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about the latest Toronto police accountability event.

Well, Hi Joyce;

I sat down and started writing this about the police accountability forum last June. Then something came up that caused me to forget it and lose it in plain sight on my computer desk top. Now I have finished it.

Feel free to show it to anyone else in that police accountability thing who you think might be amused by it. Keep in touch with me about this stuff.

I got your message about the Toronto Police Accountability Coalition meeting last Monday. (The Monday before the event.) I went, although I did not have high expectations.

I am not impressed by Johnny Sewers. He has a tendency to appoint himself as owner of a particular cause or topic and then make a mess out of it. Mostly, because he will not listen to anyone outside his narrow and rather archaic parameters.

Especially I do not like this arrangement where people are split up into small groups and a moderator appointed for each one. It is only supposed to deal with one topic. This is a lot like the famous "Delphi" technique developed by the American intelligence service to put an idea into people's heads and make them think they came up with it themselves.

The categories were pitched to create a certain type of answer. It was obvious where the whole thing was heading; toward the idea that there can be some sort of police reform if there is a public demand for it. I do not know why I bothered trying to get the question about "Police culture" reframed in a more useful way.

The professor who sat at the table seemed to have some interesting things to say but could not complete them and I would much rather have spent an

hour just listening to her. I could see she was a bit frustrated by the response. There was no discussion at all.

The people there were mostly the kind of people who always show up at these kinds of things. Most of them had some hobby horse they want to ride around the room. Half of them were saying the exact thing someone had already said and did not seem to be aware of it.

I tried to get across to people that I know something about this. I have seen at first hand some efforts to reform the Calgary police. I have studied the effort to reform the Los Angeles police. I have found attempts to reform the police of Northern Ireland after the end of the IRA insurgency there to be very instructive.

This police culture is remarkably similar almost every where you go. The only exceptions are the few places where the public has real control within an area, a real local democracy. Generally police appear to do what they want although there is a real control over them that is not seen.

The police culture is not an accident. It was put in place and it is kept in place. When an effort is made to make police accountable, there is invariably a push back and the same situation reasserts itself.

If you want you can go and look at what I wrote about the Sawyer reforms in Calgary in the 1970s. It is at <http://www.poverty-activist-toronto.ca/racoon/09-08-17.html> I also have an article about what one small town in Alberta did about its bully cops. Their solution will send pacifistic Torontonians into conniptions. <http://www.poverty-activist-toronto.ca/racoon/08-02-01.html>

But to apply all this to present day Toronto in Canada, there is no solution for this problem of a rogue police culture within the frame Sewell and company sets out. Rogue police are protected by rogue judges. Rogue judges are set up and covered by a legal bureaucracy backed by certain covert social networks.

And so on and so on. I find it tiresome explaining to adults that they do not live in a true democracy and that there is a class system, a ruling elite, that things are unjust and inequitable because they are planned that way, etc. It is at the level of absurdity of having to tell grown people where babies come from. (And then getting treated like I am the fool.)

Police in Toronto are exceptionally bad because cities are dangerous and the biggest, most central cities are the most dangerous, and have to be kept on the tightest rope. So the suppression is more thorough. And the people of Toronto, even the local elite Sewell is part of, have no real say over the police.

As the good citizens of Calgary discovered, even when a police force is seriously reformed it tends not to stay reformed. Like most western provinces, Alberta left control of police more to local government. But when police start not doing what the real rulers of society want, control is not too subtly moved away from local government.

A very good way to create and protect a parallel command structure within a police force is to remove restrictions on police unions. Nothing is going to change until you can seriously replace refractory personnel with ones who do what society really needs them to do.

This is what they discovered in northern Ireland. You do not get rid of the protestant goons of the Royal Ulster Constabulary by giving the group a new name. Recruiting one third Catholics into the force did not help anything either; they were kept marginalized, or came to identify with the old RUC people and their attitudes.

The most recent thing has been to replace much of the command structure of the Ulster/Northern Ireland police with key people from the Republic of Ireland police force. But the secret lines of command can still frustrate the official lines, especially when no one acknowledges they are there. That is they discovered too, when they tried to fix the Los Angeles police by bringing in outsiders.

One thing is going to fix the Toronto police, and that is to scrap the whole thing and build a new police force of people who believe in the values you want them to uphold. That requires a serious change in the values with which the province is governed. That is going to take a serious political and social revolution.

In the meantime, something needs to be done to protect people from the police; especially people whose activism for a better social order makes them

eligible to attack and harassment facilitated by police. Like me, by the way. This will require serious organization and funding.

This will also require at least a core of professional cop watchers; a group of idealistic volunteers will be quickly neutralized by the cops. As the professor said, it is not the regular police command they will have to worry about, but the police unions and the covert networks behind the unions.

It is hard to say just what the reaction would be to a serious effort to control the Toronto cops. Given the apparent mentality of many of these people, a police over the police may have to be armed and number in the hundreds. They could provide the nucleus of the new police force.

I do not think the revolution described above will be possible without some way of protecting its activists from intimidation and disruption directed by the police. So, to conclude, I say that if you really want to ultimately do something to really have rule of law in your society, this is where you start; learn to police the police. All this is so far outside the orbit of Sewell and his sycophants that they would probably label me as some sort of communist and/or fascist.

Sewell will continue to squat on the policing issue like a squirrel defending its territory. He thinks that if he keeps chattering long enough, "reason" will eventually prevail. But I do not want to start on my criticisms of reason and rationalism, especially Sewell's priggish, provincial kind. So here is where to stop.