

The Evolution of Political Violence in Jamaica 1940-1980

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ABSTRACT

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By the 1960s violence became institutionalized in modern Jamaican politics. This endemic violence fostered an unstable political environment that developed out of a symbiotic relationship between Jamaican labor organizations and political violence. Consequently, the political process was destabilized by the corrosive influence of partisan politics, whereby party loyalists dependent on political patronage were encouraged by the parties to defend local constituencies and participate in political conflict. Within this system the Jamaican general election process became ominous and violent, exemplifying how limited political patronage was dispersed among loyal party supporters.

This dissertation examines the role of the political parties and how they mobilized grassroots supporters through inspirational speeches, partisan ideology, complex political patronage networks, and historic party platform issues from 1940 through 1980. The dissertation argues that the development of Jamaican trade unionism and its corresponding leadership created the political framework out of which Jamaica's two major political parties, the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and People's National Party (PNP) emerged. Within the evolution of their support base Jamaican politicians such as Alexander Bustamante utilized their influence over local constituencies to create a garrison form of mobilization that relied heavily upon violence. By investigating the social and political connection between local politicians and violence, this dissertation examines how events such as the Henry Rebellion in 1960, the 1978 Green Bay Massacre, and the public murder of the PNP candidate Roy McGann in 1980

demonstrate the failure of traditional Jamaican political patronage to control extremist violence among grassroots supporters, giving rise to a general public dissatisfaction with the established Jamaican leadership. This transformation of the political system resulted in the institutionalization of political violence by the late 1960s, and a pattern of general elections destabilized by vicious conflicts between JLP and PNP gangs. This political violence was reflected in the rise of gang dons such as Jim Brown and Wayne “Sandokhan” Smith who became independent of the patronage system through their exploitation of the drug trade. Consequently, modern Jamaican politics in the twenty-first century is fractured and local political leaders have lost control of the gangs.

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem of Violence in Modern Jamaican Politics

The problem that this dissertation seeks to address is the relationship between the evolution of modern politics in Jamaica and politically related violence. The history of modern Jamaican politics has largely been told as the story of the growth of the two-party system and its relationship to labor unionization, the evolution of a political elite, the development of the mechanisms of grassroots mobilization, party campaigning processes, and the maturation of the Westminster model, namely a democratic parliamentary system of government that supports a prime minister, legislature, and cabinet. A significant amount of the scholarship on modern Jamaica is devoted to analysis of these relationships and institutional systems. However, what is often less adequately recognized or addressed in this scholarship is that this formal system of Jamaican politics is sustained by another world of organized activity, namely the political violence connected to party politics. This study will argue that politically motivated violence has not been incidental to Jamaican politics; rather, it has been endemic to the political system.

This dissertation investigates how political violence evolved from 1938 through 1980. My inquiry focuses on how political parties and their leaders mobilized grassroots supporters through ideology, demagoguery, inter-party conflict, and political patronage, and utilized the rhetoric of political campaign speeches to incite acts of aggression in an effort to defeat their rivals. This study argues that the development of the union movement in the 1930s and 1940s created the framework and set the stage for political violence in modern Jamaica, particularly between the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and People's National Party (PNP). The Great Depression

of the 1930s had devastating consequences for the world, but especially for the Caribbean, where restrictive immigrant policies led to deportation and halted migration. Undoubtedly, though, migration had been the major employment opportunity and economic outlet for Jamaicans since the 1800s when the island ceased to be a leading sugar producer.

Consequently, the depression created the desperation and poverty that empowered the development of the union movement, as laborers seeking employment and better wages, and hoping for lasting changes, joined the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) because the union represented one of the few organized structures that could effectively take on the state.

Although unionization itself did not lead to horrifying violence, laborers had to deal with the colonial structure of Jamaica and employers' use of violence to maintain power and control. This is not to imply that prior to the emergence of the union movement, there were protests of various sorts and the colonial authority reacted cohesively as they would to the labor unrest of 1938. During the riots, the British colonial authority utilized a two-fold process to contain and manipulate the development of the union movement and the formation of the political parties. The first stage involved utilizing the judiciary and police force to detain popular leaders, such as Alexander Bustamante, in May 1938 and again in September 1940 for inflammatory rhetoric, followed by the detention of radical socialists for the People's National Party (PNP)—Richard Hart, Arthur Henry, Frank Hill, and Ken Hill—because “the Governor considers it imperative to exercise control over these men before they have further opportunity to influence the ignorant masses who are unusually receptive to such propaganda.”¹ The second stage involved the

¹ PRO: CO 968/68/7. Memorandum, December 1940. 1–2.

colonial authority's exploitation of the existing tension between Bustamante and Norman Manley. They did so because they recognized Bustamante as less of a threat since he focused on consolidating his power base and was willing to work with the colonial authority. On the other hand, Manley and the PNP "was fundamentally anti-government and subversive," thereby, more dangerous because Manley was willing to challenge the power of the British government in Jamaica. Consequently, Manley had to be contained, and the colonial authority effectively used the JLP to prevent the PNP from consolidating its power base among grassroots supporters, which resulted in escalating violence due to party politics.² But once again, the focus of this dissertation is not the role of the colonial state per se, although it obviously frames the context of the period up until 1962. Rather, the focus of this dissertation is on the rivalry that developed between the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP); and this is because of the gradual evolution of violence such that by the later period of 1965, violence was a taken-for-granted dimension of the political process in Jamaica. I will argue in this dissertation that this evolution constitutes a process of institutionalization; by which I will mean that from the 1940s onward, there emerged a fairly stable—if informal (not state-sanctioned)—gangs connected to the political parties that were involved in the systematic intimidation and, sometimes, aggression against rival gangs in order to secure control of political territories, that is, constituencies.

After establishing the connection between local politicians and violence during this earlier period of political development, this dissertation turns its attention to an examination of how later events such as the Henry Rebellion (1960), the Green Bay Massacre (1978), and the

² PRO: CO 968/68/7. Letter, Arthur Richards to H.F. Downie, June 1, 1942, 1–3.

public murder of the People's National Party (PNP) candidate, Roy McGann (1980), were systematically related to the development of party politics in Jamaica. I argue that events such as these represent the outcome of the institutionalization of political violence in the structure and processes of Jamaican politics by the 1960s.³

In my research into Jamaica's modern political history, I discovered that the current literature overlooks the direct role of many Jamaican political leaders in the instigation, encouragement, or condoning of political violence. In the current literature, the majority of scholars focus on Jamaica's political history within the context of constitutional decolonization, the early years of post-independence Jamaica, the debates about the socialist and communist impact on Jamaica, ideological rivalries between the parties, and political disintegration. For example, preeminent scholars of the early period such as Victor Reid, George Eaton, and Philip Sherlock contribute to the current literature by studying Jamaica's renowned political leadership (in particular, Norman Manley, founder of the nationalist movement and its main political organ the People's National Party, and first premier in 1955–1961; and Alexander Bustamante, the leader of the labor movement, founder of the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP), and first prime minister of Jamaica 1962–1967); but they neglect the major problem of political violence in modern Jamaica and its connection to its leadership.⁴

³ Terry Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–70 (Britain: Manchester University Press, 1977), 61–82.

⁴ George Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica (Jamaica: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1972); Philip Sherlock, Norman Manley (Britain: Macmillan London Limited, 1980); Victor Reid, The Horses of the Morning (Jamaica: Caribbean Authors Publishing Co. Limited, 1985).

These political biographies concentrate exclusively on a traditional political narrative related to Bustamante's and Manley's leadership in Jamaica's independence movement and their role in the establishment of Jamaican party politics. I have defined political leadership in terms of political cohesion as directing policies and political patronage as well as maintaining authority over party supporters. The problem with the current literature is that these biographers are insiders, straddling the worlds of activism and scholarship; but in the post-independence era, the men they study had the power to shape the history of Jamaica and what the country could accomplish. Although the literature describes Bustamante and Manley as shrewd enough to manipulate the political process, these works fail to examine not only institutionalized but inter-party violence as well. I am holding Jamaica's political leaders accountable for the violence because during the 1938 labor conflict, these men encouraged the poor to confront the state, expecting violence but promoting rebellion, anyway. And this tactic transitioned into the political sphere, creating a system in which violence became endemic to modern Jamaican politics.

One valuable source used in this dissertation is *The Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, which was founded in 1834 in Kingston by brothers Joshua and Jacob De Cordova, wealthy Texas land agents who traveled between the United States and Jamaica, where they had several businesses. Since the majority of local papers focused on farming and the Stock Market, the De Cordova brothers wanted to provide the island with a daily paper that was more informative with literature, arts and science, and other forms of amusement. However, men who were part of the plantation class launched the paper on the cusp of the British government's ending of slavery in its colonies. Even in the twentieth century, *The Daily Gleaner* reflected planter

ideology, which was elitist, anti-union, and somewhat anti-PNP. From the post-labor rebellion era of 1942 to date, the paper has often allied itself with the Jamaica Labor Party, the government of big business, and supported favorable U.S. policies, reduced taxes, and de-regulation. *The Daily Gleaner's* reportage, though at times antagonistic to progressive change, still remains important to current scholarship investigating Jamaican politics, society and economy.⁵ As one of the oldest and most respected newspapers on the island, *The Daily Gleaner* represents a source for my study, because unlike other local tabloids, *The Daily Gleaner* frequently has editorials devoted to political analysis and the rise of gang violence.⁶

In spite of its politics, *The Daily Gleaner* documented the labor rebellion and the rise of unionization. The violence associated with the 1938 labor rebellion is very often understood as connected to the activism generated by unionization as well as by state repression; and it cannot be ignored because Jamaica's political parties evolved out of the union movement. My argument emphasizes that violence was not confined to the periphery of party politics; rather, it became integral to the political system. Initially, Jamaica's political parties served as an extension of the trade union movement. Certainly, the use of violence as a political tool

⁵ James M. Day, *Jacob De Cordova: Land Merchant of Texas* (Waco: Heritage Society of Waco, 1962), 5–30; also referenced in Olive Senior, *The Encyclopedia of the Jamaican Heritage* (Jamaica: Kingston Twin Guinep Publishers, 2000), 30–65.

⁶ This dissertation uses frequent direct quotes from *The Daily Gleaner* in Jamaican patois, the authentic voice of the people, which is a combination of English and Spanish. Many Jamaican leaders speak Standard English, due to their elite or upper-middle class status. However, in an effort to connect with their constituents and display their nationalism, local politicians often incorporate patois into their speeches. As an archival source, *The Daily Gleaner* remains valuable to this study and contrasts with other local newspapers, such as the *Star* or *Jamaican Observer*, many of which are tabloid-based or are forms of wire press focused on specific topics (i.e., tourism and criminal violence).

became more apparent on February 15, 1946, during a series of confrontations between the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and People's National Party (PNP) workers at the Mental Hospital on Windward Road in Kingston. The mobilization of supporters on each side into committing acts of violence represented a significant milestone in the evolution of partisan violence in Jamaica. A series of confrontations between JLP and PNP supporters erupted into a riot encouraged by JLP leader, Alexander Bustamante, the self-proclaimed "man of the people."⁷ Despite the obvious political connection between party leadership and violence suggested in this event, the classic political biographies fail to address not only the relationship between the political leaders and the institutionalization of violence, but the inability of party leaders to forgo their self-interest and genuinely serve the interest of the people.

Nineteen eighty was a watershed year in Jamaican politics as a result of the number of deaths that occurred in the immediate run-up to the general elections in October of that year. After 1980, there has been a flood of discussions about polarized politics, ideological differences, and their seemingly intrinsic relationship with violence. This violence was documented by the local media, in particular *The Daily Gleaner*, which relished reporting Michael Manley's failure as a leader in sensationalized headlines. For example, on October 10, 1980, *The Daily Gleaner's* headlines declared "a hail of bullets and a river of blood," in reporting the violence that occurred at the JLP-sponsored dance at Gold Street, where four people were killed and eleven wounded after thirty armed men dressed in camouflage attacked the

⁷ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 117–118.

gathering.⁸ Although sensationalized headlines dramatically emphasized the prevalence of partisan violence within Jamaican politics, it was the 1980 public murder of the political candidate, Roy McGann (PNP), and his bodyguard while campaigning in the JLP constituency of Gordon Town that signaled a shift in the political parties' control of local gangs. This process became very evident when Michael Manley and D. K. Duncan were themselves fired upon while attending a PNP rally in Spanish Town, at which point D. K. Duncan drew his own gun and returned fire on the gunmen. Duncan's action at Gordon Town was significant because it portrayed a local politician engaged in retaliatory violence, which was part of process of inter-party conflict.

Without detracting from the significance, scale, and intensity of violence in 1980, this dissertation will argue that violence has been a central part of Jamaican politics from its very beginnings. The violence of unionization came in part from employers and their reliance on the police force; consequently, the violence that erupted was in the wider context of a battle between employers and workers. This was evident in the structure of the unionization process that began on May 25, 1938, when violent riots erupted at the Frome estates in Westmoreland, which resulted in the death of two workers and several being wounded after a confrontation with the police.⁹ Violence accompanied the trade union movement as early as May 26, 1938, when Alexander Bustamante usurped and directed the rebellious energy generated by

⁸ Laurie Gunst, Born Fi` Dead: A Journey through the Jamaican Underworld (New York: Holt & Company, 1995), 111; "Gold Street Massacre," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 240, October 10, 1980, 1.

⁹ "2 Killed 1 Seriously Wounded as Police Fire to Drive Mob Back: Labor Leader Bustamante Arrested and held Without Bail," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 119, May 25, 1938, 1.

organized labor, encouraging workers to participate in a universal strike. The later violence that occurred resulted in the arrest of Bustamante and his lieutenant of the BITU, William Grant, for sedition and unlawful assembly. In a later interview after his arrest, Bustamante promised to use labor to destroy Kingston if the government attempted to arrest him again.¹⁰ Although many such extremist statements are attributed to Bustamante, the threat of violence to resolve a personal conflict is indicative of the problem that plagues modern Jamaican politics.

This process was repeated in early 1939 when Bustamante almost destroyed the BITU after he attacked his rival A.G.S. Coombs, of the Jamaica Workers and Tradesmen's Union (JWTU), in an effort to displace the union from the island and replace it with the BITU, thereby, making it the major union in Jamaica with a monopoly over labor. After 1939, the BITU emerged stronger, which allowed Bustamante to effectively dominate the emerging political sphere. Since Jamaica's political parties evolved out of the union movement, the framework for endemic violence and corruption was created via the unionization process. However, within this process, violence against the labor movement in the late 1930s was also generated by employers and state officials' determination to break the unions via police action.

History of Modern Jamaican Politics

What follows is a discussion of the salient features of a number of representative works that address the history of modern Jamaican politics. These texts can be divided, if only as a heuristic, into three categories: political biographies, radical studies, and revisionist literature.

¹⁰ "Dock Workers Ready to Form Union but Jailed Leaders Must be Freed," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 122, May 28, 1938, 1.

The political biographies interpret the story of modern Jamaican politics through the personal history and political careers of Jamaican prime ministers, focusing on their responses to British colonization and foreign diplomacy as well as on their influence within the evolution of the Jamaican trade union and independence movements and nationalism. The more radical works address various aspects of Jamaican political development, ranging from the 1938 labor rebellion to the influence of Marxist ideology on the PNP, the rise of the Rastafarian movement, and the impact of “dons” on Jamaican politics. These studies create the foundation for understanding how the political structure in Jamaica evolved over time. The third (revisionist category) documents the process of the institutionalization of partisan conflict and the rise of the gang culture within the structure of Jamaican politics. These studies lack a thorough analysis of the internal and intimate relationship between violence and politics in modern Jamaica.

Biographical works such as Rex Nettleford’s Norman Manley and the New Jamaica (1971), George Eaton’s Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica (1972), Philip Sherlock’s Norman Manley (1980), Victor Reid’s The Horses of the Morning (1985), and Darrell Levi’s Michael Manley: The Making of A Leader (1989) all examine the history of Jamaica’s prime ministers in relation to ideology, the decolonization process, self-government, nation building, participation in the labor movement, and rise of the major political parties, the JLP and PNP.¹¹

¹¹ Rex Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica: Selected Speeches and Writings 1938-1968 (Jamaica: Longman Caribbean, 1971); Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica; Sherlock, Norman Manley; Reid, The Horses of the Morning ; Darrell Levi, Michael Manley: The Making of a Leader (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1990); Other relevant biographies are Gladys Bustamante, The Memoirs of Lady Bustamante (Jamaica:

The earliest study that can be characterized as a political biography is that contained in Rex Nettleford's 1971 edited volume, Norman W. Manley and the New Jamaica. It is of seminal interest because while not a typical political biography, it contains a long introduction and study of Norman Manley's life and work, followed by a collection of major speeches from 1938 through 1968. In his essay, titled "Norman Manley and the Politics of Jamaica 1938–1968," Nettleford briefly documents the history of the Jamaican labor movement and rise of the island's political parties. According to Nettleford, Norman Manley influenced nationalist sentiments in Jamaica; he advocated for self-government via independence and the socioeconomic uplift for the working poor, beliefs also shared by his cousin and fierce political rival, Alexander Bustamante. Moreover, Manley tirelessly promoted universal adult suffrage and the development of a viable two-party system. At times, Nettleford presents Manley more as a legal scholar preoccupied with issues related to independence and democratization than a veteran nationalist politician committed to mass mobilization for progressive change.

Although Manley's commitment to participatory democracy and nation building influenced the development of modern politics in Jamaica, Nettleford contends that Norman Manley's legacy was his advocacy for the Jamaican people to become self-sufficient and independent from British colonial authority. In order to overcome the negative impact of the Crown Colony system, Norman Manley fought for organized politics.¹² This quest manifested

Kingston Publishers, 1997); Rachael Manley, Slipstream: A Daughter Remembers (Toronto: A. A. Knopf of Canada, 2000); Rachael Manley, Horses in her Hair: A Granddaughter's Story (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2008).

¹² From 1866–1938 the Crown Colony system was used in Jamaica, and can be described as a colony in which the British government has total control of the legislature and is usually administered by an appointed governor from London.

itself in the formation of the PNP by 1938.¹³ In Nettleford's view, Norman Manley remained committed to establishing a movement towards creating a national political identity. In the wake of universal adult suffrage in 1944, after Bustamante's second release from detention, Manley's vision of a national political system included the idea of a competitive party system and, therefore, had an important role for the political opposition. Such opposition could work to his own detriment as when a referendum vote was defeated on the West Indies Federation in 1962.¹⁴ However, what Nettleford fails to provide is an adequate critique of Manley's relationship to the emerging use of violence by political parties. Moreover, Nettleford does not address the extent of Manley's leadership role in sanctioning this political violence. Nettleford's introduction does not deal with violence, and he includes only one 1964 speech in which Manley denounced the political parties for encouraging people to participate in acts of partisan violence.¹⁵

Manley contended that political violence was not beneficial to organized politics because partisan conflicts negatively polarize the populace. But Manley treated violence as

¹³ The formation of the PNP in 1938 was an attempt by Manley to implement his vision of a national movement towards creating a national political identity and unity, whereby an organized government was representative of national consciousness.

¹⁴ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xxxii. The West Indies Federation was an attempt by Great Britain to extend limited independence to its Caribbean colonies, similar to Canada and, later, Australia during the 19th century. Recognizing that multinational corporations and superpower nations dominated the global market place, Britain's efforts to create a Federation in the West Indies meant that the islands would be protected financially and economically. The West Indies Federation would organize the colonies so that limited natural resources, industrialization, and emigration would be sustainable between the smaller and larger islands.

¹⁵ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 46.

isolated incidents rather than acknowledging the deeper endemic connection between violence and politics. Despite Manley's opinion, the parties' reliance on local gangs to disrupt the general electoral process became toxic to politics as the violence adapted, became stronger, and was removed from the political sphere to become militarized and, thereby, uncontrollable.

In contrast with Nettleford's analysis of Norman Manley, Philip Sherlock's political biography on Manley and his early union career focuses mainly on how Manley transitioned from being a member of the King's Council to a populist leader and founder of Jamaica's first political party. Sherlock's biography examines Manley's idealism, family life, politics, and his attempt to transform the PNP into a political party dedicated to grassroots mobilization. Sherlock contends that Manley believed that colonialism debilitated Jamaica because it fomented class polarization, color prejudice, and economic dependency, all of which contributed to the island's economic, social, and political underdevelopment. Although Sherlock examines Manley's idealism and his struggle to empower the people, his study (published in 1980, during the height of political gangsterism) never discusses how the union movement during its formative years created the foundation for future political violence. Since Sherlock and Victor Reid were contemporaries and supporters of Norman Manley, their works portrayed Manley as a nationalist leader, dedicated to Jamaican independence, rather than analyzing Manley's impact on institutionalized violence in modern Jamaican politics.

Sherlock's study, thus, perpetuates a common interpretation of modern Jamaican political history, whereby party leaders remain exempt from blame for encouraging partisan conflicts. Furthermore, he does not recognize that Jamaican politicians created a political

system in which violence was endemic. In contrast, Rex Nettleford's study analyzes Manley's political leadership and is not only critical of his decision to support the West Indies Federation referendum vote in 1962 but also recognizes the problems caused by partisan conflicts. Though Sherlock briefly examines the conflict between the labor unions, he does not adequately explain the main factors that led to unionized violence, such as the role of union thugs hired to intimidate and assault those workers attempting to break the strikes.

A comparable study is Victor Reid's 1985 The Horses of the Morning, which is a literary biographical account of Norman Manley and his participation in Jamaican politics.¹⁶ Though not a traditional political biography, Reid's study provides valuable information about the union movement, the personality of Norman Manley, and his political ideologies. Reid introduces us to Norman Manley in 1938 who, at the time, saw himself as an advisor, not a leader of the union movement. Thus, Manley frequently allowed his more charismatic cousin, Alexander Bustamante, to dictate union policy and action via the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU).¹⁷ Reid argues that as partisan politics evolved, Manley came to believe that he would make a better champion for the people and could lead Jamaica into self-government. Manley felt that his political rival, Bustamante, remained preoccupied with using political power for personal gain.¹⁸ Consequently, following the creation of the JLP, Manley consolidated and unified the PNP to effectively challenge Bustamante. In comparison with Sherlock, Reid's portrait of Norman Manley shows him standing above condoning acts of violence, as he

¹⁶ Reid, The Horses of the Morning, x–xviii.

¹⁷ Reid, The Horses of the Morning, 140.

¹⁸ Reid, The Horses of the Morning, 207–220.

documents the history of the Manley family and Norman Manley's participation in local politics with little attention to the evolution of partisan violence within Jamaican politics.

Reid's study further documents the power struggle between the JLP and PNP that dominated the political arena from 1944 to the 1970s and the intricate aspects of localized politics. His work centers on the personalities of the Jamaican leadership, analyzing the ideological struggles that influenced Manley's political career.¹⁹ However, since the trade union movement created the foundation for the development of party politics, Reid's contention that political violence is only an unintended consequence of the union movement is one of the major limitations of his study because it tacitly absolves Jamaican party leaders from responsibility for creating a political system in which violence remained an integral part.

Another important biography is George Eaton's 1975 biography of Alexander Bustamante, which focuses on the Jamaican labor movement and its impact on the development of the political parties. Prior to Eaton's detailed biography of Bustamante's political objectives, unionization efforts and nationalism exemplified an intriguing mixture of myth and history. Eaton examines modern Jamaican politics through the lens of the politicization of Alexander Bustamante and argues that Bustamante's venture into politics served to highlight the general conditions of the working poor. Eaton maintains that Bustamante believed that the working poor were often ignored; not only did they need an advocate, but their economic and political conditions could also be improved by agitation for

¹⁹ Reid, The Horses of the Morning, 221–234.

minimum wage, workers' compensation, pensions, and other benefits.²⁰ In 1942, with the approach of universal adult suffrage, Bustamante broke with Manley's PNP and founded the JLP in 1943 to contest the upcoming election.

Eaton asserts that Bustamante's egotism and basic insecurity generated hostility and extreme aggression towards his political rivals, a political tactic that distracted attention from social and economic problems.²¹ Eaton's critique of Bustamante's efforts to organize workers after the 1938 labor rebellion was that Bustamante was more concerned about consolidating his power within the trade union movement than acting to promote self-government, a process which would have hastened constitutional decolonization.²² The value of Eaton's scholarship is that he provides a detailed history of the labor movement and its relationship to Alexander Bustamante as well as a study of modern Jamaican political development via partisan politics. However, much like Nettleford's work on Manley, Eaton's biography on Alexander Bustamante and the history of modern Jamaican politics fails to analyze the migration of union-linked violence into the political arena.²³ In contrast, my dissertation will seek to connect the violence associated with the labor movement to later partisan conflict.

²⁰ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 68.

²¹ Eaton's biography of Alexander Bustamante contends that a critical element of Bustamante's personality was his blatant egocentrism and autocratic temperament in dominating the union movement, JLP, and politics. Despite Bustamante's personal charisma and appeal to the poor working class, he was aggressive in vilifying Manley and the PNP's socialist platform, a tactic that was successful in the general elections in 1944 and 1950.

²² Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 60–61.

²³ For the purpose of this dissertation, unionized violence refers to the internal use of union activists by the union leadership to defend strikers from scabs as well as the police.

Darrell Levi's Michael Manley: The Making of a Leader (1989) investigates Norman W. Manley's younger son Michael Manley's intellectual development, multifaceted personality, political journey from journalist to participant in the union movement, and eventual rise within the PNP.²⁴ Manley's ascent to power began between 1952 and 1972 when he worked as a trade unionist for the National Workers Union (NWU), representing the working class poor. As a union activist, Manley fought for workers' rights and was initiated into the political arena. Manley's political consciousness made him critical of the political structure and sympathetic to the poor in 1972 when he was elected prime minister by popular vote. Relying heavily on populist sentiments among the poor, Manley articulated the plight of the working class, thereby gaining their loyalty.²⁵ Throughout the 1970s, Manley attempted to end underdevelopment and to liberate the country from its colonial legacy. However, the Manley regime remained plagued by internal mismanagement, severe IMF austerity measures, foreign destabilization, and political violence.²⁶ Levi's study represents a comprehensive analysis of Manley's political career; he regards political violence as an extension of partisan conflict that operated independently of party leadership.²⁷ Levi does not question Manley's political decisions or his tolerance for political violence despite his examination of the destabilizing

²⁴ Levi, Michael Manley: The Making of a Leader, 116–120.

²⁵ Levi, Michael Manley and the Making of a Leader, 130–133.

²⁶ Levi, Michael Manley and the Making of a Leader, 1–5.

²⁷ Levi, Michael Manley the Making of a Leader, 143–144. Although Levi recognized that political tribalism was associated with violent crimes, he failed to recognize and to analyze the connection between Jamaica's political leaders and partisan violence.

influences of political gangsterism in the general elections from the late 1970s through the 1980s.

Despite the comprehensive analysis provided by these biographies, none of these works analyze how violence developed. Rather, these biographies perpetuate a traditional historical analysis of this period in which party leaders stand above political conflict. Like previously mentioned biographies, Levi's work does not recognize that Jamaican politicians created a political system in which parties relied on violence to maintain their power. In this study, I will establish the relevance of the evolution of political violence, emanating initially from the union movement to the partisan political arena, and the crucial role of political leaders in instigating political conflict through inter-party violence.

Radical Scholarship

In this section, I will investigate briefly a number of studies from the Left that examine modern Jamaican politics. Trevor Munroe's The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization: Jamaica 1944–1962 (1972) examines the development of party politics in Jamaica in the British post-colonial era from 1944–1962, with a major emphasis on constitutional developments.²⁸ Within this framework, Munroe's study addresses Jamaica's transition from Crown Colony system to self-government and eventual independence. Munroe's examination of party politics reveals that in the post-colonial era, Jamaica's political system was controlled by members of the elite rather than the mass of the population. Munroe argues that the relationship between members of the political elite and capitalist leaders fostered a two-party political system that

²⁸ Trevor Munroe, The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization: Jamaica 1944–62 (Jamaica: UWI, 1972), vii–xi.

hinged on destabilizing the unity within the working-class masses, thereby, allowing political leaders to exploit the weaknesses of the mass movement. What evolved within this system was political polarization with the resurgence of class-color antagonism in the post-independence era.²⁹ Munroe documents the process of decolonization and constitutional development; his study also addresses the emergence of party politics via constitutional manipulation and political corruption. This dissertation will connect the system of party politics that Munroe describes to the evolution of political violence.

In The Cold War and the Jamaican Left 1950–55 (1992), Munroe reassesses the decline of the Marxist Left in Jamaica during the 1950s in order to explain the rise of the New Left by the 1970s. He argues that the collapse of the Soviet state, coupled with excessive theoretical analysis and chaotic intellectual debates about communist theories, prompted a re-evaluation of the Marxist Left in Jamaica during the 1950s. Munroe contends that during decolonization, colonial institutional state power aggressively combated communism, thus effectively isolating the Old Left by 1955.³⁰ According to Munroe, the New Left's general discontent with the Old Left began with mass rebellion against U.S. imperialism, economic dependence, cultural domination, and racist policies, followed by the emergence of the Black Power movement that challenged the leadership of the middle class during the post-colonial era; the influence of the Jamaican labor movement, which educated the masses about democracy and anti-imperialism

²⁹ Munroe, The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization, 36–45.

³⁰ Trevor Munroe, The Cold War & the Jamaican Left 1950–55 (Jamaica: Publishers Limited, 1992), 193–194.

policies; and the rise of international communist parties around the world.³¹ With the death of the Old Left, the New Left emerged by 1968.

Munroe argues that the rise of the New Left was possible because the 1960s generation of Marxists were not constrained by the problems faced by the Old Left, such as securing independence to end the oppressive impact of the Crown Colony system. The Soviet Union's post-1950s neglect of the development of the Caribbean Left fostered even greater independence among Leftist leaders.³² Munroe's work represents an important study of the ideological impact of Marxist ideas and activism during Jamaican decolonization in the 1950s and, in particular, their impact on the evolution of the PNP.

In his 1978 study, Arise Ye Starvelings: the Jamaican Labor Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath, Ken Post contends that the exploitative nature of capitalism on the world trade system fosters forms of rebellion that are expressed through "racial consciousness, religious revivalism, nationalism, or class consciousness."³³ According to Post, this is reflected in the eruption of the labor rebellion in Jamaica, in which discontent about race, class, nationalism, and religion allowed the seizure of state power from the British colonial government by Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley, representatives of the new middle class leadership who effectively consolidated and organized the labor movement.

³¹ Munroe, The Cold War and the Jamaican Left, 192–197.

³² Munroe, The Cold War and the Jamaican Left, 145–147, 150–152, 194.

³³ Ken Post, Arise Ye Starveling: The Jamaican Labor Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath (London: Institute of Social Studies/The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), 2–9.

Post argues that despite the economic, social, and political transformations of the 1930s, and the emergence of Jamaican labor movement, the island did not experience a real revolution because the poor and working class had not yet attained a new level of consciousness; rather, they were prepared to accept the existing social structures and looked to their leaders to supply solutions to all problems. Post asserts that this failure could be attributed to the fact that the Jamaican working class still believed that certain judicial and government processes would enable them to realize their demands. Post's study offers a meticulous analysis of Jamaica's class structure, its economic base, and the ideological and political formations that manifested class aspirations.

Post argues that there were various socioeconomic, ideological, and political factors that led to the 1938 labor rebellion: the impact of racism upon opportunities for socioeconomic mobility for the working and middle classes, class inequality, nationalism, the plantation system that fostered economic dependence via starvation wages, and a repressive political system. These factors created the environment for conflict. Post's work contributes to the established literature by providing a detailed history of the labor rebellion and an analysis of union-related violence that established the framework for future political violence. Despite the rich contributions of this volume, even Post does not fully explore the political use of violence and the creation of a mentality of political tribalism (strong political loyalty) within the JLP and PNP communities over the spoils of local elections. Since Post's study is concerned with an analysis of the relationship between the British colonial government and the conflicts that sparked the labor rebellion, his work does not focus on the dysfunctional evolution of partisan politics. My

dissertation will establish a connection between unionization, party leaders, and political gangsterism.

In the sequel to Arise Ye Starveling, the 1989 study, Strike the Iron: A Colony at War Jamaica 1939–1945, Post examines the impact of the Second World War on the emergence of Jamaica’s two main political parties, the 1944 constitution, and the political impetus for “constitutional decolonization.”³⁴ Post studies Jamaica’s wartime economy, social formations, politics, and class in order to ascertain how the British colonies responded to the war, not only by supplying troops but also as producers of needed material resources. Within this framework, Post argues that both the First and Second World Wars precipitated the decline of British imperial capitalism and its ruling class. This political and economic change empowered the labor movement in 1938, and allowed the working-class poor to destabilize colonial class relations, extract more from the economy in the form of high wages, and “force changes at the cognitive and political levels.”³⁵ These structural transformations fostered new colonial policies and allowed the capitalist system to reproduce itself. They also incorporated politically radical elements of communist, socialist, and nationalist, organizations which, Post contends, continued up to 1945 to be agents of change.

Like the earlier book, Strike the Iron provides the context for understanding Jamaica’s political history and how violence developed in the aftermath of the 1938 labor rebellion. Consequently, Post’s work remains relevant to this dissertation because it contributes to the

³⁴ Ken Post, Strike the Iron: A Colony at War Jamaica 1939–1945 (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1989), 4.

³⁵ Post, Strike the Iron, 8.

story of the union movement, the development of partisan politics, and the beginning of political tribalism. Due to the focus of Post's study, his work is not concerned with the character of partisan violence.³⁶

Richard Hart's Rise and Organize (1989) is an autobiographical account of the main causes of the 1938 labor rebellion and the formation of Jamaica's political parties. It provides a personal history about the creation of the PNP and offers insights into the personalities of Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante as well as Hart's own personal interaction with both leaders as a lawyer and labor organizer. Hart argues that the oppressive nature of the Crown Colony system, high unemployment, and poverty precipitated the labor rebellion of 1938, and allowed Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley to emerge as the leaders of the fledgling union movement. However, both leaders had different opinions about how laborers should be represented; Bustamante pushed for unionization via the BITU, Manley promoted legislative reforms (minimum wage law) to foster change.³⁷ Despite attempts by colonial authorities to prevent and control the union movement, workers won the right to unionize.³⁸ Hart documents how Frank Hill, Ken Hill, Arthur Henry, and himself influenced Manley and PNP politics in the 1940s prior to their expulsion from the party in 1952. Although Hart provides a historical record of the development of the PNP, his study is more interested in dissecting the

³⁶ Post, Strike the Iron, 9.

³⁷ Richard Hart, Rise and Organize: the Birth of the Workers and National Movement in Jamaica (London: Karia Press, 1989), 48–77.

³⁸ Hart, Rise and Organize, 132–136.

personalities and decisions of Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley in analyzing the development of unionization and the role of political leaders in partisan conflict.

Although these works document the history of how modern politics developed in Jamaica after the 1938 labor rebellion, they fail to discuss what is centrally important to this study—the evolution of partisan conflict. Munroe, Post, and Hart all examined different aspects of the union movement and political development of the PNP; however, these works confine violence to the periphery of the Jamaican labor movement rather than connecting it to partisan politics.

Revisionist Literature

In this third section, I briefly examine works that create the framework for understanding politics, government, the union movement, and political behavior in Jamaica from the 1960s to the present. In the course of his tenure as prime minister and afterward, Michael Manley wrote several books documenting modern Jamaican political developments and the impact of foreign pressures on his government. In his first book, The Politics of Change (1974), Manley argues that Jamaica's independence and development had been hindered by over three hundred years of British colonialism. According to Manley, Britain's continued control of Jamaica's natural resources and wealth led to the underdevelopment of the country, leaving the local leaders powerless in their efforts to resolve the economic crisis that led to dissatisfaction with high unemployment, poverty, class hierarchy, and wage disparity. Manley's argument concerning Jamaican underdevelopment was characteristic of classic development theory for Latin America at the time, epitomized by Andre Gunder Frank. Manley regarded his

work as an examination of the politics of change and the progressive leadership which supported development.³⁹ Manley remains deliberately vague when discussing other historical and sociological scholarship. Furthermore, Manley's study of Jamaican politics and economy is more useful as an introductory text on Jamaican society, written from the perspective of a PNP prime minister rather than as a comprehensive and original interpretive work.

In his second study, A Voice in the Workplace (1975), Manley examines the struggles by Jamaican workers to establish the trade union movement, the impact of class consciousness within the workers' movement from 1938–70, and workers' dissatisfaction with the Crown Colony system that resulted in the labor rebellion in 1938.⁴⁰ According to Manley, workers articulated their concerns about their civil rights and equality. Moreover, workers wanted to secure those rights through political activism. Out of the labor struggles of the 1930s, Jamaica's political parties emerged and what ensued was a battle for power that polarized the Jamaican people into armed JLP and PNP constituencies that resulted in violent inter-party conflict. Rather than admit that both political parties were responsible for political violence in the 1950s and 1960s, Manley blames the JLP and Edward Seaga for political gangsterism, completely ignoring the PNP's defensive response with the formation of Group 69 in the 1950s.

Manley's work remains very important to the current literature because of his analysis of Jamaica's labor history and his family's efforts in creating the PNP. However, Manley fails to

³⁹ Michael Manley, The Politics of Change (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1974), 16.

⁴⁰ Michael Manley, A Voice in the Workplace: Reflections on Colonialism and the Jamaican Worker (Britain: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1975).

examine the relationship between the early labor movement and later acts of partisan violence, including his own campaign for prime minister in the 1970s. This was a time when he could have articulated his opinion about the impact and evolution of political violence in Jamaica. Sadly, Manley seemed somewhat afraid to criticize the toxic political structure that his father, Norman Manley, helped create. Acknowledging that partisan politics resulted in violent inter-party conflict in Jamaica would make the PNP equally culpable for a fragmented political structure.

His third study, Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery (1982), is an autobiography of Manley's second term as prime minister of Jamaica from 1972–80 and offers an extensive analysis of why the PNP's attempt at establishing a democratic socialist government ultimately failed. Manley argues that his election in 1972 was a symbol of hope for the future provided by the PNP system of reform programs.⁴¹ However, Manley's democratic socialist agenda provoked hostility from the United States, which acted to not only destabilize his government but also contributed to the most politically violent stage in Jamaican modern history. Manley's work still has historical significance because he was the architect of the first sustained attempt to implement socialist socio-economic policies in Jamaica. Like other democratic socialist leaders in the Caribbean and Latin America, Manley tried to provide an alternative model of development and democratization that challenged capitalism and Western economic/geopolitical control of the region (British, Canadian, and American).

⁴¹ Michael Manley, Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery (London: Writers and Readers Publishers, 1982).

In Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–70 (1977), Terry Lacey concentrates on an analysis of political behavior and its impact on internal security in Jamaica. Lacey examines such historical and contemporary factors as civil disorders, disruption of public services, and partisan conflict that created a political vacuum, resulting in a struggle for succession after the British withdrawal from Jamaica. He divides his study into three sections: the historical causes of frustration, which establishes the main causes of deteriorating internal security; “manifestations of frustrations,” which analyzes the increase in violence during the 1960s; and a final discussion of the relationship among the forces working to maintain internal security. Lacey argues that between 1960 and 1970, the country entered a transitional period, resulting in the inevitable disruption of the social order through endemic violence that effectively destabilized the political process.⁴² Lacey investigates a series of violent incidents, such as the Henry Rebellion in 1960, anti-Chinese riots in 1965, election violence and a state of emergency in 1966–67, and the Rodney riots of 1968, all of which Lacey views as political struggles for power and evidence that the government lacked control of internal security. In his assessment of internal security, Lacey investigates *de facto* incidents of violence to distinguish between civil disturbances and counter-insurgency efforts to overthrow the government since the government’s response differed, based on the particular threat.⁴³ Lacey’s research establishes a connection between party politics and political behavior and explains the emergence of what Carl Stone later called “garrison politics.” Lacey’s study remains limited to the period 1960–70 with little acknowledgement of previous conflicts involving partisan violence because, like most

⁴² Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–70, 2.

⁴³ Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–70, 3–4, 82–99.

scholars, he contends that the institutionalization of political violence began in the 1960s. Using the framework created by Lacey in his study, this dissertation examines the evolution of political violence from 1940 through 1980.

Evelyn Huber-Stephens and John Stephens, in Democratic Socialism in Jamaica (1986), explore Michael Manley's attempt in 1972–76 to establish a socialist program in Jamaica and the problems which ultimately led to the PNP's failure in the 1980 general elections. The authors argue that modern Jamaica remains hampered by economic dependency, created as a consequence of colonization. The struggle that emerged for Jamaican political parties centered on developing strategies to overcome dependency and underdevelopment. Consequently, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica focuses on the interaction between the two political parties, the sweeping reforms implemented by Manley's socialist government, and the impact of economic dependence, reinforced by organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Huber-Stephens and Stephens assert that despite the shortcomings of democratic socialism, Manley's efforts to "transform the social and economic structures of dependent capitalism within a democratic constitutional framework" offered hope that the system could be changed to better serve the people.⁴⁴

Huber-Stephens and Stephens emphasize how devastating economic dependence affects Third World economies, and, in the case of Jamaica, argue that desperation and poverty—fueled by political loyalty—resulted in political violence. The authors acknowledge the

⁴⁴ Evelyn Huber-Stephens and John Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 128–137.

use of gang violence in the 1970s general elections but do not fully address how violence became a functional part of the political system because the work is focused on an examination of the economic consequences of democratic socialism in Jamaica, beginning with the election of Michael Manley, not his predecessors. Instead, their study attributes the failure of democratic socialism and Jamaica's destabilization to economic agents, United States Cold War policies, and PNP legislation.⁴⁵ The problem with the treatment of gang violence in this study is that it is explained as an economic effect and not recognized as an independent part of the political sphere. Since Huber-Stephens and Stephens analyzed Manley's attempt at democratic socialism and the economic fallout that occurred, the authors conducted only a cursory examination of partisan conflict as it related to the general elections.

Carl Stone in Class, Race, and Political Behavior in Urban Jamaica (1973), analyzes political behavior, social attitudes, class structure, and voting behavior in Jamaica during the 1970s general elections.⁴⁶ Using data he collected through national public opinion polls, election statistics, government documents, and census data, Stone argues that Jamaican politics embodies a power structure dominated by "feudal political overlords," who polarized the Jamaican populace, based on international response to the pressure of competing United States capitalist versus Soviet Union communist interests. That was represented with increased inter-party conflict that erupted in violence around the general elections or, at times, was used to embarrass local politicians for failing to improve the toxic political structure of modern Jamaica. The legacy of partisan politics is a Jamaica where violence has adapted, become

⁴⁵ Huber-Stephens and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 65–101.

⁴⁶ Carl Stone, Class, Race, and Political Behavior in Urban Jamaica (Jamaica: UWI Press, 1973), 140–146.

stronger, and is removed from the political sphere to become militarized by local gangs. The end result is a political system that has failed to help the Jamaican people because collective violence was used as a political tool to articulate policy pressures.

Stone proposed a nationalist path for Jamaica that would allow the country to have relations with the U.S. or the Soviet Union without becoming a victim of either nation. Stone's study provides the foundation for understanding not only voting behavior but also the social attitudes, public opinion, and political behavior of the Jamaican populace, which are relevant to understanding the story of political violence in Jamaica. Stone's study is extensive. The most significant weakness in this work is that he recognizes only demonstrative acts of violence and not politically motivated organized violence. Stone argues that "demonstrative violence attempts to influence those who exercise state power by disruptive but limited use of coercion."⁴⁷ Although this definition works in theory, political violence in the 1980 general elections resulted in over eight hundred people dead, and the local police were overwhelmed in their attempt to control the JLP stronghold in Tivoli Gardens that rebelled against government authority. The scale of death as a consequence of pre-election violence does not equal a merely limited use of coercion as Stone suggests. Rather it underscores a flawed political system, in which the mid-1970s political violence overwhelmed democratic politics in Jamaica. This points to the preeminence of structural factors such as the foundation of institutionalized political violence in Jamaica as well as the fault of charismatic leadership.

⁴⁷ Stone, Class, Race, and Political Behavior in Urban Jamaica, 147.

In Radicalism and Social Change in Jamaica 1960–72 (1991), Obika Gray analyzes the development of radical social movements and change during the post-independence period. Gray's historical examination goes beyond a recounting of events. His book encompasses not only a study of political violence but also an inquiry into the development of localized rebellion among Rastafarians and the so called 'rude boys' and the formation of radical political organizations such as the Unemployed Workers Council and the Young Socialist League (YSL).⁴⁸ He connects the rise of rebelliousness to the influence of Black Power thought from the United States and the leadership of Walter Rodney. Gray asserts that the transitional period proved problematic for Jamaican democracy as the political system was weakened by social movements.⁴⁹ Although the radical movements of the 1960s did not displace the government, Gray argues that they exerted great influence on Jamaica's political development by transforming the terms of the political debate by influencing the PNP's policy in the 1970s.

Moreover, Gray contends that these radical groups influenced the PNP's use of popular culture, reggae music, and symbolism via the mythical 'Joshua's Rod,' allegedly bestowed upon Manley by Emperor Haile Selassie and which featured prominently in the 1972 elections. Identifying with the poor "sufferers," Manley's PNP promoted governmental policies that had popular appeal. Despite the challenges of the 1960s through 1970s via independent civil disorders and increased partisan violence, Gray states that the dominant party's supremacy

⁴⁸ Obika Gray, Radicalism and Social Change in Jamaica 1960–72 (Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 87–90.

⁴⁹ Gray, Radicalism and Social Change in Jamaica 1960–70, 1–5.

over national policies continued.⁵⁰ Although Gray's study is comprehensive where radicalized politics are concerned, he does not fully explore the relationship between political leaders and their exploitation of grassroots supporters.

In his second and most recent work, Demeaned but Empowered (2004), Gray argues that the predatory nature of Jamaican politics empowered the poor inasmuch as through the use of gun violence the lumpen proletariat managed to acquire social power and social mobility, but at the expense of many others. Gray asserts that motivation for political violence was linked to the "winner-takes-all" nature of politics and the failure of political patronage to provide for all party supporters, which forced people within these political enclaves to turn to local gang leaders such as Claude Massop and Jim Brown for protection and financial assistance.⁵¹ The process was similar to Pedro Escobar and the Cali drug cartels in Columbia and drug lords, the Felix Arrellano brothers in northern Mexico.

According to Gray, Michael Manley and the PNP's 1972 political campaign of "Better Must Come," an appeal to popular culture, provided validation for the "sufferers'" lifestyle and empowered the poor to continuously challenge the power and hegemony of the state (JLP authority).⁵² Gray argues that in the mid-1960s, institutionalized violence became a means by which poor communities could empower themselves, which was still evident as late as September 1998 when the community of Matthews Lane in west Kingston rallied *en masse* to

⁵⁰ Gray, Radicalism and Social Change in Jamaica 1960–70, 230.

⁵¹ Obika Gray, Demeaned but Empowered: The Social Power of the Urban poor in Jamaica (Jamaica: UWI Press, 2004), 169–175, 290–294. For further statistics on the rising level of homicide and political violence consult Appendix A.

⁵² Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 135–142.

protest the arrest of the local don, Donald “Zeeks” Phillips.⁵³ This situation reflected an evolution and deterioration in the political process whereby the masses of the urban poor no longer relied on the government for financial support or protection. Gray’s interpretation provides a comprehensive analysis of the degradation of the political system and the political activism of the Jamaican working-class. Using Gray’s study as a foundation, this dissertation establishes that the violence of the 1960s and 1970s evolved from partisan politics of the earlier period.

Laurie Gunst’s Born Fi` Dead (1995), investigates the association between the Jamaican gang culture and politics. Although this study is sensationalized journalism aimed at vilifying political violence, Gunst exposes the political exploitation of the Jamaican gang culture. She asserts that the legacy of British colonialism, economic dependency, and political corruption contributed to creating a system of institutionalized political violence whereby poor “ghetto youths” became the foot-soldiers for the political parties.⁵⁴ Moreover, Gunst contends that the pervasive influence and control of gangsterism within Jamaican partisan politics and the structure of political behavior explains how the gang culture became entrenched in Jamaica as well as the United States during the 1980s, after their usefulness as thugs to the political parties was over.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Gunst attributes the violence and cruelty of local gunmen to the

⁵³ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 337–38.

⁵⁴ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 3–48.

⁵⁵ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, xxiii.

influence of Hollywood western films, which glorified violence and affected a generation of young men who wanted to emulate their western heroes like Clint Eastwood.⁵⁶

Gunst concludes that based on this political environment, high unemployment, poverty, and political corruption, political violence became entrenched by the mid-1960s. Although Gunst investigates the causal link between the development of gang culture and the political parties, she fails to fully establish a concrete relationship among local gangs, the impact of drugs, and the influence of American foreign policies on the poor, all of which contributed to the problem.⁵⁷ Relying exclusively on interviews conducted with gang members, Gunst presents a disturbing but limited picture of localized violence because the study does not fully examine the history of garrison politics of the 1960s. However, Gunst's documented oral histories remain important in my work since the Jamaican government shows no interest in gathering statistics related to "political violence." Such government data would undermine political leaders' credibility and ability to control internal security. Using the contributions of Laurie Gunst's study, this dissertation seeks to historicize politically related violence through an analysis of the political system from 1938 through 1980.

Unlike Gunst, Brian Meeks demonstrates in Narratives of Resistance (2000) that political violence was not just a Jamaican problem. Meeks's work represents a leftist comparative analysis of contemporary social, political, and intellectual resistance to hegemony in Caribbean societies. Through a series of essays, including the "Henry Rebellion; Counter Hegemony" and

⁵⁶ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, xxi.

⁵⁷ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 74.

“Remembering Michael Manley 1924–1997,” Meeks discusses the manifestations of popular resistance to foreign domination in Jamaica and Trinidad. For example, Meeks’s study of the Henry Rebellion contends that culture and ideology play a role in fostering revolutionary action. And in the case of Jamaica, a rebellious traditional culture (coupled with a history of courageous militarism demonstrated via the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865, Alexander Bedward millenarian movement in 1920, Marcus Garvey’s deportation from the United States in 1927, and the Rastafarian movement) laid the foundation for the Henry Rebellion.⁵⁸

The Henry Rebellion was orchestrated by father and son, Claudius and Ronald Henry, who used their control of the African Reform Church to encourage a guerrilla-type revolution among members of the Rastafarian community to overthrow the Jamaican government. Meeks concludes that the Henry Rebellion failed because the pre-emptive government raid against the church eliminated any element of a surprise attack; and the majority of Jamaican people were unaware of a revolutionary movement and would have been unwilling to participate in a rebellion at a time when avenues of migration were open to the United States and Great Britain.⁵⁹

In his second essay, Meeks reflects on Michael Manley and his contributions to Jamaican politics after his death in 1997. Although Meeks summarizes Manley’s childhood, entry into politics via the National Workers Union (NWU), and his eventual control of the PNP in 1969 upon his father’s retirement from politics, his analysis centers on Michael Manley’s 1972

⁵⁸ Brian Meeks, Narratives of Resistance: Jamaica, Trinidad, the Caribbean (Jamaica: UWI Press, 2000), 37–45.

⁵⁹ Meeks, Narratives of Resistance, 44.

political campaign. Meeks contends that once Michael Manley assumed control of the PNP, he launched a campaign that exploited black consciousness and social awareness created by the Rodney Riots in 1968, and used these currents to tap into popular culture through reggae music to mobilize and politicize the poor.⁶⁰ Consequently, Manley won the 1972 elections and began modernizing Jamaica through a series of programs such as Jamaica Adult Literacy Program (JAMAL), aimed at ending illiteracy, drafting of new laws to prevent wage disparities between the sexes, a housing development program, and the bauxite levy which increased revenue for the government.⁶¹

Meeks argues that these programs came at a cost because what followed in 1974 after Manley resurrected democratic socialism was the systematic attack by the Opposition party, in conjunction with the United States government, against PNP strongholds “with the twin purpose of demoralizing the hardcore democratic socialist support and discrediting Manley’s ability to govern.”⁶² Despite the violence that followed, Meeks states that Manley is remembered by the people of Jamaica as the man who fought for the poor.⁶³ Meeks’ study remains very relevant to contemporary Caribbean literature because he articulates and documents how social and political movements were used to mobilize the poor and disenfranchised.

⁶⁰ Meeks, Narratives of Resistance, 118–121.

⁶¹ Meeks, Narratives of Resistance, 122.

⁶² Meeks, Narratives of Resistance, 125.

⁶³ Meeks, Narratives of Resistance, 128.

The final intellectual study is Anthony Bogues' Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals (2003). Bogues divides the black radical intellectual tradition within the African Diaspora into two categories, the "heretic" and "prophetic." He argues that this study is necessary because black intellectuals are not given credit for their original thought. Rather, black intellectual ideas exist only in relation to and because of accepted schools of thought. In this series of essays, Bogues identifies and clarifies movements associated with the contributions of black intellectuals in the Caribbean and United States in the twentieth century. Bogues then establishes an association between black radical thought and moments of social and political unrest, such as the 1938 labor rebellion against colonial economic policy as well as such social movements as Rastafarianism.

Through an examination of Rastafarian Claudius Henry, Bogues shows how as a black radical, Henry articulated the possibility of full decolonization and liberation of Jamaica from colonial rule, an ideological view which became a key feature of Rastafarian ideology in 1960.⁶⁴ The problem with Claudius Henry's proposal for decolonization is two-fold: first, the Rastafarians were considered by the wider Jamaican society to be a cult of criminals who violated the law by smoking ganja in religious ceremonies; second, the Rastafarians were very vocal about their portrayal of the white man as the oppressor of blacks and this clashed with the popular Jamaican sentiment whereby the people assigned blame to local authorities rather than attribute problems to the British government.⁶⁵ Although the Rastafarians were politically

⁶⁴ Anthony Bogues, Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals (New York: Routledge, 2003), 166–168.

⁶⁵ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 96–97.

marginalized, the 1960s exemplified an important era for decolonization movements in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean; and, in this respect, the Rastafarians articulated national political ideas that resonated widely.

Although the existing scholarship on Jamaican political leadership, nationalism, political economy, and violence is extensive, there remain several areas which need additional research. Authors such as George Eaton to Darrell Levi examined only certain aspects of political leadership. The association between political leaders and partisan violence or the development of the gang culture in many of these studies remains under-researched, since party leaders were not held accountable for partisan conflicts or asked to explain their tolerance for political gangsterism.

