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Between Two Giant Sounds: Jamaican Politics, Nationalism, and Musical Culture in Transition, 1974-1984

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Between Two Giant Sounds:
Jamaican Politics, Nationalism, and Musical Culture in Transition, 1974 – 1984

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
History

By

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Abstract

The story of Jamaican music is also one of the island's journey from independence, the rise of nationalism and changes in its political structure in the Cold War era. Reggae as a popular form, developed in the context of Jamaica's history of colonialism and slavery, as well as the island's development as an independent nation within the African Diaspora. Michael Manley's policy of democratic socialism leading to U.S. intervention to destabilize his government in the mid-1970s and the installation of the pro-American Edward Seaga, in 1980, led to considerable changes in Jamaican political culture and nationalism. Inextricable from changes in the nation's political culture, however, were changes in its popular culture, namely, the transition in popular music from reggae to what became known as "dancehall." The history of reggae and the rise of dancehall in the period from 1974 to 1984 this thesis argues, was integral to the transformation of Jamaican nationalism and politics in the decades following independence.

Introduction

One little *bwoy* come blow him horn. And mi look *pon* him wid scorn
And mi realize how me five *bwoy-picni* was a victim of de trick
Dem call partisan *poli-tricks*.¹

--“Me Cyaan Believe It,” Michael Smith

Said one Rasta to me in Kingston in 1980, *Mon!* You know what politics mean?
Poli, is Greek for many. Tic, you know what that is *mon?* That is a parasite.
Politics: - Many Parasites.²

--Jamaica Under Manley, Michael Kaufman

Early in his career, Bob Marley brought radical, politically charged reggae music to the Jamaican airwaves. In the month of December 1976, however, while Marley rehearsed for his “Smile Jamaica” Concert — an event meant to heal political strife in Jamaica — gunmen made an attempted assassination on his life, driving him into exile. Two years later, on April 22, 1978, the reggae star returned to Jamaica in an effort to placate political violence and to fight what many believed were attempts by the United States to aggravate Jamaica’s political divisions and to bankrupt its socialist government. At his 1978 stage-show, the “One Love Peace” concert, Bob Marley brought the socialist Prime Minister Michael Manley and the pro-American opposition leader Edward Seaga to the stage.

Michael Manley, elected in 1972 as the candidate of the People’s National Party’s (PNP), disliked what he considered to be the neo-colonialist policies of the United States. After two years in office, Manley’s leftist tendencies had raised U.S. suspicions and led to American efforts to destabilize his government, leaving Jamaica and Jamaicans in grim circumstances. Manley’s political opponent, the Jamaica Labor Party’s candidate (JLP) Edward Seaga, by contrast, soon gained the favor of the U.S. government because of his pro-capitalist stance and eagerness to see American investment in Jamaica.

As the ideologies of these political leaders clashed, it not only brewed bitter rivalry in Jamaican electoral politics but also among political strong-armed gangs in the ghettos of Kingston, which contributed to increased civil unrest and instability in Jamaica. Gang violence quickly became a reflection of the Jamaican political state of affairs. The dub poet, Michael Smith's, "*Poli-tricks*" limerick (above), reflected a nation torn apart by political strife. Like Smith and Marley, reggae musicians and other artists became some of the most important commentators on the rising political warfare in Jamaica, particularly their effect on the nation's poor.

Bunny Wailer, Marley's band-mate from the band "The Wailers," described Marley as "the eyes and ears" of the Jamaican underclass, who had risen out of the ghetto through his music. By the mid-70s, Marley had become the widely acclaimed reggae king, and his musical message resonated among the majority of Jamaicans. At the same time, his acquired wealth placed him in a position of power, even above most of Jamaica's political "big shots." Many Jamaicans saw Marley, in particular, as the man who could use reggae music to speak for the underprivileged. Aware of the power of music, particularly reggae, Marley had noted in his 1975 song "Trench Town Rock" that "*One good thing about music / When it hits you, you feel no pain.*"³ The "One Love Peace" concert was a direct effort to use music and its foremost troubadour to "hit" the "many parasites" of politics that they believed engendered the escalation of violence in Jamaica. Hoping to inject the concept of love and unity into the politically divided and warring garrison communities, the concert organizers proposed a truce between Jamaica's opposing political leaders by the symbolic gesture of their united hands on stage. [Fig. 1]

As ghetto gunmen and garrison leaders in the audience looked on, Marley joined the hands of Michael Manley and Edward Seaga while singing, "*I just want to shake hands and*

show the people that we're gonna unite/ The moon is high over my head and I give my love instead/ Show the people that everything is gonna be alright."⁴ Marley's political gesture, expressed through his music, not only captured the perceived power of reggae music, but also demonstrated its intimate relationship with politics and Jamaican nationalism. This snapshot of Jamaican political leaders joining hands at the urging of Bob Marley illustrated the political importance of Jamaican music, placing it at the center of attempts — symbolic and real — to unify Jamaica by ending partisan politics.

Fig. 1 Bob Marley attempts to unite Jamaican political leaders at 1978 One Love Peace Concert. (left- Michael Manley, Center- Bob Marley, Right- Edward Seaga)



The success of the “One Love Peace” Concert suggested a peaceful resolution of Jamaica's woes. But improvements came slowly. Actual political reconciliation between the two political leaders did not occur as expected and gunmen did not disappear from Jamaican politics. Many now regard Manley's and Seaga's participation in the moment as a mere photo opportunity, rather than a sign of willingness to quell partisan rivalry in the government. In fact, violence between their constituencies increased after 1978. (Only at Marley's 1981 state funeral would the two leaders again join hands.)

Meanwhile, the growing violence had given Jamaica a reputation as an aggressive and ungovernable island, particularly among its Caribbean neighbors. This had not always been the case. In the previous decade, well before Marley's attempt at a truce, daily life in Jamaica had been, on the whole, peaceful. After winning its independence in 1962, a new Jamaican cultural identity and sense of nationalism arose. Immediately after independence, the legacy of slavery and exploitation had fostered the camaraderie and oneness that characterized early Jamaican nationalism. Following Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities — that is, that nationalism is an accumulation of beliefs stemming from the past — the shared history of slavery and resistance fostered a sense of national feeling among Jamaicans. Norman Manley, in his fight for Jamaican independence, had articulated this feeling noting, “It is out of your own conviction about the future of the country that the spirit of national unity and of patriotism will be built.”⁵ In 1962, the black, green and gold flag blowing in the wind signified, as Jamaicans would say, “massa day done.” According to the national anthem, “*Eternal Father*” would “*bless our land*” and this Jamaicans sang together as they looked towards the promise of a new era.⁶ Indeed, Jamaican nationalism, though immature, found a particularly unique assertive expression through music. As musicologists have associated the growth of Cuban identity with the chacha and rumba, Jamaicans created a sense of nationalism by tuning in to reggae music.⁷ Reggae's relationship with the Jamaican masses developed in such a manner that it not only spoke *to* them but *for* them by expressing their frustrations with the government at street-level to politicians.

However, the independence euphoria did not linger. A growing Cold War struggle for influence in the “Third World” had violent repercussions for Caribbean Islands such as Jamaica. As political factions provoked partisan violence in the inner cities of Kingston, many Jamaicans began to subscribe to what Michael Kaufman described in his book as “poli-ticks.” By the mid-

1970s, political strife gradually divided the country into left and right political groups, challenging post-independence Jamaican nationalism.

As political parties competed for supremacy, partisan politics reared its head in violent ways. Jamaican politics started to epitomize what many now term “slash and burn gun-point politics.” With the onset of the politics of 1976, the divisive nature of the political culture at the top contributed to adversarial behaviors on the streets between Kingston’s ghettos. As inner city communities aligned themselves to the Jamaica Labor Party and waged war against the People’s National Party and vice versa, Jamaicans killed Jamaicans. As Damian Marley later puts it in his 1999 song “Catch a Fire,” *“after 400 years.../ We ambush we brother and go on like we never used to plan slave revolts inna di bush dem together/ We change just like di weather.”*⁸ This surge of political hostility disrupted ideas of Jamaican unity and nationalism, as the island’s citizens identified with the JLP or PNP, rather than their shared status as Jamaicans.

Intensifying an already difficult situation, American involvement played an essential role in exacerbating the roots of Jamaica’s woes. U.S. involvement with political gangs instigated further violence, which served to supplement the existing left and right divide in the country. U.S. intervention also led to a violent transition in political leadership in Jamaica, from the nationalist Michael Manley to the pro-American candidate Edward Seaga in the 1980 election. By 1976, as a nation, Jamaicans began to define themselves in terms of increased political civil wars and disillusionment with the government.

While U.S. intervention, “partisan poli-ticks” and violence challenged early Jamaican nationalism, it also caused a cultural transformation in aspects of Jamaican life such as tourism and Rastafarianism. However, in the climate of cultural, political and nationalistic transformation, the emergence of the new music of dancehall, as an offspring of reggae, stood

out. Jamaican popular music became the one aspect of Jamaican life that was not only involved in, but also wholly embodied the transition in Jamaican culture and politics between 1974 and 1984. In the violent political atmosphere of mid-70s and 1980s, the same popular music that had once contributed to feelings of nationalism now played a role in its dissolution.

A transformation from reggae to dancehall reflected a shift in the definition of Jamaican nationalism and the dawning of a new political and musical culture between the 1970s and 1980s. In the late 1970s and 80s, the concerns expressed in reggae and dancehall lyrics reflected the impact of U.S. intervention during the Cold War — especially the spread of capitalism in the Caribbean and the forms of “neo-slavery” many activists believed U.S. capitalism engendered. Reggae, developed in the mid-1940s, evolving from earlier musical forms such as mento, ska and rocksteady. Also termed “roots reggae” in its earliest incarnation, it had been the music of the Jamaican poor, primarily reflecting their social discontent. By the mid-1980s, the sound of dancehall music took over as the new mainstream, particularly among Jamaican youth. As a derivative of early reggae, dancehall music in essence developed as a form of “deejaying,” rhyming and talking over beats. With the development of dancehall “sound clashes” — a musical competition where sound system crew members from opposing sound systems pit their rhyming skills against each other — political rivalry on the streets began to be mimicked on the music scene. Not only did the lyrics convey these tensions but also the politicization of the new dancehall music and the dance hall scene provided an avenue for political expression for politically affiliated gangs in an era when politics often led to violence.

