

The Ghetto Subsystem

by Charles T. Byrd, Jr.

The ghetto economy is markedly different from the rest of the economic system. It is the center for the bulk of the urban

compared to national figures released claiming to establish an average. As a matter of fact, the unemployment rate in most ghetto neighborhoods is that characteristic of a depression.

The opportunities for development, progressive change and advancement are minimal compared to the rest of the economy. As a result a subsystem exists that operates, partly legal and partly illegal, to supply the ghetto resident with the services needed but unaffordable because of low incomes.

When the ghetto is compared with the rest of the economy, there are two reasons that can be noted for the evident differences. There is a continuous drain of income and resources out of the ghetto. Secondly, there is a constant inflow of people, cast off as unusable by the rest of society, that counterbalances those who are able to escape the decadence.

The drain of income is obvious in the situation of savings by ghetto residents. The savings are in financial institutions that make the loans to businesses and for mortgages that are outside the deprived neighborhood. Products sold in the ghetto are produced elsewhere and the owners of the retail establishments also live "outside".

Manpower also leaves the ghetto when it is able; taking with it skills and entrepreneurship that are needed assets.

With the structure that exists, it is easy to understand why the ghetto is such a useless limb of the economic body. It is obvious that to remedy this deplorable living condition, help must come from internal and external community and economic sources.



Can I Return My Elephant?

Your Christmas list probably didn't include purple satin pillowcases, a leopard print table cloth, a fuzzy angora sweater, or a fuzzy allergic

take it back as soon as possible after the holidays.

If the store's policy is to credit the price of the return to your account, be sure that this

hats on a table with a sign saying, "Special Purchase: \$1.99 to \$2.99 -- \$5 to \$7 value." But if you stop to

can't quite squeeze into or a cigarette lighter you don't want because you quit smoking last New Year's Day. But now that you have them, what can you do with them?

Other than stuffing the gifts in a closet and writing gallant thank-you notes, you can try to return them, says the Better Business Bureau. That is, if you know where the gifts were bought. But even then, don't assume a store has to accept returned items; it doesn't.

Except in cases of misrepresentation or defective products, a store doesn't have to accept any of your returned white elephants. But most stores want your business, so there's a good chance you can get an exchange, credit or refund.

If a store's policy allows returns, usually it will require proof of purchase. If the item was a gift, you won't have a sales slip. So take it back in the original box or wrapper when you return it. And try to

statement and that it stays there until you decided to use it.

Don't expect a refund on anything you've soiled or used. The store may not be able to resell it, and this just increases the cost of all items in the store for all customers. It also might prompt the store to adopt a stricter return policy.

While you're returning unwanted gifts, you'll probably notice that everything seems to be on sale. This is a good time to pick up some real bargains. But it's also a good time to pick up more white elephants.

How many times have you bought something because it was on sale and then never really use it, or never really liked it? Buying sale items on impulse when you really don't need or want them doesn't save you any money.

Many items may be advertised as special values. You might see mittens and

the items could really be expected to sell at \$7 or \$6 or even \$5.

This is the time of year when you can get some good bargains in sheets, pillowcases and towels. But if you buy linens in a white sale this year, you could get short-sheeted. Many manufacturers, caught in the squeeze of inflation, have simply shortened the width or length of their sheets. Some companies are doing this to avoid raising prices, and some are doing it and still raising prices.

You might not find the smaller sizes objectionable at all, but you better check the label to know what you're getting. The accepted standard sizes of flat sheets in the past have been? king, 103" by 115"; queen, 90" by 115"; full, 81" by 104"; and single, 72" by 104".

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