My study reveals how violence associated with the labor movement established the foundation for political conflicts. The stage was set by the Crown Colony government, which enforced oppressive laws such as the Trade Union law of 1919 that prevented workers from participating in the basic mechanisms of unionization. Peaceful picketing or demonstrations were often treated as illegal or disorderly assemblies, which resulted in the use of force by police officers to intimidate and arrest union leaders. This legal precedent meant that the labor rebellion of 1938 was founded in violent conflict.⁶⁶ The Frome Riots began on May 2, 1938, after workers had protested a reduction from their wages of three to six pence a day. One thousand workers gathered to demonstrate and demand that the estate's paymaster, Mr. A. Lindo, resolve the problem. During the standoff, strikers actively prevented trucks and morning

⁶⁶ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 68.

laborers from working as scabs with acts of intimidation and violence, including the destruction of property and fighting with the security forces being used to deter the strike.⁶⁷

Although the workers' early efforts to protest were spontaneous and lacked centralized leadership, Alexander Bustamante's attempt to emerge as the undisputed representative of the people was successful, and he intervened in the Frome negotiations. By May 26, 1938, workers participated in a universal walkout; violence erupted when the police fired on a large mob of women and children who were obstructing Matthews Lane and Beeston Street. What followed this conflict was the arrest of Bustamante and William Grant for sedition and unlawful assembly.⁶⁸ After Bustamante's arrest, he was interviewed by *The Daily Gleaner*, and he promised that "we are going to burn Kingston down, if they ever send me back to prison, Kingston will be a mass of ruins."⁶⁹ The fact that Bustamante could promise to retaliate with violence hints that the union movement was being used by Bustamante to exercise his authority over the poor and to settle old scores with others. This abuse of power was repeated on September 7, 1940, when Bustamante, addressing waterfront workers, displayed a general disregard for workers when he strategically used rhetoric that implied violence by promising to destroy Kingston if laborers' demands were not met. Bustamante stated that "I have stood for

⁶⁷ "1000 Laborers Halt Tate & Lyle in Westmoreland," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 100, May 2, 1938, 1.

⁶⁸ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 42–43; also referenced in the "Manley Busy as Mediator in Strike Case," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 120, May 26, 1938, 3.

⁶⁹ "Bustamante and the People," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 135, June 14, 1938, 1.

peace from the first day, I have been in public life, but my patience is exhausted. This time if need be there will be blood from the rampage to the grave.”⁷⁰

The evolution was evident in the Mental Hospital strike of February 15, 1946, when Bustamante ordered JLP grassroots supporters to riot to protect the party’s interest. This type of political exploitation was possible because political leaders via the unions generated Messiah-like devotion and loyalty among grassroots supporters. This unflinching loyalty meant that party supporters never questioned the decisions or actions of their leaders. Rather the grassroots supporters acted to protect their respective constituents from the opposition party. The tragedy of this political reality was the politicization of ghetto youths, resulting in their increased use of violence to settle disputes. I contend that the party leaders of Jamaica not only manipulated grassroots supporters, but that there also existed a relationship between party leaders and gangs promoting electoral violence.

The two major events which signify this transition involved Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante and Minister of Development and Welfare, Edward Seaga. In the 1930s, Alexander Bustamante warned, “There will be bloodshed. I expect everyone in this country to follow... The niggers in this country shall rise. This will be war. We want revolution in this country and before whites destroy us, we will destroy them. The Negro blood has been shedding for the past 102 years and the time has come when we shall shed theirs.”⁷¹ Playing on Black Nationalist sentiments, Bustamante encouraged his supporters to use violence to accomplish his goals. This

⁷⁰ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 77.

⁷¹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 76–77.

type of exploitation is at the root of inter-party conflict, which affected Jamaica's political structure.

The second event occurred in 1965 at a ceremony at National Heroes Park, where a monument was being erected to honor Paul Bogle. Edward Seaga, as Minister of Development and Welfare, made his most notorious speech to a hostile crowd and threatened his PNP opponents, saying "I can bring the crowds of west Kingston. We can deal with you in any way at any time. It will be fire for fire, and blood for blood."⁷² The fact that two prominent political leaders could publicly promise to use their supporters to incite acts of violence illustrates that a relationship existed between local politicians and the gang culture. This connection raises several questions: How did the relationship between political leaders and gangs evolve? At what point did political violence become institutionalized? And why does the existing scholarship fail to discuss the relevance of the association between partisan politics and political gangsterism?

Through further examination of the socialist and revisionist scholars, I found that the general consensus regarding political violence emphasizes that it began by the mid-1960s with

⁷² "Ceremony Honoring one of Jamaica's National Hero's"; "Ransom urges Citizens to Speak Out Against Violence," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 96, June 17, 1966, 1, 11; Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960-70, 22-23, 88-89. Paul Bogle was a freed slave and later a Baptist Deacon. In 1865, he supported the poor black peasantry in a dispute with plantation owners over land policy. Planters believed that the rapid growth of the poor black working class threatened their ability to maintain economic and political power. Consequently, they developed a land policy that discriminated against the peasantry by restricting land ownership, which resulted in the re-enforcement of the caste system. In response to the peasants' protest, Bogle demanded that Governor Edward Eyre abolish the law and he led a march to the court house in St. Thomas. The demonstration, however, ended in violence when the protestors were attacked by the local militia. Bogle and others were eventually executed for their part in the rebellion; Manley, A Voice in the Workplace, 16-17.

the rise in gun violence. Although scholars such as Terry Lacey, Michael Kaufman, Obika Gray, Darrell Levi, and Laurie Gunst have documented the history of politics and rising political violence, they do not explain how political violence evolved over time. What role did party leaders play in the institutionalization of political violence? And at what stage in Jamaica's political history did violence become endemic to the system? Even if gun violence signifies the development of new forms of political conflict by the mid-1960s, several incidents that preceded this period contributed to the evolution of political gangsterism. This study will show how party leaders, through their speeches, ideology, and political patronage, contributed significantly to this violent partisan conflict. Although contemporary studies (such as Obika Gray Demeaned but Empowered (2004)) show the correlation between local politicians and the dons in 2000, this research does not extend to the past and Jamaica's most revered political families.⁷³ What dominates the literature instead are biographies about the Manley family, Alexander Bustamante, and Edward Seaga, and revisionist scholarship that is limited to a particular subject matter such as colonialism, independence, economic dependency, partisan conflict, and the rise of local gangs and dons.

Rather than condemn Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley for creating politics dominated by party symbolism, polarized politics, a corrupt patronage system, and political violence, the existing literature treats political violence as a problem on the periphery of wider society. In these works, the analysis begins after political violence became institutionalized in 1966, and various prime ministers are removed from the debate regarding their contribution to

⁷³ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 120–151.

the problems with contemporary politics in Jamaica. My dissertation creates a time-line that begins with the labor rebellion of 1938 through the election of Edward Seaga in 1980 to establish a consistent analysis of the evolution of political violence under the various prime ministers of Jamaica. It shows how Jamaican politicians waged a political campaign which resulted in the transformation of political violence. Based on interviews, I argue that while there is a definite change between the types of violence used in 1944 and those of the 1970s, Jamaica's political elite manipulated and corrupted the general election process from its inception in order to maintain control over the Jamaican government.

In my first chapter, I provide historical background about Alexander Bustamante's rise to power, his political ideologies, and the socio-political factors that contributed to local discontent, within the context of political exploitation and electoral corruption. Additionally, I illustrate how, during the post-rebellion era, political leaders created a flawed system of government. In chapter two, I highlight Norman Manley's regime and his implementation of socialist policies to enhance the powers of the Jamaican government. I explore the Henry Rebellion, rise of socialism, and the controversy surrounding the West Indian Federation in order to address Norman Manley's unrealistic attempts at reform. Chapter three focuses on the leadership of Donald Sangster and Hugh Shearer and how they responded to the eruption of violence in the form of the Green Bay Massacre. Chapter four traces the rise of Michael Manley and his government's destabilization during the 1970s through a collaboration of the JLP and U.S. interference. The chapter also examines the implications of the very public murder of political candidate, Roy McGunn. Finally, chapter five analyzes the role of Edward Seaga in Jamaican political violence. This chapter examines Seaga's relationship with the U.S., speeches,

position on gang violence, campaign practices, and his attempt to destabilize Manley's regime in the 1970s. This dissertation shows how political violence, sponsored and condoned by leaders, evolved from 1938 through 1940. It argues that violence was not peripheral to politics; rather, it was built into the modern political system.

Chapter 1

Busta Leader Fe` Life

Introduction

In the 1930s, Jamaica was still governed by the Crown Colony system, which created a 'psychology of discontent' for a variety of reasons.⁷⁴ Economically, Jamaica—like many of the Caribbean colonies—was forced to rely on agriculture through the production and exportation of such crops as banana and sugar in order to develop. With the disruption caused by the 1938 labor rebellion, the British government ordered an investigation by the Royal Commission into the violence and the demands of labor. Members of the Royal Commission contended that one of the consequences of underdeveloped industrialization was high unemployment. As a result of this system, laborers seeking employment remained dependent on white plantation owners despite starvation wages that reproduced the cycle of poverty and intensified the desperation.⁷⁵ The poverty of Jamaican laborers was further complicated by a population explosion after 1921 when the population totaled 858,000. By 1936, that number had increased to 1,139,000 due to reduced emigration.⁷⁶ Much like the rest of the world, Jamaica was suffering from the effects of the Great Depression of 1929. The depression affected not only the economy, but also most importantly, it curtailed migration, which traditionally served as an

⁷⁴ PRO: Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Report (1938–39); Report (Cmd. 6607), London, H.M.S.O., 1945. 11; Royal Commission report was an investigation conducted by the British government into the disturbances that erupted in the Caribbean. The document charts the history of the Caribbean and lists the reasons why the rebellions occurred, and is available via the British Public Record Office (PRO).

⁷⁵ PRO: Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Report, 6–8.

⁷⁶ PRO: Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Report, 9.

outlet for surplus laborers in the West Indies. Initially, in the early 1900s, West Indian laborers found employment in Panama, constructing the Panama Canal and working on sugar and banana plantations in Cuba, Costa Rica, and other Caribbean islands.⁷⁷ Coupled with the implementation of restrictive policies on immigration to Britain and the U.S. during the depression, inter-Caribbean migration also declined. Cuba, headed by Ramon Grau San Martin, enacted the Fifty Percent Law in 1933, which mandated that fifty percent of workers in the agricultural industry and commerce be Cubans; otherwise, all foreigners without visas were deported.⁷⁸ With migration closed, the pressure of poverty and desperation began to build. Consequently, a large labor pool increased competition that resulted in lower wages and even higher unemployment among poor laborers as the unemployment rate reached 27 percent. This tension erupted in the labor rebellion of 1938.

Unemployment was a complex issue in Jamaica because of class and race prejudice but also because agricultural employment was seasonal. Out of the post-emancipation era, a social hierarchy based upon race emerged that restricted members of each class to their particular niche in society.⁷⁹ “Color affects the job you get. Color certainly helps as regards a job. If I were fairer I could get a better job. Fair people have a better chance in Jamaica. If you are black you may not get anything to do. If you have a little cleaner color you may get through quicker than the black one,” observed Fernando Henriques in 1953.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ PRO: Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Report, 10.

⁷⁸ Brian H. Pollitt, “The Cuban Sugar Economy and the Great Depression,” *Bulletin on Latin America Research*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1984), 3–28.

⁷⁹ Fernando Henriques, Family and Color in Jamaica (Jamaica: Sangster Book Stores Limited, 1953), 50.

⁸⁰ Henriques, Family and Color in Jamaica, 63.

In addition to the dilemma of racism, unemployment, emigration, and unhealthy working conditions, members of the Jamaican working class encountered problems with the standard daily wage, which was not tied to the amount of work or the length of time on the job but rather to a standard daily wage. In Jamaica, the daily wages in agriculture varied from ten-and-a-half pence to one shilling per week for twelve hours of work; however, these rates were contingent upon sex and skill. Workers often protested to members of the Royal Commission that they did not know the rates of pay until after the job was not completed, nor could they bargain collectively with management for the establishment of a minimum wage, for workmen's compensation, or for improved labor conditions.⁸¹ These grievances contributed to the labor rebellion of 1938. The rebellion is taken to mark the beginning of modern Jamaican political history, and out of it evolved labor unions and political parties. The development of modern politics resulted in the polarization of the working class and the institutionalization of violence within the system.⁸² Local leaders acted in their own self-interest by not only polarizing local constituents but also by corrupting the system of government and using violence in order to maintain power. This framework was founded when workers took action against their exploitation in what came to be called the "labor rebellion" of 1938 of dock and sugar cane workers.

⁸¹ PRO: Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Report, 67–70; PRO: Great Britain. West Indian Royal Commission, 192.

⁸² PRO: Great Britain. West India Royal Commission, 193.

Biography

Perhaps, the single most important figure in the process of labor mobilization and party formation is Alexander Bustamante. Bustamante is often described as an outspoken and passionate orator who, despite his social class and skin color (he was considered a white Jamaican), fought for the common man. Born William Alexander Clarke on February 24, 1884, to Robert Clarke (a white farmer) and Elsie Hunter (a colored woman), he possessed moderate wealth.⁸³ Growing up in rural Jamaica prepared William Clarke for a future in farming. Despite his position as overseer at Belmont, a local plantation in Kingston, William Clarke decided to leave Jamaica. He traveled to Cuba in 1905, where he worked for a tramcar company that had operations in both Cuba and Panama.⁸⁴ Clarke also journeyed to Spain, where he acquired his surname Bustamante. Before his return to Jamaica, Bustamante had lived in New York City, where he worked as a dietician; but according to Bustamante himself, he acquired his wealth by speculating on the American Stock Market.⁸⁵

Since Bustamante was secretive and often fabricated the history of his past, he was wrapped in a cloak of enigma when, at the age of 50, he returned to Jamaica in 1934 and established himself as a money lender and an advocate for the common man.⁸⁶ Over the course of the next four years, Bustamante created a political image by actively engaging in political

⁸³ George Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica 1–2; also referenced in Frank Hill, Bustamante and his Letters (Jamaica: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1976), 61–62; Theodore Sealy, Sealy's Caribbean Leaders (Jamaica: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1991), 83–115.

⁸⁴ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 14; also referenced in Sealy, Sealy's Caribbean Leaders, 87–88.

⁸⁵ “Staff of the Kingston Industrial Workers,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CI. No. 149, July 1, 1935, 3.

⁸⁶ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 16.

debate through the mass media, using his knowledge of trade unions gained from his travels.⁸⁷ As early as April 25, 1935, letters written by Bustamante appeared in *The Daily Gleaner* on a variety of subjects, ranging from unemployment and protection of local industry to criticism of local government.⁸⁸ Bustamante participated directly in politics by speaking at local events sponsored by labor leaders, such as Allan George St Claver Coombs, founder of the Jamaica Workers and Tradesmen Union (JWTU) in 1936 to protect the rights of laborers.⁸⁹ Although Bustamante was slowly making a name for himself as a man of the people, he would not gain national recognition until the labor riots of 1938.

Fueled by poverty and desperation, the labor rebellion began on January 6, 1938, when workers went on strike at the Serge Island Sugar Estate, demanding a wage increase from ten-and-a-half pence to 2/ shillings per ton for cane cutters. Owners argued that the sugar industry could not afford these wages. Around 1,400 workers, armed with machetes and sticks, protested by picketing the factory, blocking the roads, intimidating other workers, and battling with police in the streets.⁹⁰ Through this confrontation, labor leader Bustamante achieved national recognition when he volunteered his services as mediator for the labor dispute. Bustamante, along with the owner of the plantation (R. Ehrenstein) addressed the workers. He discouraged the strike and asserted that the current rate of ten-and-a-half pence was

⁸⁷ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 17.

⁸⁸ "Important Recommendation of Unemployment Commission," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CI. No. 95, April 25, 1935, 1, 6; "Full Effect of late Blows Being Felt in the Banana Trade," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CI. No. 287, December 11, 1935, 3.

⁸⁹ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 33; also referenced in Sealy, *Sealy's Caribbean Leaders*, 83–115.

⁹⁰ "34 Strikers Hurt, 60 Arrested in Clash with Police," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 5, January 7, 1938, 1; "Molding Jamaica's Future," 5; "Trouble on Serge Island Estate in St. Thomas," 7.

adequate, but asserted that Ehrenstein was willing to grant a concession to workers of 1/ shilling per ton.⁹¹ Workers became disruptive and rejected the offer, calling Bustamante a traitor for not fighting on behalf of laborers, at which point Bustamante and Ehrenstein were granted a police escort off the plantation in order to restore order.⁹²

Ultimately, at the conclusion of the Serge Island conflict, 34 strikers were hurt and 60 others were arrested for inciting the riot and intimidation.⁹³ Despite the conclusion of the Serge Island Estate strike, labor agitation continued to erupt throughout the island as Bustamante and other labor leaders attacked local legislative leaders for failing to implement measures to relieve unemployment, poverty, and homelessness, or to address the problem of fluctuating wage rates.⁹⁴

The problem that workers encountered were multifaceted, and these issues received political attention in 1938. Local leaders criticized and blamed the governor, Sir Edward Denham, for failing the people by downplaying the significance of the labor riots.⁹⁵ *The Daily Gleaner*, Jamaica's most popular newspaper, reported that Bustamante criticized the governor when he sponsored the new *Road Traffic Law* in 1938, which stipulated that owners of passenger cars must pay a ten-and-six-pence fee for a vehicle examination conducted by the police. Local chauffeurs were outraged because their current earnings totaled 12/- pence per

⁹¹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 38.

⁹² Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 39.

⁹³ "30 Strikers Hurt, 60 Arrested in Clash with Police," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 5, January 7, 1938, 1.

⁹⁴ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 40; "City Police Rust to Scene of Disturbance," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 4, January 6, 1938, 1.

⁹⁵ "Jamaica's Social Problems Considered at Mayor's Economic Conferences," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 24, January 29, 1938, 17.

week.⁹⁶ As one of the leaders organizing the chauffeurs' strike, Bustamante denounced the governor for his promotion of the law. Denham, Bustamante asserted, could not relate to the problems confronting the poor. Bustamante further encouraged city chauffeurs to join the newly formed Chauffeurs Union, which 150 joined at the rally.⁹⁷

Bustamante frequently wrote to members of the British Parliament in order to ingratiate himself with the colonial authority, while promoting the cause of labor. In his letters to members of parliament, which were published in *The Daily Gleaner*, Bustamante argued that local leaders were conspiring to conceal the problem of poverty within the Jamaican economy.⁹⁸ Bustamante further claimed that workers were suffering from starvation, sickness, and homelessness. Because of the starvation wages that were paid, workers could not adequately provide for their families. In his letter to members of parliament, Bustamante did not exaggerate when he asserted that "thousands upon thousands of able-bodied men and women willing to work, overrun the towns and districts hungry, ragged from the want of employment, thousands of children run the villages not able to go to school because of a lack of food and clothing. When the people dared to stage a hunger demonstration they were met by police armed with rifles displaying bayonets that were used to disperse the crowd."⁹⁹ Bustamante further blamed the state apparatus headed by Governor Denham and local capitalist (business sector) for perpetuating the problems that laborers encountered via police

⁹⁶ "City Chauffeurs May go on Strike Today," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 76, April 1, 1938, 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ "Authors of Disclosures in Parliament," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 92, April 22, 1938, 17.

⁹⁹ "Chauffeurs Coming Together," *The Daily Gleaner*, April 22, 1938.

oppression, and he warned the British parliament that violence like that at Serge Island Estate would continue until something was done to help the workers.¹⁰⁰

The consequence of the starvation wages paid to laborers and the suffering of their families provoked the labor rebellion of 1938. These economic conditions resulted in the eruption of further violence when the police tried to suppress the labor strikes intended to demand higher wages. The reality for poor laborers in Jamaica was that poverty was maintained by the low wages that workers were paid per day for work. One shilling (1/-) equals ten cents, and 1d was the equivalent of one penny, based on the decreased monetary value of laborers' wages. Bustamante did not exaggerate when he said that the working man and his family were starving.¹⁰¹ The figures below reflect this concern.

Table 1

Comparison of wages paid in Kingston and outer Parishes

		Kingston							
		Public Works				Private Employers			
Employers	Daily Pay								
Laborers	Per Day	1932	1937	1938	1938	1932	1937	1938	1938

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Richard Hart, Rise and Organize: the Birth of the Workers and National Movement in Jamaica, (London: Karia Press, 2001), 31.

Men		3/-	3/-	3/-	3/-	3/-	3/-	3/-	3/-
Women		1/3	1/3	1/6	1/ 10 ½	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/ 10 ½
Artisans	Daily Pay								
Carpenters	Per Day	7/-	7/-	7/-	7/-	7/-	7/-	7/-	7/-
Mechanics		8/-	8/-	8/-	8/-	7/-	7/-	7/-	7/-
Blacksmiths		8/-	8/4	7/6	7/6	7/-	7/-	7/6	7/6

Other Parishes

Public Works

Private Employers

Employers	Daily Pay								
Laborers	Per Day	1932	1937	1938	1938	1932	1937	1938	1938
Men		2/4	2/4	2/5	2/10	1/9	1/9	1/11	
Women		1/1	1/1	1/1	¼	1/d	1/-	11d	
Artisans	Daily Pay								
Carpenters	Per Day	5/6	6/-	6/4	6/7	4/7	5/-	5/2	
Mechanics		7/-	7/-	7/4	7/4	5/3	5/7	5/9	
Blacksmiths		6/-	6/6	6/3	7-	4/7	5/-	5/-	

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This table reflects the fluctuating nature of the wage system in Kingston and the surrounding parishes. Laborers were typically paid an average wage of 2/4 to 3/ for unskilled work, and

¹⁰² Hart, Rise and Organize, 32; also referenced in Great Britain. West India Royal Commission, 45; Public Record Office, London. PRO: CO 140/296, Labor Department Annual Report, 1939. The Public Record Office in London is a valuable archive which provides invaluable government documentation on the 1938 Labor Rebellion. Herein after Public Record Office documents will be referred to as PRO: CO.

higher wages were paid to artisans. Women however, were always on the low end of the wage scale, whether they were located in Kingston or the outer parishes.¹⁰³

The spark that ignited the conflict into a working-class struggle was the eruption of labor-related violence at the Tate & Lyle Frome Sugar Estate in Westmoreland, on May 2, 1938. The disturbance occurred when laborers employed by Frome discovered that their pay packets reflected a reduction in their wages, ranging from three to six pence per day.¹⁰⁴ Enraged laborers attacked the pay office and destroyed property and threatened to assault the pay master, Mr. A. Lindo, whom they blamed for the deductions. Due to a lack of action on the part of the estate owners, laborers declared a strike.¹⁰⁵ A crowd of a thousand or more laborers picketed the central factory. In an effort to defend the picket line, the strikers prevented delivery trucks from reaching their destination and morning laborers from getting any work accomplished. When the police arrived, they confronted a crowd armed with stones, knives, and machetes (cutlasses). The angry crowd threw stones and other such implements at the police; the police responded by firing shots into the crowd, which forced them to disperse.¹⁰⁶

Alexander Bustamante once again offered his services as mediator and met with Mr. Lewis A. Grant, one of the Frome estate managers, and discussed the changes that were being implemented to improve labor conditions. "Changes included proper medical care for laborers,

¹⁰³ Hart, Rise and Organize, 33.

¹⁰⁴ "1,000 Laborers halt Tate & Lyle in Westmoreland," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 2, 1938, 1, 6.

¹⁰⁵ "Unrest on the Waterfront," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 119, May 20, 1938, 1; also referenced in Hart, Rise and Organize, 36–37.

¹⁰⁶ "4 Dead! 9 in Hospital! 89 in Jail," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 101, May 3, 1938, 1, 6.

among whom ‘hookworm’ was a problem, and a regular dentist.”¹⁰⁷ Bustamante was also shown plans for a housing development project to accommodate Frome workers, but the problem of low wages remained. Bustamante argued that the plans to improve the estate were adequate, but workers needed more money to survive.¹⁰⁸ In defense of the workers, Bustamante further blamed the governor and police for the aggressive actions used against the workers at Frome, and he warned that more violence was to be expected if something was not done to help the workers and their families.¹⁰⁹

An investigation into the Frome Riots by the Royal Commission uncovered several problems within the Crown Colony system, which precipitated the labor rebellion of 1938.¹¹⁰ Members of the Royal Commission reported that the riots at Frome were partially the result of a previous error, where a newspaper advertised that Tate & Lyle was seeking laborers and promised a dollar a day.¹¹¹ Thousands of unemployed and desperate laborers descended on the Frome Estates, and those not hired were allowed to remain in the area, further intensifying the agitation.¹¹² Violence erupted when laborers received their pay packets and discrepancies were reported. When estate owners denied that one dollar a day was feasible, workers called a strike. Laborers interviewed by reporters for *The Daily Gleaner* complained that Tate & Lyle was to blame for the strike because they forced workers to work seven days a week for little pay.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ “Pen and Picture Story of Fatal Riots, at Frome Estate,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 102, May 4, 1938, 7.

¹⁰⁹ “7,000 hear Mr. Bustamante in City,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 106, May 5, 1938, 3.

¹¹⁰ Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Recommendations (1938–39), Recommendations, 3.

¹¹¹ Hart, Rise and Organize, 36.

¹¹² Great Britain. West India Royal Commission Recommendation, 3; also referenced in the, “Labor Agitation in Kingston Reported,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 107, May 10, 1938.

Workers were used to working five days a week with weekend free to farm and provide food for their families. Poor living conditions, low wages, and a lack of labor leaders created chaos.¹¹³ According to the Royal Commission report, this situation was exacerbated by Bustamante, who promoted the strike and encouraged workers to disrupt Frome Estates production. In promoting his political ideals, Bustamante constantly referred to the Frome Riots in speeches aimed at maintaining the 'psychology of discontent.'¹¹⁴ Frome laborers influenced by Bustamante's inflammatory speeches, formed road blocks, and armed themselves to prevent Frome Estates from conducting business. Violence erupted when police confronted a hostile mob of laborers outside the main gates at Frome. Bustamante argued that aggression used against laborers at Frome was unnecessary, stating, "why did not the police aim at the feet of the people if they wanted to restore law and order as they say? No; they aimed deliberately at the hearts of the people who were agitating for their bread, I saw one woman who would in the next four or five months become a mother suffer and die from a bullet in the forehead."¹¹⁵ Bustamante's graphic account of the violence involved at the Frome Estates was aimed at dramatizing the tragedy of the riot for his own benefit, a tactic that he would successfully exploit as a politician.

May 1938 marked the pinnacle of labor dissatisfaction in Jamaica and what followed throughout the year was a series of planned strikes all over the island. These disturbances granted Bustamante national attention as the recognized leader of the common man and

¹¹³ "Pen and Picture Story of Fatal Riots at Frome Estates," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 4, 1938, 7.

¹¹⁴ Hart, Rise and Organize, 40–41.

¹¹⁵ Hart, Rise and Organize, 41.

ignited a social upheaval that politicized working-class Jamaicans and altered the colonial administration.¹¹⁶ Wharf workers disrupted business in Jamaica when they struck for higher pay. Workers received nine pence per hour but wanted 1/ shilling instead. Stevedores also demanded time-and-a-half for overtime, public holidays, and night work. United Fruit Company wharf owners rejected the laborers' demands because they believed that the current rate of pay was generous.¹¹⁷ After negotiations broke down, the owners promised to return to the bargaining table, but only after workers returned to work. Desperate workers attempting to maintain the purpose of the strike threatened fellow workers if they tried to return to work without achieving their goal of 1/ shilling per hour. Bustamante, as the leader of the wharf strike, recognized his growing popularity among the populace when he declared, "this is not a military revolution; it is merely a mental revolution. I say and I shall repeat that if there is going to be a master of this field (labor relations) in Jamaica, if there is going to be a dictator, then, I am going to be that dictator."¹¹⁸

Bustamante's fame increased during the wharf strike when he and fellow union leader, St. William Grant, were arrested during a labor meeting and charged for allowing people to assemble unlawfully and disobeying police order to disperse. They were denied bail because of their role in unlawful assembly.¹¹⁹ The arrest of the labor leaders intensified labor agitation.

¹¹⁶ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 40–42; also referenced in the "Weekend Labor Troubles"; "City Scavenger Gone on Strike"; "Sunday's Dawn Brings Strike to Number 2 Pier"; "Case of the Dock Workers"; "Plight of the Middle Classes," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 118, May 24, 1938, 10–12.

¹¹⁷ "Unrest on the Waterfront," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 20, 1938, 1.

¹¹⁸ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 42.

¹¹⁹ "Kingston Shipping Completely Disrupted," 16; "Commission Meet to Enquire into Circumstances at Frome Riot," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 25, 1938, 17.

Wharf workers refused to negotiate with owners or go back to work until Bustamante and Grant were released from jail.¹²⁰ The process was further complicated by an extemporaneous island-wide strike in support of the labor leaders' release.

Workers also voiced their dissatisfaction with the local economy and the government. According to *The Daily Gleaner* reports, there was no warning of trouble when the strike occurred and no notice was given to any employers when the workers walked off the job. "No violence was used in closing the stores, no attempt at pilfering or robbery."¹²¹ Garbage men specifically helped to blockade and shut down the city. Violence occurred when strikers and police clashed. "Serious trouble flared up early in the day when a large mob of men, women, and children obstructed an armed police party at Matthews Lane assaulting them with stones and bottles. The police fired at the crowd and 2 persons, a woman and a boy, were killed, and another boy was seriously wounded."¹²² The police assault against innocent civilians at Matthews Lane resulted in a riot developing among laborers, property damage, looting, and further violence.

Amid the confusion resulting from the labor leaders' arrest, Bustamante's cousin (Norman Manley, Kings Council and Jamaica's leading criminal attorney) became the mediator for the BITU. In this interim period, Manley negotiated with the Conciliation Board on the

¹²⁰ "Sequel to the Fatal Riots on Frome Estate," 1; "Workers Stick out for 2d per Hour Increase," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 111, May 14, 1938, 17.

¹²¹ "Bustamante and Grant jailed until Thursday," 1, 7; "Manley Busy as Mediator in Strike Case," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 26, 1938, 1, 3.

¹²² "2 Killed 1 Seriously Wounded as Police fire to Drive Back Mob: Labor leader Bustamante Arrested and Held Without Bail," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 25, 1938, 1.

workers' behalf and managed to attain major concessions from wharf owners. Manley also pledged his support to Bustamante by achieving his release from jail on May 27. Upon his release, Bustamante met with the Conciliation Board and then announced at a labor rally that "I have been out of jail for only a few hours but I have got everything for you."¹²³ A crowd of 15,000 laborers gathered to hear Bustamante and other union leaders discuss the benefits of the labor negotiations. An enthusiastic crowd chanted, "We will follow Bustamante, we will follow Bustamante till we die, Bustamante the chief."¹²⁴ This declaration of loyalty by grassroots supporters to Bustamante, which transitioned out of the union movement, was detrimental to the evolution of partisan politics.

As a consequence of his appeal, Bustamante established himself in local politics as the "Messiah" of the common man in Jamaica. The ability of local leaders such as Bustamante to manipulate unconditional loyalty among grassroots supporters ultimately distorted unionization and the political process as they exploited patriotism, encouraged partisan politics, and used patronage to maintain power. The framework of this process was evident in June 1938 when Bustamante threatened the local government with violence if his authority was questioned: "if they ever send me back to prison, Kingston will be a mass of ruins. We are going to burn Kingston down."¹²⁵ Bustamante's threat to use violence as a part of labor tactics contributed to the development of conflict within modern Jamaican politics. Violence was recorded in the Governor's correspondence in 1938, seen in the table below, which

¹²³ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 43.

¹²⁴ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 46; also referenced in the "Bustamante and Grant Jailed until Thursday," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 26, 1938, 1, 7.

¹²⁵ "Bustamante to Stand for legislature in 1940," *The Daily Gleaner*, June 14, 1938, 1.

demonstrates increased acts of violence against laborers as the labor rebellion escalated in 1938.

Table 2

Casualties in Jamaica Disturbances Reported by the Governor

Governor's Telegram Number		Strikers Wounded/Injured				Police and Local Forces	
						Killed	Total
69	Frome May 2	4	9	8	21	3	3
94	Kingston May 22–24	2	17	53	73	6	6
95	Caymanas May 26		4	4			
98	Spanish Town May 26	2		2	4	4	4
114	St. Elizabeth & Clarendon June 2	2			2		
118	Islington & St. Mary June 3	3	2		5		
126	St. James, Hanover, & Trelawney June 7	1	2		3	1	1

126	St. Catharine	10	7	109	119	14	14
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In the period following his release, Bustamante spent the next several months consolidating his power base in order to become, according to George Eaton, the undisputed boss of the trade union movement by forming a single union movement with himself as leader. With the emergence of numerous and independent unions, Bustamante faced a challenge from rival union leaders such as Allan George St. Claver Coombs, leader of the Jamaica Workers and Tradesmen's Union, who openly questioned his right to leadership.¹²⁷ Consequently, Bustamante engaged in a vindictive process to depose his rivals, using slander and treachery to destroy not only Coombs' reputation, but his union as well.¹²⁸

Through the JWTU, Allan Coombs had established a power base in Montego Bay among banana workers. When Bustamante decided to challenge Coombs for power, he succeeded by getting the Spanish Town branch of the JWTU to cede their allegiance to the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU).¹²⁹ In order to further undermine Coombs' control of the area, Bustamante participated in an inadvisable strike by store clerks. The Northern Clerks Association planned a staged walkout by store clerks to protest the 9 o'clock closing time of

¹²⁶ PRO: CO 137/902/4. Letter, Governor of Jamaica to Secretary of the Colonies, June 14, 1938, 1–3.

Notwithstanding the 1865 peasant revolt by Paul Bogle, there has not been any major rebellion or crowd action in Jamaica until the labor conflict of 1938. Consequently, this survey just shows that violence escalated as the labor rebellion progressed.

¹²⁷ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 61.

¹²⁸ PRO:CO 137/902/4; also referenced in the "Montego Bay goes to Bustamante," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 170, July 25, 1938, 1.

¹²⁹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 62.

stores instead of 6 o'clock on weekends. Clerks were also protesting the firing of their colleagues, and asked Bustamante to negotiate for the clerks. He won the clerks' reinstatement and a 6 o'clock closing time on weekends.¹³⁰ This intervention allowed Bustamante to gain not only a foothold in Montego Bay, but to also displace the JWTU, forcing Coombs to withdraw to other communities within St. James where his union dominated local politics.¹³¹

The problem Bustamante confronted in 1938–39 were multifaceted because he not only had to deal with dissent within the union from his second in command, St. William Grant, but he also had to contend with a rebellious labor force engaging in independent acts of protest.¹³² St. William Grant, however, proved to be the most disruptive because he challenged Bustamante for leadership in the summer of 1938 by demanding a more dominant position in the union and that his name should appear in the union title of the BITU. Grant also accused Hugh Buchanan of treachery, Laurie Wellington of malicious gossip, and others of graft. Grant argued that his loyalty was being questioned when he had always supported Bustamante so much so that he went to jail for him; Grant also contended that the union was being undermined from within and it must be purged of traitors.¹³³ Bustamante responded to Grant's demands by expelling him from the union that he helped to create.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Hart, Towards Decolonization: Political labor and economic Developments in Jamaica 1938–1945 (Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1999), 24–28.

¹³¹ "Business Life of Montego Bay Back to Normal as Clerks Return," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 171, July 26, 1938, 1.

¹³² Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 63.

¹³³ "Schism in the Bustamante Labor Group," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 187, August 15, 1938, 1.

¹³⁴ "Business life of Montego Bay back to Normal as Clerks Return," *The Daily Gleaner*, July 26, 1938; "Grant is Fired! Say's Bustamante," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 190, August 18, 1938, 1.

Once his power base was solidified, Bustamante focused on expanding the union and exploiting the adulation of the populace in order to emerge as the only honest and loyal leader of the people. Bustamante had enough opportunity to prove his worth with the eruption of labor strikes all over the island. On May 28th, workers in Clarendon protested on the streets, enforced road blocks, and cut telephone wires to prevent the police from arriving.¹³⁵ On May 29th and 30th, workers in Manchester, armed with sticks and cutlasses, protested in the streets and barricaded the roads. The crowd would only disperse when the military fired warning shots and, using bayonets, attacked the crowd. Similar incidents were further reported throughout the rural parishes.¹³⁶ Labor leaders blamed the colonial government for failing to implement economic and political policies that would uplift the black working class.

Norman Manley argued in favor of an independent government when he attacked the British government for their mismanagement and destructive control of the colony. Manley contended that due to that colonial control, the Jamaican legislative laws remained weak because local leaders possessed no real power.¹³⁷ The local economy was dominated by the British, who not only depleted Jamaica's natural resources but also maintained a colonial system that exploited the working class. As a consequence of the oppressive nature of the Crown Colony system, which caused the labor rebellion and eventually the workers efforts to unionize, Jamaica's first political party emerged. The People's National Party (PNP) was launched on September 18, 1938, in an effort to create a government that would displace the

¹³⁵ Hart, Towards Decolonization, 86.

¹³⁶ Hart, Towards Decolonization, 87.

¹³⁷ "Mr. Manley Calls for One Political Party," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 185, August 12, 1938, 7.

local legislative administration appointed and controlled by the British government.¹³⁸

Consequently, the PNP national platform promoted self-government, economic and social development, enforcement of constitutional laws, universal adult suffrage, and protection of local industries, in an effort to uplift and protect the Jamaican populace.¹³⁹ The British government responded to the radical movement by sending members of the Royal Commission to investigate not only the labor rebellion of 1938 but also the factors behind legislative mismanagement. As local leaders, both Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley testified before the commission and demanded the establishment of a minimum wage (one dollar per day), pensions, workmen's compensation, legalized unionization, and agricultural training in order that laborers could improve their economic condition.¹⁴⁰ Manley further stressed that unless some legislative changes were implemented that benefited the masses, discontent would continue to reproduce itself in the form of violence since laborers did not have the means to seek redress through the courts as was done in the U.S.¹⁴¹

The formation of the PNP as a political organ to exert progressive change in the Jamaican legislature was followed by the consolidation of the Bustamante Unions into the Bustamante Industrial and Trade Union (BITU) on January 23, 1939.¹⁴² The BITU aimed to

¹³⁸ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 67; also referenced in the "Mr. Manley on Present Day Jamaica," *The Daily Gleaner*, July 1, 1938, 7; PRO: CO 318/434/8 File 71175—Telegram, Secretary of State to Officer Administering Government, August 8, 1938.

¹³⁹ "Plans and Aims of the PNP;" *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 217, September 16, 1938; also referenced in PRO: CO 137/ 840 Governor Richards to Secretary of State (Telegram), November 4, 1940.

¹⁴⁰ "Bustamante before the Royal Commission," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 267, November 17, 1938, 1, 16–18.

¹⁴¹ "Legislative Council Inept," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV, No. 265, November 15, 1938, 1, 16–19.

¹⁴² Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 70–72; Hart, Towards Decolonization, 102–104.

defend the workers' interests. Unfortunately, Bustamante also used the union as a political weapon directed at destroying his enemies such as Allan Coombs. Bustamante's abuse of his authority would garner criticisms from Coombs and others that he was establishing a dictatorship over the unions when he installed himself as president for life of the BITU.¹⁴³ G. Scotter, a reporter for *The Daily Gleaner*, contended that Bustamante's actions could possibly threaten the future development of unionism in Jamaica by retarding the process, an argument that was taken up by historians, George Eaton and Richard Hart. Bustamante's idea of unionism was antidemocratic; Scotter contended that the union itself had no voice, no power, and no constitution unless Bustamante allowed it.¹⁴⁴ If Bustamante represented the voice of the union, where was democracy? This constituted a legitimate question because Bustamante's egotism demanded that only he be acknowledged as the leader of the union as well as be allowed to possess the authority to exercise power over the masses, which forms the base of partisan politics.¹⁴⁵ Although Bustamante won the battle with Coombs, his irresponsible decision to consolidate the union was disastrous for the BITU because the union's membership declined after the conflict, and Bustamante proved to laborers that not only was he arrogant but also that the workers' interests were secondary to his ability to control of the union movement.

Bustamante's egocentric tendencies resurfaced in early February 1939 when he attempted once again to eradicate his rival, Allen Coombs, who managed to maintain a

¹⁴³ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 70–72.

¹⁴⁴ "The One Man Union," *Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 202, September 1, 1938, 5.

¹⁴⁵ Hart, *Towards Decolonization*, 103–104; also referenced in PRO: CO 137/836 File 73617—Minutes of Emergency Session of the Legislative Council, February 16, 1939; *Trade Unions*: Annual Report of the Registrar of Trade Unions for the year ending May 31, 1939, Island Record Office, Spanish Town, File 1536/39; PRO: CO 137/836 File 68868—Telegram No. 34 Governor Richards to Secretary of State.

foothold in the parish of St. James and in some areas along the wharfs in Montego Bay.

Bustamante exploited a minor confrontation on the wharf with Mr. Reid, a member of the JWTU, by demanding his dismissal and threatened to launch an island-wide general strike that would paralyze the country's economy.¹⁴⁶ Despite the lack of preparation, loyal laborers took to the picket line protesting against scabs that were employed to replace the strikers. This situation was made more chaotic when employers, such as the United Fruit Company, retaliated through the mass dismissal of employees who participated in the strike.¹⁴⁷

Bustamante's decisions brought the union movement to the verge of collapse. At this juncture, Norman Manley intervened and took command of the negotiations between Bustamante, Governor Sir Arthur Richards, and Allen Coombs, and a compromise was arranged. In return for calling off the strikes, the governor would lift the state of emergency, and employers would discontinue retaliations against laborers. Additionally, the Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC) was created to "act as advisory committee to the trade unions."¹⁴⁸ The TUAC comprised Norman Manley, Alexander Bustamante, N.N. Nethersole, and nine other union and non-union leaders. During the year, Bustamante slowly withdrew the BITU from the TUAC and PNP in an effort to dominate the unionization process.

¹⁴⁶ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 74; also referenced in Hart, Towards Decolonization, 126; Post, Strike the Iron, 395–400.

¹⁴⁷ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 75; also referenced in Hart, Towards Decolonization, 127–128; Post, Strike the Iron, 400–405.

¹⁴⁸ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 75; also referenced in Post, Strike the Iron, 402.

However, the advent of World War II adversely affected the labor movement when rolling blockades enforced by both Britain and Germany disrupted trade in Jamaica.¹⁴⁹ The enforcement of the Defense and Emergency Regulations from September 1938 to September 1939 affected local labor agitation through the curtailment of civil liberties, which restricted wharf workers' attempts to protest. War forced Jamaica into an era of semi-repose with the war effort diverting national attention, even as the island's economy was in a state of decline, and increased unemployment, disrupted trade, and reduced wages produced local dissatisfaction.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, Bustamante responded to laborers' concern with direct action to revitalize the impotent union movement.¹⁵¹ Presenting a speech to wharf workers on September 8, 1940, Bustamante said, "I have stood for peace from the first day I have been in public life, but my patience is exhausted. This time if need be, there will be blood from the streets to the grave."¹⁵² The speech reflected Bustamante's efforts to intimidate the oppressive state apparatus. This statement was recognized as a threat by Governor Richards, who ordered Bustamante's arrest, and he was charged with making an inflammatory speech. The internment

¹⁴⁹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 77; also referenced in Hart, Towards Decolonization, 132–34; Post, Strike the Iron, 407–415.

¹⁵⁰ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 77; also referenced in Post, Strike the Iron, 421–529.

¹⁵¹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 77; also referenced in Post, Strike the Iron, 425–26.

¹⁵² PRO: CO 318/443/6 File 71168—Secretary of State to Officers Administering all West Indian Government, January 30, 1940; also referenced in *Jamaica Archives*: Colonial Secretary's Department File No. 750 (1941)—H. M. Reid to Governor Richards, March 20, 1941; PRO: CO 137/840 File 68511/229—Governor Richards to secretary of State (telegram) September 8, 1940; PRO: CO 875/13/3 The Jamaica Worker Restriction Order September 9, 1940; PRO: CO 137/840—Secretary of State to Governor Richards, September 12 and Governor Richards to secretary of State, September 13, 1940; PRO: CO 137/840 File 6851/292—H. V. Hodwin, Ministry of Information, to N. Sabine, Colonial Office, October 2, 1940; PRO: CO 137/852 File 69120—Petition from BITU to Lord Moyne Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 17, 1941.

of Bustamante served to benefit his leadership by making him a martyr for the labor movement and rallied the country to his cause.¹⁵³

With Bustamante incarcerated, Norman Manley returned as a mediator for the struggling BITU. Both leaders agreed that Manley would act to revive the union. Manley responded by recruiting radical socialist leaders working for the PNP, such as Richard Hart, Ken Hill, Frank Hill, Arthur Henry, and others to assume leadership within the BITU.¹⁵⁴ One of the first issues that Manley confronted was discontent among sugar workers over low wages. Workers were told by their employers that no wage increase could be made until the government-appointed Minimum Wage Advisory Board made a decision about the amount of the new minimum wage.¹⁵⁵ In an effort to assist the workers and alleviate the problem, Manley organized the sugar-producing parishes of Clarendon, St. Catherine, and Trelawney into participating in a strike. The strike proved to be effective in destabilizing the sugar industry; Manley was called upon by Governor Richards to sign a landmark agreement. The terms of the contract provided for “immediate wage increase and cost of living escalator clause to govern future adjustments. The larger sugar manufacturers would underwrite smaller producers and the government would bear half of any cash support needed.”¹⁵⁶ Manley’s contribution to the BITU was obvious. When Bustamante was released from jail on February 8, 1942, the union had

¹⁵³ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 78; also referenced in Post, Strike the Iron, 430–431.

¹⁵⁴ Rex Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica: Selected Speeches and Writings 1938–68 (Jamaica: Longman Caribbean, 1971), 54.

¹⁵⁵ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 78–79; also referenced in Post, Strike the Iron, 421–428.

¹⁵⁶ PRO: CO 137/854/14. Letter, Inspector P. Long to Secretary of the Colonies, May 26, 1942, 1; also referenced in PRO: CO 137/852 File 69130 N. N. Nethersole to Citrine, telegram February 28, 1941; PRO: CO 137/852 File 69130 Officer Administering Government to Secretary of State, telegram March 2, 1941; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 79; Post, Strike the Iron, 431–449.

a membership totaling 20,612 of which 13,741 paid dues. The BITU leadership was dominated by PNP socialist radicals such as Frank Hill, Ken Hill, Richard Hart, and Arthur Henry, who were brought in to revitalize the union.¹⁵⁷

Bustamante and violence

The colonial government, using the services of the local Criminal Investigation Department (CID), monitored and exploited the distrust between Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley to maintain control over the emerging progressive movement. In May 1942, the CID (through their investigation) placed the blame for local unrest at the door of the PNP, arguing that it was easier to lead the people if they were afraid and confused.¹⁵⁸ The CID's investigation further accused the PNP of using the legislation enforced as a result of the war effort to indict and condemn the British government of exploitation and neglect. "Now, seizing upon every incident and turning same to suit their policy and propaganda, the PNP are spreading anti-government propaganda, and at the same time, psychologically working the public up to a state of excitement and scared apprehension by exaggerating conditions, knowing that this will add to the issue."¹⁵⁹ The PNP was dangerous because Manley was influenced by radical leftists such as Arthur Henry, Ken Hill, Frank Hill, and Richard Hart, who

¹⁵⁷ PRO: CO 137/840 File 68511/229—Governor Richards to Secretary of State (Telegram), November 4, 1940; also referenced in PRO: CO 968/68/7 File 14463—Statement of Alexander Bustamante to Detention Advisory Committee, January 10, 1942; PRO: CO 968/68/7 File 14463—W. H. Flinn, Officer Administering the Government, to Stanley, January 23, 1943; PRO: CO 968/68/7 File 14463—Direction: Suspension of Detention against Alexander Bustamante, February 8, 1942, 1; also found in Post, Strike the Iron, 452–460.

¹⁵⁸ PRO: CO 137/854/14. Letter, 2.

¹⁵⁹ PRO: CO 137/854/14. Letter, 1.

supported self-government in an effort to undermine British control of Jamaica.¹⁶⁰ The CID recommended that the fear of internment be used to disrupt the base leadership of the unions.¹⁶¹ This strategy had been tried before when Bustamante was interned both in 1938 and 1940; however, his internment proved problematic for the colonial government because under Manley, the union movement solidified around the BITU. Manley's charismatic leadership and successful negotiation of his release represented a threat to Bustamante's autocratic control over the union, and this alienated both leaders politically.¹⁶²

Upon his release from jail, Bustamante accused other labor leaders of "acting to destroy his union through socialism, unholy combination of certain persons with political ambition whose objective is that of destroying me and then to assume control of the union as a political machine to serve their own big friends."¹⁶³ Manley responded to Bustamante's accusations by arguing that Bustamante had made a secret agreement with Governor Richards and his actions since his release was evidence of that arrangement. Manley's accusation was justified because the Public Record Office in London released documents in 1993, which proved that Bustamante had an agreement with the British government to break his affiliation with the PNP in return for his release.¹⁶⁴ Manley also charged Bustamante with ingratitude for all that was done on his behalf. Manley formulated a plan that would sever PNP association with the BITU "because I knew that people were saying that Bustamante was detained because he was associated with

¹⁶⁰ PRO: CO 137/854/14; "Bustamante and Grant jailed Until Thursday," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 26, 1938, 1, 7.

¹⁶¹ PRO: CO 137/854/14. Letter, 3; PRO: CO 968/68/7 File 14463, 1.

¹⁶² PRO: CO 137/854/14; PRO: CO 968/68/7.

¹⁶³ PRO: CO 137/854/14, 1–2; also referenced in Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 80.

¹⁶⁴ PRO: CO 137/854/14. Letter, 1–3.

the PNP, and the government did not like the PNP. I asked him if it was true and this is what he said: the government had taken him out of detention camp before a high officer and asked him to sign a document promising to denounce the PNP as a condition of his getting out.”¹⁶⁵ The tension and conflict between Bustamante and Manley became the catalyst for the polarization of party politics and the rapid deterioration of the political process that would later be reflected in the institutionalization of political violence, which was evident in the inter-party conflict. That was further supported by Manley’s assertion that once again, the colonial government was seeking to divide the union movement and the PNP in an effort to gain control over the progressive forces behind political, economic, and social reconstruction.¹⁶⁶

Bustamante denied these claims and began purging the union leadership of anyone who opposed his authority. The acting president of the BITU, H. M. Shirley, was one such victim, who launched the Jamaica Workers Union, in opposition to the BITU.¹⁶⁷ Bustamante justified Manley’s suspicion when he ordered BITU officers to break all ties with the PNP, and he further accused the PNP leadership of being socialist with their radical ideas aimed at self-government, public ownership, political education, and universal adult suffrage, all of which undermined the power of the state.¹⁶⁸ The rift between Bustamante and Manley became the catalyst for the polarization of party politics and the rapid deterioration of the political process, which would

¹⁶⁵ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 82; also referenced in PRO: CO 968/68/7, (Letter) Statement of Alexander Bustamante to Detention Advisory Committee, January 10, 1942, 1–2.

¹⁶⁶ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 54.

¹⁶⁷ PRO: CO 968/68/7 File 14463—Bustamante to Stanley December 29, 1942, 1; also referenced in Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 81.

¹⁶⁸ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 82; also referenced in Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 5.

later be reflected in the institutionalization of political violence. In order to challenge the PNP within the political arena, Bustamante founded the Jamaica Labor Party in August 1942 to contest the PNP in the upcoming 1944 general elections.¹⁶⁹

The effective creation of the JLP resulted in the establishment of the two-party system. Representing a by-product of the BITU, the JLP and its political platform reflected the unions' ideals through the promotion of minimum wage, pensions, workmen's compensation, support of big business, and land settlement schemes. The revision of the constitution, which granted universal adult suffrage, intensified the 1944 general elections by allowing Bustamante to appeal to new voters and win political power. Bustamante's ability to manipulate the gap between the classes benefited the JLP when he exploited the distrust between the black working-class poor, and brown middle class by arguing that the PNP was dominated by light-skinned blacks who would oppress poor blacks if they won the election. This kind of class manipulation contributed to the polarization of Jamaican society by not only distorting class and color prejudice, but also by complicating the divergent groups' understanding of reality.¹⁷⁰ Bustamante's agreement with the British government prompted him to oppose the PNP's demand for self-government: "I oppose immediate self-government; I oppose more so those who are clamoring for self-government now" because the JLP administration needed a period

¹⁶⁹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 85; Monday 20 November, 1944; Jamaica appointed a new Governor, Sir John Higgins, and a renewed constitution that created a three-branch legislative government: Lower House (House of Representative), twenty four elected members, Upper House (Legislative Council), fifteen nominated members, and an Executive Council of ten members.

¹⁷⁰ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 94–95, 105.

of tutelage to understand the fundamentals necessary to operate local government.¹⁷¹

Bustamante's belief that the island needed the colonial apparatus represents his attempt to utilize British support to maintain control and power of the state, thereby, undermining the PNP's growing popularity.

