

editorial

PR over safety

The University of Waterloo has its own private police force. It handles its own arrests and processes any charges through the courts. The officers carry handcuffs. They have had Special Constable Status since at least 1965.

The police at McMaster University in Hamilton also carry handcuffs. Investigator Ron Singer said, "The only time we call in the police is when we require their expertise, such as their criminal investigation division, or when we need back up . . . We arrest, we transport those arrested to jail, we process cases ourselves. We do the court work too." McMaster police handle offenses such as assault, theft and impaired driving. Singer said McMaster police have been using handcuffs less often recently, as last year a cage was put into a squad car.

Security at the University of Toronto, Guelph and Western also have Special Constable Status. Only four universities in the province do not. York Security officers, on the other hand, do not have Special Constable Status and are not allowed to carry handcuffs. In effect, they have no power beyond that of an ordinary citizen.

Regrettably, there is more than just petty crime at York. Violent incidents occur on campus and our Security guards are not adequately equipped to deal with them.

An *Excalibur* reader described a 1987 incident when four Security officers had to sit on a drunken suspect until Metro attended.

We also have learned that Security officers escort in excess of hundreds of thousands of dollars from offices, such as student accounts, to the bank, with no effective means to protect the funds. An armed person could steal the money and the officers would have to chase and hold the thief with their bare hands.

In August, handcuffs were used to restrain an unruly pub patron in Founders College. After an investigation, Security supervisor Rob Hughes was fired for authorizing the use of the handcuffs. Hughes is currently suing the university for wrongful dismissal.

Obviously there are cases where the use of handcuffs is necessary. It seems, however, that it is more important for Security's management to present a squeaky-clean image of the campus instead of admitting there are problems and effectively dealing with them. Admitting a need for handcuffs or any other increase in power would be admitting there is a problem. Good PR appears to be more important than safety.

Not only do our Security officers need the right to carry handcuffs, they need Special Constable Status. The York Fact Book states that in 1988 there were 50,857 people at the university. The number is bound to be higher for this year, and the university is continuing to grow. The main campus has a larger population than towns that have their own police forces.

Special Constable Status would give our Security officers the power to arrest, on reasonable and probable grounds and without warrant, anyone the officer believes has committed a criminal offence. Metro Police will not have to be called on campus for every incident that occurs. York Security would also be able to transport suspects to Metro jails, arrange court appearances and gather witnesses.

Along with Special Constable Status comes increased training and supervision which would ease the fear of abuse of authority. Officers would attend Ontario's Police College for a nine-week training course and would then be governed, not only by York, but by the Ontario Police Commission. If an officer abused his or her authority, s/he would face disciplinary action by both institutions in the form of suspension, demotion or dismissal.

Eric Pond, assistant director of Security, said the Security advisory committee is working towards Special Constable Status. But he said, "I really don't see this happening this side of Christmas." He added that a lot of the support for Special Constable Status has come from students and it is higher on the advisory committee's agenda because of this.

York's Security officers deal with assault (sexual, domestic and otherwise), vandalism, theft, and all other types of crime associated with a large and concentrated population. They need both Special Constable Status and the freedom to use handcuffs in order to effectively protect the York community.

If McMaster and Guelph need special constable status, surely it is needed at York.

OUR WORLD...



letters

Misleading distortions and half truths

Dear Editors:

Derek Cohen's letter in the September 7 issue of *Excalibur* oscillates between, on the one hand, a strong defence of free speech and well deserved criticism aimed at Israel's President Chaim Herzog and, on the other hand, grossly misleading distortions and half truths.

Cohen comments that Israel has "... systematically denied an education to a large number of the inhabitants of what many people are now content to call Israel." He conveniently neglects to mention that schools in the occupied territories were closed only because they served as centres for the disseminating of inciteful propaganda and for the harbouring of terrorist cells. Can Cohen name a single country in the world that would act otherwise? Not likely.

Moreover, Cohen surely knows that four universities exist today in the occupied territories whereas prior to the 1967 occupation (opposed by many Jews in Israel and abroad), it contradicts Cohen's contention of a systematic denial of education. Cohen then goes on to nullify his credibility by indirectly equating Chaim Herzog to the likes of Kurt Waldheim and P.W. Botha. Nice touch.

