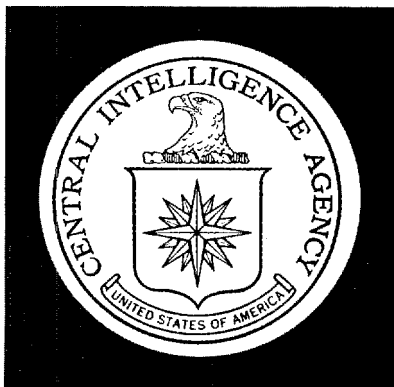


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

## *Special Report*

*Jamaica Deals Gingerly with Social Unrest*

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## JAMAICA DEALS GINGERLY WITH SOCIAL UNREST

Against a background of rapid population growth, high unemployment, inflammatory slum conditions, an inadequate educational system, and serious income inequality, the Jamaican Government led by Prime Minister Hugh Shearer is making only limited attempts to build a more viable society. Discordant and often incompatible elements from Europe and Africa have not been reconciled, and the Negroes in particular have little opportunity to acquire education, skills, jobs, or anything other than a bare subsistence livelihood. The social tensions thus generated have been reflected in a tendency toward sporadic violence, political as well as criminal.

The government's response to recurrent strikes, a rising crime rate, and other social problems has been confused and ill-designed to alleviate the causes of social unrest. Violence, largely confined so far to urban areas, is exploited by a small handful of extremists who would discard Jamaica's democratic institutions and impose a dictatorship. There are no policy changes in sight that would cope adequately with these continuing problems.

### BACKGROUND

Jamaica gained its independence in 1962 with impressive political assets: a 20-year history of democratic government based on a two-party system, an impartial judiciary backed by traditional respect for law and order, and a capable civil service. Since then, however, its leaders have tended to be middle-class foreign-educated mulattoes who have little personal experience with the fundamental difficulties that affect the vast majority of the population.

One of the underlying problems in this multiracial country is the high correlation between color and social status. Negroes, who account for slightly more than three fourths of the population, are largely confined to the lower class. Mulattoes—approximately 15 percent of the remainder—predominate in the professions and commerce and hold most of the important government jobs. The rest of the population is a potpourri of races and nationalities—East Indian,

Chinese, northern European—many of whom are the wealthiest members of society.

A third of the rapidly growing population is concentrated in Kingston. Unemployed and unemployable youth—almost a fifth of the country's population—gravitate to the slums of West Kingston, a breeding ground for vice, crime, and political unrest. Residents of this area were largely responsible for the rioting that followed a student demonstration against the government last October.

Recurrent turmoil in the past several years may be viewed against a backdrop of increasing public dissatisfaction with the government as a result of rapidly rising living costs, allegations—some justified—of corruption, and breakdowns of essential public services.

