

INTRODUCTION

Forty years ago on August 6, 1962 Jamaica became an independent and sovereign nation after more than 300 hundred years of colonialism under the British Empire. In the international context, Jamaica is a relatively young country. Indeed, in contrast to the countries in Latin America, Jamaica and the other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, all former colonies of Great Britain, only became independent in the second half of the 20th century. Unlike their Spanish-speaking neighbours therefore, none of these territories had the distinction of being founding members of either the United Nations or the hemispheric body the Organisation of American States.

The purpose of my presentation is to present an overview, a perspective of the political, economic and cultural development of Jamaica over these forty years. But before doing so, I think it is important to provide a historical context to modern Jamaica. So I will start with a brief history of Jamaica, tracing the trajectory of conquest, settlement and colonisation to emancipation, independence and nationhood.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

English colonial rule in Jamaica began in 1655 after being captured from Spain. So Jamaica does have a Spanish history, brief though it may have been. Christopher Columbus landed in the island on his second voyage to the so-called New World in 1494. There he met the Tainos. So Jamaica also has a prehispanic history. Jamaica was inhabited by the Tainos somewhere between 600 and 900 AD. Sadly, the arrival of the Europeans meant the demise of the indigenous population in Jamaica as a result of forced labour and imported diseases. Very little is recorded about the Jamaican Tainos, but to them Jamaica owes its name, which comes from the Taino word Xaymaca which means Land of Wood and Water. Our Coat of Arms bears the images of a male and female Taino.

Gold was the prime motivation for Spanish occupation in the Americas, but as Jamaica lacked the commodity, it was never able to attract large numbers of settlers. Throughout the period of Spanish occupation, the white population fluctuated between a few hundred and a few thousand souls. To replenish the native Indian population, the Spanish began to introduce African slaves in around 1517. Until then, the only Africans on the island were the personal household servants of a few settlers. These did not come directly from Africa but from European countries where slavery was already institutionalised. In the century and a half of their rule, the Spanish made two introductions that became pivotal to Jamaica's future: they brought sugar cane and slaves from Africa to cultivate the cane.

The British invasion and capture in 1655 capitalised on this nascent sugar industry. This was the beginning of what was to become the economic backbone of Jamaica for the next three centuries of British dominion over the island. With the help of the Atlantic slave trade that provided a consistent labour force of Africans, the English turned the island into one vast sugar plantation.

A curious phenomenon existed in Jamaica and other West Indian colonies. Like their Spanish predecessors, the English did not establish settler communities in the islands. The plantation owners preferred to rule from afar. This explains to some extent the demographic make-up of the country. Historically, the white population has remained a small percentage of the total population of the island.

The slave trade was abolished in 1807 but it was not until 1838 that slavery itself was abolished. But emancipation did not bring with it political, social and economic freedom. It was almost a hundred years later, after intermittent liberation struggles that the movement toward political liberty began to take shape; the most prominent was the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865. In 1866 Jamaica became a full Crown Colony of England.

The need for adequate supplies of cheap labour to replace those who had left the plantation after the emancipation of slaves, led in the first instance to the importation of white indentured servants from Europe (England itself, Scotland, Germany and Ireland). Failure to attract adequate numbers of cheap labour

led to the importation of indentured labour from India and China. Jews, who already had a presence in the island from the early sixteenth century as indentured servants, also increased in numbers. Migrant Arab traders also joined the mosaic, contributing to today's unique racially mixed Jamaican people, giving rise to our motto "Out of Many One People".

FROM COLONY TO NATION

Although there were antecedents, such as the rise of Marcus Garvey and his preaching of black consciousness in the 1920s, for most political historians the movement toward self-government and independence in Jamaica genuinely began in the 1930s. This period of political turmoil saw the birth of the two major political parties, which have dominated politics in Jamaica since then — The Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), and the People's National Party (PNP), founded by Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley, who are today considered fathers of the nation. The parties emerged out of the dynamic trade union movement, which had by then developed to demand better labour conditions, often through violent protests.

In 1944, the British Government granted a new constitution that saw two fundamental changes: universal adult suffrage and an elected majority in the legislature. Jamaica's first general election took place in December 1944. The members of legislature and the ministers of department had no executive responsibilities and continued to be answerable to the Colonial Office through the Governor. This was progressively altered and by 1958 Jamaica was an independent country in every internal matter, with only bills relating to defence and international affairs being reserved for the Queen.

