

Closing Address

Inaugural Prime Minister's Conference

Michael Manley Centennial

**' MICHAEL MANLEY'S LEGACY :
A NEW GLOBAL PARADIGM'**

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December 5, 2024

Greetings & Salutations

- University Hierarchy & Academia
- Members of the Michael Manley Family
- Colleagues in the Political & Trade Union Vineyard
- Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen

Let me begin by commending the University and the Co-Sponsors for embarking on this series of Conferences which reflect on the lives and contributions of our past Prime Ministers to the evolution of our Caribbean Region.

Fitting start as Michael Manley was in many spheres of his illustrious life, a trailblazer and a game changer.

This connoisseur of cricket would be delighted to celebrate his century with the deserving recognition and laudable acclamation which the previous penetrating analyses and illuminating discussions have evinced from scholars and eloquent presenters involved in various facets of his life.

The brilliant shots, played all around the wicket, are already on the scoreboard and there is little left for a tailender like me.

In his last letter to me of December 15 1992 – he wrote “ Its been a long journey of our safari in 1969” . That impelled me to use this closing presentation for sharing some reflections on our journey and his singular response to the global encounter that Michael envisaged in 1970. What would be his strategic approach to the world as it exists today:

- In cricketing imagery – how to pick and play the googlie on a turning wicket.

“I speak without apology as an unabashed internationalist” he declared at the outset of his political leadership.

“Jamaica is not one little dot that is hanging in the universe by itself. What happens in the world has a fundamental effect on what happens in Jamaica” he elaborated.

Jamaica’s first Prime Minister, Rt. Excellent Alexander Bustamante saw the world as divided between East and West.

For Michael Manley, the division that had the most profound bearing on Jamaica was that between “a metropolitan and developed region and a relatively under-developed, largely tropical region.” He realized that Jamaica by itself had the power to do or change nothing but “together with 107 nations and more than 2 million people has the capacity to do it little by little” he proclaimed.

Michael Manley’s fiery rhetoric and fierce combat against imperial conquest was grounded in his strong ideological commitment to “freedom and sovereign equality” as was his indignation at poverty and injustice of any sort or place.

The passion and instinct of a supreme Trade Unionist perceived the primacy of an identity of interests common to the Caribbean, Africa, Central America, India and South-East Asia.

The visit we undertook to Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia was an essential trigger for the dialogue to begin as we prepared to assume the reins of national and eventually global leadership.

Michael envisaged a future where global political and international processes would promote peace and development in a world of ideological pluralism.

Jamaica's fourth Prime Minister, fully understood that the mission of his generation – the post-colonial economic reconstruction and social upliftment of Jamaica – could not be divorced from the post-imperial restructuring of global economic relations.

That necessarily entailed the formulation of a broad alliance and a common strategy of the South to reform the iniquitous structures of international economic relations.

This was a core pillar of Michael Manley's world-view, and central to his concept of the national and regional mission.

The New Economic Order

It is a fitting coincidence that the 100th anniversary of the birth of Michael Manley is also the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

Other celebrated leaders from the Global South were involved in the accompanying Programme of Action for its Implementation, but none more indelibly than Michael Manley.

We can see today the validity of this world-view even more clearly than was the case fifty years ago. A new international economic order remained aspirational as the iniquitous structures and unequal relations of the past have yet to change.

War and conflict heighten geo-political tensions which imperil access to food and energy; health pandemics yield vaccine nationalism; revolutions in technology threaten to leave us even further behind.

Manley's unwavering commitment and dedicated work on behalf of the Global South sprang from his observation that for millennia, the combination of capital, technology, and exploitation of human and natural resources had resulted in wars, depressions and recessionary periods. While the global economy had expanded considerably, the growing economic disparity between developed and developing countries had widened.

Indeed this was a phenomenon that engaged some of the brightest minds from the Global South, amongst them Arthur Lewis, Raul Prebisch & Alister McIntyre. This phenomenon triggered as well the development of alternative and non-traditional economic theories.

Our Mona Campus of a by-gone era was rightly engaged in the dialectics of the dependency theory vs the plantation theory.

In all the discourse, the harsh reality was that two thirds of humanity remained below the poverty line.

The harsh fact persists that many of the countries continued to grow most slowly at the same time the growth rate in economically advanced market economies was accelerating.

This was the global context that incubated the vision of a new international economic order. It was a period in many aspects remarkably reminiscent of today – a time of cascading and multiple crises.