### POLITICAL MALAISE

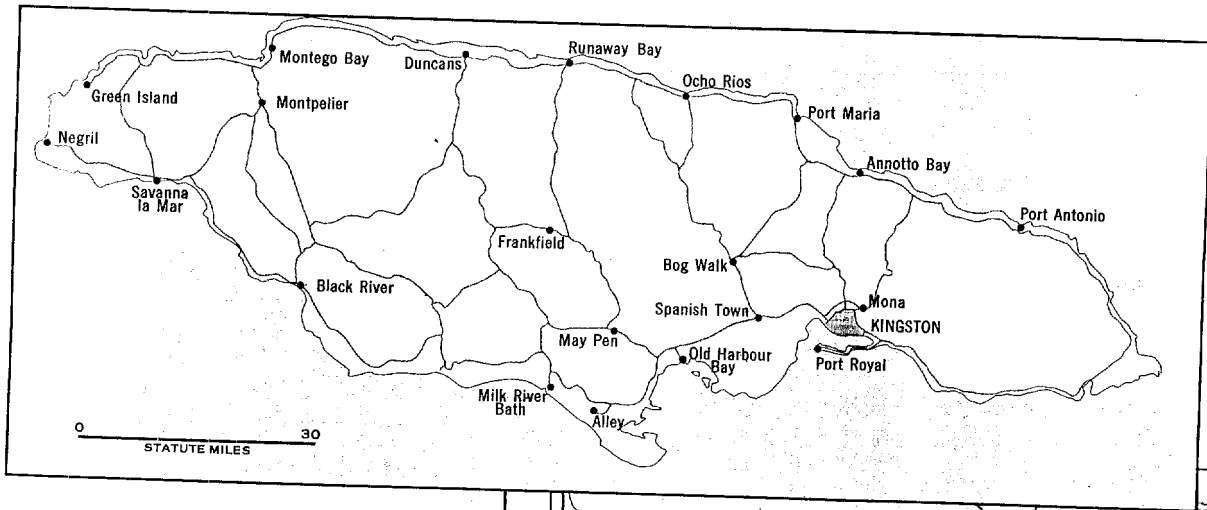
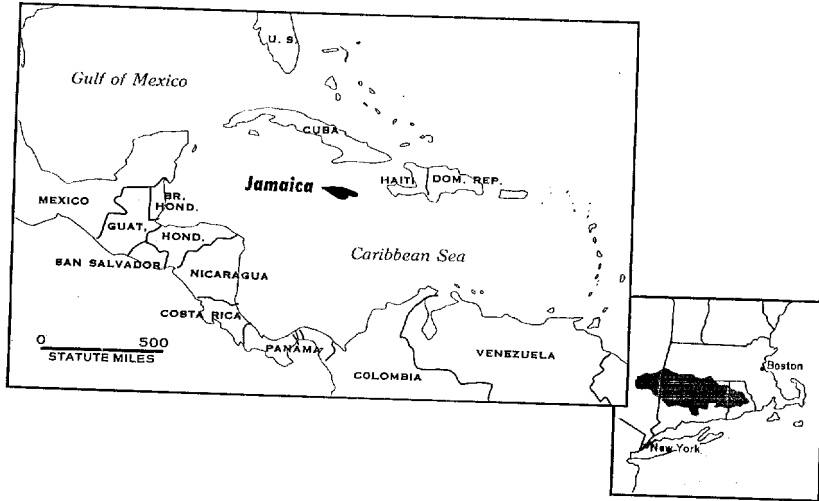
Both major parties, the incumbent Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and the People's National

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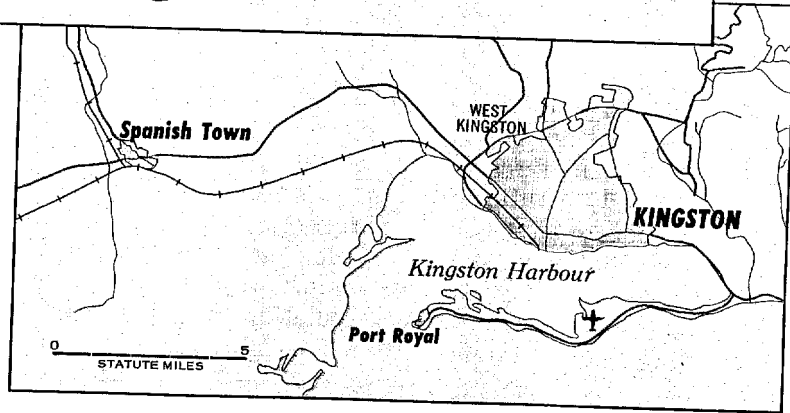
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Party (PNP), claim broad popular support, but their power base lies in the two major trade unions. For this reason, although the large rural population and other well-defined interest groups are represented in the political process, party leaders tend to be especially responsive to the needs of organized labor and are less concerned with the other segments of society.

