

Enemy unknown

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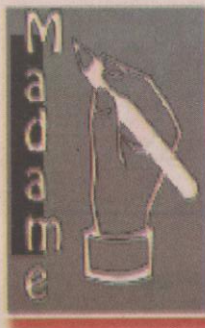
So when a crude, home-made bomb exploded in a dustbin, located at the corner of Queen and Frederick Streets, it was not surprising to me at least.

Just a couple of months ago, after fire ravaged the People's Mall and several other businesses in the heart of the city, you could have cut through the hopelessness and tension in the air.

And when I recorded the feelings in the April 15th edition of this column, I noted that Port of Spain was ready to erupt again.

It had nothing to do with the people who suffered as a result of the fire and who would have been the ones everyone could have been pointing fingers at, in the event of a back lash.

It was all about the life



The crime scene with the metal remains of the dustbin frame (arrowed).

these days.

In this rounds there will be no organised, concerted overthrow of the political directorate.

"Each man is looking out for himself and when the spontaneous combustion finally comes, it will really be savage!" Madame warned a couple of months ago.

"Public transport is at an all time frustrating low and breadwinners suffer all kinds of indignity to be able to get to

and from their jobs.

"Perhaps no politician will check the chaos at City Gate in Port of Spain, until some kind of tragedy happens, when people climb on top of one another to get a maxi-taxi or a bus to get to the safety and comfort of their homes.

"Or, God forbid, until someone torches the rat infested wooden structure that they call City Gate," the column stated.

It almost came to pass.

City Gate, after all, was the scene of "terror" again on Tuesday morning, when a bomb scare stretched the security services and forced the evacuation of the transport hub in another act of mischief that may not have been linked to Monday's bombing.

But we really have reason to be worried, because any kind of nastiness could have been in play in the city on the afternoon that the bomb was planted in front of Maraj Jewellers.

Businessmen locked down

-- not just Frederick Street -- but most of the city on Monday afternoon for fear of looting.

We are not sure if the bomb was meant to send a message to some businessmen, or whether it was the work of a drug lord who has reason to disrupt the security services.

Or whether it was politically motivated, which is something we cannot discount at this time.

The politics of this country has been taking interesting twists and turns in the past few years, enough to make you believe that political violence awaits us in the future.

We've had gunshots fired at people and Molotov cocktails thrown at their homes during an election campaign, and the kind of rhetoric that has been displayed on the political platforms is enough evidence for you to believe that dropping a crude home-made bomb in the middle of the city is nothing out of the ordinary.

This country has had its fair share of revolution, from Butler, to the National Union of Freedom Fighters (NUFF) in the 1970s and then the Jamaat al Muslimeen in 1990.

On all occasions we could have identified the perpetrators. This rounds it's far different as the "enemy" remains unknown and the man/woman who planted the bomb is walking around unscathed and possibly emboldened by the simplicity of the task that he accomplished.

tute concerned citizens are certainly talking a lot of crap about terrorism.

For example, the San Juan Business Association hastily penned a release in which it claims "our innocence was loss (sic) in a most brutal manner".

What innocence?

Who has been innocent since the NUFF freedom fighters or the army mutiny (albeit there was no bloodshed) or the July 90 insurrection?

Even the Minister of National (In)security, Martin Joseph seemed like a bungling fool when he appeared on the scene to wonder aloud in front of television cameras about the irony of this happening when there was an anti-terrorism conference in Tobago?

Even when the Commissioner of Police was operating like a true well-bred professional, not jumping to conclu-

trust the judgment of the top cop and made his comment alluding to terrorists.

Later when he appeared on television to broadcast a special message to the nation, Joseph looked like a real buffoon with the Police Commissioner and Chief of Defense staff standing at either side of him along with the regiment Commander and Head of the Special Anti-Crime Unit.

It was not a comforting appearance and most of the people of this country who were not directly affected by the bombing looked on at the charade.

The bomb certainly did not come from within the ranks of the people -- whether disgruntled or not.

It is part of the bigger battle for power in this country between the politicians, the drug barons and the other players in the high stakes game.

Photos by INNIS FRANCIS



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