

Jamaican activist describes Island's plight

By B.J.R. Silberman

The conditions facing the majority of working people in the Caribbean today are at a point of crisis. In places such as Jamaica, wages are low and the cost of living is high. There is massive unemployment and the housing situation is far from adequate. Most homes don't even possess running water.

Leading West Indian political activist, Dr. Trevor Munroe, spoke at York last Thursday night on this theme at a meeting sponsored by Third World Students Union. He said the problems suffered by the region are a direct result of the

capitalist system.

Countries like Jamaica, whose main export is bauxite, are exploited by the multi-national corporations. In 1971 such corporations as ALCAN paid Jamaica \$2.40 for every ton of bauxite removed from the ground. They in turn sold it on the U.S. market for \$500 a ton.

Foreign investment made by has done little to ease the situation in the area. In the late sixties, U.S.-investment into the area was \$1.5 billion, and Canadian investment was \$5 billion. The money that was drawn back out from the

Caribbean as a result of these investments showed that significant profits had been made.

Jamaica, according to Munroe, is suffering from a balance of payments problem. It depends on external inputs in order to survive. Most of its food and medicine must be imported. In order to purchase such items, Jamaica must earn enough foreign exchange to pay for them, but it is unable to do this because it still works in a market which was forced onto it by colonialism.

There can only be two major solutions to such a problem,

Munroe said. A country like Jamaica can turn to the capitalist solution which is to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund. In return, the borrowing country must follow a standard program dictated by the IMF. To Jamaica, the IMF offered an extreme version of this program. If offered devaluation of Jamaican currency, a guarantee to private capital, a balanced budget and restrictions on workers' wages in the form of restraint or freezes.

The other alternative, Munroe stated, is a turn to the socialist system. Under this system, a country could renegotiate its old debts so that the payments could be rescheduled to a later date.

Very recently, Jamaica chose the IMF solution to solve its payments crisis. This choice, Munroe said, has locked Jamaica more tightly into the capitalist system. Its production has gone down and its cost of living has risen markedly.

Parking office's break-in policy questioned

By Brian Gillett

Some members of the York community have raised questions about the activities of employees of the traffic office headed by George Dunn.

Recently a York staff member had her car broken into by York security to remove a decal loaned to her by a friend on leave. Although the Community Legal Aid Services Program (C.L.A.S.P.) said these actions could be seen as trespass and theft of the decal, George Dunn justified his department's actions saying that York security suspected the decal was stolen.

In order to determine just how far the University feels it has the right to act in dealing with parking offenders, Excalibur interviewed Dunn last Friday.

Asked when York security will break into a car, Dunn replied, "A vehicle will be broken into in order to release the hand and parking brakes when towing is to be done. Furthermore, a vehicle will be towed away if it is parked along a fire route, in a medical zone, or in a service area. A persistent offender (one with more than three parking violations) may also be towed away."

Although vehicles are usually towed to one of the peripheral parking lots, the University has been known to impound an offending vehicle, releasing them only when proof of ownership has been produced. In this way, the university can establish the offender's identity. The university cannot legally

refuse to return a vehicle to its owner in order to force payment of fines and towing charges. However, Dunn says that cases have been taken to court to force payment of fines and "we've never lost one yet."

Dunn was asked why the university persists in using large stickers which are plastered on the offending vehicle when these stickers impair the driver's visibility and their removal may scratch the windshield itself. "I have no sympathy for people who receive stickers on their cars," he said, "these people are usually persistent offenders anyway, and besides no one is forcing them to drive their car when driver visibility is impaired. I see the main purpose of the sticker as an irritant and, hopefully as a deterrent to other potential violators."

According to Dunn, there are 14,000 vehicles registered at York. In addition, to the income received from permits, there will be another \$30,000 collected in parking fines for the 1978 fiscal year. Dunn says this money will be used to offset the costs of salaries of parking attendants.

Although Dunn maintains that the university is well within its rights to enter a vehicle, or even impound it over at the physical plant, there are other independent legal opinions to the contrary. According to a lawyer contacted by Excalibur, the whole issue may only be settled when and if someone takes the time, effort, risk, and expense to challenge the university in court.

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