Prime Minister Hugh Shearer took over the leadership of his party and the government in April 1967 following the death of his predecessor, Donald Sangster. He originally projected an image of decisiveness. He has failed, however, to cope with such fundamental problems as race relations

Although there have been some indications of conflict between Shearer and other cabinet members such as the ambitious Minister of Finance Edward Seaga and the eloquent and persuasive Minister of Trade Robert Lightbourne, the prime minister seems to have consolidated his hold over both the party and the government. During a recent JLP conference, Lightbourne replaced Seaga as the second-ranking member of the party. It now appears that Shearer backed Lightbourne, a loyal supporter, against Seaga in order to undermine a possible threat to his leadership.

Seaga remains the most controversial figure in Jamaican politics. A Harvard-educated Caucasian of Lebanese descent, he is the lightest-skinned member of the government, but his power base is the black, poverty-ridden area of West Kingston. Describing himself as a liberal, he once formed a leftist bloc within the JLP ranks, but has since followed a cautious course to stay in good standing with other party leaders. His concentration on the underprivileged and youth has

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Minister of Trade and Industry  
Robert Lightbourne



Prime Minister  
Hugh Shearer



Minister of Finance  
Edward Seaga

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brought him a large personal following and his red-shirted henchmen were active in much of the violence in the West Kingston slums during the riots of 1966.

Although Shearer is firmly in power, he may be losing much of his popularity. He has done little to reduce the rising cost of living, which especially affects foodstuffs, or to curb labor unrest. There are recurrent rumors of corruption among top government officials

[Redacted]

The opposition People's National Party (PNP) has had little success in exploiting the government's shortcomings. In fact, it apparently lost ground in the burst of popular endorsement for Shearer's handling of the Kingston riots on 16 October 1968, which followed the government's ban on the re-entry of Dr. Walter Rodney, an extreme leftist Guyanese lecturer employed at the Jamaica branch of the University of the West Indies.

[Redacted]

During the past half year, the PNP has apparently taken a more militant posture by aggressively focusing on the government's failings. It has not developed a coherent program of its own, however, even though it claims to be socialist. It appears, in fact, to have suffered as a result of the government's counteraccusations that all who disagreed with the government's handling of the riots were backing Rodney's extremism.

The PNP's efforts to make political capital have been hampered by an awkward period of leadership transition. The aging party founder, Norman Manley, recently resigned in favor of a more energetic set of younger leaders, and his son, Michael, was elected party chief on 9 February.

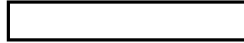
It is not clear if the new PNP leadership will shift the party's orientation away from parliamentary criticism in order to make a stronger appeal to the black slum dwellers who are now excluded from the political institutions. Elder statesman Norman Manley has said that while the party must recognize the constructive aspects of the doctrine of "black power," especially in a country that has an overwhelming majority of black people, it must reject all forms of racism and violence.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Although Jamaica is one of the most prosperous of the Caribbean islands, its recent growth rate has been sluggish. In 1967, the growth in gross domestic product fell to two percent from above four percent the preceding year. There were several causes of this slowdown: a severe drought, uncertainty following the death of a newly elected prime minister, and the devaluation of the Jamaican pound in keeping with British devaluation. The rate of economic growth rose in 1968, but the continuing agricultural lag apparently prevented a return to the five percent average growth rate of 1960-65.

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In recent years, industrial growth has far outpaced that of agriculture. Jamaica's history of political stability combined with its bauxite deposits has attracted substantial foreign investment and has provided the main basis for economic progress. Today, Jamaica is the world's largest exporter of bauxite and alumina, and the expansion of this industry has provided a stimulus for further industrialization and diversification. Foreign investment has also encouraged a rapid expansion of the tourist trade, now an important source of foreign exchange.

Agriculture, employing 40 percent of the labor force, has been stagnant for years. The combination of a vast number of extremely small holdings on relatively poor soils, ignorance of modern techniques, and lack of appropriate incentives condemns most peasant farmers to a subsistence level of existence.

