

Safeguarding Self Interest

Within the world within which we live, there is a growing problem where individuals who head organizations and enterprises are being accused of undermining the trust and confidence reposed in them. It is questionable as to what drives their behaviour or actions. It is of concerns that in many cases the actions or behaviour filter down, and impact heavily on those we refer to as the 'working poor.'

Based on the many cases reported by local, regional and international media houses of criminal acts and unscrupulous behaviour of executives, there is justification for a rising tide of concern. Very often the fallout from these actions or decisions, is that workers and or working class people invariably suffer losses. There are many cases to be cited of persons losing their pensions and /or other forms of investment. Some are traumatized when they suddenly learn that they are out of work because the business is forced to close its doors due financial difficulties. Not only are these persons left on the breadline, but some can be challenged in their efforts to receive their severance payment and other benefits.

The conventional process is that those who head organizations, whether public institutions, private enterprises, nongovernmental or not for profit organizations, which include trade unions, churches and other service organizations, are elected, selected or appointment to lead and manage. The bottom line is that in most cases, these persons are either paid good salaries, or receive monetary remuneration to manage and make decisions on behalf of workers and working class people, who are they constituents.

Most would tend to accept that those who shoulder these high level of responsibilities should be properly remunerated. To satisfy these persons there is the tendency to provide incentives or attractive benefit packages. It is almost amazing how some of these executives or management personnel, exercise the latitude of the influence they have in getting Boards of Directors, Executive Councils, Church Boards and the like, to approve of the purchase of top of the line vehicles, and sometimes the rental of expensive housing accommodation.

It is difficult to conceive how in hard economic times, where employees are unable to secure a raise in pay, and worse yet, to lose their jobs because

businesses and even government move to cut back on expenditure, that monies could be spent on such luxury items. Who is guarding the guard or who is fooling who? Are persons just living a lie or are they simply making mock sport at the people they employ, service or represent? Those who are the beneficiaries would contend that there is no loss or need to moan or groan, when they are simply utilizing the benefits of tax free concessions offered by government.

History tells of the exploitation of the masses in the Caribbean by the white colonial masters. It is almost amazing how history repeats its self. The affluence that executives and other leaders in our society enjoy at the expense of the poor and most vulnerable cannot be right. It is rather unfortunate that the shareholders and the rank and file members of organizations, often do not have a say when decisions are made to incentivize individuals by providing them with expensive luxury items. Maybe it is about time that persons remove open their eyes to what is happening around them and stop being blinded by their own ignorance.

The Mighty Chalk Dust a popular calysonian from the twin island state of Trinidad and Tobago, once sang a calypso with the lyrics.. "White people laughing at we." It would now seem that laughter continues, but this time the joke is on we as a people.