An important feature of this pre-independent period, particularly in the 1950s, was migration; both internally from rural to urban towns and externally to the United Kingdom and North America. Migration had an impact on the country's economy as a considerable amount of money was sent home by these migrants. Remittances continue to contribute to the Jamaican economy and the survival of families in.

Total transfer of power came on August 6, 1962 and Jamaica became an independent nation.

Jamaica's political system is organised as a parliamentary democracy of the Westminster model. There is a bicameral legislature comprising an elected House of Parliament (Lower House) and an un-elected Senate whose members are appointed by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Jamaica is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and retains the British Sovereign as Head of State, represented by a Governor General who acts on the advice of the Prime Minister. As has occurred in former British colonies such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, there have been discussions from time to time on the need to adopt a republican system of government as most Commonwealth countries have done. While the majority of Jamaicans profess no particular loyalty or allegiance to Her Majesty, there is the question of the kind of Republic that should replace the current system. Whether an executive presidential system such as that in the United States, Mexico and other Latin American countries, with a divided Congress; a political system such as that in France; or merely a ceremonial president such as the case of India, itself a former British colony.

INDEPENDENT JAMAICA

Against this backdrop, I now turn to the core of my presentation: Jamaica as an independent nation over the last four decades. For the purposes of this presentation, I have divided post-colonial Jamaica into four distinct periods: first, the period immediately after independence when as a small state Jamaica sought to establish itself as a viable and sovereign political entity and find its footing in the world; second, the decade of the seventies characterised by an attempt to move away from the ideological conservatism of the early years of independence and the establishment of a liberal/socialist regime; third, the eighties with a reversal towards conservative tendencies; fourth and finally, the post-Cold War period.

Politically, Jamaica entered independence with few apparent major problems. There were no serious racial problems. The

new nation was fairly homogenous and a well-organised two-party system of government was established. It was fortunate in having an experienced and competent Civil Service, a highly respected judiciary and an efficient police force. The transition from colonialism to independence was therefore relatively smooth and was not marred by the political upheavals witnessed in Africa and Asia at the time. Jamaica has been a stable democracy since independence. Alternation in politics has seen the two dominant parties assuming government at intervals: the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party. Over the years, the dominance of these parties has been such that it has been virtually impossible for third parties to survive.

The economic policy of the Government after independence was actually a continuation of the approach of its predecessors in the fifties based on the Puerto Rican model of growth through industrialisation. During the first decade after independence, the Jamaican economy experienced strong growth with GDP averaging 5.2 per cent per annum between 1962 and 1973. This economic growth was largely the result of foreign direct investment, which developed the mining, tourism and manufacturing sectors. Since World War II, the economy had been revolutionised by the exploitation of bauxite and in the space of a few years Jamaica had become the world's largest source. As the policy of industrialisation was vigorously pursued economic activity expanded during this period so that apart from bauxite and the traditional sugar and banana industries, a thriving manufacturing sector developed in food processing, textiles, construction, breweries and bottling plants, among others. Fiscal incentives offered by the government played an important role in attracting investment. In the case of the manufacturing sector, import substitution policies provided additional incentives for local investment.

Despite its name, ideologically, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) which ushered Jamaica into independence in 1962 could be described as a conservative centre-right party. This was reflected in its external relations and foreign policy. The Government fully accepted the reality of the international environment in which it operated and the division of the world into East and West. At independence, the first Prime Minister, Sir Alexander Bustamante,

declared the basic tenet of Jamaica's foreign policy thus: "We are with the West". Preservation of its traditional ties with the United Kingdom, the United States and the West in general was thus the cautious and conservative foreign approach adopted. As a small state with its continuing dependence on western powers for economic development and security, this was perhaps the pragmatic approach to adopt. The Caribbean had by then become a theatre for East-West rivalry and the government of Jamaica espoused strong anti-Communist policy –it was highly critical of the Fidel Castro regime and supported the US trade embargo against Cuba. Ironically, however, Jamaica maintained consular relations with Cuba because of the large number of Jamaicans residing in Cuba and even resisted pressure to sever relations with Cuba when it sought membership in the Organisation of American States (OAS) in 1967.