Bustamante's autocratic leadership of the JLP effectively polarized the Jamaican populace into two distinctly loyal groups of constituents. Since the JLP became the dominant political party after 1943, the PNP emerged as a counterpoise to the JLP in an effort to undermine and dismantle the BITU's control over supporters at the grassroots level. With the future of Jamaica and unlimited power recognized as the remuneration, the competition between the JLP and PNP degenerated into inter-party conflict, promoting slander and violence. In 1944, the competition for the first general elections intensified as Bustamante attacked the PNP's ideology, using political slander (by equating socialism with slavery) to confuse and agitate the voting public. *The Daily Gleaner* reported in various articles that Manley pledged to destroy 'Bustamanteism.' "He said he would live to get that damnable thing called Bustamanteism destroyed in this country, and in that effort he would ask the people of Eastern St. Andrew to hold up his hand, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the great and imperishable national movement."¹⁷²

Manley further defended the PNP by trying to show how the party contributed to the union's cause of 1938; however, he warned that one of the greatest threats to Jamaica's

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² "Mr. Manley Determined to Destroy Bustamanteism," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 228, October 18, 1944, 10; also referenced in "PNP Deputy Leader Explains Seeming Party Differences," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 232, October 23, 1944, 9.

democracy was the current conspiracy between the JLP and the Jamaican Democratic Party (JDP) in an effort to undermine the new constitution, which not only granted self-government to the local legislature but also destroyed the ancient privileges of the Crown Colony system.¹⁷³ The JDP was formed in 1943 by citrus farmer T.H. Sharp and represented capitalist interests by openly advocating for free enterprise, a direct counter to the PNP's socialist ideals. The JDP acted in conjunction with the JLP to undermine the PNP's political programs aimed at nationalization.¹⁷⁴ *The Daily Gleaner* reported that Manley attacked Bustamante's domineering and 'Messiah'-like complex. He also charged that Bustamante's control of the BITU was corrupt. Manley believed that unions were an effective tool in training workers for the responsibilities of a democratic government. Bustamante's dictatorship was a danger to the system.¹⁷⁵ Bustamante defended the JLP and criticized the PNP propaganda machine by equating 'Bustamanteism' with labor and then accusing Manley and the PNP of attempting to destroy labor, by which he meant poor laborers.¹⁷⁶ Bustamante further condemned the PNP for party aggression and for exploiting color and class prejudice to alienate the JLP from its working-class and peasant support base. Bustamante himself exploited the suspicion that existed against the radical middle-class that challenged British authority by asserting that brown middle-class domination would mean further oppression by the state for the black working-class.¹⁷⁷ Bustamante argued: "How could I seek friendship with a party, some of whose officers sow the

¹⁷³ "Mr. Manley and other PNP Candidates," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 246, November 8, 1944, 12.

¹⁷⁴ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 89; also referenced in Hart, *Towards Decolonization*, 168–69.

¹⁷⁵ "Why I doubt Mr. Bustamante," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 261, November 28, 1944, 6.

¹⁷⁶ "The Facts Revealed," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 262, November 29, 1944, 9.

¹⁷⁷ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 95.

seed of dissension in the ranks of labor and preach race hatred, and support the use of birth control as a means to liquidate the poor colored people of this country?"¹⁷⁸ Bustamante also attacked the socialist platform of the PNP and contended that through socialism, the PNP planned to destroy the poor farmer by taking away his land as part of their public ownership ideology.

Furthermore, the JLP equated socialism with slavery. This claim was possible because in September 1940, the PNP declared itself a 'radical left wing party.'¹⁷⁹ Manley asserted that "socialism was not just a matter of higher wages and better living conditions for workers but that it involves the concept that all the means of production should in one form or the other come to be publicly owned and publicly controlled."¹⁸⁰ Since the ordinary farmer was unfamiliar with the subtle differences between the Marxian definition of socialism and communism, in general, the JLP's propaganda tactics had negative consequences for the PNP in the rural areas.¹⁸¹ In another effort to destabilize the PNP's political machine, Bustamante claimed that the leaders of the Opposition Party had done nothing to help poor workers before the advent of the BITU; therefore, they were political parasites who aimed to manipulate the efforts of the BITU to their own advantage.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ "The Facts Revealed," *The Daily Gleaner*, November 29, 1944.

¹⁷⁹ "Mr. Bustamante Hits Back at Mr. Walter Lewis," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 266, December 4, 1944, 7; "If Jamaica became A Socialist state," 7; also found in Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 106.

¹⁸⁰ PRO: CO 137/859 File 68714—Governor Higgins to Secretary of State, telegrams, July 17, July 18, 1944, 1–2; also referenced in Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 108.

¹⁸¹ "Bustamante Bares Leg at Election Meeting," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 243, November 4, 1944, 8.

¹⁸² "PNP and Bustamante," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 244, November 6, 1944, 6.

Bustamante also launched a personal attack against Manley's reputation when he denied that Manley had anything to do with the success of the BITU or Bustamante's release from jail. Finally, Bustamante exploited the psychology of dependence on Britain by insinuating that the PNP's support of self-government questioned Jamaica's loyalty to the British Crown. Ironically, George Eaton has argued that "the reality of the Jamaican experience, however, was that the masses ever since 1865 had come to view the British crown as the protector against the plantocracy and the black and colored middle class."¹⁸³ As a result of these tactics and the charismatic leadership of Bustamante, the JLP emerged victorious in the 1944 general elections with Alexander Bustamante elected as chief minister and the JLP winning twenty three of the thirty two seats while the PNP claimed only four and the independent party won five seats in the new government.¹⁸⁴

Although the 1944 general election process was marked by political exploitation and manipulation, the period after 1945 ushered in an era of political violence as Jamaican society was turned against the PNP-TUC and affiliated unions. The conflict between the JLP and PNP destroyed labor solidarity by polarizing the working-class populace. This situation deteriorated further when Bustamante declared war against the Trade Union Council (TUC) and pledged to destroy all affiliated members of the union in an effort to undermine the PNP's union support base.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ibid; also found in Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 96.

¹⁸⁴ "Bustamante Landslide gives Labor Full Hold," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 277, December 16, 1944, 1.

¹⁸⁵ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 142; also referenced in Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 104–110.

Bustamante's opportunity arose on February 15, 1946, when he politicized the Mental Hospital Workers Union strike. The 280 nurses and other hospital workers affiliated with the TUC went on strike to protest poor working conditions and removal of the senior medical officer, a BITU sympathizer.¹⁸⁶ Bustamante intervened by visiting the hospital and was subsequently slightly injured. Bustamante responded by rallying 5,000 JLP supporters to capture and return the mentally ill to the hospital; he also encouraged the police to use an 'iron hand' to enforce the peace.¹⁸⁷ In return, Manley rallied other union members, from the prison guards to rail road workers, to support the hospital workers' right to have the TUC represent them.

The ensuing riot at the hospital was a significant milestone for Jamaica because the labor rebellion of 1938 witnessed the use of force by the British Crown Colony system to oppress poor Jamaicans. Now, it was Bustamante, the self-proclaimed man of the people and elected leader, who encouraged the mob to riot in order to accomplish the BITU's agenda.¹⁸⁸ George Eaton asserted that "faced with disruption of meetings and molestation of supporters, actual or supposed, the PNP retaliated by forming their own protective groups or strong-arm squads."¹⁸⁹ Further violence occurred during which three people were killed and many more wounded. As the strike progressed, Kingston was overrun by mental patients who escaped during the riots, and chaos ruled the streets as workers continued to protest and fight with the

¹⁸⁶ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 117–118.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 121.

police. The governor had to declare a state of emergency to restore order, and negotiations resulted in the indictment of Bustamante and fellow BITU organizer, Frank Pixley, for manslaughter in the death of J. Nicholas, an innocent bystander who was beaten to death by an angry BITU mob. They were acquitted by trial in June 1946.¹⁹⁰ However, Bustamante's willingness to participate in violent protests signaled in 1946 the corruption of modern politics in Jamaica.

Despite Bustamante's acquittal, he was frequently caught violating local laws in the 1940s. As the leader of the union movement, Bustamante attended political rallies, armed with a revolver, just in case he had enemies present. This fact was recorded by Governor Higgins in a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in January 1948, which reported that Bustamante was fined five pounds and convicted on four charges of obstruction and assault of police constables in the execution of their duty on October 2, 1947.¹⁹¹ The violence that is typically affiliated with the development of unionism became the violence that emerged in the aftermath of the 1938 labor rebellion and created the framework for violence in modern Jamaican politics. This fragmented political system was further corrupted by Alexander Bustamante's defiance and disdain for the PNP when he condoned acts of violence or encouraged JLP supporters to attack their PNP opponents.

Bustamante's support for political violence was also evident in an address made before the House of Representatives in 1947 in which he promised to incite the populace to violence

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Governor Personal Correspondence, January 20, 1948.

and revolution if changes were not made to the 1944 revised constitution and certain members appointed by the British government (such as the governor, Sir John Higgins) replaced.

Bustamante's demand was universally supported by the Jamaican people, who condemned governmental appointees for localized problems rather than the British government. Critics responded by admonishing Bustamante for his speech and reminded all politicians that as leaders of Jamaica, it was their responsibility to uphold the dignity and integrity of their offices.¹⁹² Manley further asserted that "the time has come when the work for labor must be more closely coordinated with the work in the political field. It is not two progressive movements, but one progressive movement, consisting of different classes of people and the foundation of its strength must be in the class at the bottom."¹⁹³ However, these concerns were ignored as politicians pursued their own ambition for political domination through the creation of local agitation.

Political irresponsibility was evident on January 15, 1948, when Bustamante launched the 'red smear' campaign where he attacked the PNP on the grounds that they had been infiltrated by Red Communists; and Bustamante promised that he was going to take steps to 'stamp it out.' Bustamante contended that "he had thousands of soldiers to do this," the *Liverpool Post* reported, "addressing thousands of his followers at union headquarters" to accomplish this task.¹⁹⁴ This was, however, partially an anti-JLP crowd; and they disrupted the rally by booing during Bustamante's speech. In trying to leave the meeting, Bustamante was surrounded and verbally abused; he responded to this threat by drawing his gun and firing into

¹⁹² "All Sugar Factories Resume Operations," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 65, March 21, 1947, 1.

¹⁹³ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 105.

¹⁹⁴ "Bustamante Threatens Colonial Authorities," *Liverpool Post*, January 15, 1948, 4.

the air. After Bustamante had departed, an angry mob—armed with pick axes, cutlasses, shovels, and iron bars—rioted, destroying property.¹⁹⁵ Bustamante's actions in this case were not only irresponsible because he was the chief minister of Jamaica, but his willingness to publicly draw a gun to confront an angry mob symbolized Bustamante's acceptance of political violence and legitimized this tactic for the wider populace.

The increasing confrontations between political rivals resulted in the continued escalation of political violence. Other telegrams between the Governor and the Secretary of State for the Colonies and newspaper articles reported confrontations at political rallies in Kingston on October 30, 1950, where in response to a disorderly and rioting crowd, police used teargas to disperse the mob after shots had been fired at a Labor Party meeting. One man was wounded in the knee and three police constables and two other men were hurt during the violence.¹⁹⁶ Consequently, the Governor responded by issuing a proclamation that prohibited any political meeting in the urban and suburban areas for a month.¹⁹⁷ Political maneuvers continued when violence erupted at the Worth Park Estate on March 13, 1950. The conflict emerged when dissatisfied cane cutters called a strike to protest low wages. Over the course of the next several days, workers turned to the TUC affiliated with the PNP for representation. The TUC, in order to publicize the laborers' plight, imported members from Kingston to picket the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Governor Higgins Personal Correspondence, January 20, 1948.

¹⁹⁷ "Bustamante Controversy," *Daily Mail*, June 1, 1950, 4; also referenced in the "Jamaica in Conflict," *Times*, June 2, 1950.

factory and intimidate non-unionized workers.¹⁹⁸ The violence that erupted between the police and laborers was a consequence of the PNP's efforts to help workers. Ultimately, the strike failed to win the wage increases that the TUC demanded, but it did help to create a volatile political atmosphere for the upcoming elections.

With the advent of the 1955 general elections, violence intensified as Bustamante's and Manley's electioneering campaign strategies encouraged the active participation of loyal party supporters, which resulted in clashes between rival opponents in order to protect not only political patronage but also the privileges extended to the party that won. Pre-election tension erupted in the PNP-affiliated Gordon Town area, and *The Daily Gleaner* reported that a farmer, Benjamin Taylor, was stabbed to death while many others were injured. The conflict began when Alexander Bustamante pushed councilor Wills Isaacs, a member of the opposition, and was in turn struck in the face by a stone.¹⁹⁹ According to witnesses, the problem began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon when a truckload of PNP laborers singing anti-JLP songs were attacked by JLP supporters armed with stones; the men in the truck disembarked and retaliated against those throwing stones. The JLP workers fled the scene down a local gully. Benjamin Taylor, a JLP supporter, was caught, beaten, and eventually stabbed.²⁰⁰ It was further reported that once the rioting began, Manley arrived to address the crowd in an attempt to prevent further violence.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ "Open Conflict in Kingston," *The Daily Gleaner*, January 4, 1950, 6; Telegram Secretary of State, March 13, 1950.

¹⁹⁹ "Municipality has most Violent Election," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 153, July 7, 1949, 1, 11.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

Upon his return, Bustamante was heckled and chastised by the crowd; and when he attempted to leave the area, stones were thrown at his car. In his haste to leave the scene, the back door of Bustamante's car was left open and three police constables were injured as the car sped away. Bustamante retreated to the courthouse where Norman Manley was holding a rally, and he verbally confronted Manley.²⁰² *The Daily Gleaner* reported the exchange between the two men: "Mr. Bustamante had gone up to the courthouse steps where Mr. Manley stood. Harsh words passed between them. Mr. Bustamante turned to Superintendent Donald G. Neish, who was nearby and said, gas them and gas Manley too."²⁰³ In his haste to depart, Bustamante engaged in a scuffle with Wills Isaacs, who was restrained by local police constables to prevent further violence. Upon fleeing to his car, Bustamante was struck in the face with a rock by someone in the crowd. Due to the police's use of tear gas to disperse the crowd, Bustamante was protected from further harm as the crowd scattered.

In the days following the riot, the local government investigated the contributing factors behind the violence. The inquest raised more questions than it provided answers to.²⁰⁴ Local police asserted that members of the PNP were responsible because they had a larger number of supporters at the rally. Moreover, PNP supporters were more aggressive and disrespectful to the opposition leader.²⁰⁵ However, Police Superintendent Donald G. Neish contradicted that argument when he testified that when news of Bustamante's assault in Gordon Town was

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ "Strength of Rival Parties on Election Day Compared," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 162, July 16, 1949, 1, 11, 13.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

reported, busloads of JLP supporters descended on the area, although they were denied access due to police blockades; and controlling physical confrontation proved difficult.²⁰⁶ On the other hand, Wills Isaacs accused JLP officer Hugh Shearer of firing a gun at police officers and demanded his arrest. Isaacs displayed his arrogance when he said that “a broken skull did not matter in the growth of a nation,” in an effort to explain away the use of political violence.²⁰⁷ Other witnesses testified that Bustamante was partially to blame because weapons such as sticks, lead pipes, and stones were concealed in the trunk of his car; and JLP supporters took weapons from Bustamante’s car during the conflict with PNP supporters. At the conclusion of the inquest, the courts ruled that the various acts of violence were the fault of the PNP, specifically Wills Isaacs, because he provided access for non-voting members of the PNP into the area with the purpose of disrupting the election process.²⁰⁸

This verdict served to increase local agitation because Norman Manley refused to accept full responsibility for the violence. Manley insisted that the JLP was equally to blame because the JLP sought to intimidate PNP voters in the Gordon Town area.²⁰⁹ As a result of the Hearn Report findings, Wills Isaacs resigned as a PNP official for dishonoring and tarnishing the reputation of the party. “Isaacs admitted that he had been most indiscreet in his testimony before the commission,” *The Daily Gleaner* reported and added that “he regretted most of all,

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ “Commissioner tells Police Officials,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 155, July 9, 1949, 1, 13.

²⁰⁸ “PNP Blamed for Election Violence,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 180, August 6, 1949, 1, 11.

²⁰⁹ “Hearne Report Intemperate Unbalance Manley Says,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 183, August 9, 1949, 1, 11.

any inflammatory statements made, especially as they do not represent PNP policy.”²¹⁰ In a final attack, Isaacs cited incidents of violence perpetrated by the JLP prior to the Gordon Town incident, which received little public attention or warranted no official inquest that was designed to destroy the party at the grassroots level.²¹¹ In spite of the Hearn Report’s verdict, the 1955 Gordon Town incident reflected not only a willingness by the leaders of political parties to use violence but it also witnessed the use of grassroots supporters to instigate acts of political violence.

Despite the scandal attached to the Gordon Town incident, the JLP continued to attack and undermine the PNP’s socialist’s political platform. In his campaign for re-election, Bustamante vilified the tenets of socialism by effectively making socialism the equivalent of slavery, whereby members of the elite dominated the system and the poor were subordinated.²¹² By insinuating that the PNP represented a party which served the interests of the middle-class and that under their regime, the ordinary working man would never reap the rewards of his own labor and would rather be a slave to the system, Bustamante destroyed the PNP politically.²¹³ Bustamante exploited the existing Cold War paranoia that local communists were attempting to undermine Jamaica’s democracy by corrupting politics and oppressing the people. Other critics of the PNP’s “communist” platform attacked socialism in defense of capitalism and argued about the benefits of private ownership. Public control of power, communications, and transportation were good ideas and would benefit the Jamaican

²¹⁰ “Isaacs Resigns as PNP Officer,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 184, August 10, 1949, 1, 12.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² “Vote against Socialism,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 247, October 22, 1949, 11.

²¹³ Ibid.

government, they argued; but the problem remained with socialism and its oppressive nature through the rights it appropriates.

In response to Bustamante's attack, the PNP was forced to define and defend its version of socialism for the wider populace. Manley contended that "Our enemies constantly say that we are communist, or dominated, or influenced by communists. They no doubt will go on saying so. I am not concerned with those who deliberately misrepresent these matters. The PNP is socialist and socialist alone, but it will take no part in red-bating."²¹⁴ Unfortunately, the PNP's definition of socialism was frightening to a country struggling to survive in a post-World War II era where the Soviet Union's system of government was viewed as disruptive of capitalism and democracy. These conditions were made more problematic by the vagueness of the PNP's definition of socialism and Bustamante's successful 'red smear' campaign.

Ironically, the emergence of the two-party system destroyed labor solidarity and fostered political patronage, which resulted in the eruption of the political violence that polarized Jamaican society.²¹⁵ *The Daily Gleaner* reporter Kenneth D. Carey argued that political patronage negatively affected society because it forced laborers to choose a political party or to remain unemployed. A result of this system was that political patronage rose to dominance as political and trade union affiliations became a key factor in government employment.²¹⁶ This argument was supported by historian George Eaton, who contends that "Jamaica developed a kind of perverse electoral accountability and responsibility system in which the political parties

²¹⁴ "Manley Resists Pressure Moves," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 221, September 12, 1949, 11.

²¹⁵ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 110–120.

²¹⁶ "Political Influence Bad for Workers," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 239, October 14, 1949, 8; also referenced in Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 121–124.

were judged and supported by working-class, not on the basis of the politics they had instituted or failed to institute in an attempt to solve the basic problems of the country, but on the basis of necessity to maintain control of the distribution of work on government controlled projects. Paradoxically, therefore, the fiercest political competition and violent partnership came from those who suffered most from the inability of the two political parties to deal with chronic and structural unemployment.”²¹⁷

The JLP control of government jobs created continued political agitation, which allowed the JLP to emerge victorious in the December 21, 1949, general elections. The JLP won 17 seats and the PNP made significant gains with 13 seats while independents walked away with 2 seats in the local legislature.²¹⁸

Conclusion

A victory for the JLP was destructive for the Jamaican society because Bustamante unilaterally refused to support Jamaica’s attempt at modernization and self-government, believing such policies would undermine his own authority and political power. In his effort to maintain power, Bustamante caused political underdevelopment.²¹⁹ The political environment deteriorated further as Bustamante exploited his authority via control over government employment and abused his power as labor mediator for the government, by attacking and destroying rival unions, such as the TUC.²²⁰ Due to the benefits of political patronage,

²¹⁷ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 125.

²¹⁸ “Major Party Leaders Win; 2 Independents,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 296, December 21, 1949, 1.

²¹⁹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 100–109.

²²⁰ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 115.

Bustamante's rise to power meant that his enemies were subjected and dependent on his leadership as Prime Minister to advance Jamaica's political development and transformation. This situation created tension between both parties, which intensified as rival leaders had verbal and physical confrontations. If loyal party supporters used local politicians as examples of true leadership, then, the eruption of political violence was inevitable since Bustamante willingly used crowd actions and exploited not only his popularity but also the fear generated about the PNP's socialist platform by asserting that Manley was a communist intent on destroying democracy for the common man.²²¹ Political propaganda was a major component of the political process and Bustamante and other popular politicians exploited their control of party supporters to incite partisan conflicts. Bustamante's aggressive political strategy promoted violence, especially the type of violence that surfaced in the 1940s and 1950s general elections, whereby JLP and PNP supporters protested with party symbols such as the broom to sweep out the old or the bell to ring in the new party. When violence was involved, party supporters clashed in the streets, using sticks, stones, and machetes as weapons. Preceding unionization, dissatisfaction among workers was prevalent; however, local disunity among workers prevented organized group action to protest unfair working conditions and to incite violence. By the 1960s and 1970s, organized gang violence led to men being armed with semi-automatic weapons to disrupt the general elections.

Through the story of Alexander Bustamante's political development, what I have attempted to capture is the unions' willingness to use violence to achieve their goals, which increasingly became political ones. Since unions are directly linked to the creation of modern

²²¹ "Isaacs Resigns as PNP Officer," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 184, August 10, 1949, 1, 12.

political parties in Jamaica, the endemic nature of union violence was reproduced in the antagonistic relationship that developed between the political parties. This relationship was further manipulated by Bustamante, who used his quest for power to radically polarize the populace by exploiting issues involving not only color and class but also the vilification of Norman Manley by portraying the PNP's leader as a communist puppet who was going to destroy Jamaica's working-class. Within this framework, what emerged was a political process marred by systemic violence as party leaders exhibited a willingness to utilize violence to accomplish their goals. This forms the next chapter in the story of Jamaican political violence.

Chapter 2

Norman Manley: The Man and the Myth?

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the emergence of violence in modern Jamaican politics. Whereas in Chapter One Alexander Bustamante is charged with instigating violence within the union movement, what Chapter Two does is to establish the role of Norman Manley in the evolution of violence in the political processes in Jamaica. In the context of labor unrests in the late 1930s and 1940s, violence became a feature of original Jamaican politics. Alexander Bustamante understood how the threat of violence could reinforce his hold on both the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) and the political structure; thus, he utilized this method to maintain power. I will examine the responses of the People's National Party to Bustamante's aggressive campaign tactics. Unlike the current scholarship that alludes to partisan violence being relegated to the periphery of politics, this chapter will show that Norman Manley, just like Bustamante, was far from being removed entirely from the institutionalization of political violence.

In 1955, Jamaica's new Premier, Norman Washington Manley, faced a confrontational, manipulative, Jamaica Labor Party, headed by Alexander Bustamante whose use of conservative nationalism created the framework for political violence.²²² This political structure

²²² Due to Bustamante's agreement with the British government, he initially did not support radical reform such as self-government. However, when campaigning for political office, Bustamante frequently exploited and manipulated nationalist sentiments to undermine the more progressive PNP. This electoral tactic contributed to the political

was further corrupted and exploited by both political parties, thus encouraging loyal grassroots supporters to engage in violence in order to maintain power and win elections. Although Bustamante encouraged laborers to confront the state apparatus, he could not effectively control the violence that emerged, such as the sugar workers' strike at the Worthy Park Estate in January 1951, where an agitated crowd threw stones at Bustamante and other Jamaica Labor Party leaders as they attempted to address the audience. This conflict and others exacerbated the already-uneasy political climate. In an effort to neutralize and challenge the JLP's aggression, Manley and the People's National Party became defensive, forming their own gangs such as 'Group 69' in Kingston, which utilized political gangsterism in order to protect PNP members. Manley suggested that such a PNP armed defense was necessary because "I have been abused. I have been kicked on Bustamante's orders at meetings. I have seen my own workers in the Party beaten at street corners."²²³

This chapter examines the connection between political leadership and the evolution of gang violence, focusing on the Worthy Park Estates and Myrtle Bank strike, the Claudius Henry Rebellion, and the failure of the West Indies Federation. It emphasizes how Norman Manley and the PNP leadership participated in the use of violence as a political tactic. In 1949, a commentary in *The Daily Gleaner* stated that "men who should be considered in the highest regard too often appear in the company of persons known to be of evil reputation. The election is being conducted in some quarters as if it cannot be won without the support of polarization of the Jamaican populace into armed garrisons willing to use violence if necessary to defeat the opposition party."

²²³ "Split in Ranks of Labor Union"; "PNP Leaders Bitter Denouncement of Labor Union Head"; *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 41, February 19, 1942, 11, 14.

criminals.”²²⁴ This editorial provides evidence that as early as 1949, Jamaica’s main political leadership had already corrupted local politics through their affiliations with petty criminals. The fact that the local newspapers could openly discuss PNP ‘Group 69’ or quote JLP boasts that “no PNP member dared to hold any meetings below the Cross Roads line,” demonstrates the political leaders of Jamaica’s utilization and acknowledgment of the gang problem.²²⁵ Local gangs were created by politicians who used poverty and desperation to build up armies in the slums of west Kingston. This was evident with the PNP’s creation of ‘Group 69’ in west Kingston to challenge the JLP’s authority in that constituency. This problem persisted because violence was an effective tool with which to destabilize the incumbent government in power. How could Jamaican politicians refuse to acknowledge responsibility for a political system that they helped to corrupt and develop? Using current scholarship, local newspapers, and government documents, this chapter explains how political violence developed in 1944. In addition, the chapter explains how the political rivalry between Norman Manley’s socialist vision for Jamaican society and Bustamante’s conservative nationalism polarized politics and corrupted it locally.

Biography

Manley’s political interests developed in the early 1920s when he witnessed a Jamaica that lacked political and economic autonomy. Consequently, the working poor were denied civil and human rights as well as economic and social justice. This compelled a sympathetic Manley

²²⁴ “PNP Plan,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 263, November 11, 1948, 8.

²²⁵ Amanda Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica: The Hearne Report, in Anthony Harriot, Understanding Crime in Jamaica (Jamaica: UWI Press, 2003), 49–61.

to aggressively defend the civil rights of the common man; he established his political career on the principle that the power to govern resided fundamentally with the people. Manley's ideology never wavered. Throughout his career, he fought to protect the rights of the people, even to his own detriment, such as his decision to call a referendum on the West Indies Federation in 1960 when he could have guided Jamaica through independence.

Norman Manley was born in 1893 to Thomas Manley, a dark skinned farmer who loved to gamble and invested in the exportation of his own crops. Thomas married a member of the prominent Shearer Family, Margaret Shearer, who later became a postmistress in Porus Manchester. She was the half-white daughter of Alexander Shearer, and she defied class status by marrying a black man.²²⁶

The couple had five children: Douglas, Muriel, Vera, Roy, and Norman. Unfortunately, Thomas Manley's penchant for risk proved disastrous, and he died in 1899 leaving his family financially devastated. Upon Thomas Manley's death, Margaret Manley relocated the family to her sister (Mrs. Shrimpton) in Kingston, and left for the United States, unsuccessfully seeking employment.²²⁷ Inadequate salary forced Mrs. Manley to return home, at which point she moved her family to Belmont (a small farm in St. Catherine in which her husband had some interest along with her grandfather, Mr. Shearer). Due to her grandfather's poor health and near blindness, Margaret Manley took over his responsibilities and operated the farm on a daily

²²⁶ Philip Sherlock, Norman Manley (London: Macmillan London Limited, 1980), 46–47; also referenced in Norman W. Manley, My Early Years, an autobiographical fragment in Manley and the New Jamaica: Selected Speeches and Writings 1938–1968, ed. Rex Nettleford (Jamaica: Stephenson Litho Press Ltd., 1971), Prologue, xcv.

²²⁷ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 47; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xcvi.

basis. Mrs. Manley not only managed the farm but also performed domestic duties such as mending clothing and childrearing. In addition, she petitioned the local authorities to allow her to establish a local post office to further provide for her children.²²⁸

With such a determined mother, Norman and his siblings were raised in an environment dedicated to hard work and promotion of a higher education. Family was just as important as school work, however, and the Manley household hosted various members of the Clarke family, including Alexander Bustamante, then known as Alexander Clarke.²²⁹ Between the ages of 21 and 22, Bustamante resided at the Belmont estate as a junior overseer. While there, Bustamante acquired the reputation as a good horseman, and peasants traveled from all over the parish to have him 'break' their animals.²³⁰ Norman fondly remembered Bustamante as a fun and talented cousin with a zest for life that resulted in his travels around the world. In his unpublished autobiography, Norman Manley described himself as a 'bushman': "I grew up as a bushman. I earned my pocket money cleaning pastures and chipping logwood at the standard rates. I would get out in the morning and share lunch with the workers or if we were out looking for stray cattle, walk the day and get home late at night after twelve or fourteen hours on the constant move."²³¹ Although Manley believed that his childhood experiences were compatible with the average Jamaican, the reality for working-class Jamaicans was that they worked because of financial necessity, not for pocket money. That Manley failed to grasp that

²²⁸ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 48–49; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xcvi.

²²⁹ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 48–49.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xcvi.

simple fact when he described himself as a ‘bushman’ suggests that there was a disconnect between him and poor laborers.

Despite Margaret Manley’s determination that all her children receive a good education, Manley was undisciplined and erratic in school. He attended various schools: Lloyds Elementary School, Spanish Town Secondary School, and in 1906, at 13 years of age, Manley attended Jamaica College (JC).²³² At this point, Manley was not dedicated to his education and his grades reflected this fact; moreover, he became the leader of the school bullies and spent the next three years harassing the weaker students. In 1909, when Norman was 16, Mrs. Manley died; and he decided to honor her memory by furthering his education through an application for the Rhodes Scholarship, although he was unqualified due to both poor academic record and disruptive behavior.²³³ According to Manley, his headmaster was stunned that someone of Manley’s character applied for such a prestigious award: “To say that he was shocked is to put it mildly; I had done little work and showed no special promise at anything. I was reminded by the Head that not only was I far behind in study but also had a thoroughly disreputable reputation which would make it almost impossible for his teachers to write character recommendations on his behalf.”²³⁴

In spite of Manley’s poor academic record, Mrs. Manley had, before her death, appealed to teachers at JC (Mr. Reginald and Mr. Murray) to tutor her son in order to improve his grades. In attempting to reform himself, Manley not only dedicated himself to his education

²³² Sherlock, Norman Manley, 52–53; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xcvi.

²³³ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 54–55; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xcix.

²³⁴ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 54.

but also participated in various sports such as track, cricket, football, and rifle shooting. He also taught English and Math classes at Titchfield School and successfully controlled his quick temper. According to Manley, “constant inhibition by violent efforts at control gradually wore it down till it seemed to disappear with its place being taken by a sort of arrogant indifference which was constantly mistaken for the real me.”²³⁵ In 1914, Manley was rewarded for his efforts with the Rhodes Scholarship; unfortunately, his education was delayed by an attack of typhoid fever which almost killed him. Manley claimed that “this illness which nearly killed me had a great effect on my life and character.”²³⁶

Ironically, it was Manley’s journey to Europe that helped to shape his political development and resulted in his dissatisfaction with the British government. After recovering from his illness, Manley traveled to England where he was expected to attend Jesus College, Oxford, in the fall of 1914, the same year in which World War I began. With the outbreak of the war, Manley reunited with his family in London. While visiting his aunt (Ellie Swithenbank) in Penzance, Manley was introduced to his cousin (Edna Swithenbank), who later became his wife.²³⁷ Manley described Edna, “then a little girl of fourteen, a strange, shy, and highly individualistic person quite unlike the rest of her family and unlike anybody I had ever known.”²³⁸ Manley’s education was interrupted from 1915–1919, when he and his brother (Roy) enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery. Manley’s experience in the war was tragic because his

²³⁵ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 54; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, c.

²³⁶ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 54.

²³⁷ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 58; also referenced in Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, cii; Wayne Brown, Edna Manley, the Private Years, 1900–1939 (London, Britain: Deutsch Press, 1975), 80–101; Norman Manley, “Letter to Edna Manley from NY,” July 13, 1935, 1.

²³⁸ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 58.

brother (Roy) was killed after serving on the Western Front for three years. He also encountered racism while serving in the British army, where members of his unit referred to him as 'darkie.'²³⁹ This situation became even more problematic when Manley, due to his childhood experiences with horses and guns, was promoted to lance corporal and then corporal by the time his unit left for France.²⁴⁰ Manley explained that "corporals and sergeants resented my sharing status with them. They were rude, spiteful, and later conspired to get me into trouble."²⁴¹ After being charged with insubordination, Manley negotiated with his commanding officer for a transfer for both himself and Roy to the 'battery of guns.' In 1917, at the battle of Ypres, Manley "lost his brother and was devastated by Roy's death." Despite being awarded a "military medal for bravery in action," Manley felt isolated from the wider society.²⁴² Manley's experience in the military created a sense of ambivalence about British governmental authority, a sentiment that was later reflected in Manley's decision as leader of the PNP to support an end to the Crown Colony system and the promotion of self-government.

The conclusion of World War I was a significant transition for Norman because he lost his scholarship while serving in the military, struggled to finish Jesus College successfully and also felt alienated from his white peers. "Norman felt alone, a brown alien in a white city," his biographer Philip Sherlock writes. What "he said about a sense of superiority being a good

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 59.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Sherlock, Norman Manley, 62; also referenced in Brown, Edna Manley the Early Years, 80–101; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, cu.

protection against the obsessions that color feelings can create was only partly true.”²⁴³ In the summer of 1921, Manley completed law school and married Edna on June 25. He spent the next year as an intern, learning the techniques necessary for being a proficient lawyer. On May 30, 1922, Edna gave birth to their first child, Douglas; and the family migrated to Jamaica. “I dedicated the next several years establishing my practice that kept me at it seven days a week and anything up to twenty hours a day, law and court work did not absorb all my mental energy.”²⁴⁴

Since Manley’s law practice dominated his family life, in 1923, Edna returned to London for a year to decide whether she wanted to pursue a career in art. Edna felt stifled by racism and social status in Jamaica that did not allow women equal access to opportunities. During their separation, Manley bought a house later named ‘Drumblair’ and waited for Edna to return, which she did in 1924.²⁴⁵ With his family reunited, Manley explored the possibility of a political career. Despite his popularity and success as a lawyer Manley was alienated from the wider Jamaican society. His position was complicated by his role as barrister for the crown charged with subjugating challenges to British colonial authority, which often led to the further oppression of poor blacks.²⁴⁶

The 1930s was a turbulent time for Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. The Great Depression resulted in the reduction and withdrawal of financial aid to the West Indies from

²⁴³ Rachel Manley, Horses in Her Hair: A Granddaughter’s Story (Canada: Key Porter Books Limited, 2008), 7–124; Sherlock, Norman Manley, 61.

²⁴⁴ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, ciii.

²⁴⁵ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 64–65.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

Great Britain, causing higher rates of unemployment, increased poverty, reduced migration, homelessness, starvation wages, and worker oppression.²⁴⁷ Workers responded to the economic crisis through the labor rebellion that erupted all over the Caribbean. In Jamaica, violence began in St. Thomas at the Serge Island Estate on January 7, 1938. Workers went on strike to demand a higher wage increase from one to two shillings per day. Although initiated for fair wages, the strike degenerated into violence as workers responded to employers' efforts to replace the striking workers with scabs.²⁴⁸ In an effort to protect the picket line, the level of violence generated by the strike resulted in a committee being formed to investigate the crisis. This was headed by Sir Henry Brown, who discovered that not only were wages inadequate but that other factors such as poverty, desperation, lack of opportunities, and racism had to be considered as part of the dilemma.²⁴⁹ This economic crisis was dramatized when Bustamante testified before the commission and stated the "Poor House, the Mad House and the Prisons are overcrowded through dire need and poverty, while the streets and villages are over-run with beggars who were once respectable people. Thousands upon thousands of able-bodied men and women willing to work, over-ran the towns and district, hungry and ragged from the want of employment."²⁵⁰ This argument was supported by the Labor Department which reported in 1938–1939 the high rate of unemployment.

²⁴⁷ "Mr. Bustamante Replies to Statement in British Press by Minister of Parliament Who Visited Island," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 67, March 16, 1938, 5.

²⁴⁸ "Trouble on Serge Island Estate in St. Thomas," *Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 5, January 7, 1938, 7.

²⁴⁹ "Commission to Probe Labor and Unemployment Conditions in Island," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 74, March 30, 1938, 1.

²⁵⁰ "Author of Disclosures in Parliament," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 92, April 22, 1938, 17.

Unemployment Survey 5 Parishes, 1938–39

Parishes	Laborers		Artisans	Domestics	Clerks	Dress Makers
	Male	Female				
Kingston & St. Andrew	4,946	814	2,170	3,575	593	963
Portland	3,305	887	342	534	35	40
St. Thomas	2,843	562	307	359	22	38
St. Catherine	3,586	692	354	578	38	42
St. Elizabeth	2,188	543	335	244	21	46
	16,868	3,498	3,508	5,290	709	1,129

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Manley's biographer argues that "as a lawyer he recognized that he had obligations to the society in which he lived, and to which he belonged. No man, however poor, should be deprived of his help through lack of money."²⁵² Therefore, as Manley became politicized he openly articulated policies of political modernization, universal adult suffrage, self-government, and constitutional reforms that would provide opportunities and protect the laboring masses. A consequence of Norman's ideological beliefs was that he became involved in the labor struggles among Jamaica's working class via unionization.

²⁵¹ Labor Department Report 1938–1939.

²⁵² Sherlock, Norman Manley, 69.

Manley attempted to align himself with labor when he organized the Jamaica Banana Association, the country's first large co-operative formed to protect the interests of the small farmer. In early 1935, Manley's efforts on behalf of the workers laid the foundation for the future of the labor rebellion in 1938.²⁵³ The dilemma that banana producers in Jamaica confronted was two-fold. The first issue was the subordination of Jamaica's banana exports to United Fruit Company exploitation. According to Manley, "the United Fruit Company and Elders & Fyffes controlled the position in Jamaica. And the small grower paid for it. His price varied with United Fruit Company interest and there was no guarantee that he could sell at all when his fruit was ready."²⁵⁴ The second dilemma was local disunity among farmers. Consolidation efforts were complicated by Governor Edward Denham who refused to recognize the co-operative as a legitimate organization. Despite these obstacles, in 1935, Manley met and negotiated with Samuel ZeMurray, leading to the creation of the United Fruit Corporation (UFCO), which ZeMurray merged with Cuyamel Fruit. Samuel ZeMurray was a powerful business mogul whose private company Cuyamel Fruit controlled the banana market in Central America in the 1920s. Manley and ZeMurray reached an agreement that protected local banana producers: "The proposal was that the United Fruit Corporation would set aside one cent per stem exported from Jamaica to form a fund to be administered by an organization to be created by me for the good and welfare of the people of Jamaica with emphasis on the rural people. This would mean as things then stood some 25,000 dollars nearly 90,000 pounds annually."²⁵⁵ From this offer evolved the Jamaica Welfare Limited, which represented local

²⁵³ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, cvi.

²⁵⁴ Sherlock Norman Manley, 75; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, cvii.

²⁵⁵ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, cix.

banana producers and others. Through the organization, Manley acted to protect the interests of small proprietors through fixed rates, fair contracts with United Fruit, and legal representation. The crisis initiated by the United Fruit Corporation allowed Manley not only to explore political leadership but also to create his own power base among small farmers. He, then, raised the question: Could Jamaica operate successfully within the colonial framework? For Manley, the answer was “No” because the Crown Colony system was designed to oppress the local economy and people. Manley advocated for self-government because it was the only way to empower the people.²⁵⁶

Due to his official position as barrister for the crown, Manley was considered the enemy of the Jamaican working-class; his decision to participate in the politics of labor disputes, however, reflected his support for Alexander Bustamante. Despite Manley’s earlier experience as a negotiator for Jamaica Banana Producers, he was not recognized as a labor leader until he participated in the labor rebellion of 1938. On January 6, 1938, when sugar workers went on strike, labor conflicts erupted at the Serge Island Estate; Alexander Bustamante rallied to the cause of labor and, in the process, alienated local leaders within the Crown Colony system by attacking the British government for failing to protect the working-class poor. Consequently, on May 4, 1938, *The Daily Gleaner* reported that Bustamante’s actions as labor leader resulted in his being arrested and charged for inciting people to unlawfully assemble in 1938.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 78.

²⁵⁷ “Riot Ended Government! To Give to City Unemployed, Mischief Makers Warned,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 102, May 4, 1938, 1; “Pen and Picture story of fatal Riots at Frome Estate,” 7; “2 killed 1 Seriously Wounded as Police Fire to Drive Back Mob: Labor leader Bustamante Arrested and Held Without Bail,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 119, May 25, 1938, 1.

With the arrest of Bustamante, Norman Manley became the unofficial leader of the union movement by negotiating on behalf of dock laborers on strike for higher wages in May 1938, for one shilling per day and two shillings for overtime work.²⁵⁸ His efforts to settle the strike proved problematic since dock workers refused to return to work until Bustamante and Grant were released from jail, and other laborers complicated the negotiations by participating in an extemporaneous island-wide strike that paralyzed the country.²⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Manley's skill as a negotiator was not the same as Bustamante's as an organizer. Consequently, there was distrust between Manley and the populace when he supported workers' returning to work and terminating the strike. In addressing the workers, Norman encouraged them to participate in the negotiation process and asserted that "the object of the Labor Committee that I am trying to form is first of all to represent the different groups of workers before the Conciliation Board and to negotiate on their behalf; secondly to deal with the organization of Trade Unions; and finally to prepare and advocate a program for the general improvement of labor conditions. One of the most important tasks of the committee is to devise a viable program for labor reform and a foundation for the creation of a genuine Labor Party in Jamaica."²⁶⁰ Since Manley believed that the Crown Colony system was oppressive toward the poor and working-class blacks in Jamaica, he utilized the unrest generated by the labor rebellion to promote change.

²⁵⁸ "The Strike so Far," 3; "The Soul of Bustamante," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 120, May 26, 1938, 3.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ "Labor's Big Chance to have its just Claims Recognized," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 121, May 27, 1938, 1; "Cause of the Strike," 7; "Mr. N. W. Manley Kings Council Addressed Mass Discontents at No. 1 Pier," 17.

Manley continued to negotiate with wharf owners and won major concessions for workers. Consequently, when Bustamante and Grant were released, Bustamante announced that he had won for them an increase of ten to eleven pence per day and new overtime rates of pay.²⁶¹ Although Bustamante took credit for Manley's work, general national recognition for Manley's efforts on behalf of working-class blacks emerged as a counterpoint to Bustamante's leadership. Manley used his popularity to gain additional power within the labor movement by uniting with Bustamante and the BITU to resolve labor conflicts in Jamaica. Since Manley and Bustamante had different base constituencies, Manley advocated for legal reforms in rural areas. He remained critical of the British government's control of Jamaica and argued that this colonial control rendered the Jamaican laws weak and left Jamaican local leaders without real power. Manley realized that it was important for Jamaica's political development to embrace the process of self-government because the current construction and structure of government was restrictive. For example, the legislative council contained fourteen elected and fourteen nominated members, the latter predominantly white. A governor who was appointed by Britain had veto power over local laws and protected British interests. Voters were restricted by property qualifications and lacked political knowledge, which resulted in a poor voter turnout.²⁶²

Manley further asserted that local leaders refused to cooperate with each other. Instead, they fostered a political structure based on disunity among the people.²⁶³

²⁶¹ "Orderliness Back to Work Labor Pledge," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 123, May 30, 1938, 1.

²⁶² Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, 91–92.

²⁶³ "Bustamante Denies that He was Boomed," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 152, July 4, 1938, 1.

The council is now a body of bickering and abuse of government even when government is trying to do its best in the interest of the country. If the fourteen men, representatives of the people come together with the financial power, which they have in their hands, they could control the destinies of this country. What is wanted is co-operation. There are many parties in this country everyman is a party unto himself, everyman is a voice unto himself. The control of the financial powers of the country would give our representatives a considerable amount of power.²⁶⁴

Manley looked beyond the labor movement to the future of Jamaica and the destructive role of the British government on the island. Consequently, he advocated radical changes such as self-government that would lead Jamaica towards independence.

Political Evolution

Manley argued that if economic and social conditions improved in Jamaica, real changes such as self-government and universal adult suffrage needed to be promoted locally.²⁶⁵ In 1938, as a union leader, Manley believed that the politician's responsibility focused on mobilizing the masses and the nation towards self-government. Sherlock writes that Manley contended "that a government should create the conditions for liberating the potential of the individual, coupled with his insistence that the solutions for Jamaica's problems should be thorough in terms of the needs and history of the people, led him to reject any form of dogma, or any political theory that put the state first."²⁶⁶ Consequently, Manley espoused Fabian socialistic policies because these promised equal opportunities for all, but socialism was also flexible enough to be applied in any country. Manley's socialist politics meant that he had to invest in

²⁶⁴ "Mr. Manley on Present Day Jamaica," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 150, July 1, 1938, 7.

²⁶⁵ C. Paul Bradley, "The Rise of Mass Parties in Jamaica," *Social and Economic Studies*, I.S.E.R., UWI, Vol. 9, No. 4, (1960): 25–40; also referenced in George E. Eaton, "Trade Union Development in Jamaica," *Caribbean Quarterly*, UWI, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2, (1962): 4–20; Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, 99.

²⁶⁶ Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, 101–102.

educating the Jamaican public about the benefits of self-government and socialism as they were applicable to Jamaica.²⁶⁷

By August 1938, Manley asserted his political independence when he encouraged the audiences of the National Reform Association and citizen councils to form political parties to support the local economy and sever Jamaica's dependence on British colonialism. An internal dispute within the BITU between Alexander Bustamante and William Grant for complete control of the union resulted in the expulsion of Grant from the union for being a traitor. Manley continued to travel, to petition the people to participate in local politics, and to campaign for self-government because without a united people, Jamaica would remain dependent on Great Britain and be forced to subjugate its national interests.²⁶⁸

Using a platform based on political modernization, constitutional reform, and self-government, Manley organized the grassroots support base for the People's National Party (PNP) on September 18, 1938. The PNP's political platform advocated for "political, economic, and social progress of Jamaica; exercise effectively the country's rights and power; promote predominantly the public's interest; achieve self-government; nominate and support candidates for election to the legislative council; secure representation of the party in all municipal bodies; by guiding, informing, and expressing public opinion through meetings and

²⁶⁷ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 104.

²⁶⁸ "Grant is Fired! Says Bustamante," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 190, August 18, 1938, 1; "Mr. N.W. Manley Speaks of a Birth of a New National Spirit in Jamaica," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 200, August 30, 1938, 8.

party literature to develop the political life of the island.”²⁶⁹ Manley warned that the process towards self-government remained precarious because the colonial government was attempting to disrupt the unity forged by the labor rebellion. For example, rumors circulating within the Bustamante Union charged that Manley conspired to usurp Bustamante’s authority and become the principal leader of the union. Manley contended that Jamaica could not be truly independent until the people had a government that was representative of the people through direct election of government officials.²⁷⁰

Although Bustamante and Manley continued their unionization efforts of Jamaican workers and grassroots mobilization, the personal charisma of both men produced rumors that disrupted the union’s unity. At the launching of the PNP, Manley observed that *The Daily Gleaner* editorials “suggest that there was a conspiracy to dethrone Mr. Bustamante and to rule myself. I myself was supposed to be one of the conspirators. I was supposed to be conspiring to take charge of the labor movement. I wish I had the power to do so and the time, because it is worthy of help.”²⁷¹ Manley’s efforts to diminish the controversy did not eliminate the problem; rather, it concealed the issue, which resurfaced in 1940 when Bustamante was again incarcerated. The eruption of violence caused by World War II interrupted the unionization process. In a campaign by the British government to maintain production and promote colonial

²⁶⁹ “Plants and Aims of the PNP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 215, September 16, 1938, 8; “Theatre Packed at Launching of PNP”; *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 217, September 19, 1938, 1, 7.

²⁷⁰ Norman W. Manley, “Inaugural Address,” At the Launching of the People’s National Party, September 1938.

²⁷¹ Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, 13; also referenced in Hugh H. Watson, ‘Political Developments in Jamaica (Semi-Annual Report),’ (July 16, 1941): 4; PRO: CO 137/ 846/ 69120. Letter. Labor Conditions; Memorial by Alexander Bustamante Union on Sugar Industry, August 31, 1940, 1; PRO: CO 137/ 840/ 68511/ 229. Letter. G. to S. of S., September 8, 1940; Ken Post, *Strike the Iron: A Colony at War: Jamaica 1939–1945* (Netherlands: Institute of Social Studies the Hague, 1981), 113–145.

unity, Jamaican workers lost rights. The West Indian colonies were expected to illustrate their loyalty and rally in support of Great Britain during crises. Unfortunately, workers' dissatisfaction over high unemployment, a weak economy, and disrupted import and export trade remained, and wharf workers demanded that Bustamante protect their interests.

Bustamante's union activities resulted in his internment from September 1940 through February 21, 1942, while he secretly negotiated with Governor Richards for his release. Due to Manley's socialist affiliation, the British viewed him as the most dangerous of the Jamaican national leaders and, as a result, the terms of Bustamante's release stated that he sever BITU affiliations with the PNP. Bustamante honored the agreement upon his release and denounced Manley and his colleagues for being traitors to the union movement, asserting that "we would not consort with traitors and conspirators."²⁷² As Bustamante reported, "with a note of injured innocence he denounced the PNP caretakers as self-seekers, who could well take care of themselves, because they possess intelligence, influence and wealth."²⁷³ Manley was disappointed and criticized Bustamante for being a pawn in the British government's venture to maintain colonial authority in Jamaica. Manley also publicly stated his suspicions that Bustamante would betray him when he said that "shortly before his release Bustamante withdrew from our close association and I discovered that he was hoping and planning to break

²⁷² PRO: CO/ 137/854/69201. Letter. Sir Arthur Richards to Cosmo Parkinson Colonial Office, April 6, 1942, 1.

²⁷³ "Bustamante Replies: Labor Leader Charged Libel," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 43, February 21, 1942, 8; also referenced in Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, xl; PRO: CO/ 137/ 854/ 69201. Letter. Sir Stafford Cripps to Oliver Stanley of the Colonial Office, March 3, 1943, 1; PRO: CO 137/ 850/ 68714/ 6. Letter. Robert Kirkwood to Harold Butler, His Majesty's Minister in Washington, September 15, 1942, 1; PRO: CO 137/ 850/ 5511. Letter. Governor Arthur Richards to H. F. Downce Colonia Office, June 1, 1942; PRO: CO 137/ 68511/ 330, 792. Letter. April 6, 1942, 1.

within and attack our self-government, which was then at a climax and crisis.”²⁷⁴ Manley’s suspicion about an arrangement between Bustamante and the British government proved to be correct and had negative consequences for the development of modern politics in Jamaica. The rift between Bustamante and Manley produced not only an ideological separation between the PNP and BITU but also perpetuated a struggle between both leaders for control of Jamaican politics, which polarized the local populace.²⁷⁵

The alienation of the PNP and BITU precipitated the division of the union movement and fostered the advancement of independent political parties. According to Philip Sherlock, “Manley’s success with the union was bound to make Bustamante suspicious and hostile. Manley had worked to keep the labor movement and the national movement together but Bustamante was not the man to play second fiddle to anybody except, by courtesy, the sovereign; certainly not to his highly educated introvert cousin Norman, of whom he always spoke with affection and esteem as a lawyer but whose politics he distrusted.”²⁷⁶ As a result of this process, Manley developed a political orientation for Jamaica that advocated a nationalist ideology rather than Bustamante’s narrowly focused labor ideals, because Manley believed that the modernization of Jamaica depended on its total independence from Britain.²⁷⁷ Manley openly supported universal adult suffrage in an attempt to reduce the oligarchic dominance of white British expatriates and their control over the Crown Colony system. In trying to establish

²⁷⁴ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 112.

²⁷⁵ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 112–113; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 80–82.

²⁷⁶ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 132.

²⁷⁷ PRO: CO/ 137/ 852/ 69120. Letter. G. to S. of S. Labor Conditions, January 23, 1942, 1; Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xlv.

grassroots support, Manley contended with local confusion over socialism, Bustamante's appeal to the masses, and the idea that the PNP was protecting the interests of the middle-class.²⁷⁸

The struggle between Bustamante and Manley not only polarized the Jamaican populace but also prompted Bustamante to form the Jamaican Labor Party (JLP) to contest the upcoming general elections in 1944. The party's platform reflected union ideals such as workmen's compensation laws, minimum wage laws, eight-hour workdays, old age pensions, and legalized unionization, rather than focusing on political issues such as independence.²⁷⁹ Bustamante claimed legitimacy for the JLP, based on these platform issues. To many critics, the JLP seemed to be an extension of Bustamante's union without any substantial political policies. However, based on the economic rebellion of 1938 that fostered the union spirit, Bustamante was extremely popular among the populace. This was because whether right or wrong, he was idolized as the man responsible for change. George Eaton contends that "the JLP was a political label for the Bustamante Trade Union. The JLP like the BITU was Bustamante."²⁸⁰

The contest between the JLP and PNP engulfed the country as both parties nationalized political issues that revived open debates among Jamaicans regarding their political future. "You are a JLP. And you is a PNP, became terms of abuse thrown from one crowd to another. A Bustamante or 'laborite,' and a 'comrade' were words of recognition and acceptance," writes

²⁷⁸ PRO: CO/ 137/ 852/ 69120.

²⁷⁹ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 85.

²⁸⁰ Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, 133.

Philip Sherlock.²⁸¹ Since Bustamante was elevated to the status of Messiah for the black man, Manley was constantly on the defensive about the PNP's political programs. In advocating self-government, Manley found it difficult to rally support because the working-class remained dependent on Britain, which he viewed as a threat to Jamaica's independence.²⁸² Manley was attracted to socialism as an alternative to capitalism because of the positives that it represented for the ordinary working man and woman. Manley's affiliation with local communists, Frank and Ken Hill, Richard Hart, and Arthur Henry, who helped to develop the political platform of the PNP, influenced his opinions on socialism. Although Manley was attracted to socialism as a system of government, he failed to define socialism in Jamaica and how his version of socialism would affect the people. Manley declared that "socialism does involve a demand for the complete change of the basic organization of the social and economic conditions under which we live. If it involves anything less than that then it is something less than socialism. Socialism is more than higher wages or better living conditions. It involves the concept that all the means of production should in one form or the other come to be publicly owned and publicly controlled."²⁸³ Manley's vague definition of socialism and how it was applicable to Jamaica allowed Bustamante to use misinformation to confuse the populace by equating socialism with communism and loss of freedom, security, and individual land ownership. "To the land conscious peasant whose plot of land symbolized his status of independence and removal from slavery... it was frightening to be told that a socialist

²⁸¹ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 135.

