

EDITORIAL

End police violence

It cannot be easy to be a police officer. Having to deal with crime, with violence, with human failure and degradation on a daily basis would harden even the most compassionate of us.

What can we make, then, of the fact that four Metro officers have been charged in shootings in the last eighteen months, all involving black victims? Were they racists, using the power of their uniform to act out private fantasies? Is the predominantly white police force racist?

You don't have to see a conspiracy to realize that there is a serious problem here. Metro's officers are largely isolated from the communities in which they work, and many may suffer from a siege mentality. These are conditions under which unnecessary force, racist violence, may flourish.

There are solutions:

- Restrict the "fleeing felon" rules. In some of the cases the blacks who were shot were unarmed; in most, they were moving away from the police. They were, in short, not a threat to anybody.

According to the law, however, the police have the right to fire on people moving away from them if the officers believe they constitute a legitimate threat to public safety. This law is being used to justify excessive force against individuals; it is time it was changed.

- Institute a progressive visible minority hiring programme. The siege mentality is easier to foster when officers are dealing with an unfamiliar culture. When members of a police force are taken from the community which they will patrol, their ties make them more sympathetic to what is going on there, less likely to react with unnecessary violence.

- Give a civilian oversight committee the power to investigate allegations of police violence and to lay charges. Justice is not seen to be done (and may not be done) when police officers who operate in the same milieu investigate each other.

Police can easily forget that their power derives from the consent of the individuals who make up society. They are not above the law, despite their possibly harder circumstances, and it is up to the individuals in society to judge their actions, not other police officers.

The solutions to Toronto's police problems are easy. Finding the political will to carry them out will be hard.

Ira Nayman

Profiteering: by any other name

York University had a reputation for providing accessible education to low-income students. I say *had* because things have changed. Over the last half decade, York's tuition price tag has fattened to become one of the steepest in the country.

I can understand that because of provincial underfunding and cut-backs, York has had to try and scrape together money from other sources: selling off university land, accepting donations from fascists and, lately, charging students for using their own university's (and colleges') names or logos in any way, shape or form.

So what's the big deal? Well, how about disregard for basic ethics for starters, followed by a good dose of greed. Let me be clear: if I wrote Vanier or Founders or York on a shirt, I could technically be asked to pay for it, literally. This sounds like a disguised incidental fee to me (remember they were abolished a few years ago by the provincial Liberals).

The cost of going to school, buying books and living in Toronto is plenty high enough without students having to pay for any unnecessary extras. The York administration, however, has defended its 6.5 per cent licencing fee (ie: logo tax/royalty payback), saying they must protect the university's good name. Besides, it seems the extra "licence" revenue will be dropped back into the university's budget. How nice! Why not just be up front and call a profit scheme a profit scheme. Let's stop with the semantics.

Administration claims that to remain consistent, it must charge every manufacturer who uses the university name, even if the customer is our own student council. It tries to brush off responsibility by saying the decision is up to the manufacturer to add the initial tax back onto the final sale price.

This is a cop-out. Let's be honest: students wouldn't get charged if the university hadn't charged the factory in the first place. York University Ltd., the North York corporation, is making enough money off its students without this slap in our faces and yank at our wallets.

Is York a place of higher learning or merely a profit-minded corporation? Is each student a bright young mind or just \$2000 in the bank? What comes first: the students or the corporation?

