



Jamaica's Foreign Policy

1962-2022

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ISBN 978-3-031-58900-3 ISBN 978-3-031-58901-0 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58901-0>

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For Sean and Dominic

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1

Introduction

In the years since Independence in 1962, Jamaica's foreign policy has reflected the flux and reflux of international affairs. There has been continuity in the midst of change; and while the country has sought to deepen its traditional friendships and widen its network of allies, it has also experienced occasions of externally determined crisis and profound disagreement both within the Caribbean and in the wider world. Bearing in mind the profound changes which have taken place in the international sphere since independence, this may be an opportune time to examine some of the main initiatives and responses which have characterised Jamaican foreign policy over the last sixty years.

This book is meant not as a detailed examination of any particular feature of the country's foreign policy in the period under consideration, but rather as a general overview which seeks to highlight the leading trends which have occurred in the broad sweep of Jamaica's international relations outlook as an independent country. In the process certain conceptions and misconceptions concerning Jamaica's foreign policy will be reviewed, and some of the more controversial features of our international relations efforts will be considered.

Some of the issues addressed in the text include the early pro-Western orientation of Alexander Bustamante's Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)

administration at the onset of independence, the role of Cold War and developmental imperatives in influencing the foreign policy initiatives taken up by the first Michael Manley Government under the People's National Party (PNP), and the strong return to anti-communist, pro-Western positions by Edward Seaga and the JLP. Subsequent attempts by Governments led by Michael Manley, P.J. Patterson, Porta Simpson-Miller, Bruce Golding and Andrew Holness have not had to contend fully with the vicissitudes of the Cold War era, but have instead been obliged to address broad political challenges relating, *inter alia*, to economic development, globalization, human rights, climate change, security, respect for International Law and safeguarding progress for small States. The book reviews Jamaica's policy positions on these broad questions. It also assesses in discrete chapters specific issues pertaining to Jamaica's interaction with various international organizations, including the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the Organization of American States. The discussion in the text also considers questions pertaining to Jamaica's perspectives within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the country's approach to the vexed issue of the death penalty, as well as its policy positions on extradition matters, and diaspora relations.

In the main, Jamaica's policies on external affairs have been driven by our standing as a small, Third World country, located less than 300 miles south of Florida, and 90 miles below the elongated arm of Cuba. Among other things, our location has placed us close to the centre of some of the Cold War cleavages which characterized American relations with its neighbours to the south, while, at the same time, our relative distance from the rest of the anglophone Caribbean has made us into a somewhat removed CARICOM cousin.

But, to be sure, our policies have not been subject only to the paramountcy of geography. On the contrary, for well-known reasons of history and culture, Caribbean countries have for several years ignored certain obvious geographical realities in their inter-State relations.¹

¹ For comment on the impact of historical cleavages on the formation of economic groupings in the Caribbean, see, e.g., Byron Blake, "The Caribbean—Geography, Culture, History and Identity: Assets for Economic Integration and Development", in Kenneth Hall and Denis Benn (eds.), *Contending with Destiny: The Caribbean in the 21st Century* (2000), p. 45 at pp. 49–50.

Hence, despite Jamaica's proximity to Central and South America, trade and investment relationships with these areas have been incidental, at best. Likewise, although Haiti's western coastline seems almost literally to stretch outwards to Jamaica, our foreign policy initiatives since independence have often, but not always, involved only a perfunctory glance towards Port-au-Prince.

Of course, our status as a small country underlines the interplay of both history and geography in determining some of our postcolonial initiatives in foreign affairs. Small size imposes certain constraints, mainly in relation to domestic market size, economies of scale and political power. Yet, this point should not be overstated, for developments in the world of technology since 1962 have opened up new vistas for small States. Possibilities in service industries such as tourism, specialist manufacturing, insurance and banking, information technology and so forth have become viable options for all States with appropriate levels of education, expertise and determination. Jamaica's generally sluggish economic performance in the years since the 1970s has been the subject of differing interpretations, but, if anything, it stands as evidence of our failure to take full advantage of opportunities for small, dynamic States.

Again, the imperatives of history may be said to have restricted the degrees of freedom within which we have been able to operate. In particular, given the country's colonial background, Jamaica has been inclined to continue trading relationships with Britain and Europe which owe more to history than to economics. As part of this situation, too, Jamaica has been an active partner in the coalition of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States which have sought preferential treatment in trade matters with the developed countries of Europe under the Lome and Cotonou Agreements.

Reference to these agreements, however, also raises the question of economic philosophy in Jamaica's foreign policy approaches. Certainly, since the time of the Reagan presidency, the United States and its developed counterparts have presented free trade arguments which challenge the ACP position in favour of preferences for developing countries in respect of sugar, bananas and other agricultural exports. At the heart of the ACP position—firmly supported by Jamaica—is the implicit assumption that Europe owes the South preferential treatment as a means of

compensating for centuries of colonialism and exploitation or, from another standpoint, as a measure of solidarity in support of economically challenged post-colonial States. And we continue to pursue preferential policies even though it may fairly be argued that preferences keep us locked into a system of dependency by encouraging us to remain primary producers, a paradox from history retained by ACP States.