As earlier indicated Jamaica had become an attractive location for foreign investment and tourism and the government wanted to maintain a favourable investment climate. To do this it had to project an image of political stability and reliability, which as far as the government was concerned meant close identification with western political and economic interests. In other words, it was its external economic relations that defined its foreign policy attitudes. While close ties were maintained with the United Kingdom, the traditional relationship enjoyed with the former colonial power underwent changes after independence. An immediate issue faced by Jamaica was the prospect of the United Kingdom's entry into the then European Common Market (EEC). Membership by the UK in the EEC would have enormous implications for the preferential treatment for commodities such as sugar and bananas. Jamaica and other Commonwealth countries sought safeguards for continued trade preferences from Britain when it gained entry in the common market. Those safeguards were to be eventually incorporated in the 1975 Lomé Convention linking former European colonies in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

During this period, the United States came to dominate the Jamaican economy and was involved in virtually every sphere of economic life of the country –tourism, manufacturing, trans-

portation, communications, agriculture and the very important mining sector. The bauxite industry was one hundred per cent foreign owned and by 1970 represented almost two thirds of Jamaica's exports and supplied more than fifty per cent of American imports.

The above should by no means suggest that Jamaica paid no attention to developing relations with other countries and regions. Given its history and experience as a developing country, it was only natural that it would forge links with other developing countries. It became a member of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1970 and sought to project a more pro-Third World position in international affairs. It began to identify with other developing countries on economic matters through the Group of 77 in the United Nations. Diplomatic representation and political ties were expanded with Africa and the country became an ardent supporter of the struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid. (Jamaica was the first country to impose a trade embargo against apartheid South Africa, doing so in 1958, even before it gained independence.)

At the regional level, Jamaica became more open to regional economic integration with other Commonwealth Caribbean countries and in 1968 became a founding member of the Caribbean Free Trade Association (Carifta), the precursor of the Caribbean Community (Caricom). It became a member of the Organisation of American States in 1969, becoming the first English-speaking Caribbean State to do so. Jamaica also recognised the advantages to be derived from multilateralism and therefore attempted to engage in active diplomacy through the United Nations system. Its interests were largely in the economic and social areas and it was instrumental in having 1968 declared International Human Rights Year.

At the end of this first phase, despite its smallness, there was little doubt as to the viability of Jamaica as a state. It had proved that politically it was a sovereign state in terms of its internal political structure and order, although in terms of its foreign policy, its behaviour was somewhat proscribed by its economic dependence on the West. By international standards at the time Jamaica was not considered a poor country. Its industrial growth, however, masked real economic problems. The high rate of eco-

economic growth achieved during the decade of the sixties was based on a fragile economic foundation. The economy experienced persistent balance of payment deficits. Jamaica was dependent on inflows of foreign capital for balance of payments stability. Dependence on capital inflows and imports, together with an undiversified export base, made the economy highly vulnerable to external shocks. At the same time the benefits of prosperity were unevenly distributed, resulting in increased social inequality. By 1972, the bottom 40% of the population received only 7.0% of the aggregate income, while the top 5% received 37% of the wealth created. This increasing inequality threatened to undermine social cohesion. By the time of the first general elections in 1967, which were won by the incumbent government, there were signs of internal fragmentation, discontent and strife.

As the decade progressed, contests for political power and leadership upward social mobility, the emergence of a local business elite, black nationalists and women's movements, and increased rural to urban migration served to exacerbate the polarisation between social, economic and political interest groups.

DECADE OF THE 70s

It was against this background, that Jamaica began the decade of the seventies, the second phase of its post-colonial evolution. The seventies were turbulent years for Jamaica both at the domestic level and in its external relations. For many analysts, this period is considered the transcendental moment in Jamaica's modern political history. The period is distinguished by two major factors. First, a policy of economic transformation; second, and closely related to the first, a radicalisation of Jamaica's foreign policy.

At the centre of the dramatic shift in both internal and external policy was Prime Minister Michael Manley, whose People's National Party (PNP) had won the elections of 1972. For many, it was during the government of Prime Minister Manley that Jamaica really gained international name recognition at the political level. After a decade of quiet diplomacy, he launched what he de-

scribed as a more open foreign policy, which propelled Jamaica onto the international stage and was to have consequences for its relations with the West, particularly the United States.