Indeed, the decade was characterized by the collapse of the gold-exchange monetary system, currency instability, an upsurge in global inflation, widespread harvest failures, and the quadrupling of oil prices for many developing countries.

The Algiers Summit was the incubator for the United Nations Sixth Special Session in 1974 which adopted the Declaration of the Establishment of a New International Order and its related Programme of Action.

How can we forget the historic flight of Fidel and Michael to the Fourth Summit of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Algiers in 1973 – a year after Michael Manley first came to office?

At the insistence of the G77, our Agenda in 1975 focused on six major areas; international trade, transfer of real resources and international monetary reform, science and technology, industrialization, food and agriculture, and the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system.

So high was our standing on the global stage, that Jamaica was one of the Group of 19 countries selected to represent in Paris the interests of the Third World in negotiations for a restructuring of the world economic order and a new regime for global development.

With Jamaica in the cockpit, the Global South sought the structural transformation of an international economy whose main institutional features had been determined and established without our involvement, and which functioned to our detriment.

When that final push was made to address major issues in the fields of raw materials, energy, trade, development, and money and finance in an integrated manner, the North resisted any change that would dilute their historical power and influence and which might lead to outcomes less advantageous to them.

That great Black American, Frederick Douglass, said it more than a century and a half ago, "Power concedes nothing without a demand, It never did, it never will."

Michael Manley always understood this. I trust in our pursuit of a new world order, shaped by the quest for harmony, equity and justice rather than entrenching the spoils of Empire and victory in the Second World War, leaders, regardless of their political stripe, will learn this rather than attempt to belittle or distort his legacy of vision and purpose.

Truth be told, by that time both the political and the economic headwinds were in the realm of Category five.

Washington Consensus

During the decade of the 80's, Governments virulently hostile to the idea of a new international economic order had come to the fore in major industrialized countries. Moreover, the debt crisis that was to bequeath a lost decade in much of the developing world was in full train.

Consequently, the number of IMF lending programmes more than doubled in the 1990's and, at its peak, more than forty (40) percent of developing members – including Jamaica – were submerged. Rather than the elixir of a new international order, the bitter gall of the Washington consensus – and of structural adjustment – was to be the fate of the Global South.

By the time Michael Manley resumed the reins of Government, the tectonic plates had shifted. The Soviet Union had been dismantled Germany had been reunited, the rubric of apartheid and colonisation in Southern Africa was crumbling. The sole superpower was extending its hegemony and capitalism was spreading in an uneven global market place.

Since then, we have witnessed the emergence of a powerful China, military and economic. As the Non-Aligned Movement has declined, a new axis is emerging forged on alliances with differing political systems and growing economic clout.

The current steady swing to the right in a number of G20 countries will place further challenges in the Global South. Even before taking office, Trump has threatened a tariff war to punish those nations who seek to create a new currency for trade and thereby terminate the might and budgetary laxity of the United States that stems from the US Dollar as the only currency.

We are all too familiar with the patterns of destabilising governments and their economies which are not subservient to their orders. We can anticipate an increase in pressure against doing business with China. Will we have the courage to resist?

Let us be reminded of Michael's constant plea, "All we ask for, is to be left alone and create our own path."

Looking Ahead

As this Symposium draws to a close, I suggest that our Leaders look to the future of our planet with the benefit of the lessons to be learnt from the accumulated experience and insights of Michael Manley during the varied phases of his extensive international engagement.

If we have learnt anything it should be that history, and with it, human development, does not proceed in a straight line: each epoch of struggle, each period of contestation, whether in the realm of ideas, of politics, culture or otherwise, lays the ground for the next.

It is not far-fetched to conclude, that this is precisely what we are witnessing in the global arena. It would be wrong and defeatist to view the set-backs encountered as failures. They are battles in a war which must be fought until the final "bell" and victory is won.

In the years that have passed since Michael Manley's *exemplary leadership in the pursuit of a new international economic order, the fundamental challenges have really not changed.

It was Heraclitus who wrote "the only constant in life is change." In the passage of time, several of those changes have made things worse.

The current environment is characterized by multiple and cascading crises; by wars and conflict in both the developed and the developing world, by currency instability and global inflationary pressures, by a burgeoning debt crisis in the Global South, by a global pandemic, and by food and energy insecurity.

