

## **SHOE BOMBER: ILUSION OR POTENTIAL**

*Union Financiere de France (UFF) displays a larger than life, unmistakable picture of the face of Karl Marx, and advertises itself as “THE BANK THAT MAKES YOU LONG TO BECOME CAPITALIST.” Most people pass through the airport at Martinique without recognizing Marx or that provocative advertisement.*

*Probably, I love the ad. Clearly, I respect the imagination of those who crafted it. Our ads in Dominica are at a different dimension. It is manifested in the transvestite, at once naïve and unfortunate, who employs a couple of limes to pass for “to-tot”, in a vain effort to get the discount offered only to women by the First Domestic Insurance Company.*

*Meanwhile, others in the global village pass him by and go about their own advertising business.*

*So, semi amused by what Marx would consider insulting and outrageous, I continued my journey toward the security area, wondering how different it might have been if recent history had come up with a more equitable balance between socialism and capitalism.*

*With the exception of Cuba, the invisible hand has been given almost full rein in just about every economy. Yet things are bad for most people everywhere. Perhaps, I speculate, the invisible hand is too far up somewhere to be visible.*

*By that time, a hawk-eyed immigration officer had handed me back my passport. I placed what keys and coins I had in the basket provided. I walked pass the security apparatus.*

*It sounded an alarm that jolted me back from thoughts about how soon capitalism will sell nuclear bombs at a profit to whoever can afford to buy them. I believed it was the metal in my belt. But a security woman, more knowledgeable than I, asked to see my shoes. I raised one foot. She asked me to remove them.*

*There was a time when, with impugny, you could hide the holes in your socks in an elegant pair of shoes. You can still try that today, but you may be risking embarrassment.*

*My shoes were subjected to the x-ray equipment. The friendly security people actually showed me the computer image of the offending metal in the bowels of my shoes.*

*That was April 13, 2002. The day before, I had passed through the security system at Melville Hall, wearing those shoes, and without machine detection of anything. I hope we have our act right. I should note here, one week later I witnessed a security officer at Canefield request a passenger to remove his shoes.*

*I did not see her x-ray the shoes. So that, if they contained a bomb, what would happen is that, at some point, she might well have been holding that bomb in her hands. If we are begging, we should today beg also for sophisticated security equipment and training for airport personnel. Excellent security at all ports will enhance and promote our tourism product.*

*I had chosen to wear that particular footwear because of its versatility. I shall not travel in them again. Meanwhile, if in your travel anywhere, what you wear creates the illusion that you may be a potential shoe-bomber, bear with the airport authorities for better security of us all.*

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