

CB/3118/97

26/3/97

### HUGE CROWD TURNS OUT FOR MANLEY'S FUNERAL SERVICE

KINGSTON, March 16 (JAMPRESS):

It was a solemn, but not sad occasion today as thousands of Jamaicans gathered in Kingston at the Holy Trinity Cathedral to give thanks for the life of former Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Michael Norman Manley.

Mr. Manley passed away on Thursday, March 6. He was 72 years old.

The crowd erupted as the black hearse bearing the remains of Mr. Manley progressed down North Street toward the historic Holy Trinity Cathedral.

"Joshua! Joshua!" they chanted, as members of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) hoisted the flag-draped casket onto their shoulders and slowly proceeded into the cathedral, already filled with somber, yet expectant mourners.

The crowd had earlier exploded into roars of approval on the arrival of Cuba's President, Fidel Castro, Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan, Jamaica's Prime Minister P. J. Patterson and South West St. Andrew Member of Parliament, Portia Simpson.

Other leaders present included Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister, Basdeo Panday; Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister, Lester Bird; former Venezuelan President, Carlos Andres Perez and Haitian President, Rene Preval.

From the belfry came a haunting toll, competing with the quiet buzz of the crowd, which was to maintain a vigil for the next three hours as the State Funeral for a son of Jamaica proceeded.

The congregation of more than 2,000, as well as those accommodated on the lawns of the cathedral, listened as Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Howard Cooke read the first lesson from Wisdom 3:1-9.

The second lesson, Ephesians 6:10-20, was read by Mr. Manley's daughter, Sarah, while Leader of the Opposition, the Rt. Hon. Edward Seaga, read the third lesson, Matthew 25:31-46.

Delivering the remembrance, Prime Minister Patterson reflected on his first contact with Mr. Manley, recalling the times spent sharing experiences and work, in what was to become a lasting friendship.

He was an advocate of "the poor and dispossessed", the Prime Minister said of Mr. Manley, whose formal entry in the political arena was his decision to contest the Central Kingston seat in 1967.

The workers of the country, he said, would remember Mr. Manley for the introduction of the minimum wage, compulsory recognition of trade unions and a raft of programmes which expanded workers' rights and raised their standard of living.

Mr. Patterson also expounded on how small farmers, women, children and students would remember Michael Manley, the "quintessential West Indian", who he noted was a "main architect in the design of the Caribbean Community".

He recounted Mr. Manley's contribution to the fall of apartheid in South Africa, which was recognised by the United Nations, his efforts at enriching the local political process and how he placed ordinary Jamaicans at the centre of national affairs.

"He was consistent in his objectives," Mr. Patterson declared. "Those who were privileged to know him will recall his... unwavering sense of obligation," he said, praising the late leader as one "who could motivate and inspire his team and the people".

"This world will be a much better place because he lived so unselfishly and shared his mind and talents with so many," the Prime Minister stated.

A former Cabinet colleague, David Coore, in his tribute said his life had been enriched by his friendship with Mr. Manley, which he traced back to when they met at Jamaica College as 10 year old boys.

"Even in those tender years, Michael demonstrated many of those qualities which were characteristic of the man he was to become," said Mr. Coore.

President-General of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU), Hugh Shearer, who was a one time political rival of Mr. Manley, paid tribute to the former Prime Minister, who was also a trade unionist. "I have lost a friend," he mourned.

Mr. Manley's daughter-in-law, Della, paid tribute in song and his daughter, Natasha, in poetry.

Following the sermon by the Lord Bishop of Jamaica, Right Reverend, Dr. Neville deSouza, prayers and hymns, the soldiers retraced their steps with the casket, placing it on a gun carriage for the processional walk to the interment in the National Heroes' Park.

CONTACT: KEDAN HARRIS

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF JAMAICA