But other arguments have also been offered in defence of preferences: so, for example, since the time of the Barbados Declaration in 1994, Jamaica and other Caribbean States have relied on the concept of the “small island developing State” or the SIDS as the basis for supporting preferential treatment.² Here, the argument is that each small island developing State is entitled to receive special treatment in trade relations as a means of competing on a level playing field with larger, well-endowed States: philosophically, this is an argument to the effect that need is a basis for entitlement in international relations.

In some respects, geography and history merely set the stage upon which policy makers perform. Performance also turns on ideology and prevailing world conditions, among other factors. As to ideology, the pro-capitalist orientation of the JLP has often been contrasted with the PNP’s disposition in favour of Democratic Socialism: the main point would be that the former has been partial to foreign policy positions of the United States and, in particular, to perspectives of the American Republican Party, while the latter, with its early connections with the British Labour Party, has been inclined to support policies that promote deference to non-alignment and evince some degree of scepticism towards Western dominance in international relations. Even with their different points of departure, however, Jamaica’s two main political parties have sought to link ideological questions to economic outcomes. The Bustamante Administration, with some support from Norman Manley’s PNP, remained committed to strong bonds with the United States not least because such bonds constituted the *sine qua non* for the development the Jamaican bauxite industry, the key element of Jamaican development in

² One guideline recommended for Jamaica in World Trade Organization negotiations is that special consideration be given to “small states”: Government of Jamaica, “Jamaica’s New Trade Policy”, Ministry Paper 69, paragraph 13 (undated).

the first decade of independence. Similarly, as the Michael Manley sought closer relations with the Soviet Union, it made efforts to link these closer relations with prospects for trade, through the sale of bauxite from Jamaica and the purchase of motor vehicles from the Soviet Union. It must have been a matter of some disappointment for the Michael Manley Government in the 1970s that the Soviet Union was not forthcoming with greater levels of economic assistance for the PNP's Democratic Socialist regime. The return of the JLP to power in 1980 witnessed a much-heralded ideological shift back to full support for Western political perspectives and simultaneously to practical reliance mainly on the United States of America and other Western countries and institutions for economic sustenance.

Changing conditions in the world—and especially the end of the Cold War—have reduced the role of broad ideological rivalry in shaping Jamaica's foreign policy approaches. Within the era of globalization, Jamaica has accepted, with notable reservations, the general strictures of free trade and free movement of capital. For the period following the end of the Cold War, Jamaica has also had to make foreign policy adjustments bearing in mind the unipolar position of the United States, resistance to unipolarity, the strengthening of the European Union, and the emergence of Peoples' Republic of China as an important source of aid for developing countries. At the same time, the post-Cold War era has been characterized by greater attention to the existential threats such as that emerging from climate change, differing perceptions on the role of national sovereignty in shaping foreign policy decisions, and the increasing need for international cooperation to combat threats in relation to matters such as terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and money laundering, as well as human trafficking. The post-Cold War period has also coincided with increased awareness of the need to promote and protect human rights through international linkages and with a greater role for civil society in domestic governance issues. These factors have all brought about changes in the Jamaican approach to foreign policy questions with the passage of time.

Another source of influence on Jamaican foreign policy has been what may be described as the Jamaican national story. In this national story, Jamaica perceives itself as an influential, prestigious country which,

notwithstanding its small size, exercises influence on a range of foreign policy matters: as is sometimes claimed, Jamaica punches above its weight.³ For this line of argument to remain viable, however, Jamaica has had to present itself as a country which respects basic standards of human rights both internationally and at home and supports full respect for the rule of law in international affairs. With this in mind, Jamaica has consistently maintained that its foreign policy positions on a wide range of questions—including, for instance, self-determination, national sovereignty, resistance to the unlawful use of force by States, opposition to the United States embargo on Cuba, refugee protection, and support for development initiatives—are built on principle rather than expediency.⁴ As the then Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Seymour Mullings put the matter in 1995:

We have endeavoured to pursue through the years a principled foreign policy anchored in the true recognition of our goals as a nation and the common interest we share with others in the international community.

The idea that Jamaican policy is built on principle is readily supportable in some cases: few would argue against the righteousness of the country's policies in relation to South Africa from the time of Jamaica's independence to the time of black majority rule in that country.

But in some instances, the identification of the precise principle to be defended by Jamaica is not entirely clear and sometimes two identifiable principles may be in conflict with each other. Where, for instance, refugees need protection, but seem to be associated with efforts that could possibly undermine security in Jamaica, does the balance of principle lie on the side of keeping the refugees here or in expelling them? Or, if a regime takes power by unconstitutional means, does principle automatically require suspension of Jamaica's relations with that country? And if not, why not? Jamaica has retained diplomatic and commercial relations with some regimes that have come to power through undemocratic

³ See, e.g., "A Professional Foreign Service is a Must, as Ukraine has Shown", *The Observer*, March 6, 2022.

⁴ Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Seymour Mullings to the Jamaican Parliament, May 11, 1995, p. 2 (recorded by Allerdice).

means, while it has sought to shun other regimes for their lack of democratic credentials, unexplained inconsistency that has given rise to the charge of hypocrisy over the years.⁵ In sum, Jamaica's self-perception may encourage the country to invoke principles in defence of its foreign policy approaches, but on some occasions these principles flounder in the icy waters of practical politics.

The ensuing discussion briefly highlights certain points of continuity and change in first years of Jamaican foreign policy following independence in 1962. It begins with a review of the foreign policy positions taken by the Bustamante Administration in the years immediately following independence. This is then followed by consideration of certain foreign policy positions taken by subsequent administrations and by analysis of these positions.

