



James Bailey

Economics and crime

How do you deal with organized crime?
The police chiefs say they need greater wiretapping powers to keep organized crime in check. The opposition parties say we need a judicial inquiry to expose the problem, the civil libertarians protest that our legal rights would be eroded by any restrictive countermeasures.

I'm inclined to agree with the view that an answer won't be found in more restrictive laws. Although the idea may sound contradictory, organized crime feeds on restrictive laws. Prostitution, gambling and drug trafficking are the big profitmakers for crime organizations because they are illegal. A demand has always existed for these services, and the law ensures there will be a scarcity of supply. Scarcity means high prices and thus high profits for anyone willing to do the supplying.

Organized crime's other major source of profits, loansharking, is also based on fundamental economics. People who need money and can't get it any other way turn to the loansharks and their usurious interest rates.

Someone once said that when you create more laws, you create more criminals. The opposite may also be true. By legalizing the services provided by organized crime — with appropriate controls — we could put the criminals out of business.

Often we base our restrictions on these services in the argument that organized crime may become involved. In the days of Wintario, Loto-Canada and all the other government-operated games of chance, the moral arguments against gambling have pretty well disappeared. Las Vegas-style gambling is prohibited, however, because of the fear that criminals might take it over.

Similarly, prostitution — the sale of sex for money — is dangerous in its consequences, not in the act itself. The decision to go to a prostitute is a matter of personal morality which neither adds to, nor detracts from, society as a whole. Society is, however, harmed when venereal disease is spread through contact with prostitutes, when real estate values plunge because of an overabundance of brothels in a given area, or when ordinary citizens are assaulted by garish, tasteless street-level advertisements and solicitations.

Hard drug users certainly harm themselves, but their major danger to the rest of society is the violence they commit in order to feed their habits through break-ins, robberies, and other crimes. These crimes occur because the law creates a scarcity which forces up the price of drugs to a point where an addict can't get the money needed any other way.

Instead of continuing to wage a losing war against these activities, perhaps we should think about legalizing them all and allowing the immutable laws of economics to destroy organized crime. We could, for example, set aside a specific area in each major city in which prostitution and gambling were completely legal. Prostitutes would be licensed and subject to frequent medical inspection to prevent the spread of venereal disease. Houses of prostitution and gambling operations would be frequently checked by authorities to prevent "rip-offs." Persons who attempted to operate these businesses outside the "open zone" would be subject to heavy fines under city bylaws which would destroy their profits. They would be forced to close down anyway, because people who provide the market for their services would obviously go to the "open zone" where they would be assured of legal sanction, heavy police protection and stringent government inspection. Drugs could also be sold at low cost by agents who were licensed by the government and whose wares had also been subjected to rigid inspection. The market for illicit drugs of questionable quality would quickly dry up.

Bookmaking and loansharking businesses could also operate freely in the "open zone".

Loansharks would be permitted to charge extremely high interest rates because of the high-risk business they would likely attract, but would, on the other hand, be strictly controlled in their methods of debt collection. Bookmakers have operated in Britain for years without bringing the country down.

But how do you keep organized crime out of the "open zone"?

Simple. Hold a lottery. Only winners of a government-run lottery would be issued licenses to operate businesses in the area and the licenses would be non-transferable. If a winner decided to close down his business, he would have to turn in his license — he couldn't sell it and he couldn't take in any partners. His books would be open for surprise inspection at any time by government auditors to make sure that he hadn't acquired any "silent" partners.

This isn't a perfect solution, by any means, but, in law, as in so many other areas of human conduct, we have to assess priorities. To me, the violence which organized crime breeds is its greatest danger. An "open zone" would bleed off the profit sources of organized crime and eventually lead to its destruction.

It's a compromise, but maybe it's worth a try.



John Stewart

Bitter choice

Pop singer Barry Manilow must have envisioned the problems McDonald's Restaurants would have in Mississauga when he penned the firm's theme song with the refrain stating, "You deserve a break today."

I'm sure the American-based fast-food outlet would love a couple of breaks from city council, but they are unlikely to get them. Nor do they "deserve" them on the basis of their record here.

McDonald's is a good corporate citizen, as every lawyer who represents it reminds elected representatives the instant he gets to his feet to address them. But if they expect to gain the co-operation of councillors, they will have to come up with a little more efficient planning.

