

'Ban The Pan Men', S

Bourgeois' Steelbands Beaten By 'Rangoes' In Coronation Fete

Guardian Staff Reporters

"Ban them!" This was the general reaction of an angry public to the news that a young motorist was clubbed to death by a steel band during Saturday's Coronation Carnival. It was unanimously agreed that the carnival was the worst since the death of Mr. Bernard O'Connor's death

was the worst of several incidents in which it is believed that well over 100 persons were injured. Several of these in-

juries were not reported to the police.

Not only were pan-beaters and masqueraders hurt, but also bystanders and passers-by. Things were so bad that several parents have banned their teen-aged sons from beating pans.

REASON FOR DISORDER

Nearly every "bourgeois" steel band—Dixie Stars, Dixieland, Dem Boys, etc.—was attacked, beaten and had their pans either destroyed or taken away from them by the "rango" bands.

What was the reason for all the disorder? A steel band enthusiast, who has been following the pans since the dustbin days, supplied the following analysis of the situation:

"In the early days when pan-beating was not socially accepted, the steel bands were made up entirely of unemployed young men from the lower classes. Behind the East Dry River was the home of the pan.

"In those days, the followers of the bands, mainly hooligans and saga-boys, fought among themselves. Steel band wars were confined to the lower classes.

'SOCIAL BANDS'

"During the past two or three years, however, the middle and upper classes have taken up pan-beating. College boys, civil servants, store clerks and other white-collar workers have formed themselves into bands—Dixieland, Dem Boys, Hit Paraders, etc.

"Not only have these bands learnt to play as well, or even better, than many of the old bands, but they have been getting all the engagements at the clubs, dances, etc.

"The proletarian bands, jealous of the prowess of what they call the 'social' bands, and resentful at their encroachment on what were formerly their exclusive preserve, have openly resolved to 'run all the social bands off the road.'

NEVER AGAIN

"On Saturday, every 'social' band, unarmed, unsuspecting and not looking for trouble, was attacked in broad daylight by hooligans with baseball bats, big white whips,

and saga-boys, hooligans themselves. Steel band wars were confined to the lower classes.

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NEVER AGAIN

"On Saturday, every 'social' band, unarmed, unsuspecting and not looking for trouble, was attacked in broad daylight by hooligans with baseball bats, big sticks, bottles, cowhide whips, and even razors and cutlasses, and put to flight.

"Many of them did not dare venture out in the night. Some have vowed never to beat on the road again."

Reactions of the public were that the steel bands be banned for some time at least, until they learn to behave themselves. The only difference of opinion was with regards to the length of the ban.

One Carnival lover felt that the bands should not be allowed to come out on Discovery Day. But a City Councillor declared that they should be banned from the road not only on Discovery Day, but next Carnival as well.

WILL CAUSE UNREST

A puritan, who has been crying out against the steel bands since their birth, felt that they should be banned forever.

A student of local history pointed out, however, that every time the authorities attempted to ban certain types of Carnival bands—e.g., canboulay, tamboobamboo—disorder resulted, or the bands reappeared with new instruments.

To ban the steel bands would only cause unrest among the large mass of unemployed young men, he said, and would most probably result in serious disturbances. The steel band had caught too great a hold on the people of Trinidad, he added, for any attempt to be made to clamp down on them.

He felt that the police should exercise greater supervision of the bands, and make sure that no baseball bats, sticks, cutlasses or any possible weapons of offence are carried.

'CAT OFFENDERS URGED

He also thought that any person found guilty of using a weapon during Carnival should be given the 'cat'.

One housewife said that on Sunday she gave her 14-year-old son strict orders not to beat pan again.

"I love steel band music," she said, "and I have no objection to my boy beating a pan—but not if he is going to be mauled by some hooligan for doing so."

Mothers of High School and Convent girls have also stated that in future they would think twice before allowing their daughters to play in the "social" steel bands.