Actually, Kurt Waldheim is, among other things, a liar of colossal proportions, one who struck a "hear no evil, see no evil" pose during the deportation and murder of thousands of Greek Jews. P.W. Botha and the reprehensible policies he stood for shame the human race and require no description. Equating Herzog to either of these men is a distortion of abominable proportions. Regrettably, equating Israel to South Africa no longer raises eyebrows, although the canard is based on the Big Lie theory, that is, the greater the lie, the greater its likelihood of being believed.

Why do Cohen and his cohorts not heap their criticism on regimes that truly deserve it? Where are the letters decrying the massacre of Chinese students, the slaughter of thousands of Kurds with mustard gas by the Iraqi airforce, and the blood bath in Algeria during food riots?

All these are recent events now ignored by the media, the latter two barely given coverage at the time of the respective incidents. Why is Israel portrayed as a monolithic society or not given credit for its free press, its tolerance of non-violent dissent or its multi-party democracy, one open to participation by all political groups and all

Israeli citizens, be they Moslem, Christian, Jewish, Druze, Circassian or Bedouin. Such things are taken for granted in the West but stand out as anomalies in the Middle East where systems of government are based on coercion and where leaders come in the form of feudal monarchists, military and 'socialist' dictators or clerics bearing lobotomy scars.

Israel is not perfect, nor is it blameless. And no one can argue that its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is not, at times, brutal. It is. Gentleness is the antithesis of occupation. Yet when compared to what Arab countries regularly inflict on their own citizens, Israel's actions amount to a drop in the bucket.

But Cohen, rather than contribute something constructive, prefers to regurgitate a trite, erroneous rehash of the drivel regularly spewed by halfwits that call themselves 'International Socialists.'

Finally, where is the voice of the Jewish Student Federation in all this. No doubt its energies are being focused on more important things such as organizing a "Provocative Evening of Fashion Entertainment" and awarding "fabulous" door prizes.

Asher Levy

A E Pi master defends his frat

Dear Editors:

I was severely disturbed when I read your editorial concerning fraternities printed this summer in *Excalibur*. Without knowing anything about the members of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, you have accused us of condoning such evils as gang rape, sex without your partner's consent and other such atrocities. As President of A E Pi, I can assure you that we do not have Rape and Pillage-a-thons as someone who read your editorial might think.

What you have done is taken a non-official, rarely used cheer, and cast a sweeping generalization concerning an entire group of York students. I understand that you are the editors of a newspaper, and that shock value works. Next time however, before you go making such unsubstantiated accusations, try doing a little more research.

A E Pi takes a strong stand against sexual abuse. Being a responsible organization, we are members of the Fraternity Insurance Purchasing Group (FIPG). Section III of the FIPG policy con-

cerns itself entirely with sexual abuse, and reads as follows. *The fraternity will not tolerate or condone any form of sexually abusive behaviour on the part of its members, whether physical, mental or emotional. This is to include any actions which are demeaning to women, including but not limited to, date rape, gang rape, or verbal harassment.* Our fraternity explicitly condemns the actions which your editorial has accused us of encouraging.

What your article has done is help to perpetuate long standing myths concerning fraternities. Over the years, fraternity members have been portrayed as jerks, just out for a good time at anyone's expense. Members of the Eta Pi chapter of the A E Pi fraternity do not fit into this mold. My fraternity consists of York University students, with similar interests, who pool their resources and talents together to help enhance the York University experience.

As well, you have neglected to recognize the many positive aspects of our fraternity. Either you failed to discover, or you

chose to ignore A E Pi's involvement with community service projects. During our five year history at York, we have been involved in many philanthropic events, such as our annual Bowl-a-thon for Sick Children's Hospital, and our involvement in the Baycrest Fun Run. Even more such events are planned for the upcoming school year, including a charity softball game in our Fall Rush schedule. Such involvement in the community is just a small sample of the positive aspects of fraternities.

I consider myself a person of sound judgment. If what you wrote about fraternities were true, I myself would not be a member. Fortunately, the reality of Alpha Epsilon Pi is a sharp contrast from the fraternity portrayed in your editorial. I assure you that I, and the members of Alpha Epsilon Pi share your concern about the problem of rape. I could not consider myself a brother with someone who does not.

Yours Truly,
Stephen Offenheim
master,
Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity

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