
Jamaica

Dope income is now bigger than GNP

by Carlos Wesley

Jamaica's marijuana income has increased sevenfold since Edward Seaga became prime minister in 1980, becoming a cash crop worth at least \$3.5 billion a year—larger than the country's official gross national product. When Seaga took office, the annual marijuana crop was worth an estimated half-billion dollars, and its sales abroad—mostly to the United States—brought in about half the country's export earnings.

Seaga has been eager to do the bidding of the International Monetary Fund, and IMF demands are responsible for this surge in Jamaican dope production—creation of a cash crop to make IMF looting easier. Now, after four years of IMF cutbacks and the voodoo economics of “free market forces,” while the drug economy grows, Jamaica's productive sector has been virtually wiped out. Last month, Seaga ordered new, drastic cutbacks in the importation of industrial raw materials, arguing that Jamaica's industries were producing “too many consumer goods for the domestic market.”

As for employment, last month Seaga announced that roughly 3,900 civil servants in Jamaica would be laid off over the next two months in order to reach the goal set by the IMF of eliminating 5,500 government workers during the course of this year. This in a country where real unemployment approaches 40% of the labor force.

Seaga is able to preside over the explosive growth in Jamaica's drug economy because there is a crucial weakness in the Reagan administration, despite its “war on drugs”: a blind commitment to the “magic of the free market,” and administration refusal to break with the genocidalist, drug-pushing policies of the IMF and its sister institution, the World Bank.

This flaw has been exploited by Henry Kissinger's friends in the Reagan administration, even though the President has officially made the war against drugs a keystone of his foreign policy towards Jamaica.

Take the case of Lawrence Eagleburger, former under-secretary of state for political affairs and now a partner in Kissinger Associates, Inc. Eagleburger protected Jamaica's marijuana exports from U.S. anti-drug efforts in order to prop up Seaga. Asked in a *New York Times* interview published Sept. 10 why more pressure had not been exerted on Seaga

to curtail the drug trade, Eagleburger replied: “Our emphasis has been: Can Jamaica be made economically viable so that we don't face the Manley [Jamaica's former prime minister] kind of problem in the next election?. . . To be honest, I wasn't aware Jamaica was that large a marijuana producer [sic]. To the best of my knowledge, it didn't come up.”

But Eagleburger and others knew, or should have known, that Seaga's entire political career has been dedicated to transforming Jamaica into a drug and cult haven in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund. This news service provided reams of documentation to the incoming Reagan administration on Seaga's drug-and-voodoo-promoting activities, and much the same information was given wide publicity by this and other media.

Marching orders from the IMF

On his first day in office in 1980, Seaga's first official act was to carry out the IMF's instructions, to order the banks to accept deposits from drug dealers, “No questions asked.” Despite this, Seaga—a self-proclaimed priest of a voodoo sect—became the first foreign head of government to be invited to pay an official visit to the Reagan White House, an occasion which he used to push Kissinger's proposal to turn the Caribbean into a new “Hcong Kong,” to replace the British drug enclave which is reverting to communist China—a proposal otherwise known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative.

The implementation of the “new Hong Kong” plan for Jamaica was turned over to the U.S./Jamaica Business Committee to promote Investment and Employment, a group headed by David Rockefeller. In Kingston during mid-November, Rockefeller called on Jamaicans to keep making “the painful but necessary adjustments” demanded by the IMF.

At the same time, the Seaga-dominated Jamaican Parliament enacted legislation to establish a key component of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, the so-called foreign sales corporations. These are nothing more than a nameplate, a post-office box, and a secretary, to allow American individuals and corporations to escape U.S. taxes (courtesy of a new regulation of the U.S. Treasury), Jamaican taxes, and to launder the proceeds from the drug trade.

Although he has recently been making cosmetic anti-drug statements, Seaga has made sure his government gets its cut of the drug trade. In September, he announced that Jamaica was instituting a tax on drug smugglers, and that the national revenue service had already billed 28 of the largest known dope traffickers (who were not jailed, and whose names were not made public to protect their “confidentiality as taxpayers”!). Although Seaga claimed the measure was against drugs, the taxing scheme was a step towards legalizing drugs, not eradicating them.

Any serious attempt to wipe out the drug plague would require confiscating the drug dealers' assets, not taxing their proceeds. That is just what Seaga will not do.