After taking an option to purchase the former BP site on the south side of Lakeshore Road at Clarkson Road, McDonald's representatives expressed surprise that residents, businessmen and the ward councillor got upset about the location. They apparently consider the opportunity to quell a Big Mac attack to be worth unconscionable traffic jams, irritation to established residential communities and the destruction of a budding Business Improvement District.

It is unlikely that the firm could have come up with a worse choice had it set out to do so.

The city has said that unless McDonald's can acquire more land for parking, and resolve some of the other attendant problems, Mississauga will not issue a building permit.

This week, a lawyer for McDonald's asked general committee to solve the traffic abomination caused by their establishment at Highway 10 and the South Service Road. The company bought the land with a legal non-conforming use on it and, over the objections of residents and councillors, won approval to build there.

Cars are piled up in the parking lot like quarter pounders are piled up on the grill inside. Internal traffic often comes to a standstill and causes back-ups onto Highway 10.

Now McDonald's wants the city to express sympathy for its plight. The restaurant has offered to expand its commercial use to provide 27 more parking spots to help the city with its problem.

Mississauga is offered a bitter choice. Either it expands a use which the neighborhood finds repugnant in an attempt to make the traffic situation palatable or it rejects the company's rezoning and by implication endorses the current mess. Either way, the city is likely to end up with Egg McMuffin on its face.

At least the two recent McDonald's applications have satisfied my curiosity about the burning question of what that clown named Ronald does when he's not performing for kids.

He is obviously the fellow in charge of selecting new locations for McDonald's circuses.



Sid Rodaway

The age of the boor

If there is a single trend in society that has not failed to aggravate me on almost every occasion it is the growing dominance of the public boor.

You know the creep I'm talking about. His appearance may vary from the youthful norm but his singular lack of consideration for the people around him makes him a member of a rapidly growing fraternity.

He's the jerk who insists on talking through a movie, the bimbo who swears out loud at public events attended by parents with their children. This need is part of a trend towards self-centred tastelessness that threatened to overwhelm us.

I took my nine year old to his first stock car race on Saturday night. We were blessed with a neighbour who insisted on venting his obscene spleen at the cars driven by anyone but his favourite "main man."

This tattooed greaseball proceeded to down the contents of a 26'er of rye chased by several bottles of beer. His verbal attacks on the cars, their drivers and anyone who looked at him

soon sent many families in search of better seats. His wife, a rather pleasant looking woman in her late twenties, simply ignored his antics.

At a drive-in movie Sunday night I was unlucky enough to arrive just before the feature started and was relegated to the third from last row, the area reserved for late comers and yahoos.

Although I turned the volume up as far as it would go the warm night air was filled with the distracting sounds of flying beer caps, screamed profanities, honking horns and occasional fracas.

The stoned carload of boors to my left spent the entire evening trying to figure out the plot of the two movies. "What the f— is going on in this g— d— picture," was the most common expletive wafting from their open car windows.

It was warm. I didn't want to wind up my own windows so I was forced to listen to this cacophony of nature's rejects.

I'm far from being a prude and I'm certainly not beyond using the infrequent expletive in certain choice company.

But broadcasting this kind of language to the world at crowded public events requires a particular form of insensitivity.

In a way this trend represents a kind of psychopathic group behavior. "I can do anything I want — rules don't apply to me. I don't care about the consequences."

Of even greater concern is the failure of the rest of society to react. Foul mouthed bravado is rarely challenged — after all they didn't take their families to a movie to engage in a fight or an argument.

So while the nice guys mind their manners the stobs have inherited the earth.

It's not a recent development. With the introduction of public education in 19th century England, offensive graffiti soon began to decorate barn doors and sign posts.

The boors have always been with us. The only difference now is their numbers and society's failure to call their bluff.

There once was a time when even street toughs would often curb their tongues in the presence of children. Such is not the case very often now.

The result has been the abandonment of many fun activities. Camping was a beautiful family hobby that has been relegated to the level of carniesideshow.

The moody sounds of dusk on a weekend camping expedition now have to compete with high output woofers and the beat of country and western corn. The onetime camaraderie of the camping fraternity is just a memory and equipment thefts, an unheard of event a few years ago, are now quite common.

I'm a real movie fan. I could attend two or three a week without strain but I have reduced my attendance as the seats fill up with the talkers and noise makers.