Jamaican dancehall became a metaphor for political struggle within Jamaica, between Jamaicans, both critics and musicians alike. Whereas reggae had been a place for nationalist struggle *against* former colonial powers and U.S. imperialism, dancehall became a debate over

political power *within* Jamaica. Reggae, considered more authentic and roots-oriented music, developed with its choreography and costume referencing traditional rural music and its lyrics speaking to centuries of racial and economic oppression. But while reggae, the quintessential expression of Jamaican nationalism and culture, remained the voice of protest and a way to attempt to undermine politicians seen as corrupt, dancehall developed in a different direction. From its new position in the Jamaican mainstream, dancehall endorsed, as well as promoted the partisan crime and violence that gripped the country and adopted many of the forms and sounds of American popular music. Reggae and dancehall were markedly different due to their message, nature, and the climate of their development. This musical transformation, in turn, sheds new light on this tumultuous period in Jamaican history.

Although this era in Jamaican political history has been well documented, the analysis has usually been limited to the areas of democratic socialism, U.S. intervention, and musicological analysis of Jamaican popular music. Numerous books have examined American intervention in Jamaica and the era of Democratic socialism. Michael Manley's *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery* (1983) outlined the "Caribbean's Dilemma from intervention to the triumph of destabilization."⁹ Ernest Harsch's *U.S. Intervention in Jamaica: How Washington Toppled the Manley Government* (1986) showed procedures that the CIA employed to topple Manley's government. Michael Kaufman's *Jamaica Under Manley: Dilemmas of Socialism and Democracy* (1985) and *Small Garden, Bitter Weed: The Political Economy of Struggle and Change in Jamaica* (1982) by George Beckford and Michael Witter examined economic deadlock and violence as repercussions of Democratic Socialism. Researchers have also investigated the violence that erupted during the period. *Born Fi Dead: A Journey Through the Jamaican Posse Underworld* (2003) by Laurie Gunst and Duane Blake's *Shower Posse: The*

Most Notorious Jamaican Criminal Organization (1996) examined the actions of politically affiliated gangs in Jamaica in the underworlds of Kingston and New York.

Numerous authors also examined different aspects of Jamaican music. Books such as Norman Stolzoff's *Wake the Town and tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica* (2000) and Carolyn Cooper's *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* (2004) both examined the dancehall culture. Stolzoff connects dancehall music to the Jamaican slave culture of 200 years ago and argues that it is not just a recent form of expression by volatile ghetto youths. Stolzoff also relates the power structure, dress codes and language in dancehall to intra-class rivalry — a battleground between “the haves and the have nots.” Cooper on the other hand makes the argument that dancehall is fundamental to an understanding of marginality and power in Jamaican culture while also making an argument that dancehall gives women some measure of liberation.

However, few writers have sought to address how partisan political violence from that period penetrated Jamaican society. Yet this violence affected significant transitions in Jamaican politics, nationalism and musical culture. Furthermore, these transitions became manifested through the changing sounds of Jamaican music. Although some writers have argued that dancehall is a recent phenomenon, crucial stages of its development occurred in the 1970s and 80s. What follows is an attempt to reconsider the events of the transitional decades of the 1970s and 80s in Jamaica through popular music — namely the transition from reggae to dancehall.

Jamaican popular music has been an often overlooked and misunderstood site of political struggle and conflicts over how Jamaica would be defined as a nation. According to cultural studies scholar Trisha Rose, “Without historical contextualization, aesthetics are naturalized, and certain, cultural practices are made to appear essential to a given group of people. On the other

hand, without aesthetic considerations, Black cultural practices are reduced to extensions of socio-historical circumstances.”¹⁰ Historian Robin Kelley, in his article “Kickin it to Reality” noted that Rose’s call is important, as it offers a more multilayered interpretation of cultural forms that takes account of context, aesthetics, politics and pleasure.¹¹ In Jamaica, viewing music within its political context and politics within its cultural element combines to give a clearer understanding of the transitions going on in Jamaica between 1974 and 1984. Reflecting layers of society, music as a repository of Jamaican history can be used as a compelling form of evidence for addressing not only musical transformation, but also the transformation of politics and nationalism in Jamaica. For many Jamaicans, music was not only an activity that brought pleasure to the community, but also remained intertwined with other aspects of Jamaican life. Music had always been the source of recounting Jamaica’s history, serving as a means of expressing political ideas of visions for the future, and a targeted site for political struggle and social protest. Through musical performance, the past can be acted out in the present and is therefore central to the creation and maintenance of the community itself.¹² The lyrics of reggae and dancehall songs recount the events of decades of the 1970s and 80s. The transformation in from reggae to dancehall, understood in tandem with political changes and the evolution of Jamaican nationalism, provides a fertile ground for examining the changes in the politico-economic climate in Jamaica in the 1970s and 1980s.

The contrast between the two musical sounds — reggae’s nationalistic message and dancehall’s Americanized sound; reggae’s message of peace and dancehall’s call to violence; reggae’s piety and dancehall’s brashness; reggae’s ties with the African Diaspora and dancehall’s departure from it and even the difference in the style of dress and the gendering of music adopted

by the two musical art forms — tell the story of Jamaica's struggle over national identity and their places within the Cold War world.

Since 1494, when Columbus first landed in Jamaica, to its surfacing as an independent country in 1962, the island journeyed through three main phases. It initially served for nearly one hundred and fifty years as a Spanish-held way station. From the mid-1600s until the abolition of slavery in 1834, the sugar-producing island operated as a slave-worked plantation society. Thereafter, the island became a largely agricultural British colony, peopled by mainly black peasants and indentured workers.¹³ Within this history of colonization was also a history of resistance expressed in numerous rebellions and uprisings. Large maroon communities on the island formed some of the most formidable enemies of plantation owners. From their hideouts, maroon freedom fighters waged war on the masters that had enslaved them. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, Jamaica went from one crisis to another: the collapse of the sugar trade led to racial and religious tensions during the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865.

In the 1920s, somewhat stemming from the racial tensions, Jamaica experienced a cultivation of self-confidence and black pride promoted by Marcus Garvey and his Black Nationalist movement, which also overlapped with working class militancy. In exalting his pan-Africanist view, Garvey announced, "Africa, like a bereaved mother, holds out her hands to America, and implores you to send back her exiled children."¹⁴ Emperor of Ethiopia, Ras Tafari, made a similar announcement, "Tell the people to come home. Here their race originated and here it can be lifted to its highest plane of usefulness and honor. Assure them of the cordiality with which I invite them back to the homeland, particularly those qualified to help solve our big problem."¹⁵ The early 1930s saw the start of the Rastafarian movement, which hailed Ethiopia's emperor Haile Selassie as God. With the black liberation struggle and connection and

repatriation to Africa at the center of their thinking, Rastafari as a religious movement evolved in Jamaica.

In 1938, reformist policies appeared to have failed as workers broke out in spontaneous demonstrations throughout the Caribbean region culminating in Jamaica. The middle class demanded constitutional reform in the Crown Colony government, which they believed had developed into an oligarchy that only reflected the interest of the financial elites. A hastily dispatched Royal Commission from Britain toured the island and reported to the British Parliament on the dismal conditions and made strong recommendations for significant political reform. The Commission pointed to the deficiencies in the education system, and economic and social problems of unemployment that led to economic hardships. It also sharply criticized the poor health conditions, high infant mortality rates and condemned unsafe conditions at workplaces.¹⁶

As a result of these circumstances, William Alexander “Busta” Bustamante founded the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) to expose and combat social and economic conditions on the island. In numerous letters written to *The Daily Gleaner*, Busta claimed that the Mother Country was not aware of the state of affairs in Jamaica as a result of being misinformed by the Governor. In May 1938, at Heroes Park, Busta told a crowd, "Long live the king, but Denham must go."¹⁷ Through the platform of the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) that he later founded, Busta prophesied a pending mental revolution for Jamaica. The labor riots soon started to fuel a movement for independence.

Norman Manley's involvement in the political life on the island also came about in 1938 riots. During the riots, Manley negotiated with the wharf owners and persuaded the colonial governor to a sympathetic stand with the strikers. Manley had announced in 1938, “We can take

everything that the English has to offer us, but ultimately we must reject the domination of her influence, because we are not English and nor should we ever want to be.” Manley went on to say, “instead, we must dig deep into own consciousness and accept and reject only those things from which our superior knowledge of our own cultural needs must be the best judges.”¹⁸ Manley clearly viewed the coming of the indigenous music of Jamaica as a voice for the masses. In 1962, through the efforts of cousins — Busta and Manley — Jamaica threw off the yoke of colonialism. Grippled by independence fever, the newly independent nation prepared for the raising of its own flag and reggae lyrics became a celebration, indeed an orchestration of a staunch Jamaican nationalism.

Long before Bob Marley became a household name, reggae had been the medium through which many ordinary Jamaicans chose to define themselves. Reggae as a nationalist, cultural force developed in tune with the new climate of opinions and literary expressions following independence. It is no coincidence then, that those prior suppressed feelings of resistance to colonialism and the inhumanity of slavery became firmly entrenched and immortalized in the reggae aesthetic. Through reggae, Jamaicans expressed themes of poverty, resistance to government and religious oppression. Yet these themes posed a problem for the Jamaica Tourist Board as they marketed reggae as a reflection of Jamaican culture. This dilemma, as expressed in a 1975 Jamaica Tourist Board publication memorandum not meant for publication, stated that “When we promote reggae music, we are promoting an aspect of Jamaican culture which is bound to draw attention to some of the harsher circumstances of our lives.”¹⁹ These themes in reggae came up from other musical genres that had taken Jamaica by storm in the mid-1940s. Mento music had allowed for a fusion of European music with African

folk music. Soon mento evolved into “ska” music, a form with a strong jazz influence. In pre-independence Jamaica, ska soon mutated into rocksteady, emphasizing socio-political themes.

