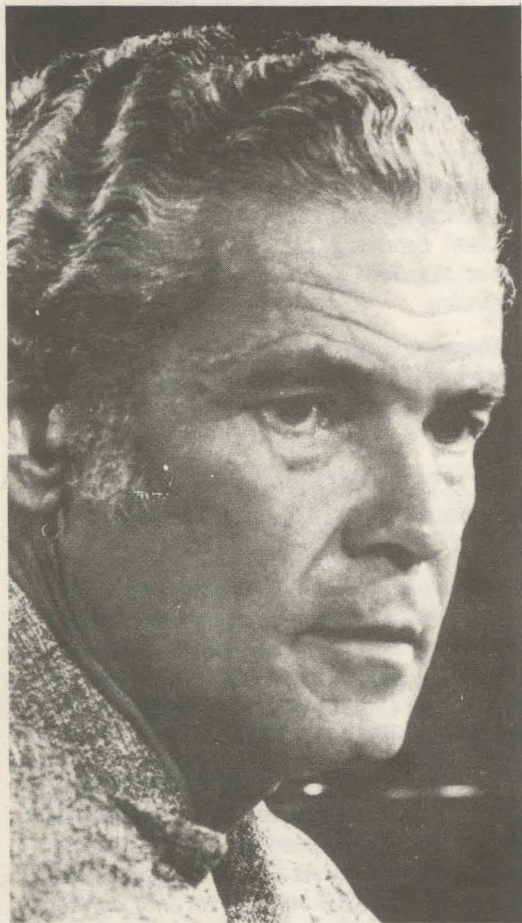


# Hon. Michael Manley

## Prime Minister



Michael Manley was first appointed Prime Minister of Jamaica on March 2, 1972, following the success of the People's National Party (PNP) in the General Election held on February 29 that year. The PNP won 36 seats and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) 17 in the 53-seat House of Representatives.

He was reappointed on December 20, 1976, after his party was returned to power with 47 of the Parliament's 60 seats.

Mr Manley was born on December 10, 1924. His early years were spent at the family home "Drumblair" in St Andrew.

His father, the late Rt Excellent Norman Manley, who died in 1969, is one of Jamaica's seven National Heroes. He was the founder of the PNP (1938) and was Chief Minister of Jamaica from 1955 to 1959, and Premier from 1959 to 1962.

The Prime Minister's early recollections are of a father who, as a barrister, had become the pre-eminent figure in legal circles; and of a mother, Mrs Edna Manley, who had made an international name for herself as a sculptor of disturbing originality. The elder Mr Manley was also a distinguished patron of the arts.

In 1935 — at the age of ten — he entered Jamaica College, his father's old school. Unlike his father, who had excelled at school as a track athlete, he concentrated on swimming, and as captain led his school to victory in two annual Inter-Scholastic Swimming Championships.

He left Jamaica College in 1942, and in September of the following year he registered at McGill University in Canada. Two weeks later, however, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a volunteer.

He left this Force in 1945 as a Pilot Officer.

In September of that year, he decided to resume his university education, and chose the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

He received an Honours Degree (B.Sc.) in Economics in 1949, and did post-graduate work there for a year. During that year, he

did a study on "Contemporary Political Developments in the Caribbean".

Mr Manley remained in London for another year as a free-lance journalist with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). For the BBC he did book reviews and was a member of the panel of broadcasters in the weekly "Caribbean News". Among his broadcasts was a series of specially prepared programmes on "Comparative Post-War Economic Development in the Caribbean".

In 1951, he accepted an offer to return to Jamaica as associate editor of the weekly *Public Opinion*. The Managing Editor of this newspaper was the late Mr O.T. Fairclough, a foundation member of the PNP.

His appointment at *Public Opinion* began in January, 1952. In that year, he plunged into the political arena by addressing group meetings of the PNP. In April of that year, also, he started a political column in the newspaper titled "Root of the Matter".