²⁸² Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, li.

²⁸³ PRO: CO 137/ 850/ 68714/ 14. Letter. Creech Jones to Lord Cranborne, October 30 and November 16, 1942, 1; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 82–83.

government might require him to divide and share the little he had.”²⁸⁴ The successful smear campaign waged by Bustamante created a sense of distrust of the PNP and, in particular, Norman Manley, who was not viewed as a friend of the poor black man.

The PNP’s failure to effectively counter JLP propaganda affected the party’s ability to recruit grassroots support. This situation was further complicated by rising partisan violence, which was being used by the JLP to deter the PNP’s Trade Union Congress (TUC) from gaining a support base among the working class. Ironically, it was the violence generated by the 1944 elections that led to the PNP’s Wills O. Isaac’s founding of ‘Group 69’ as his own defensive garrison in the Matthews Lane district. Isaac believed that violence was necessary for the political process and he stated in 1944 that “what are a few broken skulls in the growth of a nation!”²⁸⁵

In the 1944 general elections, Manley was forced to address racism since the JLP insinuated that the PNP was the party of the brown middle-class. Although Manley did not exploit color prejudice, he tried to form a national movement that would unite all Jamaicans despite color; but years of colonialism by the British government had created distrust between black, brown, and white Jamaicans. “Bustamante also denounced self-government as ‘brown man’ (middle class) government, and a return to slavery.”²⁸⁶ This was a successful tactic because the overseers of the old plantation system were represented locally by the brown middle-class. Despite defeat in the 1944 elections, Manley asserted that “he had no thought of

²⁸⁴ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 85–89.

²⁸⁵ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 71–72.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

giving up the struggle, and he remained convinced that he had been right in pressing for adult suffrage as a first requirement. He considered that adult suffrage had wrought a political revolution. A new and—for Jamaica—unprecedented political awakening had occurred. It permeated all classes.”²⁸⁷ His socialist vision reinforced his hope that Jamaica’s political development would be achieved through an educated people while motivating PNP leaders to continue fighting for a progressive change. In spite of Manley’s beliefs, he had to combat Bustamante’s popularity and influence over legislative policies which ran counter to PNP political platform issues.

Despite Manley’s aspirations, the JLP successfully defeated the PNP in the 1950 general elections due partly to Bustamante’s manipulation of “deep-seated fears and suspicions when he alleged that a victory for the independent party would mean the brown man, i.e., middle class government and continued exploitation of the masses.”²⁸⁸ Although repetitious, the JLP’s political tactic proved that color prejudice was deeply entrenched in the Jamaican psyche, which reflected that politically the local populace was polarized according to class and race. However, the PNP gained momentum in the 1949 elections because the PNP won thirteen seats in the House of Representative to the JLP’s seventeen seats, and two for the Independent party. This achievement for the PNP meant that Manley’s efforts to challenge the JLP’s authority were successful, as he effectively illustrated the benefits of the PNP’s political

²⁸⁷ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 137; also referenced in the Jamaica Hansard, “Proceeding of the House of Representative of Jamaica,” Session March 1949, 94–95, Jamaica Hansard, Session June 1949, 172; Jamaica Hansard, Session November 1949, 412.

²⁸⁸ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 95; also referenced in “Busta Wager called Insult to People,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 284, December 7, 1949, 13.

programs such as constitutional reforms, self-government, and government-owned public utilities.²⁸⁹

Norman Manley and Violence

Despite the PNP's ability to successfully gain a foothold within the Jamaican populace by 1950 via representation within the government, political violence was evident. The point is not that Manley was participating in violence himself but that he colluded in violence through grassroots supporters. Any Jamaican involved in politics under the Bustamante or Manley regime would claim that political debates were entertaining and party loyalty was displayed through party symbols, such as the PNP's broom or the JLP's bell. However innocent that assessment might be, the political violence generated by the general elections hints that politics was becoming corrupt in that period. The violence that tainted local politics was introduced into the process via the unionization movement when unions used thugs to counter employers' use of scabs and thugs.²⁹⁰ The struggle to unionize workers polarized the populace, forcing laborers to choose between either the BITU (which controlled the docks and government jobs) or the TUC (which was entrenched in the bauxite and sugar industries). Out of this conflict, the beginnings of political gangsterism emerged in the form of 'Group 69' from the Matthews Lane district.²⁹¹ As modern politics developed, the conflicts within the union movement shifted to the political sphere.

²⁸⁹ "Socialism Will not Win in Jamaica," *Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 288, December 12, 1949, 13.

²⁹⁰ Gunst, *Born Fi` Dead*, 69–71.

²⁹¹ Gunst, *Born Fi` Dead*, 71.

Gangs such as the PNP's 'Group 69' were initially used as a defensive tool to protect PNP supporters attending rallies or going to vote against violence by JLP supporters. The intensity of violence generated by the pre-election process increased in 1949, forcing the PNP to go on the defensive. Group 69 served as a political tool that was used to mobilize party supporters during the general elections, such as in 1949 when PNP supporters were bussed into Gordon Town based on allegations of JLP aggression and violence.²⁹² Norman Manley's collusion in violence via party supporters was evident in his testimony before the Hearne Commission in 1949 when he stated that "actually what happened was when you got your representatives at trouble spots, the trouble stopped. Of course, at times things developed into a fight."²⁹³ Based on Manley's statement, it is obvious that he was aware of violence via the defensive actions of loyal party supporters in the 1949 election. By 1960, gang violence became synonymous with the high death rate, rise in gun violence, and hypocritical politicians who refused to acknowledge their role in perpetuating localized violence.²⁹⁴

The political atmosphere deteriorated as political leaders tarnished the electoral process through the use of gangs (desperate, poor, and unemployed young men found in every constituency), resulting in an escalation of violence. Consequently, political gangsterism became synonymous with electioneering. This change was reflected in local politics when *The*

²⁹² Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica, 53; "Bustamante, Manley Declare Against Political Violence," *The Daily Gleaner*, July 29, 1949, 1.

²⁹³ Hearne Commission Report, August 4, 1949, 1–5; "Manley Charges JLP Preaches Violence Towards PNP," *The Daily Gleaner*, July 29, 1949, 1, 12; Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica, 56.

²⁹⁴ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 72–73.

Daily Gleaner chastised Bustamante for promising to incite the populace to violence and revolution if changes were not made to the constitution and certain British government appointees removed from office.²⁹⁵ Verbal agitation evolved into physical confrontations between the rural parties. On February 15, 1950, employees of the Myrtle Bank Hotel went on strike. The problem that TUC representatives encountered was a preexisting contract between the Crown Colony government and the BITU in 1941 which stipulated that the BITU was granted “sole bargaining rights of industry” until the end of 1950.²⁹⁶ Consequently, when the TUC demanded recognition by management for representing hotel employees, the negotiation reached an impasse. The management announced that they reached an agreement with the BITU regarding wage increase. A group of 1,500 angry employees went on strike and invaded bedrooms and bathrooms at the hotel, scaring the hotel’s 145 foreign guests. *The Daily Gleaner* reported that the strikers were also accused of stealing private property and assaulting police officers and hotel personnel who tried to remove them from the premises. Such drastic actions taken at the Myrtle Bank Hotel were necessary to gain national attention for the problems that confronted workers. With the eruption of violence, TUC representatives retreated to picket lines outside the hotel, where chain-linked workers defied police and intimidated visiting hotel guests. This conflict highlights a willingness of mobilized grassroots supporters to utilize confrontational tactics to resolve labor disputes.

The partisan *The Daily Gleaner* once again chastised the PNP for fostering environment of violence:

²⁹⁵ Jamaica Hansard, Proceedings of the House of Representatives of Jamaica, Session July 1947, 390–394; “Labor Management and Government,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 67, March 21, 1947, 6.

²⁹⁶ PRO: CO 137/ 876/ 2. Letter. Sir J. Huggins to the State for the Colonies. March 31, 1950, 1.

And with all of this having taken place, we were treated at the end of the affair to the shameful and amazing spectacle of Mr. Norman Manley one of his Majesty's Council (sworn to uphold the law) rejoicing with the crowd in the illegalities committed and publicly thanking the mob for the wonderful work that they had done. If King's Council, a leader of an important political party, a member of the House of Representatives, a man universally respected for his character, integrity, and knowledge of the law, a man regarded as one of Jamaica's outstanding sons, can thus display his hearty support of vandalism, intimidation and law breaking, then to what is this country becoming?²⁹⁷

It is my contention that political irresponsibility was repeated in January 1951 when violence ensued in a strike in St. Catherine at the Worthy Park Sugar Estate and gained national attention. Striking factory workers armed with sticks, stones, and machetes, fought with police armed with billy clubs and guns on the streets when one of the owners, Owen Clarke, was assaulted and prevented from entering the factory.²⁹⁸ According to the Governor, "since that time the situation has deteriorated and a number of criminal elements who are PNP-TUC leaders have used intimidation in other industrial disputes have entered the area. Several persons including two police officers suffered injuries. Tear gas was used and some arrests were made."²⁹⁹ The intensity of the union conflict was reflective of Jamaica's descent into partisan conflict.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this situation became more problematic when Bustamante attempted to speak, while visiting the Worthy Park Estate in Llundas Vale. Unfortunately, the agitated crowd rejected Bustamante, heckled BITU speakers, and then threw stones at Bustamante, who responded by firing two shots into the air in order to escape from the crowd.³⁰⁰ The fact that Bustamante was carrying a concealed weapon and was willing to

²⁹⁷ "Manley for TUC-BITU Co-operation," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXVII. No. 2, January 20, 1951, 1.

²⁹⁸ "Bustamante Fires over Strikers," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXVIII. No. 3, January 4, 1951, 1, 15.

²⁹⁹ PRO: CO 137/902/4. Letter, Acting Governor to the Secretary of the Colonies, January 3, 1951, 1.

³⁰⁰ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 136–137; "Riot Act Read at Worthy Park"; "Bustamante's Car Stoned; Fires 2 Shots," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXVII. No. 2, January 3, 1951, 1 15.

discharge his gun in a crowd is one of the paradoxes of modern politics in Jamaica—political leaders were somehow exempt from charges of political violence despite their actions, which promoted partisan conflict. Tensions between the parties escalated further when a Member of Parliament, Wing Commander Cooper, while visiting Jamaica, blamed the labor disturbance at the sugar estate on the communist influence within the PNP which, he argued, were inciting the people to riot.³⁰¹ Visiting Member of Parliament, Sir Tomas Lloyd, contended that:

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Mr. Bustamante's speech at Lluidas Vale contained the same sort of references to communist infiltration. He ought to have been conscious of the risks involved in making this sort of statement. There is, of course, some truth in the allegation that certain prominent members of the People's National Party are extreme left-wing in their political sympathies and are known to be in touch with the Communist Party in this country. But these facts are well-known both to the Colonial Office and the Jamaican government, and they do not amount to serious communist infiltration in the sense implied by Wing Commander Cooper. The real point is that there are a number of thugs among the supporters of both Mr. Bustamante and Mr. Manley, and these include some persons who have contacts with British Communism. They are not the cause of the trouble in Jamaica; this lies in the struggle for political power between Mr. Bustamante and Mr. Manley, waged in the Trade Union field. Responsibility for these troubles lies squarely with Mr. Bustamante and Mr. Manley who have failed to agree on some solution of the problem of representational disputes.³⁰²

Although Members of Parliament were concerned by the possible communist infiltration on the island, a greater importance was placed on the failure of both Manley and Bustamante to effectively resolve the crisis within the union movement, which resulted in local disruption of business and acts of violence. Consequently, the ability of Manley and Bustamante to mobilize poor laborers represented a greater threat to the power of the colonial authority.

The Worthy Park Estate strike was resolved when Bustamante agreed to share 'joint bargaining rights' with the TUC, which allowed the union to negotiate on behalf of sugar

³⁰¹ "Visiting MP Sees Red Tactics at Worthy Park," *The Daily Express*, No. 1047, February 1, 1951, 1.

³⁰² PRO: CO 137/ 902/4. Letter. Sir Thomas Lloyd to Sir Robert Arundell. February 1, 1951, 1.

workers.³⁰³ George Eaton argued that “Bustamante realized that continuing political violence would be too costly. The irony, of course, was that violence should have been a factor in sustaining the leadership of a man of such overwhelming popularity as Alexander Bustamante.”³⁰⁴

The dramatic resolution to both the Worthy Park and the Myrtle Bank strikes represented an attempt by Governor Sir J. Huggins to change Trade Union laws, not only to prevent future political violence but to protect striking workers from thugs brought by employers to disrupt the strikes.³⁰⁵ Escalating violence resulted when Governor Huggins imposed a ban on public meetings and processions throughout the island. Despite current political violence, Norman Manley’s claim that “I will be no party to inciting people to physical violence as a means of progress in this country” was a meaningless comment because pre-election violence continued to rise and adapt.³⁰⁶

The Governor’s efforts to preserve the peace by negotiating with both the JLP- and PNP-affiliated unions lasted until the 1955 general elections when violence that accompanied that election forced Bustamante and Manley to agree to a peace treaty to prevent future violence. *The Daily Gleaner* reported on May 18 that the political parties agreed “not to use force in political campaigning and to remember that regardless of their political views, it is in their interest to comply with this appeal so as to secure the preservation of law and order, the rights

³⁰³ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 137.

³⁰⁴ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 139.

³⁰⁵ PRO: CO 137/ 876/ 2. Letter. Sir J. Huggins, 2.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*; also referenced in Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xxxvi.

of free speech and the right of everyone to exercise his privileges as a voter.”³⁰⁷ Unfortunately, the peace did not last because two months later political violence erupted in the St. Andrew district over by-election politics.³⁰⁸

The tension in the district was evident in a series of clashes between JLP and PNP supporters. One of the most violent episodes involved an attack against local resident, Benjamine Taylor, who was beaten, stabbed, and died in his own home. Due to the close margin of votes that separated the candidates (Lee McDonald (JLP) and Allan Isaacs (PNP)), Governor Huggins acted by forming a commission in 1949, chaired by Hector Hearne, to inquire into the election-related violence. Political scientist Amanda Sives writes that “the evidence highlights the existence of loyal supporters ready to engage in violence against their rivals during the early phase of party politics in Kingston. While the violence of the 1940’s was not as endemic in its consequences as that of the later period—partly because sticks and stones were used rather than semi-automatic weapons—a strong sense of party loyalty and affiliation was evident.”³⁰⁹ The political violence generated by the general elections proved that the politicians were exploiting the existing tensions between JLP and PNP supporters to win power. Despite the subtle evolution of political violence from 1938 through the 1950s, local politicians colluded in corrupting the political structure, a process described by the Hearne Commission report. Whether Norman Manley wanted to accept responsibility for the PNP’s collusion in violence

³⁰⁷ “MP Comes to Study Local Conditions,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 114, May 18 1949, 1.

³⁰⁸ Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica, 49–61.

³⁰⁹ Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica; also mentioned in “Manley Charges JLP Preaches Violence Towards PNP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 175, July 19, 1949, 1, 12; “PNP Plan,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 263, November, 11, 1949, 8.

through the mobilization of party supporters, the reality of the general elections of the 1940s and 1950s was that partisan violence escalated due to the PNP's defensive program in 1944, which resulted in the creation of the party's garrison ('Group 69').

With the British Crown Colony system being attacked, it was important that the Governor reassert control by investigating the outbreak of political violence. Consequently, the Hearne Commission was charged with investigating "first, all political incidents subsequent to July 2, 1949, and relevant to the by-election campaign. Second, the commission was to explore all the events and circumstances leading up to the violence; and finally, the commission was to identify the persons or political bodies who were responsible."³¹⁰ Through this investigation, the commission discovered that both political parties were involved in instigating local agitation. On July 3, 1949, JLP supporters disturbed a PNP rally of 300 persons by marching through the area. Violence erupted when stones were thrown and six people were injured.³¹¹ PNP supporters retaliated on July 4, in Gordon Town when they disrupted a JLP event. The evidence reported by the commission revealed that political candidates were complicating the process by breaking the peace agreement, encouraging violence by possessing fire-arms, and denouncing their opponent's character, which resulted in further conflict between supporters.³¹² The intensity of political corruption was evident when JLP political candidate, Mrs. Rose Leon, hired a professional boxer and petty criminal Eustace Cox, also known as

³¹⁰ Ibid; also mentioned in "Manley Charges JLP Preaches Violence Towards PNP, *The Daily Gleaner*, July 29, 1949, 1, 12.

³¹¹ Hearne Commission Report August 4, 1949, 1–5; also referenced in Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica, 52.

³¹² Ibid.

‘Gungoo,’ to act as protectors for her entourage.³¹³ Her PNP opponents were just as guilty of promoting violence by hiring Aston Nelson, also known as ‘Jar Man,’ to act as a bodyguard.³¹⁴

Politician Frank Gordon asserted that “people would attack you because you were a member of the PNP. You could not hold a meeting on the streets without confrontation. We had a councilor, Wills O. Isaacs, who said we must keep a meeting and get all the rough necks to come out and have a meeting on the streets, so you have to fight back. You had to build a counter force. Group 69 was part of it, and others.”³¹⁵ The use of petty thugs by acknowledged respectable politicians represented a toxic political system. That was further complicated by local denial by leaders such as Frank Gordon, who believed the PNP was innocent because their actions were defensive in protecting local constituents rather than offensive.

Group 69 was formed as a defense force for the Matthews Lane community to counter aggression from their JLP neighbors in the Tivoli Gardens district. Like previous gangs, members of Group 69 were desperate unemployed young men used by the PNP in the unionization efforts of the labor rebellion of 1938. However, by the 1950s, Group 69 was reconstituted as a gang. The formation of Group 69 in west Kingston allowed the PNP to aggressively defend their communities and defy the JLP’s efforts to oppress the party. The PNP’s efforts to openly challenge the JLP’s authority were reflected in a statement made by Minister of Parliament, N.N. Nethersole, to *The Daily Gleaner*:

³¹³ Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica, 53.

³¹⁴ “Manley Say’s Hearn Report Intemperate and Unbalanced,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXV. No. 183, August 9, 1949, 1, 11.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

We will resolutely oppose all demagogic thugs who attempt to reduce us to servility, and to suppress our rights to hold and express any individual opinions and to join and participate in the institutions and organizations that we support. We will defend those vital and fundamental rights to the death and we will defend our supporters and property when they are attacked and threatened, and for those purposes we will fight our attackers in the streets, in the lanes, on the housetops, until we have driven them into the sea.³¹⁶

The fact that the PNP leadership acknowledged the escalating violence and promised to retaliate in kind establishes a connection between politicians and local gangs. Based on the level of violence and the role of the political parties, the Hearne Commission concluded that the PNP was responsible for the eruption of violence. Manley responded to this conclusion by arguing that “the report was intemperate and unbalanced. I have been abused. I have been kicked when it suited them I have seen my own workers in the Party beaten at street corners.”³¹⁷ If the by-election violence involved both political parties, then, how did the Hearne Commission conclude that the PNP was solely to blame? The simple answer to this question is that members of the Hearne Commission examined the evidence, questioned the participants, and concluded that the PNP was the aggressor. Therefore, they were held responsible for the violence that erupted. This conclusion was somewhat questionable since the commission seemed inclined to ignore the JLP’s response to aggression, which made the party just as culpable for partisan conflict. Additionally, the report also meant that the PNP’s claim that their use of thugs was solely for defense purposes was false because the party was found guilty of instigating violence.

The PNP’s ability to participate in political subterfuge was temporarily suspended due to intra-party conflicts. The JLP’s propaganda about a PNP dominated by communists crystallized

³¹⁶ “Manley Charges JLP Preaches Violence Towards PNP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, July 29, 1949, 1, 12.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

on November 26, 1951, when an internal conflict between the right and left wings of the PNP erupted. Although Manley acted as a mediator between the factions to maintain peace within the PNP, he could not anticipate the scandal that divided the party. The problem was initiated when one of the leaders of the TUC and the right wing, Florizel Glasspole, broke his affiliation with the TUC and announced the formation of a new union—the National Labor Congress—which represented bauxite workers.³¹⁸ Sectarian polarization within the PNP occurred when the leaders of the left (Frank and Ken Hill, Richard Hart, and Arthur Henry) responded to this threat by demanding the expulsion of members of the right for their betrayal of the PNP. Glasspole, then, alleged that the left was actually attempting to seize control of the party through subversive actions.³¹⁹ Members of the right (Thossie Kelly and Walter McPherson) provided documentary evidence which showed the efforts of the left to undermine PNP authority via the formation of a communist party.

At this juncture, Manley intervened to prevent further conflict by forming a committee to investigate all aspects of this discord. The investigation revealed, George Eaton writes, that “documents prepared with the knowledge of the four H’s taught that only a communist party could protect workers and that workers would have to leave the PNP and form a communist party at some stage of the movement for freedom prior to which the working class may be part of a general national party like the PNP. Moreover, the four H’s and others formed a secret organization within the PNP to which they were bound by discipline and which was working to

³¹⁸ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, xxv; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 150.

³¹⁹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 50–51.

disrupt the PNP.”³²⁰ Manley tried to negotiate with both sides to prevent the split; however, Ken Hill aggressively attacked PNP politics and leadership. This resulted in the expulsion of the four H’s, and with them the loss of the TUC, the union base of the PNP. This necessitated the formation of the National Workers Union (NWU) to fill the gap.³²¹ Noel Nethersole, Florizel Glasspole, and Michael Manley were recruited by the PNP as leaders for the NWU, and the union quickly became popular and attracted many members. By 1952, NWU membership totaled 25,000 at the expense of the BITU. The crisis precipitated by the four H’s demanded the reorganization of the PNP. Consequently, Manley eliminated his socialist rhetoric to articulate PNP platform issues in order to protect the party from the JLP propaganda machine and post-World War II anti-communist paranoia. This allowed the PNP to emerge from this conflict victorious as a popular alternative to the JLP’s dominance. The intellectual radicalization of the PNP was especially attractive to the younger generation of Jamaicans that supported the idea of an independent Jamaica. However, the purging of the left from the PNP negatively affected the party because the four H’s represented the progressive and radical intellectual arm of the party. Thus, from 1952 onward, the PNP had been marginalized politically.

Continued JLP attacks against the PNP’s acceptance of communism—which many poor Jamaicans did not fully understand—and reports of JLP discord (such as the arrest of JLP candidate, Wilton Hill for possessing a weapon and breaking traffic laws) helped make the PNP a viable option in the 1955 general elections. Consequently, Manley was elected as prime minister while the PNP claimed victory in the elections, capturing eighteen seats while the JLP

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 151; Sherlock, Norman Manley, 155.

claimed fourteen.³²² Due to the fact that political violence centered around the various general elections, the first five years of the PNP's administration were relatively quiet, which allowed the PNP to focus on the development of the economy, education, agriculture, industry, and civil service reforms. Manley contended that steps had to be taken to develop Jamaica's infrastructure, "planning and rational administration were to be the mainspring of action in mobilizing, harnessing, and exploiting the human and financial resources of the country."³²³ With the election of Norman Manley as chief minister, it was time for a change; however, the partisan conflict remained since party leaders refused to acknowledge that their mobilization of foot-soldiers within the various constituencies generated political violence.

Manley's most important decisions centered on the administration of finances via the colonial Development and Welfare Organization, which provided financial assistance from Britain to the West Indies. Manley's budget for 1955–1957 encouraged the growth of the economy through the expansion of governmental programs. He also created the Central Planning Organization that annually published statistics charting the progress of the economy, and reviewed the progress of the various departments. Despite the PNP's efforts to develop the government, Manley acknowledged that "there were limits to what could be done. The government was without some of the institutions vital for regulating the economy."³²⁴ Manley carried out constitutional reforms aimed at recognizing the internal structure of the government by allowing the ministers of the House of Representatives to become independent

³²² "PNP Victory in Election"; "Few Incidents of Violence," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXI. No. 10, January 13, 1955, 1, 11.

³²³ Eaton, *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica*, 160.

³²⁴ Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, 163.

of the governor when passing laws. Manley reformed the civil service to make it more efficient, honest, advancement opportunity-oriented. However, the civil service reforms did not eliminate exploitation through political patronage such as the location and development of housing projects.³²⁵ In the field of education, Manley sought to create equal opportunities for all classes through the establishment of national scholarships to be available to all. Finally, he invested in agricultural reforms by offering incentives and facilitating soft loans to farmers. Manley argued that “like so many third world countries, Jamaica did not have the resources to finance its development. It was without capital,” Philip Sherlock writes.³²⁶ Consequently, the government needed to focus on providing incentives to private investors. Although the PNP continued to promote Jamaica’s development, Manley’s attention remained divided over the controversial West Indies Federation. The question of federation was a polarizing factor for the development of modern politics in Jamaica because federation would determine whether Jamaica sought independence or remained part of the British Commonwealth. In the ensuing debate that engulfed Jamaica, the question remained: Was federation a savior or hindrance for Jamaica and the wider West Indies?

The process of federation began as early as 1919 when the British government promoted a closer union among the islands, and members of the Royal Commission advocated federation because they believed that certain islands were unprepared for independence. According to members of the Royal Commission, the islands needed both the economic protection that federation could provide and secure and the guidance of strong political

³²⁵ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 170; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 163–167.

³²⁶ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 178.

leadership. Political scientist Douglas Anglin observes that “in 1919, a West Indies Court of Appeal was created; in 1924, the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was founded in Trinidad; and in 1934, a West Indian Trade Commissioner was appointed to Canada in order to further overcome local prejudice against federation and pave the way towards eventual political union.”³²⁷ Additionally, the Royal Commission supported the formation of the Development and Welfare Organization, which was responsible for the amalgamation of the various territories. The people of the West Indies were apprehensive about the federation and pressured the colonial administration for political independence.³²⁸ Despite the English-speaking Caribbean’s demand for independence, in March 1945, the British government pressed for federation instead. What followed was a series of conferences from April 1953 through February 1956 to convince and rally West Indian support for federation.³²⁹

As early as September 3, 1947, Manley reiterated his support for federation when he presented a speech at the Caribbean Labor Congress. He argued that the federation would be beneficial in protecting Caribbean interests in the international sphere. Manley said, “The history of civilization is a history of amalgamation from small things to large. I say it is evident that we must create out of ourselves large enough units. I say we must create a large enough area, small although it will be in the face of the colossi who bestride the world today, but a large enough area to give us a voice, and pull, and power over their international affairs which

³²⁷ Douglas G. Anglin, The Political Development of the West Indies, in The West Indies Federation, ed. David Lowenthal (NY: Columbia University Press, 1961), 39–40.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Anglin, The Political Development of the West Indies, 42.

in the long run determine the peace and prosperity and the opportunity for happiness of the three million people of these lands.”³³⁰

Once elected as prime minister in 1955 and again in 1959, Manley collaborated with the British government and tried to rally local support for the federation, which proved to be a difficult enterprise. This was especially so since Bustamante exploited the confusion about federation to propel him back into the spotlight.³³¹ Despite ten years of preparation for federation, Jamaican opinion had gradually changed as an economic boom from bauxite and tourism stabilized and improved the economy. Jamaicans became apprehensive about the effects of federation on the local economy such as the power of taxation, internal migration, and the role of customs unions.³³² However, the issues that Bustamante used to generate fear in Jamaica revolved around the power of federation to tax the various territories without their consent and whether internal migration might be allowed.

On February 23, 1956, the British Caribbean Federation Act was passed by the British parliament, and tentative steps towards the formation began. According to Douglas G. Anglin:

In 1955, Sir Stephen Luke comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies was designated commissioner for the preparation of the federal organization, and experts were appointed to prepare reports on the fiscal, civil services, and judicial implications of federation. This pre-federal executive quickly plunged into the task of organizing departments of government, appointing key officials and

³³⁰ “Gomes Hits Out at Bustamante as Labor Congress Opens”; Political and Economic Emancipation of the British Caribbean Area,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 114, September 3, 1947, 1, 11; also referenced in Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 166.

³³¹ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 185.

³³² PRO: CO 1031/ 2573. Letter. Events Leading up to Jamaica Referendum, Secretary of the Colonies, September 19, 1961, 1.

legislation and regulations, and attending all other problems, large and small associated with the establishment of a modern state.³³³

Between 1956 and 1958, Trinidad became the capital of the federation, and Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados was chosen as prime minister after Norman Manley declined the position. Manley said that “the job of first prime minister of the West Indies is a great job and it would assure to any man a place in history for all times. It is a far easier job than the job of continuing in the hard, bitter, tough fight for Jamaica, but I am not asking for an easy job. I am probably facing the last job of my life and I am taking a job where I believe I can make the largest contribution to my country.”³³⁴ Manley’s decision to remain in Jamaica undermined Bustamante’s attempt to create local agitation thereby making federation an election issue.³³⁵

The formation of the West Indies Federation resulted in two opposing parties. One was the Federal Labor Party which consisted of Norman Manley and Grantley Adams, and the other was the Democratic Labor Party, “a loose collection of territorial parties and individuals formed in 1957 by Alexander Bustamante.”³³⁶ Internal conflicts within both parties made these unions susceptible to any disruptions, such as the issue of representation based on population. The populations of the smaller islands, for example, were supposed to be the beneficiaries of federation; but in reality, they expressed doubts about replacing British leadership with a West Indian-based one and were suspicious of the intentions of the larger islands. The West Indian Federation’s legislature consisted of the Governor-General, a Prime Minister, Senate, and

³³³ Anglin, The Political Development of the West Indies, 42; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 169–175.

³³⁴ Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 169.

³³⁵ PRO: CO 1031/ 2573. Letter.

³³⁶ Anglin, The Political Development of the West Indies, 48.

House of Representatives.³³⁷ The Governor-General was appointed by the British government to serve on the West Indies Federation and protect British interests in the Caribbean. “The governor general personally appointed all the federal senators, justices of the Federal Supreme Court, and members of the Public Service Commission. He had the discretionary power to make appointments to offices in the public service of the federation and to dismiss and to exercise disciplinary control over officers, and he was not required to accept the advice of even his own Public Service Commission.”³³⁸ The role of the Governor-General within the federation ironically raises the question of whether the federation really represented freedom for the Caribbean. Regardless of the structural organization of federation, these various problems allowed Bustamante to challenge Manley’s support of federation, and nationalized the issue of federation, thereby, gaining control over a divisive election issue.

Since Bustamante was not as politically invested in federation as Manley, he argued that the JLP was against federation for Jamaica because the former’s ability to tax the colonies would retard Jamaica’s economic development. He pointed to Trinidad as an example, which was experiencing problems with federation immigration policies. With the formation of the federation, Trinidad had 10,000 migrants immigrating to the island. Consequently, Eric Williams demanded that the federation make “economic development of the Leeward and Windward islands a priority, in order to protect the wider Caribbean.”³³⁹ The JLP supported Bustamante, and contributed to the nationalization of the federation issue in Jamaica by exploiting local

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Anglin, The Political Development of the West Indies, 50.

³³⁹ Anglin, The Political Development of the West Indies, 70.

fears about the impact of federation on the economy.³⁴⁰ This issue was further politicized and exploited by Bustamante to confuse the Jamaican populace about federation and served to also mobilize grassroots supporters against the PNP.

The question of whether Jamaica should join the West Indies Federation or vote for independence further polarized Jamaicans into opposing JLP and PNP constituencies. Ordinary Jamaicans soon became concerned that the Jamaican people would be overwhelmed with the financial burden of federation, and fearful that free trade within the federation would make Jamaica a dumping ground for manufactured goods from Trinidad and the other islands, resulting in high unemployment.³⁴¹ Bustamante argued that he was against federation unless certain changes were instituted: representation based on population, a revised federal constitution, and removal of federal powers of taxation without prior territorial consent.³⁴² Bustamante further stirred up local suspicion when he contended that:

I am more suspicious of the motive behind this federation. Most of the British West Indian colonies have been asking for greater self-determination. As far as Jamaica is concerned we have left the stage of infancy and we have grown up into manhood where we can manage our own affairs, and I believe there are other West Indian islands almost in the same position. The reason why I have become suspicious about the motive relative to the formation of this federation is that whilst most of us West Indians have been asking for self-government, we are told that self-government for the time being is really not good for us and the thing we deserve is federation.³⁴³

What ensued as a result of JLP anti-Federation campaign was a national debate. The pro-JLP *The Daily Gleaner*, for example, was filled with dramatic headlines such as; 'Bigger

³⁴⁰ "Quit Federation Busta Say's," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXIV. No. 254, November 5, 1958, 1; also referenced in Michael Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley: Dilemmas of Socialism and Democracy* (London; Zed Books, 1985), 52; Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, 162–184.

³⁴¹ "Federation: Is Jamaica to Suffer Alone," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXIV. No. 194, August 27, 1958, 10.

³⁴² "Parliament and Politics," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XVIII. No. 38, November 9, 1958, 6.

³⁴³ "Federation; Government v. Pirate;" "Federation," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXV. No. 6, January 8, 1959, 7, 15.

Burden for Jamaica,' 'Quit Federation says Bustamante,' and 'Federation: Is Jamaica to Suffer Alone.' Headlines such as these helped to agitate the local populace, and forced Manley to defend the process of federation. Manley argued, "I believe I speak for the real sentiment of Jamaica, and I hope that I speak for the wider West Indies if we federate we must federate as self-governing units who voluntarily surrender some of the power which each has over his own to the common whole. I reject totally any sort of mis-marriage between colonial rule and federation, and I would predict for such a marriage an abortion as politics has never seen and I say that a federated West Indies cannot aim at any smaller immediate objective than dominion status."³⁴⁴

Based on the documents available, I believe that Manley was correct in his stipulation about Federation; this organizational body would have unified the Caribbean islands and empowered the federation government to negotiate and represent the various islands internationally. The Federation would have also offered protection to these struggling Third World countries as they entered the international business arena for the first time. My one concern, which was never fully explained by Norman Manley, was just how much control would the British government exert over the newly formed federation?

Bustamante's attempt to undermine the progress and success of the PNP government by vilifying the federation process ultimately failed. The problems with federation were insignificant since the Jamaican people were ready for a political change and were willing to give Norman Manley a chance to address real problems like high unemployment, government

³⁴⁴ Rex Nettleford, Manley and the New Jamaica, 167.

corruption and intimidation, and the general stagnation of the Jamaican economy. Despite Bustamante's concerns about the Federation, the PNP won re-election in 1959, claiming the majority twenty eight seats in the house, while the JLP won only sixteen seats.³⁴⁵ However, the crisis precipitated by the JLP's electioneering campaign persisted; and during Manley's second term as prime minister, he confronted a polarized, confused, and angry Jamaican populace that demanded answers to questions surrounding the federation. In an effort to promote the federation, the Secretary of State, Ian Macleod, met with Bustamante and other leaders of the minority party on June 14, 1960, to discuss their concerns. Bustamante said that "it looks as though England expected 3 million hungry people to make a success of federation without financial help, and nothing substantial has been done to make federation a practical possibility. He was loyal to the U.K. but his first loyalty must be to Jamaica."³⁴⁶

The Secretary of State acknowledged that although a great divide existed over federation, the decision whether to join or not must be made by the people. Manley informed the Secretary of State that "if it was impossible to reach agreement on the character and structure of an independent federation, Jamaica would insist on withdrawing and would seek independence as a dominion on her own, leaving Trinidad and the other islands free to form a smaller but perfectly logical and viable federation by themselves."³⁴⁷ Bustamante's nationalization of the federation debate allowed the JLP to once again gain the political

³⁴⁵ "The PNP wins Smashing Comeback," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXV. No. 173, July 29, 1959, 1, 4.

³⁴⁶ PRO: CO 1031/ 2573. Letter. "Events leading up to Jamaica referendum," Secretary of the colonies, September 19, 1961, 1. Located at the Public Record Office in London, this document provides valuable information about the controversy surrounding the development of Federation in the West Indies.

³⁴⁷ PRO: CO 1031/ 2573. Letter. 2.

spotlight, forcing Manley and the PNP to go on the defensive via the mobilization of grassroots supporters.

By May 31, 1960, Bustamante further exploited Manley's vulnerability by announcing his decision to resign from the Federation's Democratic Labor Party in order to support his theory that federation would destroy the Jamaican economy. With public pressure growing, Manley announced his intention to call a referendum which would allow the Jamaican populace to decide if Jamaica should remain a part of federation and ultimately resolve the question about independence. The reality of a vote against federation was that it was unclear who would lead Jamaica into independence. The battle cry of the parties was "power for the PNP and Freedom for the JLP."³⁴⁸ Manley asserted that "I have decided to put the matter to the final test in the only way such matters can be put to the final test. I have decided to go to the people and ask them to vote on one single question all by itself, the question is, do we stay in the federation or do we get out? Yes, we stay. No, we go."³⁴⁹ The question about federation was pivotal to the PNP's political future because the wrong decision could have resulted in Manley's losing of the next general elections.

Although partisan violence was comparatively subdued due to doubts about Jamaica's political future, mobilized foot-soldiers for both political parties acted to protect their constituencies. *The Daily Gleaner* reported that most political violence was concentrated in the west Kingston Tivoli Gardens district where several shanty homes were destroyed by politically

³⁴⁸ Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, 174–175; "The JLP is Back in Power," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 85, April 11, 1962, 1, 2.

³⁴⁹ Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, 176.

motivated arson. Since the local police were expecting political protests generated by the elections, riot police were sent with the local fire brigade to subdue any post-election violence.³⁵⁰ However, the violence surrounding the fire elicited minor local protest; election violence erupted when the JLP candidate, Edward Seaga, visited the district. According to reports, the problem erupted when Seaga arrived at the polling station in Denham Town and was assaulted by someone in the crowd. In the confusion that followed, Clarence Harris was stabbed in the side and the police intervened and used tear gas to disperse the crowd.³⁵¹ But the violence continued when Wilburne Johnson was also repeatedly stabbed by JLP supporters. The rioting escalated as the local police reported further acts of partisan violence that included mob violence, assault, destruction of property, and drive-by shootings. Although the police visited several hot spots throughout the day, violence continued sporadically. Preventative police raids in Union Gardens also resulted in the confiscation of a cache of Molotov cocktails in the shop of Herman Graham. Nine of the homemade bombs had been used in prior political actions and, acting on tips, the local police seized the remaining bombs. Although the PNP successfully defeated the JLP in 1959, the questions about Jamaica's independence or federation created a sense of political desperation and intensified the competition for political office which resulted in an escalation in violence against political candidates and foot-soldiers alike.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ "The JLP is Back in Power," *The Daily Gleaner*, April 11, 1962, 1, 2.

³⁵¹ "Two Stabbed, One Shot as Factions Clashed," *The Daily Gleaner*, April 11, 1962. 2.

³⁵² Ibid.

The debate over whether to stay in the federation was complicated and overshadowed in the national media by an attempt by Rastafarians to overthrow the colonial Jamaican government. The Rastafarian religion elicited a volatile reaction from the wider society because Rastafarian beliefs departed from conventional religious beliefs by promoting radical Black Nationalism and revolutionary violence.³⁵³ For example, Rastafarians considered whites evil because they controlled the colonial system which they saw as oppressive to and exploitative of Jamaicans. The Rastafarian Movement evolved as a result of various religious and political leaders' influences. Ernest Cashmore contends that Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa movement, as well as the visibility of blacks in power, influenced Rastafarian ideology. It is difficult to define Rastafarianism as a religion or a cult because there is no clear locus of final authority beyond the individual member. Additionally, there are different sects within Rastafarianism just like there are different Protestant denominations. Rasta ideology is loosely defined, and doctrine

³⁵³ Ernest Cashmore, Rastaman: The Rastafarian Movement in England (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1979), 6; the culture of Rastafarianism is also referenced in Leonard E. Barrett, The Rastafarians: A Study in Messianic Cultism (Puerto Rico: Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1968), 20–50; Leonard Barrett, The Rastafarians: the Dreadlocks of Jamaica (London: Heinemann, 1977), 10–100; Martha W. Beckwith, "Some Religious Cults in Jamaica," *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 34, (1923): 32–45; Dick Hebdige, "Reggae Rastas and Rudies," *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, 8 (Summer 1975): 135–154; Sheila Kitzinger, "The Rastafarian brethren of Jamaica," *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, Vol. 9, (1966): 33–39; Sheila Kitzinger, "Protest and Mysticism: The Rastafarian cult of Jamaica," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall 1969): 240–62; George E. Simpson, "Political cultism in West Kingston Jamaica," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (1955): 133–49; George E. Simpson, "The Rastafari Movement in Kingston Jamaica," *Social Forces*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (1955): 159–71.

was a matter of individual interpretation since there was no leader to impose his authority and unite the movement.³⁵⁴

The Rastafarian attempt to overthrow the government was inspired by Alexander Bedward, a leader of the Baptist Free Church, who supported millennial prophecies, and proclaimed himself to be the re-incarnation of Jesus Christ and that he would ascend to heaven on December 13, 1920, at 10 am. After three days, he would return and carry his followers to heaven, where he would create the perfect world.³⁵⁵ Bedward appealed to Jamaican Black Nationalism when, “he told his followers of an impending holocaust in which all whites would be destroyed and the blacks redeemed,” historian Ernest Cashmore writes.³⁵⁶ Bedward’s followers lost faith and withdrew from the movement when his ascension to heaven failed to materialize. Due to his erratic assertions, Bedward was committed to Bellevue Mental Asylum in Kingston, where he later died in 1930.³⁵⁷

Marcus Garvey influenced the Rastafarian Movement when he participated in sponsoring fundamental societal changes that were engineered by local blacks. Garvey did not believe that real changes could effectively reconstruct European colonialism, which oppressed and fragmented blacks culturally and intellectually. Since Garvey was part of a historical continuation of the Back-to-Africa movement, he advocated that program because only in

³⁵⁴ Cashmore, Rastaman, 7; also referenced in Beckwith, Some Religious Cultism in Jamaica, 32–45; Hebdige, “Reggae, Rastas and Rudies,” 40–45; Kitzinger, “Protest and Mysticism,” 39; Simpson, “The Rastafarian Movement in Kingston Jamaica,” 159–71.

³⁵⁵ Cashmore, Rastaman, 8–10; also referenced in Hebdige, “Reggae, Rasta’s and Rudies,” 135–54; Kitzinger, “Protest and Mysticism,” 240–62.

³⁵⁶ Cashmore, Rastaman, 19; also referenced in Simpson, “Political Cultism in west Kingston Jamaica,” 133–49.

³⁵⁷ Cashmore, Rastaman, 19.

Africa could blacks attain true equality.³⁵⁸ Garvey created the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 in Jamaica and the U.S. in an effort to promote reform on behalf of blacks. Garvey failed due to colonial interference as the French, British, and U.S. governments acted to contain and isolate a colony of emigrants of African descent. The duplicity of a corrupt Liberian government, which did not want Garvey's back-to-Africa dream fulfilled, and internal corruption within the UNIA, contributed to his failure. When Garvey did finally return to Jamaica, he was ignored by his own people and he died in 1940 in London. Ernest Cashmore argues that Garvey's ideologies did change black self-conceptions through 'an emancipation of the mind.'³⁵⁹ These ideologies were the foundations for the Rastafarian Movement.

Garvey's prophesy said, "Look to Africa where a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near."³⁶⁰ Around this phrase, an entire religious system was created. Garvey's prophesy was fulfilled in November 1930 when the Ras Tafari, the prince regent of Ethiopia was crowned emperor and transformed into Haile Salassie I, "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the all-conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the self-proclaimed redeemer of all blacks by promising the return of blacks to Africa."³⁶¹ Garvey's supporters usurped the prophesy and transformed the ideology of black power into the Rastafarian movement, whereby poor blacks were empowered to foster change.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Cashmore, Rastaman, 21; also referenced in Barrett, The Rastafarians, 10–60; Beckwith, "Some Religious Cults in Jamaica," 32–45.

³⁶⁰ Cashmore, Rastaman, 23; also referenced in Hebdige, "Reggae, Rastas and Rudies," 135–54; Kitzinger, "Protest and Mysticism," 33–9.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

The Rastafarian movement lacked centralized unity and organization. The only area that Rastafarians agreed on was the recognition of Haile Selassie as the redeemer of black people.³⁶² Those who supported the radical ideologies that the world would be ‘miraculously transformed’ by Haile Selassie began recruiting and preaching to the masses of Kingston in the early 1930s.³⁶³ Rastafarian ideology depicted whites as the enemy sent to oppress and enslave blacks, who could only be saved when they returned to Ethiopia. The evolution of the Rastafarian movement was shaped by a notorious leadership. For example, local Rastafarian leaders, Leopold Howell and Robert Hinds, in 1933, experienced many confrontations with the law and their subsequent arrests for sedition and disorderly conduct attracted negative attention.³⁶⁴ According to Ernest Cashmore, “Howell organized the Ethiopian Salvation Society in 1940, took his 1,600 followers to an abandoned estate at Pinnacle, St. Catherine, where they set up their own self-sufficient commune. Howell’s commune was subjected to frequent police raids due to drug use.”³⁶⁵ What becomes evident by the 1930s after Howell’s failure is that Rastafarians operated on the periphery of Jamaican society, and by the 1960s, leaders such as Claudius Henry were willing to use violence to accomplish their goals.

The development of modern politics in Jamaica is rooted in union-related violence. An examination of the formation of labor unions revealed that in 1938, unionization produced national rebellions and state-oppression generated violence. Therefore, it is not surprising that

³⁶² Cashmore, *Rastaman*, 26; also referenced in Kitzinger, “Protest and Mysticism,” 240–62; Simpson, “The Rastafarian Movement in Kingston Jamaica,” 159–71.

³⁶³ Cashmore, *Rastaman*, 24; Simpson, “The Rastafarian Movement in Kingston Jamaica,” 159–71.

³⁶⁴ Cashmore, *Rastaman*, 25; also referenced in Hebdige, “Reggae, Rasta’s and Rudies,” 140–50; Kitzinger, “Protest and Mysticism,” 33–9.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Rastafarians involved in the Henry Rebellion in 1960 were inclined to mobilize, using violence. Claudius Henry returned to Jamaica in 1959 from the United States and founded the African Reform Church. Henry proclaimed himself God's prophet and sold tickets to Rastafarians who wanted to return to Africa.³⁶⁶ Thousands sold their personal possessions and waited for the ship that would take them home. However, when this failed to materialize, the local Rastafarians were disappointed, disillusioned, and stranded with nowhere to go. The government charged Henry with fraud. He was found guilty and sentenced to twelve months in jail.³⁶⁷

The threat that the Rastafarian movement represented to the wider Jamaican society revealed itself in a raid on Claudius Henry's residence by police on April 12, 1960. Confiscated at the scene were "detonators, dynamite, home-made bombs, guns, machetes, and swords."³⁶⁸ After the discovery, Henry and several of his followers were arrested for "conspiring to overthrow the government and treason."³⁶⁹ The government's security forces discovered through their investigation that some of Henry's followers were plotting a rebellion. Rumors of Rasta military exercises aimed at overthrowing the government resulted in a raid by the local security forces that discovered a cache of firearms at the Rastafarian commune located in Red Hills.³⁷⁰ During the raid, there ensued a shootout between police and Rastas. As a result, two members of the British Royal Hampshire Regiment were killed as the suspects fled in a hijacked

³⁶⁶ Cashmore, Rastaman, 28; also referenced in Kitzinger, "Protest and Mysticism," 240–62; Simpson, "Political Cultism in west Kingston," 130–40.

³⁶⁷ Cashmore, Rastaman, 29; Hebdige, "Reggae, Rastas and Rudies," 135–45.

³⁶⁸ Cashmore, Rastaman, 30; Simpson, "The Rastafarian Movement in Kingston Jamaica," 159–71.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Cashmore, Rastaman, 31; also referenced in the Jamaica Hansard: Proceedings of the House of Representative of Jamaica, 1960–1961, 436.

vehicle. This incident was followed by a massive manhunt to find the assailants, with 1,000 members of the joint security forces who searched the island, causing panic until Monday June 27, when the four suspects, all Americans, were caught in a shop located in Sligoville. Later, another six suspects were apprehended. One of the six, Ronald Henry, was the son of Claudius Henry.³⁷¹ The uprising led by Ronald and Claudius Henry was disruptive for Jamaica because seven of the men arrested were American Rastas affiliated with the radical First African Corps, a New York-based organization that sympathized with the Jamaican Rastaman cause, and also because those arrested possessed automatic weapons. This raised the question, how did these local Rastas acquire such weapons? The uprising threatened political order on the island. A total of eight men were arrested, including Ronald Henry. The men were charged with plotting to overthrow the government; and murderer, Ronald Henry, was executed in March 1961 for the crimes he committed. Henry's execution served as an example that the Jamaican government would not tolerate rebellion.³⁷² However, the Henry Rebellion confirmed the problem with political violence in Jamaica.

Despite the debate, the political backlash from this incident resulted in increased hostility towards local enclaves of Rastafarians and open assaults and raids against their communities.³⁷³ Manley responded to the crisis aggressively when he said, "recently there has developed a section of the Rastafari movement which introduced two new elements. The first was the positive preachment of violence against the country as a whole, and the second was its

³⁷¹ Ibid; also referenced in "Williams Always saw Manley as Next WI Premier," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVI. No. 261, November 22, 1960, 1.

³⁷² Cashmore, *Rastaman*, 31–32.

³⁷³ Cashmore, *Rastaman*, 32–33.

association with foreign elements in the United States of America. It will be the policy of government to pursue relentlessly and to stamp out completely every trace of this new movement of violence in this country.”³⁷⁴ Although Manley promised swift action against all forces aimed at disrupting the Jamaican government, he acted with compassion and restraint by ordering members of the UWI to conduct an investigation into the practices and beliefs of Rastafarians in an effort to find a peaceful resolution to Rastafarians’ complaints.

This decision was criticized by Alexander Bustamante who believed that Rastas violated local laws through their use of “ganja” (marijuana) in their religious ceremonies. Bustamante’s antagonism towards the Rastafarian culture was rooted in the Rastas’ opposition to Bustamante’s conservative nationalistic approach. They also created a spiritual, cultural, and political discourse that was much more inclusive than Bustamante’s use of nationalism for his own political ambitions. The Rasta rebellion was detrimental to local government because Rastafarian complaints and concern about a white political structure resulted in the threat of violence as seen in a reported plot to overthrow the government. Continued Rasta dissatisfaction and abuse by police led to local rebels independently attempting to overthrow the established government, proving that local politicians’ control over grassroots supporters was tenuous at best and, more importantly, that the fragmented political system was flawed.

Although the Henry Rebellion of 1960 remained controversial, Manley had to re-focus his efforts to address the federation problems. Bustamante continued to pressure Manley about seceding from the Federation. He accused Manley of “planning to sell out Jamaica to the

³⁷⁴ Jamaica Hansard, “Proceedings of the House of Representatives of Jamaica,” Session 1969–61, No.3, 436–438; “Manley: Four problems,” *The Daily Gleaner*, November 22, 1960.

smaller islands.”³⁷⁵ Due to the confusion about federation, Manley acted as a mediator for Federation and he tried to negotiate changes to the federal constitution that would protect Jamaica’s interests. Manley threatened to withdraw Jamaica from the Federation if the power to take over the economy of countries within the Federation was not eliminated. Continued public pressure resulted in Manley’s extemporaneously announcing the referendum. The question of federation resolved itself on September 19, 1961, when Jamaica’s referendum was completed and 35,535 Jamaicans (fifty-four percent of the population) voted against federation. Manley responded to the results when he said, “tens of thousands will grieve at this defeat of their hopes for the future and I share their sorrow.”³⁷⁶ This was the first of two disappointments that Manley suffered when he called an early election in 1962 and lost to the JLP, which gained twenty six seats while the PNP won nineteen.³⁷⁷ After the election, the newly formed Jamaican government headed by Alexander Bustamante petitioned the British government for independence; a request that was granted.

Conclusion

On August 6, 1962, when Jamaica gained independence, Norman Manley claimed victory for advancing Jamaica from a colony to independence while reminiscing on his tenure in office, and claimed that the country’s infrastructure was stronger due to his economic programs. Yet, despite these achievements, political violence persisted. In the 1940s, both Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley—the forefathers of modern Jamaican politics—

³⁷⁵ Cashmore, Rastaman, 184.

³⁷⁶ Sherlock, Norman Manley, 187.

³⁷⁷ PRO: CO 1031/ 2573. Letter. 1–3.

engaged in political subterfuge to win elections, and developed the framework for political violence. Although the violence of the 1940s through the 1950s might be described as less intense than the bloodshed of the 1960s, the willingness of loyal party supporters to engage in partisan violence cannot be overlooked, and was reflected in the Gordon Town incident. According to Amanda Sives, “these experiences of political participation formed through violence on the streets, whether political party or trade-union inspired, helped to define the way in which the relationships developed between individuals, their parties and their government on the streets of Kingston.”³⁷⁸

This chapter contends that while Norman Manley did not directly advocate violence as Alexander Bustamante, he was involved in the creation and institutionalization of a framework of political violence which was sanctioned. Under Norman Manley’s regime, the evolution continued with the eruption of PNP-affiliated violence that was reported in the 1949 Hearne Report. The Hearne Report documented that the increase in casualties was due to the use of automatic weapons by gangs. The Hearne Commission further concluded that although both parties were guilty for the sectarian violence, the PNP was blamed for the eruption of violence in Gordon Town, which sparked the ensuing riot. Coupled with the Hearne Report findings were *The Daily Gleaner* editorials that condemned the various parties’ use of violence: “it is obvious that violence is being spawned in this political contest.”³⁷⁹ This was followed by increased political violence in both the 1955 and 1959 general elections when the police department reported on further JLP and PNP clashes, shootings, and riots.

