

The Prospects for 1987

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
December 29, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The Old Year and the New Year meet and part during the course of this week: so what can the passing year tell us about the coming year? What are the prospects? Is 1987 likely to be any better than 1986? And how are we to measure any improvement or any decline that may be in store for us? Most of us, certainly our governments spokespeople, have grown adept at playing the numbers game in ways that make for the most optimistic predictions possible. And so we hear about this percentage growth and that percentage growth, all of which point to things having stabilised or improved, and with the prospects for recovery now excellent. But for whom? Which brings us to the other, and rarely mentioned, form of measurement: the quality of life of the great majority of the Jamaican people. Will the quality of life of the Jamaican people be better in 1987 than it was in 1986? Will housing be better? Will health services be better? Will education be better? Will the nutrition of our children be better? Will there be more hope of jobs for the unemployed than in 1986? Will our young people, and our school-leavers in particular, have more job chances than before? How many of those who want higher, tertiary education, and have the ability, will be able to go into college or university? These questions, and the answers to them, represent the other side of the

measurement equation as between numbers and the quality of life. If the claimed gains of the numbers are to be real then they would be reflected in matching gains in the quality of life. If they do not match then something is gravely wrong. Indeed, on this matter of balancing the claims of the numbers against the reality of the quality of life the contradiction is almost unbelievable. After nearly six years of structural adjustment the overwhelming majority of Jamaicans are worse off than they were in 1980. There are gains, to be sure: there is greater security; ^{some of} the streets are cleaner; electricity is stable. But the price has been fearfully high. And, of course, for a minority in the society, for between say 10%-20%, it has been a time of high profits, rich rewards and big financial killings. But for the majority it has been a period of grief, misery and unemployment. And the indications are for more of the same in 1987, if we pursue the same policies. So what can we do? I said it back in 1980 when we opened the country to cheap ^{food} imports and drove our farmers against the wall, I repeat it now: we must feed ourselves from our own soil and treat it as an emergency measure. The United States is in deep economic trouble which is why the hand-outs are going to be less and less with time. There is going to be no miracle upturn in the world economy for the next two to five years so we are going to have to survive largely on our own by feeding ourselves, exporting what we can, especially our traditionals, and doing the best we can with tourism - but never putting all our eggs only in one or two baskets. Self-reliance and diversity is the name of the game. And we must return to the wise policies of all previous Jamaican governments of careful and prudent investment in Jamaica's single most important asset: the Jamaican people and their wide range of skills intelligence and commitment. Without such an investment to advance the quality of life, we have no worthwhile future. Goodnight

Christmas 1986:
Lessons from the past

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
December 22, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: It is far too close to Christmas for us to go on talking about current political problems: these problems will be with us after Christmas and into the New Year, so let them rest for now. Instead, let us think about Jamaica and Jamaicans and who they are and where they come from and what makes them who they are. We sometimes sound as though we have forgotten that Jamaica and Jamaicans were here long, long before there was an IMF. We seem to have forgotten that Jamaica and Jamaicans survived without the IMF. There was no IMF in the hard years between the two world wars, and very little imported food came in but Jamaica survived and fed itself. She survived during the war when the British were too embattled and too busy trying to stay free and feed themselves to worry about faraway colonies. Jamaicans and Jamaica survived when there was no Peoples National Party and no Jamaica Labour Party. She survived when there was no food aid and no loans or hand-outs from the United States. Indeed, Jamaica and Jamaicans had a highly developed, if tightly restricted sense of sovereignty when the United States were still only the Thirteen Colonies. In these days of over-dependence by our government on what comes from outside we often belittle this enormous Jamaican capacity for surviving with pride, with dignity, with self-respect. And so there is ~~a~~

this tendency within the political culture to sound as though Jamaica and Jamaicans would perish from the face of the earth if there were no IMF and no foreign loans or handouts and no foreign "experts" to come and tell and teach Jamaicans how to run things. We seem to forget that Jamaicans have in fact been running many of these things for a long time. And often Jamaicans have to show these "foreign experts" how to do the things they have been brought in to teach us. I think it is important for us to reflect on these things ~~inbetween~~ ^{and} our very many Christmas activities. It is important to remember that Jamaicans made glorious Christmases for themselves, especially in the rural areas, long before the birth of the shopping plaza and the hard-sell of latter-day hucksters. If you travel slowly through rural Jamaica right now you may just catch glimpses of that other, self-contained and self-sustaining way of preparing for Christmas. And that self-contained and self-sustaining Jamaica is so much more graceful and generous and caring than the thing most of our politicians seem to want to put in its place. To say all this is not to say we must or even can return to ~~the~~ ^{and can do so again} past. It is simply to say that Jamaicans made life for themselves ^{and can do so again} and that some of the things of the past were very good indeed. The way people cared for each other and for the old and the young; the self-reliance, the pride and self-respect; above all, the sense of sovereign self-worth. It is important to remember these things at this time: to remember what Jamaicans have done for themselves, by themselves, and without any self-inflated and puffed-up political god-fathers. No one man, no matter who; no political party, no matter which, should be allowed to behave as though Jamaica and Jamaicans cannot survive without them. This is particularly important for our young people. So be proud ^{and remember} and have a good Christmas of peace and love. Goodnight.

A Regional Christmas Message
For Jamaica

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
December 19, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The most important ^{regional}/news development of this week was the Trinidad general election, its results, and the way in which political power was transferred from one political party to another. By Jamaican standards the election was as peaceful as a picnic organised by a church group: violence and nastiness were minimal. And when the will of the Trinidadian people became clear the outgoing government accepted that will with grace and set about the transfer of power and authority with quiet dignity. Indeed, the new Prime Minister told reporters that the outgoing Prime Minister, who had decided to retire from politics, stood ready to give the new government any advice he could, should he be asked.

So there we had it: free and fair elections that were free from fear; almost
/ no violence, no bloodletting, a minimum of the kind of nasty personal smearing which is such a strong feature of the Jamaican political culture; and then the graceful and helpful and co-operative transfer of power. Why can the people of Trinidad and Tobago do this while we seem to find it so hard? Is there something different about them? Do they have qualities and gifts that we lack? And, lest we forget, earlier in this same year the people of Barbados also had a general election which also swept out one government and brought in a new government by peaceful, orderly, free and fair elections which were also free from fear. So it is not only Trinidad that

can do it; Barbados has done it too. It is only Jamaica, the third member of the "Big Three" of the English-speaking Caribbean which seems unable to have this kind of free and fair and peaceful national election. Why? Basically, Jamaicans are the same kind of people as the people of Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago; they have the same British colonial past of the sugar plantations; their political struggles have been of a broadly similar pattern. So why the difference? Why the violence in the Jamaican political culture? I do not think it has to do with the Jamaican character. Jamaicans are not all that different from other Caribbean people. And I think we are dead wrong when we talk as though Jamaicans are more violence-prone than other West Indians. If there is a difference it is simply that Jamaica has a bigger land area and so ambitions and the reach of the mind are a little larger. But, and this is critical, I also remember a time, not so very long ago, when Jamaicans conducted their ^{and their elections} ~~politesses~~/as comparatively peacefully as the Trinidadians did this week, and the Bajans did earlier this year^{election}. I remember a time when going to the party political/rallies was fun and games; and you went from one party meeting to another with little fear of ^{political} violence. So this thing of/violence is not part of the Jamaican nature or the Jamaican character. It is something new, not much more than about twenty years old, that has been deliberately brought about. And for this I do not think the Jamaican people should be blamed. I think the blame lies with this generation of politicians. I am not saying all politicians are guilty of fostering political violence; but even those who are against it have turned a ^{blind} ~~blind~~ eye and thus acquiesced. And so the monster has been allowed to grow. This week's Christmas message to us from Trinidad and Tobago - as the one from Barbados earlier in the year - is that we can choose and change governments without violence. Goodnight.

A Season of Our Discontent

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
December 15, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Traditionally, at this time of year~~s~~, the natural impulse in most of us is to turn away from the things that are unpleasant, the things that divide us and the things that make us feel sour. This, after all, is the traditional season of goodwill and warmth and friendliness. So the news of demonstrations and roadblocks and skirmishes between groups of discontented citizens and their own security forces is disconcerting. Where is the peace that should prevail among men at this time? Where is the goodwill? But are we supposed to generate and show peace and goodwill, no matter what? Are peace and goodwill unrelated to day-to-day reality? So that one/^{person}~~man~~ kicks another/^{person}~~man~~ but because of the season of the year the kicked one smiles and is at peace with the one who kicks? I don't think so. Rightly or wrongly, that is not how/^{people}~~men~~ who have any kind of choice behave anywhere in the world. You are kicked; you try to kick back; you are hit; you hit back: you are discriminated against; you react with dem^onstrations and blocking the roads. It is the same everywhere, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Americas and the islands of the seas. And there never is any seasonal limit to the expressing of deeply felt discontent. So we have seen, all over the world, all kinds of eruptions on some of the highest and holiest days in the calendar of mankind. There was a

time, in the turbulent 1970s, when the Jamaica Labour Party understood this reality as sharply and clearly as possible. They and their supporters were discriminated against and they reacted with demonstrations, roadblocks and the burning of rubbish on the streets and roads up and down the country; and like all people everywhere who are angry and outraged they were no respectors of seasons and high days. Indeed, what they did in the 1970s make yesterday and this morning's demonstrations look tame, like child's play. So why the over-reaction from the Minister of National Security? There is clearly and obviously no present attempt ^{to} ~~the~~ destabilise the society in these relatively small demonstrations. They are obvious protests against a clearly perceived discriminatory handling of the Christmas works programme such as it is. And it seems to me that good sense would dictate that the Government makes some attempt to address that issue, even at this late hour, instead of sounding as though it sees the season of peace and goodwill as a licence to ride roughshod over every objection. First, we had the Minister of Local Government cancelling an appointment with the nation's elected Mayors because they dared to demonstrate ~~an~~ objection to the government approach to Christmas Work. This, as far as the Minister was concerned, was confrontationist and he would not meet them till this was abandoned. What presumptuous arrogance! Now, another Minister denounces as destabilising the government the kind of demonstrations the Jamaica Labour Party itself pioneered in this country in the 1970s. There is no greater ^{political} arrogance than that which says 'No matter what I did; forget what I did; just do as I say'. And it is this attitude to a nation and its concerns that is key to our present season of discontent. Change that attitude, heed genuine ^{protest} objection; and peace and goodwill may yet prevail.

Goodnight.

Christmas Work, 1986

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
December 12, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Christmas, 1986 is less than two weeks away and it looks like being a mean and miserable and hungry Christmas for very many Jamaicans. The traditional easement for the unemployed by the providing of two weeks of Christmas work has been so drastically scaled down that only a handful of people - an average of / only 266 jobs for each constituency according to a statement from the Prime Minister - will get this work. This is a very far cry from the time-honoured tradition of providing a little Christmas cheer for ^{the mass of} the poor at this time of year. And Jamaicans, right now need that kind of easement more than ever before. Unemployment and under-employment are much greater than official statistics would make out. And hungry children and old folk are all about the place. The large number of laid-off civil servants have mostly used up whatever savings they had. And the mothers who both mother and father their young in our ghettos are going to have a bitter time without that little Christmas money to cheer things up. And to add insult to injury the ^{tradition of Christmas work} little that is available will ~~the~~ ^{be} given out on a biased party political basis. Indications are that a division of that work on the basis of two-thirds to the JLP and one-third to the PNP has been used as a guide. So in every constituency 178 Labourites will get first lick out of the 266

traditional Christmas work jobs, and some 88 Comrades will get second lick. The people who are not members of either party, or who are not known to be, are out in the cold. ~~But~~ what right does any government allocate taxpayers money in this way? When they collect taxes, whether direct taxes or taxes on everything you buy to eat or drink or wear or use, they do not first check your political stripe. They don't take ~~two~~-thirds of all taxes from JLP, one-third from PNP, and no taxes from the No-ps. So by what right do they use our money as their special political war-chest to share out as they see fit. Many, many years ago some of us objected on principle to the old Bustamante-Norman Manley formula whereby work was shared out on a 40-40-20 basis with the two parties each getting a 40% share and the No-parties getting 20%. We objected because we thought work should be available to all on a non-party basis. But at least that formula was more equitable than this present formula which cuts out the non-party and is frankly discriminatory in favour of the so-called top-dog to the tune of two-thirds to one-third. If our political parties continue to use the nation's resources ~~as~~ ^{as if} though it were their private political booty, the Jamaican people may yet come to the point of refusing to pay taxes for such. And I am frankly a little tired of all this humbug about all the changing up of almost every tradition being in the interest of greater efficiency and better management. We have recently had some shocking examples of downright bad management. You do not come from the Spring Plain fiasco and arrogantly wipe out time-honoured traditions that worked. If you had not blown that one we may have had enough for a decent Christmas works programme. Or would there have been some other excuse to kill it? Not all change is good; not all change is progress. This ^{Christmas works} one certainly is not. Goodnight.

High Stakes Ganja Politics &
The 'National Interest'.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
December 8, 1986, 6.10p.m

local
Good evening: Ganja was the dominant/news theme for all of last week. Over this past weekend - within a time span of forty-eight hours - two Air Jamaica planes were detained by U.S. authorities for carrying ganja and fined millions of dollars. The Minister of Government responsible for transport, promised investigation to determine whether 'someone wanted to pull Air Jamaica out of the skies, damage the tourist industry or destroy the government for political reasons or whether it was purely an illegal drug operation'. So the putting of ganja on the two Air Jamaica planes could be either straight ganja business or it could be political. And the news reports on the Government-controlled tv and radio station made much of the political aspect of the matter. So which is it? Straight ganja criminality or political anti-government activity? On the evidence of the past week there seems to be a deliberate design to suggest a political connection. Consider the unfolding of the week's ganja-related news. On Sunday of last week at his party's annual conference the Prime Minister publicly accuses the PNP of having links with the ganja traders. On Wednesday young Mr. Jeremy Palmer reads that ^{alleged} PNP connection into the nation's Parliamentary records, quoting from a Caracas religious magazine article based on "Reports from Jamaica..." and sounding like rewrite of what the

JLP leader had said even though the article came before the speech. And on Tuesday, the day before Mr. Jeremy Palmer's naming of people and thus smearing them/^{behind}~~xxxx~~ the protection of Parliamentary privilege, the Minister of Transport had told an Air Jamaica function that if the level of ganja shipments on Air Jamaica continued the airline could be grounded. And lo and behold on both Friday and Saturday ganja was found on two Air Jamaica planes. Now, how does this unfolding~~x~~ pattern of ganja-related news sound to you? Random? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday: each day a big ganja story. I personally see two ^sparate streams of connection. The first is the relationship between the Venezuelan article based on "reports from Jamaica" and the speech by the JLP leader and the reading of that article into the Parliamentary records. The design here seems clearly to smear the PNP as the ganja party. The second stream is the very real damage to Air Jamaica and thus to the Jamaican national interest. So why have we had no prosecutions? When ganja is carefully packed~~ed~~/^{into}~~xxxx~~ bags of cement it has to be a very sophisticated operation; when it is secreted in containers or quality manufactured goods the operation has to be big. So why no big arrests? Why no big ^{evidence}prosecutions? If you have enough/to tax them on their ganja operations you would certainly have enough evidence to prosecute. So why no ^sprosecutions? Certainly, the national interest would dictate a resort to law rather than to dirty and divisive political smear. And what are we to make of what looks like a carefully orchestrated package of ganja-related news over almost every day of last week? What was, and is, behind it? Is it a build up to some dramatic new development? And if so, what is that development? In whose interest? And who defines that interest?

Goodnight.

- 1) Dirty Politics
- 2) Neglecting Our Children

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
December 5, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: This week's 'dirty politics' in which the Jamaica Labour Party seemed determined to smear the Peoples National Party as the party which supports the 'Ganja Barons' is yet another depressing example of how not to forge united action in face of a serious problem. Instead of the two major parties working together to deal with a very serious problem, the problem has been used to divide them even more bitterly than before. So why did the JLP embark on this course? And what is behind it? And where is it likely to lead? I think it is bound to lead to the heightening of the political polarisation of the society and ^{to} increased resentment and bitterness between the two major parties. So why, if your real concern is ^{a climate of} for order and stability in which to deal with hard problems, do you embark on such an obviously confrontational course? Could it be a mistake, the excitement of being carried away by your own rhetoric at the party conference? If it was then perhaps fences could be mended, and some measure of bipartisan co-operation restored. A close look at the available internal evidence suggests otherwise. That article which Mr. Jeremy Palmer read into the nation's Parliamentary records was published on October 26th - five weeks ago. It carried this significant sentence: "In deference to the ganja

benefactors, Manley made no reference to marijuana in his speech at the PNP's 48th annual conference..." In his speech of November 30th, which was last Sunday, Mr. Seaga said: "When Manley was on this very platform in September he spoke about drugs but never mentioned one word about ganja..." So the article from Venezuela and the leader of the JLP make the same point in only slightly different words. Was it a case of 'great minds' thinking alike or an exchange of ideas? And this, logically, brings us to Mr. E.K. Powell's question which seemed to irritate the JLP Chairman into branding him assassin^{or who}. And that question: What was the source of those "Reports from Jamaica..." with which the article opens? I think that until we know that most Jamaicans will see ^{this} ~~the~~ whole bit ~~thing~~ of dirty politics as a set up. To what point? Well, there are all sorts of very tough problems and decisions ahead of us and people, especially 'clever' people, sometimes use diversionary tactics to cloud the hard and stubborn problems. There is, for instance, the IMF. about which we are still to be told. The sad and terrible thing about it all is the sheer waste of creative time and energy ^{bitter} that would be put to better use. This is the price of ^{and all too briefly} under under-development. And finally /the matter of the neglect of our children about which the Reverend Hugh Sherlock asked some searching questions in a letter to the press yesterday. Please read it. We, as a nation, and the government to which we entrust responsibility for running the affairs of the nation, have all let down the nation's children. And I am not impressed with any Minister of government passing the buck to the churches without even the grace to approach them first. They collect huge taxes from us; let them ^{more} spend/of those on our children, and then call on us to help. The ^{primary} responsibility is their^s; they must not duck it. That, more than any clever dirty politics is the road to real progress. Goodnight.

- 1) A Second TV Station ~~For~~ Jamaica
- 2) Mr. Reagan's Troubles:
Who will benefit, Who will lose

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
December 1, 1986, 6.10p.m

I have known the death of my good friend, Cassel Henry.
Good evening: ~~for the week~~ The JLP's annual conference (with its hint of strident desperation from the leader); the wholesale uprooting of Kingston's sidewalk vendors; and the closing exercises of Journalism Week gave this past weekend a most varied and interesting flavour. The single piece of genuine 'hard' news was of course Mr. Manley's announcement at the PAJ ceremony that a PNP government would agree to the establishment of a second television station. This is most welcome. What is ~~less than welcome~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ welcome - to me at least - is the idea of running JBC along the lines of the Electoral Commission. That formula is excellent for running elections. But to try to run a television and radio station under this kind of party political balancing act is a recipe for disaster. ^{The idea of journalists} Having to take account of two, instead of just one party political master as at present, is terrifying in its implications: to be careful not to offend/ ^{or cross} either of our two major political parties would require an act of intellectual self-castration. Better by far to take the party political hand completely out of the J.B.C. and let it function as the national station Norman Manley originally intended it to be. That would be really serving the national interest. So I hope Mr. Michael Manley ^{and the PNP} will think again. Today's journalists have, I think, earned the right to responsible self-government ^{of the media} in the nation's interest. So much for

the local scene. Internationally, President Reagan's troubles over that secret Iran arms business continue to grow. The American Congressional leaders are now pressing for the calling for a special session of both Houses to inquire into the matter. Talk of the suppression and shredding of information are disturbing reminders of the Watergate era. . And the same questions: Who knew? Who else was involved? are swirling around such highly-placed officials as the Vice President and the President's Chief of Staff. And from Europe come fears and concerns over Western policy. If the American Presidency is rendered impotent or is badly damaged what happens to the Western alliance? What happens to Western defences? America is at the centre of the Western alliance and what hurts America is bound to hurt her allies even more. So the Europeans are worried about what they may lose. And if the Soviets are really concerned about a peace agreement, then they, too, are losers because a wounded American President will not have the authority to make peace. So who will benefit. The freedom fighters of Southern Africa, for starters, because the Reagan administration will not now have the time to help out the South African racists or Jonas Savimbi. The Nicaraguans too are now less likely to be the victims of an overt or covert American attack between now and January. And of course, at a lower but still important level for us, the U.S. administration is going to be too preoccupied with its own troubles to have time to lobby the IMF or anyone else on Jamaica's behalf. So Mr. Seaga is likely to be on his own up there this week. The great North American giant is caught up in an internal scandal and all the rest of the world which depends on American leadership, or American aid or American arms is thrown into turmoil. The so-called Free World is on hold until the Americans sort out this particular internal scandal.

Goodnight.

Local Government: The Dangerous
Dilemma of False Options

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Friday
November 28, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The President of the People's National Party this week again spoke of the unhappy simmering crisis in Jamaica's local government system. This time Mr. Manley stressed the point that in the name of ~~efficiency~~ the government had undermined the democratic process and then, after the July 29 Local Government elections, ^{it} crippled what remained of the system by starving it of money to perform the tasks traditionally associated with local government. So now we have an elected local government system in place, but the local councils do not have the money to carry out the work normally done by such councils. The government's answer is that it has now assumed responsibility for the work formerly done by the local councils. And it claims that the work is now being done more efficiently and more economically than under the councils. And in such high visibility operations as Corporate Area street cleaning (especially in commercial and middleclass areas) that claim cannot be disputed: the streets are cleaner. But do we really have to make a choice between clean streets on the one hand and grassroots democracy on the other? If we have to, then, of course, most of us will choose clean streets and democracy will be left to wither and die

Or will it? I am not so sure myself. All the indications are that most Jamaicans, regardless of party loyalty, want to have both efficient local services and grassroots local democracy. And here, I think, this government of Jamaica is in conflict with the wishes of a majority. For most Jamaicans the option of either good management or democracy is false. To be sure, most of us know that democracy is not the most efficient form of government under the sun: it is ~~clumsy~~ by definition; too many often conflicting interests have to be taken into account; and it implies a workforce that is not subservient. Dictatorial or efficiency regimes often seem to get things done so much more quickly and easily. Like Italy's Mussolini made the trains run on time for the first time in his country's history. But what a price the Italians, and then the world, had to pay for that bit of efficiency! No, we know that there are many things wrong with democracy. But we also know, some of us instinctively, that all the other systems usually end up with people totally regimented and in a worse position. Which is why democracy, in all its infinite variety is very much more than doing things efficiently. And, in any case, how will this government of ours stand up to the same test of efficiency it has applied to the local government system? Can the sixteen Cabinet Ministers and their sixteen Ministers of State Parliamentary Secretaries and and their Members of Parliament stand up to the same kind of scrutiny applied to the local government system by them? I honestly doubt it. So if the government does not want this dangerous ~~dilemma~~ of false options to get us into another unnecessary political confrontation, it should give the elected local authorities the necessary tools with which to do the job. To do less is to undermine that grassroots democracy to which we all pay lip service. As America's Al Smith said: 'The only cure for ^{the ills of} democracy is more democracy'. And then make it work efficiently. Goodnight.

President Reagan's Secret
Iran Arms Deal: The After-shock spreads

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
November 24, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Egypt's President Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein jointly expressed their shock and dismay this weekend over American President Reagan's secret shipment of arms to Iran a fortnight ago. These two leaders are America's staunchest Arab allies in the Middle East, and their denunciation of the Reagan action is a fair measure of the enormous loss of influence the U.S. has suffered in the Middle East as a result of that secret arms shipment to Iran. And Mubarak and Hussein have now repeated, more strongly than before, their call for an international conference on Middle East problems. This simply means that they now want the Soviet Union fully involved in any search for peace and a political settlement in the region. Up to now, that call has been used mainly as a bargaining counter to pressure the U.S. to make concessions or else to 'lean' on Israel. Now, after the revelation of the arms shipment to Iran, the call is much more serious. Speaking for the so-called moderate Arab leaders, Mubarak and Hussein were appalled that the American action appeared to back Iran in its war with Iraq. And they know that this could and probably would lead to Iran's victory over Iraq and the collapse of any semblance of geopolitical balance in the region. So they want the Russians in to help stop what looks like American

political madness. This is just one of the after-shocks of which I spoke on November 7th when the Iranians first made public that secret shipment of arms. It has made a shambles of American policy in the Middle East; and everybody who can run for cover is doing so. Israel (which almost certainly was the third country involved) is refusing to say anything; the West Europeans are saying little but securing their own interests. Even Britain's Mrs. Thatcher is suddenly very quiet about her declared faith in Mr. Reagan's integrity. In the United States itself, the now Democratically-controlled Congress is angry and asking more and more questions. People in the White House, it seems, are also running for such cover/~~and~~^{as} can be found dripping and leaking to the press like secret/taps. The latest is that the President's National Security Council Chief, Admiral Poindexter and a mysterious Colonel who is a master of 'dirty tricks' and covert operations and who played a key role in such 'capers' as the invasion of Grenada and the mining of Nicaraguan waters, are going to be made the scapegoats. The hope is that by throwing some people to the wolves the Reagan Presidency might be put back on track. Perhaps so; perhaps not. The evidence right now suggests a continuing eroding of the President's position. Even the American people, Mr. Reagan's greatest source of support up to now, seem not to believe his explanations. If this continues, the remainder of his Presidency is likely to be a sorry mess, both at home and abroad. So why did he approve of this damnfool thing? Two main reasons I suggest. First, he is probably the most ill-informed person to ever occupy the White House; and second, he became the victim of his own public^{great} relations skills. And then, of course, he gambled. If he had brought home the hostages on the eve of the mid-term elections the Republicans would have won the election hands down, he would have served out his term in a blaze of glory. The gamble failed; now things are in a shambles^{for all of us.}. Goodnight.

The Cult of Violence

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

November 21, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: This week's killing of three policemen in a military-style attack on the Olympic Gardens Police Station has shaken and traumatised the Jamaican society as it has not been since the horrible days leading up to the 1980 general election. The human slaughter then was more wanton and widespread and indiscriminate: but the motives then were clear and clearly understood. We - or more accurately, some of us - had chosen to use the bullet to assist and influence the outcome at the ballot. There was the odd attack on police stations then. Part of the horror of this week's attack is its unexpectedness. There is no widespread political violence in the society today. The expressed impulse among all political parties - overtly at least - is to have and to keep the peace. In that sense the political climate is very different from what it was in 1979-1980. So how do we explain this week's assault? Was it only to get the weapons? Most unlikely, though that was surely part of the reason. Was it a direct and frontal challenge to the society? A showing that even our security forces are at risk? If it is this, then it is also the arrival in Jamaica of the age of the kind of terrorist groups about whom we have heard and read as operating in West Germany and France

and Italy: the names are familiar 'the Red Army faction', 'Baader-Meinhof', 'Direct Action'. These are well-trained, highly disciplined groups that kill and rob and bomb and terrorise. But these groups, generally speaking, are confined to Western capitalist countries and have no clear political objectives other than the will to kill and destroy. Their members are usually highly educated people from a middleclass background who have lost faith and confidence in the political systems of their countries but have no new ideas with which to replace them: they are disillusioned with capitalism and disillusioned with communism. And violence is the way in which they give vent to their bitter disillusion. Is this what has come to Jamaica this week? This type of essentially negative violence has not erupted anywhere else in the Third World, so why should it do so here? Third World terrorism, wherever it takes place, usually has a strong and specific political purpose. The political purpose of the attack at Olympic Gardens is dubious which makes it seem nearer the European version. But that is hard to buy unless we claim that some Jamaicans have made the fantastic psychological leap from underdevelopment to political ^{& nihilism} ~~decadence~~. And I do not believe that. I think a much simpler and more likely explanation is that large numbers of very intelligent young people with obvious organisational skills and abilities have nothing to do and nowhere to turn, and, as usual, the devil has found hideous work for those idle hands. And for the last twenty years, starting in West Kingston, our political culture has made the gun the appropriate tool for such terrible work. Of course we have to bring these highly skilled killers to book. But we must also find other ways of engaging ^{that generation} ~~them~~ their skills, daring and resourcefulness in nation-building. ^{If we don't} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the cult of violence is bound to escalate. Goodnight.