To correct the economic imbalance in the country and diminish the economic domination by external interests, the Manley government attempted to institute far reaching social and economic changes. The government's programme of reform placed great emphasis on self-reliance and self-help while at the same time promoting big government and state control of the economy. Massive social and economic adjustment programmes were introduced, among them: establishment of a minimum wage, worker participation in industry, compulsory recognition of trade unions, establishment of community councils to democratise community life, free tuition at the tertiary level and nationalisation of public utilities. The agenda of political change was packaged under the ideological label of democratic Socialism. It was largely populist in its thrust and aimed to achieve social justice by securing greater recognition of social and economic rights, greater responsiveness by those in control of the power structures, and the allocation of resources to the needs of the majority classes.

Prime Minister Manley's philosophy was that national independence and economic growth and development could not be achieved without an examination of foreign policy. For him, the structure of the international system into developed and developing world profoundly affected countries such as Jamaica given the sharp dichotomy of interests between the two groups. He contended that Jamaica should expand its economic relations by participating in a trading bloc on a regional basis. He saw regionalism as the natural avenue through which Jamaica could enter and influence the stream of world politics. He was a foremost proponent of upgrading Carifta into Caricom, which was launched in 1972.

A deepening of regionalism for Mr. Manley embraced the wider geopolitical Caribbean Basin, and he even envisioned widening of the Caribbean Community to include non-English speaking mainland states. This vision of expanded co-operation was perhaps pre-mature in the context of the English-speaking Caribbean's own efforts toward regional integration at the time. Jamaica none-

theless attempted to pursue the extension of co-operative relations, focusing in the first instance on relations with Venezuela and Mexico. Mr. Manley made the first official visit by a Jamaican Head of Government to Latin America when he visited Venezuela in March 1973. In the following years, he also visited Mexico and there were visits by the Heads of State of both Venezuela and Mexico to Jamaica. In the case of Mexico, President Echeverría visited Jamaica in 1974 and Mr. Manley returned the visit in 1975 and paid another visit in 1980 when President José López Portillo received him. There were grandiose proposals for regional co-operation such as a Jamaican, Mexican, Venezuelan joint venture for a refinery for alumina (Javamex), a three-way Caribbean bauxite smelter scheme involving Jamaica, Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago, and the creation of a regional shipping company with Venezuela, Costa Rica and Mexico. None of these proposals eventually bore fruit for political and economic reasons, but it signalled the potential for wider Caribbean Basin regional co-operation. It is of course unfortunate that over the years this potential has not been given more tangible expression. In August 1980, Venezuela and Mexico signed an Energy Co-operation Programme (San José Accord) for Central American countries of which Jamaica is a beneficiary.

Prime Minister Manley's government also began to pursue a non-alignment that was very different from that of its predecessors. It expanded diplomatic, trade and economic relations with the Soviet Union, the Socialist Republics of Eastern Europe, and the development of closer links with Cuba. Jamaica became deeply involved in the North-South issue and pursued with fervour the call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and other Third World issues. In this, Prime Minister Manley played a leadership role, bringing him into close collaboration with radical leftist leaders in the Non-Aligned Movement who were also committed to Socialism and non-capitalist development strategies. These leaders included Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, Colonel Boumedienne of Algeria, and Fidel Castro of Cuba.

These ties and the anti-capitalist rhetoric of the governing party created a profound political crisis in the country and set

Jamaica on a collision course with the United States. The increased role of the government in the economy, its egalitarian and far-reaching social policies, perceptions of threats to private property—among other factors—led to disaffection among foreign and local business interests. The period saw a large increase in external migration and capital flight.

Jamaica's relations with Castro's Cuba, in particular, were the source of both internal and external consternation. A mere 90 miles from Jamaica, Cuba for the Manley Government should be a natural partner, politically and economically. Along with other independent Caribbean countries, Jamaica had established formal diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1973. Castro and Manley developed close personal relations. The Jamaican Prime Minister paid an official visit to Cuba in July 1975 and President Castro reciprocated in 1977. The countries signed a technical assistance and cultural-exchange agreement under which Jamaican youths, *brigadistas*, were sent to Cuba for training, ostensibly as construction workers, while Cuban advisors and technicians arrived in significant numbers to offer technical assistance.

