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# Jamaica Buries Ex-Prime Minister

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National Library of Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) -- Thousands gathered Sunday to bury Michael Manley, the revolutionary turned capitalist who defied his class to uplift black Jamaicans but failed to bridge the gap between rich and poor.

Manley, who served three terms as prime minister before retiring in 1992, died March 6 after a battle with prostate cancer. He was 72.

Manley "fired my imagination ... with the belief that the world could be a much better place," agronomist Marjorie A. Stair wrote in *The Gleaner* newspaper. "Did Manley fail us as a leader or did we fail ourselves as a people?"

With great charisma enhanced by movie-star looks, Manley led Jamaica to the forefront of the developing world's nonaligned movement in his first two terms as prime minister, from 1972 to 1980.

He forged close ties with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, railed against capitalist domination and discouraged foreign investment.

Castro, Haitian President Rene Preval and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan were among those at Sunday's state funeral.

In his efforts to put Jamaicans in control of their

economy, Manley nationalized utilities and hotels. He imposed higher taxes on multinational bauxite industries, and gave peasants lands previously held by the elite.

Trying to close the gap between the wealthy, lighter-skinned elite and the black urban and peasant masses, he instituted a minimum wage and free secondary education, and his government built thousands of low-cost homes.

But foreign investors withdrew, U.S. aid dwindled and shortages grew. Jamaica's wealthier class revolted.

By 1980 the country was near bankruptcy. Jamaicans elected conservative Edward Seaga as prime minister.

Seaga closed the Cuban Embassy and privatized government businesses. But he failed to improve the economy, and Manley was re-elected in 1989. This time, Manley re-established ties with Cuba but welcomed foreign investment and good relations with the United States.

"He did that which wasn't popular, but he did that which he believed was morally and ethically correct, and that is what makes him greater than a politician," Farrakhan said in a statement broadcast on Jamaican public radio.

Jamaica's economy remains troubled. On Friday, the government took over one of the Caribbean nation's biggest financial groups, Crown Eagle, to stem a run on its banks. Prime Minister P.J. Patterson, a Manley protege, asked a foreign investor, the Bank of Nova Scotia, to manage Crown Eagle.

As Jamaicans pondered Manley's legacy, some looked to him for deliverance, even in death.

"Go ahead of us, Joshua!" mourners have chanted, using the nickname for the man they hoped, like the Old Testament prophet, would lead them to the promised

land.

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