⁵When Jamaica indicated in 1997 that it would not pursue diplomatic relations with coup leaders in Liberia, this prompted stinging rebuke from at least one observer who pointed out that Jamaica had taken a contrasting approach to coup leaders in Brazil, Chile, Nigeria, Grenada, Cuba and Ghana: "Hypocrisy in Jamaica's International Relations, Letter to the Editor from Clive Ocnacuwenga, *The Gleaner*, August 5, 1997. Cf. "Sanctions Slapped on Nigeria", *The Observer*, March 7, 1996 (Measures taken by the Patterson Administration against military rule in Nigeria).



2

The Early Years

1 “With the West”: 1962–1972

Writers often begin the review of postcolonial foreign policy in Jamaica with Bustamante’s pithy pronouncement that “we are with the West.”¹ Sometimes this is done as a means of denigration.² Bustamante, and by extension, the Jamaica Labour Party,³ have also on occasion been depicted as anti-intellectual and shallow, with respect to both foreign and domestic policy in Jamaica; and this pronouncement has been called in

¹ See, e.g., Don Mills, “Jamaica’s International Relations in Independence”, in Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in Independence* (1989), p. 131. Some of the economic and cultural factors which helped to explain the pro-Western orientation of the Bustamante administration are also intimated by Lester D. Langley in *The United States and the Caribbean in the Twentieth Century* (4th ed., 1989), at pp. 255–256.

² D.K. Duncan argued, for instance, that the statement “(w)e are with the West” amounted to a straight repudiation of independence, for the West at the time was still associated with colonial power in some parts of the world: D.K. Duncan Interview, reproduced on *Nationwide News* (Jamaica), September 17, 2020. Duncan’s statement is undermined, however, by some policy positions taken by Jamaica at the time of independence. At the United Nations General Assembly in 1963, Hugh Shearer put the early Jamaican perspective as follows: “I now turn to the problem of colonialism. Jamaica reaffirms its unswerving opposition to colonialism in all its forms. We are concerned to see the continent of Africa rid of it. We join our colleagues, the indigenous people of Africa, in their determination that the people of Angola and Mozambique should be liberated from European domination as quickly as possible.”

³ Bustamante, independent Jamaica’s first Prime Minister, was the leader of the Jamaica Labour Party from 1943 to 1967 when he retired from active politics.

evidence on the point. In fairness, however, Bustamante's statement is, as a matter of fact, a useful place to start any assessment of foreign policy in independent Jamaica, for it highlights certain important and enduring themes in Jamaican politics.

To begin with, it demonstrates the pragmatic approach which has been a consistent thread in the foreign policy initiatives of the Jamaica Labour Party. The pragmatic approach implicit in the bald statement of alliance with the West was given greater substance through Jamaica's Ministry Paper No. 19 on the Foreign Policy of Jamaica.⁴ In this Ministry Paper, the Bustamante administration reiterated its pro-Western orientation in the following terms:

*Jamaica believes in Western hemisphere solidarity, and, accordingly, Jamaica will make every move designed to ensure the stability of the hemisphere, to maintain the security of the area, and to foster its economic and social development. Jamaica, in particular, co-operates in every possible manner with the United States of America and Canada, but, at the same time, maintains independence of thought, and is prepared to follow an independent line in the United Nations and elsewhere on any issue with which Jamaica is not in agreement.*⁵

Ministry Paper 19 thus persisted in acknowledging Jamaica's immediate connection with the West, even as it contemplated that in some instances Jamaica could pursue independent lines of policy. Other aspects of Ministry Paper 19 consistently took this approach. Accordingly, the document noted that "as a small nation in a world of power blocs", Jamaica was obliged to make friends internationally while simultaneously preserving its sovereignty and independence.⁶ Jamaica also recorded the value the country placed on Commonwealth links,⁷ noted its preference

⁴The Foreign Policy of Jamaica, Ministry Paper No. 19, June 1964, presented by Alexander Bustamante.

⁵Ibid., para. 2(x).

⁶Para. 2(i).

⁷Para. 2(viii).

for “the closest possible collaboration among sovereign Commonwealth Caribbean Countries”⁸ and affirmed perspectives against colonial domination⁹ and in favour of democracy and the rule of law.¹⁰

2 Pragmatism in Context

It should also be noted that Bustamante’s pragmatism lay in his recognition of the realities facing Jamaica in August 1962. In April 1961, the United States Central Intelligence Agency sponsored the embarrassingly unsuccessful Bay of Pigs Invasion.¹¹ In July 1961, the USSR-Cuban alliance was publicly announced; in December 1961, Castro declared himself communist;¹² and in October 1962, the world was brought

⁸ Para. 2(ix).

⁹ Para. 2(iii).

¹⁰ Para 2(vi). The core elements of the JLP’s foreign policy orientation, including pragmatism, support for Western powers, anticommunism, anti-racism, and human rights promotion, were also presented by Senator Hector Wynter in *The Gleaner* on December 17, 1962: quoted by Paul Ashley, “Jamaican Foreign Policy in Transition: From Manley to Seaga”, in Leslie Manigat and Jorse Heine (eds.), *The Caribbean and World Politics: Cross Currents and Cleavages* (1988), p. 144 at p. 145.