Locally, this aroused fears of a Communist take-over of the island. Not surprisingly, it also caused displeasure in Washington where the Jamaican-Cuban connection was regarded as part of Castro's scheme to spread communism in the Caribbean. US-Jamaica relations suffered severely and the US responded to Jamaica's domestic and external policies by withholding much needed financial assistance and trade credits. There were accusations about the US policy of destabilisation of Jamaica with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) heavily involved. Coupled with the decline in bauxite revenue, the effect on the Jamaican economy was devastating. The overall economic picture was one of rapid economic decline during this period. GDP declined by 22.1 per cent between 1974 and 1980.

By 1980, the Jamaican government appeared to be under siege—not of course in the military sense. Even though it had won elections in 1976, popular resentment grew and Mr. Manley was forced to call early elections in December 1980. The factors that contributed to the demise of the Manley government are evident. There was, of course, the economic crisis, attributable to both

domestic policies and the international economic crisis. The IMF programme had created conditions of discontent and eroded the government's credibility. There was also the radical leftist policy practised at home and abroad. At home, there were fears, real or unreal, of a Communist take-over. This led to political tension and violence as the opposition, the local press and the private sector, some say with the help from external sources, carried out a systematic campaign to undermine the government. Abroad, the government's pro-Third World and especially its pro-Cuban foreign policy alienated the United States with the attendant consequences – reduction in US aid, and, as a result of US influence and pressure, the absence of viable alternative sources of financing. Negative press reports in North America about Communist take-over affected tourism and eroded investor confidence.

What are the lessons learned from this period? The experiences of the seventies are illustrative of the very intimate relationship between the domestic and international spheres of policy in the small state. It raises questions as to the capacity of countries to independently carry out proximity to the United States restricted the country's room for manoeuvre. They also demonstrate the control and influence of external actors, not only States, but also multinational corporations and international financial institutions.

DECADE OF THE 80s

The government of the Jamaica Labour Party swept into office with a landslide victory in the general elections of October 1980. As was to be expected, the priority of the government led by Prime Minister Edward Seaga was to stem the perceived tide toward communism. This meant the repudiation of the socialist doctrine of its predecessor both in terms of domestic policy and external relations. It was no surprise that one of the first official acts of the government was to expel the Cuban Ambassador who had become quite visible in domestic affairs. After declaring that there was evidence of Cuban spying, diplomatic relations were terminated in 1981.

Prime Minister Seaga's immediate domestic priority was the recovery of the Jamaican economy placing emphasis once again on the free market economy and limited government intervention. The Puerto Rican model of development was restored to respectability. Mr. Seaga's associated foreign policy priority was to restore Jamaica's traditional friendly and non-threatening relations with the United States. It was certainly fortuitous for Mr. Seaga that his election coincided with that of US President Ronald Reagan. Mr. Seaga's repudiation of the communist ideology and his anti-Cuban stance were warmly received in the Washington. President Reagan described him as "our man in the Caribbean" and the Jamaican Prime Minister had the distinction of being welcomed as Reagan's first foreign head of government on an official visit to Washington.

Within its first nine months in office, the new government was able to secure an agreement with the IMF on terms that were far more generous than those offered to the previous PNP government, and by all indications the US was very instrumental in getting an IMF package approved. This opened the door for financing from other sources, including commercial banks that had denied loan facilities to the Manley administration.

This rapid and positive reaction contrasted sharply with the treatment of the previous regime and clearly sent the message that the US government was prepared to sanction countries which were deemed anti-American and anti-free market and reward those considered its friends and allies. The ideology of Mr. Seaga's government was not only different from its predecessor; in pursuing its goal, the Jamaican government understood the geopolitical realities of being a small state within the sphere of influence of the United States and thus operated in that context. He was also prepared to use his anti-Communist credentials as leverage for economic assistance from the West.

In terms of the wider Caribbean, Mr. Seaga is credited with persuading the US to act on a proposal for a special programme of economic assistance for the Caribbean, a kind of mini-Marshall plan. The Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act or the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) which was introduced in 1983 emerged out of this proposal. It granted limited free entry access to the

US market for a number of goods from the Caribbean and Central America, investment incentives for US businesses, and US aid and economic assistance. But the CBI package excluded important products, such as textiles, sugar and leather, and in time, was to prove far less beneficial than the Caribbean countries had anticipated. It nevertheless allowed the US to claim that it was not merely concerned with the security aspects of the region. In essence, however, it was a politically and ideologically motivated initiative, excluding Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua.