³⁷⁸ Sives, The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica, 59.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

Violence continued to escalate in the Henry Rebellion of 1960 when local Rastafarians, using Jamaica's union and political legacy of violence, organized a rebellion against the established government. Despite the brutal suppression of the Rastas, Henry's willingness to use violence highlights the problem with political polarization in modern Jamaican politics. The evolution of political violence represented a process that continued to develop despite Bustamante and Manley's withdrawal from politics. This system will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Changing Faces of Jamaican Politics

Introduction

The late 1960s was a period of transformation for Jamaican political leadership and the use of political violence. By 1967, an old and infirm Bustamante at age 83 was preparing to retire and relinquish the reins of power to younger and popular Jamaica Labor Party leaders such as Donald Sangster and Hugh Shearer. In the 1960 elections, deaths and injuries through firearms totaled nineteen cases. By 1969, the number had increased to two hundred and six. Political violence was a consequence of the two-party system, which was manipulated by party leaders to protect their interests.³⁸⁰

The social divisions that polarized the Jamaican society were reflected in the growth of political violence, which was evident during the “Henry Rebellion,” when Henry’s followers—dissatisfied with the legacy of colonialism represented by the local government—used automatic weapons against the local security forces. The Henry Rebellion was followed by the Coral Gardens conflict in 1963, where three Rastafarians attacked a gas station; an anti-Chinese riots in 1965, when Chinese-owned businesses were looted and destroyed by angry mobs, allegedly jealous of their success; and rioting in 1966 over labor disputes that resulted in the JLP’s imposition of a state of emergency. Finally, in 1968, a state of emergency was once again declared when followers of the Black Power Movement protested in the streets about the

³⁸⁰ PNP Pamphlet, Budget Debate 2005–2006: A sound foundation, A secure future, April 20, 2005, 7–11, features a historical overview of the party; Dr. Ivan Cruikshank. Interview, University of the West Indies, July 25, 2005.

Shearer government's decision to prevent University of the West Indies (UWI) instructor, Dr. Walter Rodney, from entering Jamaica.³⁸¹ Unlike the 1930s, , events such as these and many more during the 1960s signified a transitional phase, whereby confrontations between the state apparatus and partisan supporters escalated into frequent violence. Jamaica was becoming increasingly a volatile society, characterized by civil unrests, gang violence, and police aggression.

This chapter examines the relationship between the political process and gun violence in the 1960s. Of equal importance to the patterns of political violence was the rise of gun violence through "garrison politics," as the JLP and PNP developed paramilitary units which responded to the increasing political fragmentation and economic pressures. Although Bustamante continued to lead the country and the JLP in the early 1960s, his failing health forced him to turn the party over to his younger protégés. Consequently, after Alexander Bustamante retired, leaders such as Donald Sangster, Hugh Shearer, and Edward Seaga, took Jamaican politics in a new direction via governmental reform. Donald Sangster and Hugh Shearer attempted to lead the JLP independently of Bustamante's influence and to combat a PNP political machine that was in the process of reforming and seeking to attract a popular and youthful base. The violence of the 1960s was significant because it signaled an increase in political conflict and a transition to open political warfare between the parties as well as the nationalization of

³⁸¹ Terry Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970 (Britain: Manchester University Press, 1977), 86–90.

violence that engulfed and further polarized the country. Problems within the political arena were exacerbated by a failing economy with an unemployment rate of thirty two percent.³⁸²

As part of an era of transition for the JLP, Donald Sangster became the second Prime Minister of Jamaica on February 23, 1967. He was born on October 26, 1911; his father was W.B. Sangster, a land surveyor in St. Elizabeth. Donald Sangster attended Munro College from 1921–1929, and practiced law as a solicitor in 1937. He began his political career at the age of 21 when he was elected to the St. Elizabeth Parochial Board on June 22, 1933, a position he retained until 1949.³⁸³ Sangster entered national politics in 1949 when he won a seat in the general elections for southern St. Elizabeth. This victory was followed with an appointment as the Minister of Social Welfare. In 1950, Sangster became the Deputy Leader of the JLP and was also appointed as Finance Minister; he also later served in both the House and the Senate.³⁸⁴ Sangster and the JLP were displaced in the 1955 general elections by an aggressive PNP opposition. However, the PNP's failure to make the West Indies Federation a reality for Jamaica allowed the JLP to return to power in 1962. As *The Daily Gleaner* reported in a 1997 history of the party,

Shortly after independence in 1962, Bustamante affirmed Sangster's political credentials by naming him Deputy Prime Minister even though such a post did not exist, and still does not, in the constitution. Then in 1964 when Bustamante's failing eyesight forced him to pull out of the day-to-day leadership, and so he

³⁸² Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 30–33.

³⁸³ "Genesis in the Beginning," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. 160. No. 129, 1997, Sec. A. October 23, These articles written from 1995 to 1997 were part of a series honoring Jamaica's past Prime Ministers in *The Daily Gleaner*.

³⁸⁴ "Prime Ministers of Independent Jamaica," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. 85. No. 65, Sec. B. July 10, 1995.

chose February 21, 1967, three days before Bustamante's 83rd birthday as the date of the first general election in which for the first time since 1944 Bustamante would not be at the helm of the campaign.³⁸⁵

Despite Bustamante's retirement, the JLP emerged victorious in the February 1967 general elections with thirty three seats to the PNP's twenty.

In a series of articles reviewing Sangster's life and career, a reporter for *The Daily Gleaner* in 1997 wrote, "Though a private man whose real personal friends were a minimum, Donald Sangster was a likeable politician. With no fanfare or formalities; no wife; no mother; no father; no sister; no brother to hug with joy and share this time of glory and congratulate him even the staff at Vale Royal knew that Donald Sangster had been sworn in as Prime Minister of Jamaica."³⁸⁶ Prime Minister Sangster's personal life remained private, and he was not well known by the Jamaican people. Sangster supported Caribbean solidarity and wanted that bond of unity translated into reforms for Jamaica's political affairs. Unfortunately, his death four months into his 1967 term prevented not only true reforms but also hindered acceptance by the local populace, which allowed Hartely Neita to refer to Sangster as "the forgotten prime minister."³⁸⁷ Despite his short term as Prime Minister, Donald Sangster remained critical of the previous PNP government and openly denounced the PNP for being corrupt and violent incompetents who exploited the people, which was conventional political rhetoric in both parties.

³⁸⁵ "Sangster Governed by Loyalty," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. 159. No. 128, October 22, 1997, 2.

³⁸⁶ "Sangster in Lonely Splendor," *The Daily Gleaner*, October 21, Vol. 158. No. 127, 1997, 5.

³⁸⁷ "A Quiet Giant," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. 157. No. 126, October 20, 1997, 2.

Unfortunately, any faith that the people had in the newly elected JLP government to lead a united people and independent Jamaica into a true democracy proved disastrous.³⁸⁸ Instead of promoting national unity, the leaders of both political parties polarized Jamaica by creating a political environment dominated by partisan politics and political gangsterism. When the JLP returned to power in 1962, they cleaned house by terminating the appointments of those civil servants who had been elected for their credentials and expertise because they served the government by invitation of the PNP. These civil servants were removed as an act of political patronism that in turn effectively destabilized the JLP government by creating a new class of enemies.³⁸⁹ According to *The Daily Gleaner* journalist Thomas Wright, in 1967, all Jamaicans suffered because of the patronage system: “entire constituencies and in some cases the larger portions of whole parishes which had not voted for the JLP at the last general election were victimized. Government housing units went exclusively to carefully selected and

³⁸⁸ “JLP has Divided the Nation”; “Seaga has Failed to Provide Leadership,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 32, February 9, 1967, 10, 27.

³⁸⁹ “Loss of Jobs Brings Despair, Bitterness,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 24, January 28, 1966, 3; “Myrtle Bank Domestic Workers Choose NWU”; “Another City Waterfront Dispute Erupt,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 27, February 5, 1966, 16; “Sangster Charged with Discrimination”; “Arnett arrested, charged with Obstructing Police,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 41, February 18, 1966, 1, 2, 20; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Statement by the BITU”; “Hopeton Caven: No Wonder Marchers were Attacked,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 61, April 16, 1966, 2, 8; “Shearer in the Cabinet not Democracy at all”; “Danger Signals in Jamaica’s Political Development,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 62, April 18, 1966, 10, 15; “Eldemire Expresses Alarm at Series of Organized Strikes and Violence,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 63, April 19, 1966, 2; “Labor Takes 33 Seats, PNP 20,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 43, February 22, 1967, 1; “JLP Men Shot dead; Gunmen on 2 Hour Rampage,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXVIII. No. 8, February 19, 1967, 1; “Labor Takes 33 Seats, PNP 20,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 22, 1967, 1; “Violence Escalates as Rival Party Clashes,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 43, February 23, 1967, 1.

known supporters of the JLP. This was particularly so in western Kingston, where supporters of the PNP and even those who were completely neutral in their politics, were so rigidly excluded from housing and jobs in government projects, there resulted a sense of hopelessness and frustration.”³⁹⁰ The desperation created by unemployment fueled the political violence of the 1960s.

In spite of the political struggle between the JLP and PNP, Sangster was critical of political violence and encouraged party supporters to avoid participating in violent conflicts against PNP supporters. Denouncing political gangsterism, Sangster said, “However, political violence does not exist in a vacuum. It takes people to be violent, and other people to encourage them. Both parties solemnly declare that they are against violence. Yet violence continues. How can that be? Each side considers it necessary to ‘defend’ themselves against the violence of their opponent. Nobody of course, has the courage to be the first to put a stop to this system of defense and counter-defense. So declarations of non-violence continue side-by-side with actions of violence.”³⁹¹ With increasing tension between JLP and PNP supporters and a financial crisis in the economy, the Sangster government’s popularity declined. Unfortunately, a health crisis prevented Sangster from creating a lasting legacy of leadership for Jamaica.

On Sunday March 18, 1967, while working on the government’s yearly budget, Donald Sangster “complained of nausea, vomiting, and an intense headache.”³⁹² A physical

³⁹⁰ *Department of Statistics* (1966) *Employment, Earnings and Hours in Large Establishments 1965*, (Kingston: Department of Statistics).

³⁹¹ “JLP has Divided the Nation,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 9, 1967, 10.

³⁹² “Sangster Governed by Loyalty,” *The Daily Gleaner*, October 22, 1997, 2.

examination and tests by Dr. A.L. McFarlane revealed that Sangster suffered from a brain hemorrhage; he was ordered to remain in bed and avoid the strenuous responsibilities associated with political office. Sangster's high blood pressure resulted in a decision by his doctor to transport the prime minister to the Neurological Institute of the Royal Victorian Hospital in Montreal, Canada, where he could be properly diagnosed and treated.³⁹³ The Deputy Leader of the JLP (D.C. Tavares) was appointed as the acting prime minister. While in Canada, Sangster's condition further deteriorated and he died on April 11, 1967. The same day, Hugh Lawson Shearer, the Minister of External Affairs, was appointed as Jamaica's third prime minister.³⁹⁴

Biography

Hugh L. Shearer was born in Martha Brae, Trelawney, on May 18, 1920, to James Shearer, reportedly a veteran of the First World War, and Esther Lindo, a dress maker and member of the prominent Lindo family. However, the family resided with Esther's grandfather, Fredrick Lindo, who was not only the Deacon of the local Baptist church but also a small farmer.³⁹⁵ Hugh Shearer was raised in a strict family and was compelled to attend mandatory church services. He performed light chores around the farm such as carrying water from the local river to the house; but he had no interest in becoming a professional farmer. He attended

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Hartley Neita, Hugh Shearer: A Voice for the People (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), 11–14; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, August 5, 1967; Olive Senior, Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage (Jamaica: Twin Guinep Publishers, 2003), 5–20.

the Barracks government school in Falmouth, and won a scholarship to attend St. Simons College in 1935 to pursue a secondary education.³⁹⁶ According to his biographer, Hartley Neita, Shearer was a “tall, lanky, exuberant school boy, laughing, zestful, quick witted, and high spirited with an eye for the girls.”³⁹⁷ Shearer completed his secondary education in 1940, and was then employed by his uncle, Lynden Newland, who worked for the BITU’s weekly newspaper, the *Jamaica Worker*. Shearer claimed that his job “was to edit the letters sent to the union by its members and supporters principally for publication in the *Jamaica Worker*. You must remember that, at this time, illiteracy in Jamaica was very high and many of these men and women could barely read and write. Their letters needed translation.”³⁹⁸

Shearer learned the practical applications of journalism on the job via his uncle, Lynden Newland, who was a professional journalist. Shearer was a good student and quickly became proficient at organizing and writing insightful and scintillating editorials, some of which are cited in this chapter. Shearer began his career when the Second World War was declared, and the British colonial government used censorship as a method of preventing rebellion.

³⁹⁶ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 18.

³⁹⁷ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 22; “Mr. Lindo promoted to Local Office,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CI. No. 209, September 7, 1935, 10.

³⁹⁸ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 42; also referenced in the *Daily Gleaner*, “Jamaica Pay’s Homage to Donald Sangster”; “Shearer—It Took Him 26 Years,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXVIII. No. 16, April 16, 1967, 1, 2, 6; “Bustamante Placed Under Detention”; “Workers Protest Busta’s Arrest and Violence Erupts,” *Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVI. No. 279, September 9, 1940, 3, 10; “Labor Union to Carry on”; “Principles Involved in Postponing the Election,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVI. No. 211, September 10, 1940, 3, 9; “Union Activity and Protest Continues”; “Manley: We Stand for True Unity in our Country,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVI. No. 216, September 16, 1940, 4, 10; “Out look for Sugar in Jamaica”; “A Visit to the Labor Leader in Internment Camp,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVI. No. 279, November 28, 1940, 4, 6.

Consequently, the *Jamaica Worker*, a public forum for the BITU, was subjected to intense government censorship and all articles had to be approved by the locally appointed government censor, Inspector Long.³⁹⁹ As a reporter for the *Jamaica Worker*, Shearer had constant contact with Alexander Bustamante, who was influential in not only politicizing Shearer but also in educating him about the level of poverty that Jamaican workers endured.⁴⁰⁰ Shearer witnessed political conflict within the BITU while Bustamante was detained in 1940. Bustamante argued that Manley's management of the union was problematic because he was not consulted or included in the decision-making process.⁴⁰¹

In the subsequent days, Bustamante expelled those BITU leaders such as acting president, H.M Shirley, for betraying him. Hugh Shearer claimed that Bustamante stipulated that he was "going to keep on sweeping until the office is purified of Norman Manley's godsons, who should have been thrown out of the union long ago. When you discover traitors around you, son, get rid of them fast. If you don't, they will get rid of you."⁴⁰² It is my contention that Shearer forged a bond with Bustamante when he was promoted to assistant

³⁹⁹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 43; "BITU Censored," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 215, September 24, 1947, 10; "Labor Organization Intensified," *Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 280, December 17, 1942, 10.

⁴⁰⁰ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 44–45; also referenced in Gladys Bustamante, The Memoirs of Lady Bustamante (Jamaica: Kingston Publishing, 1997) 20–80; Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 79.

⁴⁰¹ "Conflict Between Manley and Busta Over the BITU," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CV. No. 89, April 20, 1939, 10; also referenced in Neita, Hugh Shearer, 48–53; "Bustamante and Manley Disagree," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 53, March 5, 1938, 10; "Sugar Agreement Handicaps Industry," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIV. No. 51, March 3, 1938, 1.

⁴⁰² Neita, Hugh Shearer, 55; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Bustamante Betrayed by Manley he Claims," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 50, February 27, 1942, 1, 2; "BITU Purged of Traitors," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 46, March 2, 1942, 10.

editor for the *Jamaica Worker* and assigned the responsibility of meeting with Inspector Long to submit Bustamante's schedule for review, which was one of the requirements of his release. Shearer had the responsibility for organizing for the BITU, leading strikes, performing clerical duties, and helping to develop strategies for negotiations.⁴⁰³ Shearer was also encouraged to participate in union rallies after Bustamante found him to be a charismatic and articulate speaker. According to Hartley Neita, "his style of speaking was rooted in Baptist pulpitry. He used phrases which evoked an imagery which resonated with his listeners. His voice was strong and in rural areas where there was no electricity for public address systems, he could be heard clearly and distinctly at the far distant edges of the crowd."⁴⁰⁴

Due to his new position as Assistant Editor and public speaker for the BITU, Shearer had frequent contacts with Bustamante and participated in efforts to revitalize the union, which was under attack from rival unions such as the Jamaica United Workers Union, headed by H.M. Shirley, a former BITU vice president.⁴⁰⁵ I have found that Bustamante's attempt to restore the

⁴⁰³ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 56–57; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Shearer organize for the BITU in Country Areas," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 280, December 27, 1942, 10; "Mr. Manley Wants State to Take Over All Transportation," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIX. No. 134, June 12, 1943, 10.

⁴⁰⁴ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 58; also mentioned in PRO: CO 137/ 840 File 68511/ 229, Governor Richards to Secretary of State (Telegram), 4 November 1940; Pamphlets: *Jamaica Political Report of 3rd Annual Conference*, People's National Party, 1941, 9–10.

⁴⁰⁵ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 60; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Labor Dispute Grows," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVI. No. 46, March 4, 1940, 1; "BITU Re-Organizing," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 46, February 19, 1942, 10; "Busta Travels the Country to Rally Local Support," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 36, February 20, 1942, 1; "Dispute Within the BITU," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 59, March 17, 1942, 6; "Growth of Labor Unions in Jamaica," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 47, March 3, 1942; "Status of the BITU," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 176, July 30, 1942, 10.

BITU's dominance allowed Shearer to travel to the various parishes on behalf of the union, where he could perfect his skills as a public speaker. Since Bustamante was grooming Shearer as a protégé, he was given additional responsibilities such as job placement and union recruitment, which allowed Shearer to interact and become popular with members at the grassroots level.⁴⁰⁶ Shearer's practical experience with unionization expanded when he assisted Bustamante in trying to negotiate a Minimum Wage Law that would protect all workers. It was "Shearer's responsibility to find out the rates being paid to workers by industry in order to present claims to employers if these pay rates were below the minimum wage."⁴⁰⁷ The process was complicated by the governor and local legislators, which delayed the implementation of the law. Bustamante, however, threatened serious labor action if the government did not act to protect workers. Consequently, the Minimum Wage Law was implemented on December 22, 1942. Shearer's participation in unionization allowed him to interact with JLP grassroots supporters and establish a support base for himself.

Shearer's own inquisitive nature and compassion for the working man slowly weaved him into the tapestry of unionism. Shearer's contributions were practical and relevant, because his indoctrination in the union movement helped not only to politicize him but also shaped his political decisions as Prime Minister.⁴⁰⁸ As Shearer engaged with members at the grassroots

⁴⁰⁶ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 61–62; Post, Strike the Iron, 153–54.

⁴⁰⁷ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 63; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Busta Betrayed by Manley he Claims," *The Daily Gleaner*, February 27, 1942, 1, 2; "Labor Dispute Grows," *The Daily Gleaner*, March 4, 1940, 1.

⁴⁰⁸ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 66; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Dispute within the BITU," *The Daily Gleaner*, March 17, 1942, 6; "New Faces of the BITU," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No.160, July 6, 1942, 10.

level, his responsibilities with the union increased as he became involved in negotiations on behalf of the workers. This can be seen from his effort to gain an increase to seven shillings for sugar workers who protected the sugar cane against vermin by catching and disposing of rats. Shearer also became very vocal about protecting non-unionized workers, whom he argued should not be ignored by union leaders.⁴⁰⁹

Despite Shearer's increased political participation, Bustamante effectively controlled the BITU and was committed to transforming national politics when he announced in 1942 the formation of the JLP, a political party acting as a counterpoise to the PNP's political power.⁴¹⁰ According to Bustamante, "Shearer neither hated nor intended to preach hatred for the PNP or the capitalist class, but he was only setting out to curtail the length of the rich man's pockets."⁴¹¹ It is my contention that a consequence of the formation of the JLP, as an extension of the union, was that Shearer was slowly becoming politicized as "he accompanied Bustamante, Lynden Newland, and Gladys Longbridge on their travels throughout the island, personally contacting the local branch chairmen and secretaries of the union to gain their

⁴⁰⁹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 70; "Shearer Organize for the BITU," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 280, December 23, 1942, 6.

⁴¹⁰ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 75; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Busta Forms the JLP," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 60, March 13, 1942, 1; "Bustamante Leaves the PNP"; *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 70, March 24, 1942, 1, 10; "New Labor Conflict," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 74, March 28, 1942, 10.

⁴¹¹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 75.

support for recruitment purposes and arrange for union members to attend local rallies.”⁴¹²

This kind of interaction between Shearer and Bustamante allowed him to become more intimately tied to both the union and the JLP representing the common man.

The creation of the 1944 constitution eliminated voting requirements such as literacy tests as a requirement for voting. Consequently, the general elections of 1944 signaled the beginning of a new era, where all Jamaicans of twenty one years could vote.⁴¹³ Shearer, however, could not vote or run for office because he was not yet twenty one years old. However, that disappointment did not deter him from campaigning with Bustamante for the JLP. “Shearer with all the pristine vigor, enthusiasm, and fervor of youth became the dashing ace organizer for the BITU in the most remote part of Jamaica,” one biographer writes. “His monumental pioneering work was only outdone by the reputation he made for himself for his fast driving and his amorous attraction to women.”⁴¹⁴

It is my contention that the exploitative and polarizing style of politics utilized by Bustamante in the development of partisan politics in Jamaica made Shearer reluctant to

⁴¹² Neita, Hugh Shearer, 76; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Workers Rally to Support Bustamante,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CVIII. No. 273, December 16, 1942, 1; “Jamaican Politics Changing,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIX. No. 63, March 16, 1943, 10.

⁴¹³ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 80–85; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Aims and Objectives of the JLP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CIX. No. 157, August 12, 1943, 5.

⁴¹⁴ Vivian Durham, Saga of a Liberator, or, the Bustamante Story (Jamaica: Dennis Higgins, 1989), 1–15; also referenced in Neita, Hugh Shearer, 86–87; “A Fraud Exposed,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 259, November 25, 1944, 10.

participate in national politics.⁴¹⁵ These political strategies were evident in the campaign for the 1944 general elections, which proved to be problematic for Shearer, who was raised to be morally conscious about his personal decisions. Therefore, when the PNP propaganda machine accused Bustamante of stealing from the union, Shearer responded by holding a public meeting, where Bustamante issued an invitation to members of the BITU to examine the union accounts.⁴¹⁶ According to Hartley Neita and *The Daily Gleaner* in 1944, “Shearer was annoyed at these accusations against Bustamante and deeply concerned at the levels to which the chief had to go to remove these rumors from the political agenda of conflict. Up to then he had enjoyed the political hopscotch of debates, but the personal venom which he now discovered was a feature of party politics that was against all the values of good manners he learned as a child.”⁴¹⁷ Consequently, Shearer became very acquainted early in his political career with the political maneuvers and drama that dominated the political structure. Therefore, life on the campaign trail with Bustamante was a learning experience for Shearer, who became acquainted with the problems confronting working-class Jamaicans, which re-reinforced Shearer’s ideological beliefs that the people needed someone to protect their interests.

Shearer’s first independent project occurred in 1946, when Bustamante was distracted by the campaign to find a replacement for Maurice Thelwell, the JLP representative from south

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 88; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Labor Struggle Continues Between Manley and Bustamante,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 190, September 25, 1944, 10; “The JLP’s Aims and Objectives,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 272, December 11, 1944, 1; “What Real Unions Have Done for Labor,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CX. No. 273, December 12, 1944, 7.

Trelawney who died in October of that year. This campaign coincided with a strike by sugar workers at the Frome Estate, located in Savanna-la-mar, when the union secretary from Westmoreland, Clarence Spencer, asked Bustamante for his assistance after union members had been arrested for violating the Defense Regulations Act. Since Bustamante was dedicated to the campaign on behalf of J. Henry Sparkes, he sent Hugh Shearer to resolve the problem. Shearer successfully negotiated the bail of various workers in the area and provided them with legal representation.⁴¹⁸ With the union movement dominating national attention, Shearer utilized Bustamante's support and claimed a political victory in October 1947 when he ran for office in the number two division of central St. Andrew. "Shearer defeated the PNP candidate John A. Gregory, obtaining 3,645 votes while Gregory obtained only 2,478."⁴¹⁹ Throughout 1947, Shearer continued to successfully negotiate on behalf of various industries for improved working conditions for laundresses at Jamaica College, and for fairer pay for workers at J. Wray & Nephew, Fred L. Myers & Son, and the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH).⁴²⁰

Although Shearer preferred union organization, he realized that significant reforms were only possible via the state apparatus. Consequently, he used his political popularity to

⁴¹⁸ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 108–110; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Bustamante Takes the Lead," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 19, January 22, 1947, 6; "BITU Continues Union Action," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 24, January 27, 1947, 10.

⁴¹⁹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 116; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Strikes Close Six Sugar Factories"; *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 56, March 8, 1947, 10; "More BITU Workers Returning to Jobs"; "JLP: Mr. Barrant does his Duty," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 58, March 11, 1947, 1, 2.

⁴²⁰ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 134; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Sugar workers on Strike and Violence Erupts," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 62, March 15, 1947, 1; "BITU Reaches Agreement," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXIII. No. 66, March 19, 1947, 1.

become a voice for the people in the House of Representatives and fought to defend the people's rights because he believed that it was only through politics that lasting changes could be made for the poor. The question of the West Indies Federation divided the Jamaican populace and played a dominant role in the 1959 general elections as a result of Bustamante's manipulation of the issue. A consequence of Shearer's position in the BITU was that he worked with Bustamante via the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and campaigned for federation among the smaller islands.⁴²¹ Bustamante's tactics to undermine Manley's support for federation failed and the JLP lost the 1959 elections to the PNP, which won twenty nine seats to the JLP's sixteen.⁴²² When Shearer lost his political seat in the elections, he contested the result, claiming voting fraud, which forced the PNP-led government to investigate the matter. By 1960, the committee reported that "electoral malpractice occurred in the west Kingston constituency where Shearer was defeated by Hubert Wallace. Five other constituencies were also affected. According to the reports, there was a possible maximum of 8,000 false votes in these areas, including 142 votes for persons who had died, 862 persons who were abroad, and 950 cases of double voting, all of which had been evident during the magisterial recount in west Kingston."⁴²³

⁴²¹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 161; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Politicians Make Big Stride in Constitution," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXVIII. No. 73, April 8, 1952, 1; "Federation in Question," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXIV. No. 250, October 31, 1958, 1; "Revelations and Reflections on WI Federation," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XVIII. No. 37, November 2, 1958, 8.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 163; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "PNP Wins Smashing Come Back," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXV. No. 173, July 29, 1959, 1; "Public Order Conviction: Shearer Admonished, Discharged," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXV. No. 203, September 3, 1959, 1, 14; "Busta Calls for New Election"; "PNP Fraud not

Although the verdict of the committee vindicated Shearer's credibility, he was displaced politically; but he campaigned with Bustamante against federation. In 1962, Shearer led the attack against the PNP: "firstly he had been forced out of active politicking by his defeat in west Kingston in 1959 and was therefore left freehanded to challenge Michael Manley for trade union supremacy during the intervening years. He not only challenged but he succeeded. It is very significant that the JLP won almost all the seats in the trade union parishes of Cornwall and Middlesex," Hartely Neita writes.⁴²⁴ Ironically, despite Shearer's disdain for Bustamante's political tactics, he was willing to use similar methods to undermine the PNP's popular support as Shearer willingly polarized the Jamaican populace against the incumbent government via an anti-federation campaigns based on fear.

The discontent and misinformation about federation generated by the JLP in the 1960 elections had negative consequences for Manley's second term. The JLP fostered a hostile political environment with nation-wide debates that promoted agitation about Jamaica's status within the federation and anger about possible taxation issues, which resulted in an early election and a referendum on the value of the West Indies Federation. Consequently, the political campaign of the 1960s was followed by increased political violence in the 1962 general elections. *The Daily Gleaner* reported that violence erupted in the Spanish Town area outside west Kingston, where Edward Seaga was assaulted, while another man was stabbed, and the

General"; "Fraud in Local General Elections," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXV. No. 184, August 12, 1959, 1; "Government to Deal with Voting Fraud"; "Manley: No New and Extreme Policies," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXV. No. 187, August 15, 1959, 1, 14.

⁴²⁴ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 169.

local police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. The newspaper also publicized pre-election conflicts when a police raid in Union Garden uncovered a cache of bombs, Molotov cocktails stockpiled by Herman Graham, who was later arrested. The JLP political machine's attacks against the PNP enabled the JLP to win the elections with 569,781 persons voting.⁴²⁵

Shearer's political activities intensified when he became the voice of Jamaica internationally due to the 1962 general elections, which allowed the JLP to dominate local government and resulted in Bustamante's assigning control of the External Affairs Office to Shearer.⁴²⁶ Shearer accepted this role as he branched out into the Caribbean in an effort to increase unionization and promote "training in trade union representation in Jamaica. Shearer benefited from the colonial Development and Welfare, an agency created by Britain to provide financial aid for health, education, agriculture training, and other social and economic development programs in the British West Indies."⁴²⁷ Bustamante displayed his favoritism for Shearer once again when Jamaica won independence on August 6, 1962, and he appointed Shearer as Jamaica's spokesman. Shearer was assigned the responsibility of presenting a speech before the United Nations announcing Jamaica's independence. "It was not only the address

⁴²⁵ Eaton, Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica, 50–80; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "The JLP Back in Power"; "Only One Area of High Tension," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 85, April, 11, 1962, 1, 2; "Bustamante's Take the Lead," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVII. No. 89, April 15, 1962, 1.

⁴²⁶ PRO: CO 1031/ 2573. Letter; also referenced in Neita, Hugh Shearer, 175; Anglin, "The Political Development of the West Indies," 50–51.

⁴²⁷ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 174; "Elections Next Year"; "Federation: Is Jamaica to suffer Alone," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXIV. No. 194, August 27, 1958, 10; "PNP March"; "Federation to Start New," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XVIII. No. 38, November 9, 1958, 2, 6; "WI Big-Three will meet to Discuss Federation," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXIV. No. 263, November 22, 1958, 1, 10.

that he was to deliver, but as Jamaica's spokesman, he was also expected to hold meetings with other world leaders. And he would be expected to initiate future diplomatic, economic and, other relationships with their governments."⁴²⁸

Some critics believed that Shearer was a poor choice, that there were other more qualified candidates; yet, Bustamante remained loyal in his support of Shearer. In his speech before the UN, Shearer was very blunt in expressing his opinions. He addressed race in the wider world, the impact of corruption and colonialism on Third World nations, effects of underdevelopment, nuclear testing and its destruction of the environment, and exploitation of workers. Hartley Neita writes that as Jamaica's foreign policy representative, Shearer spent the next three years creating and articulating Jamaica's policies. He further asserted that although Jamaica was aligned with the west, its government would not always agree with western policies. Shearer stipulated that "Jamaica as an independent nation definitely should be pro-west, and her attitude will be one of friendship towards the US of America but this friendship will not carry a price tag."⁴²⁹ By 1963, it was evident that Shearer's role as Bustamante's personal advisor made him the heir apparent to the JLP, a position envied by members of the cabinet. In 1964, Bustamante's failing health resulted in his passing the torch to Hugh Shearer, to whom he gave "full authority to enter into all discussions on behalf of the government of

⁴²⁸ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 186.

⁴²⁹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 189–90; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Referendum on Federation"; "MPA Tries to Misdemean Public Manley Says," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVI. No. 115, June 1, 1960, 1, 15.

Jamaica.”⁴³⁰ It is my contention that once again, Bustamante displayed his loyalty to Shearer as his protégé and replacement who, by 1963, embodied all the attributes necessary to lead but, more importantly, exhibited unwavering loyalty to Bustamante and the party—all of which was necessary because Bustamante wanted a representative who would not only implement the JLP’s partisan ideologies but was popular and dynamic enough to fire the imagination of party supporters.

On January 24, 1967, the JLP leadership announced the retirement of Alexander Bustamante and his replacement by Hugh Shearer in the south Clarendon district in the upcoming general elections.⁴³¹ “The elections were held on February 21st. The JLP won thirty three seats and the PNP, twenty.”⁴³² Hugh Shearer won the seat vacated by Bustamante in south Clarendon. Hugh Shearer’s political career reached its apex when the then current Prime Minister, Donald Sangster died on April 11, 1967, and Shearer was appointed Prime Minister by the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Campbell.

As Prime Minister, Shearer had to address the problems of crime and violence, which continued to escalate in the late 1960s. The evolving gang violence was evident in Jamaican

⁴³⁰ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 203; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “The JLP Honors Sir. Alexander, Lady Bustamante,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 230, October 5, 1962, 1; “Mr. Roy Lindo Buried”; “Dispute Erupts Between Local Towns,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 233, October 9, 1962, 1, 10; “Sympathy Lockouts Strikes Unfair”; “Sangster: Government Preparing Development Program,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 234, October 10, 1962, 1, 2, 14; “Union Calls Meeting to Study Plot Change,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 23, October 23, 1962, 1; “Manley Claimed: Instructions Given to Bring Proceedings Against Shearer,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 251, October 29, 1962, 1.

⁴³¹ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 221.

⁴³² Ibid.

culture, where “popular singers had been glorifying the men involved in these crimes, who had earned the name of ‘Rude Boys’ or ‘Rudies.’ These popular songs that glorified violence included ‘007’ and ‘A-Shanty Town’ by Desmond Dekker and ‘Tougher than Tough’ by Derrick Morgan.”⁴³³ According to Robert MacFarlane and Eric Williams, popular culture’s glorification of violence contributed to the belief that being a gangster was the key to wealth. Consequently, some Jamaicans in the 1960s not only idolized Clint Eastwood in films such as *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, *A Fist Full of Dollars*, and *For A Few Dollars More*, but they also wanted to emulate the life-style depicted in such films. This was reflected in growing discontent with high unemployment, poverty, and the government, which erupted into violence by 1963 with the Coral Gardens incident, Anti-Chinese Riots in 1965, or political warfare related to the declaration of a State of Emergency in 1966–67. The increased political violence of the mid-1960s gained national media attention forcing politicians to criticize popular culture gangster lifestyle.⁴³⁴ Shearer responded to the problem by publicly denouncing the rise in violence and announced that he supported the police force’s using any means necessary to stem its tide. Political scientist Carl Stone contends that political renunciation was hypocritical because the corruption of the political process and rising gang violence represented an effective tool for destabilizing the system and polarizing grassroots supporters into either the JLP or PNP camp. “The political parties provided the main channels for the articulation of individual and collective interests in search of responses by the state. As the political parties matured they increasingly

⁴³³ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 249.

⁴³⁴ Mr. Robert MacFarlane and Mr. Eric Williams. Interview, New York, 2000; Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970, 84–87.

frowned on non-partisan activism and sought to co-opt and incorporate all such pockets of activism and harass some that resisted. They attempted to establish territorial hegemony over defined combination to preserve that territorial hegemony.”⁴³⁵ Unfortunately, localized violence was the means by which politicians maintained control over their particular constituencies.

By June 1968, the JLP government headed by Hugh Shearer confronted various governmental failures in the form of island-wide electrical black-outs caused by increased demand that exceeded Jamaica Public Service Company’s supply, which created problems for local businesses. The country and its businesses were also plagued by strikes. Marine pilots, bus operators, street cleaners, and hospital workers participated in a work slow-down, accompanying a sick-out by policemen island-wide, and a water shortage.⁴³⁶ Complex societal issues, coupled with rising violence, effectively destabilized the local government, while damaging Shearer’s reputation, as he seemed incapable of resolving the country’s current conflicts. “The reaction of the JLP government was to try to tighten the reins of control by

⁴³⁵ Carl Stone, “Democracy and Socialism in Jamaica 1967–1979.” *Journal of Commonwealth Studies*, Vol. XIX. No. 2, (July 1981): 115–133; *Economic Survey Jamaica*, 1966, Kingston: Central Planning Unit.

⁴³⁶ Neita, Hugh Shearer, 287; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Sangster: Cause for Anxiety,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 69, March 25, 1967, 1; “Rifle and Ammunition Shipments Seized”; “Sangster Remains in deep Coma,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 76, April 4, 1967, 1, 14; “JLP Leaders Call all Party’s MP’s to Talk”; “Sangster Tremendous Fight for Life,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 77, April 5, 1967, 1; “Doctors Give up Hope for Sangster”; “Ballots Pick Shearer to Succeed,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 78, April, 6, 1967, 1; “Employers Group Back Shearer,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 101, May 3, 1967, 1; “Shearer: Jamaica Faces 3 Alternatives,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 149, June 30, 1967, 1, 2.

repressive measures which created for the opposition PNP the issue of civil rights, police brutality, freedom of speech and movement, and abuse of power by the JLP government.”⁴³⁷

Beginning in 1967, violence erupted which resulted in physical confrontations between supporters. In an effort to protect Jamaica’s economy and relieve high unemployment, Hugh Shearer traveled to Europe. His European trip was important for the economic stability of the country since Britain was going to become a part of the European Common Market; thus any preference given to her Caribbean possessions would be lost, forcing the countries into economic turmoil. The aim of Shearer’s visit was to seek a way for Jamaica to gain access to the European Common Market via Britain’s acceptance.⁴³⁸ *The Daily Gleaner* criticized Shearer and argued that the economic problems confronting Jamaica would not be solved by Britain or the United States because they acted to protect their own interests. *The Daily Gleaner* critics also said that Jamaica’s agriculture needed to be further developed if Jamaica was to benefit from it; otherwise, Jamaica would continue to import foreign food staples, displacing local farmers and markets.⁴³⁹ The PNP leader Norman Manley was also critical of the government when he argued that unemployment could not be resolved by orthodox means. He further asserted that the role of government was to create an effective program that would provide employment;

⁴³⁷ Stone, “Democracy and Socialism in Jamaica,” 119.

⁴³⁸ “Shearer’s Tour,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXVIII. No. 41, October 8, 1967, 6; “Call for Rational Trade Union Leadership,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIV. No. 106, July 3, 1968, 12; “Manley Quitting as PNP Leader,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXIX. No. 18, July 7, 1968, 1, 2; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Political Control of Parish Councils Remains Unchanged,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIV. No. 114, July 12, 1968, 1, 2; “Violence Escalates,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXIX. No. 21, July 28, 1968, 10.

⁴³⁹ “Shearer Back With ‘Best Results’ for Now,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXVIII. No. 46, October 15, 1967, 1, 2.

and if that objective was impossible, then, the government must provide financial assistance for the unemployed. Manley charged that the JLP failed to protect the workers' interests with an unemployment rate of twenty percent. He contended "that the economic problems bound up in unemployment, required long term and short term solutions and investment in education."⁴⁴⁰ With unemployment, poverty, and desperation on the rise, the political structure of the 1960s fostered an environment that made escalating partisan violence possible, which was made worse by the development of gang culture.

Shearer and Political Violence

The political scene was further complicated by the restructuring of the PNP under Michael Manley as Norman Manley prepared to retire. In an effort to lead the PNP in a new direction, Michael Manley assigned each department within the party a specific task, and compelled the party to register as many members as possible for the upcoming elections. The younger Manley criticized the JLP government for its incompetence, corruption, and victimization of PNP leaders. He also claimed that the JLP was responsible for the increase in political violence surrounding the general elections.⁴⁴¹ Manley further charged that "the country was being flooded with words everlasting, about everything under the sun. But underneath those words it is the same policy. The government works for the big money

⁴⁴⁰ "Shearer Has Big Problems to Tackle"; "Unemployment cannot be Solved by Orthodox means Manley Say's," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 240, October 16, 1967, 1, 2.

⁴⁴¹ Department of Statistics (1966), *Employment, Earnings, and Hours in Large Establishments 1965*, (Jamaica, Kingston: Department of Statistics) 1–30; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Strikers Back at Work," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 238, October 13, 1967, 11.

interests. The government works on basically conservative lines. The government is not concerned to change the fundamental structure in which we derive from our colonial days, a structure of inequality, and a structure in which the masses of the country have no hope.”⁴⁴²

Political machinations by both the JLP and PNP failed to address the problem of politically instigated violence, an issue that threatened the upcoming general elections. *The Daily Gleaner* reported that the violence associated with political gangsterism made the political parties responsible. Despite local confusion about which party was responsible for political violence, I have found that for many working class Jamaicans, the late 1960s symbolized political evolution in not only the level of violence involved, but also the types of weapons used to disrupt the political process.⁴⁴³ In 1966–67, a series of conflicts served to highlight the problem with gun violence, which served as a precursor for political life in the future. Political gangsterism was evident on February 13, 1967, when gunmen opened fire on Michael Manley’s procession as he and others campaigned for peace in the west Kingston constituency. This incident represented a significant change in how the political process was conducted because politicians were now the objects of violence and that use of violence included the use of guns.

⁴⁴² *Economic Survey of Jamaica 1966–1967*, Kingston: Central Planning Unit, 10–25; “Manley: People Disturbed by JLP Tendencies,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 273, November 13, 1967, 1, 16.

⁴⁴³ Mr. Robert MacFarlane, and Mr. Eric Williams. Interview, New York, 2000; the issue of political violence is also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “The JLP had Divided the Nation,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 9, 1967, 10; “Police Seized Firearms and Explosives,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 34, February 11, 1967, 1; “Gunmen Shoot at Manley’s Party,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 35, February 13, 1967, 1; “Police Seize Firearms and Explosives,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 19, 1967, 1.

It is my contention that with a political process that allowed a significant level of dependence on political patronage, Jamaican political structure evolved into a system that bestowed increased power on political leaders to control and exploit party supporters. Carl Stones argues that this process was further complicated by the use of 'political gunmen' and gangs that utilized violence and terrorization to enforce 'party discipline.'⁴⁴⁴ With another election on the horizon, the violence escalated in 1966–67, which allowed irresponsible leadership to corrupt the political process. This development was evident in affected communities such as Tivoli Gardens and media coverage of the elections. With sensationalized headlines which announced that the "JLP has divided the nation," "Police seize firearms and explosives," "Gunmen shoot at Manley's party," and "JLP man shot dead," these titles very clearly summarized the problem. My research revealed that rising gang violence dominated the headlines of local newspapers.⁴⁴⁵ Loyal politicians seemed almost impotent to stop the problem and eager to maintain the status quo that promoted partisan conflict.

The pre-election period represented a chaotic time in Jamaican politics as both the JLP and PNP, in an effort to consolidate their power bases, abused their control over the patronage system. This problem was already evident in 1966 when Edward Seaga, the JLP representative of the western Kingston district of Tivoli Gardens, planned to extend the housing estate in an effort to strengthen his control in the area and displace his opponent, Dudley Thompson, in

⁴⁴⁴ Stone, "Democracy and Socialism in Jamaica," 119.

⁴⁴⁵ "Police Seize Firearms and Explosives," *The Daily Gleaner*, February 19, 1967, 1; "Gunmen Shoot at Manley's Party," *The Daily Gleaner*, February 13, 1967, 1; "JLP has Divided the Nation," *The Daily Gleaner*, February 9, 1967, 1.

western Kingston. In essence, Edward Seaga precipitated the escalation of violence on the part of the state via the use of police officers to bulldoze the Back-O-Wall district, forcing out tenants and squatters alike. This project produced an elevation in anti-JLP sentiments as violence and terrorism were used to intimidate PNP supporters in bordering communities through night-time guerrilla warfare. Additionally, JLP bulldozers displaced squatters and Rastafarians when their shanties in Foreshore Road were destroyed for a housing development project scheduled for that area that was part of the patronage system used to reward loyal JLP supporters. Ironically, the Back-O-Wall conflict was caused by the JLP's desire to establish a base constituency in the west Kingston district. Consequently, according to Terry Lacey, due to increased violence, Shearer "in October of 1966 declared a state of emergency in west Kingston, the army and the Jamaica National Reserve (JNR) was mobilized and the army working in conjunction with the police force conducted raids on the headquarters of the JLP and PNP in the area. Minister of Affairs McNeill asked Seaga and Thompson not to visit their constituency in order to prevent further conflict."⁴⁴⁶ The failure of the Jamaican police force and party leaders to effectively prevent the chaotic eruption of violence allowed the process to deteriorate further. Terry Lacey writes, "it was argued that the influx of guns into western Kingston could not be explained by the stealing of locally owned firearms, the apparent reluctance of the JCF to arrest known gunmen alleging that some top JCF officers wanted to

⁴⁴⁶ Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–70, 49.

raid political headquarters of Seaga and Thompson, but could not get a green light from the Director of Public Prosecution.”⁴⁴⁷

This struggle over the Back-O-Wall constituency established a clear connection between politicians and gang violence, as both Minister of Parliament, Edward Seaga, and Dudley Thompson recruited local gunmen to defend their respected districts, which was evident by the second week of June after rival gangs of one hundred and fifty men armed with semi-automatic guns and dynamite bombs fought continuously for six days. The police were slow to respond to the conflict, which allowed local gangs to terrorize communities located along Foreshore Road and Denham Town areas via the destruction of property, robbery, intimidation, and assault.⁴⁴⁸ *The Daily Gleaner* reported that Norman Manley said, “he was aware that Seaga’s private army was well armed and the new element was introduced when he made his threat last year ‘of blood for blood and fire for fire,’ when he promised to use that private army.”⁴⁴⁹ It was evident

⁴⁴⁷ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 91; Gunst, *Born Fi` Dead*, 79–80; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Political Gang Terror in Washington; JLP Man ‘Zakie’ Shot Dead,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. October 1, 1966, 1, 8; “Support Police to Stamp out Political Violence,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. October 2, 1966, 2.

⁴⁴⁸ “Warm-Up Parleys for Parish Election,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. May 30, 1966, 1; “Clash Between Foreshore Road, Denham Town Groups”; “Police Break-up Gang Rumble,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 108, June 14, 1966, 1, 2; “Seaga, Manley Issue Statement on Riot”; “PNP Gangs Armed with Dynamite Say’s Seaga,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 111, June 17, 1966, 1, 8.

⁴⁴⁹ “PNP Gangs Armed With Dynamite Say’s Seaga,” *The Daily Gleaner*, June 17, 1966, 1; “Police Kill Gang Member; PNP Strongman,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 202, October 3, 1966, 1, 15; “Dudley Thompson Barred From Emergency Area”; “Military Find Large Quantity of Dynamite,” *The Daily Gleaner*, October 12, 1966, 1, 8; “Violence Designed to Remove Seaga”; “State of Emergency will End by November 2,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 216, October 19, 1966, 1, 8; “Emergency Ends Tonight in west Kingston,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 228, November 2, 1966, 1, 8.

from the failure of Shearer's government to effectively control JLP minister (Edward Seaga) that the political system was deteriorating and violence was becoming a recognized part of politics. Furthermore, Shearer's reluctance to support the prosecution of Thompson and Seaga shows his collusion in maintaining the status quo, especially since the bulldozing of Back-O-Wall resulted in the destruction of 1,500 shacks and the displacement of over 4,000 families. This conflict was the result of the JLP's efforts to gain substantial foothold in the PNP-dominated west Kingston constituency.⁴⁵⁰ It seems that political leaders were not concerned with the well-being of the people but rather their ability to maintain power and political office.

Arguably, the 1960s was a turbulent time because of the political conflict between the JLP and PNP factions. Young Michael Manley realized very early in his political career that his greatest opponent would be the rising star of the JLP, Edward Seaga. According to Rachel Manley, her father's relationship with Seaga went beyond partisan politics. Her father's antipathy towards Edward Seaga stemmed from an incident in 1965, at the National Hero's Park, honoring the nineteenth-century insurgent leader, Paul Bogle, whose statue was designed by Edna Manley.⁴⁵¹ The crisis occurred when Edward Seaga was booed by the crowd because Edna Manley left the stage to join her husband Norman who, as leader of the opposition, should have been invited onto the platform. Seaga responded to the insult by issuing a threat of war, "If they think they are bad, I can bring the crowd of west Kingston. We can deal with you in

⁴⁵⁰ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 90–91; "Seaga Announces 3 Projects for west Kingston," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 136, July 16, 1966, 1–2.

⁴⁵¹ Manley, *Drumblair*, 333; Gunst, *Born Fi` Dead*, 84–85.

any way and at any time. It will be fire for fire, and blood for blood.”⁴⁵² Rachel Manley wrote that, “the incident had a profound effect on my father, who stated bluntly that he would never forget this insult to his father by Edward Seaga.”⁴⁵³ Consequently, I have found that the political relationship that emerged was marred by personal sentiments, depreciation, and political verbal antagonism, and manipulation of party loyalty. All of this helped to create a political environment that was volatile and chaotic, and the blame for the violence that later emerged was the fault of Jamaica’s more prominent leaders.

Unlike his father whose collusion in political violence was more passive because grassroots supporters engaged in less armed conflict, Michael Manley might arguably be thought of as being a more aggressive participant in the politics of spoils that generated violence. I believe that with the 1967 elections approaching, politicians on both sides of the aisle condemned the other for perpetuating political violence while exploiting the west Kingston war to advance their respective parties’ politics in these communities. The PNP candidate for the west Kingston constituency, Dudley Thompson, manipulated the anti-JLP sentiments created after the forced removal of a large PNP-affiliated Rastafarian community from the area to win local support for his candidacy.⁴⁵⁴ Darrell Levi states that “Gangs connected with the JLP and the PNP began to attack each other with guns and Molotov cocktails. In 1966, Norman Manley accused the government of fomenting violence in west Kingston to confuse the public mind and divert attention from the moral shame and wickedness

⁴⁵² Manley, Drumblair, 333.

⁴⁵³ Manley, Drumblair, 334.

⁴⁵⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 117.

of the conduct of the government towards the poor squatter.”⁴⁵⁵ As violence continued to escalate and politicians from the JLP and PNP blamed each other for the crisis, Dudley Thompson and other PNP leaders tried to negotiate an end to violence in the area. However, Seaga’s refusal to meet with the opposition and discuss peace negotiations led to the government declaring a state of emergency in October 1966 to end the violence. The state of emergency was terminated after three weeks when the violence subsided despite flare-ups of sporadic violence as the 1967 general elections approached. Michael Manley later commented that the “principal beneficiary of the west Kingston wars was Edward Seaga,” who was idolized by the constituency for defending their homes.⁴⁵⁶ My analysis of the 1966 state of emergency has revealed that the escalation of political violence was generated by a series of strikes initiated by both the BITU and NWU, which were engaged in a battle for power.

The most relevant aspect of the strike was the Post Office dispute which began on April 4, 1966, when 500 postal workers walked off the job. In the ensuing days, violence erupted as the government terminated the appointments of all the striking postal workers and employed scabs to replace them.⁴⁵⁷ Violence escalated as local gangs attempted to intimidate postal employees who themselves resorted to violence to block scabs. The government responded by using the Police Riot Squad to end the conflict. The postal workers’ strike represented a significant change in political violence since the dispute involved a clash between the police and

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ George Beckford, and Michael Witter, Small Garden Bitter Weed: The Political Economy of Struggle and Change in Jamaica (London: Zed Press, 1982), 73–75; Levi, Michael Manley, 118.

⁴⁵⁷ Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970, 87–88.

armed gangs. According to Terry Lacey, “the strike paved the way for more violent rebellions against the government.”⁴⁵⁸ Lacey’s assessment is correct because from May through September 1966, the country was overwhelmed by violence as local gangs protesting poverty, unemployment, and homelessness used terrorism to gain access to political patronage. When the government failed to respond to their demands, JLP government offices were vandalized and government construction projects were disrupted.⁴⁵⁹ Random acts of violence were documented by *The Daily Gleaner* and Terry Lacey, who reported that after a week of escalating violence and political rhetoric, the entire area of Spanish Town road was closed after public health inspectors and the CID escorts were attacked with Molotov cocktails: “Assistant Commissioner Basil Robinson led one hundred police armed with rifles and tear gas into the area. Armed men opened fire on the police and fired at them from behind ‘barricades’ of children. When the police fired the children and squatters retreated while firing at the oncoming police as they went.”⁴⁶⁰ In spite of (economic) protests, endemic political violence continued as JLP and PNP confrontations erupted over a plan by Edward Seaga to develop the Tivoli Gardens area as an extension of political patronage to reward party loyalists. According to

⁴⁵⁸ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 88.

⁴⁵⁹ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 89; also referenced in the *Daily Gleaner*, “SMA Unable to Meet Union Demands,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 6, January 8, 1966, 2; “Another City Waterfront Dispute Referred to Labor Ministry,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 30, February 5, 1966, 16; “Arnett Arrested and Charged with Obstructing Police,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 18, 1966, 1, 2.

⁴⁶⁰ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 89–90; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Statement by the BITU”; “No Wonder Marchers Were Attacked,” *The Daily Gleaner*, April 16, 1966, 2, 8; “Shearer in the Cabinet—Not Democracy at All”; “Danger Signals in Jamaica’s Political Development,” *The Daily Gleaner*, April 18, 1966, 10, 15; “Eldemire Expresses Alarm at Series of Organized Strikes and Violence,” *The Daily Gleaner*, April 19, 1966, 2.

Vivian Blake, a PNP member of parliament, “both parties practiced victimization albeit with varying degrees of ruthlessness. Jamaicans were tolerant of this system because there are not enough jobs to satisfy the demand.”⁴⁶¹ As violence escalated with additional conflicts between the security forces and local gangs, a state of emergency was declared in October 1966.

Through these tragic stories, which documented political violence, it is evident that the parties’ connection to gun violence added to the problem. On February 3, 1967, *The Daily Gleaner* headline article reported ‘arms, explosives seized at JLP headquarters.’ When the police raided the JLP central headquarters in Kingston, policemen armed with riot gear and ‘Mark seven rifles,’ tear gas and other such paraphernalia, blockaded the JLP offices and engaged in a minor gun fight. The wounded were Clement Tucker, who was shot in the neck, and Neville Fowler, who was shot in the thigh. Both men were later taken to the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH) for treatment. Police seized “at least 200 rounds of ammunition, two home-made bombs, two Molotov cocktails, and dynamite caps. In another raid on an adjacent property the police discovered a small cache of weapons and ammunition.”⁴⁶² Mass arrests followed the raid for illegal possession of firearms and violation of the ‘Gun powder and Explosives law,’ but the questions that remained were: Where did the JLP representatives get these weapons from? Why were these weapons being stockpiled? This incident firmly established a link between local politicians and the rising gun violence because why would

⁴⁶¹ Olive Senior, *The Message is Change: A Perspective on the 1972 General Election* (Jamaica: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1972), 26.

⁴⁶² Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 87–90; “Arms, Explosives Seized at JLP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 27, February 3, 1967, 1, 8.

politicians need bombs and over two hundred rounds of ammunition? Ironically, no politician from either of the political parties could provide a definitive explanation about the ammunition stockpile, and the questions were left unanswered about the role of party leaders in political violence.