¹¹ Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy’s Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (2000), at pp. 123–148. As Cohen put the matter, the USA had attempted by the Bay of Pigs invasion “to overthrow the Cuban government and had failed miserably”: Warren I. Cohen, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations: Volume 4: America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991* (1993), at p. 131. LaFaber remarked that the Bay of Pigs invasion was “without air cover, without a historical justification, without trust and without intelligence”; in all, it was “the perfect failure”: Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present* (1994), at pp. 589–590. See also Trumbull Higgins, *The Perfect Failure: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the CIA at the Bay of Pigs* (1987).

¹² For the view that the USA had decided to treat Castro as communist well before he had discovered that he was, see, e.g., Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (1994), at p. 440.

exceedingly close to nuclear confrontation via the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹³ In the midst of this Cold War powder keg, Bustamante and newly independent Jamaica had no practical alternative but to be with the West.¹⁴ A pro-communist stance—real or perceived—was fundamentally inconsistent with Jamaica’s political culture, while neutrality in the heart of the Cold War conflict would have placed Jamaica in the pathway of considerable economic and political pressures.¹⁵

This point bears further elaboration. As to political culture, at the time of Jamaica’s independence the anglophone Caribbean did not have a strong tradition of alternatives to plural democracy and bourgeois capitalism. True, the Caribbean region had historically been subject to imperialistic control, and the individual countries had indeed been pawns in

¹³From the voluminous literature, see, e.g., John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (1997), pp. 268–280; Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1969); Robert E. Quirk, *Fidel Castro* (1993), pp. 425–448; Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938* (8th Revised Edition, 1997), pp. 181–191; Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (1993), pp. 364–425; “John F. Kennedy, the Cuban Revolution and the Cold War” in Robert Griffith (ed.), *Major Problems in American History Since 1945* (1992), pp. 235–303. The stakes in the Cuban Missile Crisis were undoubtedly high: Lukacs suggests that the Crisis was “the last dangerous confrontation of the Cold War between the two superpowers” and that it brought about Khrushchev’s removal from power in 1964: John Lukacs, *A Short History of the Twentieth Century* (2013), p. 163. Norman Manley, then Jamaican Leader of the Opposition, opined that the missile crisis brought the world “to the very brink of total war with nuclear weapons”: Norman W. Manley, recorded interview by Frank Hill, August 7, 1964, at p. 5, John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/JFKOH/Manley%2C%20Norman%20W/JFKOH-NWM-01/JFKOH-NWM-01-TR.pdf>, last accessed October 31, 2021. For Johnson, at the time of the Crisis “(t)here was no doubt the world came close to large-scale nuclear war”: Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: From the Twenties to the Nineties* (Rev. ed., 1991), at p. 626; Cohen agrees that the world was taken “close to nuclear war” but presumes full responsibility for this rested with Khrushchev: Warren I. Cohen, *loc. cit.*, note 11, at p. 144.

¹⁴During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Jamaica supported the United States. As noted by the U.S. State Department, Bustamante publicly endorsed the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba, granted permission for American ships and aircraft to use Jamaican ports and air fields, and co-operated by declining certain requests for travel to and from Cuba via Jamaica: United States State Department, Office of the Historian, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–63*, Plan of Action for Jamaica for the Period Beginning June 1, 1963 (Approved by Latin American Policy Committee, May 29, 1963), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d177>, last accessed October 27, 2021. For some of the practical implications for Cuba of its diplomatic disengagement from the USA after 1961, see, e.g., Louis A. Perez, Jr., *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (2nd ed., 1997), at pp. 243–257.

¹⁵On the Kennedy administration’s “overriding concern, at times an obsession” to prevent the emergence of “another Cuba” in Latin America and the Caribbean, see George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (2008), at pp. 716–718.

the power relations among European States. However, Jamaica had been subject to British control for over three hundred years leading up to independence; and, notwithstanding its noted tradition of slave uprisings, labour resistance and anti-establishment rhetoric, the country had not evinced broad acceptance of Marxism as an alternative philosophy to conventional impositions fostered by the British establishment class. Thus, quite irrespective of possible pressure from the United States and other Western countries, Bustamante's foreign policy maxim was well-received by most Jamaicans. Arguably, the country's history—especially as reflected in disparities of wealth and power arising from colonialism—had given rise to a fair-sized constituency of persons receptive to radicalism; but the point here is that, at the time of independence, the notion that Jamaica would align itself with East Bloc countries carried little appeal among social leaders¹⁶ or among the mass of the populace.¹⁷ This conclusion is easily substantiated by certain straightforward political facts which prevailed at independence.

For one thing, the main opposition to Bustamante's JLP, the People's National Party (PNP), was clearly disinclined to embrace an alternative political model at the time. A policy statement issued by the PNP in 1965 had sought to align the country with “the ‘have not’ nations of Africa, Latin America and Asia” and had argued for a broad approach

¹⁶In a survey of 188 leaders in Jamaica conducted in 1958, Wendell Bell posed the question, “As you understand the general positions taken by the Soviet Union and the United States with respect to the world situation, which do you feel has been morally right more often in recent years?” 83% of the respondents indicated that the USA was morally right more often, 1% said the Soviet Union, while 16% said both countries were about the same: Wendell Bell, *Jamaican Leaders: Political Attitudes in a New Nation* (1964), at p. 152. From this and other points of analysis, Bell concluded that “the Jamaican elites overwhelmingly favored the USA over the Soviet Union as an actor on the world scene”: *ibid.*

¹⁷An American State Department Report prepared shortly after Jamaica's independence noted that Jamaica had tended to turn increasingly to the United States for economic and military support given that Britain was “no longer willing” to maintain its commitments to the country, and that Jamaica had exchanged no diplomatic missions with any Communist country, though there was a Cuban consulate in Kingston to cater for the interests of roughly 20,000 Jamaicans living in Cuba. The Report also stated that there was no Communist party in the country, “front organizations” were relatively weak and groups representing “special interests or extremist views” lacked support: United States State Department, Office of the Historian, *loc. cit.*, note 14, last accessed October 27, 2021.

