

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity
—Lord Acton

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Campus patrol would sow seeds of tension

The idea that York's security department is encouraging the Metropolitan police to patrol the campus is disturbing.

Security head George Dunn has assured students that police are not being "infiltrated onto campus for some nefarious purpose," and surely no-one believes a great plot is being hatched to bust half the campus for assorted misdemeanors.

But on a less melodramatic level, there may indeed be reason to encourage the police to stay off campus — if only because of the potential disruption in the daily student life which the presence of a yellow car might trigger.

First, consider the arguments for inviting the police on campus. Staff sergeant Bill Bishop of Metro's 31 division, which includes the university, said it was

his experience that "the best prevention is patrol — letting the officer be seen."

That premise seems fairly sound, until one reads the result of a year-long test carried out between 1972 and 1973 in a 35-square mile area of Kansas City, Missouri. The area was patrolled for successive periods by one police car, four cars, five cars, and no cars at all.

Results showed that there was almost no difference in the crime rate or number of arrests between patrolled and unpatrolled neighbourhoods.

It is hardly wise to place all one's faith in a single study; and yet, simple logic indicates that with the infrequent touring of a patrol car weaving from Highway 400 to Keele between Finch and Steeles, the chances of that car being in the right place at the right time are slim.

Another argument in favour of police on campus is that they might spy a criminal whom they may have run into previously, pull him over and ask him for identification.

The point is valid; but what, one wonders, if a residence student were to stagger from his home after midnight, intoxicated or stoned, and attract the attention of the familiar yellow auto. How would that student be treated? If he were to bolt out of sudden fear or confusion, what would the officers' reaction be? Would we have some dramatic chase through a college complex? And to what end?

At this point, we recall the infamous Vanier bust of last year, which began when a group of plainclothes policemen "got lost" in Vanier residence and happened to stumble into a floor party where York ID wasn't being checked.

The benevolent cops booked the whole crowd as found-ins at a party where liquor was being sold without a licence.

York's current dilemma is that following the recent wave of thefts and assaults, the security department feels a need for added help in protecting the campus from criminals; however, considering the number of unlicensed drinking parties and persons strolling around campus with an ounce of hash in their pockets, a sizeable percentage of the York population is made up, technically, of criminals.

In other words, we want the cops to prevent those crimes we wish prevented (theft, property damage, violence), and to ignore those crimes we don't consider crimes (those old familiar drinking and drug laws).

Drinking infractions seem particularly trivial, since a resident student whose mailing address is invariably 4700 Keele tends to view the campus as his home and therefore private residence.

In the case of cannabis, though, we have to cope with the stupid laws governing marijuana; could we ask an officer merely to ignore the proliferation of joints as the security squad has ignored them in the past?

To pose the ultimate question: does the value obtained from patrols outweigh the loss of a certain freedom of movement?

The answer is no. We foresee the presence of Metro police on campus creating possibly ugly confrontations, as well as establishing a basically paranoid atmosphere.

To our mind, the recent criminal incidents on campus don't warrant the intrusion of

police vehicles into an environment which, while admittedly not a sanctuary, has established itself as a fairly tension-free place with a minimal number of restrictions.

George Dunn has stressed that we must keep on good terms

with the police, so that we can count on them in emergencies. But we've been on good terms with them for the past several years, without extending an open invitation to patrol the campus at will; there is no reason to extend that welcome now.

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"All the regular buses broke down, and the new Red Rocket wasn't ready, so somebody figured, why not get a good trajectory along Finch..."

— Column

Very steep marching indeed

By JAMES McCALL

"A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart."

Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*

New York July 1968

For a long time, sitting in that cell, I felt I had found my proper place in society, that I could not be what I was without eventually ending up in jail. But I also felt curiously relieved. It was as if I no longer needed to think about making choices; they now would all be made for me.

There was a row of five cells on that floor of the police precinct station. Each 10 by 10 by 10 cell contained one man, but you could see no-one except an occasional guard, because the bars were only on the side facing the walkway.

All night long the lights burned in the ceiling of the walkway, but it was hard to sleep anyway lying on a steel bench six feet long and a yard wide with only a blanket as a cover.

For a while some of the other prisoners talked to each other about how long each had been gone from the army, and how each had been caught and what the stockade at Ford Dix, New Jersey would be like, the one to which we would be taken the following day.

Some had been absent without leave several times and were quite veterans about the whole procedure. I did

not talk that night nor eat for the next three days; I was afraid of violating that strange feeling of repose.

Earlier that day I had waited for two hours in another New York precinct station after notifying the desk sergeant that I had been absent without leave for two months, before the armed forces police came. Two rather bored looking noncoms armed with forty-five automatics escorted me with handcuffs through my belt — which was turned around to buckle in back lest I should entertain any second thoughts about my decision.

They directed me to sit in the middle of the back seat of their car and not to move, the threat was implied but clear. We drove for what seemed an inordinately long time before we arrived at my room for the night.

Now, six years later, the United States government, presumably as a gesture of compassion, is allowing deserters and draft dodgers to "work their way back into society." It is a characteristic of evangelical people to want to help those who have strayed from the correct path, to rehabilitate the unfortunate who have made mistakes, to show the unenlightened the flame of truth.

I have often been congratulated on my courage in coming to Canada. These people say that the Vietnam War was immoral and that I was morally bound to refuse participation in the American army. Other people have been quite pointed in their contempt for any one who would desert the army of his country and flee to a foreign land for refuge.

I think the truth lies somewhere else. For each person there are times when he must make a decision, usually involving very unclear alternatives, the result of which will not entirely absolve him from guilt. It is a question of which is the least bad thing to do, and of accepting the consequences of one's act.