The government is aware of the agricultural problems, but its programs to encourage increases in domestic food crops have not been successful. At the same time, government insistence that sugar estates forgo the economic advantages of mechanization in order to maintain high levels of employment has resulted in high-cost sugar that can be sold profitably only in markets with artificially high prices. The government's orientation toward trade unions prevents it from finding common ground with an industry whose main problem is the reduction of labor costs.

Widespread unemployment is a more volatile issue in Jamaican society. There is a surfeit of the unemployable, while skilled labor is scarce. About half of the estimated 18,000 young people who enter the labor market annually cannot find jobs. Chronic unemployment is approximately 18 percent and shows no signs of diminishing. Economic development has increased the unevenness in the distribution of wealth and has not significantly

lowered the numbers of those who lack adequate housing, education, or any reasonable prospect of improvement. Although the government has made some effort to provide more schools, housing, roads, and public utilities, it has not initiated any large public works programs or significantly improved working conditions and salaries of such public employees as police, teachers, and civil servants. Instead, the government has chosen to husband its funds and maintain credit-worthiness in order to attract more foreign investors. The immediate consequence has been a rash of strikes in the public services and rising social discontent.

Population pressure continues to be a problem, despite massive emigration to the United States. Because of emigration, however, the rate of population increase has been cut from 2.6 to approximately 2.0 percent. Prime Minister Shearer has called for an end to the "production per mother of 12 and 14 children," and the government officially encourages birth control by operating some 80 family planning clinics. Nevertheless, knowledge of family planning is not yet widespread and those most favorably disposed toward birth control are the upper and middle classes.

#### RACISM AND EXTREMISM

"Black power" and racist groups have become more active in Jamaica during the past year and appear to have contributed to an increase in antiwhite sentiment. Despite the government's allegations, however, these groups have had only limited success in exploiting conditions of deep-seated poverty and unemployment in Kingston's black slums.

One important racist leader, Claudius Henry, head of the New Creation International Peacemaker's Tabernacle, espouses a doctrine of Marxist-influenced racism and has made a number of threats of antigovernment action, but there is

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no indication that he has made a systematic effort to prepare for violence.



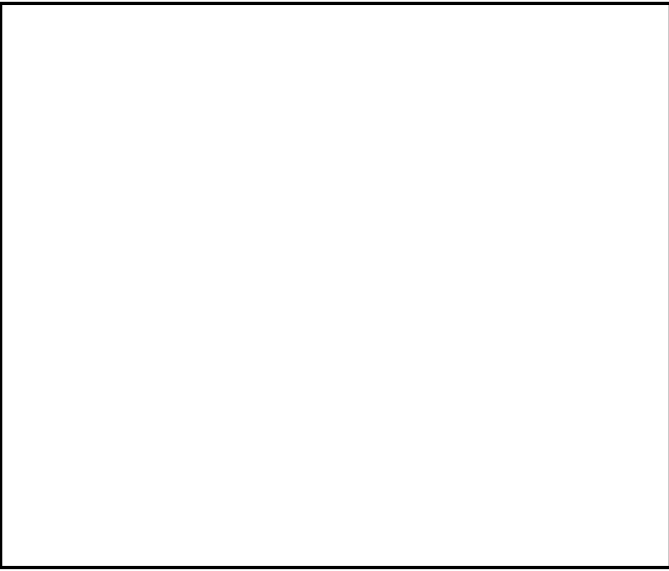
1,200-man Jamaica Defense Force, whose major responsibility is internal security. The effectiveness of the internal security forces has at times been hampered by inadequate internal communications equipment and very poor coordination between the two groups. There is no reliable evidence that political or social unrest has altered the leaders' traditional commitment to democratic institutions, but any future prolonged breakdown of the constitutional processes might severely test their restraint, especially as the old leadership gradually retires.

The radical left is particularly active among intellectuals and students at the Mona campus in Kingston of the University of the West Indies. A number of left-wing groups have sought to stimulate support and interest for their radical plans to effect sweeping changes in Jamaican society. All efforts to unite the leftist groups have thus far failed, however.