He was elected to the National Executive Council of the PNP in September, 1952.

The National Workers' Union (NWU), which was founded in April 1952, also began asking him to address workers' groups. By the following year, he had begun to handle union negotiations.

As he became increasingly involved in union activities, he made an arrangement with the *Public Opinion* management which allowed him to undertake part-time trade union and political work. This arrangement continued for some months until he was offered, and accepted, the post of Sugar Supervisor with the NWU in August, 1953.

Mr Manley's involvement in the trade-union movement was based on a deeply held belief that "it is indispensable to the progress of the working classes and that the progress of the working classes is indispensable to the progress of the nation".

As Sugar Supervisor of the NWU, Mr Manley set about familiarising himself with the workers' conditions in the industry which were deplorable and were characterised by low wages, negligible fringe benefits, and poor worker-management relations. In his own words, the industry was "literally crying out for tough single-minded, efficient, professional deputation".

His first major triumph as a trade unionist came in 1954 when the NWU decisively won representational-rights polls at Caymanas and Bybrook Estates in the parish of St Catherine and at the New Yarmouth Estate in Southern Clarendon.

These victories activated a surge of support for the NWU and within two years the union had established itself as a major union in the Industry.

In 1955, Mr Manley was appointed Island Supervisor and elected First Vice-President of the NWU.

Under his leadership, the NWU continued to make significant gains for sugar workers, but it was in 1962 that Mr Manley achieved one of his major triumphs in trade unionism during the Goldenburg Commission of Inquiry into the Sugar Industry.

Drawing on years of investigative work, he proved to the Commission that in the five years prior to 1950 the industry had made J\$4 million unreported profits. As a result he won a record settlement of J\$2.5 million for the workers.

This settlement is still regarded as the definitive example of trade union presentation in Jamaica and the papers associated with it have been placed in the archives of the University of the West Indies (UWI).

One of the highlights of his early association with the NWU was the Alcan strike in 1953. (Alcan - the Aluminium Company of Canada - is one of the bauxite mining companies operating in Jamaica).

The NWU asserted the then-revolutionary view that wages in the bauxite industry should reflect the ability of the companies to pay. The union therefore demanded (and won after a decisive strike) a 300 per cent increase in the industry's wages. Previously, bauxite wages were tied to those paid in areas such as agriculture and the government service.

The Alcan strike had two important effects on trade unionism in Jamaica. First, its innovative contract negotiations set a blueprint for the industry, and set off a growth rate in the NWU that equalled the 1938 - 41 growth rate of its rival union, the BITU.

It is significant that Mr Manley considers the issues surrounding a 97-day strike at the publicly-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) to be of such importance that he regards this as one of the highlights of his union career. The strike revolved around an apparently simple case of dismissal of two employees. In fact, Mr Manley regards this strike as the battleground on which a more profound issue was at stake: that is, whether an employer had the absolute right to terminate a particular contract of employment "not because a worker was deficient, not because the job itself had ceased to exist, but for no reason other than the arbitrary desire of the employer to get rid of the particular worker".

During this strike, Mr Manley organised a number of demonstrations. Choosing peak hours, Michael Manley and the workers (men and women), together with supporters, lay in the streets at major cross-roads and blocked traffic for miles around. They were removed only by mass arrests and by the use of tear gas. The demonstrations aroused nationwide interest in the issues surrounding the strike, and support for the case of the workers came from all strata of the society.

A public inquiry into the strike and its causes vindicated the workers, and Mr Manley and the NWU won nationwide acclaim for the conduct of the strike.

During his 20 years as an active trade unionist, Mr Manley introduced highly sophisticated contract negotiations which improved the standard of trade-union practices in Jamaica. His achievements in trade-union representation in Jamaica led to his election as President of the Caribbean Bauxite, Mineworkers and Metal Workers Federation in 1964, an office which he held until 1974.