The Anatomy of Underdevelopment:
Casino gamble; black business

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
November 17, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Two news events of the past weekend underscore yet again one of the worst features of the state of being underdeveloped. First, there was the 'good news' from the Prime Minister that there will be no casino gambling introduced in Jamaica. And, second, there was the laying bare by Carl Stone in today's paper of what looks like a bitter financial and business vendetta against a black Jamaican family which dared to aspire to become part of 'big business' in Jamaica. In both cases much time, much mental and emotional effort, as well as large sums of money were invested either to no ultimate purpose or else to 'tear down'. In the case of casino gambling, which will now not come here, the relief and the joy, especially among our Christian leaders, seems to have overshadowed the sad reality of the months and months of bitter debate and argument and, at times, nastiness, in which so much of the nation's emotional energy was dissipated. How many ^{Jamaican} children could have been clothed and fed and schooled if the resources, both government and private, wasted on the casino wrangle, had been put to better use. What are we to make of a government which says it cannot find ^{the} money to care properly for its very old and its young but which can spend money on the trips and the investigational

and promotional work involved when it thought it could impose casino gambling on us? Just because you have the power, temporarily, to set a nation's agenda,^{it}/does not give you the right to waste a nation's time energy and resources and then back away and expect to be praised for doing so. It was clear from as far back as 1981 that a majority of Jamaicans did not want casino gambling. Real 'wisdom' would have recognised and accepted this fact at that time; not five years later. Instead, in a classic example of perpetuating our underdevelopment we/~~waste~~^{dissipated} five years on what turned out to be a pointless waste of time, energy and resources. The decision is welcome but there is no cause for praise. And as for the other case of wasting time, human energy and resources, please read that Carl Stone piece in today's paper and then ask yourself: What higher national purpose ~~was~~ was or is served by what looks like the deliberate busting of Antillean Food Processors? And what is really behind the push against Jamincorp International Merchant Bank? Is it really, as suggested, because the owners are black Jamaicans and that there are those who do not want black Jamaicans to operate as owners at that level of business? The very fact that these questions are being raised about the actions of a national government is disturbing. But perhaps more disturbing is the time and energy that had to be put into busting the highly successful Antillean Food Processors. Why? Was it class-colour-power politics which requires that only a certain class and type of people be in ownership of the 'commanding heights' of the national economy. And if so, what does it make of our National Motto? And what is the role of the Government of Jamaica in this kind of situation. Do we allow the waste of another five years in argument, debate and litigation, thus further perpetuating our state of underdevelopment? Or do we begin to break the bonds? Goodnight

Democracy & the Jamaican Constitution

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
November 14, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Ever since the Prime Minister's announcement towards the end of last month that the Constitution would be amended to make possible the ^{previously announced} appointment of Senator Hugh Dawes as Minister of State in the Ministry of Education there has been a low key but persistent public debate on the ^{pros and cons} ~~possibility~~ of amending the Jamaican Constitution. Some people want to amend the Constitution to ensure that nothing like that 'snap election' of 1983 is ever again possible; others want to have a fixed date for general elections as is the case in the United States; some want to limit or otherwise control the wide discretionary powers given to the Prime Minister under the Constitution; and some want to change the electoral system itself from the present 'first past the post' to some form of proportional representation. The key concerns behind all these ideas seem to be to broaden the process of government and at the same time to impose curbs and restraints on those who happen to control political power at any given time. So the small parties like the WPJ feel that proportional representation may give them a chance to enter the political mainstream. The trouble is that wherever you have had proportional representation you have also ^{the} had political instability of a multitude of small parties none of

which had enough ~~seats~~ to govern on its own. Italy and France, immediately after the second world war were classic cases of this form ^{of} instability caused by an electoral system. Governments changed ^{to} and three times in two years. The interests of political power brokers and wheeler-dealers took precedence over the national interest. It is bad enough when you have two political parties, each of which identifies its own special partisan interest with the national interest. It is infinitely worse when you have six or eight or twelve parties all doing the same. So I, for one, do not see proportional representation as the answer to any of our electoral problems. And I am not sure that limiting the powers of the Prime Minister is the answer to other dissatisfactions. Those who shaped the Jamaican Constitution did not make it for any one particular individual or to contain or control one particular individual. It is a framework, a book of rules, within which all types of individuals who aspire to political power must work. And such a book of rules must be durable enough and flexible enough to contain and survive all types and all ambitions. Which is why this book of rules puts the power of choosing and rejecting governments in the hands of the people. This, more than any amendment, is the ultimate guarantor of the ^{integrity} ~~Jamaican~~ of the Jamaican Constitution. So I would join those, like Mr. Robert Lightbourne, who urge caution in making changes to this most important of national documents. The only really essential amendment was provided for in advance by the founding fathers themselves: and I still remember Norman Manley saying only one sentence needs to be changed to transform Jamaica from a democratic monarchy to a democratic republic. And the operative word is 'democratic'. As long as we have that the people will have the power to change their minds and correct their mistakes by voting in or out whom they choose, democratically, legally, constitutionally,

Goodnight

The Jamaican People's
Right to Know

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
November 10, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: At its last^{monthly}/Board of Management meeting, which was on Wednesday of last week, the Jamaica Agricultural Society called on the Government of Jamaica to explain its real plans for the Jamaican sugar industry. What had prompted this call was the revelation that the government-owned Petrojam had, or was in process, of acquiring a closed sugar factory in Belize which would reportedly cost some \$20-million Jamaican to bring back into operation. This factory in Belize would, reportedly, produce alcohol for Petrojam's ethanol operations. And at the heart of the very angry JAS meeting was the question why a foreign sugar factory was being opened with Jamaican capital while Jamaican sugar factories were being closed. Subsequently the Chairman of the All-Island Jamaica Cane Farmers' Association described this acquisition of a foreign sugar factory with Jamaican capital as part of a systematic plan to destroy Jamaica's sugar industry. And what seemed most strikingly clear from all this is that whoever had made the decision about acquiring the Belize sugar factory had not bothered to consult Jamaica's ^{cane}~~sugar~~/farming interests or the wider agricultural community represented by the JAS. And this, inevitably, must raise the question of the right of the Jamaican people to know what is being done in their name. For any time any enterprise is funded from

public money, that enterprise becomes the public's business and the public has the right to know what is going on. And part and parcel of the right to know is the right of access to the information involved. So when the Board of Management of the JAS asked those questions about the Belize sugar factory last Wednesday, you would have thought that someone would have given some sort of answer by now; even if it was only to say 'give us a little time and we will give you all the facts'. But that has never been the style of this government, and there has not been a mumbling word from 'on high' about the Belize sugar factory. Yet it is public money - your taxes and mine - that was used to acquire Petrojam. What was borrowed, was borrowed in our name and we, the corporate national entity known as Jamaica, will have to pay it back. So why this official arrogance about our right to know? I suggest that there is a profound misunderstanding of the workings of the key democratic process among our present leaders: they confuse governing in Jamaica with ruling. We do not elect rulers; we elect people to govern our affairs. And those who govern are accountable to the governed. And a central part of accountability is frank and full information or else a full explanation as to why such information has to be withheld for the time being. The notion of any leader telling us just what he thinks we need to know is dictatorial and militaristic by definition. And Jamaica is not a military or any other kind of dictatorship. So Jamaicans must insist on their right to know, no matter who forms the government. Jamaicans have a right to know about this Belize sugar factory venture; they have a right to know what is or is not going on with the IMF; they have a right to know what the government's plans are, because they are the ones who pay for it all, in one way or another. The Jamaican people pay for everything the politicians spend or promise: and this gives them the right to know. Goodnight.

The Politics of Confusion

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
November 7, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: In one of the oddest weeks in a very long time it has often seemed as though the main purpose of politics^(including business politics) is to sow as much confusion as possible:^{so} the important point of a^{tourism} new event has been buried under a smokescreen of^{one of} the hottest personality clashes in a long time. Now that it seems to be over, what was this whole affair all about? What triggered it? And will the problem or problems which triggered it go away? Much time, much heat and passion and much media space has been spent on this event and still there is confusion as to why it happened and what the basic issues are. The other 'big' local event of the week was yesterday's announcement, again with full and serious media treatment, that the "poppys show resignation" as it was dubbed in many quarters has been withdrawn "in the national interest". It even earned a one-sentence mention on the BBC's early evening new^s bulletin directed at the region. For many Jamaicans this was a predictable non-event. But where does it take Jamaica, the nation? Are we now into the situation where whatever serves the personal interests of one man is "in the national interest"? Does the recovery of the Jamaican economy really rest on one man's decision to stay or to go? The fortunes of a political party may indeed rest^{, at least temporarily,} on whether a leader stays or goes, though even this is highly questionable; the fortunes of a nation can never be, and never are, so narrowly based. But Jamaica is not the only

place where politicians in power seem hell-bent on using confusion to hold on to political power. After the massive Republican defeat in the mid-term elections the U.S. ^{White House} ~~Administration~~ insists that nothing has changed. The fact is that the political centre of gravity has changed and from here on the Reagan Administration will only be able to do what it can persuade the Democratically-controlled Congress to go along with. The only other way would be for it to deceive the American Congress and the American people as to what it is doing. One such deception came to light this week when the Iranian ^s revealed that a U.S. delegation has been secretly trying to negotiate a deal to exchange American hostages held in Lebanon for arms to Iran. The Iranians have now blown this particular story and the Reagan people are just about as deeply embarrassed as caught-out lying politicians can be. They have been lecturing everybody else on how to be tough with terrorism and not to negotiate with terrorists. The West Europeans in particular have been at the receiving end of this brand of American moral preaching. Now they have been caught out trying to do a deal with the 'promoters of terrorism'. We have not yet begun to see the after-shocks of this revelation. But the danger of the Reagan Lame-duck status is greatest in Central America where the temptation to mount a full-scale invasion of Nicaragua before the Congress can curb it is very strong. So, between now and January when the new Congress convenes there may be much dirty trickery in Central America. So look out for a stepping up of the politics of confusion in the region. And then there is Southern Africa where the arch destabilisers of governments in the region is now accusing others of plotting to destabilise its puppet Malawi. The racist South Africans are arming and financing ~~Unita~~ to try and overthrow the government of Angola, and they are arming and ~~financing~~ Renamo to do the same in Mozambique. So why this new piece of confusion? Are they planning war and finding an excuse? Goodnight.

The U.S. Mid-term Elections:
Mr. Reagan's Last Hurrah

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
November 3, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Tomorrow, November 4, is mid-term/election day in the United States. And whether we like it or not, the outcome of that election is, in a sense, more important to us, and to the world's long-term future than is any local national election. For instance, a small shift of United States policy on, say, Central America could determine whether the present slow/^{and deliberate}strangulation of the Nicaraguan economy is eased so that Nicaraguans can stop bleeding to economic death and have a reasonable chance to rebuild their economy. And only the American Congress can, if it is strong enough, and determined enough, bring about such a small but important shift in U.S. policy. Lest we forget, it was the American Congress which over-ruled the American President and imposed harsh sanctions against South Africa. So tomorrow's mid-term Congressional elections have far-reaching implications for all those of us who live in the shadows of American regional political and economic power. If, for instance, that small shift is/^{further}to the rightwing of the American political spectrum, forces like those of the Moral Majority and Senator Jesse Helms will be strengthened, and the White House will be forced to be even more toughly unyielding in its dealings with issues of peace and disarmament and political detente. Indeed, the pressure on Jamaica's government to show much more positive commitment to 'market forces' by opening the economy more would probably be

increased. If, on the other hand, that small shift were to the
 leftwing of the American political spectrum (and leftwing in this
 context simply means liberal democrats of the type of Senator Ted
 Kennedy and company), if the small shift were in that direction
 then the tense international situation may be eased somewhat and a
 measure of
 / political and economic pluralism may be tolerated. The peace and
 disarmament negotiations in Geneva may become more than just hanging
 tough until the Soviets capitulated to Star Wars; Nicaragua may be
 left alone to sink or swim on its own and Jamaica may be allowed to
 and assisted to pursue its own Jamaican brand of the mixed economy.
 In this sense the American rightwing is quite as rigidly committed
 to its ^{own} version of life and history ^{and truth} as is the rigid leftwing of Stalin-
 ist communism. For both, anybody who is not with us is against us
 and must be squeezed until they either cry 'Uncle' or 'Comrade'.
 Fortunately you have American mid-term elections that may cause
 shifts: unfortunately the only Soviet counterpart so far is the
 shift caused by the death of a leader. But even that little dissimil-
 arity will change. So what are the prospects for tomorrow? The
 House of Representatives will remain under the control of the
 Democrats, so no change there. The Senate is presently under Republican
 control with 53 seats against 47 for the Democrats. One third or 34
 Senate seats are up for ^{re} election; 22 of them from the Republican side
 and 12 from the Democratic. The Democrats need to win only 4 to
 gain control of the Senate, and ^{thus} of both Houses of Congress. If
 they pull that off the shift of Congressional power ^{would} be much
 greater than the numbers tell. The White House ^{would} be
 emasculated and for the next two years Mr. Reagan would be the ~~lamest~~
 of lame ducks, a President bereft of ^{all} real power. This is why he has
 campaigned so hard and so scared. And this is what his opposite
 number in Moscow is watching so closely and so keenly. Goodnight.

Education: A fresh start or
Political fence-mending?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
October 31, 1986, 6.10p.m.

Good evening: The new Minister of Education, Dr. Neville Gallimore, has made some interesting sounds and movements in his first days on the new job. He has met with the leadership of the Jamaica Teachers Association and called for co-operation and a pulling together. Then, at another place, he has spoken of the role and status of the teacher within the community in the days when he, Dr. Gallimore, was a schoolboy. He remembered the teacher as the community leader to whom everybody turned for guidance. This was good and welcome stuff after the often abrasiveness of his predecessor. I think the teachers welcomed it; and I think the society welcomed it. In terms of fence-mending and of public relations, the new Minister has made a good start. But education, next to health, is perhaps the most socially sensitive issue in Jamaica today; and good pr fence-mándeng will be very short-lived unless it is followed by positive responses to certain urgent and critical problems. We saw one of the likely pitfalls this week in the matter of school toilets and parents demonstrating by blocking a roadway. The Migister said work was being done on the toilets and the schools would open on Monday. Parents in the affected area phoned the call-in programmes to say no work had been started. I do not think the Minister would say work had been started unless

he had been so informed. In this sense the "new boy" may well have been the victim of misinformation from his bureaucrats who may not have expected him to go public quite as quickly as he did. In the case of the roadblock the Minister questioned the motive for the action, implying some anti-government/^{partisan} political intent. I think that in straight pr fence-mending terms this was a terribly bad move. Jamaicans of all parties and no party take their education and the education of their children much too seriously to play party politics with it: and they do not take kindly to being accused of doing so. I think the new Minister would be well advised to back away from this kind of hard-nosed party-political-infighter-stuff for as long as he holds the education portfolio. Otherwise all the fence-mending efforts will come to nought. But fence-mending and good public relations apart, will the arrival of the new Minister signal a frsh start for education itself? Will the declared emphasis on primary education, with which I agree wholeheartedly, be given real force and meaning by making the nation's teachers the reasonably contented and motivated group which will do the job? Only the teachers can do that job, all the decrees and declarations from the Ministry notwithstanding. If Dr. Gallimore understands that we will have a fresh start. And will he go to bat for secondary and tertiary education, not as a privilege as he once misguidedly said, but as part and parcel of a whole educational process and therefore the right of every Jamaican child who has the capacity for it? That is part of the tradition Dr. Gallimore inherited as a child at school in common with very many other Jamaican children, many of them from poorer homes, who rose to high and distinguished positions in the service of their country because education was the key. This is the challenge to the new Minister of Education and we pray he rises to it.

Goodnight.

Amending the Jamaican Constitution:
The Dangers of Trivialisation

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
October 27, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: When the new Ministers in Mr. Seaga's reshuffled Cabinet were sworn in last Friday, one announced Minister was left out. The previously announced Minister of State in the Ministry of Education could not be sworn-in because it would have been unconstitutional to do so. The Jamaican Constitution states flatly that: "Not less than two not more than four of the Ministers shall be persons who are members of the Senate." So the appointment of Senator Dawes as Minister would have exceeded the Constitutional limit of four. Mr. Seaga then announced that Mr. Dawes' appointment would be put off until the matter had been taken to Parliament for Constitutional amendment. In other words, a mistake was made and was not discovered until the last minute, and in order to correct this mistake or oversight, whatever you choose to call it, the Jamaican Constitution is now to be changed to correct that mistake. And this, intended or not, trivialises the nature and quality and importance of the Jamaican Constitution. Please don't get me wrong. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with changing the Jamaican Constitution, provided this is done with the seriousness and solemnity the importance of the document demands. What must not happen, what must not be allowed to happen, is for

the Constitution to be changed in what appears to be an arbitrary and high-handed manner in order to correct a mistake. The Jamaican Constitution is far too important a national document for that. So my objection is not just to the proposed changing of Section 70 (subsection 2) of the Constitution, but ^{also} to the manner and the reason for which that proposed change was announced. And then there is the matter of the balance as between the elected and the non-elected Ministers in the country's government. The founding fathers who wrote the Constitution established a clear and sharp predominance of elected over ~~appointed~~ ^{non-elected} Ministers. ~~Appointed~~ Ministers who were not elected by the people are the creatures of the person who appointed them; the others are the elect of the people, beholden to a wider constituency than ^{just} the Prime Minister who appointed them. And the elect of the people should never be placed in a position where those who have not been elected can control the balance of power in Cabinet decision-making. So in the first instance the Constitution said "not less than two nor more than three". And then, by Act 36 of 1975, the three was increased to four. I did not like the change in numbers at the time but ^{at least} the manner in which it was done did not trivialise the Constitution. This time it makes the numbers even worse, and the manner of its doing undermines the dignity of the Constitution. It really is not good enough to amend a nation's constitution in order to correct any man's mistake. And it cannot be good for our democracy to raise the numbers of non-elect ^{at least} Ministers to levels where they can, with a little management, frustrate and outvote the will of the real majority of the elect of the people. Many of us who should have, and who did know better, acquiesced in that 1983 abomination which has left us with a one-party parliament. Let us not add to that the trivialisation of the Jamaican Constitution.

Goodnight.

- 1) The Death of Samora Machel
- 2) A Super-power Poker Game

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
October 24, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: For the Third World in general, and for Southern Africa in particular, the death of Samora Machel in a plane crash on the Mozambican-South African border on Sunday, was a terrible blow indeed. It is bound to force the hastening of Frontline States and Third World efforts to break the racist South African regime's stranglehold on Southern African trade movement. And this, in the first instance, means securing the road and railway across Mozambique to the port of Beira. The South African racists know this, which is why they have so heavily financed and armed the so-called rebel forces to disrupt those road and rail links and to play havoc with the Mozambican economy. In short, the South Africans and their puppets are doing in Mozambique what the so-called Contras and their U.S. paymasters are doing in Nicaragua. And Machel was on his way home from a meeting with Zambia's President Kaunda, where this specific matter of containing and countering the racist destabilisation was discussed because Kaunda was ^{worried} ~~concerned~~ about the so-called 'internationalising' of the struggle. I think the struggle is being 'internationalised' whether we like it or not; and I think the death of Machel is bound to hasten the process. And, like most other informed observers, I do not think Machel's death was an accident. It happened too near a strong South African military post; and the South Africans have the technology and the equipment to make a pilot flying 'blind' think he is in another place and lure him into a

crash. Consider one of the early 'explanations' of the pilot mistaking the railway lights of Komatipoort for the runway lights of Maputo. Why would he? Railway lights look very different unless faked to look like airport lights; or, if he is flying blind, faked on a dummy radar screen? And, of course, in this kind of manufactured 'accident' there is no evidence of 'foul play'. We must hope Machel's death will underscore the critical urgency of ^{quickly} breaking the South African hold on the trade routes: the sooner it is done the fewer the ^{losses} are likely to be. The week's other matter of high drama was the diplomatic poker game between the United States and the Soviet Union which began with what became known as the Daniloff affair. You will remember a Soviet UN employee in New York was handed a parcel by someone and then immediately arrested by the FBI as a spy. A little while later the Soviets did exactly the same with an American journalist in Moscow. And after a lot of propaganda huff-and-puff the American journalist was exchanged for the Soviet UN employee. Then, unexpectedly, and contrary to the terms and conditions under which New York was chosen as the UN headquarters, the Americans expelled 25 Soviets employees of the U.N. The Soviets responded by expelling five American diplomats. The Americans upped the ante by expelling a further 55 Soviet diplomats: five, they said, in response to the Soviets and the other fifty to achieve parity in numbers. The idea was said to be that there should be the same number of diplomats in both countries. The State Department was unhappy about the whole affair but the hawks of the White House insisted. After all, mid-term Congressional elections were just around the corner and the President and his warriors were worried about retaining Republican control of the Senate. Then the Soviets struck back. They expelled five more Americans and ordered ^{ed} 260 Soviets to quit their jobs at the American Embassy and consulate - no domestic help; and Un~~the~~ blinked and bawled: Tovarich! Goodnight.

National Heritage Week, 1986:
A Challenge for the JLP

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
October 17, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Lest we forget, this is National ^{Heritage} ~~Heritage~~ Week here in Jamaica. Traditionally, it is a time for reflection; a time of historical remembrance; a time of shared hope for the future. Yet this week has been turned into a week of confusion, without most of us knowing precisely what the confusion is about, or why it has been unleashed on us. Was it really about a Cabinet reshuffle? But the power to reshuffle the Cabinet is at the Prime Minister's absolute discretion; he ~~does~~ does not have to get anybody's approval. He can consult whomever he wants to or not consult anybody. And then he can make up his list of changes, call in his Ministers and tell them what he has decided. He may give them a change to speak or he may say that is how it is to be. So there is not and there was not any need for the Cabinet reshuffle to be turned into a drawn-out, week-long public event with the whole nation on 'hold'. Certainly, there was no need to super-impose this essentially contrived and artificial crisis on National ^{Heritage} ~~Heritage~~ Week. It has succeeded in polluting and spoiling the wholesome flavour of National ^{Heritage} ~~Heritage~~ Week: and that is unforgiveable. This 'crisis' could have been staged the week before or the week after National ^{Heritage} ~~Heritage~~ Week. So why on this week? To take public attention away

from the country's National Heroes and focus it on someone else? God forbid. This is not part of the Jamaican heritage. And now that the reshuffle is over, does everything automatically return to normal? Is the 'crisis', whatever it was, over? Do those who remain in the Cabinet, and those who have been brought in, and those who have been shuffled around and those who have been dropped, do they all carry on as though nothing unusual has happened? I rather suspect that nothing is going to be quite as simple as that. I think we are going to have to wait a little while before the consequences of this week's power game become clear. If those consequences are ultimately to be for the good and to the benefit of Jamaica then we should see signs of it in a number of subtle changes in the relations between the Prime Minister and the Jamaica Labour Party. Up to now the Jamaica Labour Party has been the docile creature of the Prime Minister. Seemingly, he has exercised the same sweeping/ ^{and absolutist} authority over that party that he does over the Cabinet. This meant that the/ ^{normal} 'checks and balances' as between party and government were absent. Instead of being an influence to either moderate or push or check the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, the party was turned into just another tool of the Prime Minister. Which is why the PM could over-rule everybody else over that 'gentlemen's agreement' and call that ^{now so disastrous} December 1983 'snap' election. A stronger and more assertive party would probably have stopped him. Instead, because he had absolute control of both ^{Cabinet and party}, he had his way. If this week's contrived crisis confounds him by re-asserting the party's moderating and inhibiting influence over the party leader, then out of this most unnecessary of crises, may yet come some good for the Jamaican democratic process. No one man, left, right or centre, should be allowed ever again to put a nation on one week's hold. This now, is the challenge for the leaders of the Jamaica Labour Party. ^{Peace & love.} Goodnight.

After the JLP Retreat:
Resignation or Powerplay?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
October 13, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: What happened at the JLP retreat was not this past weekend's most important news by a very long shot. The failure of the U.S.-Soviet talks in Iceland was, for us as for all the world, the most important piece of 'bad' news. And the emergency meeting of the leaders of the frontline states of Southern Africa in Maputo to prepare against overt and covert military assault from racist South Africa, was second in importance, because in it are the seeds of the kind of localised war that could explode into world conflict. And even that tragic natural disaster in El Salvador is of greater local real importance than the story which dominated the headlines in both electronic and print media. Yet it is 'our' story, so it commands pride of place. So what are we to make of it? Are ^{we} really to take it as seriously as the news treatment suggests? At first sight that frontpage headline this morning gives the impression that Mr. Seaga has resigned as JLP leader. If that were in fact the case then it would be very important for us. But then we get all the provisos in various smaller sizes of print: ... the party votes to have him remain...his resignation as party leader is 'with a year's notice'. But even this is not all that clear. A release ^a from Jamaica House tells of "his intention not to seek re-election as leader of

the Jamaica Labour Party at the next Party conference to be held in November and to demit office as Prime Minister August 12, 1987". So, in the frontpage story he resigns with twelve months' notice and the party votes to have him remain. But in the Jamaica House release he has simply made a declaration of his intentions with a clear timetable to: step down as Party leader at the Party's November conference; and give up the office of Prime Minister on a specific day next August. So what is this really all about? When politicians in office ^{really intend to} resign the intention is usually kept a close secret until the act of resignation. This ensures political stability and a quick transition from one leader to the next with minimum dislocation within the ranks of the party. The kind of long drawn-out departure of which we have just been told is bound to, if stuck to, disrupt and shake up and dislocate the party, any party, but particularly the kind of one-man autocracy that the JLP has always tended to be. And I don't think anybody in the JLP wants that. So the only reasonable explanation is to see this as an effort to shake up the party and gamble on starting a groundswell of popular support for the leader that would strengthen his hand. The announcement of a Cabinet reshuffle this week supports this explanation. It suggests that far from quitting or intending to quit the man is seeking to tighten his grip on both party and government. But what of the not standing for party leader in November? If the gamble works then he will be 'drafted' against his will. And what is more heroic than an apparently reluctant hero? But the hard question is: Do we really need this kind of political power-play at this stage in Jamaica's affairs? Do we need the heightened sense of political uncertainty? I thought the general mood on this morning's Road Beat got it right. Get it over with and let us get on with Jamaica's real and serious problems. We're out of time for poppy-shows. Goodnight.

- 1) A New IMF Agreement?
- 2) The Politics of 'Disinformation'.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
October 10, 1986, 6.10p.m

Goodevening:

On Wednesday of this week the main frontpage story in the Gleaner was headed: "Wage freeze said part of IMF deal: price controls to go". If you read that story carefully you will see that no source is given for the information about any wage freeze and end to price controls. We are simply told that the government is 'reported' to be considering these steps. So who reported it? In the business of journalism we are very familiar with the 'planted' news item. There are times when politicians want to get a piece of information made public either because they either need to know how people will react to it, or else because they want to use public knowledge of it as part of their negotiating tactics. If, for instance, the IMF were to say to Jamaica's negotiators: "What is your alternative to an immediate 10% devaluation?" They might say: "Will you accept a wage freeze and an end to price controls?" And then 'plant' the idea in what they see as the most appropriate news outlet: and making the idea public gives it an added strength as a bargaining counter. Alternatively, the IMF itself may suggest that the only condition under which it will agree to a delay in that 10% devaluation is if the government would impose a new wage freeze and end all price controls. And faced with two hard alternatives the government would

want to choose the politically less damaging of the two, which is a freeze on wages and a lifting of all price controls. The July 29 local elections told the governing party clearly that it has already lost the unionised working-class vote. And there is no way to win that back. But the business, mercantile, and even small business vote could still be retained or won back by freeing-up all prices and holding down wages. And going public with this idea would, it must be hoped, mobilise ~~those~~ behind the government, those who would benefit from such a policy. But, of course, if the IMF is as set on that 10% devaluation as we are told then the delay gained by this proposed trade-off will be very, very temporary and the price that Jamaicans will pay for it ^{a few} ~~further~~ months down the road is the further debasement of the quality of life. Either way Jamaicans are going to feel the squeeze: a few may benefit in the very short run; all will feel it in the long run. I would have thought that a frank and open levelling with the Jamaican people about very real hard choices would have got a much more responsive and sympathetic hearing than any manipulative 'planting' of ideas. But it seems that those in power do not trust their people. This week a respected American journalist, Bernard Kalb, resigned as spokesman for the U.S. State Department because he did not want to be associated with the 'disinformation' - the new word for the use of lying, untrue and concocted information - used to justify the attack on Libya. American law says it is acceptable to use non-American news sources for purposes of 'disinformation'; but it is wrong to use American news outlets, which is what they did with Libya. Talk about double-standards! And the best local news at home was that big garment contract gained by the Broadway Group. I was particularly pleased because I still remember the bitter hostility Mr. Morgan and his associates faced when they first went into the garment trade. Goodnight

- 1) Nuclear & Space Accidents
- 2) Market Forces on the Offensive
- 3) Family Planning

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
October 6, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The fire - and possible explosion - which disabled a Soviet nuclear-powered submarine near Bermuda last Friday morning has again underscored the kinds of dangers and risks inherent in the new age of nuclear power and high-tech with which the world hopes to enter the twenty-first century. The submarine reportedly carried nuclear weapons; and we were told that three of the crew died and many were injured. And this morning a United States news report said that the submarine has now sunk. For their part, the Soviets who advised the Americans of the accident very early, said the accident posed no danger of any nuclear explosion or radio-active contamination. Soviet merchant ships had the damaged submarine in tow before this morning's reported sinking. The Americans had offered help. Such are the bald facts we know. We must assume that ~~that~~ the Soviets would either have removed or else ne~~u~~utralised the weapons and removed all the remaining crew before the submarine sank or was scuttled. If this were not done then there would be further potential long-term contamination of the ocean. And this, lest we forget, is only the latest, and one of the more public, of a long series of nuclear, space and high-technology accidents since the start of the so-called nuclear age during the closing days of the

second world war when two American nuclear bombs were dropped on two densely populated Japanese cities. Generally speaking, the ordinary peoples of the world have been kept in ignorance of these accidents, wherever and whenever those in control thought they could get away with it. This was, and still is, true of both capitalist and communist regimes, of both the Soviet Union and the United States. And this, I suggest, is one reason for the very high level of fear, distrust and suspicion of the nuclear industry. We have been lied to about it so often and so blatantly that most of us have come to distrust almost anything about it. This is one of the most bitter long-term consequences of the politics of deception and disinformation, whatever the motive behind it. And yet the world cannot afford to turn its back on nuclear energy and high-technology. What seems to be needed is a greater open-ness in informing people about the risks and dangers, as well as the enormous problems and obstacles of this new venture into the future. And for this the world's leaders need to understand more clearly the extraordinary forces they want to harness and use. You cannot, as Mr. Reagan once suggested, launch a missile and then call it back because you've changed your mind! And here at home the weekend saw the Free Market-eers on the offensive. Are things really as simple as that? Free up everything and 'market forces' will ensure economic growth and prosperity? And what about equity and social justice? Can the private sector raise its own foreign exchange and credits without government guarantees? And will real ownership and control of 'the commanding heights' of the economy be any less narrowly based than now? I am not sure that it is either all state control or all/^{free}market forces. Neither have done all that well up to now. And finally, as a longtime supporter of family planning may I appeal. Please, not quite so aggressive and condemnatory. You risk turning people off. Goodnight.

U.S. Sanctions Against South Africa

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
October 3, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The United States Senate yesterday afternoon voted to over-rule President Reagan's veto on a bill to impose harsh sanctions on racist South Africa. The Senate needed 67 votes - a two-thirds majority - to block the President's veto: it received 78 votes, which made it a crushing defeat for President Reagan. Earlier in the week, on Monday September 29, the U.S. House of Representatives had also over-ruled the President's veto by a massive 313 votes to 83. So both Houses of the American Congress have now over-ruled the Reagan veto and the toughest economic sanctions so far proposed by any major Western power are now law in the United States. And so the Reagan administration, despite its bitter opposition to sanctions, and despite its fierce and often 'dirty' Reaganite fight against sanctions, must now carry out those sanctions. That is how American law works. It is part of ^{the} American tradition that once a matter becomes law all Americans, all American institutions and all American authorities are duty bound to honour, uphold and enforce that law. So President Reagan must now enforce sanctions against South Africa. There is a useful summary in today's Gleaner headed: "Effects of the sanctions" which gives a fair idea of the scope of the sanctions; and they are tough and they are sweeping

and they put to shame the wishy-washy action decided on by the European Community under British and West German self-serving pressure. Britain and West Germany wanted to appear to be on the right side while having their cake and eating it. The American Congress, speaking for the American people over the head of their leader, ~~have~~ shown the world how to take a real stand against a manifest evil. There are many things wrong with America, many things to criticise, but one of the great virtues of America and Americans ^{are convinced of} is that when they/~~xxx~~ the rightness and justness of a matter they act decisively on what they see as right. They have done so this week in the true spirit of their founding principles. And I think many Africans will long remember this. ~~Ext~~, Of course, this action will not bring down Apartheid overnight, or next week or next month or next year. And how the/^{Reagan}~~xxx~~ administration enforces the new law will also have^a/bearing; you can be active or passive in enforcing any law. For instance an active enforcement will ensure that if food routes are denied frontline states then the food is airlifted as it was during the Berlin blockade. But, active or passive, this law imposing harsh sanctions/ is just about the biggest blow against South Africa since the Cuban halted its invasion of Angola. It is going to radically change the geopolitical picture in Southern Africa and it is going to hasten by many many years the process to/~~xxx~~^{bring} an end to the last bastion of institutionalised racism in the world. For the Africans, both inside and outside South Africa, it is a welcome² shot in the arm in what is still a long and hard struggle. For the Americans there is the inherent dynamic of having to rethink and recast their Southern African policy to bring it in line with the new law. And Britain and West Germany are going to have to run like hell to try and catch up with what came^{gladly but} naturally to the Americans. Goodnight.