In the independence era, reggae soon followed rocksteady. As a symbol of Jamaican nationalism, reggae initially developed with little input from its colonial master or other foreigners. Roots reggae music, characterized by its slow tempo, rhythmic style, syncopated rhythms, and use of African musical instruments, produced what many considered to be a soothing sound. The Rastafari movement, having developed condemning slavery and colonial injustices, also found a mouthpiece for its ideas in roots reggae music. The character of Rastafari, shaped as much by the past, as well as present concerns, could be conveyed through the cultural prism of reggae. What also set reggae music apart from other genres is how effectively it communicated national and Diasporan identities and circumstances — experienced and expressed by the musicians themselves — and marketed those ideas to the powers that be. This relationship, exemplified in Marley’s 1979 release of “Africa Unite” noted the pan-Africanist element of Rastafari. Marley sang, “*How good and how pleasant it would be/ Before God and man, yeah/ To see the unification of all Africans... / As it's been said already, let it be done... We are the children of the Rasta man... We are the children of the higher man, Africans unite...*”²⁰

According to Linton Johnson in his book *The Reggae Rebellion* (1977), as a musical genre, reggae continually evolved and began to be viewed by many as “the very expression of the historical experiences of the Jamaican working-class, unemployed and peasant.”²¹ In an interview Marley explained what the increasingly popular reggae meant to him in his 1977 song “Positive Vibrations.” He described reggae music as “Positive Vibrations *mon*. That’s what makes it work. That’s reggae music. You can’t look away because it’s real. You listen to what I sing, because I mean what I sing, there’s no secret, no big deal, just honesty, that’s all.”²² To

Marley, reggae music was the “people’s music” and essentially their life, as it served as a method of communication to the otherwise powerless about issues that were not being addressed in the traditional educational institutions and by policy makers.²³ Early popular roots reggae thus sounded as an ode to the Jamaican underclass, reflected the reggae musicians’ commitment to change in the condition of people of the African Diaspora, as well as a pledge to the Rastafarian Deity.²⁴

Reggae practitioners fought to declare their music’s seriousness and its cultural place in the world. By the 1970s, critical and economic success of songs such as Marley’s “One love” (1977) had placed reggae undeniably in a category of music to be taken seriously. Reggae music’s ability to appeal to humanity regardless of color, class or ethnicity propelled the genre’s rise within world music. Promoted by Island Records President Chris Blackwell and popularized by reggae star Bob Marley, reggae attracted international attention. It soon drew the ears of American and European musicians, rock critics and fans around the world.

Reggae music, however, though it was increasingly gaining worldwide appeal, nevertheless stuck to its roots. Jamaican political leaders also grew aware of the connection between music and politics and the growing power of reggae music to win Jamaicans to their cause. Edward Seaga, who before his rise in politics had been involved in the music business as a promoter, noted that:

There is no question about the fact that music is intertwined with politics. Every public meeting begins and ends with music and music is interspersed throughout. Reggae music reflected what happenings are taking place in political life. So you wouldn’t be able to separate politics from music in terms of the extent to which they are interwoven as a form of message.²⁵

As the promises of independence failed to come to fruition and Manley’s reforms seemingly failed to bring prosperity and peace to Jamaica’s underclass, reggae musicians voiced their protest. In 1974, in his song titled “Them Belly Full (But We Hungry),” Marley advised Prime

Minister Manley that a disenfranchised ghetto population was a volatile and potent political force as a “*hungry mob is an angry mob.*”²⁶ Marley suggested through his music to the Prime Minister that the masses could become a potentially destructive force if they did not get the basic necessities of life. Even though his policies were being criticized by Marley, Manley noted that “Bob was one of the most articulate troubadours of the ghetto, its suffering and its pressures that I had ever seen and heard and the interesting thing about him is that he never went south with the gimmickry to appeal to a more commercial market.”²⁷

Such radical political music might have had limited commercial viability. In the case of international reggae, however, U.S. record companies in the late 1960s successfully marketed reggae as a new "rebel music" in hopes that it would appeal to grass root hippie movements, white American college students, and European youths.²⁸ Reggae became further popularized in the U.S. with the 1973 film, *The Harder They Come*, starring Jamaican singer Jimmy Cliff, tours by the Wailers and other reggae artists such as Toots Hibbert.

Despite reggae's popularity in the U.S., as well as America's geographical closeness to Jamaica, there had been relatively little Americanization evident in Jamaican culture. In the early 1960s, the Jamaican government sought to develop cultural institutions for maintaining the originality of the nation's indigenous artistic movements.²⁹ Starting in 1963, the government, in a show of reggae's importance to the country, gave further positive support to the music industry by way of a protectionist policy. The Creative Arts Centre, established in 1968 on the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies, developed, supported, and promoted excellence in the Jamaican local arts and artistes. It had resulted in a guaranteed local market for what was to become a burgeoning supply of indigenously created and manufactured music.

To be sure, Jamaican musicians found some inspiration in the early Black American's pop music. As early as the mid 1970s, Rita Marley (wife of Bob Marley) expressed the influence of America on her music. Rita noted how her husband and herself, "along with other music greats like Bob Andy, used to sit locked away for hours listening and trying to learn from American recording stars such as the Impressions and the Sweet Inspirations."³⁰ In spite of these early influences on reggae artists, however, many critics noticed a pronounced American influence on reggae in the transitional years of the 1980s, an influence that would lead to the creation of the sound of dancehall.

As partisan "poli-tricks" reached a more mass audience, new styles of reggae music reflected a new political reality, creating a makeshift venue for acting out political turf wars. As reggae culture evolved, it increasingly endorsed violence and embraced Americanization, in turn, countering earlier nationalist efforts to maintain the integrity of Jamaican culture. Reggae singer Jimmy Cliff reflected the anguish of the culturally colonized and the oppressed, void of nationalism and culture, in his 1973 song, "The Price of Peace." Cliff sang: "*You stole my history/ Destroyed my culture/ Cut out my tongue, so I can't communicate/ Then you mediate, and separate, hide my whole way of life, so myself I should hate.*"³¹ Jimmy Cliff's 1973 lyrics, though attacking centuries of colonialism, also reflected the coming of American influence on Jamaican culture.

In 1972, after a decade of struggle against an increasingly repressive Jamaica Labor Party's (JLP) political system, Jamaica's poor and nonconformist groups embraced the candidacy of the People's National Party's (PNP) leader Michael Manley (the son of former Chief Minister Norman Manley) for Prime Minister. Jamaicans gravitated to Manley's side for several reasons. One of reasons had been that during the national election campaign, Manley presented himself as

a pillar of Jamaican nationalism and emphasized the importance of retaining Jamaican cultural identity against increasing American intervention.

Manley attempted to appeal to Jamaica's cultural roots, especially the Rastafarians, and to Jamaica's Black Power movement, through highlighting the importance of Black Nationalist Marcus Garvey's doctrines. In an effort to emphasize his promise of "better must come," Manley adopted the Biblical name "Joshua" and walked around with a "rod of correction," reputedly given him by the Rastafarian God, Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. By constantly telling his supporters "we are not for sale," he also renounced metropolitan intervention in the affairs of Third World countries. He emphasized the fact that a prime minister of an independent state meant not only the ability to exercise authority but also freedom from colonialism.

To connect with his constituents, Manley employed the use of reggae music in his 1972 electoral campaign. Michael Manley's politics of developing Jamaica with its own identity, out of the shadows of the neo-slavery, closely paralleled reggae's message. Manley embraced reggae for not only its message but also for its position a unique Jamaican identifier and culture. According to the historian Anita Waters, as the campaign rolled on in 1972, "Rasta symbols were prominent in campaign rhetoric and propaganda and reggae emanated from bandwagons as Manley took up the cause of the poor."³² As Rastafarians, Bob Marley and reggae condemned slavery, colonialism and poverty, Manley's new leadership carried the same message. Through reggae music, Manley identified himself with the common themes of Jamaican nationalism. As Manley attached himself with homegrown Jamaican culture, his image started to reflect that of a Jamaican nationalist.

In this period, some people believed that Bob Marley's endorsement of a particular political party could sway the results of an election. Dudley Thompson, Minister of Foreign

Affairs from 1975 to 1977, noted the importance of reggae and Bob Marley to political campaigns saying:

I think politicians used reggae. Reggae especially through people like Bob Marley expressed the sentiments and wishes of the people. Their protests came through music and through the songs. They said what they disagreed and what they agreed with. So you could find out what the people were thinking by what songs they sang. It was one way you could gauge the people.³³

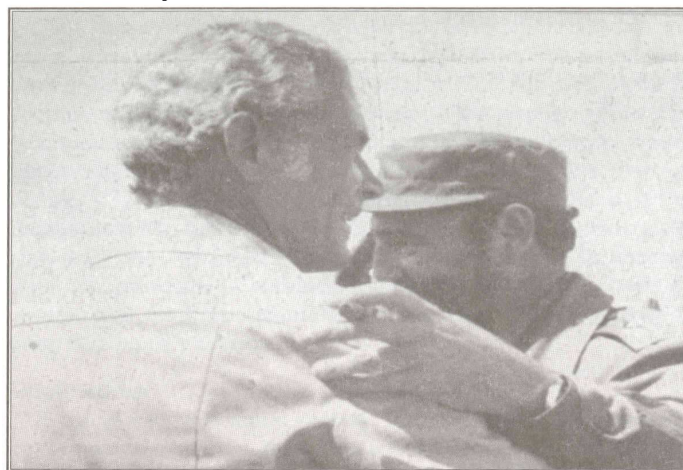
Both the PNP and JLP parties exploited reggae music in selling their policies and both were thought to be anxious to conscript Bob Marley as he had the street credibility they liked. According to Marley's band-mate Bunny Wailer, "politicians used musicians to get mileage with the people."³⁴ Manley's PNP campaign, with its emphasis on Jamaican nationalism and identity fervently sought Marley's favor. With Marley wanting to maintain a level of neutrality in the political warfare, but not disengagement — i.e. "One Love Peace" concert, Manley found other reggae artists to promote his cause. Clancy Eccles's album *Rod of Correction* when released bore Manley's face on the cover. (Fig. 2) The PNP's party identification with home-grown Jamaican culture and nationalism must have been effective. In 1972, to celebrate a landslide victory, PNP supporters paraded around the new Prime Minister Manley singing, "*Beat them Joshua with the rod of correction.*"³⁵ Like Moses, Manley held his rod to symbolize a God given authority to deliver an oppressed people from bondage.

