

B I O G R A P H Y

EDWARD PHILLIP GEORGE SEAGA was elected Prime Minister of Jamaica on October 30, 1980. He led the Opposition Jamaica Labour Party, of which he had been elected Leader in 1974, to a massive landslide victory over the ruling People's National Party, at General Elections on that day.

Edward Seaga, born on May 28, 1930, is a graduate of Farvard University (B.A. 1952). He was Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition in the House of Representatives from 1974, until the October 30 General Elections. Prime Minister Seaga has served continuously as Member of Parliament for Western Kingston for the past 18 years, and has held the posts of Minister of Finance and Planning (1967-1972) and Minister of Development and Welfare (1962-1967) in Jamaica Labour Party governments, between 1962 and 1972.

As a member of the Cabinet, Mr. Seaga was responsible for developing a comprehensive range of financial institutions to make Jamaica's Capital Market network a model for developing countries. These include the: Jamaica Stock Exchange, Jamaica Development Bank, Jamaica Mortgage Bank, Jamaica Unit Trust, introduction of Merchant Banking. He also represented Jamaica as: Governor of the World Bank, Governor International Monetary Fund, Governor Inter-American Development Bank, Governor Caribbean Development Bank, Representative on the Council of the University of the West Indies.

Edward Seaga's political career began in 1959, when the Founder and President of the Jamaica Labour Party, Sir Alexander Bustamante, invited him to serve in the Upper House of the Jamaican Legislature. The Legislative Council later became the Senate. His appointment at the age of 29 made him the youngest member in the history of the Legislative Council. He was also the youngest member among the architects of the 1962 Constitution which proclaimed Jamaica as an independent country.

In April 1962, Mr. Seaga was elected Member of Parliament for Western Kingston (one of the poorest areas of Jamaica) in the first Parliament of Jamaica. He was made a member of the first Cabinet, and appointed Minister of Development and Welfare. In 1967, he retained his seat in the House of Representatives, and was made Minister of Finance and Planning. The significance of this assignment is that it embraced national responsibility for both social and economic change in the country; and it provided Mr. Seaga with the opportunity to initiate widespread reforms in the areas of finance, culture, social development (particularly rural and urban community development) and sports.

In the span of ten years as a Minister of Government, Edward Seaga spearheaded, or was closely associated with, the establishment of a large number of national institutions vital to the development of the new nation.

He was responsible for planning and organising major economic projects, establishing codes and standards for orderly growth in both public and private enterprises, and the building of a new spirit among Jamaicans through the recognition of their cultural heritage and the practice of self-reliance.

Prime Minister Seaga established several of the island's network of financial institutions, and introduced a comprehensive programme of tax reforms to strengthen the country's economic self-reliance, reduce the need for heavy overseas borrowings and to build up national foreign exchange reserves. He also initiated the programme of Jamaicanisation, in which there was an orderly transfer of business from full foreign ownership to majority Jamaican ownership. This was successfully effected in such areas as banking, insurance, utilities, and prime agricultural lands.

The country experienced its most buoyant economic growth and prudent financial management during Mr. Seaga's period of stewardship of its financial affairs.

Edward Seaga established the Urban Development Corporation, which undertook the redevelopment of the waterfront areas of Kingston, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay; parts of Negril and Hellshire where a new city of a 150,000 population has been planned. All these areas were previously derelict, mangrove swamps, or rugged terrain.

Today, some of the most monumental developments of the Kingston and Ocho Rios skylines, as well as other planned urban communities, are the result of this redevelopment work.

In the field of culture, Prime Minister Seaga initiated the Jamaica Festival as a showcase for the island's talent in music, singing, dance, drama, art and culinary activities. He introduced the Craft Development Agency to encourage the expansion of cottage industries and set up Things Jamaican as a sophisticated production complex for the work of the people.

He also encouraged research work in folk art, promoted indigenous pop music, and worked out the initial plans for the Cultural Training Centre which embraces the performing, plastic and graphic arts.

Internationally, Mr. Seaga proposed the establishment of the International Fund for the promotion of Culture (UNESCO), in 1971, and is a founding member of the Administrative Council set up by UNESCO to govern this new organisation, which has responsibility for world cultural development.

In aiding the search for a national identity, Edward Seaga brought back to Jamaica the remains of Marcus Garvey, Jamaica's first National Hero. He also established the National Heroes' Award, introduced National Heritage Week, and formulated plans for the

development of the Arawak Museum, the Seville Museum and the historic work of excavating artifacts from the sunken city of Port Poyal -- all designed to embrace different periods of Jamaica's history.

Edward Seaga's work in community development is equally impressive. He wrote the blueprint, and organised the implementation, of the One Hundred Village community programme, in which total community development was brought annually to 100 villages. Through this plan, there was concentration of development work in the field of literacy, sports, craft, culture and co-operatives, in addition to the improvement of community infrastructure.

The programme involved 10,000 villagers islandwide, some 5,000 of whom found gainful employment through craft production generated in the villages.

The National Volunteers Organisation was a brainchild of Mr. Seaga, and before it was phased out by the previous government, the NVO made a notable contribution in mobilising Jamaicans to help one another, particularly in activities related to the young, and to the aged, in the Golden Age Programme.

It is the development of the human being (and particularly the youth) that has always been of greatest concern to Prime Minister Seaga. He once said that in all work the focus of attention must be on the people. The outstanding example of this creed in his work in transforming a Kingston slum known as "Back-O-Wall" into a vibrant community called "Tivoli Gardens", a model of total development planning.

This concept of complete community development features a maternity centre, home economics centre and nursery school for infants, and a multipurpose community centre with playing fields for recreation, meetings, sports, craft and skill training programmes.

The results in national, cultural and athletic competitions have made Tivoli Gardens outstanding in Jamaica as an example of what underprivileged youth can accomplish with proper opportunities.

Prime Minister Seaga developed the concept of youth centres, which provided cultural and athletic facilities for the youth in major urban areas. He organised the first network of islandwide inter-village sport competitions.

Edward Seaga introduced easy credit arrangements for students and farmers. Through this facility, students could borrow money for the costs of higher education, and repay after graduation. Small farmers, for the first time in local history, obtained long-term low-interest funds to finance total development of their holdings.

4
Prime Minister Seaga has been one of Jamaica's pioneers in economic, social, and cultural reforms. He has made "Change With Chaos" the practicing motto of his successful political vocation.

He has also had a successful career as a financial consultant, international financial adviser and as the owner of a financial institution since 1972.

Prime Minister Seaga was honoured in 1980, at functions celebrating his 21st year in politics.

Mr. Seaga did advance studies in sociological research projects in Jamaica, and is author of "Development of the Child" and "Revival Spirit Cults".

In 1965, he married Mitsy Constantine, "Miss Jamaica 1964". They have three children, Christopher, Annabella and Andrew-Marc.

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