“without commitment to power blocks as they exist in the world today”.¹⁸ There was also the possibility that a Norman Manley PNP administration would have wished to have latitude to trade with Cuba in the decade of the 1960s, although Manley himself acknowledged that Jamaica and Cuba had very little to trade with each other. Beyond this, there is no strong reason to believe that the foreign policy of a PNP administration would have departed radically from that of the Bustamante administration.¹⁹ Though the PNP had declared itself socialist from 1940, the leadership perceived socialism in Fabian terms, so that at most the party was prepared to introduce reforms in Jamaican society consistent with broad notions of social democracy.²⁰ Socialism in this sense meant, *inter alia*, greater emphasis on the education of the impoverished, progressive taxation, attention to the deprived conditions faced by the rural peasantry, full adult suffrage, and at the limit, State control of the commanding heights of the economy. It did not mean the abolition of private property, nationalisation without compensation, the formation of a vanguard party, nor other features of Eastern European or Cuban socialism. In fact, when Norman Manley supervised the expulsion of Hart, Henry and the Hill brothers from the party in 1952, on the ground that their communist perspective was incompatible with PNP membership, this must have sent a signal that the PNP too was “with the West.” The case of British Guiana also reinforces the general point concerning the orientation of the PNP’s anti-communism in the period; for, in response to British actions expressly designed to overturn possible communist advancement in British Guiana in 1953,²¹ Norman Manley expressly supported the anti-communist position taken by the colonial authorities.²²

¹⁸ *The Policy of The People’s National Party*, as accepted at the 26th Annual General Conference, 13 February 1965, quoted by Don Mills, *loc. cit.*, note 1, at p. 134.

¹⁹ For the anglophilism of the early PNP leadership, see Louis Lindsay, *The Myth of Independence: Middle Class Politics and Non-mobilization in Jamaica*, Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, Working Paper No. 6 (1975) at pp. 12–16.

²⁰ But for the view that the PNP’s Socialist Declaration reflected the ideological work, and limitations, of the communist elements in the party, see Trevor Munroe, *The Marxist ‘Left’ in Jamaica 1940–1950* (Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, Working Paper, No. 15 (1977)), p. 21.

²¹ Victor Kaufman, “Domestic Politics as a Catalyst for United States Intervention in the Caribbean: The Case of British Guiana”, *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 30, Nos. 1 & 2 (1996), p. 107.

²² David Goldsworthy, *Colonial Issues in British Politics, 1945–1961: From ‘Colonial Development’ to ‘Wind of Change’* (1971), pp. 234–236.

For another, it must be recalled that Jamaica's independence had, in some senses, been achieved at the expense of the West Indies Federation from which Jamaica withdrew in October 1961.²³ The factors which explain the failure of the federal experiment have been the subject of a large body of literature,²⁴ but significantly, it has not been suggested that ideological differences contributed substantially to the end of the Federation.²⁵ Generally, the members of the Federation were pro-Western, and little time appears to have been spent among the federal leaders contemplating alternatives to this orientation. Consequently, it may be fair to conclude that Bustamante's perspective was consistent not only with majority opinion in Jamaica, it represented the broader regional viewpoint as well.

No doubt, some pro-Western supporters of the Bustamante position built their arguments on a somewhat unsophisticated model. So, for instance, notions that communism was nothing more than a new form of enslavement, and that any support for Soviet initiatives in the world would be tantamount to the betrayal of the social order in Jamaica, were not unfamiliar ideas. Indeed, as a part of this notion, some analysts have

²³ Following the referendum which led to Jamaica's withdrawal from the Federation, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies anticipated that Norman Manley would seek independence—which he did, and that Manley's People's National Party would win the General Election leading into independence—which it did not: The British Cabinet, "Future of Jamaica", Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, C(61) 142, 26 September, 1961, paras. 1–3, <http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-106-cp-142.pdf>, last accessed January 19, 2022.

²⁴ See, e.g., John Mordecai, *The West Indies: The Federal Negotiations* (1968), p. 397; Hugh Springer, "Federation in the Caribbean: An Attempt That Failed", *International Organization*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1962), p. 758; Gordon K. Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (1968), pp. 368–386; David Coore, "The Role of the Internal Dynamics of Jamaican Politics in the Collapse of the Federation", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1999), p. 65; David Killingray, "The West Indies Federation and Decolonization in the British Caribbean", *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 34, Nos. 1 & 2 (2000), p. 71; D.J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development: Guidance Towards Self-Government in British Colonies, 1941–1971* (Vol. 5) (1980), pp. 143–191.