Figure 2 – Clancy Eccles record "Joshua's Rod of Correction" with Manley holding Rod



Although a Jamaican nationalist, Manley did not want to develop a brand of politics akin to the communist policies of his ally Fidel Castro; but neither did he want to associate himself with what he considered an exploitative capitalistic system in the U.S. Two years after winning the election, Manley, in his pursuit of a third political way, formally declared Jamaica a “Democratic Socialist” country. A leftist political ideology, democratic socialism emphasized the principle of equality and prescribed a large role for the government in terms of social and economic policies. Deemed a far leftist movement by his opponents, Manley’s Democratic Socialism promised a redistribution of wealth in Jamaica.³⁶ Manley sought to nationalize the bauxite and public service industries. Manley also sought to remove barriers that barred locals from enjoying privately owned resort and beaches. In keeping with his nationalistic ideals and in order to foster independence from foreign control, Manley also opposed American imperialism and exploitation, particularly the involvement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Manley also allied himself with the U.S.’s enemy, Fidel Castro. [Fig. 3] This coalition of neighbors, Manley and Castro, essentially formed a “Third World Solidarity” and proceeded to call for those formerly oppressed nations to develop in their own unique ways without U.S. political influence.³⁷

Fig. 3 Michael Manley and Fidel Castro embrace each other in 1970



MANLEY EMBRACES CUBAN LEADER FIDEL CASTRO (1970)

On March 14, 1954, long before the ensuing friendship of Manley and Castro, John Foster Dulles, U.S. Secretary of State, had noted the importance of the island of Jamaica to the security of the non-communist world against international communism.³⁸ Dulles declared that communism was already a problem in places such as Honduras, Guatemala, and Guiana. He suggested that as Jamaica had been for the British a challenge to Spanish power in the Caribbean, so too, this strategically positioned island could be the quintessential spot for establishing communism in the Western Hemisphere.³⁹

Thus, Manley's march towards communism would not be overlooked by the U.S. government. Such abrupt changes in Jamaica not only terrified his American neighbors, but changed the protocol of expectations on the U.S. periphery. This brazen move by Manley warranted "a little visit" from Uncle Sam in the name of containment. In December 1975, U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger arrived in Jamaica under the guise of soaking up the sun and enjoying the beaches. Though supposedly on vacation, he nevertheless chastised Jamaica's foreign minister Dudley Thompson for carrying on an anti-American campaign. He also issued Manley an ultimatum to end his support of Castro in Angola.⁴⁰ Manley ignored Kissinger and pronounced him *persona non grata*.

Consequently, the CIA became actively involved in Jamaican politics. Although the CIA was already understood to be maintaining what the U.S. government called "an acknowledged presence" in Jamaica, mounting evidence pointed to the U.S. covert political backing of the JLP's candidate, Edward Seaga, and inciting violence against PNP's Manley.⁴¹ Bob Marley's song, "Rat Race," while taking a stance that the "Rastas remain righteous and politically ambivalent" warned the JLP with its lyrics. Marley tooted out, "*What a rat race/ Political violence fill your city/ Don't involve rasta in your say say/ Rasta don't work for no CIA.*"⁴² The

CIA, operating out of the U.S. embassy in Kingston, organized the formation of gangs called *posses* and launched a destabilization campaign designed to drive Manley from power. These street gangs, made up of poor people from inner cities such as Tivoli, Trench Town and Rema, formed political strong armed groups.⁴³

The action of the CIA, though initially denied by officials, came to light later on September 12, 1976, when Phillip Agee, a former agent, on a two-week visit to Jamaica, publicly exposed twelve CIA operatives working out of the U.S. embassy in Kingston.⁴⁴ Agee noted that “I believe the CIA was using the JLP as its instrument in the entire campaign against Michael Manley.”⁴⁵ Jamaica’s Foreign Minister Dudley Thompson also noted, “we know that the violence that came up during those years were not entirely local. We traced it down to the CIA in many ways.”⁴⁶ With all the occurrences of that period, Manley invited his constituents to a conference to study the British-made documentary, *The Rise and Fall of the CIA*. At the conference, Manley told his audience, “I cannot prove in a court of law that the CIA is here. What I have said is that certain strange things are happening in Jamaica which we have not seen before.”⁴⁷ Throughout the year 1976, Manley outlined in an appendix, entitled “Destabilization Diary,” in his book, *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery (1983)* what he saw as a systematic campaign waged by local and foreign forces against his right to govern. With these developing events, a mortified Manley wrote an American friend: “the tragedy of America is that a society dedicated to freedom and individual self-expression will not extend that principle to its neighbors.”⁴⁸ Just as in the cases of Cheddi Jeggan’s Guyana and Maurice Bishop’s Grenada, Washington targeted and achieved destabilization for Manley's government.

From the beginning of Manley’s move towards Democratic Socialism and all the way up to the elections of 1980, mayhem skyrocketed. According an article published in *Time Magazine*,

under the headlines “Stalag in Kingston,” “it seemed that crime was vying with tourism as Jamaica’s number one industry.”⁴⁹ Destabilization via journalistic propaganda began to hurt the Jamaican economy. Aircraft owners and Pilots Associations based in Washington wrote to its members and told them to “stay away from Jamaica ‘til we’re welcome.”⁵⁰ American financial corporation officers warned each other, “We don’t want to get caught like the boys in Cuba, where they could only take out a suitcase and that’s it; we have over one billion of foreign investment in Jamaica.”⁵¹

Polarization of Jamaican politics also polarized Jamaicans. Reggae singer Tanya Stephens’s song, “Sound of My Tears,” also expressed the discordant nature of politics in those days. Many years after witnessing the divisive force of the politics of the People’s National Party (PNP), whose supporters wore orange, and that of the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP), which adopted green as its unifying color, Stephens wrote:

*This one bag of orange and green, When the whole of we should be playing on the same f--king team — don’t make sense; We used to be the best of friends, But politics a cause the whole a we face to bend... Wooo, ooo, ooooh, this is the Sound of my Tears...But most times dem fall on deaf ears.*⁵²

According to Stephen’s lyrics, even the choice colors of clothes portrayed the sharp divide of politics as supporters embraced their political affiliation. For Stephens, as with many Jamaicans growing up during the 1970s and 1980s, Jamaica’s partisan political culture formed a source of frustration for the people. The beginnings of a transition in nationalist sentiment became evident with the escalation of violent acts committed by Jamaicans against one another. Gunmen, by defending their party’s turf, showed that party loyalty came first and being a Jamaican came second. Seaga once responded to hecklers at a political rally saying, "If they think they are bad, I can bring the crowds of West Kingston. It will be fire for fire, and blood for blood."⁵³ Musical artist Yellowman later inquired the whereabouts of the guns that flooded the island in his song

“Duppy [Ghost]/ Gun Man,” released on his *Mr. Yellowman* album in 1982. Yellowman posed several questions to gun men: *Tell me whey you get yuh gun from?/ You must get it from foreign?/ You mus tek sey mi a politician...No gimme SLR.../A M16 in a Vietnam type war...*⁵⁴

While no one seemed to know where the weapons came from, some people queried whether some might have been from former U.S. stockpiles in Vietnam, or they were smuggled into the country either through the Cuban ambassador, by the marijuana trade or the black market.⁵⁵

External bodies such as the Council on Hemispheric Affairs reported that Seaga tested the limits of the nation’s democratic mores and took the lead in escalating the gravity of campaign tactics employed. From insinuation to graffiti, these tactics mushroomed into full-fledged scare techniques, murder and slanderous misrepresentation of the facts.⁵⁶ According to Laurie Gunst, in her book *Born Fi Dead: A Journey Through the Jamaican Posse Underworld (2003)* many *posse* members immigrated to the U.S., arriving at the height of the then-booming crack-trade. They established their bases, channeled their violence in drugs and sent money to finance Jamaican political activities.⁵⁷ The Council on Hemispheric Affairs also reported that Seaga used more than seventy Jeeps, received from the conservative Jamaica Freedom League, to serve as transportation for the violent attacks, on PNP supporters in Kingston. One such attack and casualty surfaced on Roy McGann, a forty-three-year-old junior minister of the PNP’s cabinet who lost his life while driving by a JLP party rally.⁵⁸

Leading up to the 1980 elections, armed gangs roamed the streets of Kingston, filling the night air with the sounds of gunfire.⁵⁹ Coupled with propaganda campaigns, those activities created a situation of terror, doubt, fear and uncertainty. In April, five people were killed at a JLP function in central Kingston in what became known as the Gold Street Massacre. Terrorist gunmen ambushed citizens on many occasions, in one instance leaving up to seven dead in

Olympic Gardens.⁶⁰ On May 19, in what became known as the “Orange Street Massacre,” a *posse* seeking vengeance for the stabbing of one its members, set fire to a tenement house. With gunfire, they kept the fire department at bay, leaving the eleven occupants of the house, eight children and three adults, to perish in the fire.⁶¹ The Orange Street Massacre provided Manley with a vivid example of the kind of destabilization through violence with which he would have to contend. Besides “putting the squeeze on the economy,” as Manley described it, a Washington-backed campaign of *posse* terror left over 750 dead, most of them young Jamaicans, as *posses* sought to eliminate their political rivals. By 1976, Jamaica experienced an increase in the reported shootings to approximately 1500 % in a mere ten-year span.⁶²

