

Michael Manley

Former Prime Minister of Jamaica



Jamaica's Manley offers wit, wisdom on new world order

By Lisa Bennett, Cornell Chronicle

1 December, 1994

When Michael Manley laughs, which is often, the sound and smile linger. He is in no hurry to finish laughing and move on to the next point. He is Jamaican and has the charm of a grandfatherly gentleman from the Caribbean.

That the Right Honorable Manley also is the retired prime minister of Jamaica, former labor organizer and journalist and still-active advocate for developing world issues (recently having teamed up with former President Jimmy Carter and former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to forge peace in Haiti) means he could offer both a little wit and a little wisdom when he visited Cornell on Nov. 15 to deliver the Bartels World Affairs Fellowship lecture.

Manley lectured to about 200 people on what some people have called the New World Order. And earlier in the day, he had a more casual conversation about the idea of order, the American elections and his hope for the United Nations.

"I don't like to comment about other countries' politics," he said when asked about his view of the American elections held one week before. "But I wonder if there is not an element of the U.S. process that is still lurching slightly (since the end of the Cold War). I get the feeling the U.S. is searching for new landmarks and the framework is very blurred at the moment.

"The voters do seem angry," he added. "Though if you scratch beneath the surface, I'm not sure they know what they're angry about."

As for the New World Order, a phrase coined by former President George Bush and used in the title of Manley's lecture, "The Search for Development Paradigms in the New World Order," Manley, one of the

first social democratic leaders to promote the need for a strong market economy, said simply: "There isn't any world order anymore." In the realm of economics, there is some. "But in terms of politics," he added, "there is no order at all."

Speaking of global economic development during his lecture, Manley said, "As we come to the end of the 20th century, it is a truism that technology, managerial skill and entrepreneurship have combined to create capital that could bring every class and nation global prosperity.

"Yet if we talk to the average person, if you can find such a person, we discover this is a time of cynicism, pessimism and creeping alienation," he added. There is, for example, increasing homelessness in the United States, more poverty in our hemisphere and a crisis of maldistribution in every society.

"So as we proclaim a new world order, as some do, we should be at the noontime of optimism and yet we are mired-in discontent," he said. Consequently, he added, the global community needs to rethink new development paradigms.

These paradigms, furthermore, must reflect a cooperative solution. "There must not be one solution for developing countries and one for developed countries, or we will each be mired in our own problems: Yours of the inner cities and homelessness, mine of more generalized poverty," he said.

As for the lack of political order, Manley places his hopes on the United Nations.

"How to contain destructive regional conflicts is the big question now. We need to have a more capable institutional action that is not the result of long laborious efforts. We need to revisit the U.N. system," he said. Then he added, in response to an expression of doubt: "What else do we have?"