The re-emphasis on Jamaica's relationship with the US and other western countries naturally meant a diminishing interest in the Third World. The country retained its membership in the Non Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, but the government's attitude lacked the strong position and conviction of the previous administration toward Third World issues. A notable exception was its position on apartheid in South Africa and the situation in Namibia. These were among the few foreign policy issues in which there was general public interest and there was bipartisan support for the government's anti-apartheid stand. In contrast to the 1970s, however, it was clear that the government had significantly, and perhaps deliberately, reduced Jamaica's international profile.

Even within the Caribbean Community, Jamaica displayed less enthusiasm for regional integration and during the period tensions among the English-speaking countries reached a particularly high level. Jamaica broke ranks with other Caribbean countries in its swift and strong support for the US invasion in Grenada in 1983 and later for its support for the outcome of the questionable election of Jean Aristides in Haiti in 1986 to replace the Duvalier dictatorship. Jamaica continued to benefit from the Mexican-Venezuela oil facility under the San José Accord. President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado of Mexico visited Jamaica in August 1987 but it was clear that the importance that the previous government attached to forging relations with Latin America had diminished.

The question that needs to be addressed is whether its pro-American and pro-Western foreign policy orientation netted for Jamaica any sustained benefit in terms of achieving its primary

objective of economic development. Historically, the asymmetric relations between small States and more powerful ones have always meant that in relative terms, the latter benefits disproportionately from this relationship. As indicated, in the early part of the Seaga administration, the US was very responsive to the Jamaica Labour Party. A paternalistic or client-state relationship developed between the US and Jamaica and the latter was able to reap in the early years certain economic and political benefits. Underpinning this beneficial relationship was their shared anti-Communist ideology.

The deteriorating economic situation in Jamaica was to test the extent to which the US government was prepared to underwrite the economic recovery and stability of the country. Considerable study has been undertaken about the Jamaica's political economy during the JLP government that lasted until 1989. It would not be an overstatement to say that its relationship with the IMF was at the centre of Jamaica's external economic policy. Under-scoring the dependence on external resources, the period was characterised by the continuation and even deepening of the relationship with the Fund. Jamaica was to undergo no fewer than five economic stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes during this period. Assistance from the IMF carried with it conditionalities which the government consistently failed to meet. Like those promoted under the Manley government, the programmes emphasised increased private sector involvement in the economy and a corresponding reduction of the role of government.

After its initial flexibility towards Jamaica, the IMF became impatient with the government's inability to manage the economy. By the mid-eighties, serious differences emerged between the government and the institution to the extent that Mr. Seaga himself began to criticise some of its practices. While endorsing the broad approach of the Fund, he pointed to the social impact of the adjustment programmes.

The tenor of US-Jamaican relations also changed considerably. There was an altogether different treatment by the Reagan and Bush administrations as the decade came to a close. With the threat of communism receding, the US no longer felt indulgent toward countries like Jamaica and therefore did not feel compelled to intervene on the country's behalf in international financial in-

stitutions. In fact, the US cut its own aid to Jamaica and reduced the country's sugar quota into the US market. With the new international climate that emerged after 1985 when President Gorbachev initiated *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, the US no longer viewed Jamaica as indispensable. As the decade drew to a close, major developments in international politics and security as a result of the easing of tensions between the US and the Soviet Union foretold the emergence of a New World order.

Prime Minister Seaga had not lived up to his reputation as a manager and technocrat. His government's efforts had failed to effectively transform the economy it had inherited. While positive growth was recorded during the initial years of the decade, this was due more to the level of external financing which had become available, rather than any fundamental changes in the economy. In keeping with IMF conditionalities, adjustment measures were adopted. These included, systematic devaluations, cuts in public sector employment, reductions in the fiscal deficit as a percentage of the GDP, and the removal of price and import controls. This period of adjustment coincided with a sharp downturn in the bauxite/alumina industry as a result of the world economic recession.

These adjustment programmes had devastating social consequences. Living standards declined, particularly for the most vulnerable groups in the society. The reduction in government expenditure meant reduced spending on education, health and social welfare programmes. Retrenchment of workers and the absence of social security nets contributed to a rapid expansion of the informal economy and increased external migration. Between 1986 and 1989, net migration is estimated at an annual average of 25 000 persons.