In 1976, Prime Minister Manley, compelled to announce a state of emergency, turned also to reggae in trying to address the rising tide of violence. Manley asked Marley to write something to uplift the Jamaican people to be performed at a “Smile Jamaica” concert, sponsored jointly by Manley’s office and Marley’s organization. Ironically, on December 3, 1976, gunmen attempted to assassinate Marley as he rehearsed his lyrics, “*We’re going to help our people/ Help them right/ Oh Lord/ help us tonight/ Cast away the evil spell/ Throw some water in the well and smile in Jamaica/ Conditions for the Jamaican people must improve now!*” In the aftermath of all these occurrences, in the spirit of reggae, Marley also released “Ambush in the Night.” He pointed out the corrupt nature of politics and expressed his disappointment at the loss of Jamaican unity. To Marley it was the divisive nature of politics that was to blame for his fellow Jamaicans to try to kill him.⁶³ He sang, “*See them fighting for power /They bribing with guns and money/ Trying to belittle our integrity.*”⁶⁴ Marley denounced “those who kept the people ignorant and constantly wavering enough to shoot each other in the name of political games.”⁶⁵

The occurrence of “strange things” in Jamaica climaxed in the 1980 elections. Dancehall artist Baby Cham, who grew up in the era of Democratic Socialism, later related the events of 1980 in his song “Ghetto Story.” He related how he remembered, “’Bout ’80, Jamaica explode.” Dubbing the song his survival story, Cham through his lyrics retold the story of what he considered not only a tumultuous time in his life but also an unprecedented time in Jamaica’s history. Cham sang:

*This a survival story, true ghetto story --this my story, I remember those days when hell was my home...I remember a so di avenue turn inna war zone...
I remember bout ’80 Jamaica explode...I remember when we stick the poll clerks
And dump the ballot box pon Tivoli’s outskirts... Jamaica get screwed thru greed and glutton,
Politics manipulate and press youths buttons...⁶⁶*

According to Baby Cham’s lyrics, inner cities became war zones. In casting ballots, the JLP’s favored Southside gang led by men like “Chubby,” went up against men like “Choppy,” the PNP’s Tel Aviv gang leader.⁶⁷ Buju Banton 1995 “Murderer” lyrics fermented attempts to condemn those occurrences. Buju sang,

*Murderer! Blood is on your shoulders/ Kill I today, you cannot kill I tomorrow...
Yes, you can hide from man but not from your consciencel You eat the bread of sorrow
drink the wine of violencel Allowed yourself to be conquered by the serpent/
Why did you disobey the first commandment?⁶⁸*

Launching their scare tactics, both movements coerced citizens to vote for their respective parties, intimidated poll clerks, and/or disposed ballot boxes. In doing so, they could be rewarded by politicians with favors.⁶⁹ Politically aligned and fiercely loyal, these political supporters deliberated with daggers, voted with revolvers and did not conceal their deadly hate for their rival party. Buju Banton also tried to instill the logic of oneness singing, “I tell you all men are created equal/ But behind the trigger is different sequell Some are murdering people to collect medal/ Stop committing dirty acts for the high official. You could wash your hands like you can’t wash no more/ It is like an epidemic and you can’t find the cure.”⁷⁰

Robert Cullen in his article “Jamaica Explode,” for *Peppapot Magazine* noted Manley’s frustrations with guns. He quoted Manley as saying, “Up to 1976, the .365 magnum was the deadliest weapon in common use in the political battle. It certainly was deadly enough! The 1980 campaign however, was to be dominated by the M-16. Slowly replacing reggae, ‘the M-16 rapid-fire chatter became like a theme song of the campaign. The whole period was an extended nightmare from which, it seemed, we would never awaken.’”⁷¹ Damian Marley, in the 1999 remix of his father’s 1973 “Slave Driver” song to “Catch a Fire,” captured this growing divisive trend and sang;

*“Now they take the ghetto youths and give them pure magazines
And take another set and give them pure 16s
And play dem dirty games of bloody plots and schemes...
The ones in the car while we’re standing at the terminus,
The government bogus, they don’t work for us,
Instead they chain and whip us with domestic fuss, and guns and AIDS and drugs.”*⁷²

As Marley sang and gun battles decided votes, Manley and Seaga immersed Jamaicans in a game of tug-of-war, indeed pulling them into two opposite directions.

In the 1980 election campaign, propaganda from the JLP stated that an alliance with Manley was a support of communism and coalition with Castro’s Cuba. At one campaign, Seaga informed his supporters that Manley thought like a communist, associated with communists, did things like communists and thus was a communist hiding under a different guise.⁷³ On the other hand, the PNP’s propaganda stated that a coalition with Seaga was a union with capitalism, angling to sell Jamaica’s national interests in favor of quick investments from wealthy multinational corporations.⁷⁴ According to *The New York Times*, the 1980 electoral campaigns, characterized by a cascade of reckless rhetoric by both parties, turned the ballots into a battleground between “godless communism and sinister fascism.” Left unaddressed in all those speeches were the real social issues affecting the majority of Jamaicans. Musician Bounty Killer, who grew up in one of

Kingston's Inner City slums, later addressed the issues ignored by the government in his song, "Poor People Fed up" (1996). Bounty Killer noted in his song that it was addressed to all the leaders and the media and identified himself as the leader of the "Poor People Government." He sang:

*Well poor people fed up, to how the system sheg up; Yuh issue gun fi wi pickney (children) bus...And everyday another ghetto youth dead up; Mi ask the leader, him a di arranger, Why mek poor people surround by danger? Fly and roach and giant mosquitoes; Sewage water whey fill wid bacteria, Yuh ever take a look down in a the Riverton area, Back to all Sea view, Waterhouse, Kentire, Long time the MP (Member of Parliament) don't come near yah And the other one that claim say he's a counselor...
POOR PEOPLE FED-UP.⁷⁵*

Reggae artist Tanya Stephens also noted that as the politicians betrayed the masses' trust, the people complained but nobody listened. As a result, she too, voiced their complaints in the form of a song, "Turn the Other Cheek" (2004) directing it "to all of you [politicians] from all us." She sang:

Providing no jobs and telling us stop the crime, It's like beating a child and telling him not to cry. With all the highways you a build and go through, You never build a little avenue fi di youths dem earn a buck, Things a run a muck, tell me what the f--- you really think a go happen .If dem nuh earn a buck, gun a buss, And none of us really want that s--t to happen...Things must really get wicked, When your paycheck is less than your speeding ticket. Mister, you know we not trying to dis [disrespect] yah, But everything is nuh so crisp sir, We just a beg a likkle help Prime Minister.⁷⁶

Regardless of these issues that Jamaicans faced, the election nevertheless eventually boiled down to a choice between Manley's Third World socialism and Seaga's Western-backed free enterprise monetarism. The 1980's political campaigns climaxed, indeed had been to many, the most divisive and bloody election experienced by the island since it became independent from Britain. With the country gripped by economic instability and "voting under the gun," Edward Seaga supporters celebrated Manley's defeat in 1980, wearing their green colors and ringing brass bells.⁷⁷

As a Harvard graduate and a low-keyed financial expert, Seaga had made his mark on Jamaican politics by exposing the plight of the “haves and the have-nots” in the Jamaican senate. But that Seaga was born in Boston, Massachusetts, to Lebanese parents provided fertile ground for criticism among Jamaicans. Manley and his reggae supporters made their case against him on the basis of Seaga’s foreign birth. At the behest of PNP, the socially minded reggae artist Clancy Eccles organized a PNP bandwagon heckling Seaga singing: “*My father born yah, My grandmadda born yah/ My leader born yah/ He gave I a message/ Who are those people that love no progress?*”⁷⁸ Not only was Seaga’s nationality in question, but many Jamaicans also questioned his loyalty. Seaga was a former official of the World Bank and had worked for the International Monetary Fund, which only served to further convince Jamaicans that his success in the elections had come with U.S. aid via a CIA backing. Jamaicans speculated and understood the implications of his background and his disconnect with Jamaican heritage in light of the allegations of his party’s ties with the CIA. In fact, to many, Seaga was merely a spy for the U.S. and “Spy-aga,” the name his opponents coined for him, expressed their sentiments.

Despite these aspersions, with his win Seaga ushered in a new period of changes to Jamaican politics, nationalism, and culture. He reversed Jamaica’s pro-Cuban foreign policy. He began close cooperative relations with the U.S., being the first leader to visit Ronald Reagan after his inauguration the following year. The series of violent political civil wars of the 1970s and ‘80s that transitioned Seaga into power in 1980 signaled to many an increase in political corruption. As Seaga ascended into power, taking the Prime Minister’s seat, Manley commented that, “If we look about us, we see the lengthening shadows of a thousand small corruptions creeping across the landscape of our nation. But this is monstrous. It is not the evening of our history; it is the morning and the shadows should be moving the other way.”⁷⁹

After the 1980 election and the subsequent transition in Jamaican government, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs again noticed a shift in nationalist sentiment. According to them, Seaga came to power via political violence. They also noted the contrast between “Manley’s statesmanship and outspoken commitment to a proud nationalistic and democratic course for the nation and Seaga’s worrisome and untested extremism.” This, the Council said, conjured up the “specter of a Jamaica brought to her knees before the international investors and lenders with no guarantee that this humiliating about face would bring economic relief of any sort to the nation.”⁸⁰ Unlike this new era of politics, in the post-independence years up to 1972, politicians had often subordinated political differences to the cause of Jamaican nationalism. Politicians in that era, more often than not, in the spirit of Jamaican nationalism, placed the good of the country first before dividing it in an effort to gain positions in Parliament. Edna Manley (wife of former Chief Minister Norman Manley and mother to Michael Manley), noticed how the developing rivalries in the partisan politics of the 1970s and 1980s stood in stark contrast to the political eras before. She felt that her husband and his political rival Alexander “Busta” Bustamante, prime minister in 1962, had a civil relationship despite their differences. Indeed, she felt that the behavior of the politicians and leaders before were more often than not nationalistic. She noted, “Busta and Norman, in spite of their faults, never broke faith over agreements. Shearer and Michael all through the union struggle and politically – never broke faith with each other. But this - son of gun [Seaga] will do anything to retain a place of power at whatever the spiritual cost to Jamaica.”⁸¹ Marley, too, noticed the changes that surfaced as a result of the 1980 transition. As always, he put the plight of the Jamaicans in songs. “Crisis,” released in 1978 noted, “*So much have been said/ So little have been done/ They still killing, killing the people,*

*and having, having, having lots of fun/ They just want to be the leader, in the house of the rising sun.*⁸²

In reflecting the divisive nature of partisan politics, some party members refused to patronize businesses because rival party members owned them. Tension based on political beliefs built up in the business community. Chris Chin, top official of VP Records, noted this tension as a cause for the eventual relocation of his business. He expressed that as a result of partisan politics he had been held up at gunpoint to ascertain his political allegiance.⁸³ Students assumed that they would face discrimination if they exposed their political views. Employees also felt silenced, as in their minds, one false political word and they could lose their jobs. Party members enforced their party's ideology by all means, sometimes using coercion to gain support of their parties' ideas. In those times, gunmen in garrisons received target practice or earned their stripes by shooting their party opponents.⁸⁴ This fight for political turf pitted street against street, and community against community. Random shootings, drive-by attacks, and other senseless violent acts stemmed from political competition.