The Economics of Survival:
A Gloomy Outlook & Third World Debt

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
September 29, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The International Monetary Fund-World Bank meetings take place in Washington this week in an atmosphere which has been described as 'gloomy' for the world economic outlook. The latest IMF report projects little real growth for the economies of the 'rich' Western World between now and 1991. They say growth may average 3% over that period. This, of course, is on the assumption that nothing goes seriously wrong between now and then. If anything does go seriously wrong then I think even this very modest forecast of growth may not be fulfilled. The rich nations of the West - the United States, West Germany, Japan and, to a lesser extent, France and Britain - are faced with sufficiently serious financial problems of their own to be scrapping among themselves over such matters as protectionism, interest rates, and access to each other's markets. The Japanese are accused of not allowing the Americans and Europeans free and fair entry into their markets; the Americans accuse the Europeans of gross and unfair agricultural protectionism which makes it impossible for the United States to sell its agricultural products in Europe. The Europeans hurl back the counter-accusation of large-scale American farm subsidies, price-fixing and other forms of protectionism. And Europeans and Americans join together in

bawling against Japanese penetration of their markets. Japan, meanwhile, is resisting efforts to force her to revalue her currency upwards. Almost everybody else, even the great United States, is under pressure, direct or indirect to devalue: only Japan is being pressed to revalue - and she resists! It is important for us to appreciate this broad context in which the World Bank-IMF meeting takes place this week, and in which Third World countries are trying to get some sort of easing of their debt burdens. When a business firm is doing well: when things are look up and moving well and profits are rolling in, the firm or business enterprise can usually afford to be generous with employees and customers and corporate image-building. It can give generous bonuses and facilities to its workers, generous terms and discounts to its customers, make big donations to good causes such as supporting sport. But the moment there is trouble, a recession, a fall in sales and profits, that same business will cutback drastically: lay-offs, no bonuses, an end to credit and easy terms, no big pr and corporate-image budget. And as with firms, so with countries: when hard times come they take care of 'Number One' first: credits, grants, outright gifts either dry up or are drastically reduced; debt-collection is rigorously enforced. In this context I think Third World pleas for a new economic order and for 'reversing the net transfer of resources from the poor to ^{the} rich rich countries' will fall on deaf ears. And the only new borrowing that may be allowed will be to continue servicing debt. This is the new reality for the foressable future, and the only way out of it is the long, slow, hard and painful struggle to become as self-sufficient as possible while working to pay off the massive debts ^{into which we have been led:} ~~of our former wasteful ways~~. This, I suggest, is the true nature of the new economic bondage into which we have been led. And there is no easy way out, no 'quick fix'. Goodnight.

The "Americas Watch" Report:
The Police & the Rule of Law

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
September 22, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The United States human rights monitoring group, "Americas Watch" has provoked deep consternation in Jamaica's security establishment by its report, made public here this week, that the Jamaican police are responsible for gross abuses of human rights in their dealings with ordinary Jamaicans. This news broke in the local paper on Wednesday; the Minister of National Security reacted to it ^{with his usual volubility} ~~on a call-in radio programme~~ yesterday; and a statement from the Commissioner of Police today denies the Americas Watch charge of 'summary executions' by the police. I think there are two very depressing mental attitudes at work here on the part of our security authorities. First there is the screaming sense of outrage at this charge coming from 'foreign' which is going to damage our 'image' and to which we therefore must pay attention; and second there is the almost automatic seizing on anything to explain and excuse and deny or justify. And I thought the Minister of National Security yesterday played the whole range of these. And yet, you know, all that "Americas Watch" is asking for is for the government to "acknowledge these abuses and to end them by disciplining or removing from the force the constables and superior officers responsible". To have done so in frank and straightforward manner would, I think, have disarmed all serious criticism. Howling and

screaming, especially when most Jamaicans will tell you that the charges are well founded, is the worst thing you can do. Of course these abuses are the work of a minority in the force; but that does not make them any less terrible. It is cold comfort to tell those who are beaten and brutalised that it was done by a minority; it is even colder comfort to tell it to a bereaved ~~xxx~~ relative when a loved one has been, in Ombudsman E.G. Green's words "slaughtered...without due process of law." And, of course, this kind of charge does tarnish the good names of the decent cops. So the answer is to get rid of the bad cops - which is what very many thoughtful and concerned Jamaicans and Jamaican groups have been ^{calling for} ~~doing~~ over the years. Perhaps now that the call has come from an influential 'foreign' U.S. source, it will be taken more seriously than it was when it came from Jamaicans. There are very many of us, not hostile to the police, who get a sick feeling in the stomach when we ^{ever} heard or read about some of these killings in dubious circumstances. So let us admit the seriousness of the problem, face it, and deal with it. I have not yet seen the full report from Americas Watch; and the Jamaica Human Rights Council ^{which incidentally did not sponsor the investigation} tells me that the advance copies that were sent to them ^{some time ago} have somehow not yet reached; but the summary rings dead true. These people are thorough. Their first team spent two weeks here in February to make sure that there really was a case to investigate. They met and interviewed a wide-cross section of groups and individuals and went about seeing for themselves. You or some of the police may have dealt with them without knowing. Then when they had reported, a second group came here for two weeks in June, and went deeper into things. Incidentally, my information is that they also had meetings with the Minister of National Security, the Commissioner of Police and the DPP. So this was no secret, Nicodemus investigation. So, please, heed its call. Goodnight.

Jamaica, The IMF & Bi-partisan Issues

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
September 22, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The weekend - and indeed much of the past week - here at home was dominated by the proceedings of the 48th annual conference of the People's National Party. The mood of the conference was upbeat throughout: it was that of a party which was on the way back to power, and which knew it. It reminded me strongly of the mood of another political party sensing that it was on the verge of power. That was the Jamaica Labour Party during the latter half of 1980, shortly before the general election of that year. The JLP then had this same upbeat mood of confidence. But there was, of course, one very major difference between that time and now. This time there is peace in the land; politically inspired gun-violence is almost non-existent. Nobody in the PNP is threatening ^{to} ~~the~~ lock down the country tighter than a sardine can; nobody is talking of removing the government by overthrow or underthrow. This is the basic and all-important difference. And I think we need to think about it carefully and to make sure that this political peace is not shattered. In that interview with the Associated Press last week Mr. Seaga gave the impression, to me at least, that this general desire for political peace was something he could exploit as part of his delaying tactics on the call for general elections. For the sake of that peace, as well as for the sake of the restoration of Jamaican parliamentary democracy, I hope

he will think again. Political power in a democratic society is never in the hands of one person to either hand over or else hold on to. It is a terrible and tragic misunderstanding of the nature and ~~source~~ source of political power in a free and open democracy for any person to talk of 'giving' or 'handing over' or 'withholding' that power. It does not belong to you; it never has; it was only entrusted to you temporarily. Now, the real owners of that power want it back to entrust^{it}/elsewhere - again only temporarily. There was a time when both our major parties understood this very clearly. Now, the JLP under Mr. Seaga seems to have lost its way. In the same way, there was a time when Jamaica's dealings with the IMF would have been handled on/^a~~xxx~~ bi-partisan basis because that would so clearly be in the Jamaican national interest. In any negotiation with some foreign grouping Jamaica's interests can only benefit from a united approach which makes it clear/^{to that grouping} that we cannot be divided and conquered. Right now, a bi-partisan approach would strengthen Jamaica's hand immeasurably in the talks now going on in Washington. The difficulty is that there is no basis of trust between the two parties to allow for such an approach. A man or a party who has double-crossed you once, who has gone back on his or its word once, and who has gloated about it, is liable to do it again. So you don't help out unless you are absolutely sure you are in control. This is one of the more bitter consequences of that shoddy piece of smartness of December 1983. It makes/^{impossible} any genuine bipartisan approach to some key issues.~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ And for this Mr. Seaga and his tough-guy "win-at-any-price" approach is largely to blame. There is desperate need for bi-partisan approaches^{on a number of issues} but who will trust this PM? All of which makes another two years far too costly and far too long a time of waiting to get this nation moving^{once more.} Goodnight.

Mr. Seaga Decides to Hang On:
What future for the JLP?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
September 19, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Jamaicans today got their first clear straight answer from Prime Minister Seaga on his intentions following ~~the~~ his massive defeat in the local elections of July 29th. You will find it boxed across the frontpage of today's Gleaner. And, as all too often with this Prime Minister and this government, it comes to us by way of a foreign news agency. Our own native media, it seems, is not good enough or important enough to break this kind of news which is of such importance to Jamaica and Jamaicans. So Mr. Seaga told a correspondent of the Associated Press that he has no intention of calling an early general election and that he expects in the next two years to turn around the country's decision of July 29th. The story is headlined: "I'm not going to hand over power". So now we know, thanks to the foreign press. So where do we go from here? Must we have another two years of a government which has clearly lost the support of a majority of Jamaicans? Another two years of a one-party rubber-stamp Parliament? Another two years of bitter and smouldering discontent? Mr. Seaga calculates, shrewdly I think, that the PNP will not ^{want to} push as hard for elections, as say the JLP did in the 1970s, because "they wouldn't want to inherit something that has been destroyed". And, like it or not, there is

threat and menace in this message. What is the PNP being told? What are Jamaicans being told? That if you press too hard for new general elections the country will be destroyed? And who will do the destroying? I think Mr. Seaga owes this nation an explanation; but I doubt that he will give us any. This, however, is not a question for Mr. Seaga only. It is a question also for the Jamaica Labour Party, the party founded by National Hero Alexander Bustamante, and dedicated until now, in partnership with the party founded by National Hero Norman Manley, to the ^{proposition} ~~of~~ of a two-party parliamentary democracy. Does the JLP, as a party, want the present political and parliamentary abnormality to continue for another two years despite the clearly expressed will of the majority? Already its proud record has been tarnished by the fact that it brought about the first one-party parliament in the history of independent Jamaica. Rationalise it any way you like, it does not alter that central fact. ^{two- or multi-party} And if/parliamentary democracy is to survive in this country then, for the foreseeable future we will need a strong and viable JLP as counter force to a strong and viable PNP. Destroy ^{or discredit} either one and you destroy ^{or discredit} the democratic process itself. So the JLP, like its opposite PNP, owe it to the society and to our democracy, to ensure its health as a dynamic and respected force within the society. Both JLP and PNP survived their founders; the death or fall of a leader did not, and must not be allowed to, affect the dynamic life of the party. The survival of such a ^{democratic} party must never be dependent on the survival of any ^{one} particular leader at any particular time. If the JLP is to serve this high historic duty to our democracy then it cannot go on ducking its responsibility: it cannot go on abdicating its primary duty to the nation, ^{of furthering democracy} no matter how dominant the leader of the moment. So where stands the JLP in this current undemocratic chaos? Goodnight.

Changing the IMF:
Mr. Seaga's Gamble

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
September 15, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The impasse between the Government of Jamaica and the International Monetary Fund over the matter of a further devaluation of the Jamaican dollar is, according to the Prime Minister, to be settled one way or the other within the next two weeks. This, if it means anything, means that we should know within that time whether there will be a new IMF agreement or whether we will go it alone on the basis of Mr. Seaga's so-far highly secret 'contingency plan'. The only thing we know about this 'contingency plan' is Mr. Seaga's statement that it contains "no fearful changes". But what does that mean? And who decides what is, or is not, fearful? The same people who described the terrible and weakest hardships and pressures on the poorest/in the society as 'structural adjustment' and 'rationalisation'? Anyway, whatever the 'contingency plan', I suspect that Mr. Seaga hopes devoutly that he would not have to apply it. I agree with those who see that tough talk about the IMF as essentially for domestic consumption. But there was, of course a little more to it than that. I think it was also a signal to Mr. Seaga's most influential friend in Washington that he was having trouble with the IMF and that this was compounding his problems here at home. The hope must have been that the very shrewd and

persuasive and powerful political arm-twister would use some of his considerable influence to get the IMF to ease up on 'Our Man in the Caribbean'. We saw signs of some of this at work during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington; and I think most Jamaicans, no matter what their political persuasion, will hope that this ploy will succeed. I think it has a reasonable chance. The IMF is under pressure everywhere to change its policies; it cannot resist such heavy pressure indefinitely in case there are some really serious defaults which could bring the entire IMF-based monetary system down in chaos. For instance, if the three or four biggest Latin American debtor nations were to follow Peru's example or worse, the entire system would be at risk. By comparison a Jamaican default would be a minor irritant with no effect on the world system. But if the tide is for change, and if it is accepted that the time has come to make the change, then surely, trying it out with a small case like Jamaica would be safest. So they may just accept Jamaica's insistence on no more devaluation: it would be helping out a loyal ally and at the same time ^{be} accommodating the pressure for change without undue upheaval. In this sense Mr. Seaga's gamble may pay off. But whether it pays off or not, where does it leave Jamaica's long-term future? All the big projections notwithstanding, Jamaica is no nearer that 'light at the end of the tunnel' now than it was when the JLP first set out on that fearful road of 'restructuring' of almost everything in sight. Dr. Ken McNeill's letter on our health services in yesterday's paper speaks eloquently to the fearful deterioration in the quality of life since this 'restructuring' began. And public policy ^{supported by taxpayers money} is supposed to serve the public good first and foremost: ^{of} not one sector or one class but ^{at all the people} ~~the entire polity~~. Without that it is ^{just democratic} ~~meaningless~~. So, where are we going? Goodnight.

Social & Economic Mobility:
if not through education - how?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
September 12, 1986, 6.10p.m

Guild of
Good evening: The/Undergraduates of the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies has now questioned the legality of the university administration in effect acting as an agent of the Jamaican Government by collecting a tuition 'cess' imposed by that government. The University, they say, is a regional institution, and its Charter gives ~~the~~ gives only the university the right to set and to collect fees. And the government-imposed cess on tertiary education was set by the Government of Jamaica, not by the University. So the University itself must consider whether it would not be contravening the Charter and Statutes of the regional University of the West Indies by collecting such fees. And this, on the face of it, has all the makings of an epic legal battle. And if such a legal battle were to be joined it would put the entire business of collecting the cess on 'hold' until the case is settled. This, now, is the new situation brought about by the manner in which the government went about imposing its new tax on tertiary education. And, interestingly, the Jamaica Teachers Association is also reported as about ^{to} ~~the~~ challenge the legality of the government's closing of eight primary and all-age schools in remote areas of rural Jamaica.

The one thing common to both cases is money. In the one case the government wants the students to pay more for the tertiary education they get; in the other the government wants to save money by closing down small rural schools. And, of course, in both cases, as seems habitual with this government, both decisions were made without serious prior consultation with those most deeply involved. If there had been genuine prior consultation we would not now be facing these potential legal encounters, which, if they go to court, would involve taxpayers money, no matter what the outcome. And this, in terms of our much vaunted 'prudent management' was not really necessary. And then there is the wider question forced on us by this government's apparent attitude to education. Till now, and as far back as the beginnings of the struggle for self-determination education has been accepted as the cornerstone of Jamaican development. People, communities, churches, institutions and, when it came into the hands of Jamaicans, the government, all accepted the centrality of education to the national development process. And so latent skills and talents, wherever they were found, were brought ^{out} and encouraged to develop to their fullest possibility. It did not depend on what your family had or who would stand guarantee. You yourself, your raw talent, was the guarantee and the hope for the future; which is how most of Jamaica's great sons and daughters were produced. And it made for the relatively stable Jamaica of the past forty-odd years. Education was the key to social and economic mobility: it was the key for all who wanted to move upward. Remove that key or ^{blunt} ~~spoil~~ it; restrict higher education to only those who can afford ^{to buy} its 'privilege' and you cut off social mobility and ^{you} open the door to future chaos. Would this, in Mr. Seaga's language be "no fearful change"? We have had ^{many} 'fearful changes' already so what ^{does he mean by} is 'no fearful change'? Goodnight

- 1) The Eighth Non-Aligned Summit Postmortem
- 2) A Weekend of Terror
- 3) Journalistic Dirty Tricks Revisited

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
September 8, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: It was a peaceful and quiet and largely tranquil weekend here in Jamaica, with Saturday's uproar over a beauty contest choice being the only disturbance. The heavy and serious stuff came from the world outside. There was the bloody hijacking attempt at Pakistan's Karachi Airport on Friday night in which fifteen people were killed and many others were wounded. And then, on Saturday, there was that horrible and horrifying suicide attack on a Jewish synagogue in the Turkish city of Istanbul, in which twenty-one Jewish worshippers as well as the two Arab attackers died. There were other horrors, of course: there was the by now almost ritual daily black deaths in South Africa. And there was the failed attempt, nearer home, to blast the Chilean dictator, Pinochet, out of existence. And, in the long run, most important of all, there was the successful winding-up of the week-long summit conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, with its clearly defined course of action over the next three years under the leadership of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe. And, interestingly, there was, this time around, much less of the usual Western media attempt at belittling and trivialising of the movement. This time it was Libya's Gaddafi who tried to do the damage. But he did not get far and I am sure

that most, if not all of the delegates would have welcomed it if he had carried out his threat to withdraw from the movement. But I doubt that he will. But despite disapproval of Gaddafi and his ways, the movement is clear/~~that~~ in its opposition to the United States aggression or any other ~~aggression~~ against Libya, and, indeed, against U.S./aggression - overt or covert - against sovereign states, with Nicaragua as the other special case in point. But, inevitably, mapping out the struggle against South Africa was the key issue for the next three years. The frontline States of Southern Africa are under grave threat of South African destabilisation and if they do not fight back they will soon be reduced to the same status as South Africa's Bantustans. So the economic war for survival is urgent, hence the stepped up campaign for sanctions. It is Mugabe's determination that the South African stranglehold on other black economies must be broken within his three year term if Apartheid is to be contained and then destroyed. And the Non-aligned, with world backing might just pull it off. I hope so. And finally a word on journalistic 'dirty tricks' which we carried to such ugly extremes here in Jamaica in the 1970s by our campaigns of sneering and jeering and smearing and character assassination and 'guilty by association' or sympathy. Most of this has now been abandoned but some traces still linger. Labelling/~~people~~ ^{journalists} as pro this or that party, of being biased, of not being 'objective' - without adducing evidence or proof - are tricky attempts at inhibiting. It is, I think, a fraudulent form of judgemental journalism to which those who indulge in it should themselves be exposed. So will the anonymous "Listener" please come out of the woodworks so that we may identify you, judge you by your own yardstick as to leaning, bias, objectivity and the rest. Or else stick to cheap gossip which requires no qualification to pass judgement. Goodnight.

The Road Back to Elective Democracy
for Jamaica

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
September 5, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Three stories dominated the Jamaican news this week: First, there was the collapse of the highly touted Spring Plain winter vegetables 'miracle' at enormous loss of tax-payers' money; then there was the Prime Minister's 'tough guy' trip to Washington where he was to tell those money-lenders just where they got off; and then there was the series of swearings-in of local government authorities all over the island, with the PNP taking control of all but one Parish. Spring Plain, the IMF, and the return of elective local democracy in a seriously emasculated form. The connection between these three news stories is not immediately obvious; but it is there and it is profound. Take Spring Plain. If there had been an opposition in Jamaica's Parliament back in 1982 when the whole thing started, many Parliamentary questions would have been asked almost from the outset. And unlike the questions from journalists and farmers and farmers' organisations, those parliamentary questions could not just have been ignored. Answers would have had to be given: and if they were lying or misleading answers, they would have been on the record and could have been used to nail those who gave them. So the ignorance of the true facts of the Spring Plain business/which lasted till this week would have been dispelled much earlier, and the huge losses would have been less than they are.

In this instance the absence of a critical and questioning Opposition in our Parliament has cost the nation dearly in taxpayers' money; ⁱⁿ and ^{an} the often questionable pattern of priorities decided on in ~~an~~ the arbitrary manner by the one man who controls the nation's purse strings. Indeed, it now transpires that not even the Minister of Government responsible for Agriculture had any real say in the Spring Plain affair. I think the Minister concerned should tell us why he tolerated this. Did he agree with it? If not, why no protest? Why no resignation? Similarly, if there had been an Opposition in Parliament the systematic degutting and emasculation of the local government system would have been strenuously challenged, especially that reallocation of \$30-million to ^{the all-} JLP MPs as a thinly veiled political 'slush fund' so that all local 'benefits' rebound to the credit of the MP. It was, and is, perfectly possible to streamline and improve local government management and finances without degutting the system itself. And so the restoration of substance to the elective local government system, of which Kingston Mayor Ralph Brown spoke yesterday, becomes as urgent as restoring true public accountability to such projects as Spring Plain. And so to Washington where Prime Minister Seaga reportedly sang a softer and more pleading tune than the harsh and strident one he sang for local consumption. The catch is that you cannot separate the local from the foreign in these days of instant communication. So which is the true tune: the bluster or the begging? And while ^{the White House's} ~~Washington's~~ goodwill and support ^{are always} ~~is~~ important, especially in the short-run of incumbency, these of the American Congress and its General Accounting Office, are of much greater long-term importance in the nation-to-nation relations between the United States and Jamaica. So, please, do not become a human obstacle ^{true} on the road back to elective democracy. Goodnight.

The Eighth Non-Aligned Summit

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
September 1, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The eighth ~~xxx~~ summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement got under way in Harare, Zimbabwe, today with Prime Minister Robert Mugabe taking over the leadership from Prime Minister Rajiv ~~Gandhi~~. And, as usual, the Western news media is hell-bent on trivialising the event: they will stress the conflicts, the disunity, anything that can be used to belittle the event or raise doubts and questions about the motives, intentions and integrity of the movement and its leaders. So it is ~~important~~ important for Third World peoples to be clear about what the movement is and is not, if we are not to follow Miss Eugenie Charles into the carefully baited trap of equating non-alignment with neutrality. The Non-Aligned Movement was founded by Josip Tito, who was and remained an avowed communist; Pandit Nehru, a pragmatic Hindu Brahmin; Gamel Nasser, a very devout muslim and Arab nationalist; and Kwame Nkrumah, a passionate Pan-African nationalist. There was no ideological uniformity among these men - no single holy political church of any stripe. The two key points which united them were: firstly, the determination to be free of the stifling embrace of either the Soviet bloc on the one hand or the American bloc on the other; and to make their policies and their decisions independently of either super-power, and in their own best self-interest. This would be the basis on which they would deal with

the two super powers in particular and all other nations in general. And the second key point was that they would co-operate and support each other in the struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, ~~and~~ economic imperialism, and the pervasive racism of the world in which ~~the~~ movement came into being. And to these basic principles the Non-Aligned Movement has always been true despite mighty efforts at destabilisation and disinformation (some of it from Third World newspapers serving First World interests). So from the very outset the Non-Aligned Movement has embodied Third World ideological pluralism, from the communist left, to the broad socialist and liberal capitalist centre, to the rightwing monarchies, dictatorships and strong-man military leaders. And over the years it has evolved better checks and balances on the policy-making powers of the person who becomes its head every three years, than have any of the other and much smaller world groupings: the leadership of none of the Western power groupings is as democratic; America dominates those just as much as the Soviets dominate the Eastern power groupings. There are no vetoes in the Non-Aligned Movement and yet its meetings usually achieve an extraordinary level of agreement. And I expect this same high level of agreement on the key issue of the present meeting, the assault on South African racist domination in the Southern African region. Mugabe is making this the centrepiece of his chairmanship, and he has already indicated some of the economic ways in which South Africa can ^{itself} be hit by the frontline states. India ^{economic} is leading the move for practical support for the frontline states; and if South Africa were to attack Zimbabwe they may find themselves facing an army of the Non-Aligned Movement. The big question is: What would America ^{and} her allies do then? They may realise, too late that sanctions ^{were} ~~was~~ indeed, the better option for ~~salvaging~~ ^{salvaging} their interests in Southern Africa. Goodnight.

After Spring Plain:
Leadership, Accountability & Democracy

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Friday
August 29, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: This has been a bad week for Jamaica: first we had the collapse at Spring Plain; then we had the Interpress report first carried by this station of Jamaica's 'very serious' arrears in its payments of what we owe the IMF. These arrears reportedly stand at U.S.\$70-million (or somewhere approaching \$400-million Jamaican). Add to this Tuesday's Gleaner report of property taxes being increased by between 200% and 400%, and the angry depression and sense of bitter disappointment of very many Jamaicans become understandable. This has been a bad week for most Jamaicans. And what has made it worse is the fact that we have not had a word from the Prime Minister of Jamaica about Spring Plain; and we have not had a word from the Prime Minister of Jamaica about the IMF arrears. And in times of difficulty and in times of trouble the people of a country which is a democracy expect to hear from the person who heads their government. It is part of the democratic tradition that a country's head of government steps forward to explain and to comfort and to encourage the nation in the face of troubles and difficulties and disasters. And the worse the trouble the more quickly and decisively is the leader expected to step

forward to explain and to comfort. In this sense the Spring Plain collapse and the IMF arrears should both have been announced by the Prime Minister himself. And, indeed, in both cases there was the added responsibility of both matters being under the direct and personal control of the Prime Minister; which makes his personal accountability in these two matters all that much greater. Elsewhere in the media today there is an interesting discussion about whether any Prime Minister should have this kind of close personalised control over such a wide range of matters as this present Prime Minister has. And there is the suggestion to control this by way of Constitutional change. This tendency is understandable. The electoral system was shamelessly manipulated in 1983 so let us make sure it will never happen again by enshrining fixed election dates in the Constitution; a Prime Minister takes too much power and control into his own hands so let the Constitution limit him to only holding the office of Prime Minister. This is a natural reaction to what is seen as the abuse of power. But I think it can easily go to the other extreme of a rigid and inflexible electoral system and a completely emasculated Prime Minister without the overall authority the job demands. When anybody abuses a good system, you do not have to change the system; change the abuser: that is much easier than ~~changing~~ ^{having to change} rigid and stifling controls once they are enshrined. I think the political parties must ensure that no leader turns himself into a little tin-god. The JLP has a greater problem here than the PNP which is the more democratic of the two. And the Jamaican voters who knew how to handle the great Alexander Bustamante and the great Norman Manley have just shown that they know how to discipline any arrogant leader. They know this democracy is theirs. And they are waiting for an accounting of this week's bad news and for a date.

Goodnight

Spring Plains: The ^{apparent} collapse
of an agricultural 'miracle'

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
August 25, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The ^{apparent} collapse of the Spring Plains 'miracle' which was supposed to chart the future for Jamaican agriculture, is a sad and depressing piece of ^{weekend} news; and the first impulse is to write it off and try and forget about it. We do not know how much Jamaican taxpayers' money has gone into this costly project. The roughly \$28-million mentioned in yesterday's Sunday Gleaner may not include the costs of the glossy public relations blitz to which Jamaicans were subjected by way of radio, press and television or the media and other parties that were transported ~~to~~ on field trips to see the birth of this agricultural miracle which was supposed to teach poor backward Jamaican peasants what real, profitable high-technology farming was all about. I still remember how very upset and angry some small peasant farming friends of mine were at some of the sneering references to Jamaica's small farmers. I still remember the lofty, contemptuous : "What agriculture?" as though we had nothing before Spring Plains and high-tech and the fancy concept of 'Mother Farms' which would teach us all how these things should be done. The unnecessary ^{ar}rogance to which our small farmers were subjected must be written in as part of the cost Jamaicans paid for the failure of the Spring Plains 'miracle'. And we, and those who lead us, must learn the lessons of this failure if we are not to

repeat the same failures and the same mistakes over and over again. And the first lesson is that Jamaica is Jamaica, not America, not Israel, not anywhere else; and any technology, no matter how high or how smart, which is not adapted to Jamaican conditions and to Jamaican folkways, is likely to do more harm than good. Agricultural technology is not the sudden new discovery of this government of Jamaica: we have had generations of experiments with various technologies for agriculture: ask the likes of Dr. T.P. Lecky and a host of other marginalised Jamaican agricultural experts - people who really know the land and how best to use it. The fact of being a good businessman, or even a good manager, does not automatically make a person a good agriculturalist or farmer who knows how to get the best out of the land ^{without} leeching or exhausting it. I think we had better make sure in future that politicians who do not understand ~~that~~ this are not allowed to use our very finite Jamaican earth as a kind of agricultural high-tech mining of the land for quick one-shot big bonanza ^{profits} ~~crops~~. The Jamaican earth has to sustain generations of Jamaicans yet to come so let us not allow it to be turned into desert or swamp for anybody's quick profit. And then there is the fatal business of gearing all our farming to exports. Exports are critically important: feeding ourselves from our own soil is even more important because it means we can survive even if the export market goes into decline. So let us have a balance instead of the self-defeating having either the one thing or the other. Growing our own food should be our most solid base. Our small farmers have always known this; so did other generations of leaders. And, ^{lest} we forget, the so-called 'Mother farm' concept can easily become or be turned into a plantation central, with all the little farmers around as a new dependent ^{and exploited} peasantry. We've been ^{this way} ~~there~~ already. Goodnight

Jamaica's Changing Political Climate

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
August 22, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Yesterday's swearing-in of ten of Jamaica's twelve Parish Councils plus the KSAC is the most visible outward manifestation so far of the profound change in Jamaica's political centre of gravity since July 29. Of the ten Mayors and their deputies sworn-in yesterday, nine are from the PNP and only St. Thomas is under JLP control. The KSAC will be under PNP control; St. Elizabeth looks that way too, and Clarendon could go either way, depending on the outcome of the recount. Thus the PNP's control at the Local Government level is overwhelming and must be taken into account in all matters of public policy. At the level of 'higher politics' so-called, an interesting indicator is this morning's frontpage newspaper report that the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs who is currently on holiday on our North Coast (where, incidentally, Mr. Michael Manley is also spending a week) will be having talks with both Mr. Seaga and Mr. Manley. Whatever the local JLP propagandists say, the political centre of gravity has shifted too much for any high and responsible U.S. government official to come here and speak to only Prime Minister

Seaga. July 29th has changed all that and the interests of American foreign policy dictate that they recognise and deal with this new reality. The foreign policy and the foreign relations of a great and powerful ^{country} are not, and cannot be based solely on the personal relationship between the two men who happen to be in power for the time being; of course, personal relationships are important but only up to a very limited point. The need for ongoing and constructive relations between America and Jamaica will continue to be important long after Mr. Reagan has left the White House and Mr. Seaga has left Jamaica House. The shift in the political centre of gravity is exploding the myth that only Mr. Seaga - or indeed only Mr.-anybody else can get us this or that lot of goodies from 'Uncle'; it is policy, and above all, the popular support of the people that will make the Americans deal seriously with the leader of any country. Of course, all great powers, east and west, prefer to deal with obedient satellites - but if they ^{have to} ~~must~~ they will deal reasonably and responsibly with relatively independent governments who do not threaten American interests. I think Mr. Manley has had time to take in this point over the past six years. So, with the shift in the political centre of gravity clearly accepted both at home and abroad where does this leave the JLP? There seems to be a tug between those who want to "tough it out" for the next two years, those who want to call general elections as soon as possible, and those who want to make a cosmetic change of leadership. Those who want to "tough it out" talk of changing policies to make them more acceptable. Can the 'Authoritarian' leopard really change his spots? I doubt it; and so I think do most Jamaicans. And ^{cosmetics} ~~costmetics~~ may damage the JLP to the point of extinction. And the framers of the Constitution did not intend for it to be used to cheat ^{or outwit or hoodwink} the people of their right to choose and to reject those who govern them. Goodnight