PERIOD OF TRANSFORMATION

The JLP government subsequently lost the general elections in February 1989, and was once again replaced by the People's National Party, still headed by Michael Manley, bringing us to the fourth stage of political evolution in Jamaica since independence. It was almost a decade since the People's National Party was out of power and for most of that period it did not even have a seat in

Parliament having refused participate in the snap elections called by Prime Minister Seaga in 1983. The PNP government has remained in power since 1989 first under the leadership of Michael Manley and then under current Prime Minister Percival James Patterson after Mr. Manley resigned because of ill health in 1992.

The new government came into power in an international political and economic environment that had changed significantly and dramatically. The Cold War had ended and with it the geopolitical and geo-strategic importance of Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean. The reality was that Jamaica needed to once again adjust its internal and external economic policies. The new government was immediately faced with the prospect of the establishment of Europe 1992 and the North American Free Trade Agreement, which meant the erosion of trade preferences under the Lomé Convention, the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement. There was also the launching of the Uruguay Round and the coming into being of the World Trade Organization.

All of this has meant a decade of adjustment, of transformation to take advantage of and capitalise on the promise of globalisation. Through a process of economic reform and institutional strengthening the government over the last decade has concentrated on achieving macroeconomic stabilisation as a necessary condition for growth. The main objectives of the stabilisation effort have included reduction of fiscal deficits, reduction of inflation, maintenance of exchange rate stability and rebuilding of the country's foreign reserves. A major achievement was the ending of the borrowing relationship with the International Monetary Fund in 1997 while retaining the IMF's seal of approval for the government's macroeconomic policies. The government has also embarked on a massive privatisation programme in most sectors to encourage investment.

Economic transformation has also meant taking account of the profound technological revolution. Emphasis is being placed on promoting and developing the information technology sector and strengthening indigenous technological capacity. Coupled with this is the liberalisation and expansion of the vital telecommunications sector and heavy investment in the improving the nation's infrastructure.

In an effort to comply with the new rules of the game in international trade, the government has progressively liberalised trade to enhance export growth and secure old and new markets. Globalisation and economic liberalisation have exposed the Jamaican economy to increased external competition in keeping with the emphasis on reciprocity reflected in the new international trade regime. Making the transition from full preference to full competitiveness and reciprocity has been challenging. Economic policies have been aimed at placing firms in a position to trade and compete successfully on a global scale.

Policy measures designed to offset the negative effects of this transition have also come in the form of deepening regional integration in the Caribbean Community and the move toward the creation of the Caricom Single Market and Economy which should come into being in 2004. Regional co-operation with its Caricom partners is in fact a key component of Jamaica's foreign and trade policy and the current government places great emphasis on Caricom as a framework for functional co-operation as well as a collective approach to dealing with the complex international political and economic developments. Jamaica has taken a leadership role in the establishment of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the proposed regional court of last resort to replace the Privy Council in London which remains the highest tribunal for most Caribbean countries even after 40 years of independence. The CCJ will be both the highest domestic tribunal for member countries in respect of civil and criminal appeals, and an international court to hear and adjudicate on claims under the Caricom Treaty.

Beyond Caricom, Jamaica took a lead role in expanding regionalism to include non-English-speaking territories as a means of creating within the wider Caribbean special trading and functional co-operation arrangements. Out of this emerged the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) which includes all States in the Caribbean Basin.

Jamaica is also involved in the negotiations for the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), seeking along with other smaller economies special and differential treatment, as well as negotiations within the framework of the World Trade Organization.

Concentration on foreign economic policy has not detracted attention from political issues although this has tended to be primarily focused on those of regional import. In 1999, Jamaica successfully sought and gained a seat on the United Nations Security Council to serve for the two-year period, 2000-2001, the second time that it occupied a seat on the Council.

In the 1990s, conditions in Haiti were the main political issue in the region in which Jamaica was directly involved. For reasons of geography and a sense of kinship, Jamaica and other Caribbean countries felt a duty to assist in resolving the complex situation in the former French colony. Jamaica's desire to have a more stable and democratic Haiti also stemmed from its concerns about the incursions of refugees to the island which its own fragile economy and social infrastructure could not support. In the late 1980s, Jamaica had previously taken an active part in the developments in the neighbouring country which eventually led to the departure of President Francois Duvalier. In the mid-1990s, Jamaica participated in the multinational force to restore the democratically elected President, Jean Bertrand Aristide.