In her diary, Edna Manley documented both the sweeping and mundane aspects of social deterioration due to the loss of faith in the government and the absence of nationalism in Jamaica.⁸⁵ The violence of the 1980 political transition took its toll on the national psyche and in the process eroding the older definition of Jamaican nationalism. Jamaica's history of colonialism and slavery cemented the island to the "Plantation Theory." This theory noted that Jamaicans had inherited a wicked plantation system, which had set in train a whole set of practices that would hold them back as a people. Still others began to associate Jamaica's predicament to "dependency theory," an idea that the world economic system is set up to keep down developing companies.

In 1980, after Seaga's victory, the United States aid to Jamaica increased fivefold "averaging more than 125 million U.S. dollars a year between the 1981 and 1986."⁸⁶ Reagan's administration made Jamaica the nucleus of its Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI).⁸⁷ In January 1981, a U.S. business committee on Jamaica, composed of twenty-five of the U.S. corporate chiefs, headed by David Rockefeller, launched the effort to promote private investment on the island. With all the new U.S. aid in the mid 1980s, both private and public, Jamaica became the globe's second highest per capita recipient of U.S. assistance. In granting these loans and investment, however, many Jamaicans began to predict that the U.S. would extract their pound of flesh in return.⁸⁸

The CBI initiative brought about another round of changes, setting in motion a period of rapid Americanization of Jamaica. It provided tangible evidence of U.S. influence as Jamaican property transferred into foreign hands. Many writers such as Timothy White linked Reagan's CBI initiative to neo-colonialism and the collapse of the Jamaican economy in the 1980s.⁸⁹ Despite the changes that had occurred since American intervention in 1976, ten years later, on September 2, 1986, an Ashby Timothy editorial read, "The U.S. message to Seaga: "It's time to keep your promise."⁹⁰ The U.S. wanted Seaga to keep his promise but Marley's implicit response to the U.S. demands in his 1999 "Catch a Fire" song asked, "*We want to know when you're coming to repossess all these guns and drugs you've sent? Slave driver, the tables shall turn/ Catch a fire, you're gonna get burned...*"⁹¹

Singer Harry Belafonte, an outspoken opponent of American imperialism, accused Seaga of becoming "a pawn and a stooge of the United States."⁹² Indeed to many Jamaicans, Seaga had already kept his promise, especially in the area of revitalization of tourism along American lines, staving off the application of the "big stick" by the U.S. In the space of a few years, Seaga made

a shift from promoting festivals highlighting the heritage of folk traditions to those based on a more Americanized way of life.⁹³ Vacationers who arrived on the island with an expectation of enjoying the “authentic” Jamaican culture, experienced what U.S. owned resorts conjured up as authentically Jamaican.⁹⁴ The Americanization of the hotel areas stood in stark contrast to the rest of the island. Tourism industry workers mainly worked in resort areas such as Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Negril where the streets are well paved and lined with American fast-food restaurants such as McDonalds and other foreign lifestyles deemed suitable for visitors. At the end of the day, Jamaican workers returned to their home — poor and set apart from the rich resort areas.

According to Peter Von Maffei, in his article “Will Jamaica Self-Destruct,” the tourism industry had become Jamaica’s Babylon. His article provided evidence that Americanization had weakened rather than strengthened Jamaican nationalism. Von Maffei noted how tourism controlled the Jamaica’s culture instead of vice versa. To Maffei, the tourism industry had not helped the Jamaican economy but had only inadvertently transformed the idea of what being a Jamaican citizen meant. In fact, he felt that Jamaicans had succumbed to the fruit of the white man, the foreigner.⁹⁵ Maffei went on to note that Marley had prophesied the coming of such things in writing the lyrics to his 1972 song “Concrete jungle” when he had sung, *Concrete jungle...No chain around my feet, but I’m not free.*⁹⁶

Life and Debt, a 2003 documentary by Stephanie Black, demonstrated that for thousands of tourists Jamaica became the happy island of rum, reggae and sunshine. She nevertheless revealed how rich countries and the IMF under the guise of globalization kept the Caribbean poor. In her work, Black noted that “when you sit down to eat your delicious meal, its better that you don’t know that most of what you are eating came off a ship from Miami.”⁹⁷ Even tee shirts

and bikinis in the souvenir shop would be imported from the U.S.⁹⁸ In the book *Rethinking Tourism and Ecotravel* (1997), Deborah Mclaren expressed her concern with how “the tourist industry enforced and encouraged the distance between tourists and locals,” recalling a sign on the beach that said it all: “NO LOCALS ALLOWED.”⁹⁹ She had also visited non-resort areas in search of the ‘authentic’ Jamaican culture and found that non-resort areas had remained largely underdeveloped due to the absence of tourism. This was the real Jamaica that the majority of tourists coming to the island would not see.

Bob Marley, in his 1978 song “Time will Tell” formulated a message to tourists that, “*You think you’re in heaven/ But we’re living in hell.*”¹⁰⁰ Later, Damian Marley (son of Bob Marley), in his 2005 song, “Welcome to Jamrock,” noted “*Out in the streets they call it murder...Welcome to Jam-dung ...Political violence cyaan done.*”¹⁰¹ For Marley if tourists, “*Camped where the thugs dem camp at,*” they too would experience those sad realities of mayhem and chaos caused by political turmoil. Marley concluded however, that tourists saw only as far as the view allowed in their hotel rooms.

Early leaders such as Norman Manley had warned “that the challenge and the hope for the future is that we may one day build a society that we may not have to love despite, but can come to love because.”¹⁰² In the wake of the events of the 1970s and 80s fracturing an immature Jamaican nationalism, the younger Manley’s perception remained that “a colony had been freed but a nation had not been formed.” According to anthropologist Deborah Thomas, those disheartened by the growing influence of the U.S. viewed Jamaica as a nation “culturally bombarded and besieged, powerless either to resist or critique that which is imposed from elsewhere.”¹⁰³ Thomas asserts, “the greater cross-cultural appeal of popular cultural forms associated with Jamaicans marked a situation in which the colonial culture nexus became

increasingly unstable at a time when “America” became increasingly ascendant within Jamaica’s cultural, political and economic spheres.”¹⁰⁴

In the period after U.S. intervention, the ensuing investment of American capital and values began to be firmly entrenched in the fabric of Jamaican life, particularly in the popular music. Peter Von Maffei, in his discourse on the effects tourism on Jamaica, also noted how the music of Jamaica had taken a momentary pause. Indeed, the microphone would eventually be passed in the midst of the 1974 to 1984 period. By 1976, as the dancehall phenomenon emerged, the nationalist consciousness of Jamaican roots music had been replaced by the sound system arrangement and what many considered to be its insipid lyrical content. Leading up and throughout the political transition, increasing violence, Americanization, reggae music had remained the voice of protest. However, as political strife increased, reggae music and its music scene began to strain under pressure to address the mounting toll of violence and Americanization. Not only that, but a new generation of Jamaicans and Jamaican musicians who had come of age in the 1970s also sought a new musical form to address their experiences.

The harshness of the new emerging music became synonymous with the harsh conditions of the 1970s and 80s era. Indeed, to them, the piety of reggae had not done a great deal to alleviate their conditions. Instead, a raw, radical approach was needed. This new generation of musicians and their lyrics would thus be more geared towards addressing politically instigated crime, violence and its garrison perpetrators. This new group of musicians, for the most part, had not lived in a nondependent Jamaica and thus to many, they soon fell back into the trappings of neo-colonialism. Initially starting as a reggae artist, but later turning to dancehall, for instance, the musician Bounty Killer declared himself the “Poor- People-Governor.” His lyrics spoke about the direction of the new people and the new music stating that “*Some people lost dem*

roots and figet dem culture/ Nuh study the past/ Dem nuh know the future/ Some nuh take telling/ So dem end up so vulgar.”¹⁰⁵ This burgeoning new art form would come to be called dancehall and though initially starting as a critique of violence and a voice of protest, it later became devoid of most of the cultural aspects, exhibiting and instigating the violence. Whether interpreted as nihilism or words of street warriors, dancehall artists’ lyrics convey a sense of social realism and their work closely resembles a sort of street ethnography. Dancehall musicians and their lyrics offer a window into Jamaican life in its transitional years.