The Tutu Weekend

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
August 18, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Here in Jamaica, this past weekend was dominated by the presence among us of the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, the Right Reverend Desmond Tutu~~t~~. His words and his presence were everywhere, thanks largely to saturation coverage from radio and television. And his impact on Jamaicans everywhere in the land seemed to go far beyond, and far deeper, than such official visits usually do. And this, I think, was due to an extraordinary emotional inter-action between the man and the people among whom he had come. There had been concerns and worries about aspects of the planning of the visit. Many leaders and spokespersons of grassroots movements were unhappy about the restricted nature of the planned programme which seemed not to allow for the kind of big public meeting/~~which~~^{where} the very many thousands who wanted to do so could come and clearly demonstrate their solidarity with the South African people. In the end these concerns, and many others, were swept aside by the character and quality and the nature of the presence of the man, and by the passion with which he brought^{his} message. And I rather suspect that many among us will find/^{the core of} that message extremely unsettling and disturbing. Bishop Tutu's message was frankly political, frankly

liberationist, and frankly partisan; there was no fraudulent even-handedness as between what is right and what is wrong; no protestation of non-involvement in politics. And so his Christianity takes a stand on political issues: against the tyrants, be they black or white, and for the freedom fighters, wherever they are. In this his religion has more in^ucommon with the 'liberation theology' of Latin America than with the theology of non-political 'personal salvation' of North American evangelism. And the grassroots Jamaican response to the Tutu message was very revealing: it was warm, open and joyous. It seemed that he brought us, briefly, a religion which for all its seriousness and embattled state in South Africa, is also full of joy and caring and laughter: not the solemn and cold and careful grim-faced stuff that comes from the North; not the religion which makes of charity and charitable works almost a virtue, but the religion which wants to change the conditions which lead to the poverty and want which invites charity: a religion of justice and human dignity for all God's children. ~~A~~And I could not help wondering how Bishop Tutu would fare if he were, say, the Bishop of Jamaica practicing on a daily basis his brand of 'Church Militant' Christianity among the poor and depressed of Jamaica. Would those in power still want to honour him? When I think of how quick some of our political leaders are to attack ^{or marginalise} local religious leaders for much less, I frankly doubt it. I think if Bishop Tutu were Bih^sop of Jamaica, ^{as Bishop of Jamaica} and if he were/~~to~~ say some of the true things about poverty and misery here in a roughly similar vein to what he said about South Africa, he might find himself very unpopular. So will the Tutu visit have any real influence on the Christian Church in Jamaica? If it does, that may indeed be a great step forward in the struggle for human dignity and justice everywhere. Goodnight

Cleaning Up the Electoral System:
How to ~~and~~ How Not to Go about it

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
August 15, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: This week's announcement^{by the Prime Minister}/of the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry into electoral malpractice and misconduct during the July 29 Local elections looks, on the face of it, incomprehensible. The dust has not yet settled properly on the Local Government elections. Final vote counting was still going on this week; ⁿequiries are being held; magistrates' recounts are in progress in some divisions and there is the likelihood of election pet⁷titions being filed in our courts of law. The Electoral Advisory Committee is itself ^{now} ~~in the process of~~ looking into the process in order to set about cleaning it up for the next time. In short, the thing is still in process and the normal and legal machinery is at work right now to root out and rectify the very things the Prime Minister wants the Commission of Inquiry to look into. Dr. Lloyd Barnett, an Independent Senator in our one-party Parliament, and a recognised constitutional authority, ~~has~~ described the decision to appoint the Commission as 'Ill-timed and premature'. And dealing with the role of the courts and the Electoral Advisory Committee in the matter of cleaning up the electoral system, Dr. Barnett said: "We should not undermine or devalue the importance of these two institutions by setting up bodies with compet~~ing~~ing or

parallel functions." So what was the point of setting up this Commission of Inquiry? ~~Where~~ were the courts not doing their job properly? Was the bipartisan Electoral Advisory Committee, a comparatively recent creation to take party politics out of the electoral system, was it found derelict in its duty? And perhaps of equal importance, was the decision~~s~~ to appoint the Commission of Inquiry, part of the agreement between the parties to dealing~~ing~~ with all electoral matters in a ~~bipartisan~~ manner? Did Mr. Seaga consult with Mr. Manley? Was the idea discussed with the Electoral Advisory Committee? As far as I have been able to check there was no consultation: which makes this a unilateral political decision which bypasses the bipartisan machinery which had been built-up so painstakingly over the years. So what was the point of setting up this machinery if you intended to ignore it when it suited you? This, I think, is bad and it raises serious questions about credibility and integrity about publicly stated commitments. Then there are questions I have picked up on the street. Were the misconduct and the malpractice of the ^{general} 1980/election, the 1981 local election, and the 1983 Nicodemus election, greater or less than those of July 29? We all know the answers. So why did we not have Commissions of Inquiry after each of those? Is it, as one cynic put it: because him win then and him lose now? Or is it, as the PNP says, a brazen attempt to buy time? Whatever the answer, it is a wrong move. The electoral system must be cleaned up, but not by intensifying partisan passions and partisan strife and not by undermining good structures and institutions. So heed the Sophoclean advice from a former Junior Minister turned journalist: "All men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course^{is} wrong and repairs the evil. The only sin is pride." Goodnight.

The New Mayor of Spanish Town:
The Problems of Power Sharing

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
August 11, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: It ~~has been~~^{was} announced over this past weekend that Mr. Ferdie Neita, a man who was shot and grievously wounded in the violent and dirty politics of the 1970s, will be the new Mayor of Spanish Town and Chairman of the St. Catherine Parish Council. Mr. Neita of the PNP will take over from Mr. Everrod Williams of the JLP as the PNP now has control of the St. Catherine Parish Council. So the control of political power has been transferred from JLP to PNP at the local government level but the MPs for St. Catherine are all members of the JLP one-party parliament. So the question of how Mr. Ferdie Neita and his Parish Council are going to deal with the Members of Parliament who have control over the local public purse strings is an urgent and immediate one. And it is not one only for St. Catherine: it is an urgent question for every Parish in the island where the PNP has won control, and this means it is an urgent question for nearly all Jamaica. So where do we go from here? Will the Central Government and the JLP MPs, each with his or her half-a-million-dollar-a-year 'slush fund' be as responsive to representations from PNP-controlled Councils as they were when the JLP controlled all? Will Mr. Ferdie Neita have the same mutually supportive relationship with the St. Catherine MPs as Mr. Everrod Williams had? All you have to do is think back to some of the hard stridency

of the recent campaigning in St. Catherine and Spanish Town; and of the violence and the threats of violence; and of an MP sounding off as though any PNP public meeting at a particular spot is cause for political warfare. Think of that and you will realise how very unlikely it is for hardline political backwoodsmen - as some of these have shown themselves - to co-operate with their opponents, even when those opponents are now clearly the elect of the people. The natural impulse is to fight down the opposition, to undermine and frustrate their efforts and make them look bad in the eyes of the electorate. But if they give in to this natural impulse, what happens to the communities involved and the services to which those communities are entitled? Will the MPs go out and do everything, and supervise everything themselves, so that the people can see it is the MPs and not the Councillors who bring them the goodies? And can two or three or four individuals be everywhere in their Parish every day to make sure they get maximum political mileage? I think they will find it impossible. Even worse, I think the people will see through any such trick move. Or perhaps they could just starve the PNP Councils of money and do everything through Central Government. But was this not one of the reasons why they were so badly beaten on July 29th? They under-rated the ability of the Jamaican people to see through clever moves and big spending and they paid a heavy price for it. So I think the government must either honestly share power with the elected PNP Councils, and, indeed, must restore to these Councils, some of the powers it has taken away, or else it must go back to the Jamaican people and ask for a new mandate to do whatever it wants to do. To do anything else is to go against the clearly expressed will of the Jamaican people as made manifest on July 29: and that would be anti-democracy. Goodnight

- 1) The Tertiary Education Cess
- ~~2) The Commonwealth After Thatcher~~

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
August 8th 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The Government of Jamaica this week had its first chance, since the local elections, to send a positive and practical signal to the Jamaicaⁿ electorate that it has received and understood and will respond to the strong and clear message of Tuesday July 29. In the event, I think the Government has blown this first chance. On Wednesday of this week Prime Minister Seaga announced that the government would accept the recommendation of the Task Force on tertiary education that the new fees or cess to be paid by University and CAST students should be brought in on a phased basis rather than in one lick. This means that the agony will be spread over three years; but in the long run, it is the same agony. and the rate of interest, The size of the new fees, as Mr. Seaga had insisted, was not part of the terms of reference of the Task Force, so these remain the same as when first announced in February. I think we all still remember what happened in the weeks after that announcement. Remember the protests and the demonstrations and the road-blocks and the tear-gassing and the police batons? Remember the thoughtful statements by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the University and by the West Indies Group of University Teachers showing with facts and figures that the proposed fees were too high when compared with fees at other universities in the world?

Well, Mr. Seaga's only concession to the outcry was the sop of the Task Force, but without any power to vary the size of the fees. In a commentary on March 14 I described the government's attitude on this issue as : "...it decides on a course of action, often without knowing all the facts, and then marches ahead, stubbornly deaf, dumb and blind to reason for as long as it thinks it can get away with it." But that was before July 29 when it was and was still accepted as a government with a clear and popular mandate. And in the campaign leading up to July 29, education in general and tertiary education specifically, were very important electoral issues. You would have thought that in the light of the outcome this government would have used the opportunity to scale down the level of the proposed fees and so send a message to the electorate. By not doing so, the message will be interpreted as 'nothing has changed'. It is still a stubborn, unbending, unyielding government; still 'strong' even when proven wrong by the electorate. This is bad enough in a government with majority popular support: it is downright dangerous political folly in a government which has lost the support of the majority as clearly as this one has. Which brings us to the arithmetic of new elections. The General Election of 1980 was held at the end of that year. of October/ The victorious JLP called Local Elections on the 2nd of March 1981, some four months later. And with all its faults the electoral system now is ⁱⁿ better shape than in either 1980 or 1981. before new elections So talk about the need for a 12-month delay/is self-serving nonsense. I think that if Mr. Seaga is determined to continue his unbending and unyielding style of government then he should seek a new mandate to do so at the earliest possible moment. Otherwise he must behave with the responsiveness and sensitivity of a minority government serving out its time. And tertiary education is the point to begin.

Goodnight.

Election Postmortem:

~~Where do we go from here?~~

Dealing with the IMF after Tuesday

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

August 1, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The leaders of both major political parties yesterday called for an end to the violence and lawlessness which followed the results of Tuesday's voting in the Local elections. So let there be peace, and let the Jamaican people return to their normal ways of living. And let us remember that the disorders have been the work of a small minority: ^{overwhelming} the/majority of Jamaicans of all persuasions have accepted ^{peacefully} the clearly expressed will of the people ~~as the norm~~. Those who perpetrated the violence and the arson and the robbery are not representative of Jamaica or the spirit of the people of Jamaica, and they are certainly not representative of the will to peace which both parties declared in the run-up. They are hooligans, bullies, bad losers and enemies of democracy. I think the parties should cut them off like a surgeon removes a cancer. If this is done we will have even fewer such ugly events the next time around. So where do we go from here? As the Prime Minister indicated when he conceded the PNP victory on Tuesday night, the government clearly needs time to think things out. So give them reasonable time to think things out and work out their response to the message from the Jamaican electorate. And then, when they have done their thinking, they must come openly to the Jamaican people with their answers. A key point of Tuesday's message, as I see it,

is that the Jamaican people have reasserted their right to know. They want to know about the decisions and commitments which are being made in their name; they want to know about the loans and the conditions under which those loans are secured because generations of Jamaicans are going ~~to~~ have to live and grapple with those burdens long after this generation of politicians have passed from the scene. So they want to be consulted, or, at the very least, to know what commitments are entered to in their name. And this obviously poses a problem. No government can negotiate as if in some public forum: some things have to be confidential and private. And where there is clear confidence in the government and its policies the ^{usually} people are prepared to go along, provided they are told 'something' and are not totally in the dark. Where you have the kind of situation created by the result of Tuesday's voting an acute problem ^{arises} ~~is created~~. How, for instance, does the government now deal with the IMF 'New Look' team? I think the most useful/^{possible} way out of this difficulty would be for Mr. Seaga to invite Mr. Manley to participate as an equal in the negotiations with the IMF New Look team. This would of course mean that they would first have to arrive at a bipartisan position on relations with ~~approach to~~ the IMF. And this, if it could be achieved, would strengthen Jamaica's negotiating position immeasurably. And the Jamaican people/^{, especially the poor,} would feel very much more reassured about the protection of their interests by way of job creation rather than food stamp charity. This, I think, is our most immediate short-term priority while Mr. Seaga thinks out his options on other matters. Our relations with the IMF should never have been a party political issue^y or made the special preserve of any one single man, no matter who or how smart. Now, after Tuesday, we have a chance to make it the bipartisan national matter it should always have been. Goodnight.

- 1) Election Eve Review
- 2) The Protocol of the Tutu Visit

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast in Monday
July 28, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Tomorrow is polling day which makes this a good point for looking back at how this election campaign has developed, and at what is likely to follow tomorrow's voting. But first a worrying rather/~~worry~~ note on black South African Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu's upcoming visit to Jamaica. I was informed last night that the Anglican Bishop of Jamaica, the head of the Anglican community in this country, knew nothing about Bishop Tutu's forthcoming visit: he had been neither advised nor consulted about it. And this, in terms of worldwide Anglican and Episcopal practice and custom, is a serious breach of church protocol. Within the worldwide Anglican community, when a Bishop is invited to visit a country Anglican the/Bishop of the host country usually takes a key part in the planning of the visit. No matter what the nature of the visit, the head of the host Anglican community is usually involved. I sincerely hope that the Government will move quickly to rectify this potentially damaging oversight before it forces unhappy choices on the man we hope to honour. There is a right way and a wrong way of doing even a good thing: let us, in this case, do it the right way. And so to the campaign. I think a fair conclusion must be that the PNP has succeeded in forcing the issue that tomorrow's voting must

be seen as a referendum on the JLP's performance in Government over the past six years. And for all the JLP's protestations to the contrary, the intensity of its campaigning and the vast sums of money spent on advertising, are lavish confirmation of the grave importance of tomorrow's voting. That is why we have even seen the resurfacing of some of the duppy politics and dirty tricks of the campaigning of the 1970s. The JLP knows that a heavy defeat in tomorrow's voting would in fact ^{be seen as} ~~mean~~ a vote of no confidence both at home and abroad; and would create even more problems for the government than it now faces. On the other hand, a win would be a vote of confidence and a signal to carry on for the next two years with its hand strengthened. And even a draw or a small loss could be brushed aside as no big thing. Hence the massive JLP campaign which by its very nature confirmed the referendum idea. As far as the PNP is concerned it must win very big if it is to be able ^{to press} its general elections now plans for it would then have the political and moral high ground that comes with being the choice of the people. So the stakes are high for both. And in the background we have the undebated issue of the demands of the IMF New Look team: more austerity, more devaluation, more cut-backs. And for all the sweet words, the crisis in education, especially the foreclosure on tertiary education for the children of the poor, is a threatening shadow over the nation. The hoped-for last second relenting on the size of tertiary fees did not materialise. And, psychologically, the confusion persists with no clear idea of where we are going or what we are sacrificing for: a mixture of sparkling fountains and hungry bellies; of blooming flowers and homeless children; of clean cities and jobless men and women; of market forces and strangling regulations. Try to sort these out, then cast your vote tomorrow and pray that you do what ^{is} best for Jamaica; ^{children.} Goodnight.

Run-up to July 29 (4):
The Critical Last Weekend

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
July 25, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The last weekend of any major election campaign has, traditionally, been the most critical and volatile in the history of Jamaican elective politics. It is the time when 'everything' is thrown into the campaign: when those in the lead, or thought to be in the lead, do everything in their power to consolidate and widen that lead; and when those who are trailing, or who are thought to be trailing, use everything in their power in a desperate bid to narrow the gap and perhaps overtake and pass the front-runners. And it is one of the more devastating ironies of our elective political culture that no bunch of politicians ever admit defeat until they are thoroughly and soundly beaten. And even then they find it hard to accept defeat and come up with all sorts of explanations and excuses and justifications; usually they blame the electorate. There are exceptions, of course: I still remember the good grace with which Mr. Michael Manley accepted the verdict of the Jamaican people October in/1980. We must hope that the verdict, and its message, will be accepted with equal good grace next Tuesday. But that, right now, is the least of our concerns. The most important is how we get through this last weekend of campaigning without any escalation in political violence. For despite the agreement between the two party leaders there have been incidents of violence. This morning

, for instance, this station carried a report of a gun-battle in Clarendon; and we are all aware of the volatile situation in parts of St. Catherine and Spanish Town. There are partisan activists who are up to their old tricks and threatening and intimidation: part of it is to try and keep supporters of 'the other side' away from the polling stations come next Tuesday; part of it is straight political bullyism. It is most important that our security forces be left alone to control this type of activity; there must be no political interference; no politicians, whatever their stripe or rank, have any business marching into any police station to tell them how to do their jobs. To do so is rank political interference. If you don't like or approve of the way the job is being done at any police station, follow the proper procedures and report your complaint in the proper manner. That is the right way. Anything else is wrong, no matter who does it. So please watch all these things carefully. Communities all over Jamaica have a way of knowing who ^{to} ~~sits~~ the trouble: they know who throws the first stone or bottle; they know who is the first to bring out the machete, who fires the first gunshot - and of course they know ~~which~~ candidates and managers shut their eyes to these things. Watch it, and pass on your knowledge to each other, and then, when Tuesday comes, use your votes to condemn this kind of behaviour. And this should not be a task for only the people in the violence-prone areas; it should not be ~~that~~ a task for only the police to be concerned about political interference in the discharge of their duty; the task is for everyone who has a vote. Just the knowledge that all Jamaican voters are watching may stop them. So watch them, please. And then there are the big and desperate last minute gifts and promises. Just remember that it is we the voters who, as taxpayers, pay for everything the politicians say they have ^{done} or will do for us. It is our money ^{of course debt that} they spend. Goodnight

South African Update:
The Buthe/lezi Factor

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
July 21, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The sweep and scope and range of the Commonwealth Games boycott has clearly shaken the Thatcher Government in London and the Reagan Administration in Washington. The Thatcher people, in particular, seemed to have thought ^{the} ~~that~~ boycott would be confined to a handful of African states. They expected others to protest but to still take part in the games. What they did not expect was this sweeping Afro-Asian-Caribbean boycott with its unmistakeable message for racist South Africa's friends in the West. And to underscore the seriousness of this message a group of international trade unionists this past weekend visited South Africa and came away horrified and angry at what they had seen for themselves, and ^e determined to organise drastic action at the European-American industrial level. And over this past weekend too a small tucked-away wire news item reported that the Board of Regents of the University of California on Friday voted to sell off \$3,100-million worth of stocks and bonds in companies which do business with South Africa. So the pot is starting to boil over and this week we are likely to see a new round of efforts to keep the lid firmly on the pot. The British Foreign Secretary has seen the American President and reported back to his colleagues in Brussels and will meet with the South African racist

President this coming Wednesday; and Mr. Botha will not be too busy this time to see the British Foreign Secretary. And just to underscore the importance of that meeting, which the Third World leaders have dismissed as a waste of time, Mr. Reagan will make a big speech on South Africa before it takes place. So the stage will be set for the start of a new round of efforts to get negotiations between the white racists and their black opponents under way. This, after all, has been Mrs. Thatcher's aim all along. She won a six months' delay on imposing sanction in Nassau; now it may be possible to win another six to twelve to eighteen months while talking about freeing Mandela and then entering into negotiations. But of course, for this latest exercise in stalling to have any hope of succeeding the white racists are going to have to make some gesture, some show that they really want to sit down and talk to the black leaders. And this is where Chief Gatsha Buthelezi comes in. He is the leader of the six-million strong Zulu homeland; he is the favourite black South African of the Thatcher rightwing of the Conservative Party. He is also the one black leader whose political goons are left alone by the South African police when they attack and murder the so-called radical blacks. But Chief Buthelezi's violent ones/fight only against ANC and UDF blacks and Indians. They don't believe in violence when it comes to whites and so they disagree with the ANC armed struggle. Like Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Reagan Chief Buthelezi is opposed to sanctions and believes in ending Apartheid by negotiation. But not even Chief Buthelezi would dare to negotiate with the white racists as the spokesman for the blacks while Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu and the others remain in prison. Not even his own Zulu people would accept that. So up to now Buthelezi has refused to be the first black to join the face-card President's Council. But if Botha were to release Mandela and Buthelezi were to join the President Council..What a long stall ahead! Goodnight

Run-up to July 29 (3):
Hidden Agenda for the Economy?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

July 18, 1986, 6.10p.m

We remember Nelson Mandela this day ...

Good evening: One of the problems with election campaigns of our kind is that the really important issues are usually buried under the weight of partisan power play: so you have the motorcades with their often violent side-shows as we had ^{this week} in my own part of West Rural St. Andrew when a campaigning Minister of Government passed through; and in Spanish Town (where some of the peace-mongers made unnecessary ~~xxx~~ warlike sounds) and the peace agreement nearly came to grief. The key issues can be, and are usually buried under this kind of sound and fury. But on Tuesday of this week Omar Davies on this station gave us a summary of what the IMF 'fresh Look' team recommended in April of this year and which Mr. Seaga ~~rejected~~ ^{rejected} in May. Now the Gleaner has done us all a service by publishing ~~in today~~ ^{today} the text of the 'summary of those recommendations. Please read that summary; please discuss it, for it is fundamental to ~~the~~ ^{our} future. And then ask some questions. For instance, when he said he had rejected those recommendations / Mr. Seaga talked vaguely about a contingency plan but failed to spell it out? Why? And why has the IMF not reacted to that rejection? Usually, countries which refuse IMF recommendations are made to feel it in one way or another. So why not in this case? Could it be that there is a hidden understanding that the rejection will only last until after July 29? I do not think we are going to be told; so we

are going to have to try and think this one through for ourselves. When you've read that Summary you will see that what the so-called New Look Team wants ^{is} more of what we've been having since January 1984. Remember that petrol price increase? Remember the ~~riot~~ ^{upset} wave of devaluations and the wild price increases? Remember the ^{upset} ~~play-offs~~ in the civil service and the local government service? Remember the near breaking of the back of the organised labour movement? Well, implicit in the New Look Team's recommendations ~~is~~ ^{is} more of the same. Is this what will happen after July 29? Remember it happened after that legal and constitutional but dishonourable election of December 1983. So do not say it will not happen unless the ^{man} ~~him~~ himself tells you so plain and clear. The New Look Team says that unless what it recommends is done Jamaica's economic situation will almost certainly deteriorate. So what is to be done? I think that PNP or JLP we are so far into the debt trap now that there is no way we can realistically turn our back ^s and walk away from the IMF. So a key question becomes who will put up the hardest fight for Jamaican interests in the dealings with the IMF? Some of the IMF dictates had to be done, even without the IMF. They could have been done on our terms and at our pace; they would still have been painful, but perhaps less traumatic in the terrible destruction of our self regard and self-respect as we lost jobs and watched the crumbling of key social services. So there will be an IMF in our lives after July 29, like it or not. Do not waste your vote on anyone who says otherwise. The hard question is: Will it be on the terms of ^{and more} the New Look Team, with more/Food Stamp charity for more and more Jamaicans as the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' widens further forcing the ^{unemployed} ~~middle~~ classes down into poverty? Or will it be a stubborn Jamaican relationship in which we are not for sale to the highest bidder? This, indirectly, is what your vote will decide. ^{on July 29}
Goodnight

Run-up to July 29 (2):
Some Issues Present Themselves

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
July 14, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The Governor-General's announcement on Saturday as Leader of the Opposition that he has no intention of appointing/either of the two men who have resigned from the Jamaica Labour Party, but still retain their seats in Parliament, is a welcome resolution to a sorry little episode in what was once such a proud and honourable Jamaican Parliamentary tradition. The very idea of a couple of disaffected Constitutional in a one-party parliament party members as a/parliamentary opposition/makes a mockery of the Parliamentary process itself, and it is to the Governor-General's credit that he wanted no part of it. And this sad and sorry little episode underscores dramatically, as nothing else could, why our one parliamentary process itself has become/~~part~~of the key issues of the July 29 election. How true to the principles of the process is this one-party parliament of ours? Does its composition truly reflect the will of the majority of the Jamaican people as expressed in free and fair elections? And how could it allow any young man, however noble and high-minded, to lay claim to a Constitutional office in that Parliament on the basis of having defected from his party and representing no-one else and no alternative policy? A short answer is that these questions can only arise where the process itself has been brought into question and doubt. And this is the issues. Most of us now seem to agree that the one-party parliament is wholly undesirable. Even Mr. Seaga has described it as a

temporary aberration. So what do you do when you find yourself and those you lead in an undesirable situation? If it is within your power to do so you end the abnormal and undesirable situation and return to what is normal and desirable as quickly as possible. The seeds of this dilemma were sown in December 1983 and all who were participants of that sowing are now being weighed and judged. The young claimant making a nonsense of an honoured process only underscores the imperative of resolving that cancerous dilemma. And I hope the advertising Council of Jamaica is taking note of some of the political advertising now taking place. For instance, the Golden Age Home received a substantial proportion of its funding from the Jamaican people: some of these people ^{are} ~~were~~ JLP supporters, some ^{one} ~~were~~ PNP supporters, some ^{are} ~~were~~ of neither party; but all gave to what they saw as a good cause to fill a great need. They were not giving ^{to} ~~to~~ the glory of any political party. And for any political party to now use the building of the Golden Age Home as part of its election propaganda is unfortunate in the extreme. Let us not now take political polarisation into the people's giving. It is unworthy of the generosity of the Jamaican people. Perhaps the Advertising Council could pick up and deal with such issues as they arise. ~~These~~ should help greatly to reduce or eliminate false or doubtful claims, incitement, dishonesties and so help keep the political climate as calm as possible. Keeping the electoral peace is itself an issue too. Another key issue which is forcing itself to the front is whether you have to scrap or savagely emasculate local government ^{in order} ~~to~~ have good management or ~~whether~~ we can have both good management as well as a strong and healthy local government system. I want both. Goodnight.

The Run-up to July 29th: (1):

- a) Peace Politics strains
- b) Demonology Revived

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

July 11, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The first week of formal campaigning for the July 29th election is drawing to a close and already the 'Peace Agreement' between the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party is showing signs of strain. Each side has charged the other with breaking the terms of the agreement, and there are strong indications that at least some of these charges are exercises in 'disinformation' which is the planting of ^{dubious} ~~false~~ information in order to achieve a particular desired effect. So a St. Catherine MP complains of a violent attack on his supporters and when the caretaker for the other side checks with the police she reports that the police say that they have no information of any such attack. Surely, you would expect a Member of Parliament to report such an act of violent law breaking to the police in the first instance, whatever else he may do afterwards. And then there is the bit in this morning's paper in which the caretaker of a particular building in Montego Bay reportedly denied that a certain Minister's office was plastered with election posters. Are we into the business where this or that side just keeps slinging political mud in the hope that some of

it will stick? If we are then nothing has changed and we are back at the 'dirty tricks' and dirty politricks of the 1970s with their sneering and jeering and smearing which culminated in that terrible slaughter of Jamaicans by Jamaicans. So please, back off and let us have a really peaceful campaign. It is not enough for those at the head to talk peace while silently encouraging the other thing. The kind of propaganda you put out, the kind of language you use, the warnings and threats you make, are all signals to your followers. And we are seeing, on television, some very revealing advertisements, some of which are direct incitements to the 'war politics' of the 1970s. You cannot do that and be serious in your talk of peace. And I think larger and larger numbers of Jamaicans are seeing this kind of propaganda as an insult to their intelligence. And then there is this awful revival of the anti-Manley demonology of the 1970s. It is not as blatant as it was then, but it is surfacing again, and it is just as ugly and destructive now as it was then. When I hear ^a some of the revived nastiness in our call-in programmes this week I remembered some of those nasty full-page advertisements of the 1970s. Do we really want to go back to that, and call it peace? I think not. And I think those who persist in trying to take us back may be in for a shock. And please, the Jamaican national flag, the Jamaican national symbols, are just that: national, not ^{election} to be used as the/propaganda tools of any political party: to use them thus is to debase and degrade their importance as symbols of national unity, pride and self-respect. So will the JLP please either remove the flag from that paid party television advertisement or else drop it altogether. And please, in place of 'dirty tricks' and demonology, let us discuss the issues: and there are very many of these. For instance: Where do we go after July 29th. Goodnight.

- 1) Nomination Day, 1986
- 2) Southern African Update

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
July 7, 1986, 6.10p.m.

Good evening: Today is Nomination Day for what to very many Jamaicans are the first real elections since the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ local government elections of 1981. For most of these Jamaicans what happened in 1983 does not really count, for all its strict constitutionality and legality. And so the mood today is of a kind of bracing for a long denied exercise in making choices and expressing preferences. And this, almost inevitably, makes the election itself something of an issue - for some the most important of all the issues because it is a reaffirmation of who really controls political power in Jamaica. Those who have been helpless and at the receiving end of decisions, whether they liked ^{those} ~~the~~ decisions or not, are now back in power, able to choose and to reject. And this is one of the trickier parts of the process. If the Jamaican electorate wants to use these local elections as the means for telling the government of the day that it is time for a change, how will the government react? Again in the same strictly legal and constitutional manner it adopted in 1983? If it holds its own, or does not lose too badly, it may get away with this. If, on the other hand, it takes a very bad beating and still tries to hang on, then it may find itself not simply facing the opposition of the PNP but of most of the nation

as well. And the idea of a government in a democracy clinging on to an overwhelming political power against the wishes of a majority of its own electorate is just about as stark a contradiction of the democratic process as numbers, could be imagined. And this, according to the latest Stone Polls, is the dilemma the JLP might face after July 29. And it is this consideration that makes this election itself such a major issue. Without that very smart and clever exercise in 1983, and without the two postponements of local elections, this one might have been just another routine going to the polls. Now, like it or not, it is as crucial as any 'big one' because that is how the voters see and want it; and the power is theirs whatever the politicians propose. And in the outside world the Southern African crisis continues to fester and deepen. The British Foreign Secretary's mission has just been postponed because the racist President is too busy to see him this week. This is a calculated humiliation and a snub to the entire European Economic Community. The South African regime seems to have decided that sanctions cannot be stalled for much longer unless they get tough and defiant. Their gamble is that the Europeans and, especially, the Americans, might be shaken into backing off for a time at least by this show of toughness. They know that they are strong enough in military terms to control both the internal and external black pressures for a few more years to come. So this is a bitter, hardnosed, holding operation which may be able to resist sanctions by itself for at least the next ten years or so, unless the pressure becomes very much greater: including military aid as well total isolation in addition to really tough sanctions. And this the Europeans and Americans do not seem prepared to undertake yet. So the struggle is going to get tougher and uglier in the days ahead; and the bitterness is going deeper and deeper. Goodnight.