Throughout 1967, violence continued to escalate in western Kingston, and on February 6, 1967, violence exploded in Denham Town over JLP exploitation of the patronage system. A PNP mob gathered outside the Tivoli Gardens housing project to protest against victimization and a refusal to employ members of the opposition for the project. They were confronted by police, armed with riot gear, purportedly to restore order.⁴⁶³ However, the police's presence at the site failed to prevent nine persons from being shot. "The shooting began on Oxford Street at four o'clock in the evening when the gunmen hurled Molotov cocktails at Mr. Wayne Smellie, who posted PNP posters on walls and fences along the street. The explosive missed Smellie but hit Mr. Victor Rhoden and other PNP members standing close by. Immediately after gunmen opened fire on Smellie but he outran them."⁴⁶⁴ The continued rise in violent confrontations between police and party supporters resulted in Norman Manley publicly appealing to "all persons of both parties to put an end to violence and preserve the right of the citizens to vote

⁴⁶³ "Hypocrisy Sangster's Charge Opposition," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 6, 1966, 1, 2; "300 JPSCO Workers Strike," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXII. No. 76, May 5, 1966, 8; "PNP Supporters 'Ejecting' JLP Followers"; "Warning on Hooliganism, Violence in City," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 13, 1966 1, 10; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Warm-Up Parleys for Parish elections," *The Daily Gleaner*, May 30, 1966, 1; "Clash Between Foreshore Road, Denham Town Groups"; "Police Break-up Gang Rumble," *The Daily Gleaner*, June 14, 1966, 1, 2.

⁴⁶⁴ "Army Patrols Too, Manley Asks," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 30, February 6, 1967, 1.

and the good name of Jamaica as a peace loving place.”⁴⁶⁵ Manley further demanded that the Prime Minister activate the police and army to protect not only people but also to quickly suppress politically motivated violence.⁴⁶⁶ Shearer’s inability to resolve the economic crisis of the late 1960s contributed to increased partisan conflict since the JLP used their control of the patronage system to reward party supporters. This element of modern politics contributed to the institutionalization of political violence. And it was evident from Shearer’s failure to effectively control increased incidents of political conflict in the late 1960s that violence was evolving and party leaders did not totally control the gangs.

In spite of Manley’s warning against politically instigated violence, the problem remained and continued not only to polarize the populace but also to foster sentiments of animosity against the opposition. By February 11, 1967, the police reportedly seized explosives and firearms at a PNP constituency headquarters in west St. Andrew. The problem with this seizure was that the firearms were found buried in the yard, thereby creating doubts and suspicions as to who were the real owners of the weapons. The PNP candidate of west St. Andrew, Hopeton Caven, claimed that no weapons were found in the offices, and the yard was public domain, therefore, subject to sabotage. According to the police, this seizure yielded a total of “two revolvers one of them licensed, another an antique, one toy gun, eleven rounds of

⁴⁶⁵ “Army Patrols Too, Manley Asks,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 6, 1967, 1; “Seaga has Failed to Provide Leadership,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 9, 1967, 27; “Manley Cries Shame,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 37, February 15, 1967, 1; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Police Seize Firearms and Explosives,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 11, 1967, 1; “Labor takes 33 Seats, PNP 20,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 22, 1967, 1.

⁴⁶⁶ “Army Patrols Too, Manley Asks,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 6, 1967, 1; “Seaga has Failed to Provide Leadership,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 9, 1967, 27.

ammunition, thirteen knives, one dynamite bomb, one Molotov cocktail, one long razor, two new machetes, a quart bottle filled with gasoline and quantity of ganja.”⁴⁶⁷ Despite the suspicious nature of the police seizure and the small quantity of evidence collected, this incident served to tarnish the PNP’s reputation, further enforcing the media’s idea of politically instigated violence and the inability of the police to control the problem. It also raised doubts about the PNP’s claims that they were defending their communities and were not the perpetrators of violence.

Despite the PNP’s claims of innocence, partisan conflict escalated when *The Daily Gleaner* erroneously reported that on February 13, 1967, Norman Manley and other PNP representatives on a peace tour of west Kingston were shot at while in lower St. Andrew and the police had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd.⁴⁶⁸ On February 14, 1967, *The Daily Gleaner* corrected this error and reported that before Manley and his entourage arrived in the Spanish Town area, JLP supporters posting posters in a PNP neighborhood were shot at and pursued by a crowd of PNP supporters. It was during this confusion that an innocent by-stander, Horace Cargill, was shot in the arm.⁴⁶⁹ Prime Minister Hugh Shearer accused the leader of the opposition of trying to instigate violence. “Had Mr. Manley truly meant this tour to be a peace

⁴⁶⁷ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 90–99; “Military Police joint Venture to Restore Order,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 11, 1967, 1.

⁴⁶⁸ “Gunmen Shoot at Manley’s Party,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 13, 1967, 1; “Arms, Explosives Seized at JLP Headquarters,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 27, February 3, 1967, 1, 8; “JLP has Divided the Nation,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 9, 1967, 10; “Bad Business in the PNP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 11, 1967, 8; Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 50.

⁴⁶⁹ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 50.

mission he would not have taken the candidates for the area along with him and the fact that he did suggests that it was meant to be provocative,” thereby making Manley a relevant factor in the rising political violence.⁴⁷⁰ However, what Shearer did not address was the fact that a JLP supporter was willing to use violence to attack the leader of the Opposition in a public forum. Furthermore, Shearer’s refusal to acknowledge that both political parties were involved in violence reflected a fragmented political system.

Manley’s denial that he was an instigator of political violence was followed by a two-hour rampage by a PNP-affiliated gang in the lower Kingston and St. Andrew area. According to *The Daily Gleaner*, a JLP supporter (Rudolph Roach) was shot dead after a PNP gang randomly shot up homes and stores in Kingston on February 18, 1967, in vengeance. “The police said it seemed that the fire-arm assault was a wild affray to anyone who happened across the path of the bullets.”⁴⁷¹ Another victim (Edwin King, a Chinese grocer) reported that members of a gang became violent after they had refused to pay for merchandise taken from his store.

The transformation of the Jamaican political system since the transitional leadership of the 1967 general elections reflected a “bitter power struggle between politicians who perceived a power vacuum in their respective party leaderships was created because control of the party by Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante in dictating had weakened with age. The

⁴⁷⁰ “No Shooting at Manley’s Party,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 36, February 14, 1967, 1; “Manley Cries Shame,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 15, 1967, 1; “Vote for JLP is A Vote for Violence,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 38, February, 16, 1967, 9; “Violence Escalates in Kingston,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXIII. No. 43, February 24, 1967, 1, 20; also referenced in Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 50.

⁴⁷¹ “JLP Men Shot Dead,” *The Daily Gleaner*, February 19, 1967, 1.

weaponry of political warfare thus changed from rhetoric to the Molotov cocktail and the gun. Political violence in western Kingston continued fairly consistently from March 1966 until the general election in February 1967.⁴⁷² The unfortunate reality of electioneering was that it was wedded to political violence and the scope of this violence increased overtime. The failure of the patronage system to fully provide for loyal party supporters, coupled with a change in the political leadership of the parties and poverty, resulted in political gangsterism and the use of semi-automatic guns and bombs. In spite of the escalating political violence and the people's discontent with the government, on February 22, 1967, the people voted to re-elect the JLP, which won thirty three seats to the PNP's twenty. Despite the loss, this election reflected the PNP's success at attacking JLP grassroots supporters and dismantling the party's platform issues.⁴⁷³

The discontent that remained after the general elections served as a precursor for future elections and destabilized those governments that failed to rectify these problems. "Rising discontent over unemployment and job victimization, increasing bitter individual disputes exacerbated by inter-union rivalries, the breakdown or disruption of public services and the continued growth of industrial political and criminal violence" all destabilized Jamaica, a planning report observed in 1967.⁴⁷⁴ Despite the bread-and-butter issues that dominated political debates, gang violence in October 1968 also erupted independently of the political

⁴⁷² Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970, 46–47.

⁴⁷³ "Labor takes 33 Seats, PNP 20," *The Daily Gleaner*, February 22, 1967, 11.

⁴⁷⁴ *Economic Survey Jamaica, 1966–1967*. Kingston: Central Planning Unit, 1–25; Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970, 51.

parties with an explosion of violence that was not initiated by the two dominant political parties. This change was evident in the post-election violence that had little to do with politics and was a consequence of poverty and high unemployment.

The 1960s Black Power Movement in the United States had overarching implications in Jamaica as young college students became radicalized. Students studying at the University of the West Indies (UWI) challenged the authority and the corruption of the government and rallied on behalf of Walter Rodney, professor of African history at the University. The conflict began on October 15, 1968, when Dr. Rodney was denied entrance into Jamaica after traveling to Canada for a Black writer's conference.⁴⁷⁵ According to the Shearer government, "an Exclusion Order was initiated because of his reported secret, personal activities in several areas of the island which convinced security personnel that he was a grave security risk."⁴⁷⁶ Walter Rodney was not only popular among members of the student body and the poor. Hartely Neita writes that,

Rodney's classroom was never confined to the University. On the contrary, he spent a large portion of his time on playing fields, hanging out on street corners, meeting with the ordinary black people of Trench Town and other parishes. He especially identified with the Rastafarians who constantly reflected on the black situation in Jamaica. This group had begun to have a profound impact on the young people of Jamaica, even as the Black Power Movement gained impetus in the U.S. So, with the growing popularity of Black Nationalism in Jamaica and Rodney's hold and influence on the masses coupled with the possible spread of Communism, Shearer was forced to make a decision.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁵ Department of Statistics (1966) *Employment, Earnings, and Hours in Large Establishments*, 1965; Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970*, 94; Neita, *Hugh Shearer*, 292–93.

⁴⁷⁶ Lacey, *Violence and Politics in Jamaica*, 94.

⁴⁷⁷ Neita, *Hugh Shearer*, 295.

The Shearer government's response to the Walter Rodney case sparked immediate demonstrations by the student body, which decided to march to the Ministry of Home Affairs and demand redress for the professor. The following day, the students shut down the University and took to the streets of Kingston. In the process of marching into the heart of the city, "three youth mobs formed around gangs of thirty or so youths, and, chanting 'Black Power' began smashing and burning buildings, attacking cars and buses, assaulting motorists, and clashed with police. As the student demonstration dissipated, so thousands of unemployed came onto the streets."⁴⁷⁸ At this point, the student demonstration was replaced by mob violence which dominated the riots. The JDF used tear gas to disperse the rioters and instituted a ban on all forms of public protests. In order to maintain the peace, the military was mobilized to patrol the streets. Terry Lacy argues that a consequence of the Rodney Riots was fear of class violence "that manifested a reservoir of antagonism against the Jamaican government and the national bourgeoisie, and because they pointed to a source of political strength, and in a wider than party sense, of political violence, which was largely outside and beyond the control of the conventional political system and whose main relationship with the political system in 1966 and 1967 had been to provide mercenary warriors serving the ends of Jamaican politicians."⁴⁷⁹ The reality of the Rodney Riots was that local gangs (rise of the Rude Boys) were not fully controlled by the patronage system and they were willing to use violence, independent of the general elections, to protest against poverty and neglect. Coupled with this dilemma was the influx of semi-automatic weapons and explosives, which contributed to the increase in gun violence that

⁴⁷⁸ Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970, 95.

⁴⁷⁹ Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970, 98.

erupted in the political arena. This escalation of violence on the part of the police state and local gangs as well as the corruption of modern politics in Jamaica all contributed to the institutionalization of violence within the political system.

Conclusion

The 1960s represented a turning point for Jamaican politics as the transition from localized violence to a national process. This transition was reflected in the Rodney Riots, where Black Power sentiments resulted in not only a loss of grass roots support for the JLP (which allowed the Michael Manley political machine to dominate local politics) but also changed the structural dynamic of the type of political violence that occurred. Although it is somewhat simplistic to contend that the violence before the 1960s was different from the political violence that preceded it—because the former involved physical confrontations, sticks, and stones—the use of automatic weapons did change the level of brutality and violence involved in conflict, as in the case of the Claudius Henry Rebellion and the various police seizures of bomb-making materials during raids at both the JLP and PNP offices. This transition remains relevant because it signified the evolution of political violence and identified local politicians as the central impetus of this dilemma. A consequence of this system was that political patronage became substantial as increased poverty and unemployment led to desperation of a winner-takes-all strategy for each party to protect its vested interests. The next chapter will fully explore the further development of gang violence and the implications of political patronage under the leadership of Michael Manley.

Chapter 4

Young Joshua Comes to Power

Introduction

Popular writings about Michael Manley's period in power around the 1970s often expressed the view that the PNP was largely exempt from perpetration of violence. In my view, this is a questionable understanding of violence. This chapter argues that the PNP played an integral role in the escalation of violence in the 1970s. The 1970s epitomizes an era marred by brutal political violence and the government's inability to resolve the economic crisis. Both the JLP and PNP's participation in political tribalism and politically motivated violence brought the credibility of Jamaican democracy and political practice into question. The cycle of violence became more nationally widespread and institutionalized within Jamaican politics as both parties manipulated and exploited the population through patronage—the tool by which parties sought to exert control over the various youth gangs. Despite Michael Manley's declaration of the PNP's innocence of charges leveled against it by the JLP, it is not difficult to show that they were implicated in the cycle of violence in the 1970s that victimized people on both sides. This escalation of political violence reached its apex in the run-up to the 1980 general elections when over eight hundred people were killed.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ Evelyn Huber-Stephens, and John Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 60–144; Darrel Levi, Michael Manley: The Making of a Leader (Georgia: University Press of Georgia, 1989), 1–6.

In 1969, Michael Manley succeeded his father Norman Manley, as president of the PNP. Exploiting religious symbolism (identifying himself with the Biblical figure of Joshua wielding the 'Rod of Correction,' a cane allegedly bestowed on Manley by the emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie), making use of the popular appeal of Reggae music, and employing his considerable personal charisma, Manley gained the confidence and support of a large majority of the people and came to power in a landslide victory in the general election in 1972 despite continued election violence. Manley became a charismatic figure among the poor. For many, Michael Manley was a contemporary 'Moses,' promising a better-life-to-come for the poor and oppressed. Indeed, 'better must come' was the slogan of the 1972 campaign. Michael Manley's ability to mobilize popular culture to establish a connection with the Jamaican masses allowed the PNP to discredit the Jamaica Labor Party government for its alienation of the poor, corruption, squandering of national treasury funds, high unemployment, and poverty. Using language that the people could relate to gave the PNP legitimacy among working-class Jamaicans. The competition between the JLP's Hugh Shearer and later Edward Seaga, and the PNP's Michael Manley for power is of pivotal significance to the evolution of political violence in the 1970s. Unlike his father, who had a more passive relationship with political violence, Michael Manley might be thought of arguably as being a more aggressive participant in the politics of spoils that generated violence. This era gave rise to Jamaica's most destructive partisan politics as local gunmen used terror tactics to disrupt the general elections.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸¹ Senior, The Message is Change, 1–19.

In an effort to combat existing social and economic problems, the newly elected PNP government implemented a series of reform programs: to relieve unemployment, address illiteracy via the Jamaica Adult Literacy Program (JAMAL), and the nationalization of the utilities and bus systems. However, arguably, the Manley regime suffered adversely because it sought to establish too many reforms within too short a time frame and without the necessary financial support that would make these programs viable. In addition to economic setbacks, Manley's declaration in 1974 of a return to 'democratic socialism' and his close relationship with Cuba's Fidel Castro clashed with the United States' Cold War policies which supported the global destabilization of Socialist governments.

This chapter examines the leadership of Michael Manley as the new president of the PNP and his attempt to resolve the crisis of political violence. This political emergency was responsible for the death of nearly a thousand people as both parties viciously contested the 1976 and 1980 general elections. During Manley's term as prime minister, there were a number of incidents that implicated his government in the perpetration of violence. One of the most egregious was the so-called Green Bay Massacre in 1978 in which JLP supporters were set up, ambushed, and killed by members of the Jamaica Defense Force (JDF), presumed to be supporters of the government in power. This incident served to portray the PNP as a force behind the violence and created distrust for the government among a growing percentage of the populace. This sentiment was further reinforced with the creation of the '*Brigadista*' program which was an agreement between Jamaica and Cuba that allowed Jamaican workers to travel to Cuba, where they were to be trained in construction techniques. This program was controversial. The leader of the opposition party, Edward Seaga, exploited local and U.S. fears

about the spread of socialism in the Caribbean when he argued that the '*Brigadista*' program represented a conspiracy by the government to allow PNP supporters to learn guerrilla tactics and other subversive techniques in Cuba.⁴⁸²

The relationship between Michael Manley and Fidel Castro served to precipitate further problems for Jamaica as the United States government would not tolerate any model of alternative development in the Caribbean and reacted to this alliance by working to destabilize and remove Manley's government from power. It has been argued that the CIA sent agents to infiltrate Jamaican politics and gangs in order to create discord and to encourage the collapse of the Jamaican economy. In spite of internal and external attacks on the PNP government, Manley continued to fight for working-class people because he strongly believed that only through true participatory government could the working-class poor be granted full equality. This reality, he believed, could only be accomplished if Jamaica's sovereignty was protected from external interference. My contention is that despite Manley's attempt to reform the Jamaican government and protect the people, violence between the JLP and PNP escalated. Arguably, an irate Manley responded to the JLP's aggression by forming the *Brigadistas*—a program that generated controversy when former *Brigadista* Colin Dennis claimed that the program was designed to train PNP supporters in guerrilla warfare tactics. In my view, through his efforts to defend PNP constituencies against the JLP's aggression by implementing programs such as the *Brigadistas*, Manley contributed toward creating an environment in which political violence was sanctioned, if not authorized.

⁴⁸² Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 80–100; Levi, Michael Manley, 122–127.

Biography

Michael Manley was born in Kingston, Jamaica, on December 10, 1924, to Edna and Norman Manley. According to Manley's biographer, Darrell Levi, Manley grew up in a brown 'activist' middle-class family and experienced a normal childhood despite having charismatic parents. "Michael Manley's youth was dominated by his remarkable, enigmatic, strongly individualistic parents. Douglas, being the first born, suffered from the inexperience of his parents, as do perhaps all first born children. Michael theorized nearly sixty years after the fact that, in the twenties, his parents had adopted all kinds of crazy, wrong theories about child-raising. They would read a book and decide on the basis of their reading how to raise children."⁴⁸³ In spite of having two children, the Manleys were somewhat estranged from each other in the sense that Norman, a politician, and Edna, an artist, had professional careers which demanded the majority of their time. As King's Counsel for Jamaica, a politician, and later prime minister, Norman Manley worked extremely long hours. Edna, the consummate artist, became so involved in her art that she was often totally unaware of anything else.⁴⁸⁴ This environment resulted in the Manley children being raised by a succession of domestic helpers, some of whom essentially became surrogate parents.

The Manley family members expressed a love for art, music, and sports, especially boxing and cricket, in which both Douglas and Michael participated.⁴⁸⁵ However, exposure to

⁴⁸³ Levi, Michael Manley, 35–36.

⁴⁸⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 36.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

art and music played an important part in the boys' education, and frequent discussions of their opinions and interpretations represented an essential part of the Manley tradition. Although the labor movement began in the 1930s, the Manleys' childhood was not disrupted by the national political struggle being waged.⁴⁸⁶

In 1935, at the age of 11, Manley was enrolled at the exclusive and elitist Jamaica College. Unfortunately, his experience at boarding school became one of his greatest disappointments since Manley became a victim of school bullies and was a social outcast. Manley's negative experience at school could, arguably, be attributed to his father's reputation as both a scholar and athlete. According to Manley, "it was my first recollection of agony. I still get very upset when I remember my years of boarding early, and being very much a part of the tradition of boys that just don't tell. And I had a terrible period when I was losing weight and my parents were going out of their minds, because they did not know what to the hell was wrong with me. And I would not confide in anyone, a mistake that went on for years. Oh Jesus, it was awful."⁴⁸⁷ Manley's experience resulted in his intense attraction to sports and a fierce desire to work out in order to protect himself. Manley's athletic ability resulted in his becoming the captain of the swimming team.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Rachael Manley, Drumblair: Memories of a Jamaican Childhood (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), 83; also referenced in Levi, Michael Manley, 47; Martha Doggett, "Michael Manley," *NACLA*, Vol. 20, No. 5, (September/December 1986): 28. *NACLA* is a scholarly journal that is dedicated to recording and analyzing the societies, politics, and economies of the Caribbean and Latin America.

Both Douglas and Michael Manley had to contend with being frequently compared to their father, Norman, who was legendary. Manley stipulated that “Dad’s thing was so legendary, you just could not move anywhere at Jamaica College, he had the best bowling average for three years; second most goals scored in soccer for three years; champion athlete and was vice captain of the rifle team. Everywhere you turned you saw his picture. It was just too much for Douglas and myself.”⁴⁸⁹ Unfortunately, Manley’s personal charisma did not prevent him from experiencing conflict with the new principal of Jamaica College, J.W.S. Hardie, with whom tensions developed when Manley declined Hardie’s offer to become the new headboy over a more qualified classmate. The relationship between the two spiraled downward and resulted in Hardie’s using his position to humiliate and publicly chastise Manley in order to remind him that he was powerless as a student, which resulted in Manley’s not only leaving JC but also migrating to Canada.⁴⁹⁰

In October 1943, Manley emigrated from Jamaica and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). The military provided structure, routine, and discipline for a rebellious Manley. He quickly became bored with military life and constant exams despite his need to qualify as a pilot.⁴⁹¹ In spite of Manley’s desire to serve in combat, “he was deactivated shortly after May 8,

⁴⁸⁹ Levi, Michael Manley, 47.

⁴⁹⁰ Levi, Michael Manley, 48–49.

⁴⁹¹ Levi, Michael Manley, 52.

1945, VE Day.”⁴⁹² Manley’s experience in Canada was one of frustration; his ideological beliefs that communism granted true equality by protecting the poor contributed to his ostracism from Canadian society.⁴⁹³

Manley’s experiences in Canada resulted in his emigration to Britain in late 1945, where he was very critical of the people and society due to the subtle enforcement of racist ideologies. Darrell Levi contends that, although Manley was “very light skinned, he nonetheless witnessed and experienced an immense amount of color prejudice in which all Jamaicans, West Indians, and Africans were snubbed in restaurants, refused lodgings, and suffered job discrimination.”⁴⁹⁴ Manley’s disappointment with Britain was intense and troubling because civic classes in Jamaica had protected and idolized the history of the British people. Jamaicans were taught to respect Queen and country and to be loyal to Great Britain, which empathized with blacks through their emancipation in 1838.

Despite these obvious problems, Manley married his first wife, Jacqueline Kamellard, in early 1946 and enrolled at the London School of Economics (LSE) to finish his undergraduate degree. Manley quickly became frustrated with the structure of social conditions at LSE, where he majored in economics.⁴⁹⁵ Manley withdrew from the university and relocated with his wife

⁴⁹² Christopher Arawak, Jamaica’s Michael Manley: Messiah, Muddler, or Marionette? (Miami: Sir Henry Morgan Press, 1980), 20–100; also referenced in Wayne Brown, Edna Manley: The Private Years: 1900–1938 (London: André Deutsch, 1975), 10–50.

⁴⁹³ Levi, Michael Manley, 54–55.

⁴⁹⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 61.

⁴⁹⁵ Levi, Michael Manley, 63.

to Cornwall, a decision that lasted six months during which his daughter Rachel was born on July 3, 1947.⁴⁹⁶ By the fall of 1947, Manley returned to LSE to continue his education in political journalism. In his second year, Manley was further influenced by Harold Laski, who advocated “combining individual freedom with social order, worker freedom in the face of growing demands by the state, and the marriage of socialism and democracy.”⁴⁹⁷ Laski’s ideologies were an extension of those of Norman Manley, who had previously influenced Michael on the benefits of socialism. Manley continued to remain informed about the state of Jamaican and Caribbean politics via personal correspondence with his father and newspapers while attending Laski’s lectures which further advanced his support of ‘Democratic Socialism.’⁴⁹⁸

From 1948–49 Manley, in his third year, became more politicized and actively participated in the LSE’s West Indian Student Union. Through the student union, Manley became “a principal organizer of strikes protesting against the British government’s enforcement of racism in Africa.”⁴⁹⁹ Despite Manley’s political activism, the daily frustration of providing for a family precipitated a financial crisis, which caused a strain within the marriage and resulted in the couple’s divorce in 1951. This in turn resulted in Manley’s daughter Rachel’s being sent to Jamaica to live with her grandparents, Edna and Norman Manley.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ Manley, Drumblair, 3–82.

⁴⁹⁷ Levi, Michael Manley, 64.

⁴⁹⁸ Levi, Michael Manley, 65.

⁴⁹⁹ Levi, Michael Manley, 68; Doggett, “Michael Manley,” 28.

⁵⁰⁰ Manley, Drumblair, 79–81.

In an effort to gain practical journalistic experience, Manley worked for the *London Observer* in 1951; however, by December of that same year, he returned to Jamaica. “From early 1952 through 1955, he wrote an opinion column entitled *The Root of the Matter* for an independent newspaper that was very critical of the JLP government’s *Public Opinion*; he wrote editorials, covered stories, worked on feature stories, handled lay-outs, and managed the sports and feature pages.”⁵⁰¹ Manley used the newspaper as a forum to express his ideologies and attacked the JLP-supported *The Daily Gleaner* for its monolithic nature and its unethical editorials on the PNP.⁵⁰² In the continued battle between the JLP and PNP, Manley was very vocal in defense of the PNP and openly attacked JLP supporters. “The leaders of the JLP, he wrote in 1955, are completely contemptuous of democracy, are basically indifferent to the welfare of the country, and dedicated solely to the end of their own lust for power.”⁵⁰³

Arguably, Manley’s time as a journalist allowed him to re-connect with Jamaican society and to become more intuitive and vocal about the problems that the people endured.⁵⁰⁴ While working for the newspaper, Manley became involved in establishing grassroots support bases for the PNP in the middle-class constituency of Barbican. Working in this capacity, Manley addressed large audiences in order to promote the PNP’s political agenda.⁵⁰⁵ This allowed him to become more involved in the trade union movement and resulted in his being elected to the

⁵⁰¹ Manley, *Drumblair*, 82–86; also referenced in Levi, *Michael Manley*, 72; Doggett, “Michael Manley,” 27.

⁵⁰² Levi, *Michael Manley*, 73.

⁵⁰³ Levi, *Michael Manley*, 79.

⁵⁰⁴ Levi, *Michael Manley*, 84.

⁵⁰⁵ Levi, *Michael Manley*, 87.

“National Executive Committee and the Central Executive Committee of the PNP.”⁵⁰⁶ In late 1952, Manley became a negotiator for the National Workers Union and participated in representing workers at the Ariguanabo Textile Mill. By 1953, he also assisted employees at the Aluminum Company of Canada (ALCAN) to gain a fair wage. According to Manley, these experiences “convinced him that trade unionism suited his egalitarianism, his commitment to social justice and his instinct for activism.”⁵⁰⁷ Manley’s passionate nature and continued activism resulted in his acceptance by the local populace who believed that Manley was committed to the ordinary man. In June 1953, Michael Manley officially joined the trade union movement when he became a full-time employee of the National Worker’s Union (NWU). According to Martha Doggett “Manley’s job was to make inroads into the labor sector, long dominated by Bustamante and the BITU; although he consistently maintained that his trade unionism was separate from his politics, success in bauxite and sugar organization had the political bonus of broadening the support of the predominantly urban PNP.”⁵⁰⁸ In an effort to ingratiate himself with the Jamaican populace, Manley dedicated himself to visiting poor neighborhoods and used public rallies to advocate on behalf of the NWU.

⁵⁰⁶ Levi, Michael Manley, 88.

⁵⁰⁷ “The JLP and the Jamaican People,” *Public Opinion*, No. 1052, March 7, 1953, 6.

⁵⁰⁸ “The Daily Gleaner Fails to Tell the Facts,” *Public Opinion*, No. 1262, April 9, 1955, 8; “Manley and Jamaica,” *Public Opinion*, No. 1297, June 11, 1955, 10; “An Analysis of the Jamaican Government,” *Public Opinion*, No. 1312, June 25, 1955, 8; “Manley and the NWU,” *Public Opinion*, No. 1370, August 27, 8; “The Problems for the Common Man,” *Public Opinion*, No. 1387, September 17, 1955, 10, 1955; also referenced in Martha Doggett, “Michael Manley,” 29.

Amidst his union activities, Manley married Thelma Verity (a dancer) in 1954 despite his total involvement in a bitter struggle between NWU, BITU, and TUC to represent workers on the unorganized sugar estates.⁵⁰⁹ In 1956, this crisis resulted in major victories for the NWU in the South Clarendon area and in the NWU's emerging as a counterpoise to the BITU.⁵¹⁰ Due to the balance of power that the NWU represented in the trade union movement, there was cooperation between the BITU and NWU, which jointly led a strike in 1956 against various sugar estates.⁵¹¹ The crisis went to arbitration, which resulted in a loss for the NWU when arbitrators concluded with a decision on a worker's salary of one shilling and ten pence per hour. In spite of the defeat, Manley continued to advocate on behalf of workers for higher wages. By 1960, Manley's second marriage had failed due to his union activities since he was rarely at home to help raise his son, Joseph, who was born in 1958.⁵¹²

The failure of the West Indies Federation resulted in a major loss for the PNP in 1962, which allowed the JLP to return to power. This erupted in conflict with mass lay-offs, termination of civil servants, redistricting to claim more seats for JLP candidates, abuse of patronage, and the blatant abuse of PNP supporters who protested against JLP corruption.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁹ Levi, Michael Manley, 90; Manley, Drumblair, 132–33.

⁵¹⁰ Michael Manley, A Voice in the Work Place: Reflections on Colonialism and the Jamaican Worker (London: Andre` Deutsch Limited, 1975), 115; also referenced in Manley, Drumblair, 216–217; Levi, Michael Manley, 90.

⁵¹¹ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 114–152; also referenced in Manley, Drumblair, 217; Levi, Michael Manley, 91.

⁵¹² Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 120–140; also referenced in Manley, Drumblair, 270–284; Levi, Michael Manley, 97.

⁵¹³ Levi, Michael Manley, 109.

This environment facilitated Manley's attempt to enter the political arena because he realized that as a political leader, he could directly impact policies designed to benefit the poor. Despite the PNP's defeat in the 1962 elections, Michael Manley was elected to the senate, "the lesser house of Jamaica's bicameral parliament where his main job was to represent labor," where his political career began.⁵¹⁴

As a consequence of his senatorial position, Manley became an essential factor in maintaining the connection between trade unionism and politics, a position that he exploited in 1964 when he participated in the strike by the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC). Manley's organization of the strike gained him national attention and introduced the people of Jamaica to his dynamic and charismatic personality. Although the JBC was created by Norman Manley, the company was independent of local politics, and in this elusive capacity, the JBC was equally critical of the PNP government from 1955 through 1962.⁵¹⁵ However, once the JLP reclaimed office in 1962, they censored and controlled Jamaica's only television station and a pro-PNP medium by placing the organization's finances under the control of Edward Seaga, the Minister of Culture and Development. Concerned that JBC employees would turn to the BITU to protect their interests, the NWU began negotiations with the corporation in 1963 and reached a tentative agreement in January 1964 for increased wages, pensions, and reduced working hours. A week later, Manley was informed that the proposal was rejected by the corporation's

⁵¹⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 110.

⁵¹⁵ Levi, Michael Manley, 112; Manley, Drumblair, 294.

board of directors and Minister Edward Seaga because the JBC was losing money.⁵¹⁶ With negotiations stalling, Manley was informed that two JBC reporters, Adrian Rodway and George Lee, were terminated for reporting on the JBC labor dispute. Manley argued that the corporation should reinstate both men—Lee because he had done nothing wrong in reporting the story of the union strike, and Rodway because the most of which he was guilty was technical default by not verifying the story with the senior news editor.⁵¹⁷ The board rejected Manley’s proposal and refused to reinstate the men. At this juncture, the NWU informed the corporation of the workers’ decision to strike.⁵¹⁸

Michael Manley organized and led the strike that began on February 1, 1964. Negotiations were problematic because station managers were paid ‘double salary’ to keep the station operating while workers walked the picket line.⁵¹⁹ Manley surmised that due to the station’s ability to operate, coupled with other media outlets such as radio and newspapers that reported the daily news, the NWU’s probability of success was negligible and that he must

⁵¹⁶ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 164; also referenced in Manley, Drumblair, 306–7; Terry, Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica 1960–1970: Internal Security in a Developing Country, (London: Manchester University Press, 1977), 31.

⁵¹⁷ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 165–167; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “Democratic Socialism—PNP Program”; “Proposed PNP Socialism Program,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXX. No. 261, November 7, 1964, 1, 2, 10; “PNP Policy: Brave and Honest,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXVII. No. 44, November 8, 1964, 6; “Unions Council Makes Submissions,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXX. No. 265, November 12, 1964, 4.

⁵¹⁸ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 168; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “US Team Calls on Bustamante”; “BITU reports Street Cleaners pay dispute to Ministry,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXX. No. 272, November 19, 1964, 2, 8; “NWU Leaders: Misuse-of-funds Charge Absolutely False”; “Manley: PNP Will Work Out its Socialist policy,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXX. No. 286, December 7, 1964, 2, 8, 12.

⁵¹⁹ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 169; Levi, Michael Manley, 112.

find an alternative means of success.⁵²⁰ Manley decided that the strike's success depended on the public's awareness of the injustice of the workers' terminations, and resorted to non-violent protests epitomized by Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. in the American civil rights movement. On March 5, the union initiated a strike when JBC workers, including Manley, lay down on the streets of Kingston's main roadway, causing major traffic jams. The government responded to this act of defiance by using tear gas and force to remove the strikers. According to Michael Manley, "it is not that I do not understand that violence will sometimes be the only medium capable of delivering historical change, it is just that I see it as an absolute last resort and not a path to be taken, because the moral courage is lacking to try other ways."⁵²¹ After ninety-seven days of protest, the strike was resolved after the terminations were investigated by a board of inquiry, which ruled that George Lee was innocent and Adrian Rodway's termination was justified. Arguably despite this split verdict, the strike helped propel Michael Manley into the national political arena as a contender for the leadership of the party. It also endeared him to the Jamaican working class who renamed him 'Joshua,' savior for the people, a man willing to challenge the government to protect the working man.⁵²²

Manley's popularity did not prevent criticism from those within the PNP who believed that he was unqualified to lead the party. He was also criticized by some sections of the Jamaican Left for being a moderate liberal and not a radical socialist. Members of the Jamaican Left, such as Bobby Hill, created controversy in 1964 when he challenged the party's more

⁵²⁰ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 172.

⁵²¹ Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 174; Levi, Michael Manley, 112.

⁵²² Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 180–184; Levi, Michael Manley, 113.

prominent leaders for control over policies.⁵²³ *The Daily Gleaner* was also critical of Manley, stating that “he cast his lot in 1964–5 with the center-right of the PNP rather than its left wing insurgents.”⁵²⁴ Political challenges from the younger generation within the PNP, coupled with internal fighting, created a crisis for the PNP. Consequently, in November, Michael Manley, in conjunction with an advisory committee, announced their socialist programs in an effort to maintain party unity. Manley declared, “I want to spell out democratic socialist policy for Jamaica based on the premise that socialism is about equality. Equality did not mean uniformity, dictatorship of any kind, or equality in misery and poverty.”⁵²⁵ Manley’s explanation, however, failed to resolve the confusion and JLP propaganda about socialism. The problem with the PNP’s socialist program was its inability to work effectively within a capitalistic framework. The failure to fully define Democratic Socialism and how it would work in Jamaica created a disconnect between the people and the party. The PNP’s neglect allowed the JLP to exploit the weaknesses within the PNP’s socialist program to create uncertainty and fear about the impact of socialism in Jamaica.⁵²⁶

Michael Manley, the PNP, and Violence

Despite the JLP’s attack against the PNP’s political ideologies in 1967, Michael Manley campaigned for the House of Representatives in the east-central Kingston constituency, a seat

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 113–114.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Levi, Michael Manley, 115.

which he later won.⁵²⁷ Manley continued to engage in union struggles via the NWU, although he was now a recognized politician. The tactics utilized by Manley in the unionization process were antagonistic and perilous in relation to the political violence of the 1960s. This was evident in 1967 when Manley became embroiled in political violence himself, when the NWU's dominance of the bauxite industry was challenged by the BITU leadership. The conflict emerged in 1967, when an agreement to build an aluminum plant was negotiated between the Jamaican government and Kaiser, Reynolds, and Anaconda Corporations came to fruition when construction on the project began. At this juncture the BITU used the commencement of the project to challenge the NWU's control over workers in the bauxite industry.⁵²⁸

Unlike his father, Michael Manley had a more active relationship with political conflict, which was evident when violence occurred after Manley had addressed NWU bauxite workers. As he was leaving, a fight erupted between the JLP's Pearnel Charles and NWU members. Michael Manley claimed as the fighting escalated, "Pearnel Charles drew his gun and started firing, wounding Clenton Cooke and another NWU worker, George Whyrune. Charles then ran to a waiting BITU car, which sped away when additional shots were fired by PNP supporters, in the midst of tear gas fired in turn by the police on duty at the work-site."⁵²⁹ In an effort to end

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Levi, Michael Manley, 119; Lacey, Violence and Politics in Jamaica, 1960–1970, 49–50.

⁵²⁹ Levi, Michael Manley, 120; Manley, A Voice in the Work Place, 165–170.

the strike, Manley rallied workers and marched to the work site, past JLP gunmen defending the picket line, a strategy that ended the strike successfully.⁵³⁰

Manley married Barbara Lewar in 1966 in spite of the challenges that a political career can generate. The marriage ended when Barbara died of cancer after giving birth to Manley's third child, Sarah.⁵³¹

During his tenure as a member of the House, Manley continued to fight for the union workers; but he also became more entrenched in the political sphere by publicly challenging the JLP's policies and arguing against political corruption. Consequently, Manley criticized the JLP government for failing the working class, as the unemployment rate rose to thirty percent and poverty persisted, reinforced by enforcement of social and class biases.⁵³² The economy remained a weakness for the JLP because in the 1960s, although Jamaica experienced growth in the manufacturing industry as a result of foreign investment, that growth was limited to the middle class. This situation was further complicated by restrictive British immigration policies that prevented migration from Jamaica, thus, exacerbating the high unemployment rate. Political scientists, George Beckford and Michael Witter, blamed these problems on the mal-distribution of wealth due to the JLP's political support of multinational businesses, which oppressed the masses (especially the disenfranchised youth, whom they viewed as a "political

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Manley, Drumblair, 350–361.

⁵³² Levi, Michael Manley, 121.

nuisance and superfluous.”)⁵³³ Political deference to multinational corporations was not unique to Jamaica; however, the JLP exacerbated the issue by alienating and neglecting the working-class poor.

In February 1969, Manley became the president of the PNP after defeating the moderate lawyer, Vivian Blake, and immediately launched his attack against the JLP government. As the leader of the opposition, Manley continued his criticism of the JLP for the rising violence. “One of Manley’s first acts as PNP president was to call for an independent crime commission to investigate violence and law and order in Jamaica. Prime Minister Shearer responded by calling on Manley to stop preaching civil disobedience and support the police.”⁵³⁴ With the 1972 general elections approaching, local politicians waged a war of words, each condemning the other for localized violence while claiming that their respective party only responded to defend their members. Manley used his charismatic personality to cement a connection between the PNP, the working-class poor, and the Rastafarian community. Darrell Levi reports that,

In his campaign Manley used terms from the Old Testament that reflected Rastafarian speech and sensitivity towards the ‘sufferers’. Songs like ‘Beat down Babylon,’ ‘Small Axe,’ and ‘Must get a Beating,’ expressed the outrage of many people towards the ‘oppressors’ loosely identified as the JLP and associated groups such as ‘capitalists.’ A walking stick supposedly given to Manley by Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian emperor became known as Joshua’s rod and featured prominently in the campaign.⁵³⁵

⁵³³ George Beckford, and Michael Witter, Small Garden Bitter Weed: The Political Struggle and Change in Jamaica, (London: Zed Press, 1982), 74–75.

⁵³⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 122.

⁵³⁵ Levi, Michael Manley, 126.

The people actually believed that Manley's rod had mystical powers and wanted to touch this source of power at political rallies, a spectacle that further established Manley as a champion of the people. By exploiting Manley's connection to the Emperor's gift of the rod, and by manipulating popular culture via reggae music, he was able to evoke biblical, cultural, and political symbolism to strengthen his support base.⁵³⁶ Manley's motives during his rise to power were not totally altruistic; he was just as guilty as others of manipulating and exploiting grassroots supporters to gain access to power.⁵³⁷ However, Manley's appeal was multifaceted and, outside of partisan politics, many Jamaicans were ready by 1970 for a change after ten years of economic failure by the JLP leadership. Coupled with Manley's political campaign that incorporated the poor and disenfranchised and a stagnating economy, he claimed victory in the elections.

Reporting on the drama surrounding the political campaign for the 1972 general elections, *The Daily Gleaner* concentrated on the propaganda machines of both parties. Both parties exploited the fears of the populace. For example, speaking at a rally in Tivoli Gardens in 1972, Edward Seaga declared that "I did not bring violence to west Kingston they (the PNP) brought it to me."⁵³⁸ Once again, the JLP attempted to discredit the PNP since Seaga never failed to condemn Manley for promoting violence and all the problems that plagued Jamaica,

⁵³⁶ Levi, Michael Manley, 127.

⁵³⁷ Senior, The Message is Change, 1–19.

⁵³⁸ "Seaga: PNP Has Done Nothing for Central Kingston"; "Seaga Denies Carrying Violence to west Kingston," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXVIII. No. 46, February 24, 1972, 4, 11.

although the JLP had been in power for the last ten years.⁵³⁹ If propaganda tactics failed to motivate the populace, the JLP exploited the PNP's socialist platform, not only to vilify the party but also to create fear and confusion about a possible communist occupation and to draw support from the United States. Paul Ashley argues that "locally the JLP imposed the international climate on the electorate by perpetuating the fear of the PNP-linked communist invasion to justify its pro-United States foreign policy orientation and the veil of secrecy over its foreign policy."⁵⁴⁰ However, this tactic was frequently used by whichever party controlled the government to malign and condemn the Opposition. This was reflected in previously cited speeches, where both Manley and Seaga played partisan politics by blaming the other party for instigating political violence, a political tactic that maintained the status quo but failed to resolve the crisis caused by gang violence.

The PNP's battle call of 'power to the people' answered JLP propaganda with a campaign promise that they would dedicate themselves to resolving corruption, unemployment, crime, violence, and ending victimization by the JLP government.⁵⁴¹ Political aggression was evident in the stories reported by *The Daily Gleaner* on February 16, 1972. Kenrick Anglin was stabbed and Charles Kennedy received a head wound after stones were thrown at a public PNP meeting; yet, despite the reported injuries, PNP supporters rallied to

⁵³⁹ Ibid; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "PNP accuses JLP government of using Force," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXVIII. No. 41, February 18, 1972, 20.

⁵⁴⁰ Paul Ashley, *Jamaica Foreign Policy in Transition from Manley to Seaga* (Puerto Rico: University of Puerto Rico Press, 1983), 145.

⁵⁴¹ Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley*, 72.

defend their community by forcing JLP supporters to flee the area. Such conflicts were a common element of Jamaican politics.⁵⁴² The PNP, however, had more ammunition in the political campaign when PNP leaders accused the JLP of taking Jamaica to the brink of bankruptcy due to an absence of responsible development planning with expensive public works projects that exceeded their budgets and were incomplete. The PNP asserted that the sheer fiscal irresponsibility resulted in a debt that had increased to \$320.3 million, some of which was poorly managed and stolen by corrupt politicians. According to *The Daily Gleaner*, the legacy of the JLP in the 1972 general elections was a “public debt of approximately five times what Jamaica has been able to incur in its entire previous history.”⁵⁴³ Ultimately, the PNP’s ability to successfully exploit the Rasta culture, religious symbolism, black pride, poverty, high unemployment, problems with the JLP’s corruption, and local frustration with the incumbent government, resulted in a victory for the PNP in the 1972 general elections.

At 47 years old, Manley became the new Prime Minister of Jamaica. The PNP claimed victory in the 1972 elections with thirty four seats as against the JLP’s seventeen seats in the house.⁵⁴⁴ Manley himself asserted that “the people voted in 1972 for the change which we

⁵⁴² “Vote for JLP is a Vote for Democracy,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXVIII. No. 39, February 16, 1972, 9.

⁵⁴³ Senior, *The Message is Change*, 1–19; “JLP Man Shot Dead,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXVIII. No. 42, February 19, 1972, 1.

⁵⁴⁴ Aggrey Brown. “New Perspectives on Color, Class, and Politics in Jamaica.” Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, June 1973, 239–241; also referenced in Senior, *The Message is Change*, 1–19; “Manley Hopes to Heal Some of the Bitter Divisions,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXXXVIII. No. 50, March 1, 1972, 1; Levi, *Michael Manley*, 128–129.

symbolized more than specifically promised.”⁵⁴⁵ According to *The Daily Gleaner* reports, the 1972 elections were relatively peaceful: “a press release from the headquarters of the joint police and military command said that fifteen major incidents were reported, nine arrests, and four persons detained.”⁵⁴⁶ Decreased incidents of political violence were attributed to intra-party conflicts within the JLP leadership as Hugh Shearer was replaced by Edward Seaga as the leader of the party.

Economic Contributions to Violence

In order to understand the endemic nature of political violence in the 1970s, I will explain a number of extenuating circumstances that contributed to the problem. The first dilemma of the Manley regime was the failing economy, which was not immediately apparent due to his success in attaining more revenue for Jamaica via the increased bauxite levies. Secondly, the PNP government had to contend with an aggressive U.S. government that was determined to contain or eliminate communism/socialism around the world.⁵⁴⁷ After the 1972 elections, Manley initiated a series of controversial reforms aimed at improving Jamaica’s economy through the nationalization of several public service industries, and the government’s conversion to democratic socialism. The problem with Manley’s reforms was that Jamaica lacked the funding to make the country economically independent of what he considered to be an exploitative capitalist market. Manley exacerbated this situation by turning to the

⁵⁴⁵ Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley*, 72; Senior, *The Message is Change*, 1–19.

⁵⁴⁶ “Manley Hopes to Heal Some of the Bitter Divisions,” *The Daily Gleaner*, March 1, 1972, 1.

⁵⁴⁷ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*, 60–101.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for a financial bailout for Jamaica. This ultimately undermined his own government's authority when the banks demanded the implementation of several austerity economic measures in return for granting the loans. The problem with the IMF and World Bank demands was that the banks wanted Manley to reduce civil service sector jobs and decrease government spending at a time when Jamaica suffered from an unemployment rate of 23 percent. These demands precipitated an economic crisis for the country in the late 1970s.⁵⁴⁸

In 1972, the PNP government initiated reforms aimed at expanding the role of the state, whereby the government could more effectively serve the needs of the people. Consequently, the PNP government introduced and enhanced a series of programs designed to alleviate economic problems. These programs, according to Carl Stone, included the "New International Economic Order (NIEO), a program to reduce the gap between the rich and poor; the Special Employment Program Community; public housing program; civil service reclassification; JAMAL, a literacy program; and land lease."⁵⁴⁹ Manley believed that any economy which remained dependent on foreign sources would fail and Democratic Socialism was necessary to unite the people and change attitudes.⁵⁵⁰ Consequently, Manley argued that the government should

⁵⁴⁸ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 60–197, 391.

⁵⁴⁹ Carl Stone, "Democracy and Socialism in Jamaica 1962–1979," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. Xix, No. 2, (July 1981):119; PNP pamphlet "Our Performance Since 1972"; also referenced in Doggett, "Michael Manley," 30–33; Levi, Michael Manley, 133.

⁵⁵⁰ Linda M. Hoffman, "Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1983, 119; Michael Manley, Politics of Change: A Jamaican Testament (London: Andre` Deutsch Limited, 1974), 67–75.

serve and be controlled by the people. Political parties within that system should act as mediators between the people and government; and towards that end, the people have the power to determine the future of the country via the 'politics of participation.'⁵⁵¹ As an ideologue, Manley saw the colonial influence within Jamaican society as destructive of true democracy; therefore, the stratification of class and color had to be eliminated if true reforms were to occur.⁵⁵² Manley's decision to return to Democratic Socialism in 1974 was an attempt to reform the established system of capitalism, which was designed to benefit the colonial bureaucracy and big business. Arguably, in 1974, Manley was attempting to make both the political parties and government responsible to the people of Jamaica, and his return to Democratic Socialism was representative of this belief. Conveniently, what Manley failed to address was the role of the government and political parties in establishing a connection with the disenfranchised youths who were involved in gang violence.

Manley's reforms were not limited to the local government. He wanted to expand and transform Jamaica's relationship with other Third World countries in an effort to promote trade and cooperation between nations since Jamaica was connected to the global economy where multinational capitalistic rules dominated and also controlled the price of sugar and the stock exchange. Consequently, Manley's foreign policy focused on economic development in order to combat endemic poverty while reducing Jamaica's economic dependency on nations such as

⁵⁵¹ Hoffman, "Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80," 72–74; Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," *NACLA*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (January/ February 1981): 24–26.

⁵⁵² Hoffman, "Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80," 74; Manley, Politics of Change, 76–122.

the United States and Britain, which owned half of all business interests in Jamaica.⁵⁵³ Manley's efforts to assert Jamaica's independence and sovereignty explain his decision to extend diplomatic relations to Cuba in 1972 despite obvious conflicts with the United States' oppressive Cold War foreign policies. According to Darrell Levi, "Manley's efforts were problematic because not only was Jamaica economically dependent on foreign investors, but he underestimated the fact that the power of the United States was enormous and that the Jamaican people still harbored positive images of the U.S. as a source of opportunity and money for many of them. A tremendous problem was that for the masses of the Jamaican people, values were disseminated through a system of propaganda and entertainment that poured out of Washington, New York, and California."⁵⁵⁴ Consequently, the Manley government was negatively impacted by U.S. foreign policies, which were made more problematic by the leader of the opposition party, Edward Seaga, who encouraged misinformation and gang violence.

In the first two years, the Manley government focused on initiating domestic policies aimed at transforming a failing economy. The PNP inherited pre-existing problems such as increased interest on international loans, decreased tourism, increased taxes on imports, the end of bauxite expansion, and international recession.⁵⁵⁵ Manley, therefore, planned to use

⁵⁵³ Hoffman, "Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80," 80; also referenced in Manley, Politics of Change, 123–137; Fitzroy Ambursley, "Jamaica: From Michael Manley to Edward Seaga," in Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen, Crisis in the Caribbean (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 80.

⁵⁵⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 135; Department of Statistics (1973) *National Income and Product 1972*, (Kingston: Department of Statistics).

⁵⁵⁵ Kaufman, Jamaica under Manley, 73–76; *Economic Survey*, Jamaica, 1971. (Kingston: Central Planning Unit).

government revenues to fund expanded welfare programs through the restructuring of capitalism. He began this process by assembling a cabinet that incorporated capitalists, liberals, professionals, and leftist leaders.⁵⁵⁶ For example, Eli Matalon, a local businessman, was appointed as Minister of Education. Despite the controversial personalities of the new government, Manley focused on eliminating illiteracy through the adult education program, JAMAL. In an effort to equalize the system of education so that all children had proper access to it, the PNP government's reforms created free secondary and university education.⁵⁵⁷

With an unemployment rate rising from twenty three percent to thirty percent, the Special Employment Program (SEP) was initiated to reduce unemployment. Members of the Opposition party criticized the program because SEP was used to reward PNP supporters who had been victimized and excluded by the previous JLP patronage system.⁵⁵⁸ Through SEP, "the equivalent of 20,000 full-time jobs was created, particularly in street cleaning, road improvement, painting public buildings, agricultural infrastructure projects, etc.," the Department of Statistics reported in 1973.⁵⁵⁹ Jamaica's economic problems were complicated by an 'international economic crisis,' which resulted in increased prices for imported products like oil that multiplied the local deficit. "The deficit in the balance of trade rose quickly from

⁵⁵⁶ Hoffman, "Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80," 65.

⁵⁵⁷ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 70–71; Kaufman, Jamaica under Manley, 76–77.

⁵⁵⁸ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 73; Kaufman, Jamaica under Manley, 77.

⁵⁵⁹ Department of Statistics (1973) *National Income and Product 1972*, (Kingston: Department of Statistics).

J\$189.1 million in 1972 to J\$249.8 million the following year.⁵⁶⁰ The Manley government also raised excise taxes in order to nationalize public utilities such as Jamaica Telephone Company, Jamaica Public Service, and Jamaica Omnibus Service, to gain control over Jamaica's resources.⁵⁶¹ Manley was determined to reform the country's economic dependency and these programs were designed to create a level of local independence that would alleviate its vulnerability to the U.S.'s foreign policies.

Although the PNP claimed victory in the 1972 elections, the party suffered through an increase in post-election political violence as JLP supporters continued their efforts to destabilize the Manley regime. In 1973, violence in west Kingston claimed the lives of six prominent citizens, forcing Manley to comment on the problems of Seaga's control over the west Kingston constituency. Manley claimed that "a one-party state had been built in Tivoli Gardens, the center of Seaga's west Kingston constituency. When the Ministry of Housing had tried to place a few families there that had earlier been bulldozed out by political tyranny, a JLP gang was organized to keep them out."⁵⁶² Even before the outbreak in order to combat the problem of rising violence in west Kingston, Manley created the Home Guard Volunteers in 1972—a voluntary program designed to help the police efficiently patrol communities, and one that potentially had the means of empowering the people. The JLP, however, generated fear about the role of the Home Guard and argued that the guard "was being established to replace

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Levi, Michael Manley, 138; also referenced in Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–26.

the regular police force as the first step in an elaborate communist take-over.”⁵⁶³ The JLP continued to exploit communist fear after the election and utilized the creation of the Home Guard to raise localized concern about the government’s ability to control ordinary citizens patrolling the streets, or more importantly committing violence in JLP communities under the guise of protection. As nationwide violence continued to rise from 1972 through 1973, Manley created the Gun Court, which “was a special court established to deal with any crime involving a firearm including illegal possession of a firearm or ammunition and was to try anyone charged with a firearms offense within seven days of arrest.”⁵⁶⁴ The creation of both the Gun Court and the Home Guard under the Manley government was indicative of an increase in the use of hand guns to commit politically motivated violence.