Dancehall, birthed in the late seventies in dance halls, developed as the scion of reggae. It thereafter was called “dancehall,” not only because of its birthplace, but also because its lyrical content, considered “violent and slack” were relegated to the “dance halls and could not be heard on the radio. Anthropologist Norman Stolzoff’s, in his book, *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica* (2000), cited dancehall music as being steeply rooted in Jamaican culture and not just a recent phenomenon. He cites the shift from one music style to another as complex; “factors such as the downfall of the Manley’s government, the appeal of the Seaga’s management, the death of Bob Marley,” among other things.¹⁰⁶

Like its reggae predecessor, dancehall had also developed opposed to the divisive nature of partisan politics that swept the country in the 1970s and ‘80s. According to Jamaican journalist, Stephen Vascianne, in his 1995 article “Politics, Prison and Patronage” in *The Jamaican Observer*, “As it is always said, people who live in glass house shouldn’t throw stones; or to put it in its more relevant form, people who live in stone houses shouldn’t throw glass.”¹⁰⁷ Either way, Vascianne felt that both political parties were soft on the garrison violence, because both sides were so obviously guilty. Like Vascianne, many dancehall artists noticed that while the impetus to commit crimes came from the top, the effects of the violence were felt mostly

among the common people. Dancehall artist Ninja Man showed this in his performance at the Sting Dancehall stage-show in 1988. According to Ninja Man:

*A time fi wi tell Mr. Manley and Seaga sey a f---kery dem a talk 'bout. ' Cause the politicks ting nah go work... Black people a di smartest... But thru the p---hole politician and dem segregation...Lord have mercy...Living on free food ticket, not a money inna mi pocket, not a cent mi nuh have, but a whey mi a go do... Politicks a pass thru...You know I'm living in the land of Jamaica, I got to get the heart of a family man, To fight against politician, fi mek wi live as one...*¹⁰⁸

To Ninja Man, garrison violence was undesirable either way, whether it was “A PNP shoot a laborite..., or A laborite shoot a PNP, nah go love it...” Ninja Man also reached out to the political leaders in his lyrics as an attempt to quell garrison violence. Ninja Man sang, “*That’s why I’m calling to the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition/ Tell them to tell their followers we want a peaceful election/ Then I’m calling to the citizens of this little island. Tell them lets come together and live as one...*” Ninja Man tried to show the absurdity of politically infused garrison violence:

*Hear Ninja with reality...Inna Jamaica from mi a baby... Mi neva hear sey Seaga thump Manley, neva hear sey Manley thump Eddie... But yet wi a go fight under hypocrisy...Come mek we beat out the dirty politicians them... Tell the p---hole sey we and them a nuh friend...*¹⁰⁹

Ninja Man showed the people that they were merely hurting themselves while the culpable did not have to contend with the struggles and experiences of the ghetto.

Beenie Man, a reggae artist later turned dancehall act, addressed the political factions of Tivoli Gardens and Rema. He sang, “*T.G. and Rema and Jungle Crews and Trench Town and Jungle I’m talking to... This is World War III; this can’t be politics, copper-shots a whistle and a sing like music.*”¹¹⁰ These lyrics characterized a time when fierce party loyalties divided the ghettos of Kingston block by block.¹¹¹ Another emerging reggae artist transformed to dancehall, Bounty Killer warned, “*Man from Rema and man from Jungle/ Remember! War is not a nice something/ Whenever war bruk out inna your community/ You always report a next man*

missing.”¹¹² The irony of this situation and the very essence marking the development of dancehall is captured by Beenie Man and Bounty Killer. Though these artists tried to address the issues of partisan politics in their communities in the initial stage of their careers, they themselves would succumb to the developing dancehall culture. They soon turned into bitter enemies and fueled a turf war through their music.

Dancehall not only critiqued the escalating violence in those years but glorified and even promoted it. “Dance halls” became an area where political strong armed gangs could express their ideas of politics and what was happening in their communities by talking over the beats. Eventually the talking turned into rhyming to create music. Each politically affiliated inner city had its own deejays who would endorse violence against the opposing party’s deejays. According to cultural anthropologist Norman Stolzoff, dancehall music started to be riffed with so called “gun tunes” or gun lyrics. With the evidence of the effects of guns on the streets, gun lyrics became a way that deejays could make a name for themselves, using combative gun lyrics so they could be able to compete in a violent style. In essence, boastful lyrics in which the imagery of a *posse* “bussin” guns is used as to metaphorically challenge competitors on the microphone. Similar to Robin Kelly’s description of rap music, indeed the “mic” became the M-16 or AK, as imagined acts of *posse* violence occurred from the stage in the dance halls.¹¹³ Not only that, but the young deejays in a competitive sphere themselves with growing gang violence and its nexus with the politicization of Kingston’s inner cities, accounted for contextualizing the sound system and its role in the political “tribalism” in the transition of the government.

Violence on the streets also found a place in dance halls in the form of “sound-clashes.” Sound systems clashing, a symbolic manifestation of feuds between rivaling dance halls and deejays, paralleled the feuds between political parties and garrisons in Jamaica. According to

historian Carolyn Cooper, “the sound clash is not just a performance event but becomes trenchant metaphor for the hostile interfacing of warring zones in Jamaican society, where for example rival politicians, area dons and their followers contend for the control of the territory both literal and symbolic.”¹¹⁴ In 1985, Tenor Saw in his live performance of his song “Ring the Alarm” noted this clash of sound systems in his song that called for the audience to “Ring the alarm, another sound [system] is dying.”¹¹⁵ Ninjaman’s “border clash,” also remains a classic articulation of the recurring motif in Jamaican dancehall culture, demarcating contestations for power in a wide range of spheres of influence. According to Ninja, “*you know dem send for the Don inna the “Border Clash.”*” Tenor Saw again at a 1986 PNP rally with the sound system “Stereo Mars” deejayed: *My boy Saw, You done know that Raggamuffins done control the area.*” Without a doubt, the dancehall became the means by which feuds on the street could be hashed out lyrically and the “Don” culture could be upheld. Thus Jamaican music once again became the site, arena and medium of political struggle.

With the sound-clash, the focus of the music moved from cultural and nationalistic messages to a clash of “ampage” being of greater sonic, magnetic and kinetic proportion between rivaling juke-boxes. “The ‘clash’ concretized the role and skill of the selector as the prominent figure in the dancehall, as the music turned towards materialism, hedonism, and “gangsterism” ushered in the 1980’s.”¹¹⁶ Dancehall even included hard menacing beats, echoing the sounds of gunshots. This sidelined the spirituality and protest music of what reggae music had represented and removed the artistry that was placed in the earlier reggae style.

In the early years of dancehall, some found its lyrics to be crude and "slack." Dancehall started as a small deviation from the original reggae however, dancehall became removed from roots reggae, to the almost “hippification” of roots and culture. While these changes propelled

dancehall's rise to fame, particularly among youths, it also served to furnish critics with evidence of its decadence. It led reggae purists to furiously debate whether or not dancehall music had in fact derived from reggae. One such purist, Gregory McNight noted the manifestation of violence of the 1970s and 80s in the lyrics of dancehall. He highlighted dancehall's use of the explicit sexual content as well as its coarse and decadent nature. Although dancehall's slackness is often attributed to bad taste, lack of originality, and the greed of producers who fall short of musical creativity, it is important to understand its development within the context of the political transition in 1980 and American political and economic influences.

Dancehalls became the breeding ground for the music and its growing audience. Dances were often banned, raided or disrupted by the police. The deejay became a target of the brutality. Uroy, who many have called the Father of Dancehall with lyrics such as "*wake the town and tell the people,*" was specifically targeted during this period because his popularity drew large crowds. Whether it was King Tubby's, Sir Nation or even Sturgav, deejays could fill dance halls and keep a crowd glued for the whole night much quicker than politicians could fill their rally quarters. According *Reggae Times*, Jamaican dancehall has always scared the government, as well the middle and upper classes. The fear was that the lyrics, especially those of the deejays who seemed aggressive and rebellious, would influence the masses into realizing their subjection.¹¹⁷ With so many patrons in one arena, many politicians considered dance halls to be potentially explosive.

Though dancehall quickly became popular among the youths of Jamaica, eventually, like its reggae ancestor, it made inroads onto the world music scene. With American investment and lifestyle taking hold in Jamaican life, credibility in the fledgling Jamaican dancehall music industry became measured not on originality, but more on how American or "foreign" the music

sounded. With the emergence of *ragamuffins*, dancehall became synonymous with the hood style, which emerged with gangsta rap in the U.S. Many embraced this new trend saying that dancehall and hip-hop were practically brothers, being around the same age, sharing Caribbean roots, being urban street music, driven by emotions based on struggle and living on the street.

The death of Bob Marley in 1981 also propelled the development and rise of dancehall. With Bob Marley's death, dancehall developed hiding under the guise of his fame. Later reggae-turned-dance hall artists such as Tanya Stephens denounced the commercialization of dancehall. Her 2004 song "Way Back," became a plea for artists to:

*Take it way back before recycling sh---, When the props that you got was for your writing and sh---, Let's rewind before the hype when you used to be low key, To be a singer you had to actually know key, I mean way back, before people made a job, Of seeing who's best at impersonating Bob.*¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, dancehall became more than just a musical form. It spawned its own behavior, fashion and language.¹¹⁹ Similar to the critiques of rap music, fashion, dancing and gender spoke volumes about the shift of dancehall's musical style. Many writers associated the gendering of crimes with dancehall artists' reluctance to denounce violence, pointing out that the criminals in their narratives are mostly men and women often are often the targets of violence in dancehall music. Fashion also changed from African inspired garbs of the roots era to flashy suits, abundant jewelry and hairdos made popular by American rappers. According to Dub Poet Mutabaruka, "if the 1970s reggae was reggae, green and gold, then in the next decade it was gold chains."¹²⁰ As U.S. investment rose in Jamaica during Seaga's rule, Jamaican culture became increasingly Americanized. Jamaica became deeply influenced by North American values and became engrossed in the habits of expressions of American way of life. Manley reported that, in the 1980s "our habits of dress, our sense of social hierarchy" defined the skill in which empire fashioned the governed. He also noted that America needed not achieve this in a military fashion

but rather via Hollywood films, glossy magazines, canned television shows, which constituted a cultural invasion.¹²¹ For the mass of the population, Manley also noticed that “values were those disseminated through the stream of propaganda and entertainment that poured out of Washington, New York and California.”¹²² According to Manley, this masked means of transforming Jamaican culture occurred in such a fashion that an army was not necessary. In the end, according to Manley, it was difficult to tell where entertainment ended and propaganda began. As a result, a naturally flowing Jamaican identity decreased at that time as Jamaicans found solace in one imported through the investment of Americans.