- 1) A Day of Anniversaries
- 2) Education & the Future

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
July 4, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Today is a day of anniversaries. It is the 210th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America; it is the 100th anniversary of the erecting of their Statue of Liberty, which was a gift from the people of France to the American people; and today, and most important of all for us, is also the anniversary, the 93rd anniversary, of the birth of Norman Washington Manley. So we salute today a country, a statue and a man. The country claims for itself, and is ^{so} hailed by many all over the world, ~~the~~ ^{title of the} richest Americans and most powerful nation on earth. In moments of extravagance/ ~~they~~ call it 'God's own country', 'the land of the free and the home of the brave'. We can be tolerant of such extravagance: there was a time when 'the sun never set on the British Empire' and Mr. Churchill could think and talk of the British Empire 'lasting a thousand years'. This is part of the arrogance that comes with power. Among human beings of all kinds/ ^{this arrogance} ~~it~~ sometimes comes with a very small amount of power: we see it most sharply here in the behaviour and pronouncements of some of our own politicians and co-called 'captains of industry'. The United States has a great deal of power, so the arrogance is overpowering at times: we see that today in its bully-boy dealings with little Nicaragua. But there is the other side too, symbolised

in the Statue of Liberty with its promise of hope and support for the homeless and downtrodden and exploited. The Statue of Liberty is the symbol of all that is best in the American dream of a wider and freer and nobler life. To be sure, many Americans are ~~m~~ocked by it: the Indians who have been robbed and dispossessed of their land; the blacks who are still not quite first-class except for a token few; the nearly 10-million unemployed; the millions of women of all colours and creeds who are the victims of a pervasive male sexism: for these the great American dream symbolised by the statue is still very much a dream deferred. But the very existence of the dream is in itself a ray of hope. And it is that hope for an American~~x~~ which will deal better with its own as well as with the rest of us that we hail and salute. And so to Norman Manley, one of the great builders of a small proud nation out of the descendants of slaves. I think if he were ~~around~~ today what has happened to our education would have angered and upset him most because he believed passionately that education was the single most important instrument for peaceful social changes, and for peacefully redressing some of the grave inherited inequalities. And I think he would be very angry over the dead-end current policies have created for so many thousands of our young people. Being trained ~~to~~ do something is not the same as being educated. Education is the opening up of the potential of the whole human person: being able to judge, evaluate, make choices and of course benefitting most from training; which is why you can only train for the highest scientific and professional skills after a decent education. To substitute training for education, as we are now doing in many areas, is to put a ceiling on the aspirations of our young, especially the young who are poor. And this goes counter to everything Norman Washington Manley wanted for his beloved Jamaica.

Goodnight.

A Date & A Code of Conduct:
The New Politics or a New Game Plan?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
June 30, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Prime Minister Seaga last night announced July 29 as the date for local government elections. And on Saturday, the day before, the leaders of the JLP and the PNP issued a joint appeal to their respective supporters "to make the campaign for the 1986 local government elections a peaceful one and to refrain from the use of violence and smear tactics against their opponents". So, at long last, Jamaicans are going to have their much delayed local government elections; and they could have them in a political atmosphere that is free from the ugly violence, and the smear targeting and tactics, and the menacing and intimidation, and the destruction and defacing of property which were such prominent features of electioneering in 1979 and 1980. And if this were so, these local elections could be the beginning of a new kind of Jamaican politics: a politics free from all the brutally ugly things which were part and parcel of our party political culture since Independence and which reached its ugliest point in 1980 when Jamaicans slaughter some 800 fellow Jamaicans in the name of party politics. So for me the ~~really~~ hard question is: Is this really a new beginning? Or is it just a new game plan? On this one, I think the politicians and the parties are going to have to convince us by their deeds, not just their

words. So let us wait and see how this new language of peaceful campaigning and decent conduct come out in practice. And for how long is it? Does it apply, win or lose? And will the party in power now stick to it even when it is out of power? And will the party out of power now stick to it even when it gains power? Forgive my scepticism but we have been fed so many false and failed promises, we have been so used and manipulated and our trust has been so abused that the politicians must not expect us to accept their every word without question. Or even that they will honour ^{very snap} ~~that they will honour~~ their word to each other. The/elections of 1983, in face of a clear commitment, is a sharp reminder which will linger in our history. So what are we at: a new politics of peace and decency, or a new game plan as a tactic for winning? And you know something, calling for elections of any kind, at any time, is every citizen's right in a democracy. And if enough people in a democracy feel strongly enough to want an election, and if public pressure is strong enough, a democratic government usually responds. The JLP mounted such pressure in the 1970s till the PNP called electi There is nothing 'threatening' about it; it is part of the democratic and which political process, ~~what~~ makes it different from dictatorships or autocracies. And no national leader in a democracy, not even such 'strong' leaders as Winston Churchill or Franklin Roosevelt, were, ^{own} sets himself up against the will of his/people: he tries to convince and persuade; he never defies the will of ~~his~~ people. Or if he does, they turn from him and time is always on their side. That is how it is in all democracies, and in that sense Constitutions, written or unwritten, are there to reflect and to serve the will of the people, not the will of those who lead. In this sense, and in light of the widespread dissatisfaction with what happened in 1983, the voting on July 29, will, like it or not, be a test of confidence. Goodnight.

Political Violence:
Responsibility, Accountability & Control

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Friday
June 27, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The political parties have gone into high gear in their preparations for next month's local government elections, the date of which is likely to be announced at Sunday's JLP rally in Kingston. The PNP, for its part, has given clear notice that it will regard the outcome of next month's elections as a referendum or test of national confidence in the government's performance. By this measure a victory for the JLP could be seen as a vote of confidence in the government and its policies and performance; a victory for the PNP, on the other hand, could be seen as a vote of no confidence in the government and its policies and performance. And by the way both major parties are carrying on I think it is fair to assume that both do in fact regard next month's polls as more than a run-of-the-mill local election. And if it is treated as a 'big one' by both sides, why not just go ahead and make it a 'big one' and be done with it? If 'normalising' our/Parliamentary political culture is as important as the ^{vocally democratic} anti-leftists say it is, then they will make haste to put an end to the present one-party abnormality. The trouble is that political double-talk takes over ^{completely} as elections of any kind draw near. And this is something Jamaicans are going to have to watch especially closely in connection with political violence. To hear

them talk, all our political parties, and all our politicians are
 against political violence, know nothing about it, and if/^{any of} their
 supporters ~~do~~ commit acts of political violence, it is because
 the parties and the politicians cannot control them. And this, as
 far as I am concerned, is a monumental cop-out. Without raking up
 the sorry history of the origin and evolution of political violence
 in Jamaica, and when the gun was introduced, and when arson became
 a major tool, we can say without fear of contradiction that political
 violence was spawned by our party political culture in much the same
 way as a man fathers a child. Directly and indirectly some politicians
 nurtured and encouraged this monster. And just as they spawn it, so,
 if they really want to, they can put an end to it. They know the
 violent ones inside or on the fringes of their ranks; if they want to,
 they can banish them from the ranks of the party. Indeed, if the
 word went out to the ranks that the party/^{really} did not want the violent
 ones, the ranks would do the cleaning up for them. Have we ever heard
 of any expulsions from the parties because of violence? Because of
 victimisation? Because of denying flood damage food ^{supporters of} to the 'other side'?
 It is not really all that difficult for the parties to get rid of the
 violent ones within or on the fringes of their ranks. The real
 difficulty is that the parties want to be free of the taint of
 political violence while at the same time enjoying the benefits that
 flow from the use of political violence. I have been looking back at
 the newspaper files of 1979 & 1980 and the record of the fostering
 of personalised political hatred, and of incitement, was truly
 appalling. I think many who now sound so sweetly reasonable should
 go back and look at the files of what they said and did then. No,
 political violence is no headless monster. And those who brought it
 into being can, if they want to, banish it again. We must press them to
 do so.

Goodnight.

attention to the psychological as well as physical needs of these black youngsters than it did to ^{the needs of} their parents. The parents were immigrants prepared, ^{as} ~~like~~/all immigrants everywhere are, to put up with all sorts of treatment; the children, on the other hand, are native-born and demand the same treatment as all the native-born, whatever their colour. The British society ignores this difference at its own future peril. And so to the South African horror where the basic Nazi characteristics are standing out more sharply by the day. Here the new, stepped-up phase now, is for external pressure and disinvestment. I think we need to bear in mind and make a sharp distinction between the behaviour of the American government and the American people on this matter. A majority of the American people are clearly against Apartheid and are pressing strongly for sanctions and disinvestment; and their pressure^s are showing results. So please do not make a blanket condemnation of ^{all} the American people for the sins of the Reagan administration. And the same, of course, applies to Britain and to West Germany. Indeed, it is British public pressure that has forced the British Government to announce that it would ^{Ministerial} meet at Cabinet/level with the ANC President, Oliver Tambo. Until now they would not meet with the ANC because it was branded a 'terrorist' organisation, and they wanted it to renounce the use of violence. Nobody, of course, asked the white racist regime to also renounce the use of violence. And then there was last week's vote in the U.S. House of Representatives. All these building pressures are important. But they will not bring down Apartheid. What they will do is help undermine the arrogance of the white racists, perhaps to the point where they may again try some ^{concessions &} trick negotiation.

What the whites will not do today, tomorrow, or next year, is to negotiate their power away. That, with the help of their friends, the Africans are going to have to take. Goodnight.

After the Flood Rains:
A New Conversion or a New Snow Job?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
June 20, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: For Jamaica this week has been both extraordinary and contradictory. We have had Wednesday's national work day in which thousands of Jamaicans rallied to give help and comfort to those who have suffered most from the recent flood rain. The result was one of those great and good Jamaican co-operative efforts - a kind of much enlarged 'morning sport' or 'digging day' - which is part of Jamaican history and Jamaican tradition. Here the only new factor was the kind of startled wonderment among some of our politicians who sounded at times as though they had discovered something new of great political potential. The depressing side to this was the attempt at gaining political mileage and the isolated instances of using relief supplies as part of the party political spoils game where the 'ins' deny 'a bread' to the 'outs'. But these were small blemishes on a good Jamaican day whose roots and origins go back far beyond our present competitive political culture. I think anybody who sees what happened on Wednesday in any other light is fooling himself or herself. And Thursday, yesterday, as we were forcibly reminded by that full page advertisement on page four of yesterday's Gleaner, was the tenth anniversary ^{of the declaration} of the 1976 State of Emergency. The advertisement

tells us that the JLP had cancelled a 'Freedom Rally' planned for yesterday" in order to avoid any divisiveness at a time when there is need to rally the nation in a common effort to overcome the effects of the disastrous flood rains." And so, without hold^{ing} the rally the message and propaganda impact are assured. This is a clever political exercise in 'having your cake and eating it'. Nothing wrong with that, if you can get away with it. The trouble is that you are again unnecessarily painting yourself into a corner. What happens if this, or any other JLP government in the future, needs to declare a State of Emergency? And why, if the 1976 declaration of a State of Emergency, led to such misuse of police powers, is this government, right up to the present day, still renewing those same powers year after year? Now, States of Emergency are always undesirable because their existence imply severe^{ly} limitations on the rights and freedoms of the citizen. Jamaica has had, not one, but three such States of Emergency: one in 1956; one in 1966 (under a JLP government, incidentally, and starting in West Kingston in October of that year and made islandwide a month later). So if the declaration of a State of Emergency is automatically "a day of everlasting shame" then we must observe three such, not just one. But all we have to do is look back at the raw violence and wholesale slaughter of the 1970s, and even into 1980, to realise what caused that Emergency. So what weight are we to put on this doubly-whammy of talking peace and love and unity and at the same time persuing a hard and strident propaganda assault on the 'other side'? Are we to see^{this as} a real conversion from the bitter and strident politics of the 1970s and up to the election of 1980? Or are we to see this as a new political 'snow job'? ^{Go back and} Look at the front pages of the Gleaner of October 15 and 18, 1980 & you^{will} see why we must ask. Goodnight

Education: A Child Died

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
June 16, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: A Jamaican schoolboy, only twelve years old, killed himself by hanging last Friday because he had 'failed' the Common Entrance Examination: or, much more accurately, because his name was not on the list of 9,800 Jamaican youngsters who had been "awarded" so-called free places in ^{high} and comprehensive/schools this year. A total of 46,070 Jamaican youngsters sat this year's exam for what turned out to be only 9,800 places. *compared to a peak of 12,000 places in the 1970s* So 36,270 'failed' and were, however unintentionally, branded as failures. One of them was the twelve-year-old boy from St. Thomas for whom that 'failure' proved fatally unbearable. One of the surprising things is that this, as far as we know, is the first time we have had this kind of happening. In recent years especially, the pressures to 'win' a 'freeplace' to higher education have grown increasingly terrible for youngsters to bear; and the poorer the homes from which the youngsters come, the greater the pressure. 'Winning' that free place was usually the only way out of the poverty trap. With one member of a poor family having a decent education, a decent job was possible and with it a step upward for an entire family. Without that sort of break the future for such a family looked bleak. Please remember that for many

~~YEARS~~

years now there has been little or no increase in the number of school places available for youngsters going into the post-Common system. Entrance exams/ At the same time the school-age population has been growing every year. So, every year, more and more youngsters are forced to compete for ~~the~~ ^{the fixed} roughly same/number of places. In short, each year the pressures grow greater as larger and larger numbers of children scramble for the same few places. This is the brutal pressure which has been bearing down on our children. Have we any business to put this kind pressure on twelve-year-olds? I think not: and I think saying that we will put an end to it after next year's exams is just not good enough. We had painful and dramatic proof this past weekend of just how cruelly what was once a good system now works against our children's best interests. But let me also remind you of a most thoughtful letter from Mr. Peter Maxwell which appeared in the Gleaner of last Wednesday, June 11. In it he raises some very important questions about what is to replace the present system. We do not know because the government's education planners do not seem to want to have us participate in the planning. I think we must insist that at least the teachers and their organisations take part in planning the new structures to replace the Common Entrance examination. And I think that with such co-operation it could and should be possible to bring forward the date for the replacing of the Common Entrance Examinations. We must stop branding our children as failures when it is not they, but the system that is the real failure. It was a good system and a great step forward once, and it filled a great need. If we had updated it regularly and allowed it to evolve to meet changing needs it might have continued to be a good system. But we, as a society, failed and one of our children had to shock us ^{into this reality} by dying. Goodnight.

New Turn in the South African Crisis

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
June 13, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The white South African racist government's declaration of a nation-wide State of Emergency yesterday had several objectives behind it: First, to forestall next Monday's observations of the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings; second, to defuse and contain the escalating violence of recent days in the Cape between the so-called young radicals and so-called conservative elders. Increasingly, the conservative element (which was armed and financed by the state) was unable to do the job by itself of smashing resistance to removal of squatter camps such as at Cross Road. The army and the police were forced to support them too openly and on too large a scale for the fiction of inter-black rivalry to be sustained; the so-called elders were, too obviously, paid black goon squads of the government to be of any propaganda value in trying to con the outside world. Third, the racist government was sending a message to its rightwing that it had not really sold out on the business of white supremacy. And, last but not least, the Commonwealth-appointed group of eminent persons had just issued its report exposing the so-called moves to end Apartheid as face-card reforms which will not change

the South African racial picture in any fundamental way. So, inside South Africa it is back to harsh and brutal ~~and~~ racist repression: the kid gloves are off and the iron-fist is clear for all to see. For the outside world it means a host of wishful or self-serving illusions can no longer be sustained. The Commonwealth faces a moment of crisis, and however it is resolved Britain is likely to be a big loser. Britain is the single largest investor in South Africa and sanctions, ^{no matter} /by ~~any~~ other name, are bound to hurt British investments which run into thousands of millions of dollars. On the other hand, any stubborn refusal to take economic action against the racist regime, is almost certain to mash-up the Commonwealth. My guess is that Britain will take some sort of action and sustain her losses as best she can. Then there are the other democratic investors in racist South Africa: in order of importance in terms of size of investments & trading / they are: the United States, Japan, West Germany, Belgium, Italy and France. And this group of nations, like it or not, are the only ones ^{the} with economic 'muscle' and capacity to force South Africa into serious negotiation with its black majority. The trouble is that present profitability always takes precedence over future prospects, especially if those are seen as uncertain. Sanctions, by themselves, will not end South African racism, but they will help hasten the coming of that end - and that may mean a few tens of thousands less lives lost. If these powers do nothing they will lose their investments altogether when the change comes, as it must. So what can we in Jamaica do? Continue to raise our voice and keep ourselves well informed so that we do not give unwitting aid to those who would divide the South African struggle. Out of ignorance one such divisive element was welcomed as an honoured guest during our ~~tarde~~ union week. As the struggle deepens we need to be much more alert in our support. Goodnight.

Mr. Errol Barrow, Mr. Ron Sasso
& the Right to Speak

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
June 9, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Mr. Errol Barrow, the newly elected Prime Minister of Barbados, and Mr. Ron Sasso, one of Jamaica's best-known bankers, have been under fire from certain quarters because of public statements they made. Nothing wrong with that; we all have the right to agree or disagree with what someone else, no matter how highly placed, says and to do so publicly. So the concern here is not that anybody disagreed or disapproved of what Mr. Barrow or Mr. Sasso said: the concern is with how that disagreement or disapproval was expressed. For instance, when any ^{Jamaican} journalist tells a regional statesman of Barrow's calibre to "stick to matters concerning Barbados and leave the business of other Caribbean states alone" what are we really saying? Are we saying that Mr. Barrow, the second most senior regional statesman after Mr. Vere Bird of Antigua, has no business to discuss regional matters? And if we are saying that, then who has any business to discuss regional matters? Only Mr. Seaga and Miss Eugenia Charles? And our friends in the U.S. State Department? Are we free to discuss Bajan affairs but Bajans are not free to discuss ours? I think we are into an ugly little piece of chauvinism here, and the sooner we see it and rid ourselves of it, the better for us. And the truth of the matter is that any-

body who takes the trouble to read carefully what Mr. Barrow said in that interview with the Trinidad Express newspaper will be hard put to find any 'insult' to anybody or any 'interference' in Jamaica's internal affairs. Speaking of the pro-American policies of Jamaica and Dominica Barrow said: "I have never supported their policies so we don't have to quarrel about it. That is their foreign policy. We will have our own foreign policy." What is so wrong or 'insulting' or 'interfering' about that? And elsewhere he said; "Mr. Seaga thinks the solution to Jamaica's problem is to get President Reagan to play Santa Claus. I don't believe in Santa Claus. It is simple, that's all - we disagree in our beliefs." Where is the 'insult' or 'interference' here? I suspect that it is because the truth hurts that some of us are lashing out at Mr. Barrow for bringing it out into the light of day. But in the process of trying to cover our hurt let us be careful not to undermine the right to speak about regional problems and regional issues. The attacks on Mr. Sasso were much more petty and mean-minded and politically partisan with their suggestion of a 'man biting the hand that fed him', rather as though we are dealing with benefit politics at the banking level. I think this does a disservice to every kind of interest in Jamaica. I had hoped that we had^{had}/more than our fill of^{the} ~~this~~ kind^{of}/personal smearing/~~this~~ the ugly and dirty and nasty 1970s-style politics never to want to go back to it. I still hope we will not go back to it again, for Jamaica's sake. So, please, attack a man's (or woman's) ideas and position^{as} as much as you want to; but no character assassinations, please. Goodnight.

55 pth
2.2 250/220

Aftermath to a Week of Rain

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

June 6, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: For us here in Jamaica this week's news has been dominated by the rain and the consequences of the rain, and it has been a uniformly bad week, with only the resilience and spirit of 'grace under pressure' of ordinary Jamaicans everywhere as rays of hope. People stood up marvelously to the strains and pressures; people responded to each other's needs; the old historic qualities of how to ^{strive to} survive and how to share came into play. And again I wondered why this nation's political leaders, especially those of this generation, have failed to mobilise these great Jamaican qualities to move this nation to higher levels of effort and of achievement. I think that if, and when, these qualities are mobilised and sent out to work for the good of all Jamaicans, we may well see a minor miracle of co-operative performance. This would be nothing new for Jamaicans: many of the older folk still remember what the mobilisation of ^e those qualities did in the 1930s and '40s: they remember the political and industrial and agricultural and social transformations which took place under the guidance of the JAS, the trade union movement, the churches, Jamaica Welfare, the co-operatives. The effort, then, always, was to mobilise the

Jamaican people to bring into play the great latent qualities^{in them}/of co-operative effort in some truly worthwhile enterprise. And, of course, this kind of mobilisation is only possible when there is an absolutely clear understanding of what is to be done, and how it is to be done, and why; and, above all, ^{who make the effort,} that the people/^{all} the people, or their children, will be the ultimate beneficiaries. For this kind of clear vision/^{people} will sacrifice much and work harder than they would to enrich someone else, or another group, or some special interest. Certainly, it is only for this kind of clearly and /sharply focussed perception of national self-interest as the other side of personal self-interest that people will make extraordinary sacrifices and achieve extraordinary results. Do you remember that time back in ~~1973/74~~ ^{1973/74} when the oil crisis first hit us and Mr. Michael Manley went before the nation and laid it all bare and gave us a clear idea of what needed to be done? I think the overwhelming majority of Jamaicans were prepared to endure whatever had to be done to pull the country out of the crisis - provided everybody made the same sacrifices. But then they blew/^{it}by allowing in / all those luxury imports for some. And we had something somewhat similar with the 1980 elections when a majority of Jamaicans were again prepared to make sacrifices to pull the country out of its crisis - provided everybody made the same sacrifices. And again they blew it. Do you wonder that the political process is in such disrepute? And that it is only in times of trouble, as during these past days of rain, that the great qualities of Jamaican resilience, resourcefulness and co-operation come to the fore? When we finally get a political leadership that will mobilise these qualities on an ongoing basis, all the time, instead of for temporary partisan gain, that miracle of performance will come. Remember Labour Day? ¹⁹⁷² Goodnight.

Five Days of Rain, Wind & Cloud:
The High Price of Being Underdeveloped

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
June 2, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: It was good to see and feel the sun again this morning, after five days of rain and wind and cloud which had turned our normally sunny world into a dank and damp and difficult place. But was it really necessary for this kind of bad weather to^{cause} the amount of damage Jamaicans suffered? A child died when a wall collapsed; homes were flooded and people's household goods were damaged; roads were turned into small rivers and lakes; landslides blocked main roads. Surely, this damage and loss was far greater than should be caused by what was, after all, a relatively small spell of bad weather. This kind of weather, in almost any developed country you care to think of, would be taken in stride. The roads would hold; drainage would not go to pieces; homes would not be flooded and people's property and possessions would suffer minimal damage. Indeed, I have experienced much worse bad weather in both Europe and America without similar devastating consequences. And it is this which makes our losses from relatively minor bad weather such a depressing indicator of how being underdeveloped leads to an almost ongoing waste of resources, material and human, which could and should be put to much better use. If those homes in flood-prone areas were built on raised pillars, and were better built and with better roofing, and if the roads' surfaces and cambering were

, say, 50% as well done as in flood-prone metropolitan countries, the people of Portmore and other low-lying areas would have been able to get home, batten down, and wait out the rain and wind in relative comfort; a little wet, perhaps, but secure and without the hassle of scrambling to save fridges and the like, or having to wade through feet of fouled water. The hard truth is that the buildings and the roads were made with little, if any thought, for the long-term interests of those who ^{have} ~~had~~ to live there. And so, every time bad weather hits, the cycle of damage and discomfort is repeated and more resources must again be committed to clean up the mess and rebuild what has been damaged or destroyed. The same thing happens with most of our roads and gullies: after each bad rainy period vast sums of money and human energy are committed ^{to} restoring, rebuilding and resurfacing; and this may have to be repeated two or three times in the course of a bad year. And when you spend millions of dollars on doing the same job over and over and over again each year or, with a little luck, every two years, you are in fact squandering your country's resources. And the saddest part of this ^{brand of} underdevelopment is that we end up accepting it as the normal way things should be. Until we, as a community, reject this way of doing things, until we insist that those who govern, and those who build homes, and those who make roads, give the Jamaican people true value for their money, we will go on living in this state of infrastructural underdevelopment. We can have houses to withstand five days of rain without being flooded or leaking like sieve^s; and we can have well-drained roads that will stand up. It may mean a smaller margin of profit for the developers but it will mean real development for Jamaica. That is what we need to do to break out of this vicious cycle of wasted resources which keeps us in a state of underdevelopment. A good home or road should withstand at ^{the very} least a decade of bad weather. Goodnight.

Noted
for
the
file
1980

Variations on the Electoral Theme:
Of Parties, Power & People

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
May 30, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: There were two general elections in ^{this} ~~the~~ month of ^{which} ~~May~~ had lessons of more than passing significance for us here in Jamaica: there was Wednesday's elections in Barbados; and earlier on May 16th, there was an election in Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa. We are familiar with the details and the results and the key personalities of the Bajan election. We are less so with Sierra Leone. In Barbados it was a clearcut contest between two parties to decide which one should form the government. In Sierra Leone it was a little more complex: only one political party is allowed there and all the candidates for the 125 constituencies were nominated by that one party, the All People's Congress. In other words the party in power could not lose, and the office of President, who is both head of government and head of state, was not part of the election: so the President and the party who were in power before the election remained in power after the election. Only the faces, or some of them, of the 125 elected representatives were changed. This is not our style of elections, but those elections were 'fair and free' and free from fear' nonetheless. Indeed, Sierra Leone's new President of less than six months, Mr. Joseph Momoh, barred a number of candidates from standing because they were associated with attempts

at political violence and political bribery and corruption. So having elections that are 'fair and free and free from fear' is no guarantee in itself that the end result would always be our brand of multi-party parliamentary democracy. And one of the ironies is that the one-party state in Sierra Leone was not imposed by anybody but was decided by ^{popular} referendum in 1978. So the people of Sierra Leone have largely gone through the electoral processes in arriving where they now. The key problem here is that there is no equally peaceful mechanism by which the people can, if they ever should want to, undo what they have agreed to and take a different direction. And this, of course, is the strongest of all arguments in favour of the type of election we had in Barbados this week: the system is flexible enough for the people to choose one lot today and in three or four or five years' time change their minds completely and choose a totally different lot and try a new direction. And as this week's events in Barbados have shown, this too, can be as 'free and fair and free from fear' as the most managed one-party process. It is only when we pollute and debase and manipulate the system beyond reasonable limits that we arrive at the genocidal ugliness that led up to our 1980 elections. There are certain limits beyond which no leader committed to our brand of democracy should push the system. It is always fair and reasonable to choose the time to call elections at the point most favourable to your party. But it is dangerous ~~in~~ in the extreme to manipulate the system so blatantly as to undermine its foundations. We did this in 1983 and ended up with a one-party parliament. That is bad enough. To persist on this course when it is clear that your people want no more of it, is to make bad worse. In this context, buying time is not the answer to the ills of our democracy - only a return to ^{it} is. Goodnight.

The Politics of Electoral Arithmetic;
Mr. Seaga's Dilemma

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
May 26, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: There was supposed to be a big JLP meeting here in Kingston and St. Andrew over this past weekend. Expectations were that Prime Minister Seaga would make an important announcement concerning elections - either a big one, or a little one, or both. But that big JLP meeting did not take place. Why not? A fair and reasonable guess would be because of the results of the latest Stone Poll which was the main frontpage story of yesterday's Sunday Gleaner. This Stone Poll was carried out between Friday May 2nd and Friday May 9th, which, as you will remember, was the period immediately after the Prime Minister's announcement of the details of the 1986/87 Budget, dubbed 'the good news Budget'. In other words the people polled already knew about the promised price reductions and the coming spending on works and roads and the like. And the hope among most, if not all, JLP activists and supporters was that this spending spree would bolster the ~~popular~~ JLP and government image among the voters and release a surge of renewed popular support for the Government. And such a renewed surge of popularity would be the basis for fresh elections. This, I think, was the premise on which the weekend mass meeting at Half Way Tree was planned

But then, I suggest, the results of the latest Stone Poll became known, and that meeting was called off, because the poll showed that if elections were called now the PNP would inflict a heavier electoral beating on the JLP than the electoral beating the JLP gave the PNP in October of 1980. In/1980 the polls showed that the JLP had a 50% popular support as against the PNP's 37%. That popular support translated into the greatest electoral victory of our time for the JLP. Now, not quite six years later, that JLP popular support has dwindled to less than the 37% popular support of the PNP in 1980. The JLP popular support today is 32.8% which is roughly 5% points less than the PNP had at its period of greatest unpopularity in 1980. So any election now would result in a greater defeat for the JLP than the PNP suffered in 1980: and the PNP for its part would gain more seats than the JLP won in 1980 because it has two percentage points more popular support than the JLP had in 1980: it has 52% today to the JLP's 50% in 1980. This is the reality of the electoral arithmetic behind the latest Stone Poll. And Mr. Seaga's dilemma is clear: if this is what the electoral picture looks like now, after that just announced massive spending programme, what will it look like later, say next year, when there is no oil windfall? And when no massive new taxation can be mobilised for a new spending spree? Yet if he calls it now the numbers say he'll take a beating and if he puts it off things are not likely to get better. So what does he do? Hang on? Or go for broke? And what of the mood and the wishes of the Jamaican people? Are the people, in this case the Jamaican/ people, not supposed to be at the centre of our electoral system? Is it not their will and their choice which is supposed to prevail? I hope Dr. Broerick just 'mis-spoke' himself in the heat of the moment. Our system belongs to, and is decided by, the people, not the parties. Goodnight

Electoral Politics at Home:
State Terrorism Abroad

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
May 19, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The weekend news has been dominated by the start of Trade Union Week and electoral politics here at home, and by the latest incident of state terrorism in Southern Africa. Last night the racist South African regime sent elements of its armed force into three sovereign African states: Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Planes, helicopters and armoured vehicles were used in attacks on alleged 'terrorist/~~xxxx~~ African National Congress camps in those three countries. The fact is that there are no military camps in any of those three countries: there are political offices and refugee centre but no military training camps of any kind. And the South African racists know this. It is agreed ANC and Frontline States policy not to have ANC military training camps in any of the countries which share common borders with South Africa precisely because they did not want to expose these states to across-the-border attacks from the racists. The sole and solitary exception is Angola which is already in a war situation with ^{South Africa's} ~~xxx~~ black ~~South~~ Angolan ~~xxxxxx~~ surrogate, Jonas Savimbi: in Angola the ANC does have military training camps. So why this violation of the territorial integrity of Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe?. I think it is in part

to undermine the influence of the Commonwealth group of Eminent Persons whose pressures seemed to be gaining ground; in part it was a message to the die-hard white racist militants telling them that the government is not really 'selling them out' but simply playing a deep and devious stalling game of buying time, and, perhaps most important of all, it is the latest in a long campaign of destabilizing those black-ruled countries and make ^{seem} them/ungovernable so that they ^{racists} can say 'blacks really cannot rule themselves': this has been going on for years and has had its greatest success so far in Mozambique. Remember when they attempted to assassinate Robert Mugabe by planting a bomb where he was supposed to make a speech? He ^{did not} ~~wasn't~~ show, so he lives. This undeclared ^{war} goes on all the time. And this morning South Africa's deputy Information Minister told the BBC that last night's attack ^{what} was no more than/the Americans did to Tripoli with the active aid of Britain's Mrs. Thatcher: they ^{too} were simply taking self-protective action against terrorist centres. And since the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies has branded the Soviets ^{as} aiding and abetting terrorism, must we now expect an aided and abetted American raid on Moscow? I don't think so. Today's state terrorists, like the common kind, only hit ^{the weak &} those who cannot hit back. What a sorry state the so-called 'free world' has come to when American action can be used to justify what South Africa did. . And, so, finally back home where an embattled labour movement, weaker than I've seen it in thirty years, observes Trade Union week. I hope it learns from its mistakes and setbacks because it is critically important to the survival and strengthening of our democracy, which has been under severe strain in recent times. So the sooner we return to real parliamentary democracy the better for Jamaica. Will Sunday night tell us the date for that return? Goodnight.