U.S. destabilization efforts

The decline of Manley’s popular PNP began by the middle of the 1970s with the U.S.’s destabilization efforts after a series of conflicts between Jamaican and U.S. authorities. The first problem emerged locally with increasing anti-American and anti-capitalist sentiments expressed by some PNP leaders; second, the U.S. government was concerned about Manley’s attempt to establish democratic socialism and the impact that the PNP had on national policies; third, Americans objected to Manley’s arrogance and aggression in re-negotiating with the major bauxite companies for increased taxes that would benefit the government via needed

⁵⁶³ Michael Manley, *Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery* (London: Third World Media Limited, 1982), 85; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, “PNP Appeal for Unity,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 123, May 24, 1976, 1, 15; Levi, *Michael Manley*, 144.

⁵⁶⁴ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*, 75.

revenue; and finally, the U.S. government was distressed by the Cuban influence in Jamaica via the various exchange programs, which U.S. analysts believed was necessary if the PNP wanted to make Jamaica a one-party state.⁵⁶⁵ The U.S. responded to the socialist ‘corruption’ of the Jamaican government through “actions to undermine the Manley government and help its opponents in the form of reduced aid, negative news reports damaging tourism, and in all probability, covert funding of the opposition.”⁵⁶⁶ The U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica from 1969–1973, Vincent De Roulet, and former CIA operative, Philip Agee, stated that the U.S. government was engaged in a destabilization program in Jamaica because the Manley government refused to submit to their demands to abandon democratic socialism and sever diplomatic relations with Cuba. Arguably, Manley refused to let the U.S. dictate Jamaica’s foreign policies and was angry that yet again the country was vulnerable to American economic reprisals.

International tension between the United States and Jamaica resurfaced in 1973 when Vincent De Roulet testified before a Senate subcommittee that he attempted to destabilize the Jamaican government because he believed that Manley was a threat. “De Roulet claimed that he tried to influence the elections of 1972. He believed that Manley was more of a socialist dedicated to an egalitarian society than Shearer and thus a greater threat to U.S. interests.”⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 126–128.

⁵⁶⁶ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 128.

⁵⁶⁷ U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations; Committee on Foreign Relations, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1973), 109–127; also referenced in William Blum, Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II (United States: Common Courage Press, 1995), 263–267; Theodore H. Moran, “Multinational Corporations and Dependency: A Dialogue for Dependents and non-dependents,” *International*

Since destabilization failed to contain Manley's popularity, De Roulet testified that the opposition party was funded via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to undermine the PNP's political machine. For example, the Shearer government received \$20 million in pre-election aid to effectively challenge the PNP's socialist ideology.⁵⁶⁸ Manley's victory in 1972 failed to prevent the United States government from attempting to control his domestic policies, such as his decision to nationalize the bauxite industry. These policies prompted the U.S. Ambassador to subtly threaten Manley's political platform. According to William Blum, "Ambassador De Roulet warned Manley not to make the U.S.-owned bauxite industry a nationalization issue; otherwise, he would 'oblige' the opposition labor party to make nationalization an issue in the upcoming elections."⁵⁶⁹ Despite Manley's attempt to make Jamaica economically independent, the country obviously remained vulnerable to U.S. influence. This situation was emphasized by Ambassador De Roulet, who essentially threatened to use the opposition party to destabilize government's programs if Manley did not acquiesce to U.S. demands. As Ambassador, De Roulet recognized that the endemic partisan conflicts utilized by the political parties could be manipulated by the U.S. to disrupt Manley's government via nation-wide violence that served to embarrass and destabilize the government, create fear about the state of internal security, and raise doubts about Manley's foreign policy

Organization, Vol. 32, No. 1, (Winter 1978): 79–100; J. Daniel O'Flaherty, "Finding Jamaica's Way," *Foreign Policy*, No. 31 (Summer 1978): 137–158; Levi, Michael Manley, 139.

⁵⁶⁸ O'Flaherty, "Finding Jamaica's Way," 155–158; Blum, Killing Hope, 264–266.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Unknown,' "We Have Been Here Before," www.worldsocialism.org; also referenced in U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations; committee on Foreign Relations, 109–127; Blum, Killing Hope, 263–67.

decisions. Ambassador De Roulet's recognized threat was arguably symptomatic of the fragmented state apparatus.

The year 1974 represented a pivotal one for the PNP as the country suffered from severe economic problems, precipitated by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s imposing higher oil prices in 1973. The PNP lost support among members of the middle class who expressed dissatisfaction with the higher prices, the government's uneven economic progress, and the decision to return to 'Democratic Socialism' to stabilize and equalize the economy. This decision created controversy about Jamaica's future in a capitalistic world market and Manley's strategy.⁵⁷⁰ In 1972, the Manley government supported a bauxite levy designed to aid Jamaica's development. Due to World War II, Jamaica had become a significant producer of bauxite. However, the industry produced little financial benefit for Jamaica since the industry was controlled by powerful multinational corporations such as the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA), Aluminum Company of Canada (ALCAN), Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation, and Reynolds Metal Company, all of which exploited Jamaica for its natural resources without any type of investment in the country's infrastructure.⁵⁷¹ Evelyn and John Stephens write that "the whole bauxite strategy was aimed at taking more control of this natural resource and directing it to development ends decided by the people of Jamaica not by the multinationals."⁵⁷² In an effort to alleviate some of the

⁵⁷⁰ Levi, Michael Manley, 143; also referenced in Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 76.

⁵⁷¹ Levi, Michael Manley, 147; Beckford, and Witter, Small Garden Bitter Weed, 79–80.

⁵⁷² Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 77.

country's economic problems, on May 5, 1974, Manley imposed a bauxite levy, which was part of his attempt to make Jamaica economically independent.⁵⁷³

Manley became the driving force behind the International Bauxite Association (IBA), an organization designed to reduce the monopoly exercised by multinationals over the industry and raise support among bauxite-producing countries for the tax.⁵⁷⁴ Consequently, bauxite-producing countries such as Australia, Guinea, Guyana, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Surinam, and Yugoslavia were encouraged to join and act uniformly to protect their resources.⁵⁷⁵ The problem that Manley and the IBA encountered was that the bauxite-producing countries continued to negotiate independently with multinationals, thereby, undermining the purpose of the IBA. The other bauxite-producing countries "established low taxes which undermined Jamaica's rates, thus securing a competitive advantage. Whether this was because of the pressure of a contracting market, because they out-bargained, or because of an attempt to increase their market share is still an open question to the Jamaican people."⁵⁷⁶ Despite the controversy among bauxite-producing countries, Manley successfully negotiated a 7.5 percent production levy for Jamaica. The money was to be used for Jamaica's capital development.⁵⁷⁷ Ironically, Manley's attempt to expand social welfare reforms allowed Jamaica to become

⁵⁷³ Levi, Michael Manley, 148; Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–25.

⁵⁷⁴ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 78; also referenced in Moran, "Multinational Corporations and Dependency," 79–85; O'Flaherty, "Finding Jamaica's Way," 137–158.

⁵⁷⁵ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 78.

⁵⁷⁶ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 80.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

‘more entrenched in international capital network,’ as the government sought financial assistance from organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), in essence a continuation of the JLP legacy.⁵⁷⁸ This was a process which only served to encourage further economic dependency on international agents.

Because of the corruptive impact of polarized partisan politics, Manley’s second term was marked by a campaign of destabilization. It was organized by the U.S. through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), JLP propaganda via anti-communist rhetoric, and media that fabricated stories such as “articles describing Cuban troops on the island and Jamaica as the catspaw of the USSR.”⁵⁷⁹ The U.S.-increased intervention in Jamaican politics escalated in the 1970s as the government, in an effort to fight the Cold War, battled to keep the Caribbean (the gateway to the U.S.) free from communist influence, and Jamaica was vulnerable to such destabilization efforts since their protection as a colony ended in 1961. However, since Jamaica was governed by a JLP government that was pro-U.S. and economically committed to the IMF, the need for intervention in local policy before the election of Manley in 1970 was unnecessary. Arguably, the American media coverage of Jamaica fabricated stories about Manley and his association with Cuba. Random violence without any motive and increased acts of violence demonstrated that an actual destabilization campaign existed. Scholars such as

⁵⁷⁸ Hoffman, “Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80,” 67; Carl Stone, “The 1976 Parliamentary Election in Jamaica,” *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2, (1976): 32–50.

⁵⁷⁹ Levi, Michael Manley, 167.

Michael Kaufman, Evelyn Stephens, and John Stephens agree that destabilization occurred.⁵⁸⁰

This conclusion was based on the local intensity of violence in Jamaica, IMF austerity demands, and Philip Agee's testimony that the United States, through JLP supporters, attempted to destabilize the Manley regime.

Violence

Despite denials from both political parties over their involvement, political violence continued and escalated to levels of open warfare. Even Manley's denials that the PNP paid gunmen in their service was questionable when, in 1975, he participated in a funeral procession of a known gunman, Winston "Burry Boy" Blake, who had been prosecuted and acquitted several times for murder—someone whom the Jamaican people acknowledged as a criminal.⁵⁸¹

Winston Blake was a notorious PNP gangster whose affiliation with Michael Manley was well known because he saved Manley from a JLP gunman who shot at him while campaigning in the west Kingston constituency. In addition to saving Manley's life, Blake and other such gangsters frequently acted as protection for PNP party leaders as they campaigned in dangerous areas of the city, where guns were needed for defense. The controversy and conflict about Winston Blake occurred when Manley led the funeral procession through Blake's west Kingston constituency on the border of JLP-dominated Tivoli Gardens, where the procession was fired

⁵⁸⁰ Levi, Michael Manley, 169; also referenced in Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–27; Philip Agee, Inside the Company: CIA Diary (United Kingdom: Bantam Books, 1973), 1–108; Blum, Killing Hope, 263–276.

⁵⁸¹ Levi, Michael Manley, 163; also referenced in Hoffman, "Politics of the Manley Regime in Jamaica 1972–80," 109–110; Gunst, Born Fi' Dead, 92–94; Duane Blake, Shower Posse: The Most Notorious Jamaican Criminal Organization (New York: Diamond Publishers, 2002) 1–48.

upon. According to Manley, “the marchers in the procession were restrained by myself and others from retaliating. It seems evident that the residents of Tivoli Gardens are well armed with guns and are being masterminded to carry out political violence at all times. This was obviously a blatant act of political violence aimed at me, members of the cabinet of the PNP, sympathizers, and members of family of the deceased.”⁵⁸² Although Manley was correct in his accusation, the PNP was just as guilty because PNP members were also armed and briefly returned fire although a physical pursuit was prevented. By refusing to acknowledge the role of the PNP as participants in violence, Manley was part of the process of the institutionalization of violence in politics.

Carl Stone, political commentator for *The Daily Gleaner*, eloquently described the local political situation in the 1970s when he said that “the first round was one of the JLP using armed thugs to destabilize the PNP’s popularity prior to the 1976 election. In the second stage, the PNP organized retaliation but mainly as defensive responses. In the third wave, both were on the offensive and pushed the country to the verge of civil war.”⁵⁸³ Whether defensive or offensive, the outcome was the same: nationalized political violence was spiraling out of control, and politicians refused to accept responsibility for the problem. The grim reality remained that by the mid-1970s, the nature of violence had adapted and become stronger, and was removed from the political sphere to become militarized with younger criminals using

⁵⁸² Levi, Michael Manley, 165; John Rapley, “Jamaica: Negotiating Law and Order with the Dons,” *NACLA*, Vol. 37, No. 2, (September/December 2003): 25–26, Blake, Shower Posse, 1–48.

⁵⁸³ “IMF Chief says Industrialized Countries have a Debt Crisis”; “Voice of the People; Stone and the JLP,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CLII. No. 68, March 17, 1986, 1, 8.

firearms to commit crimes. The state of political violence fulfills the ominous reality that was articulated by scholar, Anthony Bogues, who argued “that violence is not a means-end instrument but logic that accompanies power.”⁵⁸⁴ This is a statement that explains continued violence in Jamaican politics today despite a third generation of politicians who had no direct relation to the violence of the 1940s through 1980s.

As the 1976 general elections approached, reported incidents involving the PNP and JLP increased. Manley accused the JLP of instigating violence and issued a call to arms. He “reportedly referred to the thugs and murderers of the JLP and to these people trying to bring fascism to Jamaica. I have made up my mind if they come with the gun then he who lives by the gun shall be buried by the gun.” The JLP denied involvement in the violence and *The Daily Gleaner* called on Manley “to produce evidence to support his allegations.”⁵⁸⁵ Manley’s call to arms was representative of the problem of endemic violence within the system of government. With local politicians denying any participation in gang violence but fueling it with their rhetoric, the cycle of politically instigated violence continued.

In 1976, the political climate was marred by endemic violence that began in 1975 when local gunmen launched a campaign of terror. Michael Manley retrospectively wrote that “the doors of well-known PNP supporters would be kicked down at night and the one-room shacks

⁵⁸⁴ Anthony Bogues, “Power, Violence and the Jamaican ‘Shotta Don,’” *NACLA*, Vol. 39, No. 6, (May/June 2006): 21–23.

⁵⁸⁵ “PM Calls for Defense Groups,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 10, January 12, 1976, 1, 15; “Seaga Calls on Nation to Bar PNP Defense,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 12, January 14, 1976, 1, 5; “CIA Tried to Mold Foreign Opinion,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 2, January 2, 1976, 14; Levi, Michael Manley, 169–170.

in which they lived shot up. Sometimes, the occupants were killed.”⁵⁸⁶ The problem with Manley’s assessment was that the Orange Lane community to which he referred was divided into JLP and PNP enclaves respectively. JLP Minister of Parliament Parnell Charles claimed that the tension between the gangs was created by the government’s attempt to displace JLP supporters in the area via a housing scheme that required bulldozing the homes of members of the opposition. Violence first erupted when a member of the JLP gang was killed. The gang retaliated by attacking members of the PNP community. Violence reached dramatic heights in 1976 when the Orange Lane Fire occurred. A total of 500 people were left homeless and eleven people died, among them “five children and two babies,” who perished when rival gang retaliation resulted in the destruction by fire of several homes.⁵⁸⁷ “They were trapped in the flames and died as their parents listened helplessly to their pitiful screams.”⁵⁸⁸

Manley argued that the Orange Lane violence represented an early attempt to destabilize his government through the calculated effort to create confrontation between local gangs, thereby generating localized panic via riots that occurred between JLP and PNP gangs following the fire. The Orange Lane incident was followed by escalating violence in July 1976 when a gang, armed with machine guns, attacked a PNP-affiliated club, killing six and wounding

⁵⁸⁶ Manley, Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery, 138.

⁵⁸⁷ Manley, Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery, 139; also referenced in Parnell Charles, Detained (Jamaica: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1977), 14.

⁵⁸⁸ Economic and Social Survey—Jamaica 1976, (Kingston: National Planning Agency); NPA (1977) Chief Electoral Officer, (1976) *General Election 1976, Report*, (Kingston: Chief Electoral Officer).

fifty.⁵⁸⁹ The increase in the use of guns in political conflict represented a shift in the political environment that started in the late 1960s. As a result of escalating political violence, Manley declared a state of emergency on June 19, 1976. “Under the state of emergency, the security forces were authorized to arrest and detain all persons whose activities are likely to endanger the public safety.”⁵⁹⁰ During the year, approximately 593 people were detained. Three JLP leaders, among them the prominent Pearnel Charles, were arrested as well as PNP candidates. The JLP and *The Daily Gleaner* condemned the enforcement of the state of emergency and implied that Manley was abusing the process for partisan purposes. According to JLP minister, Pearnel Charles, the PNP’s declaration of a state of emergency was a plot aimed at persecuting those affiliated with the JLP.⁵⁹¹

Charles raised concern among the opposition leadership that the PNP-led government was abusing its power. He failed, however, to adequately explain why he had in his possession at the time of his arrest recordings of police and military transmissions dated from May 4. Just as puzzling were the documents labeled ‘Operation Werewolf,’ confiscated from his fellow JLP candidate, Peter Whittingham. These controversial documents outlined a guerrilla operation, which contained detailed information on trained local gunmen, anti-government propaganda, and stockpiles of ammunition. The purpose of this was a concerted effort by the JLP to destabilize the Manley government. According to Michael Kaufman, “there was also a pamphlet

⁵⁸⁹ Kaufman, Jamaica under Manley, 115.

⁵⁹⁰ “Reserved Called Out for Fulltime Duty”; “2 Killed, Dynamite, 4 guns Seized,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 147, June 21, 1976, 1, 15; Levi, Michael Manley, 171.

⁵⁹¹ Charles, Detained, 10.

of an unknown group, the Anti-Communist League, which talked of the military hierarchy that would be established during Operation Werewolf.”⁵⁹² Charles’s arrest provided support for Manley’s claim that the opposition party was using subversive means to undermine his regime. Arguably, the exposure of ‘Operation Werewolf’ also brings into question the role of the U.S. in the 1970s in providing the funds for the opposition party’s attempts to violently overthrow the Manley government. However, it does not resolve the problem with intra-party conflict or explain the problems with violence adapting and becoming stronger outside of the political sphere.

Pearnel Charles further stated that the state of emergency could be attributed to a vengeful JLP executive, Herb Rose, who was threatened with termination from the party for his poor job performance and sexist comments. It was Herb Rose who publicly announced that the JLP was planning to disrupt the upcoming elections through organized violence, which resulted in the 1976 state of emergency.⁵⁹³ Manley contended that the reason for the declaration of a state of emergency was the murder of the Peruvian ambassador in his own home on June 14.⁵⁹⁴ The problem with Charles’s argument about former JLP organizer, Herb Rose, was that Rose resigned from the party on June 18, 1976. He publicly accused the JLP of “training young men to commit violent crimes as part of its strategy to undermine confidence in the government. It was

⁵⁹² “Police Kill 3 Gunmen in City”; “Manley Home from Mission,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 134, June 30, 1976, 1; also referenced in Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley*, 117; Manley, *Struggle in the Periphery*, 171; Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*, 136.

⁵⁹³ Charles, *Detained*, 12.

⁵⁹⁴ Manley, *Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery*, 141.

giving ammunition to half-starved and maltreated youngsters and encouraging them to take up a life of crime and violence in an effort to win the election.”⁵⁹⁵ Although Charles failed to respond to this accusation in his books, *Detained* and *A Cry from the Grassroots*, the reality of political violence was that by the 1970s, both political parties had established garrisons within local communities, which were used to instigate violence on their behalf. And the CIA supported the JLP political aspirations through its destabilization policies. Despite his personal dilemma with the JLP, Herb Rose was just articulating the problem with party politics at the time, whereby the parties manipulated partisan conflict and utilized the U.S.’s Cold War policies to undermine the authority of the Manley government.

In the height of the Cold War world, Manley’s decision to return to ‘Democratic Socialism’ in 1974 and controversial foreign affairs policies were complicated by his decision to establish a closer relationship and support of Fidel Castro’s communist Cuba.⁵⁹⁶ Manley further alienated U.S. support when he not only visited Cuba but also openly supported the Cuban government and its intervention in Angola on November 14, 1975. The Cuban intervention prevented a coup by South Africa’s army over the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).⁵⁹⁷ The consequences of these decisions emerged in early 1976 when the U.S. continued its efforts to destabilize the Manley regime. Although Manley claimed ‘no smoking gun was ever found,’ the evidence was obvious via a reduction in U.S. foreign aid, increased

⁵⁹⁵ Agee, *Inside the CIA*, 1–300; also referenced in Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley*, 117; Levi, *Michael Manley*, 173.

⁵⁹⁶ Levi, *Michael Manley*, 173–175; Doggett, “Michael Manley,” 32–34.

⁵⁹⁷ Levi, *Michael Manley*, 158; Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*, 128.

violence, reduction in tourism due to U.S. media coverage, and a failing economy.⁵⁹⁸ Manley's concern was justified when former CIA operative, Philip Agee, exposed the agency's activities in Jamaica in his book *Inside the Company*. In an interview in *Playboy*, he condemned the United States government for acting to destroy the regimes of countries which acted contrary to the U.S.'s Cold War policies. *The Daily Gleaner* reported Philip Agee's assertions that "the CIA and multinational companies were working with the Opposition Party in an attempt to destabilize the Manley government. This process would allow multinational corporations to continue exploiting underdeveloped countries."⁵⁹⁹ Agee further wrote that the media were also manipulated by the CIA, which had several reporters on the payroll—a position that was supported by *The New York Times*, which reported on December 27, 1978, that "the CIA's efforts to mould foreign opinion ranged from tampering with historical documents to embellishing and distorting accounts that were otherwise factual to outright fabrication" to destabilize regimes.⁶⁰⁰ Agee's accusations served to highlight that the U.S. was acting against Michael Manley's government which intentionally challenged U.S. authority by converting to democratic socialism.

Evidence of a subtle destabilization campaign was represented in the United States media where *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, and others published inflammatory articles

⁵⁹⁸ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*, 128.

⁵⁹⁹ Agee, *Inside the Company*, 1–108; Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley*, 118; also referenced in the "Gang Violence Claims More Lives," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 210, September 12, 1976, 1, 2.

⁶⁰⁰ "CIA Aid Report Evoke Ford Anger," *The New York Times*, Vol. CXXVIII. No. 44,079, December 27, 1978, 13; "Questions About the Escalation of Local Violence," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLIV. No. 5, January 2, 1978, 1.

exaggerating reports of violence in Jamaica. For example, *The New York Times* reported in 1976 that Edward Seaga, the leader of the Opposition Party, was shot at but escaped injury. This story received full coverage in *The New York Times* and was, in reality, completely fabricated. Yet, it played a significant role in deterring tourism, which grossly affected the local economy which relies on the tourism industry. Michael Manley also pointed to the local anti-PNP *The Daily Gleaner* as a source for concern. In 1975, Manley argued that the paper had launched a media campaign designed to “sow the seeds of discord and suspicion wherever it could” by exaggerating incidents of reported violence.⁶⁰¹ Despite his popularity, Manley was the subject of frequent attacks by *The Daily Gleaner* which criticized his attempt at democratic socialism and his failure to effectively reform the economy.

Further CIA agitation produced increased violence, decreased foreign investments, flight of local capital, and a declining tourism industry. Widespread reporting in the United States media during the 1970s stated that Jamaican political violence was out of control and that communist infiltration of the Jamaican government had devastated the island’s economy. The idea of a pending civil war was a serious cause of concern for tourists, resulting in a steep decline in tourism. “In 1976, the number of long-term guests fell by seventeen percent.”⁶⁰² According to Michael Kaufman, “President of the Jamaica Tourist Association, Mr. Cliff Burt, reported that holiday bookings were reduced due to sensationalized news of violence in foreign

⁶⁰¹ “Jamaica Worried by Slum Fighting”; “Poor Lands Disagree on IMF Demands,” *The New York Times*, Vol. CXXV. No. 43,083, January 8, 1976, 25, 45, 49; “Jamaica’s Problems,” *The Daily News*, Vol. 57. No. 16, July 14, 1975, 25; “Violence Erupts in Kingston,” *The Daily News*, Vol. 61. No. 198, February 11, 1980, 20; also referenced in Manley, *Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery*, 134.

⁶⁰² Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley*, 121.

newspapers, which negatively affected the island, in spite of the Tourist Board's attempt to assure visitors that the island was safe."⁶⁰³ This was just another way to punish the island for refusing to submit to U.S. Cold War demands.

The political environment of Jamaica was further destabilized by the JLP propaganda campaign for re-election in 1976. Edward Seaga accused the PNP of being a communist puppet of the Cuban government and using subversive activities to undermine Jamaica's independence. When propaganda failed to elicit the expected response from the populace, Seaga heightened local hysteria when he claimed that over 5,000 agents of Russia and Cuba were currently in Jamaica working jointly with the PNP government to oppress the people and establish Cuban hegemony over Jamaica. Seaga's accusations coincided with U.S. Cold War strategy to globally destroy communism or socialism wherever it emerged, which effectively agitated the populace against the Manley government. Michael Manley was compelled to address the crisis and dismiss Seaga's claims as one hundred percent fabrication. Manley stated in 1976 that "the leader of the opposition tends to set new standards of dishonesty or is sinking to new levels of irresponsibility. His anxiety to create excitement and tension in Jamaica for the purpose of harming the chances of investment of economic recovery has led him to attack the Cuban persons in Jamaica more than once."⁶⁰⁴ Seaga also pointed to Manley's creation of the *Brigadista Program* in 1975 to justify his anti-communist position and Manley's corruption.

⁶⁰³ "Tourism Bookings Down," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 290, December 4, 1976, 1.

⁶⁰⁴ "Intimidation of PNP Staff," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 109, June 5, 1976, 1; Doggett, "Michael Manley," 30–34.

Manley's alleged guilt was reflected in over a thousand Cubans working in Jamaica to help rebuild the country's infrastructure.

According to the government, the *Brigadista Program* was created as an exchange program between Jamaica and Cuba to reduce unemployment through training and education via construction methods and technology courses in Cuba.⁶⁰⁵ Cubans also traveled to Jamaica, where they worked in local hospitals and served as advisors on construction projects and trained the local police force in security techniques.⁶⁰⁶ The program began in 1975 and over one thousand Jamaicans participated that year. From the program's inception, Edward Seaga argued that "the participants in the *Brigadista Program* were being trained in guerrilla tactics, the use of arms and subversive activities while in Cuba."⁶⁰⁷ Seaga also managed to efficiently place the blame for localized violence on the *Brigadistas* when he asserted that "incidents of terrorism and violence had taken on a new dimension with daily killings and the illegal importation of weapons and ammunition was now fairly nationalized."⁶⁰⁸ Seaga implied in his statement that Manley, as the leader of Jamaica, was responsible for the weapons being smuggled into the country. Seaga's willingness to use slander to undermine the Manley government marked the apex of political irresponsibility because such action frequently resulted in more violence.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid; also referenced in Kaufman, Jamaica under Manley, 120.

⁶⁰⁶ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 108.

⁶⁰⁷ "CIA Agent Speaks at PNP Meeting," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 205, August, 21, 1980, 2c.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid; also found in Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 109–110.

The JLP's propaganda campaign effectively persecuted and vilified the *Brigadistas* who, upon their return to Jamaica, were susceptible to suspicion and possible violence. Seaga's distrust of the *Brigadista Program* was supported by Colin Denis, who claimed to have been a member of the program. Colin Denis, a former PNP supporter, wrote that he was recruited by two friends of the Communist Party of Jamaica (CPJ) and that they convinced him to travel to Cuba via the *Brigadista Program*. According to Denis, every recruit had to maintain the secrecy of the program and if he disclosed any information on the *Brigadistas*, he was subjected to death, a statement that was highly suspicious.⁶⁰⁹ Denis claimed that there were two levels to the program: one level dealt with education and job training. However, in the second level for which he volunteered, he was trained for urban guerrilla warfare, and he was told that upon his return to Jamaica, he was expected to train the young people in PNP-dominated communities. Colin Denis said that he wrote his autobiography because he was concerned that the escalation of violence was the result of the PNP's training and providing weapons to its supporters. These claims were refuted by Michael Manley, who defended the program for its educational benefits.⁶¹⁰ However, since Denis was the only so-called *Brigadista* to ever publicly state that he was a guerrilla soldier and the timing of his book coincided with popular anti-PNP sentiments, his memoir is somewhat questionable. Unfortunately, the controversy surrounding the *Brigadistas* remained as the polarized populace's response was based on party affiliations. With the Manley government encumbered by the economic crisis, U.S. Cold War policies, and

⁶⁰⁹ Colin Denis, *The Road not Taken: Memoirs of a Reluctant Guerilla* (Jamaica: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1984), 14–17.

⁶¹⁰ Denis, *The Road not Taken*, 37–43.

increased political violence, the controversy surrounding the *Brigadistas* only received marginal attention. Denis' memoirs raised questions of credibility since no other *Brigadista* has testified in support of Denis, nor have Edward Seaga and the JLP found any irrefutable evidence to condemn the *Brigadista Program*. The suspicion generated by the *Brigadista Program* remained, however, because after the JLP's victory in 1980, Edward Seaga claimed that all files relating to the program were destroyed.

Utilizing fear generated by the JLP propaganda machine, Seaga used the failure of democratic socialism, anti-communist paranoia, failing economy, fiscal mismanagement, and rising political violence to win office as a Minister of Parliament in 1976. Seaga constantly attacked the PNP's programs and frequently accused the government of promoting violence and corruption via political garrisons. While campaigning in St. Ann in preparation for the upcoming elections, Seaga claimed that calculated attacks against JLP supporters and candidates by PNP gangs resulted in injury to innocent bystanders, further proving that the JLP suffered from victimization in relation to PNP aggression.⁶¹¹ The PNP responded to the JLP attacks with a general statement that denounced violence and focused on their accomplishments during the last four-and-a-half years. Manley continued to defend democratic socialism and argued that this system of government was not dictatorial or aggressively destructive in attempting to reform capitalism; rather, his system tried to find a balance without fully relying on capitalism to run the economy.⁶¹²

⁶¹¹ "Deliberate Attacks on JLP," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 294, December 9, 1976, 1, 25; "Brigadista Trained in Guerrilla Tactics," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XLII. No. 18, May 13, 1980, 1.

⁶¹² "JLP Security Discusses Relevant Matters," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XXXVIII. No. 49, December 5, 1976, 27.

Political scientist, Carl Stone, has argued that the PNP's success in the 1976 elections was rooted in the fact that "the socialist theme tapped a deep popular desperation and aspiration for an end to the old decaying order and the creation of a new and just society."⁶¹³ By exploiting his popularity and using his personal charisma, Manley traveled extensively to rally support for the PNP's political platform, forcing critics to acknowledge that "there is no doubt about it; this man is the most effective public speaker we have ever had. He outshines his father and Bustamante. He plays his crowds like a conductor and they respond to him like violins."⁶¹⁴ The PNP highlighted the moderately stable economy, education reforms, the nationalization of public utilities, the bauxite levy, and housing projects accomplished as a result of democratic socialism to show how the PNP government helped to uplift the working class poor and provided a more equitable economic system. In spite of a volatile political environment, the PNP won forty seven seats while the JLP claimed thirteen.⁶¹⁵

In the post-election environment of Jamaica, the PNP government had to contend with intra-party struggles between the right and left wings, a failing economy, IMF austerity policies, external domination by the United States, and a death toll of over five hundred, which was attributed to increased political violence that claimed national attention. Historically, the various governments used public housing such as Rema, Tivoli Gardens, and Arnett Gardens as a form of political patronage, rewarding loyal party supporters for their commitment to the

⁶¹³ Stone, "The 1975 Parliamentary Election in Jamaica," 123.

⁶¹⁴ Levi, Michael Manley, 179.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid; also referenced in *The Daily Gleaner*, "Socialist take 41 Seats to JLP 6"; "Manley sees Rejection of Jamaica going Communist Claim!," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLII. No. 300, December 16, 1976, 1.

party. This tactic was used in the Rema Housing project, which consisted of 16,000 houses built between 1962 and 1972. In 1977, the incumbent PNP government promised in the election campaign to make housing for the poor a priority by continuing to expand the Rema Housing project.⁶¹⁶ In February 1977, the JLP dominated constituency, the Rema Housing project, was the scene of a bitter political struggle as the PNP candidate, Tony Spaulding (Minister of Housing), attempted to establish a grassroots support base in the southern St. Andrew district by destabilizing the JLP support base and populating the district with PNP residents.⁶¹⁷ The crisis erupted when the government decided to evict Rema residents for non-payment of rent and others for being squatters. According to government reports, “the trouble started when the police and army fired shots at armed tenants. In the violence that followed several people were wounded. The conflict was further aggravated by PNP loyalists who used this opportunity to displace the previous JLP residents; this situation ignited localized gang violence.”⁶¹⁸ Both JLP and PNP gangs rioted in the streets, looking to exact retribution against the other for the Rema conflict. The violence surrounding the Rema incident justified JLP claims that they were victimized. This conflict generated resentment against the PNP government since the JLP charged that the Rema incident was the PNP’s aggressive attempt at territorial expansion. In

⁶¹⁶ Jamaica Hansard, “Proceedings of the House of Representative of Jamaica,” Session 1977–78, Vol. 2. No. 3, 58; also referenced in Levi, Michael Manley, 180.

⁶¹⁷ Jamaica Hansard, “Proceedings of the House of Representative of Jamaica,” Session 1977–78, Vol. 2. No. 3, 58–59.

⁶¹⁸ Jamaica Hansard, “Proceedings of the House of Representative of Jamaica,” Session 1977–78, Vol. 2. No. 3, 58–59; also referenced in Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 158–59

this instance, the wider Jamaican public agreed that the government was the aggressor, willingly using violence via the police force to enforce order.

With a failing economy due to IMF austerity economic measures, alienation from the U.S. via Cold War policies, rising political violence, and declining local popularity, the Manley regime struggled to maintain control. A tumultuous political environment was further exacerbated by continued PNP aggression, which became evident in the ‘Green Bay Massacre’ on January 6, 1978. According to media reports and witness testimony, the conflict began when a splinter group of the Jamaica Defense Force (JDF), headed by Major Ian Robinson, who was loyal to Manley and concerned about the police department’s affiliation with the opposition party, plotted to destroy JLP gangs such as the Laborite Skull crew and Nesbeth brothers’ stronghold in the south central Kingston constituency. In late 1977, the JDF circulated a rumor that they needed ‘armed men to guard a worksite.’ Men desperate for work turned to alternative sources to buy illegal hand guns in order to apply for the job.⁶¹⁹ Fourteen JLP supporters, some of whom were gang members, were promised guns that were to be sold to them at the army firing range at Green Bay. When the men arrived at the assigned area, violence ensued although the men were unarmed. The fourteen men were accused of being gun smugglers and were fired upon. Five men were killed at the range and nine others escaped into the hillside and swampy undergrowth.⁶²⁰ According to survivor, Roddy Nesbeth, “he was already down on the ground, and started crawling for his life towards the dense macca-thorn

⁶¹⁹ Gunst, *Born Fi` Dead*, 97–98; also referenced in Levi, *Michael Manley*, 195–196; “Surprise at Target Practice by Security men,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLIV. No. 5, January 6, 1978, 1, 11.

⁶²⁰ “Second Week with Green Bay,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. XL. No. 14, April 2, 1978, 11.

bushes that surrounded the cove. He heard his friends dying as he crawled. As Nesbeth met up with another survivor Anthony Daley, he realized that the soldiers had shot out one of Daley's eyes."⁶²¹

Once the victims of Green Bay Massacre were rescued and in police custody, controversy erupted over what was reported by local newspapers. Witnesses to the crime, Delroy Griffith and Junior George Douglas, charged that the men murdered at Green Bay were set up, ambushed, and murdered. The military claimed that their action at the range was legitimate and aimed at preventing a "plot to smuggle weapons into the island at Green Bay." A government inquest was initiated to uncover the truth.⁶²² On May 22, 1978, the inquest produced a verdict, which determined that "members of the JDF were criminally responsible for the killings"; however, no military personnel were ever prosecuted for the crime.⁶²³ This controversial verdict became more problematic when Michael Manley defended the JDF and condemned the victims. He argued that "the largest and most vicious criminal gang in Jamaica resided in the Southside, a JLP stronghold that had been the scene of various violent conflicts against PNP supporters."⁶²⁴ Manley continued to alienate the people with his arrogant condemnation of the fourteen victims, claiming that these men should not receive any sympathy because they were alleged gunmen. Manley's position on the Green Bay murders

⁶²¹ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 97–100.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Levi, Michael Manley, 195.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

served to further enrage an unhappy public; and continued acts of violence, coupled with a failing economy, weakened the PNP's ability to motivate support among its party members.

According to Carl Stone, the economic stability precipitated by the 1974 bauxite levy created a false sense of financial security. By 1977, the financially crippled Manley government encountered a GNP decreased by six percent, negative cash flow of \$102 million, declining investment, higher interest on loans, and debts that were due.⁶²⁵ Manley attempted to use his diplomatic relationships with Russia, Latin America, and the Caribbean basin to help resolve the crisis. He tried to persuade the Russian government to purchase more bauxite, the price of which was in decline. When all other sources failed, Manley agreed to secret negotiations with the IMF for a financial bail-out. The IMF's structural adjustment policies were designed to bring indebted nations into the global economy. The problem with this approach was that the IMF frequently demanded "devaluation of the local currency, free market capitalist system, increased taxes, and a decreased domestic budget."⁶²⁶ The first agreement negotiated in July 1977 with the IMF was flexible and allowed the country to maintain a dual exchange rate and price controls. When the Jamaican economy faltered, however, due to capital flight which had intensified by December 1977, the IMF renegotiated.⁶²⁷ The second agreement was more austere and called for currency devaluation, reduction in domestic spending, and limited price

⁶²⁵ Thomas Grady. "The Gap Trap: The Effects of Structural Adjustment on the Development of Jamaica." Masters Thesis, Duquesne University, 1997, 30; Carl Stone, The Political Opinion of the Jamaican People 1976–1981 (Jamaica, Kingston: Blackett Publishers, 1982), 13; also referenced in Levi, Michael Manley, 184.

⁶²⁶ Grady, "The Gap Trap," 38; Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–30.

⁶²⁷ Grady, "The Gap Trap," 49; Brown, "Economic Policy and the IMF in Jamaica," *Institute of Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 30. No. 2, (September 1980): 38.

controls. The adjustment failed to help the economy recover and it resulted in further negotiations with the IMF until September 1979.

Due to the consequences of IMF aid, PNP leaders created an alternative plan called the Emergency Production Plan, designed to revive the Jamaican economy via cut backs, bypassing the IMF.⁶²⁸ The plan called for the reduction of manufacturing jobs, a third of the workforce, which Darrell Levi writes, “proved problematic since many of the manufacturing workers were PNP supporters, and loss of jobs had serious political implications for the PNP government” and fostered a form of desperation among the working class.⁶²⁹ Many Jamaicans viewed Manley’s decision to seek assistance from the IMF as a betrayal which proved that democratic socialism was a failure. Edward Seaga used the crisis precipitated by the IMF to successfully attack the PNP government for its failure to reform the economy and taking the country to the brink of bankruptcy.

Endemic violence erupted when local protests against high oil prices resulted in local demonstrations, which were uncontrollable due to the police force’s refusal to control the crowds protesting against the government’s reduction in civil service jobs. Economic decline became one of the greatest concerns for the Manley regime in 1979, especially with workers’ dissatisfaction at an all-time high. This situation was further aggravated by Edward Seaga and the JLP propaganda machine that became very vocal about PNP abuses, failure, and

⁶²⁸ Levi, Michael Manley, 184; Staff Reporter, “Better Never Come,” 24–30.

⁶²⁹ Levi, Michael Manley, 185; Staff Reporter, “Better Never Come,” 24–30.

corruption.⁶³⁰ In April 1980, further violence occurred via the Gold Street massacre in the east central Kingston constituency. According to eyewitness reports in *The Daily Gleaner*, an estimated number of twenty to thirty men affiliated with the PNP dressed in military fatigues attacked a JLP dance at which point four people were killed and eleven were wounded. The fallout from the massacre was that Manley and the PNP once again were held responsible for the various incidents of pre-election violence.⁶³¹ With increased workers' dissatisfaction, a failing economy, and rising political violence, Manley was forced to call the next general elections for 1980. Stories of endemic violence dominated the local media on July 25, 1980. *The Daily Gleaner* reported that 114 murders had occurred within twenty four days. Even more frightening was the quality of arms being uncovered. On August 1, 1980, "a Soviet AKM automatic assault rifle, four fully loaded, and 32-caliber magazines with 120 rounds of 7.62 millimeter bullets were found on Friday at a resort villa at Runaway Bay."⁶³² This raised the question of how these sophisticated weapons were coming to Jamaica, and who was responsible. Arguably, the obvious answer was that these weapons could have been coming from the U.S. and Cuba to supply members of the various political parties and the drug trade.

Despite local concern about the chaotic political process, violence entered a new phase of terrorism when PNP candidate, Roy McGann, was murdered. According to Michael Manley, Roy McGann had just concluded a campaign rally and was driving home some PNP supporters.

⁶³⁰ Levi, Michael Manley, 209–210; Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–30.

⁶³¹ "Manley Blamed for Rise in Violence," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 183, August 11, 1980, 1; also mentioned in Levi, Michael Manley, 221.

⁶³² "28 People Held, 2 Guns Seized," *The Daily Gleaner*, August 1, 1980, 1.

On arriving in the Gordon Town district, McGann encountered a road block set up by rival JLP supporters. A confrontation then ensued between JLP and PNP supporters. Upon arriving, the police began firing into the crowd and McGann and his bodyguard, police corporal Errol White, were killed.⁶³³ The McGann killing was dramatic because McGann had a radio transmitter that allowed the entire incident to be broadcast live on the local radio and his final words were “the police are firing on us!”⁶³⁴ Manley asserted that “suddenly party radios could hear McGann’s voice calling over and over, I am Roy McGann, the minister, do not shoot! A further burst of gunfire was heard and he was silent.” Michael Manley and MP D.K. Duncan were also involved in a conflict when they were stopped by police officers and prevented access to the town square. When both Manley and Duncan refused to leave, gunshots were fired into the crowd. “At this point witnesses claimed that Duncan drew his own gun and returned fire. By the time PNP supporters had recovered from the shock and rushed to the scene, McGann was being transported to University Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival.”⁶³⁵

The murder of PNP candidate, Roy McGann, represented a relevant turning point in local politics because it signaled two important changes: this was the first time that a party leader had been publicly assassinated; and second, McGann’s murder signified the parties’

⁶³³ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 111; also referenced in Manley, Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery, 196; Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 238.

⁶³⁴ Gunst, Born Fi` Dead, 111–112; also mentioned in Manley, Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery, 197; Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 239; Levi, Michael Manley, 223.

⁶³⁵ Manley, Jamaica a Struggle in the Periphery, 196–197; Gunst Born Fi` Dead, 112–113.

failure to fully control the various gangs responsible for the public assassination of a political candidate protected by local police. These two dilemmas meant that political violence had yet again adapted, became stronger, and had been removed from the control of the political sphere.

With political violence escalating, pre-election violence resulted in eight hundred people dead. It should come as no surprise that in the October 1980 elections the JLP claimed fifty one seats to the PNP's nine.⁶³⁶ This loss for the PNP meant an end of the democratic socialism experiment as the Jamaican populace gave Edward Seaga the chance to prove that he could revive the economy. In his next book, *Jamaica: A Struggle in the Periphery*, Michael Manley could now reflect on what went wrong for his government and decide who was to blame.

Conclusion

My argument is that far from being exempt from violence, the PNP was an integral participant in the transition and escalation of violence in Jamaica in the 1970s. On the one hand, there was an increase in incidents of violence and an increase in the use of sophisticated weaponry in Jamaica. On the other hand, violence became ideologically framed within the wider political debate of capitalist versus socialist ideologies. In this chapter, I have discussed several of the events that factored into this development. Manley's decision to "return to Democratic Socialism" in 1974 situated Jamaica at the center of United States Cold War policies via CIA covert action on the island. This had negative political and economic consequences for Jamaica. We have seen that Manley's attempt at democratic socialism generated intense

⁶³⁶ Levi, Michael Manley, 229.

opposition, both locally and internationally. He experienced difficulties in merging democratic socialism with capitalism in an effort to reform the system, and this situation made Jamaica vulnerable to U.S. attempts at destabilization, and ultimately cost him the 1980 elections. The Rema incident in 1977 demonstrated local desperation generated by increased poverty, making political patronage even more relevant to party supporters. In the case of the Rema Housing project, PNP supporters expected to be rewarded with housing in their constituency, even if that reward was to be paid for with death and homelessness for opposition supporters. In my view, the Rema incident was part of the transitional process in this period because political violence underscored the ineffectiveness and weakness of the patronage system to fully control party supporters.

Although the Rema incident created images of governmental victimization, the political process became further complicated by the *Brigadista Program*, which increased local suspicion about the level of the PNP's involvement in political violence. Of course, the leaders of the PNP claimed the program to be one of defense. Whatever the truth of this claim might be, the 1970s represented a transition to more intense gun violence through the use of more sophisticated weapons and the random and senseless types of violence perpetrated. Edward Seaga manipulated this situation when he condemned the *Brigadista Program* as an agency for communist Cuba to infiltrate the Jamaican government by usurping Jamaica's democracy. Colin Denis contributed to this debate in his autobiographical exposé on his purported military training in Cuba. The controversy with the *Brigadista Program* was exploited and became a part of the debate because political violence became part of the ideological framework that linked the *Brigadistas* to Cuba—a connection for possible revolutionary action in Jamaica, a process

that threatened the country's democracy. Denis' account of the contribution of the *Brigadista Program*, in my view is an important lens through which to see the transition in political violence.

In short, the political reality was that Jamaica of the 1970s can be described as having a viable gun culture. In part, this was connected to the ganja trade, which—because it was lucrative—made controlling political violence ultimately difficult for politicians connected to the impoverished state. This was especially evident since in contrast, the U.S. government funded the Opposition Party in an effort to create a political environment hostile to the Manley regime. JLP propaganda, coupled with external support, resulted in a political climate that evolved into new levels of terrorism which proved uncontrollable. I have argued that this was evident in the killing of Roy McGann. McGann's murder symbolized a transitional period in political violence because it represented a loss of control over local gangs, beginning in the 1970s. The political situation continued to deteriorate even when Edward Seaga claimed victory in the 1980 elections. Seaga's inability to control political violence or resolve Jamaica's economic problems will be the subject of the final chapter.

Chapter 5

Seaga: Devil or Savior?

Introduction

The decade of the 1980s was a turbulent time for Jamaican politics. As has already been indicated in the previous chapter, the 1980 general elections marked a watershed in the number of deaths resulting from politically motivated violence. The general elections of 1980 signified the continuation of political violence. Approximately 800 people died as a result of pre- and post-election violence and a total of 1,175 gun-violence cases were reported. The character of violence in the 1980s was different because it was fueled by anger and drug use and dominated by premeditated attacks against helpless people with reckless disregard for human life.⁶³⁷

Evidence of politically motivated violence across the nation, such as the fire at the Eventide Home for the destitute, old, and physically handicapped on May 20, 1980, was routinely documented in *The Daily Gleaner*. Arsonists started a fire that completely destroyed the 1870s wooden structure that housed 708 destitute people. According to newspaper reports, “at least 153 destitute old women, some blind and many physically handicapped, perished in Jamaica’s worst fire at the Eventide Home. There were 52 survivors, 144 bodies were recovered at press time and 9 of the old women at the infirmary which is run by the St. Andrew Corporation are missing, presumed dead. 9 of the survivors have been admitted to the

⁶³⁷ “Security Forces Gearing to Bar Economic Sabotage”; “Nine People Killed Last Week,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 296, December 15, 1980, 1.

Kingston Public Hospital suffering from burns, smoke inhalation, and shock.”⁶³⁸ The fire was labeled suspicious for two reasons: firstly, eye witness reports claimed that at 1:20am, four men were seen fleeing the scene of the crime at the time the fire began; secondly, there were reports that the telephone wires to the compound had been cut. Neither Fire Chief, Allan Ridgeway, nor the police department would comment on the cause of the tragedy. Controversy was generated when Prime Minister Michael Manley stated that “the first reports from the security forces indicate strongly that this may have been the work of arsonists.”⁶³⁹ Manley’s comments generated conflict between JLP and PNP garrisons because the Prime Minister’s claim implied that the fire was a retaliation against the innocent people residing at Eventide Home since they voted for the PNP in the previous elections. Consequently, PNP supporters staged a rally at the Parliament building with “placards which suggested that the fire was caused by arsonists and that the JLP was responsible for setting fire to the home.”⁶⁴⁰

But, perhaps, the most flagrant instance of political violence was the unprecedented killing of the politician, Roy McGann, on October 13, 1980. However (in a familiar pattern that

⁶³⁸ “153 Perish in Home for the Aged,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 122, May 21, 1980, 1 14; “Dead and Missing in Eventide Fire,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 124, May 23, 1980, 1.

⁶³⁹ “The Memory of Eventide,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 232, September 23, 2004, 1.

⁶⁴⁰ “Eventide Fire Victims Remembered,” *The Daily Gleaner*, May 21, 1980, 1; “153 Perished in Fire at Home for the Aged,” *The Daily Gleaner*, May 21, 1980, 1; “Dead and Missing in Eventide Fire,” *The Daily Gleaner*, May 23, 1980, 1; “Cock in Him Mouth,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 247, October 19, 1980, 1; “After Eventide Accident or Cruel Drunkenness,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 157, July 1, 1980, 1; “Report Being Prepared on the Eventide Fire,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 147, June 18, 1980, 1; “Premature report on Eventide Fire Drinkall Apologies to Government,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 238, October 8, 1980, 1, 13.

this dissertation has sought to explore), the political leaders on both sides—rather than engage the problem of political violence—engaged in accusations and counter-accusations and denials and counter-denials other than their respective roles in the reproduction of political violence. The McGann killing turned out to be an excellent illustration of this entrenched position on issues. For example, on Monday October 17, 1980, *The Daily Gleaner* reported that Edward Seaga called for the prosecution of Michael Manley for his handling of the Roy McGann affair. As I indicated in chapter four, McGann was a PNP candidate who was publicly murdered by the local police; Seaga claimed that the Manley government attempted to hide the truth of the ballistic report, which allegedly revealed that the gun had been used in a previous incident in which two other JLP supporters were murdered. Seaga created controversy when he said that “Mr. Manley’s conduct in the McGann affair was ‘the most dangerous’ act carried out by a Prime Minister of this country and it shows that he is not the proper person to lead the country.”⁶⁴¹ Such assertions only served to inflame the already tense climate in which political violence occurred. But whether or not Seaga’s accusation had any merit, his party was not exempt from association with the trafficking in guns and the perpetration of violence. On October 29, 1980, *The Daily Gleaner* reported the seizure of weapons, ammunition, and a Cessna twin-engine plane at the Sangster International Airport belonging to local businessman, Mr. Athol Chin, who was a member of the JLP.⁶⁴²

⁶⁴¹ “The Shootings Will Be Probed,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 254, October 27, 1980, 1, 12.

⁶⁴² “Arms Shipment Seized at MoBay”; “The Communist Treat,” *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLVI. No. 257, October 29, 1980, 1, 6, 22.

The exaggerated political violence, the JLP anti-communist rhetoric, failing economy, coupled with severe IMF austerity programs, and the United States' destabilization campaign enabled Edward Seaga and the JLP to come to power in 1980. During the 1980s, the JLP portrayed Edward Seaga as a 'financial wizard' and the right man to resolve the country's economic crisis which, they argued, was precipitated by Michael Manley's and the PNP's fiscal mismanagement of the economy and the corrupt experiment in democratic socialism, leading Jamaica to the brink of financial bankruptcy. In the 1980 political campaign, Seaga exploited his image as an expert manager of financial affairs to overshadow the charismatic personality of Michael Manley in order to prove that he was the better candidate because of his strong sense of fiscal responsibility. Seaga stressed that he acted with his 'head not his heart,' as compared to Manley's destructive socialist governmental policies in 1974.

Early in his political campaign, Edward Seaga aligned himself with the United States' Cold War policies and, once elected successfully, courted the Reagan administration for financial assistance to restore the Jamaican economy. Seaga manipulated U.S. fears that they would lose their hegemonic control over the Caribbean due its paranoia that Cuban communists would infiltrate and corrupt democratic regimes in the region. (Jamaica, like the Dominican Republic and Haiti, is strategically located in the Caribbean, which the U.S. regards as its own geopolitical territories under its control.) The Cuban presence in Jamaica, as a result of Manley's '*Brigadista*' program, provided justification that a coup supported by the radical left wing of the PNP was, at least, possible. Seaga's strong support of the United States remained important throughout the 1980s since the Caribbean became a focus of U.S. Cold War foreign policy as it attempted to rebuild its prestige. In an effort to demonstrate his

commitment to the U.S., Seaga accused the Cuban ambassador, Ulises Estrada, of interfering in Jamaica's political affairs and severed diplomatic relations with Cuba. Seaga then implemented economic reforms, with a policy of 'industrialization by privatization,' and promised to reduce the bauxite levy and restore negotiations with the IMF, a tactic that resulted in close to one billion dollars in financial aid for Jamaica.⁶⁴³

In order to revive the economy, Seaga resorted to large-scale borrowing to generate foreign capital for purchases and to counteract a negative GNP that resulted from the economic crisis. Due to the flight of capital, increased migration, and divestment, the JLP government had to reconstruct an economic environment that had collapsed. Adhering to the monetarist policies implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1980s, Seaga initiated reforms centered on rebuilding the economy via free-market policies, promotion of multinational business, tax incentives, and reduction in nationalized political violence. In establishing a closer relationship with the United States, Jamaica became the "Caribbean showcase" and gained full international financial assistance via loans which proved disastrous in the long run, while Seaga and the Reagan administration negotiated the creation of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), which was designed to provide Caribbean countries with a "competitive advantage" over other Third World nations via duty-free exports to the United States. Unfortunately, Seaga's economic reforms were also detrimental to the poor and the Jamaican middle-class who had to pay the highest interest, even as the government decreased

⁶⁴³ NPA (1981) *Economic and Social Survey—Jamaica 1980*, (Kingston: National Planning Agency); also referenced in Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–30; Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 250–284; Kaufman, Jamaica under Manley, 113–151; Levi, Michael Manley, 165–252.

funding for social welfare programs such as educational services and health programs. A consequence of increased poverty and a thirty percent unemployment rate during the 1980s resulted in escalating violence.