The dancehall craze having gained success with its gun lyrics also adopted the idea that sex sells. Shabba Ranks, Jamaican dancehall artist, defined this idea with the release of albums such as “X-tra Naked” and “Raw as Ever.” Its increasing success bore upon not only on the stereotype of marijuana use by all Jamaicans, but also by employing the use of creative curse words such as “*bomboclaat*,” a word coined to demean the female anatomy.¹²³ The dancehall music of lyricists such as Elephant Man, Buju Banton, as well as Bounty Killer (whose name represent only a small glimpse into violence of dancehall lyrics) have been in large part condemned by cultural purists in Jamaican society. In turn, dancehall received little or no state endorsement. It also faced the slaughter of intellectual criticism in the media, particularly by the likes of popular Jamaican journalists such as Ian Boyne. With its homophobic lyrics, such as “*boom bye bye inna batty bwoy head*,” dancehall also experienced criticism from the homosexual community, which claimed that it perpetuated violence against homosexuals in Jamaica.¹²⁴

Regardless of all the changes that moved dancehall from the roots reggae culture, this offspring of reggae made its home in the mainstream, soon to be marketed to a growing American audience. In efforts to market reggae to appeal to Americans, the lyrics and sound of

Jamaican music had changed incorporating hip-hop beats. American influence also inextricably tied dancehall and rap together, thus merging the two and further serving to Americanize the culture.¹²⁵ “Dolly My Baby,” by Super Cat is an example of a song that had crossover success due to Puffy and Biggie rapping on the track and Mary J. Blige singing the hook. Dancehall became constantly mentioned as the new “pop” by artists such as Foxy Brown. The Americanization of dancehall became with its crossover success outside Jamaica during the mid to late 1980s. The *raggamuffin* “Yellowman” achieved this success in the mid 1980’s with “Roots-Rap-Reggae,” a song with RUN-DMC. “Shabba Ranks” also epitomized this, as he blended dancehall with American soul, earning him back-to-back Grammys in 1991 and 1992. Like the changes made in tourism to bring economic success in Jamaica, these increased success rates in dancehall were in part due to changes made in the music, such as beats and lyrics, made to suit an American audience. In the later times in 2001, reggae pop star, “Shaggy,” went six times platinum with his album *Hotshot*. Later, dancehall artists such as Sean Paul, Beenie Man and even Damian Marley, the Son of the “father of reggae,” received U.S. recognition, receiving several music awards and increased radio airplay. Indeed, dancehall’s success in America went far beyond what early pioneers dreamed. The dancehall music now going pop around the world became a hybrid of reggae and rap and clearly built for foreign market. It is nevertheless a far cry from Bob Marley’s 1970s roots reggae. Tanya Stephen’s 2004 song “Way Back,” was also a plea to take dance hall “*way back to creativity, before MTV before BET.*”¹²⁶

On one hand, reggae's international popularity had increased the visibility of the Rastafarian movement around the world. As rock critics Stephen Davis and Peter Simon observed, reggae propelled "the Rasta cosmology into the middle of the planet's cultural arenas." On the other hand, dancehall developments created new dilemmas for the Rastafarian movement.

Icons of dancehall also co-opted the Rastafarian spiritual ritual of weed smoking. Dancehall artist such as “Roundhead sang, “*Weed is life... The weed that mi smoke prescribed by doctor.*”¹²⁷ As the dancehall culture emerged, awareness of Rastafarianism principles decayed. The Jamaican tourist industry also began to market Jamaica not only as a paradise but one with happy, high, *rastas*. Advertisements in the early 1990s changed Marley’s song to “*one love, one heart, come to Jamaica and feel “alright.”*” Tourists flooded the island wanting to explore the concepts of Rastafarian weed-smoking. As dancehall musicians employed the use of this quiet religious lifestyle, “suddenly people wanted to know what all the chanting and praying and obsessive smoking of the marijuana herb were all about.”¹²⁸ Somewhat akin to what Ariel Dorfman suggests as the use of art in wars, likewise this quiet religious life became “Disneyfied” *and* mainstream.¹²⁹

Conclusion

The transformation from reggae to dancehall signified many things: a climax in the transformation of Jamaican nationalism and culture, a transformation in leadership and political ideology from Manley to Seaga, a transformation of the relationship (or the lack thereof) between dancehall and Jamaican people, as well as the growing influence of U.S. capitalism. The evolution of the dancehall phenomenon concluded the era between the 1970s and 1980s and its musicology conveys evidence that between the mid-1970s to late 1980s, Jamaica was indeed a country in transition. Consider the transformation of Jamaican musical sounds through the changing lyrics in reggae and dancehall in these songs:

Reggae: Bob Marley's One Love (1977)

One love! One heart! Lets get together and feel all right. Hear the children cryin' (one love), Hear the children cryin' (one heart) Sayin': Give thanks and praise to the lord and I will feel alright. Sayin': Lets get together and feel all right. Let them pass all their dirty remarks. There's one question I'd really like to ask. Is there a place for the hopeless sinner, who has hurt mankind just to save his own beliefs. One love! What about the one heart? One heart! What about? Let's get together and feel all right. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end. All right, Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel alright. Lets get together and feel all right.

Dancehall: Elephant Man's Badman (2005)

Yeah, its not a lie, We kill gay guys, We put copper shots inna dem head. Real badman ready for the war, when you ready, cause we don't leave we guns from morning. Don't dis man from Rockfort, Grants Pen or man from Tivoli Gardens. Police try stop us, but copper shot added, dem end up dead. Don't f--- with man from Naggo Head or Grants Pen p--- you wi dead. Jamaicans badder than the Mafia in the Soprano. See we on the American Most Wanted Cop Banner. Walk with a bag full a shots like Tony Montano. Jamaican's put up your nine and show them your banner.

These two songs reveal much about the journey from reggae to dancehall, as well as the nature of the struggle between both art forms. While "One Love" advocated brotherhood, dancehall developed taking the opposite path. Dancehall in 2005, having shed its roots ways and moved on to world acceptance, though still based on the violent territorial division that it was birthed in, has evolved to include an anti-gay campaign and a large influence from U.S television. Even earlier tunes done by Ninja Man highlighted that, "No DJ can follow me, Ninja

Man will kill anybody...Ninja wi ninja mi rougher than Rambo...rougher than Commando."¹³⁰

Dancehall artist Elephant Man's "Badman" lyrics personify the personalities created between the 1974 to 1984 period and the new role of music.

Likewise, the discography of Yellowman — his albums and lyrics alike — not only captured the changing sounds of Jamaican music over time but also epitomized Jamaica's transitional phase. *Mr. Yellowman* (1982) had tracks such as "How You Keep a Dance," "Jamaica: A little and Miami, "Duppy [ghost] or Gun Man" thus highlighted the initial political message of dancehall. The album *Bad Boy Skanking*, released in 1982, included "King Inna the Jungle" and "Crying for love, highlighted the growing divisive culture in the "dance halls." *Zungguzunnuguzunguzeng* (1983) included "The Good, The Bad & The Ugly" and "Who can make the Dance ram." *Divorced* (1983) included "Tourist Season" and "Sometime a Lie" and highlighted the move for transition in the music. It was his "*Nobody Move, Nobody Get Hurt*" (1984) that has been called by musical critics' dancehall change for the worse. It included the album's title song as well as "Bedroom Mazuka, and "Wreck a *Pum Pum* [*Pum Pum* – [female private parts]. *Two Giants Clash*, (1984) highlighted the growing rivalry of dancehall culture among the musicians and included tracks such as *Mr. Big Shot*, "King of the Crop." *King Yellowman* (1984) and *Galong Galong Galong* (1985) included tracks that moved towards the idea that sex sells. On the other hand, the release of his 1986 album titled *Rambo* (1987), "Going to the Chapel" and "Blueberry Hill" in 1987 depicted the impact of American influence and strategies applied to market dancehall music to an American audience.¹³¹

As recently as April 2001, Jamaicans experienced an intensification of political violence, occurring after the murder of a well-known political gang leader from one of the downtown garrison communities. According to Deborah Thomas, this "created a muted sense of national

confidence about the future.”¹³² During the same election year, Danville Walker, director of elections, asked Jamaicans to put down their party colors and wear the gold of the “Reggae Boyz – the Jamaican football team,” as sign of unity. In the spirit of Bob Marley, in hopes of promoting a peaceful election, the song “Together we all” and a poem titled “Peace Time” was released. However, political divisions still lingers in Jamaica. In letters to the editor in *The Jamaican Gleaner*, readers posed several questions to their new leaders: “Why should I vote for you, when for twenty-odd years, you were a part of our slash and burn, dirty politics? Why should I campaign for you: did you not know from the days of old that the two main parties were the vehicles of corruption and bankruptcy? Why should I travel to the polling station to vote for you: you were there, when the JLP and PNP took us through the simmering civil war of the 1970s, weren’t you?”¹³³

Jamaican music continues to engage the fallout and disconnect among Jamaicans and still reflects the chaos of the island’s politics, the legacy of the Cold War years and lack of nationalist feeling. Anthony B sings “*me nah vote again,*” noting the still existent disillusionment with government. Morgan Heritage sings that, “*Life is so unfair, in this sweet paradise/ This is what we swear: “Out of Many One People/” Tell me do you see that anywhere?”*¹³⁴ Festival winner, Heather Hall’s song adds to these rhetoric by saying, “*Give me back mi sweet Jamaica.*” However, whether these questions are answered soon, it can be concluded that as a country that had only a brief period after independence, prior to intervention to develop its shared code of ethics, “it inescapable succumbed to challenges and winds of change, vis-à-vis foreign, political and other forms of disruption.”¹³⁵

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