The Politics of Survival;:

~~Where are we going?~~

" *Restructuring our minds* "

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

May 16, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: This odd and curious week has at times felt and sounded/like the first week of a national election campaign: there was that television shot of Mr. Shearer with election posters as backdrop; there was Mr. Seaga's closing of this year's Budget exercise sounding as though he was running hard and slamming hard ~~at~~ an opposition which has not been able to talk back in Parliament these past three years; and there was that vivid (and now disputed) punch-up and knock down in Falmouth's Water Square; and there was that shoddy attempt at a cover-up of the overpricing of the gift of fertiliser from Canada; and there was Mr. Michael Manley's address to his party's People's Forum on the Budget, which reminded us of what a different affair the whole Budget exercise would have been if it had been a two-sided affair instead of the one-party business it now is. And, you know, declaring how virtuously you behaved is really no substitute for a vigorous two-party parliament, especially if your own actions were responsible for the first one-party parliament in Jamaican history since independence. And then, too, the affairs of the Reverend Aaron Dumas being dismissed from the chairmanship of a school board, and noted educator Mr. Noel Monteith, a leading member of the JTA, being vetoed for a principalship, both in circumstances which smack of victimisation, raise

grave doubts about all that inspirational chat about new directions and no victimisation. If at no other time, then at election time, there is the need to ensure that the gap between the word and the deed is not such as to become a credibility problem. Jamaicans, irrespective of party, have a deepseated sense of what is right and what is wrong. And while I am all in favour of a programme of self-reliance, no matter in what new name it is dressed up, I am totally opposed to a policy of massive taxation and minimal social services. Any government which takes much from its people, must provide adequate social services to its people; any people as heavily taxed, directly and indirectly, as are the Jamaican people, have a right to expect decent schooling, adequate health services and other proper social infrastructure. Any government which cannot or will not provide these ^{services,} for whatever reason, should drastically reduce the taxes it takes from the people. (And I am not talking about the politricks of taking one hundred and then giving back five and expecting to be applauded). But the thing that struck, and disturbed, me most about Mr. Seaga's winding-up speech was where he said: "All these elements of the grand design are not unrelated pieces but part of a programme to restructure our minds and our conduct to enter a more disciplined and demanding age." And it is that "restructure our minds" that stuck and disturbed. What does it mean? And who gave anybody or any party the right to 'restructure our minds'? History, from which Mr. Seaga tells us we must learn, is replete with the record of leaders who thought they could 'restructure human minds' and human nature. In our own time there have been several such efforts; but they have all failed, after wars and revolutions, and terrible suffering. And still the human mind has resisted being restructured! I know Jamaicans will not ^{allow their minds to} be 'restructured' and I hope it was just an unfortunate use of words. Goodnight.

The World & Mr. Reagan's America

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
May 12, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The latest opinion polls out of the United States show that some 65% of all Americans think that President Ronald Reagan is doing a fine job, and they are satisfied with his performance as President. Mr. Reagan is now in his sixth year in office and no American President, not even the great Franklin Roosevelt or much-loved John Kennedy, ~~has~~ ever had that kind of popularity this late in his Presidency. Kennedy, of course, was murdered towards the end of his first term, but even at that point he did not have the kind of near universal approval of the American people that Mr. Reagan enjoys today. And Roosevelt, the first and last President ever to be elected four times in succession, always had a strong and large and bitter hard core of 'haters' in the American electorate; so he never had the kind of popularity now enjoyed by Reagan among Americans. In striking contrast, however, Mr. Reagan is violently unpopular in most of the rest of the world: ^{magnify of the} the peoples of Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America who looked with warm respect and, at times, love and admiration, on Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy, largely distrust and ^{and dislike} fear Mr. Reagan. In this respect the gap between how Americans see their President and

how the rest of the world see their President, is probably wider than it has ever been. Indeed, even the leaders of those Western countries which are America's traditional allies tend to be ambivalent about their relations with Mr. Reagan. To be ^{seen} ~~as~~ as too close to Reagan is to risk your electoral chances. And Mrs. Thatcher of Britain, Mr. Reagan's closest and most faithful European ally, has just had an unexpectdly severe mauling in British local government elections: to be sure, there were other causes for the 'Iron Lady's' bad electoral beating: but the Reagan factor was very important. And the indications are that Japan's Prime Minister Nakasone is also going to suffer serious political setbacks, though of a Japanese nature, for his perceived closeness to Mr. Reagan. The Japanese politics of concensus demands that "the nail which sticks out must be hammered down", something Mr. Reagan and his advisors seemed not to understand when they 'leaned' on Mr. Nakasone to make commitments which he could not deliver. Now, the reasons for Mr. Reagan's fantastic popularity at home are understandable. America is no longer being 'pushed around' in the world; she is doing the pushing now. And ^{the American} people like that. There is a sense of self-confidence and self-assurance which had been absent since the defeat in Vietnam. And Mr. Reagan had brought this about, by words and deeds. The communists were smashed in Grenada; their regime is being made unworkable in Nicaragua and now Angola without risking any American lives. International terrorists can be dealt with in their own coin but with a superior form of 'hit-and-run' as against Libya ~~and~~ the threat of the same against Syria or anyone else judged to be terrorists. Things are simple and clearcut again: the world is divided into good guys and bad guys; and we are the good guys. The trouble is the rest of the world knows things are never that simple. Goodnight

The Human Side of
Structural Adjustment

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

May 9, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: On Monday of this week our morning paper carried seven advertisements headed 'For Sale by Public Auction' and with the ominous sub-title: 'under powers of sale containⁱⁿ a mortgage'. In Tuesday's paper there were only three such advertisements; but one of the three was a multiple one offering two separate homes as well as three two-bedroom apartments in the same condominium; so Tuesday's three advertisements was for seven separate homes. On Wednesday there were ten such advertisements. On Thursday there were five; and today there were six. So, between Monday and today, five days of this week, thirty-five Jamaican homes, came under the auction block "under the powers of sale contained in a mortgage". There were other properties up for sale but they did not have the 'mortgage' tag, so I did not include them in this count. Also, in fairness let me say that I do not know how representative this list as an average ~~is~~ is/for other five-day weeks. But even if you had only half this rate of loss of homes it would still be a matter of serious concern. And this is the other side of the coin of structural adjustment. For very many, the loss of job has meant the loss of home; it meant being reduced to the marginal status of which Dr. Errol Miller spoke recently. I think all the gains, real and potential as well as wishful, which are being claimed for the government's

almost total
 'structural adjustment' policy with its/emphasis on balancing the books, must be measured against this human loss of a home. And please, there are profound social, psychological, ~~and~~ spiritual and emotional differences between having a home and having shelter. Shelter is to keep out rain or storm or dark; a home, especially in the context of family, is very much more than ~~just~~ shelter. It ^{sense of} gives a/place, of belonging, of being part of your community and ^{It is a source of pride and self-respect.} at the same time being your own person./For children growing up home is the physical manifestation of roots, the safe retreat from which they go forth to meet the world and life. When you take this from people, for whatever reason, you cripple them as members of a dynamic society. This is what lies behind that bland "under powers of sale contained in a mortgage". This is part of the fearful human price many Jamaicans are paying for the balancing of books. What future for them? For their families? For their children? And who will inherit the ~~sacrificess~~ of those who have kept up with their mortgage payments for ten years or more until they were hit by structural adjustment? The human price here is cruelly unfair. And when you 'privatise' health you condemn the poor to the whims and fancies of 'charity medicine'; and whether it is good, bad or indifferent, it will cease to be a matter of the citizen's right, bought with his or her taxes. It would become, instead, another facet of humiliation and degradation, undermining pride and self respect. I think Bishop Alfred Reid of Montego Bay touch^{ed} a very raw nerve at the launching of Education's Week when he spoke of some people wanting to restrict the scope of education. They say the same thing about education, about health, about housing: We must live within our means. And then they proceed to tax and pressure the people into their mould of what is supposed to be our means. To what end?
 Goodnight.

Poli-tricks at home; Demonology Abroad

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
May 5, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The political sam-fi season is on us, and Jamaica's voters are going to have their work/^{cut out} to avoid being confused and mesmerised and manipulated into giving away their votes in face of a flood of double-talk and 'new think' and big promises. But they have seen too many promises turn to ashes, they have had too much hardship to be as easily fooled this time around as they were at any point in the past. So I ^{expect a majority of} suspect Jamaica's voters, this time around, to examine with cold clarity every promise, every prediction, and especially, every invitation to 'give us your votes and we will do everything for you'. We have been along that road, and I don't think Jamaicans are going to be as trusting again of promises as they once were. Mr. Pearnel Charles, for instance, over this weekend, pretty much suggested that since the JLP was now adopting PNP social policies there was no need to "change course or change horses". ^{~~The promise to provide health is the giveaway.~~} But has the JLP really adopted PNP social policies? ^{The promise to provide health is the giveaway.} I think not. ^{Today} And then, an editorial writer who should know better, talks about last week's Budget as "without additional taxation", when all that had really happened was that the additional taxation, a whopping \$200-million a year of it, was slapped on us in advance on January 7th. Indeed, the Financial

The 1986/87 Budget Exercise Begins

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday

May 2, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Last night's opening by the Prime Minister of the annual Budget exercise - you need at least two opposing sides to call it a debate - indeed contained good news. Any reduction in prices is good news: the price cuts on some basic/food items is good news for all of us, but especially for the poorest and most hard pressed in the society, who, like it or not, bore the brunt of the hardships of this government's 'structural adjustment'. To pretend that we all shared the burden equally is misleading. Some, a small minority, have flourished while many have suffered. And for the many, especially in prices, any easing is good news. There is good news too in the signs of revival of the bauxite industry; though I think we need to go easy on the predictions and projections. We have had experience of earlier predictions and projections dissolving without trace. It seems, too, that the manufacturing sector will have a better deal with credit and that the cost of money to them will ease marginally. But here, too, much will depend on how things are done; but the promise of protecting local manufacturing from deliberate dumping is good and welcome news. To be sure this is an electioneering budget designed to win friends and influence people: so what? That is the name of the game. Much more important than making an

issue out of its being an electioneering budget, is the question of what happens after the elections. Will the reduced prices and easing of pressure on consumers be sustained? Or will we go back to the rampant prices of unregulated market forces? Indeed, the Prime Minister himself has said the re-introduction of price controls was only temporary. And how real and serious is the difference between the government and the World Bank/I.M.F./AID 'fresh look' team? In any serious conflict with an outside force or grouping there is a natural impulse to rally behind our government. 'Standing up' against any such force could pay rich electoral dividends. So, is this part of electoral politics, to last only till after the elections? And what really lies around that corner which the government now claims has been turned? I think the greatest achievement of this government has been to 'balance the books'. The price, in human terms, has been fearful. In the 1970s the PNP put people at the centre of things but failed to pay enough attention to the balancing of the books. Now, the JLP has put the balancing of the books at the centre of things but failed to pay enough attention to people and to the needs of people. And when I listened to Mr. Seaga talking about plans to 'privatise the health service' I remembered vividly a dinner in the late 1970s - I think it was 58' or 57' - at which National Hero Norman Manley spoke to a visiting dignitary about our health services. Jamaica was self-governing but not yet fully independent and he was Premier. Norman Manley's face glowed with pride as he told the visitor that every person in the island was sure of getting ^{an acceptable} ~~some~~ level of health service in case of need, no matter how poor that person was. Caring for the health of the people, like education, and light and water, was the responsibility of the government. ^{So in human terms} How far have we really progressed? ^{since Norman Manley's} Goodnight

Losing a Home: The Mortgage Crisis

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
April 28, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The best and most welcome weekend news was the working out of a formula which made it possible for the Junior Doctors to resume overtime work. We must hope that from here on the negotiations between the government and the Junior Doctors will be free of all manipulative stalling and will result in a fair and reasonable settlement, free of the kind of bitter after-taste we had with the teachers' dispute. And I hope the government will constantly bear in mind that in a genuinely free society overtime work is always voluntary, never compulsory. The most last Thursday's worrying weekend news came out of ~~that~~ public forum on high interest rates, some of whose main points were brought out in yesterday's Exposure Programme on this radio station. And the specific point of concern is what these high **interest** rates are doing to families who have bought homes but who have not yet paid off their mortgages. At that forum, the Managing Director of National Commercial Bank, Mr. Don Banks, said that about 40% of residential mortgages were in arrears. "If arrears were considered to be from the stage of one month and over, some institutions could be said to be about 80% in arrearage and in serious jeopardy". Now, if the institutions handling

the mortgages are in this kind of trouble it means that the people who have to make the regular mortgage payments on their homes are in much worse trouble. Usually, making those mortgage payments is a very high priority, especially in the middle income groups, ranking with the children's schooling and food. And if ^a ~~the~~ family has ~~paid~~ already paid off say ten or fifteen years on a twenty-year mortgage, that family will go to desperate extremes to keep up the payments and avoid losing their home; for at this point the family is fighting for what is probably the single biggest and most important investment in its life. And after ten or fifteen years of steady, regular payments, the real cost of the house has in all probability ^{already} been paid off and what remains to be paid represents interest, insurance and the reward for risk. But what if, at this point, the main family earner, loses his or her job, and ^{regular} payments ~~can~~ can no longer be made? In the real hard world of ^{so-called} 'market forces' the short answer is: Too bad; if you cannot pay, ^{as} your home is auctioned off. But the injustice of it is as glaring ^{as} and much greater ^{than} as the repossession of a piece of furniture or appliance for default when only ^{too} or three more payments remain. I think it is at this point that a sense of compassionate equity should come into play. I think there should be a cutoff point after which no home should be auctioned off because of default on mortgage repayment. It could be either halfway or two-thirds through the life of a mortgage, provided always that the family in question is under genuine hardship. Indeed, I am sure that insurance policies on mortgages could be so adjusted as to protect those who took the financial risks. What is socially and morally unacceptable is that ^{or more} any Jamaican family should have invested ten or fifteen years/ of hard effort to own a home and then to see this home snatched away because of actions and decisions beyond their control. Goodnight.

Jamaica's Community Spirit Under Pressure:
An Invaluable Asset Endangered

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
April 25, 6.10p.m, 1986

Good evening: For a short time yesterday it seemed that the long drawn-out ^{on overtime work} impasse/between the Government of Jamaica and the Junior Doctors' Association would come to an end. After a day of much coming and going and a great deal of 'movement' hopes were high that a settlement was at hand and our battered health services would return to a normal rather than abnormal state of crisis: because, lest we forget, the crisis in our health services goes far beyond the impasse on overtime. Today's frontpage story on the acute shortage of drugs at the University Hospital is just one indicator of that fact. Listen to the call-in programmes and you will get many others. So you would have thought the Government would seize on the chance to settle the Junior Doctors issue. Both the Minister of Health and his Junior Minister, as well as the leadership of the Medical Association of Jamaica had worked very hard for what looked like a breakthrough. But our hopes were dashed and it looks like another weekend of trauma for those needing medical help because of the 'intransigence' of an unyielding government. If the Minister of Health and his Junior Minister

were as opposed to the 'intransigence' of the government over this matter as is almost the entire medical profession, and as seemed to be the case, the question arises: Why did these two Ministers not 'force' the issue by privately offering their resignation? But there is another, much deeper, long-term point of concern over what the MAJ so aptly describes as the Government's 'intransigence'. This same attitude came into play in the dealing with last June's general strike; with the mediating efforts of the Secretary of the JCC; ~~with~~ⁱⁿ the dealing with the teachers. And the worrying thing is that these groups are the ones who have, over the years, fostered and nurtured a rare sense of community in the Jamaicans society which I think ^{is} unequalled anywhere else in the world. The teachers, above all, have singled out and nursed the young ones of promise and talent. They and the churches have quietly built up a sense of community and fellowship; the farmers have helped would-be young farmers through 4-H; the doctors and dentists have given freely of their time, not only because they were 'bonded' but also because it was part of the roots from which they came, and part of the tradition left to them by earlier generations. And so you had all those wonderful self-help, self-stimulating, self-uplifting movements of the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s. Jamaica, despite the party rivalry, was one big united community moving forward under the guidance of political, social and moral leaders who set the tone and gave the impetus. And vast numbers of Jamaicans responded and gave their time and talent freely because of the flow of trust and confidence and interchange of ideas between the leaders and the led. Today, much of this sense of community is under pressure because a new style of leadership which is distant, manipulative, ^{hard} ~~tough~~, unbending, is ^{undermining} ~~threatening~~ this invaluable asset.

Goodnight.

The Crisis in Essential Social Services

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
April 21, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The weekend news here at home was dominated by public preoccupation with two of our key social services - education and health. Yesterday there was an all-day National Convention on Education; and we have just come through the first weekend of a renewed and indefinite work-to-rule by the nation's Junior Doctors, with the nurses, who are the backbone and the grossly underpaid workhorses of Jamaica's health services. I ^{did} ~~could~~ not attend the the Educational Convention so comment on its details and recommendations must ~~await~~ its report. The news report, however, highlighted the call for the widening of the Task Force to included representatives from the University, CAST and the student bodies. But the news reports were ~~silent~~ on the question of the Terms of Reference of the Task Force. And, surely, it must be the issue of the Terms of Reference of the Task Force that is paramount. The ^{question} ~~issue~~ has never been whether students in tertiary institutions should or should not bear a share of the cost of their higher education. Indeed, they always have. The real issues were the level of the cess to be charged, and the rate of interest to be paid on the loans the overwhelming majority of students would have to go in for. WIGUT - the West ~~Indies~~ Group

of University Teachers - has made an overpowering case against both the size of the proposed cess and the high rate of interest to be paid on loans. It was a clear, sober, carefully research^d and statistically backed case which was published as a Gleaner advertisement on March 6th of this year. But despite this and much else, the Prime Minister/^{last Thursday} told the Task Force that "the level of cess and^d the rate of interest could not be varied but the terms of repayment and level of additional borrowings to cover the expenditure were the particular areas on which the Task Force should deliberate". The basic objections are ignored: like it or not, you are going to pay these exorbitant charges and interest rates though we are prepared to be a little flexible about how you pay. So, as I see it, unless cess and interest rates the/~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ are also up for examination, the whole exercise is largely cosmetic and public relations - which have their points of course. But increasingly, as the Junior Doctors are now showing, the business of administrative cosmetology and the big stall are things of diminishing returns. So they are digging in their heels and demanding something concrete before again sitting down to endless chat. The trouble is that this is not good for anybody: it is wrong for any group in the society to have to deal with the government of the country on the basis of mistrust because the relations are confrontational, based on who can outwit or out-manipulate whom. Our essential social services are in a mess because of this and because 'cutting and carving' at everyone's expense seems to be the first priority, with savagely punitive taxation as the second. Not even people's savings are safe. And the certainty of serious taxes coming once a year at Budget time is a thing of the past: now they come any time, anyhow, in any guise: and the mood of distrust and confrontation grows while the ^{essential} social services decline. Goodnight.

The Responsibilities of Being a Superpower:
Terrorism Before and After Gaddafi

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
April 18, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The Americans have now bombed Libya - so the big question is: What next? Where do they, and the rest of the world, go from here? If there is more terrorism, as seem certain; if more Americans are killed, as also seem certain, will there be more bombings of Libya? If the killings are traced to terrorist groups in ~~Liby~~ Lebanon, will Lebanese cities be bombed? If the terrorists are Iranians or Iraqis or Syrians, will the cities of those countries be bombed? Or will Gaddafi be the "fall guy" for the Americans in every case? It is now clear that the main target of this week's American bombing was to kill Gaddafi. In this they have failed this time. And it looks as though the attempts to follow up with an internal coup, led by the CIA supported and financed National Front for the Salvation of Libya, has also failed. So Gaddafi lives on till the next bombing or the next coup attempt. But what if Gaddafi, instead of his little daughter, had been killed in the bombing? Or what if there had been a successful coup and Gaddafi had died in that? Would it have put an end to terrorism? And is this really the best and most responsible and most effective way for a superpower, any superpower, to deal with this vexed and

most complex problem? ~~The~~ America's European allies clearly do not think so. And despite the fact that British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe found himself embarrassed by his Prime Minister after agreeing with the Europeans about not permitting the use of their bases, and despite that vote in the British Parliament, the overwhelming majority of the British people were opposed to the use of their bases, according to two authoritative opinion polls. So either the overwhelming majority of the people of the earth are wrong in saying that this is not the way to deal with terrorism, and only the United States is ~~xxx~~ in step; or else the United States is out of step with the rest of the world. And I think the rest of the world is right. Before Gaddafi was born and when he was a baby, Jewish terrorists, among them one Menachem Begin and one Ytzak Shamir, were ^{killing} ~~among~~ British soldiers and administrators in then British-controlled Palestine. The British were the 'superpower' of the time, and they did not mount a counter-terror or try to kill the terrorist leaders of those days. They may have wanted to, but their role and their responsibilities as a world power dictated other ways of action which were often more painful and slow, but were effective in the end. The point is that terrorism did not begin with Gaddafi and will not end with his murder, however engineered. Murdering Kenyatta would not have stopped the 'terrorism' of the Mau Mau; ^{murdering Mugabe} ~~murdering~~ would not have stopped the so-called 'terrorist' bush war against white racism in Rhodesia. ^{Murdering Gaddafi will not end the Palestinian problem} There are other, more effective ways to handle such problems, and being a superpower whose actions can determine the peace of the world, imposes vastly greater responsibilities than the current macho Israeli-style response to terrorism. ^{If America fails to understand} ~~xxxxxx from the xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ this she will lose the war of ideas. Goodnight.

- 1) Libya: Europeans Resist Reagan
- 2) Fr. Holung on Living Beyond Our Means

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
April 14, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: A large flotilla of United States warships is still in place off the Libyan coast but developments over the weekend suggest that Mr. Reagan's European allies are so firmly against any new military attack on Libya that the Reagan hand may be stayed. Britain, West Germany, France, Italy - the key American allies - have all firmly opposed military action or the use of bases on their territories to launch such action. And West European Foreign Ministers are meeting today to give formal and united expression to their opposition and to propose alternative and non-military ways to pressure and isolate Libya's Gaddafi. So, for the moment at least, the threat of military violence has been eased. Of course, the Americans may still decide to go it alone. But if they do, they may pay a very high and bitter long-term price. First, and most important, would be the widening of the rift between America and her European allies, which would also give further impetus to the campaign against American bases in Europe. Second, it would alienate the so-called moderate Arab states and force them to rally

behind Gadafi in order not to be branded as 'stogges' of the U.S. by angry Islamic mobs: and it ~~will~~ ^{would} invest Gadafi with the aura of an Arab national hero. And third, it would be a massive propaganda coup for the Soviets who ~~will~~ ^{would} appear even more as the reasonable, moderate, peace-seeking super-power as against the bully-boy, muscle-flexing and world-threatening American super power. It seems that Mr. Reagan has painted himself into an unnecessarily difficult corner by his determination to be seen as 'strong'. We must hope the Europeans will come up with a course of non-military action which will get Mr. Reagan, as well as the rest of the world, off the hook. Even the greatest power on earth can be 'strong and wrong'. Here at home, that dedicated Christian friend of the poor, Father Richard Holung, has revived the talk of Jamaicans, as a people and a country, living beyond their means. The question is: what are our means, as a nation? Father Holung singled out those among us who own satellite dishes, drive Mercedes Benzes (the Africans call them AmaBenzi) and live in palatial homes. But these, you know, are a tiny fraction of the national Jamaican community. I don't think they make up as much as 10% of the Jamaican community. This 10% or ^{indeed} less may ^{'our'} be living beyond ^{though not their means} their means: but how can you ^{judgement} apply this / to the other 90%? Roughly one third of our labour force is unemployed and the number is growing; and of those in jobs, something over 80% earn \$100 dollars a week or less, and are subject to ^{Large numbers are on Food Stamps dol.} usuriously high prices and taxation on every conceivable possession. /How can these be said to live beyond their means? I think we are again falling victim to the "even-handedness" syndrome where we blame both sides for political violence and so avoid having to identify specific instances and individuals. And this, like it or not, is a cop out. The truth is ^{because} most Jamaicans live in poverty, ^{small} a minority ^{live} beyond 'our' means. Goodnight.

Nightmares, Fantasies & Brutal Facts

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
April 11, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The approach of elections - local or national - has triggered that all-too-familiar outpouring of big chat signifying little more than a desire to distract attention from hard and ^{local} immediate/problems. So, instead of discussing/~~xxxxxx~~ the very serious ~~xxxxxx~~ and ~~xxxx~~ dangerous starving of funds of the University of the West Indies⁶ callers to our radio people's forums, or at least some of them, try to direct our attention to things far away, like demanding that the political parties make Libyan terrorism ~~an~~ election issue. Terrorism of every kind, not only Libyan, is an issue to be sure; but it is not more important than the slow financial strangulation of the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies; or the painful growing of raw hunger and malnutrition in the land; or the massive~~x~~ unemployment about which those with power seem to be doing little; or our poor health services. And, talking of unemployment, that massive road work programme, when it comes, will ease things considerably, especially for people in the rural areas. And I think the call by the present PNP leader for us to return to the 6ld Bustamante-Norman Manley-formula of 40-40-20 in the giving out of that road work will, if accepted, make it less of a party political fish-head business. So it is going to be most revealing to see how

the distribution of this road work is going to be handled. Jamaicans are neither as foolish nor as gullible as some politicians, especially when in power, take them to be. Both PNP and JLP politicians have learnt this to their cost in the past. I suspect it is a lesson they are going to learn again and again. And then we have had that other distracting fantasy, the launching of the Jamaican American Party, with its sole aim of making Jamaica a part of the United States. Is it accident, coincidence or design that the launching is at this time? And what makes me describe it as a fantasy is the fact that nowhere does Mr. Chisolm ^{or} and his supporters tell us how the Americans feel about this idea. You cannot just become part of another man's land or his household or his family unless he wants you to, especially if he is so much bigger and stronger than you. So, has Mr. Chisolm and Company asked the Americans if it will be allright for us to become a part of their Union? Has he checked the U.S. House of Representatives? Has he checked the Senate? Has he checked this government's very good friend in the White House? I think if he does he will find that they do not want us as a part of their Union. They do not have the same historical responsibilities for us as they have for Puerto Rico or Hawai or the U.S. Virgin Islands. Jamaicans have a bad enough time getting visas, so why should they want to welcome all ^{some} ~~nearly~~ two-and-a-quarter ^{million} of us? Until Mr. Chisolm can show proof that they want us and will accept us, it is sheer fantasy and waste of time and energy for Jamaicans to even debate the matter. Compared with this one, debating Libyan and other terrorism - like that of South Africa and Israel and the United States too - is vastly more important: which is why the Europeans are privately terrified out of their wits by America's muscle-flexing in the Mediterranean. And we have urgent problems of our own right here at home. Goodnight.

The Politics of Survival:
Where Are We Going?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
April 7, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: A country's national Budget is, traditionally, the single most important pointer to where that country is going. So where is Jamaica going? Where are we going? Are the pointers clear enough for us to read them? On the same day last week that the Throne Speech told us that as the exchange rate of the Jamaican dollar has now stabilised "the upward movement of ~~basic~~ prices of basic items caused by devaluation should cease", on that same day we had the news of the price increase on cooking oil. And now we have the news of the increase on the price of cigarettes- which is not a basic necessity, except for those who are hooked. The only pointer here is to the gap between the rhetoric and the reality. And that sort of gap always confused. And on Saturday, hard on the heels of the ^{Tabled} ~~over~~ \$580-million for Education in 1986/87, we had ^{boxed and coloured} that disturbing/front-page Gleaner item about more teachers than was normally the case taking leave without pay in order to go abroad. Large numbers of teachers are unemployed; and now abnormally large numbers of teachers are opting to go overseas without pay. The JTA is concerned because the unemployed teachers who can stand-in for those who have gone will be 'temporary' and can remain so for years. What are the pointers here? Not good, I fear. And then, at that

same Leadership Workshop where an officer of the Ministry of Education made public this increase in teachers going on leave-without-pay, the President-elect of the JTA, Professor Errol Miller said: "Jamaica does not know where it is going. The politicians do not know where they are taking us." And yet, the fact that there is confusion, the fact that the gap between rhetoric and reality seems to grow wider, does not mean we are not going somewhere. It is a law of life that nothing stands still, that there is always movement, be it for good or ill. And if we look very closely we see the movement. No country is completely independent economically; there are relative degrees of independence. But the shape and size of our debt burden ^{economically} makes us more/dependent now than we've been since Independence. More than 40c of every dollar of foreign exchange we earn go straight ^{back} to our overseas money-lenders. And when we do not earn enough to 'service' those debts, we borrow more and slip deeper into economic bondage. We are at a stage now where it is impossible to see a point in time when we ^{or our children will} have paid off our debts and can spend all we earn on improving life for Jamaicans. And each time we borrow the bondage becomes worse. To stop the rot we need to set drastic limits on what any Jamaican government, of any party, can borrow during any single term in office, and what they must spend such borrowed money on. If we don't do this, and soon, we will be forever trapped in a new form of economic slavery. And we need to cut our repayment ^e schedule by something like half. That would be bad enough but it would give us a change. So what are the pointers? I think that we are not going in the direction which is best for Jamaican sovereignty, or for relative Jamaican ^{long-term} economic independence. To be sure it is a good and profitable direction for some; but not for the majority. So the question remains: ^{after the suffering} what, in specific quantifiable terms, are the majority of Jamaicans to look for at harvest time? Goodnight

The 1986/87 Spending Estimates

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
April 4, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The Governor-General's Throne Speech on Wednesday, and yesterday's tabling in Parliament of the spending Estimates for the financial year 1986/87 by the Prime Minister, give, when examined together, an interesting glimpse into the shape of things to come in the course of this year. The text of what the Governor-General said was upbeat. "Let us," he said at the end, "resolve that this will be the year that the fruits of the adjustments of the last three years will mature and that the harvest will go towards easing the burdens of personal sacrifice." Implicit in this, as indeed in the entire Throne Speech, was the idea that the worst was now behind us - that the lay-offs, the high prices, the cutbacks, the heavy burden ^{of} ~~xxx~~ taxation were now largely things of the past - and that from here on life should be easier for most if not all Jamaicans. And the numbers in the spending Estimates confirm this optimistic forecast. Overall spending is nearly 23% more than in last year's Budget; and Capital or developmental spending is double what it was last year. And even the Recurrent side of spending shows ^{percentage} increases for all the major Ministries: from a low of just over 3% for the Ministry of Agriculture to a high of just under 15% for the Ministry of Finance. All of this is positive. But there is of course the

other side of the coin, which is the often bitter price Jamaicans have had to pay for the 'adjustment' whose fruits we are told will go to easing the burdens of personal sacrifice. It is good that our dollar has stabilised; but it has stabilised at over 300% less than it was worth a mere three years ago. So the price of that stability is a 300% drop in the real buying value of our dollar. Indeed, the very size of our spending Budget must be set against this massive reduction in the value of the buying power of our dollar. How do you 'ease' this burden? The Israelis tried to cope with this one by pegging wages and prices to the value of their currency. We simply allowed living standards to be depressed to the point where the middle-class, as a significant grouping in the society, is endangered, and where the signs of raw hunger and malnutrition are clearly visible on our streets and lanes once more. And what of the thousands who have been laid-off during the 'adjustments' of the past three years? How do we ease things for them and their families? What do we do with strong proud men and women in their middle years - in their twenties and thirties and forties - whose jobs have left them? Please don't get me wrong. There are good things in this spending Budget. The trouble is we have fallen so far back and lost so much ground that these good things can bring very little ease, and only to a lucky few. And elective Party politics being what they are, that enormous and welcome \$200-million to be spent on roads ^{this one single} in ~~the~~ year will almost inevitably turn out as largely political pump-priming because elections, local, and perhaps even national, are on this year's agenda. What I think could have made ^{much more} a very/real difference in easing the burdens of personal sacrifice would have been if our debt servicing were 20% instead of 40% of export earnings: that would have allowed over \$1,000 ^{WCS} for real 'easing' of some raw human suffering in Jamaica today. Goodnight.