We may live in the most affluent society in our history but with the riches has come a falling off in consideration and taste.



Stewart Page

Might and psychiatry

One of the more interesting viewpoints in psychiatry, noxious as it has been to the mental health establishment, is the claim that "mental illness" as such simply does not exist. This view has been advanced most notably by the eminent psychiatrist Thomas Szasz. Szasz has been bothering establishment figures in psychiatry for several years now, beginning in the early 1960s with publications of his book *The Myth of Mental Illness* in 1962.

Szasz claims that the term "mental illness" is meaningless as a scientific, objective description of someone's behavior. It has, in this view, become nothing but catch-all term to accommodate all behaviors that psychiatrists and others would like to understand but seemingly cannot. Furthermore, Szasz feels as well that there is no reliable way to define "mental patient." This is because, among other things, many such people are at least tolerated in society, until psychiatrists or others attach the label "mental illness" to their behavior. There

even exists some considerable difficulty detecting reliably the "sane" from the "insane" anyway, even if we had adequate definitions for such things.

Szasz feels that psychiatric labels are merely instruments of power. Therefore, persons of very high status can do certain things and escape being targets of allegations about "mental illness," while low-status or "lower-class" individuals cannot escape.

Szasz cites an example. While attending a scientific conference on mental illness, he observed that many of his colleagues at the conference were smoking rather heavily. They did this while making presentations purporting to demonstrate, with irrefutable scientific evidence, the genetic and biological basis of alcoholism. "The meeting was heavy on biology," says Szasz, "with elegant graphs and tables being projected onto expensive screens." Szasz felt that his colleagues were not entitled

to claim that alcoholism was a genetically determined mental illness, while at the same time producing clouds of smoke by steadily puffing on cigarettes, cigars and pipes. So, therefore, if alcoholism is supposed to be a mental disease, why is smoking (Szasz calls it "nicotism," partly tongue-in-cheek) not also such a disease? In this view, filling up a room with smoke could be of course viewed as an anti-social act, possibly requiring psychiatric attention.

The non-smokers at the conference were greatly outnumbered — and thus "outpowered." The smokers continued to smoke, of course, and did not respond to Szasz's remarks on the matter, feeling he was not to be taken seriously in this area.

Might is right, said Plato, thus offering one of the earliest and most often endorsed justifications of political justice. For Szasz, might is also the power to make psychiatric diagnoses. Szasz calls it medical metaphor. Psychiatrists thus speak of alcoholism, regard it

essentially as a mental illness and offer cures for it. However, they do not speak of "nicotism" and thus do not appear to see that as a disease. Szasz's colleagues disapprove of alcoholism, but approve of — and indeed encourage through the most potent means of moral teaching in the world, that of example — nicotism. For Szasz, such an inconsistency provides further insight and understanding into what might be called the "fakery and foolishness" (Szasz's words) used by modern psychiatry in order to foist the notion of mental illness, and of its associated treatments, upon the public.

He feels that people can become the victims of the immense power of psychiatric labels, of psychiatrists and of a culture which tries to solve its own problems and inconsistencies by putting its victims in a special place, both semantically and physically.

Dr. Page is director of research at Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital.



Desmond Morton

The NDP has a chance

When Clement Atlee retired as leader of Britain's Labour Party, the magazine *Punch* ran a cartoon showing an enormous pair of shoes and a beetle-sized Hugh Gaitskell climbing into them. It ran a virtually identical cartoon when Gaitskell died seven years later. This time, the beetle was Harold Wilson, who went on to become Britain's most durable postwar prime minister.

Leaders of reforming parties almost invariably share the same experience. Like his predecessor, Donald MacDonald, the retiring Ontario NDP leader must be using ironically on the flood of praise and the predictions of doom after his departure.

The praise is deserved. Although Stephen Lewis inherited a party with 28 per cent of the popular vote and leaves it at about the same place, the intervening years have made the New Democrats a genuine alternative to the aging Tory government. If the NDP could withstand the concentrated Tory onslaught in the recent provincial election with so little damage, its

future looks remarkably hopeful. Much of the credit goes to Lewis' tireless campaign to broaden NDP support, particularly in rural and eastern Ontario.

