

OPINIONS

communities from police violence

characteristics; and criminal tendencies are seen as a by-product of mental deficiency or the inability to "function" adequately in the "complex modern world."

American soldiers returning from Vietnam had difficulty readjusting to civilian life because the American civilian life had become all of a sudden too "complex" and "modern" for them. This argument reeks of stupidity. The American soldier had difficulty adjusting not because for a long time society had become complex, but because he was not socialized into American civilian life.

Very clearly, cultural background and education determine a person's character; the poor are not held back by heredity, and if we have appropriate cultural and economic organization, their condition will become better.

But for us in Canada, the danger of eugenics and social Darwinism is not that Canada, like a big puppy, seems to go around following in the footsteps of the United States' policy makers. The danger is that these kinds of ideas have already cost humanity countless precious lives including those of Africans, Jews and North American Indians.

For this reason, it is extremely important for the Africans both on the continent and in diaspora to become constantly aware of the subtle and insidious schemes utilized to disempower their fighting spirit and henceforth, make them give up the struggle for liberation. A few local examples may bring this point home.

Despite the fact that most Canadian athletes admitted using steroids, it was Ben Johnson who topped the list of scapegoats. If you examine the media coverage of incidents involving crime and drugs between 1987 and now, you are sure to find an over-representation of Africans.

In the words of an Aug. 14, 1988 *Toronto Star* editorial "Police Form Tightrope in Drug Raids": "[Police] raids are being conducted in areas that are predominantly black . . ." Follow-

We have here a police force whose only way to maintain morale is apparently by harassment and brutality.

ing the shooting of a black person, this over-representation becomes more visible on television. And when it comes to an African suspected of crime, the fact that he has been charged by police means that he is guilty as charged. In other words, for the African there seems to be no presumption of innocence until proven guilty.

Clearly, the idea behind criminalization of the Africans is to build-up a public consensus to hate them this time not because they are subhuman, not because they are black, but because in this society, it is morally right to hate criminals. The first requirement for racial hatred is thus fulfilled.

Through careful distortion of facts and by the employment of skilled demagogues who target people's emotions and prejudices, some people can be successfully deceived. They are now ready to denounce the African not as a vindication of their racist sentiments, but in defence of what appears to be the social values being threatened by the criminal.

Some cops assume that all blacks are criminals, drug pushers and hence, advance the argument peddled by the same editorial mentioned above: That when it comes to blacks, police face the "dilemma" of separating "good" blacks from the "bad" ones.

With the efficiency of robots, these unthinking cops can only execute the prime objective issued by the demagogue: "For blacks, shoot first and ask questions later." And they can do so knowing that there will be no government intervention.

We are now in a position to understand why the police say that any criticism is likely to lower police morale. We

Another fascist scheme is to keep the public under perpetual fear of violent crime and hence the constant warning about possible shooting of police officers. Of all the crimes committed in metro Toronto, only a small percentage involve violence. One can understand the growing sentiment that much of this violence is committed by the police themselves.

Clearly then, the purpose of the "violent crime" argument is to create a myth to justify the continuing employment of armed cops and the production of more instruments of death for profit — contrary to the growing environmental call for disarmament.

By way of conclusion, let me just say that the problem with the police is that there is no adequate control. But part of the problem is also the underdeveloped nature of Canadian democracy.

Legislation alone will not improve the quality of policing. Reform of the Police Act and the establishment of an Independent Civilian Review Agency probably staffed by lawyers, teachers and ex-judges, may quiet noisy "leaders," but it will not, by itself, solve the problem of racial and state violence that is inherent in the capitalist society.

You simply cannot legislate or force respect between peoples. Respect is an attitude that must be developed through a process of socialization.

This means that to have better relations, professional or otherwise, everyone especially starting with children, must be socialized to respect all life over money, indeed to respect a person not because he is a police officer, not because she is a member of parliament, a lawyer, a Hollywood "star," not because he is a millionaire, black, white or what have you. But because he or she is a human being. This is, in my view, the very pre-requisite for self-respect and henceforth, for a society based on mutual respect rather than fear.

This article was first published by *Contrast*, in Toronto, June 14, 1990. It is reprinted with permission of the author.



cop(y)riot 90-91 JOHN YATES

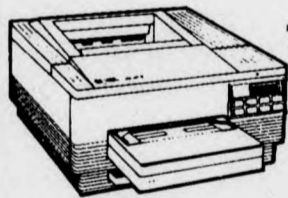
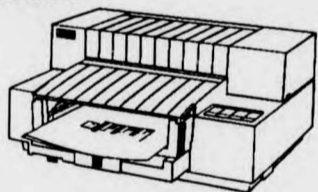
have here a police force whose only way to maintain morale is apparently by harassment and brutality. It reminds me of a man who having lost his manhood, goes around beating his wife and abusing his children just to boost his ego. This analogy applies only with respect to the inequality of physical power between armed police and unarmed civilians.

Maybe it is time for the "good apples" in the police force or government (if there are any left) to become familiar with the story of *Serpico* — the New York policeman who apparently "single-handedly" exposed the multimillion dollar involvement of hundreds of New York police officers and administrators in illegal drug-trafficking.

The Better The Presentation Looks the better YOU Look.

The Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 500

- 300 DPI
- 3 Pages /Min
- 3 Year Warranty
- Many Built-in Fonts
- Quiet Desktop Operation

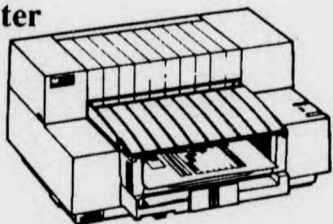


The Hewlett-Packard LaserJet III

- Most Popular HP LaserJet
- Publication Quality Output
- Scalable Typefaces and more fonts
- Quick, quiet 8 page-per-minute printing

The Hewlett-Packard Deskwriter

- Full Integration with Macintosh
- 300 DPI Printing
- Fast and Quiet Operation
- Built-in Appletalk



Now Available from

Micro York

T104A Steacie Science Library

736-5274

In association with

Value Added Systems Inc.



Are you a Progressive Zionist?

Interested in discussing the Gulf War's implications on Israel?

Come to a lecture by

Professor Howard Adelman

Professor of Philosophy

Director, Centre for Refugee Studies, York

Followed by small group discussions

A chance to voice your opinion

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

2:00 to 4:30 PM

Bathurst Heights Library

(on Bathurst, north of Lawrence)

Sponsored by

Students for Peace Now,
An Israeli Peace Movement

For more info contact:

Peace Now: 398-7732

Hillel Jaeger: 652-9719

**GRE
LSAT
GMAT**

Prep courses

April 13 GRE
June 15 GMAT
June 10 LSAT

For information about one
and two weekend courses:

(416) 923-PREP

1-800-387-5519

We offer courses in Toronto,
London, Ottawa and Montreal.

ORDER FROM

**TASTY
Pizza & MORE**

Super Special

16" large pizza
\$8.99 with this coupon

Get free Excal delivered

665-0062