- 1) Barbados Lobbies for Jamaica
- 2) Dangerous Political Point-scoring
- 3) Cheque-book Warfare

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
Mch 24, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The most startling piece of ^{weekend} regional news was that CANA story out of Barbados quoting Bajan Prime Minister Bernard St. John as saying Barbados is lobbying for international aid for Jamaica and Guyana. All we had been told had led me to belief that we were the pacesetters for the region of matters of aid and trade and lobbying generally. After all, we are the ones with the closest personal connections with the most powerful ones up North! So how come little Barbados has to lobby on our behalf? Shouldn't it be the other way round? Or is there something we have not been told? Or is it an updated version of that famous World War Two bit which urged Britain to carry on as Bimshire was behind it? Any way you look at it, it puts an added strain on credibility all round. For if there is any truth to it - and Bajan are usually practical down-to-earth people - then we have lost sight of the tunnel itself, let alone any sort of glimmer of light anywhere. Equally startling in a very different way, are the ongoing and often fierce attempts to squeeze some sort of party political mileage out of that outbreak of lawlessness following the PNP's

vigil and march from Half Way Tree two ~~Sunday~~ weeks ago. You would have thought that on this matter of political hooliganism at least our two major parties would want to show a solidarity of disapproval. Instead, some of them ^{are} ~~are~~ running hard at scoring points. Jamaica really can do without this. We have had our bellyful of this kind of ^{destructive} ~~politics~~ politics in the past; and most Jamaicans want no more of it. One of the troubles ^{with} ~~of~~ this kind of politics is that it distracts attention from the hard issues and replaces the politics of ~~these~~ issues by the politics of polarisation and confrontation: in short, it evokes the very worst features of political tribalism. I think Jamaicans should be on guard and should watch closely to see who fans this brand of politics; if we don't put an end to it, this type of politics will put an end to our democracy. Indeed, as we are seeing on the international scene, the use of political polarisation, and the pushing of it to an extreme form, has now become one standard method of undermining national stability, of making countries ungovernable and thus of bringing down governments. The South African regime is doing it in both Mozambique and Angola by arming and financing the enemies of ^{these} ~~the~~ regimes. The United States ^{is} ~~is~~ doing it in Nicaragua in the name of fight communism and for Human Rights, even though the U.S. human rights group Americas Watch have said "the most violent human rights abuses are being committed by the contras, and that the Reagan administration's policy of support for the contras is, therefore, a policy clearly inimical to human rights." But still Mr. Reagan presses for big money for the contras. The fight is not for democracy or human rights but against the communists. And the alternative to Americans, or white South Africans dying in the fight against communists, is to arm and finance contra groups. The catch is, whoever wins democracy loses.

Goodnight.

Sharpville Remembered^d
The Anatomy & Consequence of State Terrorism

NEW COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Friday
March 21, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Today, March 21st, marks the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Sharpville Massacre in South Africa. On this day, twenty-six years ago, 69 men, women and children, all part of a mass peaceful protest demonstration against the Pass Laws, were killed by South African police. Hundreds of others were wounded. The records show that until the time of the shooting the protest demonstration was peaceful; not even a stone had been thrown. Those who did the shooting were white and had the support and approval of the state; those who did the dying and the bleeding were black. The most powerful modern state on the African continent had used raw violence to put down a peaceful protest against an unjust and degrading law; ~~it~~ this action was ~~intended~~ intended, government spokesmen said at the time, to serve notice on all 'trouble-makers' and 'communists' of what they could expect in any future demonstrations and protests. There were world-wide protests at the Sharpville Massacre. But Apartheid survived; foreign investments continued; the racist regime seemed more securely entrenched as a result of that violent act of state terrorism. Indeed, it was immediately after that massacre that both the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, as well as a host of other smaller anti-Apartheid groups, were banned. Thousands were taken into detention without trial. Shortly after

More than 1000
1

that almost the entire leadership of the nationalist movement was arrested. Some fled into exile. Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, Robert Subukwe and the two top men in the ANC, were arrested, as were the top men of the PAC. State terrorism seemed to have broken the nationalist movement, and sensing this, the white rulers of South Africa became more ruthlessly brutal in dealing with any show of protest. ^{When} ~~For~~ something works, use it to the hilt. This, I suggest, explains that particularly brutal murder of Steve Biko. No other country in the world today - communist, fascist, rightwing or leftwing dictatorship - uses state terrorism as ^{systematically} brutally and pervasively as do the South African racists.. And it is this, in the end, which has evoked the new mood of militant and violent reaction to the terrorism of the state. For the present it is mainly the blacks who are dying: the state kills its almost daily quota; and the nationalists kill their quota of those who collaborate with the terrorist state. But here and there the violence has begun to touch the lives of the whites. ANC freedom fighters (a totally different breed from those Mr. Reagan calls freedom fighters) are slowly getting better at the business of warfare: they are slipping back into the country after training. Not all are caught. Their internal support is strong and growing stronger. And the children are fighting and dying. It is just a matter of time before they will turn on the whites and kill them too. Counter-terror is an almost inevitable consequence of this kind of state terrorism. All this stems from what happened at ^{six} Sharpsville twenty/years ago today. And I think one of the sad things about it is that the whites are making it impossible for ^{selves} ~~them~~ and their descendents to have much of a future in South Africa after the terror. People ^{whose kin} ~~who~~ have been killed, tortured, brutalised and scattered, at times find it hard to forgive, ^{Ask the Israelis} Goodnight

- 1) Education: The Crisis Eases
- 2) The Politics of the Oil Savings
- 3) OPEC - A Spent Force

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
March 17, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The wage dispute between this nation's teachers and the government~~h~~ has finally been settled. And students at both CAST and the University today returned to their classes. And so this weekend saw an enormous easing in the crisis of education in Jamaica. And this, from wherever you stand, is welcome news, for the present at least. Not all the issues have been resolved; many tricky problems still lie ahead. But at least there is a little breathing space. And the good thing about any breathing space is that it gives you time to think a little more calmly, to take stock under a little less pressure, and perhaps to work out where things went wrong and how to do them better the next time around. And I think there is a great deal of serious re-thinking that needs to be done about how and why and where we got into this awful educational impasse. Why, for instance, did the negotiations between the government and the teachers reach such a depressing level of bitterness? Mr. Victor Edwards' "We will remember the insults" speech is a telling indication of just how great a job of fence-mending lies ahead. And where the greatest power lies, there also lies the greatest responsibility to begin

Jamaica and
 that job. And so, for the sake of/Jamaica's children, we must hope
 that the fence-mending will begin soon, and that it will be a serious
 effort. No matter what wonderful plans we may have; no matter how
 modern and sophisticated the equipment; no matter how marvelous
 the buildings and other infra-structure; without good and dedicated
 and reasonably happy teachers there can be no really good education.
 Teachers are the base; they are the irreplaceable essential. We
 have tended to blurred this point over recent months. It is time we
 see it clearly again. And I hope the young people at CAST and the
 University, and indeed the society as a whole, will try to refine
 their thinking on this question of tertiary education. I think the
 WIGUT advertisement of March 6 and the statement on fees from the
 University's Academic Committee are sober, realistic and balanced
 pointers to how this matter can be resolved. And we must hope that
 the resolution, this time, will not be as long-drawn-out as was the
 teachers dispute, and, above all, that it will be free of bitterness.
 Here again, where lies the greatest power lies also the greatest
 responsibility. And finally, isn't it ironic that our two major
 political parties cannot even agree on the nature of that very
 welcome oil-price windfall! They quibble about the size of/xx -
 the government says \$220-million; the PNP say \$715-million; and now
 economist Mark Ricketts says that we will really save over \$1,000-
 million for this year alone! And I, for one, do not see oil prices
 suddenly shooting up again within the next year or two or three.
 I think OPEC, as a price-fixing cartel, is a spent force. It had a
 chance, in the 1970s, to reorder world financial and trading relations
 between the North and the South. It blew that chance and squandered
 resources. Now it is a spent force, and Our windfall won't suddenly
 disappear. Goodnight.

Tertiary Education in Jamaica:
How Not to Make Policy

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Friday
March 14, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: A news release from the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies yesterday, says that the Academic Committee of the university has endorsed the findings of a sub-committee on finance and general purposes which says that the government's announced fees for CAST and University students are too high compared with other parts of the world. It also ~~says~~ questions the ability of scholars at these two institutions to obtain and repay a loan of the size required. In short, it is the view of those most competent to judge that the proposed fees and conditions are too high; and that the size and terms/of the loans the government plans to make will be beyond the ability of most students to manage. So here we come up against our first major problem of the way in which this government of Jamaica makes public policy. If the government had first checked with the administrators of CAST and the University, it would have had this information before making its announcement. And if it had that information, and if it had adjusted its numbers in accordance with that information, all the trauma we have been through in recent days - the protests and demonstrations and road-blocks and tear-gassing and police batons -

could, and probably would have been avoided; and the public debate would have been a balanced and rational searching for solutions. Instead, an obviously ill-informed government, strong on ideology but woefully weak on fact, threw out its announcement ^{without} ~~with hardly~~ any real prior consultation. And when this was met ^{with} ~~with~~ shock and anger, its reaction was ^{the familiar} a mixture of truculence and stubbornness - with the only small concession being the after-thought offer of a Task Force: and then, on that unfortunate Sunday broadcast, even this was used as a weapon of threat. And, surely, the Prime Minister must have read, or been informed, of the advertisement published in the Gleaner of March 6, by The West Indies Group of University Teachers, Mona, which spelled out facts and figures. It showed, for instance, that students ^{at} ~~and~~ UWI and CAST, right now before any new fees, already have to find between \$9,000 and \$10,000 every year for boarding, meals, transport, and fees. It showed that in 1973 they contributed between \$15 and \$27 for every \$100 spent on their education; and that in 1985/86 they are paying between \$24 and \$43 for every \$100 ^{so spent}. To know these facts and figures and then to talk about 'freeness' is (extreme and irresponsible) provocation. And here we come up against the second major problem of the way in which this government of Jamaica makes public policy. All the indications are that it decides on a course of action, often without knowing all the facts, and then marches ahead, ^{stubbornly} deaf, dumb and blind to reason for as long as it thinks it can get away with it. And so every issue becomes confrontational. We saw it with the teachers, the Junior Doctors and others. And this, whatever else it is, is destructive of stability and of orderly social management. Again and again, we have had to have confrontation before an issue could be resolved. And this, I suggest, is one key reason for poor performance. Our problems can be managed and solved without this massive waste of time and energy. Goodnight.

A Traumatic Week for Health,
Education, Industrial Relations.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
March 10, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Developments over this past weekend point to this week being one of the more traumatic and unsettling in the areas of our health services, our education system, and on our industrial relations scene. Both the Prime Minister's speech last night, and the PNP's rally and all-night vigil were reflections of the deeply troubled state of this nation. And so, against all form and ^{against} all past record, I held on to a very small and very faint hope that this time the Prime Minister would resist what ^{an almost conditioned} seems/~~xxxxxxxx~~ impulse on his part to 'show muscle', to be tough and unyielding; I hoped that instead he would make some small meaningful gesture of conciliation, like reducing to concessional terms the level of interest on the proposed student loans. ~~But~~ Any such gesture would have defused and transformed the national mood and atmosphere, and would have made conciliation and reconciliation that much more possible. But he was tough and unyielding as ever, threatening that his largely tokenist after-thought/^{proposed} Task Force may be withdrawn if the students do not 'come to heel'; and hinting at the consequences if the Junior Doctors did not return to 'normal' which, in this case/^{means} grossly excessive working hours of overtime at ridiculous rates. And , of course, everybody else

was to blame for what was wrong and for what had gone wrong. Only the government admitted to no blame, no fault, no mistake. Why, even the two unfortunate members of the IDT who responded to/^{universally perceived} government pressure disguised as a request for /clarification' by half reversing themselves, were blamed ~~and~~ with the hint at removal: no hint of government complicity in the destruction of the credibility of the IDT. Instead, another veiled threat against workers and their unions if they dared to boycott the IDT. This is not how democratically elected governments are expected to deal with those who elected them. The very nature of the relationship between those who do the electing and those they elect demands a two-way flow of communication, understanding and co-operative give-and-take. Without this two-way flow, and the/^{principle of} government by consent implicit in it, democratic government cannot survive for long. Giving a government a five-year mandate does not mean giving it a blank cheque for those five years without any reference to those who put it there; it does not mean five years of dictatorship. Such a government, if it is to be true to the principle of government by consesnt, must still give heed to the mood and the wishes of its people. If it does not it becomes subversive of the/^{very} process that brought it to power. And we have seen this happen again and again in other places. So why not here? Look at education. The overwhelming majority of Jamaicans are very clear about how they want their ^{education and their} teachers to be treated. The government is the 'odd man out' on this ⁱⁿ one; its policies here are not/accord with the clearly expressed will of the people. This is no short-term, transient matter, but a matter of profound long-term national interest which will determine the shape and quality of Jamaica's future for generations to come. Can any government, anywhere, defy the clear will of the people on such a profound matter and still be democratic? Goodnight.

Collapse of Conciliation
~~The Muscle-flexing Invitation~~
~~to~~ the Politics of Chaos

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Friday
March 7, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: When you are dealing with a group of men and women who are skilled and highly trained professionals, and whose commitment and integrity are beyond question, the worst possible thing you can do is to try and bully and intimidate and threaten them into doing what you want. And yet that is precisely what the Minister of the Public Service did last night in his broadcast on the Junior Doctors' issue and their decision to strike today and to put in only their regular eight-hour-day after that. To be sure, Mr. Errol Anderson's language was very carefully chosen, and the threat was ^{as} veiled as it could be made without completely losing its message. But it was there all the same: return to 'normal' immediately and take your case to the Supreme Court or else the full force of the power of the government will be turned against ^{you} ^{business}. A court case can be a very time-consuming/~~exercise~~ and can therefore be used as an excellent stalling device. So, where do we go from here? If the record of other disputes are pointers, then we are in for yet another show-down with the government 'hanging tough' - no matter how long it takes - until 'the other side' bows or bends

or breaks and gives in. The government itself will not yield 'one inch of ground' not change its policies by 'one blade of grass'. And this is, of course, the ultimate in the politics of confrontation. The government makes a decision, takes a stand, declares its position, and that is it. You can meet to discuss that decision and make suggestions to improve or vary it in minor respects; such suggestions, or some of them, may or may not be accepted depending on their merits. What you cannot do, what will not be allowed, is to demand that any decision be changed or reversed. This, now, is the new meaning of 'consultation'. And the new meaning of confrontation is to be actively opposed to any government decision. And so, by this new meaning of old words, it is the Junior Doctors who are being 'confrontationist' and against the 'national interest', just as the teachers are, just as is anybody who does not/accept whatever the government decides. The truth of the matter is that Jamaica has never in this century, not even under colonialism, had a government as rigidly unbending as this one when it comes to listening to the Jamaican people and responding to their pleas, appeals and protests. And so, in pursuit of having its way, no matter what, the/carefully built-up industrial relations conciliation machinery has been shattered ^{by an ex-trade unionist} to score a transient victory. What machinery will the workers trust tomorrow? Or does it not matter as long as you win today? The people of Jamaica, at all levels, and in all parties, do not in the main want to plunge this country into chaos and turmoil. And so they will tend to back off every time a 'strong' government refuses to yield, even when they see it as being wrong. And this concern for peace and stability has often been misread for apathy and passivity. I hope the government is not making that mistake for that will surely lead to the politics of chaos. Goodnight

Moderation & Extremism -
a Question of Perception & Self-interest

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
March 3, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: As I watched and listened to the telecast of Prime Minister Seaga's speech to the mid-year ~~board~~ meeting of the West Indies Jaycees in Port-of-Spain last night, two thoughts built a recurring pattern in my mind. First, a country's foreign policy is and must be a logical extension of its domestic policy; and second, for that policy to have any credibility there must always be a reasonable measure of unity and harmony between the verbal expression of that policy and its carrying out in action. This is the context in which to examine any statement on freedom and democracy, no matter in what forum it is enunciated. So a fair question is: How does Mr. Seaga's words measure up~~t~~ to his governments deeds? No question about it: Mr. Seaga is right when he says the 'image' of Jamaica as a stable society is a deal better now than it was in the 1970s. The mood and atmosphere of instability then was notorious: we all still remember the violence and the arson and the killings; today things are quiet and stable by contrast. But is all this really the simple result of the policies of 'moderat-

ion'? If the People's National Party had been as 'confrontationist' in the 1980s as the Jamaica Labour Party had been in the 1970s; if they had spoken the same language of 'lockdown' and shutdown tight as a sardine can, ^{and overthrow & under-throw} would the 1980s be as relatively stable as they are? Jamaicans who have been through the 1970s and the 1980s up to this point, would know how to ask and answer such questions. I doubt whether the same can be said for Trinidadians. Then there was the claim of the universal respectability of our 'image' today. This ^{especially} is true/as far as North America is concerned, and as far as some rightwing regimes in the Third World are concerned. But it is not true for the bulk of the Third World and the non-aligned movement. I am sufficiently in touch to know that our 'image' in the Third World and non-aligned movement is vastly poorer than it was in the 1970s. Today, many of them see us as an American surrogate. The 'foreign press' has been kinder to us, and perhaps less manipulated against us, ^{today} than it was in the 1970s. And how truly 'moderate' have our domestic policies been? Moderation presupposes consultation, mediation, consensus resulting in agreed policies and approaches. The multi-party parliament is perhaps the highest expression of this process. And while we had this process in the 1970s we do not have it today. And how 'moderate' have we been in dealing with our teachers, nurses, doctor, and students? Is emasculating the trade union movement an expression of political moderation? You know, just as there can be leftwing extremism, so there can be rightwing extremism. Make no mistake about it: there was a problem of ^{verbally translated} leftwing extremism in the 1970s; and this was part of the reason why Jamaicans turned against the PNP then. Now, like it or not, the general public perception is that we are faced with a problem of rightwing extremism which puts numbers before people. So whose moderation ^{are we talking about?} ~~is it~~? Goodnight

A Nation's Money: The Problem of
Accountability

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
February 28, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The most welcome news of this week - and of this month - was the relatively peaceful ending of the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. Never mind that some high-up Americans are now sounding as though it was really their idea all the time and that they almost brought it about: all sorts of odd people usually tend to claim paternity for anything really good. So let them be: we know the people of the Philippines got rid of their dictator with very little help from anybody else. The bad part of this business - and I made mention of it on Monday - is the extent to which Marcos, and a little earlier, 'Baby Doc' Duvalier, plundered the resources of their countries. Estimates are that Mr. Marcos has plundered his country of anywhere up to three thousand-million dollars U.S. during his twenty years in power. That, by any measure, is an enormous sum of money, and larger than the national budgets of most of the smaller Third World countries. And there are suggestions that Mr. Marcos may get away with most, if not all, of this loot. Others have, so why not Marcos. But the case of Haiti is, in proportionate terms, even worse. The Philippines is a potentially rich country; Haiti is dirt poor; so the Duvalier plunder of between \$200-million and \$500-million is a much more terrible blow. Indeed, the Haitian

treasury was reported to have been left with only a half-a-million-dollars when Duvalier fled. So how can countries, especially/^{dirt}poor countries, protect themselves from this kind of savage plunder? By being democracies and operating free and open elective parliamentary systems, you say; and you are right. But please remember that Mr. Marcos came to power in just such a system. Unlike Duvalier Mr. Marcos was freely elected to power, and that did not prevent the later corruption and plunder. So just having an elective democracy is not, by itself, a guarantee against plunder. There/^{must}~~xxx~~also be ongoing checks and balances and, above all, there must be public accountability about the handling of a nation's money, and that accountability must be clear for all to see and to understand. This, in the main, was one of the great virtues of our democracy. For instance, by tradition and convention the Public Accounts Committee of Jamaica's Parliament was always presided over by the Member of Parliament who was the Opposition spokesperson on Finance. In the past, when the JLP was in power, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee was the PNP spokesman on Finance. And when the PNP was in power the JLP spokesman on Finance was the Chairman of the Committee. The checks and balances were there, clear for all of us to see. Now, unfortunately, we have a one-party parliament and so there is no parliamentary Opposition ^{to preside over the committee which} spokesman/~~to~~ examines the nation's public accounts. To say this is not to question the integrity of the present Public Accounts Committee or any or all of its members. It is simply to point out an~~d~~ unfortunate and unhealthy situation in public accountability which is the direct result of certain political decisions and political actions. And the sooner we return to a situation where our public accounts are examined and approved by a bi-partisan ^{fiscal} parliamentary committee, the better for Jamaican democracy and accountability. Goodnight.

The Crisis in the Philippines

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
February 24, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The attention of key people in almost all the world's power centres has been on
/ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ / The fast-moving developments in the Philippines over this past weekend. The Philippine crisis is at ^{its most} critical point and something is bound to happen at almost any moment: today, tonight, tomorrow - or, against all the odds, it could drag on in unnecessary bloodshed. What does seem clear is that the twenty-year grip of Ferdinand Marcos on the consciousness of his countrymen and women has been shattered and cannot be reimposed. Even President, the American / ~~White House~~ after initially fumbling the issue, has now accepted this reality. Only the Soviets are still stuck in that damnfool message of congratulations to Marcos which they don't seem to know how to undo. And one of the bitterest ironies of this Philippine horror story now drawing to its close is the very high note of hope on which it began over twenty years ago when Marcos / ~~gained political~~ power in a democratic election which was free and fair and free from fear. He campaigned against corruption, against cronyism and he promised the people honest and clean government. The people loved what they heard and gave him an overwhelming mandate. He did what he promised in the first term and so

the people re-elected him for a second term - again in genuinely fair elections, though a little less free from fear. But that second one was the last of Marcos' free and fair elections. After that, power became something you held on to by "management" and manipulation - not by the will of the people. And the management and the manipulation became more blatant and more ruthless and more arrogant with time and the tacit approval of great powers and the fawnings of hangers-on/and the realisation of the 'easy pickings'. Nothing especially new there. Haile Selassie milked his poor country of thousands of millions; ^{as did the Shah of Iran} we/^{are}not sure how many hundreds of millions 'Baby Doc' spirited out of starving Haiti when he 'stepped' - with the help of some friends Colonisers and conquering armies ^{+ usual Politicians & rulers} traditionally loot the treasure and treasuries they occupy. So that kind of thieving is no big/thing. The alienation between Marcos and the Philippine people had grown deep with time but he was and is a sick man and they may have sweated it out till he died, except for one thing. On August 21, 1983, Marcos' military goons cold-bloodedly assassinated Benigno Aquino at Manila airport on his return from exile. If you want to set a date ^{to} for the start of today's/^{Philippine}crisis, that is the date. The Philippines~~xxxxxxx~~ number over 7,000 islands occupying over 115,000 square miles. Luzon, on which Manila is, is just under ten times the size of Jamaica. There are between 50 and 60-million people, more than 80% of whom are Catholics. And as we have seen these past few days, the Catholic Church is a key force in the country. The people are as racially mixed as are the people of the Caribbean islands. And the Philippine people and their church this weekend taught the whole world a new lesson in the ^osophisticated and carefully measured use of the power of the people. Goodnight.

- 1) The Continuing Education Crisis
- ~~2) Economic Recovery - for whom?~~

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
February 21, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The crisis in our education continues. On Monday the Prime Minister told the teachers, and the nation, that no amount of protest demonstrations will budge his government from what had been offered, which was the best possible offer: in other words, 'take it or leave'. It was another variation of the Prime Minister's 'tough-guy' posturing: in October 1984 it was that his policies will not be changed by "one blade of grass", nor "yield one inch of ground"; at the last JLP conference it was "over my dead body". And he reminded all and sundry of what happened to the unions and their leaders in last June's general strike. The message was clear: try anything and you too will be busted into impotence. But if what has come out of the latest meeting between the Minister of the Public Service and the JTA is more than just *a three cord tick* ~~shadow boxing~~ then there does seem to be some small fall-back position. ^{So} ~~But~~ why this unnecessary and continued show of toughness? Jamaicans, or at least a significant majority of them, have already made up their minds about what they want and how to go about it; and, under pressure, they are a wise and patient people who know what time *& what time can* can do ~~or~~ undo. So the show of toughness has ceased to impress.

And then, on Tuesday, the Minister of Education told Parliament that as from this September students at the University of the West Indies and at the College of Arts Science and Technology will be required to pay a proportion of the cost of their training. Immediately, there was uproar from the two campuses and students took to the streets in angry protest. As has now become distressingly common, there was almost immediate questioning of the figures put forward by the government: but even ~~if~~ those figures make it clear that in terms of hard cash the students are being called on to find large new sums of money. For CAST the Minister's figures project a fee of \$900 a year per student: for the University the projected fee is from \$4,200 to \$6,000 a year, depending on the degree course being pursued. We were later told that no student would be deprived of his or her university education because of inability to find the fee. There would be loans, subject to certain sureties which must include one member of family. And there would be an interest rate of 12% per year on such loans, repayable over a ten year period at compound interest. The students would be bonded to the government for two-thirds of the time of their course. Now few comments: Let us not waste time arguing whether education is a right or a privilege: it is a right. The U.N. Human Rights declaration says so. But there is also nothing wrong with requiring a reasonable fee where the society is poor. My quarrel is not with the fee but with its size. It is much too high and its conditions are oppressive. The interest should be concessional - at no more than between 3% and 5% - and should not be compounded. The bonding should be tied to a job ~~guarantee~~. If 90% of the students are from poor homes then the family member as surety must be reviewed. We do not need additional burdens on any breadwinner made redundant by the government's own policies. Goodnight

The Importance of Trust & Confidence
Between a Government & its People

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
February 17, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Over the weekend we had the news that the Minister of the Public Service has called the Jamaica Teachers Association to new talks for this coming Thursday. Now this, on the face of it, would have been seen as a welcome gesture. The teachers, the parents and the children would, under normal circumstances, have been expected to halt their protest action, return to normal, and await the outcome of Thursday's meeting. But this is not what has happened. Parent-Teachers associations all over the island have declared their intention to continue their protest action until the dispute is settled. And this, whatever else it signals, also signals a profound distrust of the government's intentions. It seems clear that the PTAs do not believe that the announcement of a new meeting means that the government is necessarily coming forward with any better offer to the teachers. And they have ample precedent for this. Again and again in the past an industrial action, or a protest movement has been halted in mid-action by the simple device of announcing a new date for a meeting between the parties. The action or protest or work to rule had been called off, people had returned to normal, and then, at the meeting, nothing new had been offered.

The setting of a new date and calling of a new meeting had not been to put anything new or fresh on the bargaining table. It had been a tactical, stalling device, used to defuse the protest and confuse 'the other side'. And as a tactic, the record shows just how successfully it has worked. In almost everyone of its disputes with its employees the government has come out the winner. And the tactical stalling and calling of new meetings at crucial moments has been a key tool in most of its victories. And having seen this ^{tactic} work again and again, the people of the PTAs are on guard: they are not prepared to trust their government until they see results. And this, this collapse of trust and confidence between a government and a very significant section of its people, is a very bad thing indeed and with very much more serious long-term implications than all the current questionable chat about the likely breakdown of discipline because our children have demonstrated. It is at least arguable that having struggled together for the sake of a better education the bond between teachers and pupils and parents will be stronger than ever before: ^{historically,} this is the usual result of struggle in a good cause. So for me, the really key concern is the breakdown in trust and confidence between the people and their government. Without that trust and confidence, nothing the government says or does, not even its most sincere good deeds, will or can lead to success; because nobody will believe it or its good intentions. This, I am afraid, is the price you pay when 'all means justify the ends': when you will break your word and manipulate and stall and use any other tactic that will ensure that you win and remain on top. At the national level this breakdown of trust and confidence between those who govern and those who are governed is a danger to democracy itself and we must all work to restore that trust and confidence, but ^{honestly &} genuinely. Goodnight

The Politics of Human Rights

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
February 14, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: This week has been shot through and through with strange and ironic twists - especially in the area of human rights of and the things which we say make elective parliamentary democracy better than and superior to dictatorships, be they of the far left or the far right or be they based on race and colour. And one of the ironic twists is that English cricketers who have played cricket with the racists in South Africa, are now playing cricket with Jamaicans in Jamaica, while Jamaicans who played cricket in racist South Africa are banned from ever playing cricket in their own Jamaica. This makes even principle, and integrity, matters that are relative, depending on who you are, where you were born and what you look like. In this context, that resolution, piloted through the St. Catherine Parish Council yesterday by its Chairman and long-time trade unionist, Mr. Everrod Williams, to invite Mrs. Winnie Mandela to Jamaica, jarred more than a little; especially as it was also at that meeting that Mr. Williams, in his role as stout JLP loyalist, fired his broadside against the Jamaica Teachers Association for not bowing meekly to an 'unyielding' government. Some, it seems, have the divine right to be rigid and unyielding; while others had better yield or risk being denounced as 'political'

or intent on 'bringing down' the government. I think we need to remind ourselves that Article 21 of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights says that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country: which is what the teachers are doing and the parents are doing and even the children are doing. They are no more 'subversive' than Mr. Everrod Williams is. And clause 3 of Article 26 of the U.N. Declaration says flatly that "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children". I think Mr. Coleridge Barnett of Wolmer's / ^{this week} touched eloquently on the kind or 'quality' of education and the kind or 'quality' of teachers whose job it is to impart that education. All the 'unyielding' politicians in the world notwithstanding, you can't have one without the other. No double standard will work here: ask Winnie Mandela ~~and~~ ^{ask} the black children of South Africa. But perhaps we have learned this business of trying to manipulate human rights from our major mentors. After all, in the Reagan ^{Thatcher} lexicon those of whom we approve, be they the contras of Nicaragua, or Jonas Savimbi of Angola, are all 'freedom fighters' to be supported with American arms and money and with literature on 'dirty tricks' and how to terrorise most effectively: and those of whom we disapprove are the real 'terrorists'. So you finger and denounce the human rights violations that go on in the Soviet Union and communist block countries - which are very real - but you are silent or evasive or explanatory about the worse violations of human rights in South Africa and Namibia; and you turn a blind eye on the brutalities of your own 'running dogs'. The high principle of human rights has, in short, been debased by considerations of strategic, economic and political interests. There are some examples that not even desperately needy Third World countries should follow. We saw some this week.