The other regional political issue revolved around the kind of relationship Jamaica would have with Cuba. The existence of this island a mere ninety miles north of Jamaica could not be denied. Relations with the Communist country were normalised soon after the PNP government returned to power in 1989 but without any of the rhetoric that would strain relations with Washington or raise fears among the local capitalist class. Indeed, local entrepreneurs have recognised the economic and trade potential of Cuba and have seized opportunities for commerce and investment. For example, one of the largest hotel chains in Jamaica, Super Club, has invested in Cuba, while the national airline, Air Jamaica, flies to Havana. In defiance of the US, Jamaica, like most of the international community, rejected the extraterritorial application of US legislation, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (Helms-Burton Bill) of 1996. It has also supported calls by the international community for the ending of the US embargo against Cuba. Jamaica's relationship with Cuba should also be viewed in the context of the push for expanded regionalism. Jamaica and other Caricom members feel that any thrust toward widening the process of regional integra-

tion must embrace Cuba as it did the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Despite US pressure, Cuba was admitted as a member of the ACS as well as the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO). Unlike two decades before, the US has been unsuccessful in influencing Jamaica's foreign policy towards Cuba.

The last decade has seen tremendous strides toward the improvement of governance through public sector reform and modernisation. The system of government, which has functioned without any major change since independence, has been subject to a series of studies. Among those issues being debated—as I mentioned earlier—is the question of a change from the monarchical to a republican system of government. There is a high level of activism of civil society organisations and participation in the discussion on governance issues made possible through the increased availability and access to information through a wide range of media. A Freedom of Information Act is currently before Parliament to provide greater transparency in respect of information which ought to be in the public domain. In tandem with this initiative is the proposed inclusion of a Bill of Rights in the Constitution.

Greater political participation is reflected in the emergence of new political parties in the last decade to give expression to alternative political opinions. These parties were formed as a result of the disaffection with the traditional parties who have alternated in power over the last four decades. One party, the National Democratic Party, was established in 1995 as a breakaway faction of the Jamaica Labour Party. Though small in terms of support, the existence of these parties serves to broaden the scope of participatory and representative democracy. While aware of the dominance of the two traditional parties, the new parties are expected to contest the general elections, which should be held before the end of this year.

CONCLUSION

Over the span of forty years, Jamaica has developed into a vibrant, dynamic society. There have been challenges along the way, but a healthy respect for democracy has prevailed. Without fear of

contradiction, I would dare say that for a country the size of Jamaica, we enjoy enormous international name recognition, as a result of our creativity and ingenuity as a people. Born out of the legacy of our colonial history, our creative expression is highly visible in our literature, dance, art movement and of course in our music.

Even before globalisation became a buzzword, Jamaica produced creative people and products that have had a global reach. Jamaica's reggae music is universally acclaimed. The name of Bob Marley, an unofficial national hero in Jamaica, is a household name across the globe. There is also our world famous rum, Appleton, and our exclusive Blue Mountain Coffee, considered the finest in the world. Our tourism and hospitality sector is world renown. Jamaica is one of the most popular destinations in the Caribbean, receiving more than one million tourists each year, truly remarkable when you bear in mind that Jamaica has a population of 2.5 million.

Rastafarianism, a uniquely Jamaican movement, has become a transforming cultural force. Emerging as a form of African-Jamaican social protest in the 1930s, Rastafarianism has as its basic teachings the historical and spiritual significance of the African race on life and religion. It today commands a large following and general respect and has joined other religious faiths in Jamaica where religion is an important part of the Jamaican culture. The majority is Christian but there are communities of Jews, Hindus and Moslems.

Jamaica has produced distinguished male and female athletes whose world-class achievements provide Jamaicans with their own models of performance and achievement. On a per capita basis Jamaica is said to have won the highest number of Olympic medals. Who can forget Jamaica's Reggae Boyz who qualified for the World Cup in 1998?

As we celebrate 40 years of independence and at the beginning of the 21st century, Jamaica is fully conscious of the profound nature of the challenges facing the nation. There is, however, confidence in the capacity and determination of the Jamaican people to achieve the goal of national growth and development.