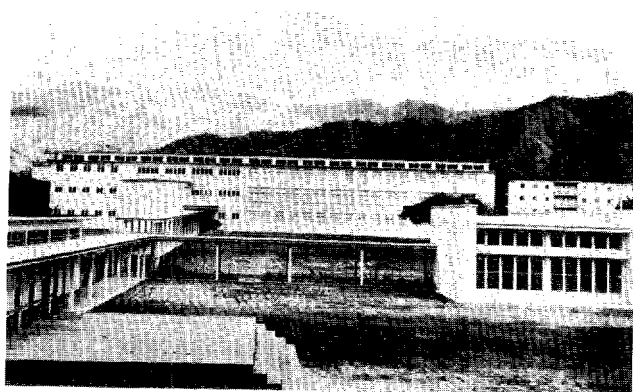
SECURITY FORCES

The Jamaican security forces are still benefiting from British instruction in public safety and are relatively well-disciplined, -trained, and -led. They have been able to contain violence—although at times they have been strained in doing so—but would be hard put to deal with island-wide disturbances. The 3,000-man Jamaica Constabulary Force is backed up by the

As part of its reaction to the Rodney affair, the government has put special emphasis on enhancing the effectiveness of the police. For example, it has recently approved a 20-25 percent police wage increase to improve morale and spur recruitment. In addition, the purchase of riot control equipment was authorized, as was a series of raids to control criminal and militant elements in and around Kingston. Prime Minister Shearer, who had ignored the wage demands for several months until the police walked out, is now devoting attention to increasing the prestige of the force.



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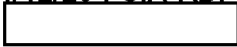
University of West Indies at Mona

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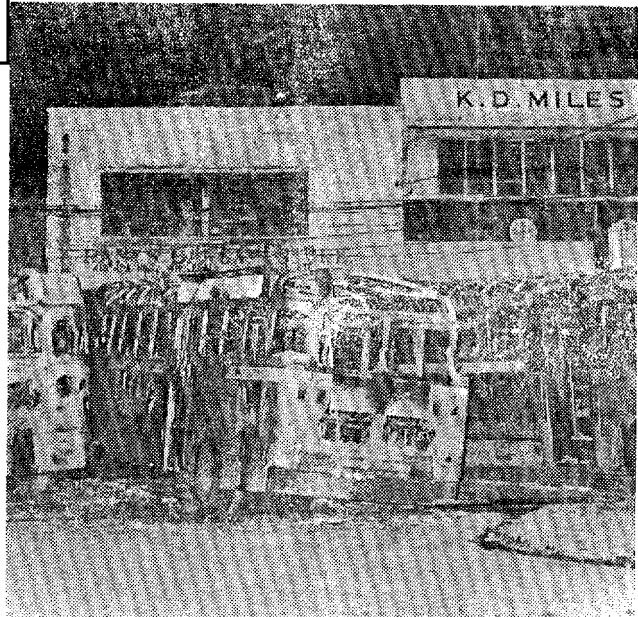
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### OUTLOOK

Although civil unrest does not pose an immediate threat to the Jamaican Government, it is increasingly apparent that many of the island's most serious problems will probably not be solved soon by any governmental action. Prime Minister Shearer is likely to take whatever security measures are necessary to prevent any incident that might endanger the lucrative tourist trade, but he has yet to grapple with the root causes of social discontent.

Shearer will not have to face the voters again until 1972. He seems to be counting on the weakness of the opposition's control of political machinery as well as its inability to prevent further gerrymandering and electoral manipulation when elections are held. He is also building an image as the staunch defender of Jamaica's young nationhood against all foreign foes, whether in the form of subversive university lecturers or regional schemes with other ex-British



Buses Set Afire During Rioting in Kingston

colonies that might dilute the country's sovereignty.



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