²⁵ Bustamante had initially offered guarded support for the federal idea; but from as early as the time of the 1947 Montego Bay Conference he presented conditions which needed to be met for him to give full support. These conditions included: (1) implementation of a loan programme for the benefit of the Caribbean islands, (2) identification of appropriate members of the proposed Governor General and governing council for the Federation, (3) the power of the governing authorities in economic and social matters, and (4) likely trading relations among the member units of the Federation: see Gladys Bustamante, *The Memoirs of Lady Bustamante* (1997), p. 166. These conditions did not suggest that East-West ideological divisions were of any significance to Bustamante as far as the Federation was concerned.

suggested that one factor in the defeat of the PNP's perspective in the Referendum on Federation in 1961 was a rumour to the effect that a vote for the "socialist" PNP would mean the introduction of communism to the country. "Russian ships" were said to be hovering off Jamaica's capital, waiting to be summoned by the PNP if that party's approach prevailed in the Referendum.²⁶ Whether or not credibility is attached to this version of events, it tends to emphasize the degree to which the Jamaican political culture was perceived as anti-communist in the period immediately preceding independence.

3 Other Early Realities

Bustamante's early pronouncement on his administration's pro-Western orientation also gave due deference to the economic realities facing the new Jamaica. By September 1961, the United States had introduced the first elements of its comprehensive trade and investment embargo against Cuba, on the grounds that the continuation of trade and investment relations would be antithetical to democratic principles, and as a retorsion in response to the broadscale expropriation of private property by the Castro regime. When faced with the reality of the embargo in 1962, the Jamaican authorities had realistically two basic options. One was to support the embargo on the basis that it was justifiable in law and policy. And the second was to reject the embargo as an act of hegemony against a regional neighbour, while seeking, in other areas, to maintain Jamaica's traditional relationship with the United States: on this approach the enemy of Jamaica's friend would not necessarily have to be Jamaica's enemy. A third possible option—that of rejecting the embargo, and of seeking alliances with East Bloc countries to resist any American reaction—must have seemed rather far-fetched in the Cold War environment of 1962. In the event, Jamaica joined in the ostracism of Cuba, though, with the passage of years, this position was to undergo radical revision and fluctuating

²⁶Former Attorney General A.J. Nicholson has mentioned this episode in an assessment of the significance of referenda in the Westminster Parliamentary System: Nicholson, "Pushing the Referendum Button", *The Observer*, July 10, 2016.

fortunes. At a time when Jamaica fervently pursued Western foreign capital in general and undertook special initiatives with Western transnational corporations in relation to bauxite, sugar, bananas and tourism, alternative foreign policy approaches which may have shunned core positions of the United States and Western Europe were distinctly implausible.²⁷ A leading Jamaican political scientist, Paul Ashley, put the matter succinctly: after noting that “the ideological affinity to, and close identification with the United States was considered an essential component of the creation of a favourable investment climate”, he concluded that the Bustamante administration “courted, welcomed and entertained foreign investment with relentless vigour”.²⁸

In the early years, the pragmatic approach of the JLP was further reflected in Jamaica’s relations with the United Kingdom. Although the British had interned Bustamante in 1938, and although some countries were anxious to reject the symbols of colonial control immediately upon assuming independence, the JLP administration retained Jamaica’s links with Britain and embraced membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations with enthusiasm. In the realm of economics, early policy efforts on the part of the Government were devoted to the preservation of preferential treatment with Britain for Jamaican sugar and bananas even as the former colonial power became more fully integrated within the European Common Market. Also, many Jamaicans, some with relatives in Britain as part of the wave of migration which took place primarily between 1949 and 1961, still looked to Britain for intellectual and social advancement. For them, a foreign policy which retained the Queen as the Head of the Jamaican State, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the highest Jamaican court, and which promoted continued investment, trade and educational connections with Britain, was entirely consonant with personal aspirations, as well as with national interest. In his 1957 essay on “The Revolt against Colonialism”, British historian Richard Pares remarked, apropos the Caribbean, that hostility towards the British

²⁷ By 1970, the bauxite industry, which was entirely foreign-owned, was responsible for a little less than two-thirds of Jamaica’s exports and more than 50% of American imports from Jamaica: Vilma McNish, “Jamaica: Forty Years of Independence”, *Revista Mexicana del Caribe*, Vol. VII, No. 13 (2002), p. 181 at p. 196.

²⁸ Paul Ashley, *loc. cit.*, note 10, p. 146.

colonial authorities was not always proportionate to the just deserts of the colonialists:²⁹ for Pares, the British appeared to be more popular among West Indians than among East Indians, even though the West Indian experience had included the horrors of slavery.³⁰ The accommodating attitude of the Bustamante government to the British gave sustenance to the paradox noted by Pares.

Another aspect of being “with the West” concerns the attitude of the JLP administration to countries and issues not directly involved in East-West tensions. More particularly, it is sometimes implied that between 1962 and 1972, Jamaica’s foreign policy remained confined only to traditional, pro-Western positions. This is not the case. As is evident, for instance, in parts of Ministry Paper No. 19, and from the policy statements delivered by Hugh Shearer and others to the United Nations General Assembly from 1962 to 1971, early Jamaican foreign policy positions cut across Cold War barriers in some areas. Thus, the Government publicly attached importance to matters such as anticolonialism and self-determination³¹ (including the self-determination conflicts in Mozambique and Angola), the South African anti-apartheid struggle,³² full participation by small States in world affairs and international trade,³³ the need for price support schemes for primary commodities, and human rights.