Appointed a member of the Jamaican Senate in 1962, Mr Manley remained in that post until 1967, avoiding elective politics. He has since explained that this was a deliberate attempt to avoid the charge of capitalising on his father's name.

"To find one's own identity involves searching for one's own role in life", he said.

However events, beginning in 1967, propelled him into the active political arena and he found himself "trapped by the forces of history", as he has subsequently described it.

As a result of the decision of the then JLP Government to increase the number of constituencies prior to the 1967 general election the boundaries of the Central Kingston constituency - represented by a Vice President of the PNP, Mr Wills O. Isaacs, were changed. This altered its electoral character and it was therefore suggested that Mr Isaacs seek re-election in another constituency.

Shortly before the election, Mr Manley was asked to stand in the constituency vacated by Mr Isaacs. He accepted the challenge and was elected by the narrow margin of 43 votes. Two years later, in 1969, when his father resigned from leadership of the PNP, he was elected President of the party. Mr Manley was then appointed Leader of the Opposition in Parliament. He served in this capacity until his appointment as Prime Minister in 1972.

As Prime Minister, he took office committed to the idea that significant, even controversial, changes would have to be made in Jamaica's domestic and international policies if the nation was to become more than formally independent.

*At home, new concepts of self-reliance would have to be encouraged, a new distribution of wealth and property would have to be pursued by legislation if the society was to witness a real transformation of human relationships rather than a mere reformation of existing inequalities.*

*Abroad, new alliances would have to be sought with other Third World countries . . . to complement Jamaica's traditional attachments to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States . . . if the country was to realise, fully, its economic and cultural potential.*

*On November 20, 1974, in the House of Representatives, Michael Manley stated the principles and ideology on which his Government would continue to serve and which inspired his ruling party. After two and a half years of close, internal debate, the Government and the party were agreed that Jamaica could be developed best, in both human and material terms, only if its legislators and their advisers accepted the philosophy of Democratic Socialism.*

*Central to this philosophy was what Manley has defined for himself as the "single touchstone" in the morality of politics: the notion of equality.*

*This egalitarian concept is, perhaps, the most stubborn constant in Michael Manley's perception of the just society. It is certainly the factor in his thinking, his feeling and his policies to which every shade of opinion in his party subscribes and which, by its moral weight, commands the general recognition that the leadership of the party should be his.*

*It is a stubborn conviction that he has carried and argued into Jamaica's new foreign policy . . . with a success that few could question, and fewer would care to deny.*

*Mr Manley has expressed repeatedly his passionate belief that each person, like each nation, is or should be treated as sovereign. Superior talent, superior power, are mere assets to be used with discrimination.*

*They impose obligations, not privileged rights of passage from the cradle to the grave.*

*Since becoming Prime Minister, Mr Manley has been honoured with the Order of Liberator in Venezuela (1973), Doctor of Laws at Morehouse College in Atlanta (1973), and the Order of Jose Marti in Cuba (1975).*

*His first book, "The Politics of Change", was published in 1973. In the preface to this book, Mr Manley expressed the hope that it "may serve as a point of departure for the realistic discussion of Jamaica's future; her possibilities, problems, her strengths and weaknesses, most importantly, the hopes she may dare to entertain and the ideals to which she must be committed: the dream, the vision of which she must measure her shortcomings".*

*His second book, "A Voice at the Workplace", dealing with his trade-union career, was published in late 1975.*

*Prime Minister Manley is one of the leading proponents of a New International Economic Order. His leadership at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Kingston in 1975 gave new impetus to the efforts to achieve this new order.*

*Mr Manley sees the ceaseless quest for the NIEO as an attempt to discover the techniques of political management of world trade and world finance that will lead to the progressive elimination of those wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind and "which are too great to be tolerated".*

*He is also one of the foremost voices in the fight to end the practice of apartheid in Southern Africa. For his contribution to this struggle he was one of seven persons honoured by the United Nations on October 11, 1978.*

*In 1978 he was elected a Vice President of the Socialist International.*