Today there is a major complicating factor: we have the phenomenon of a growing populist international revolt. Migration and border security have emerged as major issues in electoral campaigns of several developed countries as autocratic forces replace liberal democracies.

We must be on the alert to avert becoming embroiled in fights against countries with which we have shared productive partnerships on the command of nation which have their own adversarial axe to grind.

Only 15% of the Sustainable Development Goals are on track, and more than 3 billion people live in countries that are spending more on servicing debt than they spend on health and education. Half the world has been left behind.

The dangers of global warming threaten our very existence. We have been the victims, and should exact the full price from those who caused it.

The New Paradigm

Today the emasculation of the United Nations as the forum for global governance, the impotence of the Security Council to bring peace and security whether in Ukraine or Gaza, the exclusion of an entire continent Africa as a Permanent Member, render the compelling cry for Institutional Reform of an obsolete system of global governance “impatient of debate”.

Our repeated calls for drastic reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions, have gone unheeded. Hence the emergence of new Development Banks in the south, including the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank, The Development Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean, Afreximbank and the Development Bank for Resilient Prosperity, launched at the University’s Regional Headquarters a fortnight ago.

A serious exploration of the feasibility of using our natural resources as equity investment in global initiatives rather than usage as a single-generational traded commodities is gradually gaining expert examination.

While the second decade of the new millennium is in so many ways the same divided world Michael Manley deplored, there have been a few initiatives which bring glimmers of hope. More and more, as he envisioned, the economic South has come to recognize that our salvation lies in our own hands.

Only we can remove the shackles of imperial exploitation which entrenched our poverty and hunger.

In the 90s, trade amongst countries of the North was 60% of global trade, today it is only a quarter: Even more notably, trade amongst countries in the Global South is now, as high as 35%, making it the largest component of global trade.

These developments indicate that there are noteworthy changes taking place in the structure of the global economy. This makes it more important -not less so- that change should now also take place in universal institutional structures and governance.

The past is indeed prologue: sometimes old issues may lose their primacy, but the underlying asymmetry remains even as new ones arise, all of which are of considerable importance to small developing states.

This is a seminal moment in global relations when Jamaica must once again exercise its sovereignty and agency to be in the vanguard with the expansion of BRICS and the 54 nations of Africa to design our own model and modalities to create the development and prosperity that have so long eluded us in the existing global order.

Michael Manley would not ignore BRICS which constitutes 30% of the world's land surface, 45% of the world's population with a combined GDP of US\$88 trillion. He would applaud this bold challenge to Western domination and the creation of an alternative currency to the American greenback which has ruled the world since the abolition of its gold standard.

Where does Jamaica stand?

We must once again be a leading voice in the world community, to treat fairly and responsibly with digital inclusion, vaccine equity, and sharing the carbon neutral burden, especially with regard to the availability and propagation of clean technologies for sustainable development.

Africa is the continent of the future. By 2050, one in four of the global population will be African.

I can hear Michael saying

PJ:

“That umbilical connection with the Continent of Africa that inspired the start of our exciting journey in 1969 is a plank on which we must shape the future of Global Africa to foster economic and cultural growth. Let us enhance African-Caribbean economic integration in order to build collective self-reliance and emerge as a global economic market power.”

We at the Institute for Africa Caribbean Advocacy are pleased to have co-sponsored this Symposium. We believe that the 70 sovereign states in Africa and the Caribbean sea which comprise nearly 40% of UN Membership, in an alliance with Latin America, have a commanding voice to ensure a total reform of the global architecture. Our agenda must prioritize greater value added in production and trade, enhance food, energy and pharmaceutical resources and advance our capital in Artificial Intelligence.

Finale

For far too long, poverty and inequality have prevailed on Planet Earth.

Fifty years ago, the courageous thrust to reform the international monetary, financial and trading systems, under the rubric of the NIEO, was stifled.

Let us harken the words of Michael Manley “never to be bullied into silence – nor be lured into passivity and acceptance again – but to sail forth proudly and fight for our dignity around the world.”

South-South solidarity and consolidation is no longer merely an option – it is an Imperative to fulfil our prospects of hope.

Full time now – we need a new global paradigm.

“There can be no peace without justice.” Peter Tosh.

Michael Manley's legacy is a bequest that we work resolutely to build a lasting edifice, founded on the rocks of struggle and unity of purpose to create enduring peace and justice for all mankind.

He has thrown down the gauntlet – 'Forward ever, backward never.'