²⁹ Richard Pares, “The Revolt against Colonialism”, *The Listener*, 1 August 1957, reprinted in Pares, *The Historian’s Business and Other Essays* (R.A. and Elisabeth Humphreys (eds.))(1961), p. 77 at p. 77.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ministry Paper No. 19, *loc. cit.*, note 4, at para. 2(iii).

³² Ministry Paper No. 19, at para. 2(xi).

³³ Ministry Paper No. 19, at para. 2(xii).



3

Manley and Seaga

1 Manley, 1972–1980

If the first decade of independence was marked by steady pragmatism, the foreign policy of the Michael Manley regime from 1972 to 1980 featured high drama, idealism and Third World solidarity. Manley's world was quite different from that initially faced by Bustamante and his immediate successors, Sir Donald Sangster and Hugh Shearer. The early 1970s saw the collapse of aspects of the Bretton Woods system, the demise of the gold standard, actions by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) which quadrupled the price of oil, and deepening economic problems among primary producing, developing countries. Against this background, Manley opted for boldness.¹ In short order, Jamaica assumed a prominent role in the Non-Aligned Movement² and

¹ It has been suggested that the period of the 1970s was one in which “attempts at bombastic foreign policies achieved little medium- or long-term developmental gains”: Diana Thorburn, “Remapping Caribbean Geopolitics”, in *Nacla Report on the Americas*, Vol. 39, No. 6, May/June 2006, p. 26 at p. 30. Given the complexities of the issues involved in the political dynamics of the 1970s, it may suffice to note that one person's boldness is another's bombast.

² Vaughan A. Lewis, “The Commonwealth Caribbean Policy of Non-Alignment” in Basil A. Ince (ed.), *Contemporary International Relations of the Caribbean* (1979), p. 1, esp. at pp. 5–6.

the Group of 77,³ redoubled our leadership in anti-apartheid matters,⁴ acceded to the Treaty of Chaguaramas creating CARICOM, established an unprecedented level of interaction with the Cuban Government, and sought Caribbean alliances beyond CARICOM through the proposed (but ill-fated) JAVAMEX alumina project with Venezuela and Mexico.

Above all, the Manley regime between 1972 and 1980 placed Third World issues at the forefront of its initiatives. The thrust for an equitable rearrangement of the world economy was marked, *inter alia*, by greater emphasis on multilateral commodity organizations and by United Nations General Assembly Resolutions promoting the creation of a New International Economic Order⁵ and asserting the economic rights and duties of States.⁶ So, for example, one of the core principles of the New International Economic Order was that of “preferential and non-reciprocal treatment for developing countries, wherever feasible, in all fields of international economic cooperation whenever possible”,⁷ an approach aptly characterized as “positive discrimination” for the benefit of developing countries.⁸ It was also posited that development processes should encompass the mandatory transfer of technology by investors from advanced economies to developing counterparts.⁹ At each signpost toward world economic reform, Jamaica was there, holding the fort with the language of international morality and economic justice.¹⁰ In the end, the New International Economic Order and its intellectual outriders

³ For a summary of the early initiatives of the Group of 77, and some of the challenges faced by the Group, see, e.g., Karl Sauvaut, “The Early Days of the Group of 77”, in *UN Chronicle: The Magazine of the United Nations*, Vol. LI, No. 1 (May 2014), pp. 27–33; on the Group’s origins, see also Sauvaut, *The Group of 77: Evolution, Structure, Organization* (1981), pp. 1–16.

⁴ Editorial, “Where Jamaica and de Klerk Collide”, *The Gleaner*, November 14, 2021.

⁵ U.N. General Assembly Resolution 3201(S-VI) (1974).

⁶ U.N. General Assembly Resolution 3281 (1974).

⁷ Principle 4(n).

⁸ Wil D. Verwey, “The Principle of Preferential Treatment for Developing Countries”, *Indian Journal of International Law*, Vol. 23 (1983), p. 343 at p. 343; Samuel K.B. Asante, “Restructuring Transnational Mineral Agreements”, *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 73 (1979), p. 335.

⁹ For review, see, e.g., Wilberne H. Persaud, “Technology Transfer: Conceptual and Development Issues”, *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, June 1981, p. 1.

¹⁰ For the view that in the halcyon days of the 1970s Manley was widely regarded “as the leading politician in the Third World,” see Nelson W. Keith, “The Light That Failed? Short Circuits in Caribbean Marxism,” *Latin American Perspectives*, Autumn 1994, Vol. 21, No. 4, p. 66 at p. 68.

floundered on the free market rocks of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and *realpolitik*.¹¹ But Jamaica's leadership within the Third World did not go unnoticed. Thus, for example, largely as a result of our international profile and diplomatic acumen on the part of our representatives, Jamaica was selected as the site for the headquarters of the International Seabed Authority, a valuable symbolic victory for a developing country.¹² In this context, it is also important to recall that in the negotiations at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (the UNCLOS III) developing countries, including Jamaica, had sought to link expressly the idea of the New International Economic Order to the allocation of rights to all States to deep seabed areas under the high seas, pursuant to the concept of the Common Heritage of Mankind.¹³

¹¹ Michael Manley noted that the New International Economic Order was predicated on the notion that international political considerations should be guided by ethics. Ultimately, he found that this was a "fantasy", explaining that the concept of the new order was "formally buried" at the 1981 North-South Summit at Cancun: Manley. "When Reagan Killed with a Smile", *The Gleaner*, May 17, 1992.

