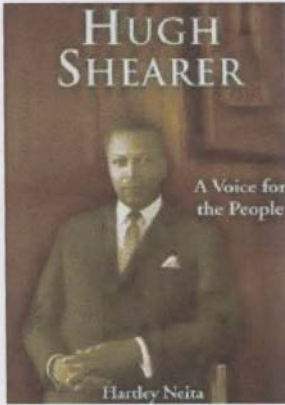


Beatitudes mentioned at Shearer book launch

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"Hugh Shearer, A Voice for the People" by Hartley Neita - CONTRIBUTED

WESTERN BUREAU:

IN THE current crime situation, it was well-nigh impossible to launch a book on Jamaica's third Prime Minister, Hugh Shearer, without mentioning the 'Beatitudes' he so famously said should not be read from when confronted by the police.

The advice was referred to twice at the launch of **Hugh Shearer - A Voice of the People** on the lawns of Jamaica House, Hope Road, Kingston, last Wednesday night. There was an oblique reference by Prime Minister PJ Patterson in his main address and a direct reference by author of the biography and Shearer's former press secretary, Hartley Neita.

BOOKS ON JAMAICA

Hugh Shearer - A Voice of the People is published by Ian Randle Publishers and is the May instalment in their year-long series of books on Jamaica.

There was a full house or, more correctly, tent for the function, chaired by talk show hostess Barbara Gloudon. There was music from the Blue Glaze Mento Band and Miss Ellan Edwards, who sang **Evening Time** to the accompaniment of Locksley Robinson on guitar.

PM Patterson outlined several strong points of the book before getting to the Beatitudes.

"... This is in no way to encourage complacency, or deny the reality that our state and our society, and the foundations laid by the founding fathers and strengthened by successive administrations, are being severely challenged. It is clear recognition of this which must guard against complacency and motivate the greatest national unity to confront and defeat the criminal element whatever their station in society, whatever their political complexion, whatever their age or gender," Patterson said.

"These vicious criminals have never heard of the Beatitudes," he continued.

BEFORE HE DIED

And, in finishing off the launch by expressing thanks to many persons who had contributed to the book in various ways, including **The Gleaner's** Ken Allen and political commentator Troy Caine,

Neita said that before he died, Shearer had expressed his sympathy for the current Prime Minister. In light of spiraling crime, he had said that if Patterson said anything about criminals and beatitudes now, he would have groups like Jamaicans for Justice to contend with.

The location and timing of the launch were timely, as was pointed out by both Patterson and Neita. "It is fitting that the book is being launched here at Jamaica House because, among other reasons, he (Shearer) is the only Prime Minister who was reputed to have resided here during his entire tenure in office."

Appropriately, the first presentation of the book was made by Patterson to Mrs. Hugh Shearer, the widow of the former Prime Minister.