

The real panmen must speak out for themselves

THE EDITOR: If anybody had told me in 1948 when I first started to attend steelband meetings that I would have lived to see the day when violence, obscene language and threats would have been part and parcel of a steelband meeting, I would have told them they were talking nonsense.

And yet in my short life

I have lived to see not only that day but days, when such displays of modern hooliganism is a prevalent item not only at steelband meetings, but at conventions and executive meetings as well.

The conduct and behaviour of some members of the steelband organisation, Pan Trinbago, as well as that of some of the representatives

of some steelbands, apart from leaving much to be desired, must have caused deceased panmen like Gold Teeth, Black Shirt, Bitterman, Bucumare (to name but a few) to roll in their graves in shame and say, "we were angels and gentlemen in behaviour in comparison to some of the people who represent panmen in 1974."

I remember attending steelband meetings as a representative of Invaders in 1948-1950, when these meetings were held at the Besson Street Quarry, the then Abercromby Street office of the chief probation officer, the late George Mose, and at the the Cocorite Caribana of the Youth Council, at which the cream of steelbandstough guys from Invaders, Tokyo, Casablanca, Desperadoes, Red Army, Rising Sun, Tripoli, Sun Valley, Spellbound, City Syncopators, Fascinators, Chicago, and Hill Sixty attended.

I remember also attending between 1955 and 1971, steelband meetings and conventions that were also attended by the tough guys of some of the steelbands already named, other tough guys from Renegades, Blue

Diamonds, San Juan All Stars, Eastside Symphony, Cross Fire, to name a few.

While it is a fact that many of the steelbands whose tough guys attended these meetings were actually involved in bloody rivalry prior to the commencement of these meetings in 1948, I cannot recall seeing or hearing as much as a strong word as "damn" used or displays of violence and threats.

I am quite certain that the former presidents like Nathaniel Crichlow, Albert Jones, Junior Pouchet and Cecil Hunte had similar ex-

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periences during their term of office.

What a great difference there is in 1974 when representatives of steelbands are not certain that they will not be abused, beaten or threatened by other representatives.

The shameful thing with respect to this sad state of affairs in the steelband movement is that 90 percent

of the offenders are not really panmen in the true sense of the term, but rather opportunists, who through old talk and guile, influence panmen to be their mouth pieces.

To put an end to this sad state of affairs before it ends in mass bloodshed, the real panmen must speak out for themselves because in the final analysis panmen alone will continue to suffer.

GEORGE GODDARD,
Opel Gardens,
Diamond Vale.