¹² See, e.g., Byron Buckley, "Seabed Gives Jamaica International Recognition", *The Gleaner*, November 20, 1994. International Seabed Authority, Agreement between the International Seabed Authority and the Government of Jamaica Regarding the Headquarters of the International Seabed Authority, Doc. ISBA/3/A/L.3, ISBA/3/C/L.3, 21 February 1997. On the decision to place the headquarters of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, see especially Ministry Paper No. 8/98, Siting of the Headquarters of the International Seabed Authority, February 24, 1998; "ISA Gets Permanent Home—Headquarters Agreement Signed", *The Gleaner*, August 27, 1999; "Seabed HQ for Kgn—ISA to Sign Agreement Today", *ibid.*, August 26, 1999; "Seabed Finds a Port—Conference Centre Building Meets HQ Requirements", *ibid.*, February 23, 1998; "Seabed HQ for Kingston—Block 11 of Conference Centre to be Permanent Site", *The Observer*, February 25, 1998. The issue of location was highly contentious within Jamaica: "Impatience Mounts at Seabed Indecision", *The Gleaner* (Jamaica), August 30, 1997; Chester Burgess, "Kingston Must Make the Grade", *ibid.*, August 9, 1995; "Foreign Ministry Studying Seabed Report", *ibid.*, July 17, 1997; "Seabed Site", Editorial in *The Gleaner*, June 17, 1995; "Committee Still Pressing for MoBay as Seabed Site", *ibid.*, February 6, 1995; "MoBay Fetes Delegates' Wives as Seabed 'Battle' Continues", *ibid.*, November 18, 1994; "Climbing Out of a Third World Mode", Editorial in *The Sunday Observer*, February 28, 1998; Max Lambie, "MoBay Facilities Will Boost Seabed", *ibid.*, August 13, 1995; "Seabed Site Selection Will Be Transparent", *ibid.*, August 13, 1995; "Seabed Authority: Hope Surges in MoBay", *ibid.*, June 15, 1995. Generally, see also "ISBA: No Agreement on Seabed HQ", *Insight* Newsletter (Jamaica), Vol. XIII, No. 14, September 1–15, 1997; "Site for Permanent Headquarters: Seabed, Gov't at Odds", *The Gleaner*, March 31, 1997; "MoBay Group Lobbies for Seabed HQ", *The Jamaica Herald*, February 4, 1995.

¹³ For a perceptive assessment of the extent to which the negotiations at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea may have contributed to the New International Economic Order, see A.R. Carnegie, "The Effect of the Law of the Sea Convention", 8th Commonwealth Law Conference, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, Sept. 7–13, 1986, Paper 9B1(c).

An especially controversial aspect of the first Manley era concerned Jamaica's relationship with the United States of America. Opponents of the Manley regime can readily identify actions in the 1970s which convey a distinctly anti-American flavour. For example, Manley's strident declaration that persons who wished to become millionaires could take one of five flights a day to Miami was, on one view, an implicit criticism of both persons with high financial aspirations and of the American free enterprise system. Jamaica's decision to abstain in the vote for the United Nations General Assembly Resolution denoting that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination"¹⁴ must, too, have had a grave impact on relations between both countries.¹⁵ Also, there is scope for the view that Manley's treatment of the American Ambassador Vincent DeRoulet may have caused serious damage. In 1973, DeRoulet was declared *persona non grata* by the Jamaican Government, on the basis that he had fabricated a story about a pre-election deal between himself and Manley on the question of bauxite mining in the country.¹⁶ True, the United States Government had distanced itself from the Ambassador's assertions in question, but even so, the public dismissal of the country's chief diplomatic representative must have been a sting in the tail.

DeRoulet's dismissal was followed, in 1974, by the Manley Government's unilateral imposition of a sizable levy on North American multinational corporations operating in Jamaica's bauxite sector.¹⁷ Manley's actions in respect of the bauxite levy, which he defended with

¹⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379, 10 November 1975, supported by 72 States with 35 against and 32 abstentions: UN Doc. A/RES/3379. The determination that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination was revoked by the General Assembly in its Resolution 46/86 of 16 December 1991: UN Doc A/RES/46/86. Resolution 46/86 was passed by a vote of 111 to 35, with 13 abstentions. Jamaica voted for the revocation and was one of its 90 co-sponsors.

¹⁵ Desmond Henry, a former Director of Tourism of Jamaica, recalled anecdotally that Jamaican authorities had received word about the negative repercussions for domestic tourism of a vote for the resolution. Nonetheless, Jamaica persisted with the vote. Henry noted that, as a result, "all hell broke loose. Our tourism was almost wiped out and was saved only by a desperate recommendation of mine that we go full speed in Europe": Desmond Henry, "MM—A Personal Retrospective (II)", *The Gleaner*, May 24, 1997.

¹⁶ "U.S. Govt. Asked to Replace De Roulet: Ambassador No Longer Welcome Here", *The Gleaner*, July 21, 1973.

¹⁷ Jamaica's Bauxite (Production Levy) Act took effect on January 1, 1974.