However, Lewis had made no secret of his determination to lay down the NDP leadership. More than a year ago, he warned NDP associates and friendly journalists that he would see the party through one more election and no longer. A political organizer, elected member and party leader since 1960, Stephen Lewis wanted a break. If few wanted to believe him, it was wishful thinking. Lewis' most striking quality is a kind of unflinching honesty that is rare in any walk of life and which voters usually try to breed out of their politicians.

That same honesty convinced Lewis that he was not the kind of politician that Ontario voters would ever choose to lead the government. One consequence of the transformation he has brought to the New Democrats is that there are plenty of alternatives. While few are household words in Ontario, Lewis' early

resignation has given others a chance to establish a reputation.

Compared to the Liberal caucus after Bob Nixon's 1975 resignation, the NDP group is full of potential talent. Front runner among the elected members is probably Ian Deans, MPP for Wentworth, a tough, aggressive politician with a shrewd political judgment and a winning way with middle-class voters since 1967. A rival would be Michael Cassidy, the first New Democrat ever to win a seat in Ottawa and a man who combines imagination in policy with a tough-minded realism that has disenchanted his former radical supporters. Jim Foulds' the NDP's education critic until 1977 and the MPP for Port Arthur could be a compromise candidate from the caucus.

Challengers from outside could include Walter Pitman, runner-up to Lewis in 1970 and now the popular president of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Widely known and respected, Pitman is judged by many leading New Democrats to have the qualities which

could break down the suspicions which have kept the NDP from power. Younger and almost unknown outside NDP circles, Doug Moffatt is seen as having the same qualities. A teacher and part-time farmer who was narrowly edged out of his Durham East seat on June 9th, Moffatt made himself a major force in the NDP caucus during his term and reflects the cautious idealism which most New Democrats want in their next leader. At least two seats would be available if the forthcoming NDP leadership convention chose a caucus outsider.

For the NDP, the race for the party leadership could be a race for the premiership of Ontario. While the Liberals have reason to crow over regaining the official opposition, none of their fundamental weaknesses, including provincial leadership, has been cured. The NDP, on the contrary, has a chance. That is Stephen Lewis' most valuable legacy to his party.

Mr. Morton is vice-principal of Erindale College and a member of the New Democratic Party in Mississauga North.

Gregory Snow



The Queen and I

For the past 25 years, Canada, and many of her sister colonies, has had the fortune of having Queen Elizabeth as its sovereign and her warmth and dignity have not been lost on the people of this country.

Even as a schoolboy, those halcyon days of so long ago, I can remember the daily ritual of turning to the back of the room and mumbling a rather limp version of God Save the Queen while staring at her picture hanging just east of the clock.

I also remember the first time I met the Queen. It was during one of her Canadian tours that the Queen came to my home town of Brantford to open the mayor's real estate office which doubled as the city hall. As a Wolf Cub, I was lined up along the street in the color guard.

When the Queen drove past, sitting in the back of a 1959 Cadillac, she waved at me and asked, "How's yer Mum?"

"Fine, how's yours," I replied quickly. Now after all these years, I find out that we are not only supposed to love and admire our Queen, but we are also supposed to know a little bit about what she does.

This weekend, CBC's public affairs program *News-magazine* released the results of a survey showing that many Canadians don't have a clue about what happens inside the walls of Buckingham Palace. Only 15 per cent of the people surveyed realize that Canada is a monarchy and that the Queen is our head of state.

Well, I can identify with the majority of those who didn't answer the questions correctly because I was contacted by the CBC and fared poorly on the questions.

"Good morning, sir, this is the CBC calling with yet another survey designed to make Canadians feel like boobs because they don't know the answers to any of the questions. This one is about the Queen. First of all I wonder if you know her last name?"

I stalled, while I thumbed through the phone book under Government of Canada.

In a pinch, I took a guess and said, "Way." "I'm sorry, sir," said the toast dry voice, "but the Queen's name is not Elizabeth Way."

"Better let the Ministry of Transport in on that," I sniped back, "because they've got 40 miles of highway named after the wrong person."

My questioner then went on to ask for Prince Philip's maiden name, Princess Anne's weight in kilos and finally what beer Prince Philip drinks when he's having more than one.

In every case, my answer was a hesitant, "beats me."

But it doesn't matter if I or any of my countrymen know the answers to these questions. For the function the Queen serves is much like the little holes in the arches of running shoes.

I don't know what they do either, but it's nice having them there. God save the Queen.