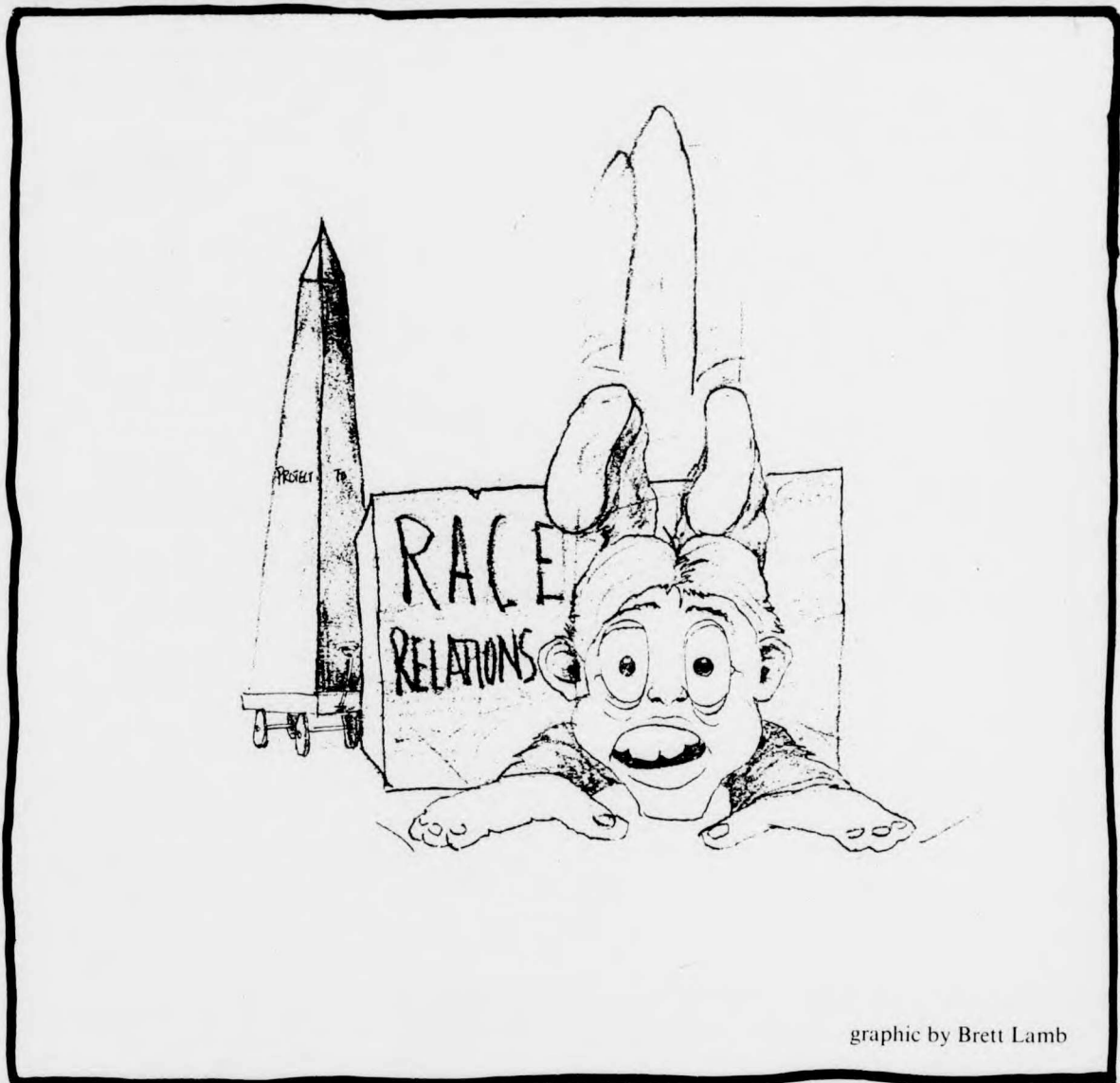
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EXCALIBUR

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LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of *Excalibur* staff or directors. However, letters judged to be racist, sexist or libellous by the editor will be refused. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Excal goes green — York can be beautiful

To the editor,

Considering it's the summer and there aren't many people around I was impressed that *Excalibur* is still coming out all summer long.

I thought the May 30 issue looked great, especially the "Meech Lake Accordion" cartoon and the green front cover. The front page just proved that York can look beautiful.

I guess it just takes some time to find somewhere they aren't fixing or building anything.

Keep up the good work, *Excal*.

Tracey Agoraki

University security is very helpful

To the editor,

I am taking my first course at York, at Atkinson College, and a recent incident has positively influenced my impression of the university.

After exiting the campus onto a busy Keele Street on May 28 around 10:00 pm, my car stalled and I could not restart it. I became quite anxious as one of my greatest fears is my car breaking down.

Almost immediately, a car drove up behind me and a couple came out to offer assistance. I later discovered they were off-duty York security officers. They tried several times to start my car, and I took them up on their kind offer to drive me to a nearby towing company. They made sure I was getting the necessary assistance before leaving without waiting for thanks.

These security officers certainly extended their helpfulness much beyond the call of duty when they went out of their way for a stranger.

Sincerely,
 Maria Jelinek

Sun review should burn in Hell

To the editor,

I completely disagreed with Andrew Sun's review of MC 900 Foot Jesus in the May 30 *Excalibur*. It was a "hellish" record, not "a Hell of a" record.

The album may sound dense, but it feels dry. It is monotonous. There's no conviction in the rapper's voice. He sounds mechanized. There's no anger or passion or conviction. It's like a robot. He's just conning anyone stupid enough to waste his time.

Maybe records aren't so important, anyway, but I like music. It pisses me off about these guys because they've got a cool name

and really cool cover drawing by Charles Burns. The thing is, the album is better as a poster, than on your record player.

Sorry Andrew, but I don't know where you get your taste. This stuff is dull. If that's all you have to do, I wouldn't mind doing reviews either.

Herschel Marshall

(Editor's note: Anyone wishing to sign up for record reviews (or films or theatre or concerts) should speak to the editors as soon as possible).

Terrorism open letter closed mind

TO THE SMARTIE TERRORIST(S),

You may have won the first round, but there are four quarters to every nerfball match, and I have yet to score.

The official *Excalibur* position is that we do not deal with terrorists. It is up to you to make demands, so that we can reject them out of hand. (By the way, the despoiled smarties have, to nobody's surprise, disappeared in custody. Do you doubt, yet, that we take smartie terrorism very, very seriously?)

The investigation is proceeding, and I expect arrests to be made at any time. Be scared. Be very scared.

Yours,
 Generalissimo Ivan