Goodnight.

- 1) Who Will Replace Our Teachers?
- 2) How to Steal an Election
- 3) The Dilemma of Freeing Mandela

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
February 10, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The public debate around the salary dispute between the Jamaica Teachers Association on the one hand and the Government of Jamaica on the other, ^{in recent days,} has/turned ugly, mean, nasty and, in some instances, personal and political. It seems to me that the only solution which is acceptable to the Government and ^{to} those who support its position is for the JTA to capitulate and accept what it has rejected up to now: if it does not do this, then the JTA will be fought to the finish: and a fight to the finish will have all the nastiness usually associated with bitter ^{& ruthless} power political warfare: characters will be assassinated, motives/^{questioned and} maligned, morale undermined, facts and figures manipulated. And I think, myself, that such a campaign, in the hands of political pros, will break the JTA. My hard question is: What then? What if the JTA goes down to defeat and destruction rather than capitulate? When one political party succeeds in discrediting its opponent. ~~party~~ We can always turn to the other party to provide leadership and ^a new government. To whom will we turn if our teachers are similarly discredited and driven from the profession? Who will teach our children then? We can do without one group of politicians because there is always an

alternative group. But who will replace our teachers? Please think it through carefully.

Next, two developments of note on the international scene. In the Philippines an election steeped in monumental corruption, and which looks like a run-up to chaos, has made a nonsense of the democratic process. President Ferdinand Marcos has been in power for 20 years and in that time he has perfected the business of 'stealing' elections - usually on a wholesale scale. Because the United States has two strategically important bases in the Philippines and Marcos was seen as the ally who ensured the retention of those bases, and because a strong communist insurgency has been going on for many years, the United States has tacitly accepted the dirty works of the Marcos dictatorship. The trouble is that dictatorship has, over the years, grown so corrupt and alienated even the anti-communists to the point where the communists are the only beneficiaries from Marcos remaining power. So the American pressure all but forced the holding of this election; but Marcos seems determined to steal this one too, even if it has to be on a smaller scale, retail basis. And this puts the Americans in a very tricky position: if they acquiesce to this latest 'steal' they lose all anti-communist support; if they help overthrow Marcos they risk opening the door to the spread of leftist influence and power. Quite a dilemma. Almost as bad as the one facing the South African racists. If Nelson Mandela were to die in prison the country would explode in black violence. If he were released from prison unconditionally he would immediately be the most powerful political force in the land - and he will not accept anything else. So what are they to do? The South African racists are now twisting and turning on the horns of this dilemma of their own making as they go on seeking to buy more time. Goodnight.

- 1) Jamaica's Children: Jamaica's Future
- 2) The Fall of a Dictator

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on ~~Friday~~
February 7, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The fall of a dictator is ~~always~~ the most welcome news possible for all people who are committed to freedom and to freedom of choice; and so it is with the end of the ~~Duvalier~~ in Haiti. thirty-year-old Duvalier dictatorship/ And this time, I for one, can find absolutely no fault with the U.S. hand in the final removal of 'Baby Doc': it was subtle, careful and probably helped save thousands of lives. If super-powers must meddle in the affairs of small countries (and they will) then this is the least offensive way of doing it. Let us hope they will now ^{help to} ensure that the fall of this dictator also means the end of all dictatorship in Haiti. But there is bound to be a vast **vacuum** after such a long dictatorship and the Haitian people are going to need all the help and understanding possible in their long journey back to the ways of free people. Here at home, Jamaica's children have this week taken to the streets to give public expression to their particular concerns about education in Jamaica, of which the teachers-government impasse is only the most dramatic symptom, of a much deeper sickness. We have had of late revival of the talk of the government's inability to

go on providing "free education" and "free health care" for everybody. This is, and always has been, a political red herring.

Education has never been "free"; the lowliest and meanest health centre has never been "free"; and the government has never provided these services as some sort of gift out of its generosity or public spiritedness. Every penny the government spends on education and ^{and other services} on health/comes from the taxes, direct and indirect, and the fees and duties and licences all Jamaicans pay in one form or another, almost every day of their lives. Even when the government borrows money the Jamaican people have to pay it back, not the politicians, not the parties, but the Jamaican people. So the Jamaican people pay for whatever services are provided: nothing is for 'free'. But back ^{to} the children. Where were you in January of 1979? Think back carefully. And on ~~that~~ those days when the life of Jamaica's economy and social services were brought to a standstill, what did you do? What did you say? Did you describe those who put up roadblocks all over this island as 'hooligans'? Did you go on the radio to do this? If you did so then, ^{now} then you are entitled/to say some of the offensive things which were hurled against some of our children this week for daring to demonstrate. If you did not then, and you do so now, then you need to examine your own motives and question your own values. And who, in all conscience, has more right to be concerned about education than the nation's children? What happens to education today will affect their lives and futures ~~very~~ much more than the lives of all the rest of us, singly and collectively. Are we, as supposedly wise and mature adults, being fair in expecting them to passively accept our right to mess up their future by leaving them mountains of debt, ^{and ramshackle} run-down/social services, a corrupt, ^{discriminatory} pork-barrel, and morally bankrupt political system? ~~Let him who is without sin...~~ ^{He that is without sin...} Goodnight.

Latest Developments in Costa Rica,
Haiti and South Africa

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
February 3, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Apart from that 'hot' meeting yesterday of satellite 'dish' owners, the weekend was quiet here at home. It was developments in Haiti, in Costa Rica and in racist South Africa which dominated a relatively quiet international scene after last week's traumatic events. In Haiti, the poorest country in this hemisphere and one of the poorest in the entire world, the Duvalier dictatorship is under pressure. The early heady hopes that 'Baby Doc' had fled the country were soon dashed. But how did this particular rumour get about? Some of the older heads ^{among us} may remember how 'Papa Doc', the present dictator's father, flushed out his enemies by himself planting the rumour that he had fled the country for France in the face of similar riots. His enemies came out into the open, and Papa Doc dealt with them. I think this was about 1963. Well, perhaps something similar was tried this time around, and the White House may have been conned into that announcement. Now, the big question is: will the U.S. intervene as it did in Grenada? What happened in Costa Rica is good news of the best possible kind. The only genuine political democracy in Central America held elections

yesterday which were as free and as fair, and as free from fear as any ~~free~~ elections in any Western democracy: nobody fiddled with voters lists; and nobody manipulated the timing of the election. And so the Costa Ricans, in peace and order, ~~yesterday~~ elected a President, two Vice-Presidents, one of them a woman, 57 members to the national assembly, and over 1,000 municipal (or local government) and state officers. There are roughly the same number of Costa Ricans as there are Jamaicans and we salute them and their democracy. There are two problems though, as I see it. No administration, from top to bottom, can serve more than one term of four years. I think there should be the option for a second term, if the people see an administration as especially good and want to vote for it. But no more than two terms. The more difficult problem is that the U.S. is 'leading' on Costa Rica not to expel the American-backed and armed Nicaraguan 'contras' who are trying to overthrow the Sandanist Government and who operate from Costa Rican border territory. It would be a very great tragedy indeed for the entire region if Costa Rica's model democracy were to be destroyed in the geopolitical power game. And finally South Africa where 'State President' P.W. Botha has made yet another attempt to whitewash his brutal regime with more promises - but not the end of Apartheid. The economic pressure on the regime, mild as it is, is hurting; and EEC Ministers are ^{tomorrow} meeting with the leaders of the African front-line state (no 'so-called' nonsense, they are in the front line) and Botha's speech was primarily for the Western bankers and their governments to say: "See, there is some movement; let us ease the pressure and see what they do. We can always reimpose the pressure later". I think this will particularly be the Anglo-American-West German line. And I think it is nothing more than an effort to ease the pressure and buy more time for the racists. Good

Education & Taxation

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
January 31, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: On the world scene the week's news was dominated by the tragic loss of the space vehicle Challenger and its crew of bright and ^{heroic and} eager and gifted young men and women. Here at home education and taxation continued to be our main preoccupations. On Education, two relatively small but important matters could easily be buried under the welter of words. The first has to do with the damage done by elements of the Nationalist Patriotic Movement at that Combined Parent Teachers Association meeting on Tuesday of last week. We were told that tyres were slashed. Tyres cost a great deal of money these days; will people be compensated for their slashed tyres? I think that in this case compensation will ~~will~~ be a fair yardstick by which to measure the sincerity of all those profuse expressions of regret and apology. Legally, nobody can prove who did what; but if all those apologies ^{are to} mean anything, if they are to be invested with any sort of credibility, then those who know they are guilty, and those who speak for them, will make restitution. The second matter has to do with the government's often repeated declaration that it accepts the validity and justice of the teachers' case but that it lacks the ability to pay. Now,

there is no question about the fact that the government ~~is~~ strapped for money: no government here, or anywhere else, has ever had all the money it would like to spend. This is why all governments have patterns of priority in their allocations: if one thing~~s~~ is accepted as more important than another, the necessary money is found by shifting resources from what is less important or less urgent or less immediate to that which is most important. In this context, "ability to pay" is relative. The problem with our teachers case is that the government has made a commitment, not to Jamaica or Jamaicans, to keep wage increases in the public sector at levels of between 10% and 15%. And it is in the context of this commitment to the IMF that we are so 'unyielding' and so 'strong' and so 'wrong'. In this sense a key part of the teachers struggle, which is increasingly backed by parents, is for the right of Jamaicans to determine Jamaican priorities. And so to taxation. A good taxation policy is one which a majority of citizens see as fair, reasonable, socially necessary, equitable and just. None of us like taxes but if they meet this criterion we grin and bear them. So most of us will go along with ^{most of} the government's latest tax reform measures. But some are so patently unjust that they cry out. To demand of a motorcyclist the same ^{as for a motorist} \$250 for a set of plates/is to make worse what is already an unfair and unnecessary measure whose ^{only} justification is the need for money ~~and it is a one-time savaging of~~. It is a one-time savaging of ^{all drivers, especially} the poorer drivers in the country. And what 60 or 70-year-old needs this type of 'life-time' plates? Any tax policy which depends solely on ~~whether~~ a measure is legal, and ignores the question of whether it is also fair and just and equitable, is socially bad tax policy which ^{can} ^{fine} blur~~s~~ the/line between fair taxation and plunder. The French, ^{revolution} American, ^{now} and other revolutions were partly born out of unreasonable taxation. Some of ours ^{now} verge on plunder. Goodnight

New Developments in Uganda:
A Ray of Hope from the Heart of Africa

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
January 27, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Except for the latest developments in Uganda, the international scene has been one of almost unrelieved gloom. We've had those ten days of heavy blood-letting in little South Yemen's leftist power struggle - but all the headlines were concentrated on the fleeing foreigners and the Royal Yacht Britannia. We've had racist South Africa which surrounds little LeSotho completely imposing an economic squeeze which finally broke Chief Jonathan's government, while the 'free world' stood back and watched. And we are still into the extraordinary spectacle of the 'most powerful nation on earth', the leader/~~xxxxxx~~^{and} guardian of Western democracy, planting its gunboats and aircraft on the edge of Libya and behaving like any powerful international bully-boy from the darkest pages of human history. Surely there were and are ways of getting at Gaddafi without flouting every principle of civilised behaviour and international law. Bullying is bullying and terrorising is terrorising, whoever does it. But back to Uganda and what I see as a small ray of hope out of the heart of Africa. Yoweri Museveni, whose forces are now reported in control of both Kampala, the seat of government, and Jinja, the source of the nation's hydroelectric power, seems to be a very different kind of man from those who have misruled

and grossly abused that very beautiful and rich country over the past quarter of a century. He began his National Resistance Movement when it became clear that Milton Obote had learned nothing from his years of exile in Tanzania. Museveni himself had been in Tanzania and reports are that Julius Nyerere was impressed with the young man who is now only forty. So when Obote~~s~~ resumed his ^{new} old ways Museveni and his colleagues began their movement in the ^{new} western part of the country. They worked co-operatively with the people among whom they were. They set up participatory forms of local self-government and built up their resistance army to defend the territory they controlled. The army was highly disciplined and worked on the land with the people and did not loot or rob or rape. So while the rest of Uganda remained in a ^{state} ~~area~~ of near-chaos the villages in western Uganda became stable and flourishing communities. And it was this living example of flourishing stability and an army that was friend and protector rather than terrorising predator, which attracted the widening support which led, finally, this weekend, to the victories at Kampala and Jinja. So what makes this a ray of hope? First, that Museveni and his friends built up a popular movement which cut across tribal and ethnic differences, in much the same way that Nyerere did when he launched his movement in the 1950s. Second, because their army is the antithesis of all Uganda's previous armies during and since colonialism. And third, their objective is not simply to grab power for its own sake, but rather to use it, for the whole country, in the same way that they used power in those ^{western} areas they controlled while waging their war. And Yoweri Museveni is the leader, not the dictator of this movement: there are others, equally bright and skilled and dedicated. There is no ^a guarantee that they will succeed, or even be allowed to. But at least there is new hope. ^{by us} Goodnight.

The Politics of
Double-Talk & Double-Think

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
January 24, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: That sordid and disreputable disruption by elements of the Nationalist Patriotic Movement of Monday's meeting of the Combined Parent Teachers Association has had some very interesting consequences. The most welcome of these was the JLP's prompt and forthright repudiation of that particular hooligan element of its supporters. Welcome, too, is the report that those who were responsible have been identified and that disciplinary action will be taken against them. I think credibility requires that the public be informed of the form of that disciplinary action and when it is taken. I personally continue to believe that all 'convicted' political hooligans, of whatever party stripe, should be expelled from the party concerned and not be admitted to membership by any other party. Such action would strike a strong blow against political hooliganism. The trouble is that key elements in our political culture have a vested interest in ~~g~~ 'goon squads', especially at run-ups to elections. Still, this week's JLP reaction was welcome. And, of course, Mr. Bruce Golding and the others were right when they accused Mr. Michael Manley of seeking to score 'political points' out of the ^{incident.} ~~xxxxxx~~ The fact is that there were political points to

score; without that action of the Nationalist Patriotic Movement there would have been no political points to score. And describing Mr. Manley's reaction as "cheap and trashy" and as "cheap politicking" are in themselves attempts at political point-scoring. All politicians are involved in political point-scoring: but each would like to make it appear that only the other side is guilty of trying to score points. We have, for instance, recently had the strange business of a politician whose party forms the government, roundly denouncing the activities of a politician whose party is seeking power. The activities of the 'out' politician concerned the state and of water of the roads/and the health services in his Parish. The 'in' politician brushed it all aside as being "politically motivated". What are we at, where are we going, when one politician denounces the activities of another politician as "politically motivated"? Strikes are "politically motivated", so are demonstrations and protests. We have had two gas price demonstrations in recent memory: one in January of 1979, when the PNP was in power; the other in January, 1985, under the present government. The one in 1979 was under the guidance and control of the Nationalist Patriotic Movement; the 1985 one had no such clearcut control but PNP activists were assumed to be involved; the 1979 one was the more highly organised one. But the significant difference was the extent to which the 1979 protest was generally accepted as genuine economic protest; but the 1985 one, with its much higher price increase, was denounced as "politically motivated". What/I do is patriotic and in the national interest: if you object to it, or disagree with it, it is because you are ~~X~~ "politically motivated", which ^{is supposed to} stop the argument, ^{dead} and deflects ^{hard} attention from the issues. This is a dangerous form of double-talk and double-think. ^{So watch it!} ~~Be on guard.~~ Goodnight.

Health, Education, and the Politics
of Fairness, Justice and Peace

NEWS COMMENTARY
For broadcast on Monday
January 20, 1986, 6.10p.m.

Good evening: After the Minister of the Public Service made his official broadcast to the nation on Friday night the Jamaica Teachers Association accused the Minister of "misleading the nation with inaccuracies" and demanded equal nation-wide radio and television time to reply to his statement. Now, if the government's recently announced Broadcasting Commission had already been established the Jamaica Teachers Association would have been able to apply to that Commission for equal time to counter what the Minister^{had}/said. And that Commission, on the merits of the JTA's argument, would have had to order that equal time: the teachers prime-time would have had the same total/coverage to make their rebuttal. Was not that the declared intention? Indeed, the Prime Minister's statement introducing the Bill in Parliament specifically mentioned "any inaccuracies broadcast over the electronic media". There is a saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating: so if accuracy and a curb on political bias are the true motives for wanting the Commission, prove it by affording the JTA 'equal time'. Or are the principles behind the idea of the Commission only for a time when the present government becomes the Opposition? How committed are you really to the fairness doctrine? We wait to see. And while we wait

the key social services - health and education - seem on a steady downward path because public policy affords them no special priority, and an insensitive administration appears more involved in concerns other than the basic needs of the people. The balancing of books is very important of course; but is it really more important than the balancing of the health and the schooling of the people? And who decides these priorities? And by whose authority? I am not surprised that the hardliners in the ruling party were so angered by what Archbishop Carter said at that Prayer breakfast last Thursday morning. He was not bland and 'even-handed' as between what is right and what is wrong. He spoke hard truths but spoke them with love and concern, especially for the poor and the down-pressed, which is the business of the true Christian and the good shepherd. He said: "Too many of our people feel they are doomed to passive existence with all evil and good, taxes and food coming from outside, from higher up. History and much of the present political economy have encouraged this posture. No development plan can succeed in this context." That, like it or not, is the hard truth of our situation. Blurring that truth, glossing over it, pretending things are better than they are, will only deepen this terrible mood of passive existence. Better to face it and shake ourselves out of the passivity and regain our faith in ourselves and in our capacity to shape our own destiny. And we are not going to do that on a diet of bland and essentially fraudulent shows of face-card a/unity to which we are not really committed. For true unity to come about there must be fairness and trust in word and deed; promises must be honoured. And the pre-condition for true peace is justice, justice for everybody, not just for one group or one side or one political persuasion. That was ^{the essence of} Archbishop Carter's message. Goodnight

Spotlight/^{on}n Our Collapsing Social Services

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
January 17, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: What a strange and terrible and traumatic week this has turned out to be. It began on Monday with the start of the teachers' protest action which crippled education nation-wide, and which rapidly turned into a national outpouring of support for pay and better/conditions for the nation's teachers. The sorry little attempt to try and discredit the teachers and brand them 'confrontationist' quickly collapsed in face of the almost universal public support of their cause. The menacing business of 'taking names' only added a tinge of anger to the public mood. So it was self-interested good sense to back off on that promised Thursday night broadcast to the nation, delay it for a day and perhaps rewrite it in more conciliatory terms for delivery tonight. We must hope that tonight's statement will contain^a/practical new negotiating offer to the teachers. Anything less will just deepen the national anger because it will tell us that the very sharp and very clear message, in which even the weather seemed to participate, has been dismissed. And that would be disastrous. Then, on Wednesday, in the

midst of the teachers' protest action, Dr. Ken McNeil, in a letter to the Gleaner, detonated the first shock-bomb in what can now be fairly described as ~~the~~ attempted cover-up of the terrible mess in our health services. Dr. McNeil, himself a former Minister of Health, and a man of impeccable and international reputation and integrity, ~~set~~ out for us in careful detail the facts about the Kingston Public Hospital's radiotherapy facilities about which we had heard through the firing and re-hiring and re-firing of the highly respected Dr. Vernon Spence. What Dr. McNeil wrote shed startling new light on the decline in our health service and reminded us, too, that there was a time when our social services continued uninterrupted and were not dislocated because of elections or changes of government. A Minister of Health, P.N.P. or J.L.P. - and indeed this was true of Education too - would continue with the policies of his predecessor, with only minor changes and adjustments. So McNeil built on what Eldermire had left just as Glasspole built on what Edwin Allen had left. And our social services were the better for the continuity. Now, they pull down in order to start from scratch with new names and new images to feed their own small egos. And we are seeing and suffering the result. Anyway, hard on Dr. McNeil's letter came that bomb-shell from the Medical Association of Jamaica - the organisation of the nation's most senior doctors. You have heard and read and seen what they have to say. It is a story of chaos and collapse which makes all the talk about 'rationalisation' and structural adjustment to deliver more efficient and effective quality health care, sound like hollow deception. We pay more taxes ^{now} than we've ever paid before. So how did we get led into this mess? Where has all the ^{tax} money gone if not to provide ^{basic} services for the people? Services for the people, from the people's taxes, is what government is all about. ~~All~~ ^{Every time} else is secondary. Goodnight.

The Deepening Crisis in
Jamaican Education

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
January 13, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: Jamaica's teachers, Islandwide, today began a new round of carefully modulated protest action in their long effort to get decent living wages and tolerable working conditions. As far as I understand it, the teachers will, at least in the first phase of this new round of action, act strictly within the terms and conditions of their employment. For instance, teachers are entitled to ten days of casual leave every year. So if a sufficient number of teachers were to decide to take two or three days of casual leave at the same time they could ^{seriously} ~~hardly~~ disrupt the system without taking industrial action and without breaching any agreements. And if this is all that the teachers are doing in these early days then they are not withdrawing their service and any threat of "loss of pay" is hollow bullyism. I am sorry and I am disappointed that this threat of 'loss of pay' was the government's only answer to what is clearly a desperate effort by the nation's teachers to get justice. The nation's teachers have been more than patient: they have reasoned, they have pleaded and they have accepted stall after stall after stall. And still, in the face of what comes across as an arrogant and dismissive government attitude, they are acting with more restraint than this nation has any right to expect from

its teachers. And you know something, I think the Jamaican society, the Jamaican community as a whole, must share the blame for this deepening crisis in our education. To be fair, I still remember the enthusiasm with which most Jamaicans welcomed the Education Tax, which was supposed to be used to give our teachers a better break. But when that tax was put to other uses, what did we do? Not a thing. There were one or two voices of mild protest: but there was no bitter uproar, no firm insistence that the tax be used for what was its declared intention in the first place. In this sense, we, all Jamaicans, are accomplices in the disgracefully shabby deal this nation is handing out to its teachers. We pay lip-service to the importance of our teachers because we all know the key role of education in the fashioning of a nation and a people who are literate well-informed, able to make good judgements and wise choices. This is what we are committed to, so we are committed to education. But somehow, we have of late reached, or been conned, into a point of thinking that education, the process, is separate and apart from the teacher, the person who makes the process work. Well, I have news for you: you can 'structurally adjust' your education upwards or downward or sideways and it will come to nothing without a corps of good and dedicated and committed teachers: without them, ^{there is no real} education ~~is wasted~~. So I hope that all the influences in the community: employers churches, unions, /political parties, civic groups, will, this time around, tell the government in no uncertain terms that it is the government's attitude in this matter that is wrong, not that of the teachers; and that it is the government that must yield in this matter, not the teachers. If we do not do this now the exodus from the classrooms will grow faster and Jamaican education will degenerate further and further and the nation will be the loser.

Goodnight.

The New Round of Taxes

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
January 10, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The new round of taxes which were announced by the Prime Minister this week is not the full package of taxes for the year. It is, Mr. Seaga told Parliament, 'a significant part' of that full tax package which would normally be introduced later this year. So, there may yet be more to come. But people are already so very angry about aspects of this latest round, that one is forced to wonder: what next? The tax that seems to have provoked the most widespread initial sense of outrage is the one which forces all of us who are motorists to buy a new set of licence plates for \$250. This one is not going to hurt the rich, or even those in the middle; but it is going to play hell with the vast number of people who can only keep their 'struggler' cars on the road with the greatest effort and sacrifice. The office worker in Portmore and the skilled artisan in the hills of St. Andrew who drive into Kingston to work are going to be hard-pushed to find that extra \$250 for something they do not want, do not need, and see no sense to other than that the government is strapped for cash. The government has divested itself of the responsibility of providing a decent/public transport system; now it is making it unnecessarily hard for the poor to hold on to their own little private transport, is

how one very angry driver put it. The other important consumer aspect of this latest round of taxes which, it seems, has not yet penetrated the public mind properly, is the almost inevitable increase in price on all those basic commodities 'in common daily use' when exemption from Customs, Consumption, and Stamp Duties are removed from the Jamaica Commodity Trading Company. When the JCCTC has to pay all these Duties and still break-even or make a profit, it will be forced to increase the prices on all the things it brings into the country and which is then sold to the consumer. Think of the list: most imported basic food, most of your medicines and drugs, cars and other things. The Customs, Consumption and Stamp Duties on all these will now have to be worked into the price that you and I, the ordinary consumers, are going to be charged for whatever we buy. Many who need drugs are not going to be able to afford these drugs; some are going to cut down on the amount they should use and do serious damage to an already poor physical condition. And many are simply going to eat less because they cannot afford all the food they need. Polite words for this are 'undernourishment' or 'malnutrition': the brutal fact is a slow starving of the body of some of the key things it needs if it is to grow strong and remain healthy. It is the young who suffer most when there is not enough of the right food to nourish body and mind. And this particular form of suffering is long-term: you see it in the stunted body; and in the physical and mental weakness when the underfed child becomes an adult. Because we have always known this, we have, up to now as a society, invested in our children by feeding them as well as possible and schooling them as well as possible. Now we must fear for our children. For me, personally, this is the most painful aspect of what is happening in Jamaica today. Goodnight

The U.S.-Libyan Standoff:
A Dangerous Power-play

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Monday
January 6, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: If there is a third world war, it will almost certainly end up as a nuclear war, no matter how it started. And such a war, if it came, will radically change the world, even if not all of mankind is destroyed. And over this past weekend the world saw a case-study of how such a war could be brought about, almost by accident and without intent. Consider the sequence of the facts. On December 27, 1985, two days after Christmas, ~~two~~ sets of terrorists (or freedom fighters depending on who you are and what your perspective) simultaneously attacked the international airports in Rome, Italy and Vienna, Austria. Almost a score of people were killed and many more were injured. The targets had been the Israeli check-in counters at these airports. The victims were mostly ~~non~~Israelis. And, ironically, both Austria and Italy are western countries whose governments are known supporters of the Palestinian cause. The shock and the outrage ^{were} ~~was~~ strong and widespread, and leaders in the United States and Israel talked strongly about hunting down the terrorists, no matter where they were, and punishing them for their crimes. At first Yasser Arafat's

PLO was blamed for the outrage; but later blame was shifted to Arafat's bitter rival, Abu Nidal, who is said to be based in Libya. Libya's leader, Muammar Gaddafi, has long been the embodiment in human form of everything evil and ugly and dangerous and terrorist as far as the U.S. Administration ^{is} ~~was~~ concerned. So/~~that~~ ^{the perceived} fact that that Abu Nidal had masterminded the two airport attacks, and was reported to be in Libya, led to the conclusion that Gaddafi was behind the attacks. And so Gaddafi had to be dealt with: preferably, Gaddafi had to be 'taken out' ^{as} ~~xxx~~ quickly and surgically as possible. A propaganda campaign was stepped up. America's friends all over the world were called to rally against terrorism by supporting the 'taking out' of Gaddafi. They had, after all, done as neat a job against that small bunch of leftwing extremists in Grenada: all that was needed was for the moderate Arab states to ~~early~~ ^{rally} around as did the moderate Caribbean states. So an aircraft carrier loaded with bombers/~~xxxx~~ ^{was} sent steaming toward Libya. But the moderate Arab leaders, most of whom feared and detested Gaddafi as much as the U.S. administration, knew that 'taking out Gaddafi' with them as American surrogates, would mean an uncontrollable Middle Eastern explosion which would, step-by-step, suck in the rest of the world. They knew, as the Americans should have known, that the only way to 'take out' Gaddafi without such an explosion would be as a purely Arab affair without any superpower involvement, be it overt or covert. In this sense, the moderate Arabs and the much more politically sophisticated Europeans can be said to have saved the Americans from themselves. I don't think the Americans wanted to, or want, to set off a chain of events that will lead to generalised war in any part of the world, which will in turn lead to global nuclear war. The danger is of their miscalculating. Goodnight.

1986 - An Uneasy Beginning

NEWS COMMENTARY

For broadcast on Friday
January 3, 1986, 6.10p.m

Good evening: The New Year - now three days old - has started on a most uneasy note. For the first time, as far back as I can remember, we have had no New Year messages from either our Head of State or our Head of Government. Why? We know that the Prime Minister is not well; but surely, someone else, the Deputy Prime Minister or some other senior Government Minister, could have read the Prime Minister's New Year message for him. That message, traditionally, is after all more than just one man's good wishes to the nation. It is an important that, of course, but it is also a political perspective of how the government sees the year ahead, and how it wants the nation to respond to the challenges and the issues of the year ahead. It is, in short, a pointer and a guide-post for the year ahead. Without it, we start the year without any official indication from the nation's principal elected official of the way ahead. Similarly, the Head of State, the person who is the embodiment of the nation, the symbol of national unity above party or class or creed or colour usually speaks for and to the national spirit, inspiring it for the efforts of the year ahead. So why the silence this New Year? I think it is cause for unease

that
~~the~~ the two most highly placed public officials in the land had
 no messages for Jamaicans at the start of the New Year. Just ^{imagine} ~~think~~
~~of~~ the British Monarch or the British Prime Minister, or the American
 President (who embodies both offices) not issuing a New Year
 message, for any reason, and you get an idea of both the symbolic
 and political importance of an apparently minor act. So the British
 Monarchs and Prime Ministers and American Presidents have never
 to deliver or send and they have never
 failed, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ their New Year messages; ~~or~~ postponed them.
 So what gives with us? And then, to add to the sense of unease
 there was that ~~American~~ "risk report" by an U.S. firm of consultants
 who provide their New Year predictions ^{the guidance of} for big American investors
 and businesses. They ^{say} ~~predicted~~ that Jamaica "shows a potential for
 turmoil" in 1986. And no matter what we do about it, that prediction
 is bound to hurt us. It was not a case of 'negative reporting' by
 some ^{foreign} /journalist, so even if Cable Network News, which picked up the
 report, were to drop it or contradict it by a ~~later~~ and more favour-
 able report, the business people who subscribe to the consultancy
 firm are not likely to be impressed. ^{The party in opposition then} ~~we~~ began this business of
 getting the foreign press to spotlight our problems in the 1970s;
 back, and then,
 it has now come to haunt us in the 1980s - which makes for another
 stumbling block ahead of us. These are some of the realities with
 which we enter the New Year. There is some optimistic talk about
 the economy in 1986. I hope it turns out to be more than talk, this
 time around. But we had similar talk at the start of 1984 and at
 the start of 1985 so most people tend to take this new upbeat talk
 with a pinch of salt. They want to see some action first. And, above
 all, the need for leadership now is urgent. In times of trouble
 when things are rough, people want to ^{see and} /hear from their leaders; they
 want to know what's happening and why. Goodnight.