This chapter investigates Edward Seaga's efforts to control nationwide political violence against the backdrop of his attempt to avert the economic crisis. The economic stability of Jamaica remains relevant to this study because the JLP's success in the 1980 election hinged on the party's promise to reform the economy. Consequently, Seaga's negotiations with the IMF determined the future of Jamaica's economic policies as well as the JLP's ability to remain in office in the next general elections. However, economic reforms were overshadowed by the escalating rhetoric over political violence in the 1980s. Seaga said that Michael Manley should be prosecuted for his participation in the massacre at the Top Hill constituency in St. Elizabeth, where property was destroyed and two children were killed and others wounded.⁶⁴⁴ The tragic political reality in the 1980s was documented by the local media. For example, as reported in *The Daily Gleaner* in October 1980, the PNP government seized an arms shipment at Sangster International Airport which consisted of 10 automatic rifles, 19 silencers, and over 12,000 rounds of ammunition. This arms cache seized by the government raised the following questions: Who was responsible for this arms shipment? And how were these weapons going to be used? Increased gun violence, coupled with violent clashes between JLP and PNP supporters involving dynamite and other such weapons, illustrated a political system that was

⁶⁴⁴ Timothy Ashby, *Missed Opportunities: The Rise and Fall of Jamaica's Edward Seaga* (Indianapolis: Hudson Institute, 1989), 1–20; Patrick Bryan, *Edward Seaga: And the Challenges of Modern Jamaica* (Jamaica: UWI Press, 2009), 10–31; Edward Seaga, *Edward Seaga: My Life and Leadership* (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2009), 7–34.

fragmented due to an endemic structure that fostered inter-party conflict and a patronage system that could not adequately support the gang culture. As violence adapted these gangs by the early 1980s had been removed from the political sphere as a consequence of their participation in the increasingly globalized drug trade.⁶⁴⁵

Biography

Edward Seaga was born on May 28, 1930, in Boston, Massachusetts, to Phillip G. Seaga and Erna Maxwell, who were visiting the United States at the time. The middle-class Seaga family operated a small travel agency. According to Seagas' unofficial biographer, Timothy Ashby, "the Seagas were predominantly of Lebanese and Scottish ancestry, members of the small white Jamaican middle class who stoutly denied any African blood for years until their aspiring son decided black antecedents were politically expedient."⁶⁴⁶ Edward Seaga attended Wolmer's Boys School in Jamaica where he received his primary and secondary education, based on the British system. By September 1948, Seaga returned to Boston, where he attended Harvard University in Cambridge, graduating in 1952 with a B.A. degree in sociology. Timothy Ashby argues that 'ironically,' in light of his later rhetoric against Michael Manley, "according to senior members of the Jamaican business community, Seaga's early philosophical outlook was

⁶⁴⁵ Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–30; also referenced in Joanne Koslofsky, "Jamaica: Roots of Electoral Violence," *NACLA Report*, Vol. 14, No. 5, (September/December 1980): 38–40.

⁶⁴⁶ Ashby, *Missed Opportunities*, 9; Bryan, *Edward Seaga*, 10–43; Seaga, *My Life and Leadership*, 7–86; also referenced in Robert J. Alexander, *Biographical Dictionary of Latin America and Caribbean Political Leaders* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 407–408; Jamaican Government, Profile: The Honorable Edward Seaga, Kingston: Government of Jamaica, 1981.

socialistic, with an innate distrust of the private sector due to his father's lack of success in running a travel agency."⁶⁴⁷

Upon returning to Jamaica in the fall of 1952, Edward Seaga initially began the medical program at the University College of the West Indies (UCWI), but he later switched his major to the Institute for Social and Economic Research. At UCWI, Seaga had developed an interest in Afro-Jamaican folk lifestyle and religious rituals (Pocomania religion that promoted spiritual interaction with the dead via dancing, possession by spirits, and animal sacrifice) in urban and rural communities where he could learn more about the lives of working-class people. Edward Seaga said that "I went into small Jamaican communities and lived. I do not mean driving in a car or going out at night. I mean living, taking a house, living in the house as a villager would, and over a period of months participated in every aspect of life within the community, and therefore thinking, feeling, and becoming part of the community as if you were always there. I did this in both urban and rural communities and that has given me the background to understanding which I treasure today."⁶⁴⁸ By integrating himself with local communities such as Buxton, Denham, and Trench Town, Seaga eventually created a grassroots support base that would remain loyal to him. However, by early 1956, Seaga had completed his study, he and approached Dr. Dudley Huggins, Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, for approval of his thesis. Due to the focus of Seaga's study on Pocomania, the department declined his thesis, which resulted in Seaga's attending London University in May of 1956 to

⁶⁴⁷ Ashby, Missed Opportunities, 9; Bryan, Edward Seaga, 10–43; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 20–25.

⁶⁴⁸ Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 33.

acquire his Masters degree. His experience in London was unfortunate because Seaga had little-to-no-contact with other students since he could not afford to dorm and engage in campus activities. Coupled with culture shock and the University's demand that Seaga repeat graduate work that he had already done, he left London and returned home in September 1956 to work for his father at a time when Philip Seaga had a successful travel service.⁶⁴⁹

After withdrawing from college, Seaga dabbled in local politics and turned his scholarly research into a business. As a student at UCWI, Seaga had researched local Kumina revival music and became responsible for the recording of popular folk music on the Folkways label. According to Seaga, getting his business started was difficult because of the PNP's policies that restricted imports of records. After 1956, Seaga turned his love of local music into a successful business when he founded his own record label, West Indies Recording Limited (WIRL), and signed popular ska artists such as Joe Higgs and Byron Lee and the Dragonaires. As an entrepreneur, Seaga represented an outstanding personality in the music business because he insisted that his artists should be paid well. The WIRL experienced major success in 1959, with the first of many singles, "Manny O."

Despite launching a successful business, Seaga embarked on a political career in 1959, at the age of 29 when Alexander Bustamante announced that Seaga had been appointed to the Legislative Council, representing the JLP.⁶⁵⁰ Already recognized as a passionate defender of the poor and a fiery orator capable of moving voters or his fellow legislators, Seaga became an

⁶⁴⁹ Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 30–31.

⁶⁵⁰ Ashby, Missed Opportunities, 9–10; Bryan, Edward Seaga, 10–73; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 35–110.

elected member of Parliament in April 1962, representing western Kingston.⁶⁵¹ As a member of the House, Seaga was also appointed as the Minister of Development and Welfare, a post that he used to facilitate the diffusion of ska music.⁶⁵²

Seaga used the opportunity provided by his position as Minister of Development and Welfare to promote the international exposure of ska music, such as the 1964 ska artist Millie Small's pop music hit "My Boy Lollipop." To further advance the industry in 1965, Seaga arranged for local entertainers Byron Lee and the Dragoniers, Peter Tosh, Roy Willis, and others to perform at the New York World Fair to not only gain access to the American market, but also to introduce international audiences to ska music.⁶⁵³

Despite the international success of ska music, Seaga's business venture was short-lived. "Seaga's WIRL remained profitable and influential as a source of popular, mainstream-oriented ska. Sometime after the World Fair showcase took place, Seaga sold WIRL to Byron Lee, who renamed it Dynamic Sound Recordings, and turned it into one of the most popular studios in the country. Seaga's formal involvement in music was over after the mid-1960s, but the impact of his work has extended for decades."⁶⁵⁴ The sale of WIRL in 1965 allowed Seaga to concentrate on his political career. In spite of an active political career, Seaga married former

⁶⁵¹ Bryan, Edward Seaga, 10–73; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 20–136.

⁶⁵² Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 20–136.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Bryan, Edward Seaga, 33; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 32–43.

Miss Jamaica, Marie Mitsy Constantine, on August 22, 1965. The couple would later raise three children—Annabel, Christopher, and Andrew.⁶⁵⁵

Early in his political career, Seaga ideologically was considered a radical leftist within the JLP government, “eager to apply his Harvard sociology training to the task of nation building in Jamaica.”⁶⁵⁶ Being a shrewd and discerning politician in 1967, Seaga won re-election and was appointed Minister of Finance and Planning, a post from which he could draft and implement financial reforms.

This was one of the most important policy positions in the cabinet, for it gave the Minister responsibility for both social and economic change in Jamaica. As Finance Minister Seaga was largely responsible for promoting import substitution industries, justifying this policy by citing the need to reduce heavy overseas borrowing and build up Jamaica’s foreign exchange reserves. Seaga also initiated the ‘Jamaicanization’ program, designed to transfer foreign ownership to majority Jamaican ownership in the areas of banking, insurance, utilities, and agriculture.⁶⁵⁷

Ironically, Seaga’s economic policies, at least, insofar as Jamaicanization is concerned, were reminiscent of Michael Manley’s efforts in the 1970s to initiate democratic socialist policies designed to reduce the control of multinational corporations over Jamaican-owned businesses.

Despite Seaga’s aura of success as Finance Minister, he remained overshadowed by other popular JLP politicians such as Donald Sangster and Hugh Shearer.⁶⁵⁸ This transitional period was confusing for the JLP as prominent political figures, such as Edward Seaga, began jockeying for control of the party. By exploiting the political opportunities generated by the

⁶⁵⁵ *The Jamaica Observer*, “Edward Seaga: A political Life,” January 16, 2005, JamaicaObserver.com.

⁶⁵⁶ Ashby, *Missed Opportunities*, 10; Bryan, *Edward Seaga*, 57–84; Seaga, *My Life and Leadership*, 165–196.

⁶⁵⁷ Seaga, *My Life and Leadership*, 165–196.

⁶⁵⁸ Neita, *Hugh Shearer*, 223–224.

JLP's instability, Seaga won the opportunity to become the leader of the opposition party in 1974, thereby setting the stage for his campaign in 1980. "Initially seen as a man of the left when he began his political career, Seaga moved to the right when he took over the JLP from Hugh Shearer in 1974, in a sustained attempt to wrest political power from the rival PNP led by Michael Manley. In this regard Seaga promoted a culture of political terror that bordered on civil war in the 1970s."⁶⁵⁹

Throughout the 1970s, Seaga was upstaged by a charismatic Michael Manley, who used his dynamic personality and knowledge of popular culture to win widespread support among the poor, altering the JLP's historic command of the working-class vote.⁶⁶⁰ In spite of the PNP's victories in the 1972 and 1976 general elections, Seaga continued his attack on the incumbent government through a political platform that emphasized anti-communism, supported a free-market economy, increased foreign investment, and promised competent fiscal management of the economy.

Seaga also challenged Manley's commitment to democratic socialism and the alleged corrupt influence of communist Cuba in Jamaica through the *Brigadista* program.⁶⁶¹ The destabilization generated by the JLP propaganda machine, coupled with increased violence,

⁶⁵⁹ Alexander, Biographical Dictionary of Latin America and Caribbean Political Leaders, 407–408; also referenced in Staff Reporter, "Better Never Come," 24–30.

⁶⁶⁰ Carl Stone, "Seaga is in Trouble: Polling the Jamaican Polity in Mid-Term," *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XI. No. 4, (December 16, 1983): 5–6.

⁶⁶¹ Ashby, Missed Opportunities, 11–12; Bryan, Edward Seaga, 101–125; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 197–220; also mentioned in Darrell Levi, "Jamaica: A Comeback Washington Won't Like," *NACLA Report*, Vol. 22. No. 3, (May/June 1988): 10–11.

attained its zenith in the 1980 general elections. According to Evelyn Huber-Stephens and John Stephens, “the level of violence in the society assumed unprecedented proportions in 1980. The same forms of violence which had terrorized the country in 1976 recurred. Acts of violence directed at innocent people, such as shooting and arson, created fear and panic. In addition, a new violent phenomenon occurred, the operation of well-organized para-military like groups, equipped with semi-automatic weapons.”⁶⁶² Although many scholars acknowledge that political violence was institutionalized by the late 1960s, what they often overlook is the inter-party conflict exploited by leaders as they took it to the streets to maintain power. The total number of murders reported in 1980 was 889, 538, more than in 1979, a number which has to be attributed primarily to politically motivated violence due to the constituencies where the murders occurred and the people who were killed. The destabilization of the economy, escalating violence, and the PNP’s inability to gain international financial assistance resulted in the JLP’s victory in the 1980 general elections.⁶⁶³

As Prime Minister, Seaga initiated reforms aimed at restructuring the economy and designed to stimulate the system through domestic programs, such as divestment of state-owned enterprises, reduction of the bauxite levy, tax-free zones to promote multinational capital, and foreign investment. Seaga also created the Jamaica National Investment Promotion (JNIP) to foster foreign investment by eliminating local bureaucratic requirements for multinationals to conduct local business and privatization, which conditionalities for IMF loans

⁶⁶² Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 236–238.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

and U.S. support required. The impetus for economic growth through these domestic policies was based on “Seaga’s promise that the economic policy of his government would rely on the private sector as the ‘engine of growth’ with the role of the public sector being regulated to providing essential services as well as economic and social infrastructure.”⁶⁶⁴ My contention is that the essential dilemma for the JLP and PNP governments was that the Jamaican economy lacked the necessary manufactories and infrastructure for agriculture to develop local industry; therefore, any opportunities created by the government would ultimately fail to reform the economy. In order for Seaga’s policies to work, the economy needed to be restructured. This required a high level of entrepreneurship, whereby, the domestic market redefined its role and aggressively pursued non-traditional agricultural and manufacturing exports that would generate higher incomes. This solution was difficult to implement because the economic infrastructure did not possess the capacity necessary to produce real change. This problem was further exacerbated by the country’s dependency on foreign capital, which was an important factor in Seaga’s efforts to reform the system.

Jamaica’s dependence was evident when Carl Stone argued in the mid-1980s that “the Seaga government shifted emphasis towards making exports the priority in place of the PNP’s major emphasis on self-reliance and import substitution.”⁶⁶⁵ Consequently, the sphere of

⁶⁶⁴ Ashby, *Missed Opportunities*, 11; Bryan, *Edward Seaga*, 101–160; Seaga, *My Life and Leadership*, 197–264; also referenced in Levi, “Jamaica,” 10–11; Staff Reporter, “We Built It, We Paid for It, It’s Ours,” *NACLA Report*, Vol. 15. No. 4, (1981): 25–35; Staff Reporter, “Migration’s Motor: Postwar Modernization,” *NACLA Report*, Vol. 15. No. 1, (1981): 2–15.

⁶⁶⁵ Carl Stone, “Jamaica in Crisis: From Socialist to Capital Management,” *International Journal*, Vol. XL. No. 2, (Spring 1985): 292.

foreign policy became consequential in attracting multinational investments in Jamaica. Edward Seaga's decision to align himself with the United States resulted in a successful collaboration with the Reagan administration through agencies such as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), a type of "Marshall Plan" for the Caribbean, "which created trading opportunities in the region in exchange for anti-communist allegiances."⁶⁶⁶ Seaga's relationship with the U.S. allowed him to not only receive \$40 million from USAID but also to negotiate favorable agreements with the IMF and World Bank for Jamaica, where the previous PNP government had failed. However, Seaga's limited economic success was based on his compliance with U.S. policies which demanded an end to any type of socialism in Jamaica and withdrawing all political affiliations with Cuba. On these issues, the Manley government of the 1970s refused to compromise, but Seaga was willing to acquiesce because, in return, he was granted financial assistance from not only the U.S. government but also the IMF, which allowed him to appear initially as the savior of Jamaica.

With the support from the Reagan administration in March of 1981, Seaga negotiated a three-year agreement with the IMF via the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the World Bank. The agreement required a reduction of the domestic budget, tax on imports, and a freeze on all employment with government civil service jobs. The financial package that Seaga negotiated was surprising to many of his critics because the agreement was very lenient and there was no demand for devaluation of the Jamaican dollar or wage and price controls, which had been

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid; Staff Reporter, "We built it; We paid for it. It's ours," 25–35.

demanded of the Manley government.⁶⁶⁷ However, in order to receive \$600 million in international loans, the Jamaican government had to implement certain restrictions such as reduced budget deficits, reduction in both government employment and expenditure.⁶⁶⁸ Carl Stone argued that Seaga deferred to the IMF's adjustment policies despite the effects on the country:

Indeed, the government fully embraced the World Bank-IMF structural adjustment policy package which seeks to combine drastic stabilization measures with trade liberalization in order to promote competitiveness in exporting capabilities. This includes slashing the huge budget and deficit, currency devaluations, import liberalization, wage controls, reliance on free-market mechanisms for resource allocation, and drastic deregulation of the states' high profile controls over private sector initiative. High interest rates and tight monetary policies, combined with drastic cutbacks in areas of public spending, were used to curtail domestic demand further and reduce the balance-of-payments pressures caused by excess demand for imports.⁶⁶⁹

The problem with the IMF's measures was that its models for reform were unrealistic and failed to consider the differences within Third World economies that are unique and not comparable to the First World framework. Despite the IMF crisis and Manley's assertions that Seaga was creating an economy of dependency, a Carl Stone poll reported that 29.9 percent of Jamaicans supported renegotiations with the IMF for better terms and only 10.6 percent of the populace wanted to stop dealing with the IMF.⁶⁷⁰ The problem with the IMF and the Seaga government was that priority was given to acquiring loans and funding rather than exploring the long-term

⁶⁶⁷ Ashby, *Missed Opportunities*, 12; Bryan, *Edward Seaga*, 144–199; Seaga, *Edward Seaga*, 236–277; also referenced in Levi, *Michael Manley*, 233; Levi, “Jamaica,” 10–11; Staff Reporter, “We built it, We paid for it. It's ours,” 25–35.

⁶⁶⁸ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*, 252–253.

⁶⁶⁹ Stone, “Jamaica in Crisis,” 292.

⁶⁷⁰ Carl Stone, *The Political Opinions of the Jamaican People 1976–81*, (Jamaica: Blackett Publishers, 1982), 71; also mentioned in Norman Girvan, Richard Bernal, and Wesley Hughes, “The IMF and the Third World: The Case of Jamaica, 1974–1980,” *Development Dialogue*, No. 2, (1980): 119–122.

effects of these measures on Jamaica, which meant drastic deregulation of the Jamaican dollar, higher cost-of-living expense, and firing thousands of civil servants at a time of increased unemployment. The result of these agreements between Seaga and the IMF made a stagnating economy worse.

Although IMF loans did generate short-term economic growth, the innate weaknesses within the economy resurfaced, forcing the government by late 1983 to renegotiate with the IMF. Seaga's management of the economy produced limited growth. In 1982 through 1983, the GDP increased by 4 percent from 12.6 percent to 18.7 percent; consumer prices decreased from 28.7 percent to 12.7 percent in 1981, and increased foreign investment in Jamaica.⁶⁷¹ This economic growth was deceptive because capital investment by multinationals was short-term and continued dependency on foreign capital meant that the local economy suffered whenever the international markets faltered. According to Darrell Levi, "the economy stagnated in 1982, as agriculture declined by nearly 8 percent, mining suffered nearly a 30 percent decrease, and the trade gap widened further and foreign debt increased to above \$1.8 billion. Like Manley, Seaga was troubled by shortages of foreign exchange, lack of managerial talent, a sluggish economy, and unreliable utilities. Seaga's government continued to stimulate exports through the Jamaican National Export Corporation, an agency modeled on state capitalism rather than 'free-market' problem and Seaga began to experience problems with the IMF."⁶⁷² Arguably,

⁶⁷¹ Ashby, Missed Opportunities, 12; Bryan, Edward Seaga, 200–250; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 278–349; also referenced in Levi, Michael Manley, 233; Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 256–257.

⁶⁷² Levi, Michael Manley, 234.

Seaga's attempt to re-build Jamaica's economy confronted problems with underdevelopment and economic dependency, which made it difficult to create lasting changes in a system that demanded a complete restructuring.

By late 1983, Jamaica had failed the first of the IMF's performance tests and had to renegotiate. The IMF demanded devaluation, increase in interest rates, and tax on imports, which had an adverse impact on the prices of imported and local food items.⁶⁷³ "In anticipation of IMF deliberations, Seaga introduced a series of austerity measures such as 10 percent cutback in foreign exchange allocations for imports, new taxes, and a shift of many new items such as gas, air fares, drugs, educational books, edible oils and soaps to the parallel market rate."⁶⁷⁴ The IMF's policies negatively affected the poor, who could not afford basic food items and became discontented with the JLP government and resorted to political protests and violence to voice their dissatisfaction.

In November 1982, a Carl Stone poll reported and predicted that the JLP's popularity would decrease from 59 percent to 53 percent. The key to understanding this decline was local dissatisfaction with the government's slow response to improving the economy.⁶⁷⁵ This situation was exacerbated by local opinion that the JLP government favored the 'big man.' Carl Stone asserted that "moreover the JLP is increasingly coming under public suspicion for not sufficiently protecting the interests of the 'small man' and for seeming to favor the interests of

⁶⁷³ Brown, "Economic policy and the IMF in Jamaica," 16–17.

⁶⁷⁴ Huber-Stephens, and Stephens, Democratic Socialism in Jamaica, 256.

⁶⁷⁵ Stone, The Political Opinions of the Jamaican People, 15.

the more powerful classes.”⁶⁷⁶ Multinational investors also expressed dissatisfaction with Edward Seaga, who they believed had failed to fulfill his promise to the United States with the creation of a true free-market economy. Timothy Ashby writes that “five years after Seaga had taken office, the state remained the dominant force in the Jamaican economy by exercising direct influence on resource allocation through ownership of assets and its associated role as a producer of goods and services.”⁶⁷⁷ Ironically, Manley was condemned for creating a similar economic environment; however, the significant difference was that Manley labeled his program democratic socialism and Manley was seen by the U.S. as a threat to its hegemony in the Caribbean. International dissatisfaction coupled with local protests about rising unemployment and poverty fostered a destructive environment, as desperation resulted in increased acts of political violence increasingly organized through the parties.

Political Violence and the Rise of Drugs

Although Edward Seaga came to power claiming that he would bring gun violence under control, this was not to be. Under his tenure as Prime Minister, gun violence escalated and was even transformed. Two incidents particularly highlight the character of gun violence: the “Rema incident” in 1984 and the fuel increase riots in 1985. The problem with gun violence that Seaga

⁶⁷⁶ Stone, The Political Opinions of the Jamaican People, 16.

⁶⁷⁷ Ashby, Missed Opportunities, 14; Bryan, Edward Seaga, 214–250, 260–275; Seaga, My Life and Leadership, 314–340.

confronted in the 1980s was connected to the evolution of the drug trade.⁶⁷⁸ Jamaica's proximity to the North American mainland transformed the island into a trans-shipment port for smuggling various illegal drugs into the United States. However, the drug of choice in the 1970s was marijuana, a lucrative trade for local gangs and small farmers, because the density of the rural terrain offered these farmers a certain level of protection for the various operations and provided the privacy needed for the drug planes to land. According to the McNair Report, "apart from landing on strips designed or adapted for drug operations landings have been made on roads, in cane fields, and on legal air strips owned by bauxite and sugar companies. The Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) has destroyed close to a 100 illegal air strips, but given the heavy limestone in many of the popular landing areas, operators are often able to make fields serviceable within ten days."⁶⁷⁹ Consequently, in the 1970s Jamaica became the second largest supplier of marijuana to the United States after Columbia. This reality was reflected in the number of reported prosecutions for marijuana cultivation. From 1972 through 1975 a total of 147 persons were arrested for the possession of marijuana; however, there are no statistics for drug dealers who paid off local police to ignore their illegal activities.⁶⁸⁰ The escalation in marijuana production resulted in Michael Manley's seeking U.S. assistance in 1974 in curbing the traffic of illegal narcotics. In a joint ganja eradication program with America's Drug

⁶⁷⁸ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 284–295; Geoff Small, Ruthless: The Global Rise of the Yardies (London: Warner Books, 1995), 100–130. For a detailed account of the drug trade in Jamaica consult Anthony Harriot, Understanding Crime in Jamaica: New Challenges for Public Policy (Jamaica: UWI Press, 2003).

⁶⁷⁹ Ivelaw L. Griffith, "Caribbean Security on the Eve of the 21st Century," McNair Paper No. 54, October 1996, *Institute for National Strategic Studies*, National Defense University, Washington D.C., 3–4.

⁶⁸⁰ Barry Chevannes, Background to Drug use in Jamaica (Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1988), 7–12.

Enforcement Agency (DEA) codenamed “Operation Buccaneer,” Manley acquired U.S. technological support via helicopters and other types of military-related assistance.⁶⁸¹ Arguably, since the program had some initial success, with the seizure of 325 tons of marijuana, various other drugs, and weapons, the Jamaican government would frequently revive “Buccaneer” in an effort to combat ganja production in the country.⁶⁸²

In the 1980s, Seaga initiated his sequel to the “Buccaneer” program when he launched a massive crusade against local ganja producers who had been lured into the cultivation of the marijuana because of the deteriorating and fragile economy.⁶⁸³ However, by the mid 1980s, drug trafficking and production was more diversified with the local gangs controlling the lion’s share of the trade, a fact supported by Geoff Small when he stated that “in what remained a highly corruptive business, Jamaican ganja barons managed to maintain their ranking by substantially upping their cultivation and shipments of the ‘herb’.

In fact towards the end of 1984, U.S Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officials placed Jamaica (14%) a distant second behind Columbia (60%) as the major exporter of ganja into the U.S.”⁶⁸⁴ Jamaica’s active role in the drug trade negatively affected the island’s relationship with the U.S. when tons of ganja were discovered on various scheduled flights into the U.S. For example, in February 1984, an Air Jamaica air bus A-300 bound for Miami from Kingston was impounded by the American

⁶⁸¹ United Nations—Treaty Series, No. 14245 (Letter) August 9, 1974, Michael Manley to U.S. Ambassador Sumner Gerard.

⁶⁸² Small, Ruthless, 68–69.

⁶⁸³ Small, Ruthless, 60–80.

⁶⁸⁴ Small, Ruthless, 108.

government after three tons of ganja were found hidden in the cargo hold.⁶⁸⁵ With a systematic increase in the tonnage of ganja being smuggled into the U.S., the Seaga government was pressured into addressing the illegal production of ganja in Jamaica, after the Reagan administration threatened to eliminate the \$125 million in annual aid to the country and also instituted the highest fines in aviation history of \$29 million against the government for failing to address the ganja trafficking problem.⁶⁸⁶

Seaga's ganja eradication program was initiated in 1984 when he ordered, among other things, the destruction of all illegal air strips, and introduced more effective monitoring of international airports, ordered the dismissal of over 100 security personnel and baggage handlers at local airports, and ordered the destruction of all ganja farms.⁶⁸⁷ His crusade against ganja producers was relatively successful although it resulted in major losses for many local farmers who relied on the crops to survive financially. Geoff Small claimed that "in 1985, the government reported that it had seized just over 200 tons of cured ganja double the quantity seized in 1983. Additionally, more than 1,000 acres of ganja crops were eradicated, and 4,500 drug-related arrests were made. By the end of October 1985, the security forces had wiped out 1,700 acres of ganja."⁶⁸⁸ The irony surrounding Seaga's use of the marijuana-eradication 'Buccaneer operation' was that it targeted explicitly ganja producers, which resulted in the

⁶⁸⁵ Small, Ruthless, 109.

⁶⁸⁶ Small, Ruthless, 108.

⁶⁸⁷ Small, Ruthless, 109–111.

⁶⁸⁸ Small, Ruthless, 110. Geoff Small has alleged in his study that Edward Seaga was involved in the drug trade, 112.

gangs' experimenting in other networks of the drug trade, specifically in the trafficking of cocaine.⁶⁸⁹ With the explosion of cocaine and other such hard drugs in the 1980s, Jamaica became a trans-shipment port to the U.S. and the movement of cocaine through Jamaica contributed to an increase in the crime rate as local gangs fought each other to dominate the trade. In his study of trends in the Jamaican murder rates, Anthony Harriot found that murder per 100,000 in 1983 through 1997 escalated and shifted from the political sphere to gang domain.

	1997	1993	1988	1983
Political	0.20 (4)	0.57 (14)	0.51 (12)	1.42 (32)
Gang Rivalry	14.10 (340)	7.04 (174)	3.61 (85)	3.12 (70)
Undetermined	10.90 (273)	6.35 (257)	3.43 (81)	3.75 (84)
Total Conflict	25.2	24.0	6.55	8.29 ⁶⁹⁰

A dilemma that proved problematic for the Seaga government arose from the political party's relationship with the local gangs. The shift that Harriot points to reflected a new dilemma as violence adapted and became militarized in Jamaica.

Although partisan politics effectively polarized grassroots supporters into political garrisons that were controlled by party patronage, the 1980s was an era of evolution as the

⁶⁸⁹ Small, Ruthless, 113–117; Chevannes, Background to Drug Use in Jamaica, 28–35.

⁶⁹⁰ Anthony Harriot, "Making Dupies: A Study of Criminal Homicides in Jamaica," (Paper) Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences: New Orleans, (March 21–26, 2000).

limit on state resources, coupled with the failing economy, transformed the local gangs into quasi-independent armies. In order to highlight the connection between the political parties and local gangs in the 1980s, I will sketch the shift in politics and violence between the mid-1970s and 1980s by focusing on the contrast between three of the most notorious gang leaders in Jamaican history: Winston “Burry Boy” Blake (PNP), Claude Massop (JLP), and Lester Lloyd Coke, aka Jim Brown (JLP).

One of the many predatory gang leaders of east Kingston in the Arnett Gardens constituency was Winston “Burry Boy” Blake, a PNP gunman. In the 1970s, Blake’s gang, known as the “Spangler’s,” allegedly enabled Michael Manley to secure his central Kingston constituency and this in return allowed Blake to acquire a larger and larger share of political patronage, facilitating the growth of his gang. Blake’s “Spanglers” posse seemed almost indispensable to the PNP in the 1970s. On one occasion, Blake is said to have saved Manley’s life while providing protection for Manley as he traveled and campaigned in dangerous communities where his entourage was fired upon by JLP gunmen.⁶⁹¹ According to *The Daily Gleaner* reports, between November 1974 and January 1975, the “Spanglers” posse was involved in a series of violent confrontations aimed at disrupting JLP organizing efforts as the general elections approached, such as shooting at JLP loyalists; assaulting union organizers representing the rival left-wing University and Allied Workers Union who were attempting to recruit disgruntled workers with the National Workers Union (NWU); and attacking the JLP constituency of Rema, attempting to seize the area for the PNP. In January 1975, “the posse

⁶⁹¹ Gunst, *Born Fi` Dead*, 93.

wreaked havoc by invading the JLP's headquarters in South West St. Andrew. They assaulted JLP organizers and supporters, pillaged the JLP's office there, and stabbed the guard. All this occurred with hardly any interference from police in the area."⁶⁹²

Despite a public outcry against the posse's violence, no police action was initiated, even when Claude Massop's gang responded to the PNP assault with a counter-attack against PNP supporters and the isolated constituency of Lizard Town.⁶⁹³ In the west Kingston war that erupted, Winston "Burry Boy" Blake was killed in a drive-by shooting on March 14, 1975. Gray stated, since Blake "was shot dead during frontline political duty, his funeral was attended by none other than Prime Minister Michael Manley, and a high powered party delegation."⁶⁹⁴ In choosing to attend the funeral of a notorious gunman, Manley seemed to acknowledge a sanctioned connection between the PNP and the Spanglers. Yet, Blake's action in launching another uncontrolled war in West Kingston also suggests politicians were losing control of the gangs.

Claude Massop, Winston Blake's counterpart on the JLP side, was born in 1949 in Kingston during the height of partisan politics. Like many young men who grew up in the

⁶⁹² "Strikes Effecting Local Economy and Erupting into Violent Conflict," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXL. No. 288, December 7, 1974, 10, 12; "Economic Uncertainty Sparks Unrest," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLI. No. 19, January, 22, 1975, 1 10; "JLP Questions Manley's Leadership," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CXLI. No. 24, January 27, 1975, 1; also mentioned in Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 184–185.

⁶⁹³ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 186.

⁶⁹⁴ Small, Ruthless, 11–12.

ghetto, Massop engaged in hustling and pimping prostitutes to visiting tourists and sailors.⁶⁹⁵

However, being a resident of Denham Town in West Kingston, a JLP stronghold, Massop was drawn into partisan politics because of benefits of political patronage. According to Geoff Small, “his independent popularity would have caught the attention of the canny Edward Seaga, then member of parliament for the west Kingston constituency. By tapping into these networks, Seaga no doubt hoped to harness for politics the independent popularity of personalities such as the young Massop. This was the case because as parties struggled to gain political control of territories they brought inexorable pressures to bear on residents in neighborhoods, streets, enclaves, and whole constituencies by demanding their loyalty in exchange for material favors,” all of which served to further entrench institutionalized gang culture in politics.⁶⁹⁶

Arguably, from the 1960s through the 1970s, Massop successfully helped Seaga to maintain his hold over the constituency by repelling PNP political challenges from the area. Massop’s success for Seaga allowed him to secure his position as leader of Tivoli Garden’s garrison in West Kingston.⁶⁹⁷ It was Massop’s responsibility to distribute gifts to the poor in the community, find employment for the unemployed, and serve as armed defense for the area by being the enforcer and recruiting the fighting men. The irony about Massop and other such gang leaders was that despite his power within West Kingston and his untouchable status, Massop remained economically dependent on the political parties, thereby, making his power limited within the confines of his constituency. In the end, the state could eliminate them, as

⁶⁹⁵ Small, Ruthless, 168–169.

⁶⁹⁶ Small, Ruthless, 169.

⁶⁹⁷ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 169–170.

indeed happened in the case of Massop when on February 4, 1979, he was killed in a shoot-out with the Jamaican police force.⁶⁹⁸

Unlike political gunmen, Claude Massop and Winston Blake, Lester Lloyd Coke aka “Jim Brown” (the JLP strongman of the Tivoli Gardens enclave in 1980) was the first Jamaican don to become politically independent of the patronage system by becoming involved in the trafficking of cocaine. Jim Brown honed his skill as a hustler during the politically turbulent era of the 1970s and served a few months for murder.⁶⁹⁹ The economic fallout of the 1980s, coupled with the chaotic political environment, allowed Jim Brown to break the bonds of political patronage by exploiting the anti-marijuana “Buccaneer” policies by investing in other kinds of drugs. However, according to Obika Gray, “unlike earlier top ranking gang leaders, Brown and others like him became patrons in their own right as the cocaine trade brought new wealth that could not be matched by state sponsors. They, too, possessed the key resources once monopolized by politicians: guns, money, violence, and the social power of community support. As the new don in Tivoli Gardens, Brown therefore juggled the management of the drug trade and his political obligations in the west Kingston garrison. Politics and drug crime now fed each other in Tivoli Gardens.”⁷⁰⁰ Brown’s success as a don was possible because the “Shower Posse” was international and the gang’s drug activities allowed him to frequently travel to the United States to maintain his empire and to truly become untouchable to U.S. and local authorities. In May 1984, Brown orchestrated a massive attack against the neighboring Rema enclave, which

⁶⁹⁸ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 175–176; Small, Ruthless, 12.

⁶⁹⁹ “Jim Brown,” *The Jamaica Observer*, January 27, 2008, JamaicaObserver.com.

⁷⁰⁰ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 283.

resulted in the deaths of twelve men. Before Brown could be charged, he fled to the U.S., only to return to Jamaica in 1987 to escape prosecution in the U.S. On his return, Brown was arrested and charged with the Rema murders; but through witness intimidation, he was acquitted of all charges at which point a contingent of Tivoli supporters gave Brown a ‘gun salute’ in front of the court house.⁷⁰¹ “The gun fire affirmed the consolidation of a rival and new power in the ghetto with its challenge to the political bosses and the society at large,” Gray writes.⁷⁰²

Although Brown transformed party politics, he was once again arrested in 1991 as he awaited extradition to the U.S. for crimes he committed in the 1980s. He died in a fire that began in his “maximum security cell” in 1992.⁷⁰³ The mystery surrounding Jim Brown’s death has led to speculation that Seaga had him killed because Brown could reveal incriminating facts about the drug trade being a state-connected operation. This rumor was exacerbated when Brown was given a statesman-like send-off that was attended by Edward Seaga, other leaders within the JLP, and 20,000 mourners. Seaga gave a eulogy that celebrated the life of Lester Lloyd Coke, a man labeled a terrorist, murderer, and drug don. Seaga’s action was openly criticized by *The Daily Gleaner* reporter, Dawn Ritch, who stated that “a politician cannot claim to have any moral authority whatever, when he openly associates with and gives praise to

⁷⁰¹ “Jim Brown,” *The Jamaica Observer*, January 27, 2008, JamaicaObserver.com; Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 290–292.

⁷⁰² Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 292.

⁷⁰³ “Jim Brown,” *The Jamaica Observer*, January 27, 2008, JamaicaObserver.com; Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 295.

organize crime leaders.”⁷⁰⁴ Arguably, despite the criticism, Seaga’s decision to attend Brown’s funeral could have been based on fear and the realization that he had to appease the community/constituency that was just as loyal to Jim Brown as to the JLP.

With an increase in gang violence via murder, intimidation, social power, and the rise of drug dons such as “Jim Brown,” Edward Seaga needed to do something drastic. In 1981, he had established the special police squad called the “Eradication Squad” to bring gun crime under control. The “Eradication Squad,” as it was called locally, was controversial because it involved alleged extra-judicial killing. For example, the most notorious police officer of the squad, Keith “Trinity” Gardner, Seaga’s personal bodyguard, was legendary for his shoot-first ask questions-later mentality. “Trinity” was frequently seen dressed in full black with two guns strapped to his hips and a rifle hung over his shoulders, driving a black car or riding a motorcycle.⁷⁰⁵ However, “Trinity” was feared because “he left a trail of death and destruction in his wake.”⁷⁰⁶ According to an Americas Watch Committee (AWC) report “Trinity’s” violent behavior was evident in various shoot-outs in which innocent people were hurt. In one such incident, a man was repeatedly shot by “Trinity” and had to have his legs amputated, a crime for which the courts awarded the victim \$80,000 in compensation.⁷⁰⁷ In another such incident, “Trinity” shot a jogger, whom he supposedly had mistaken for a suspect fleeing the crime scene. “Trinity was

⁷⁰⁴ Small, *Ruthless*, 7.

⁷⁰⁵ “Human Rights in Jamaica,” *Americas Watch Report*, September 1986, Washington: DC, 25–26.

⁷⁰⁶ Small, *Ruthless*, 207.

⁷⁰⁷ Small, *Ruthless*, 207; “Human Rights in Jamaica,” *Americas Watch Report*, 25.

about to execute the man, when the victim called out and Trinity recognized him as someone he knew.”⁷⁰⁸

Such brutality on the part of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) of which the Eradication Squad was affiliated attracted the attention of organizations such as Americas Watch, a U.S. based human rights advocacy group. Police actions were further complicated by local reports that insinuated that “this highly-trained, forty strong unit—the Eradication Squad—was created by, and answered exclusively to, Edward Seaga. Its members were accused of carrying out numerous murders, and it was insinuated that one of the squad’s tactic functions was to intimidate and kill the residents of PNP strongholds.”⁷⁰⁹ This reality was reflected in the Americas Watch report, which documented an increase in a higher number of police killings, only some of which were reported in local newspapers.

Police Killings: Dead					
1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
206	319	101	196	288	210 ⁷¹⁰

Despite Seaga’s mandate against gun violence, even his administration was unable to fully control gang activity. For example, in 1984, Jim Brown’s ‘Shower Posse’ participated in the Rema incident in which twelve residents of the constituency were killed. According to newspaper accounts in May 1984, Jim Brown allegedly led a contingent of armed men from

⁷⁰⁸ “Human Rights in Jamaica,” *Americas Watch Report*, 25.

⁷⁰⁹ Small, *Ruthless*, 208.

⁷¹⁰ “Human Rights in Jamaica,” *Americas Watch Report*, 10.

Tivoli Gardens against neighboring Rema. Although Rema and Tivoli Gardens were both JLP garrisons, a dispute over the dispersal of political patronage generated dissatisfaction among residents of Rema.⁷¹¹ Rema gunmen contemplated one of two possible actions: either they would attack the Tivoli enclave in order to gain a larger part of local patronage or they could choose to form an alliance with the PNP for protection and to protest political neglect.⁷¹² However, before the gunmen of Rema could act, they were attacked by the 'Shower Posse' and twelve men were killed in the ensuing shoot-out to bring the community back under control. Jim Brown then fled the country before he could be prosecuted for the Rema killings. Upon his return to Jamaica in 1987 when he evaded U.S. authorities, he was arrested on an outstanding warrant.⁷¹³ Jim Brown's legal victory in 1987 signaled a break in the system of control via political patronage and a rise in his personal economic, social, and political power within the Tivoli constituency. Consequently, the final transformation of political violence was represented in the local politician's loss of control of the various gangs. According to Obika Gray, "Seaga faced a new situation in which Jim Brown had resources of his own and did not rely exclusively on the politician for dispersing benefits to the poor. A power structure linking the political world and the criminal underground had emerged in Tivoli Gardens. But evolving relations in

⁷¹¹ "The Cokes then and Now," *The Jamaica Observer*, September 6, 2009; "Jim Brown," January 27, 2008, JamaicaObserver.com; "The Jim Brown Story"; "Prisoner Who Set Self on Fire Dies in Hospital," *The Daily Gleaner*, Vol. CLVIII. No. 55, February 26, 1992, 1; Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 290–294.

⁷¹² "The Cokes then and Now," *The Jamaica Observer*, September 6, 2009; "Jim Brown," January 27, 2008, JamaicaObserver.com.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

this citadel and beyond were putting Jim Brown less and less in Seaga's debt while raising the don's stakes among the rank and file."⁷¹⁴

The rise of drug dons, such as Lester Lloyd Coke, signaled the beginning of the decline of political control of the various local gangs and the escalation of gun violence. The dilemma that began with the economic upheaval under the Manley regime in the 1970s was just as problematic for the JLP in the 1980s. For example, protests against economic austerity erupted in January 1985 after the JLP announced a fuel price increase of \$1.91, raising the price of gas to \$10.90 per gallon. Hundreds of protestors converged on the streets, demonstrating against fuel prices. Security forces had to use teargas to disperse the demonstrators and to break up roadblocks that were erected throughout the city. The demonstrations interrupted local businesses and public transportation, and effectively forced the closure of schools as roadblocks were erected to prevent travel. "The demonstrations also showed its partisan face," Gray writes, "JLP gunmen from the Southside enclave in Central Kingston assaulted Browns Town residents who were manning road blocks there. Pro-PNP residents in East Kingston threw up barricades and fought with JLP invaders. Such was the fury of these partisans that four of the seven deaths from the disturbance occurred in the East Kingston area alone."⁷¹⁵ The fuel riots initially began as a protest movement by the poor Jamaicans, concerned about the increased cost of living generated by the IMF and World Bank's austerity measures. However, after the first day, the riots degenerated into gang violence by the second day with snipers shooting at

⁷¹⁴ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 294.

⁷¹⁵ Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 285.

police trying to break up roadblocks. The newspapers reported that gangs were responsible for roadblocks “and they offered to clear debris to allow motorists to pass if they paid a small amount of cash such as \$10. Snipers and rock throwers frustrated police as they frequently rebuilt roadblocks.”⁷¹⁶ With the demonstrations continuing, Manley and Seaga appealed to protestors to stop the violence for the sake of ‘national interest,’ suggesting yet again the extent to which the political leadership lost control of the gang once under their authority.

Ironically, although Seaga won the 1980 elections, a poll conducted by Carl Stone revealed that Manley remained more popular than Seaga, whose autocratic personality and dictatorial tendencies made him seem unapproachable and cold. The optimism that helped Seaga win in 1980 was short-lived. By early 1983, local polls revealed that the economy had declined and Seaga’s manipulation of the early elections allowed the JLP to dominate the government for the next five years. The snap elections called in 1983, coupled with the PNP’s boycott of those elections, resulted in an election season where the death toll decreased and the gang violence that erupted utilized the general election process to settle old scores between rival communities.

Conclusion

It can be argued that in Jamaica, violence accompanies political power, and whichever party dominates the local government, political violence tends to be used to polarize local constituencies in order to maintain hegemonic power. Michael Manley’s economic and political

⁷¹⁶ “Jamaica at Stand Still: Rioters Protest Fuel Price Hikes,” *The Register Guard*, Vol. XL. No. 10, January 15, 1985, 11A; Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 285.

failure in the 1970s was a reflection of his efforts to polarize the Jamaican masses into two armed camps, resulting in an escalation in gun violence. This political environment allowed Edward Seaga to rise to power, promising both economic and political reforms. Although Seaga came to power claiming that he would bring gun violence under control, gun violence escalated and even transformed under his leadership, a reality that empowered hardcore gunmen such as Winston Blake, Claude Massop and Lester Lloyd Coke. The rise of the dons under Seaga's tenure signaled a radical change in the system of political patronage as political leaders scrambled to regain what little control of the gangs remained via the Eradication Squad, which utilized extra-judicial means to bring gun violence under control. Ultimately, the continued escalation of gang violence after the mid-1980s represented a significant failure of the Jamaican political system.

Epilogue

Modern Jamaican politics

The general thesis of this dissertation has been that violence is endemic to the modern political apparatus in Jamaica. I have traced the emergence of political violence from its beginnings in the 1940s to the institutionalization of gang violence in the 1980s. The central axis on which this dissertation has turned has been the role of political leaders in enabling—if not legitimating—violence, especially during electioneering periods. My argument has been that the existing literature on the formation of modern Jamaican politics, while often acknowledging episodes of violence, has tended to see this violence as largely contingent or external rather than as endemic to the political structure itself. This tendency, it seems to me, has had the effect of shielding the country's most revered leaders from charges of political corruption and the advocacy of violence.

To recap, in chapter one, I addressed the process of labor unionization out of which modern political parties emerged in the wake of the labor rebellion of 1938. I suggested that the union violence that developed in relation to employer intransigence was reproduced in the antagonistic relationship that developed between the two principal political parties—the Peoples National Party of Norman Washington Manley and the Jamaican Labor Party of Alexander Bustamante—that emerged in the aftermath of the rebellion. I was especially keen to show how this process of antagonism was exploited by Bustamante who, (in my view) in his drive for power, polarized the populace through inflammatory rhetoric and agitation aimed at undermining the popularity of his rival, Norman Manley. What emerged within this framework

of antagonism was a political process in which violence was entrenched, and in which party leaders exhibited a willingness to use armed gangs to accomplish their goals or, at least, turned a blind eye to the activity of these gangs. Chapter two continues this theme because, as the party system developed, the conflict and antagonism associated with the union movement shifted to the political sphere. This divisive political structure was exploited by both political parties, the PNP and JLP, as they mobilized grassroots supporters within constituencies in order to win elections and gain power.⁷¹⁷ One of my concerns was to dispute the view that Norman Manley is exempt from the taint of political violence. This has been one of the great legends of Norman Manley, and I have tried to suggest that even if he was not himself an instigator of violence, he colluded in the emergence of a style of politics in which the use of violence was becoming one of the instruments by which political parties established and maintained influence. Arguably, Norman Manley may have been a victim of the internal rivalry of the party system that he helped to create; but arguably too, he did very little to restrain the emergence of political violence.

Chapter three addresses the era of the 1960s, which was a period of political transformation as the old guards of Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley were replaced by younger and more aggressive party leaders such as Hugh Shearer and Edward Seaga, on one side, and Michael Manley and Dudley Thompson, on the other. During the 1960s, violence escalated; it signaled an increase in political conflict and a transition to open political warfare between the parties as well as the nationwide spread of violence that engulfed and further

⁷¹⁷ Sives, "The Historical Roots of Violence in Jamaica," 53.

polarized the country. The 1960s represented a turning point for Jamaican politics as the transition from localized violence in constituencies to a nationwide process evolved. This transition remains relevant because it signified the evolution of political violence and identified party leaders as the impetus of this dilemma.

While the third chapter examined a political system in transition, my argument in the fourth chapter is that far from being exempt from violence, the PNP was an integral participant in the transition and escalation of violence in Jamaica. This process was reflected in events such as the Rema incident in 1977 when the PNP leader's use of political patronage precipitated a conflict about which party would have control of the west Kingston Rema constituency. The Rema incident was part of this transitional process because political violence underscored the way in which the patronage system of the emerging party political structure depended upon a confrontational mode of political activity that could easily tip over to open aggression.⁷¹⁸ Although the Rema incident created images of governmental victimization, the political reality of the 1970s was that Jamaica had a viable gun culture connected to the ganja trade, which made controlling political violence very near impossible.

The final and fifth chapter explores the turbulent decade of the 1980s. The general election of October 1980s signified both the continuation and transformation of political violence, and the rise of Edward Seaga as prime minister. Approximately eight hundred people died as a result of pre- and post-election violence; and a total of 1,175 gun-violence cases were reported, making this election one of the most notorious in Jamaica's history because of the

⁷¹⁸ Levi, Michael Manley, 189; Jamaica Hansard Session 1977–78, Vol. 2, No. 3, 58–59.

level of media sensationalism and violence involved. Coupled with the memorable and senseless violence of 1980 (from evidence in the fire on May 20, 1980, at the Eventide Home for the destitute old and physically handicapped) was the rise of a new breed of gang leader, the first of whom was Lester Lloyd Coke (also known as Jim Brown), which transformed the relationship between the political party and the gangs. Essentially, this is the movement of the emergence of the don, someone who is a perpetrator of violence and community leader. In a context in which the patronage system could not adequately provide for all grassroots supporters, gang leaders such as Jim Brown developed connection to the drug trade that allowed them to operate in a quasi-independent fashion.⁷¹⁹ This ceding of power had two significant consequences: the first is that there was an increasing detachment of the political parties from the gangs; and the second is that of the diminishing ability of the state to maintain law and order.

The thread that I have sought to trace is the way in which political leaders have formally or informally, directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly fostered a political system in which violence has appeared as a necessary component. Within this framework, the political system has failed the people and has been fully usurped by the political elite who then used the resources of the state to maintain security. In my view, the character of modern Jamaican politics has evolved into a process that operates more like a police state than a system of popular representation. During the course of the labor rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath,

⁷¹⁹ “Calls for Security Forces to be Fair,” *The Daily Gleaner*, December 15, 1980, 13 A; “153 Perished in Fire at Home for the Aged,” *The Daily Gleaner*, May 21, 1980, 1; “Dead and Missing in Eventide Fire,” *The Daily Gleaner*, May 23, 1980, 1; Gray, Demeaned but Empowered, 180–186.

Jamaica's leading agitators for change (Bustamante and Manley) had the opportunity to create a more representative process. However, what happened instead was that they utilized their charismatic personalities, flair for sensationalized rhetoric, and mass loyalty to polarize the Jamaican populace. This process has had a debilitating effect on Jamaican politics in which people readily identified with dynamic political leaders as people who would protect their interest. Their loyalty has been rewarded with a system of political patronage, making success in general elections an imperative for political survival because political leaders shelter the commission of violence, if not to directly support it. In this way, it has seemed to me that political violence has become an entrenched and, therefore, inescapable reality across the entire course of modern Jamaican political history.

This study is relevant in showing how the fragmented nature of the modern state apparatus in Jamaica has maintained a political structure of violence. This problem became evident on May 25, 2010, when members of the Jamaican police force attempted to arrest Christopher "Dudus" Coke, son of Lester Coke, the notorious leader of the Shower Posse. According to *The New York Times*, "Mr. Coke's case shed light on a longstanding practice in Jamaica of politicians and gang leaders sharing power, for the benefit of both. Which was evident in 2007 when Bruce Golding representing Tivoli Gardens was elected as prime minister, and Coke's influence in the community grew as his company was granted lucrative government contracts."⁷²⁰ For Dudus, as Coke is locally known, problems began in New York in August 2009 when he was indicted for operating an international drug ring that committed various murders

⁷²⁰ "Suspected Drug Lord Taken in Jamaica," *The New York Times*, June 23, 2010, A9.

and shipped drugs to the U.S. Diplomatic relations between Jamaica and the U.S. were strained over the extradition of Dudus, who was hiding out in Tivoli Gardens. Violence erupted when members of Tivoli blockaded local roads to prevent the police from finding and arresting Dudus. In a stand-off that lasted in almost two months where seventy three people were killed and millions of dollars lost in property damage, Dudus would finally surrender to the police on June 22, 2010.⁷²¹ The drama involving Christopher Coke highlights the failure of the Jamaican government and flawed nature of the political structure that the founding fathers of Jamaica helped to create.

⁷²¹ “Quiet Day in Court for Jamaican Drug Defendant,” *The New York Times*, June 26, 2010, A17.

CHARTS REFLECTING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

These figures reflect an escalation in the levels of homicidal and political violence from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Total number of violent incidents recorded, 1960-69

<i>Year</i>	<i>Incidents without reported Casualties</i>	<i>Incidents with reported Casualties</i>	<i>Total incidents</i>	<i>Percentage of total 1960-69</i>
1960	16	17	33	1.70
1961	27	37	64	3.30
1962	58	46	104	5.37
1963	57	57	114	5.89
1964	22	85	107	5.53
1965	34	112	146	7.55
1966	107	156	263	13.59
1967	115	352	467	24.13
1968	55	213	268	13.85
1969	53	316	369	19.07
<i>Total</i>	544	1,319	1,935	100.00

Total number of casualties recorded in violent incidents, 1960-69

<i>Year</i>	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Total Casualties</i>	<i>Percentage of total 1960-69</i>
1960	19	8	27	1.38
1961	13	38	51	2.61
1962	13	97	110	5.62
1963	41	64	105	5.36
1964	65	46	111	5.67
1965	67	85	152	7.61
1966	99	203	302	15.43
1967	148	309	457	23.35
1968	128	118	246	12.39
1969	153	246	399	20.39
<i>Total</i>	746	1,214	1,960	100.00

Total true reports of crime, 1960-66

<i>Year March 31</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Increase/decrease</i>
1960	31,255	-
1961	36,458	+5,203
1962	39,851	+3,393

1963	37,336	-2,515
1964	41,258	+3,922
1965	41,254	-4
1966	45,493	+4,239
<i>Total</i>	272,905	+14,238

Crime, 1973-1981 (reported Cases)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Manslaughter</i>	<i>Felonious Wounding</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Burglary</i>	<i>Firearms & shooting with intent</i>
1970	152	553	57	364	2241	5403	NA
1971	154	544	68	609	2595	4722	NA
1972	170	571	52	450	2605	4782	293
1973	227	671	81	395	2944	6589	305
1974	195	460	93	395	2387	5668	332
1975	226	540	57	411	2964	7828	304
1976	367	672	42	384	2895	7557	791
1977	409	829	58	522	3511	8853	1960
1978	381	709	52	476	3990	9150	855
1979	351	730	35	538	3654	8484	1749
1980	889	767	29	652	4731	8292	3882
1981	490	756	31	588	4617	8437	2557

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