

Portia all the way ---
The Proletariat Revisited and Three Defeated Doctors
Jamaica Elects a New Prime Minister

Portia Simpson won a stunning victory last week. The PNP mainstream is still recoiling from its rejection and her election. The Westminster Model gives the Prime Minister an unfettered discretion to clean up her Cabinet. The Cabinet portfolios that seem to require immediate attention are Health, National Security and Finance. The Cabinet is important as it is the engine of Government policy. Portia will need to tune-up this national engine.

Public health care in Jamaica is in a very poor state. Frequently patients have to provide their own bedding and their own medicine. Many die because of a lack of expensive medicines. The large number of gunshot emergencies brought into the hospitals leads to diversion of major hospital assets to the intensive care departments, non-ICU patients suffer as a result. Why spend over one million US dollars on salaries for the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica and the Deputy Governors when rural hospitals are in a scandalous condition?

As predicted in this column, the Campaign for Prosperity of Omar Davies was a huge waste of time and money. Now he has to explain to his corporate –backers how his showing was as bad as it was. The inflationary pressure that Dr Davies has placed on the Jamaican dollar must be reversed before the U.S exchange rate reaches 100 to 1. The telling talisman of the Omar Davies era will be Standard and Poor's rating Jamaica bonds as junk-bonds. A retired Jamaican teacher living in Broward County showed me her pension check recently. It was worth 22 US dollars a week after her 36 years of service to the Government of Jamaica. What prosperity!

Jamaican poor people are not at the beck and call of a political machine any longer. They have shown with zest and confidence that they are prepared to take care of themselves. They did not trust the old solutions of the last 16 years which have created a few millionaires and delivered nothing to the working class. In fact the word 'proletariat' has found its way into the Gleaner again after a long vacation. Working class people, the helpers and stone-masons spurned by the Jamaican elites have made their voices heard. These people, often thought of by the well-healed few as 'Butoos', have had the last laugh.

P.J. Patterson is to be congratulated for preserving the unity of the PNP by literally forcing the parliamentary party to accept the result, thereby averting a constitutional crisis. Portia should call an early General Election to confirm her mandate and fortify her new ruling team. The national debate about priorities will recommence. Why fly people to St. Lucia when there is no clinic in Junction, St. Elizabeth ? Why spend money on

lavish Garden Parties when the schools in Four Paths, Clarendon need computers? Why have a Jazz Festival if Spanish Town is a nest of murderous terrorist activity.

Jamaica's foreign policy seems to be reactionary and oblivious to the needs of the Jamaican Diaspora. Why is the Consulate in Miami not larger and more responsive to the needs of the massive Jamaican South Florida populace? Dare we compare the Jamaican Consulate to the Barbadian Consulate? I think cheese to chalk is the appropriate comparison. Does the Government of Jamaica care about the broken families, created both in Jamaica and the USA ,by Bush Administration over-zealous deportation policy.

Our Prime Minister-elect understands these issues in a manner that the three defeated doctors do not .As a Rastafarian told me last week; Portia may be the last hope for black people in Jamaica. Good luck Madam Prime Minister!

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