

# NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING: CARESSING THE COMMUNITY WITH AN IRON FIST



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## **NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING: CARESSING THE COMMUNITY WITH AN IRON FIST**

“Savvy law enforcement types realized that under the community policing rubric, cops, community groups, local companies, private foundations, citizen informants and federal agencies could form alliances without causing public outcry.” *Covert Action Quarterly, summer 1997.*

How often do we hear that policing is one of the most difficult jobs around? The hostility towards police is at a peak. On the one hand, the mass media, relying on its familiar tactics of sensationalism, exposes the most embarrassing scandals involving our uniformed authorities. On the other hand, hatred of the cops, formerly expressed openly only by groups which were relatively marginal (the radical left, the punk scene, etc.), has picked up steam. The latter is most of all an outgrowth of the hip-hop scene, which does not mince words, propelling criticism of the forces of law-and-order into the ranks of mass culture.

This hostility increases the “siege mentality” syndrome, resulting in the police feeling alienated from the rest of the very population that they are supposed to “serve and protect”, thereby developing a paranoid “us against them” vision of society. In the underprivileged neighbourhoods of the great industrial metropolises of the industrialized world, the behaviour of the police on patrol, the frequency of their abuses of power, and, above all, their smudges on their own blotter create a rare, unifying cause of anger among the poor. This unity sometimes extends even to rival gangs, who often on the night of a riot wind up side-by-side, making common cause. This is no minor paradox: the disaster for the police is that they tend to produce exactly the opposite effect of their mission of preserving social peace. Their repressive action itself becomes the principal catalyst for some of the most important urban uprisings of our era!

The depths of the crevice between the police and the residents of the poor neighbourhoods, and most of all the danger this represents, were highlighted by the Kerner Commission in the United States. This inquiry was set up following the Detroit riots of 1967, a veritable urban insurrection causing \$500,000,000 in damage to private property and crushed in bloodshed by the National Guard at a cost of forty-three deaths and 2700 arrests. The conclusions of the Kerner Commission constitute one of the first arguments for community policing:

“The Commission believes that police cannot, and should not resist becoming involved in community service matters. There will be benefits for law enforcement no less than for public order. First, police, because of their ‘front line position’ in dealing with ghetto problems, will be able to identify problems in the community that may lead to disorder. Second, they will be better able to handle incidents requiring police intervention... Third, willing performance of such work can gain police the respect and support of the community. Finally,

development of non-adversary contacts can provide the police with a vital source of information and intelligence concerning the communities they serve."

It isn't necessary to go so far back in time in order to establish the causal link between riots and community policing. In Amiens-Nord, France, the explosion of anger on the part of youth, during which the head of the CRS received a pellet of buckshot right in the chest (!), convinced the authorities to opt for "in the vicinity policing", the local variant of neighbourhood police. The special correspondent of the newspaper *Le Monde* reported that, "Little by little, order and calm have returned. The municipal police has established itself in the middle of the city. Working together with social workers, it has set about to reconquer public opinion. On foot. And without weapons, unlike its "colleagues" from the national police." (*Le Monde*, January 20, 1998)

Closer to us in space and time, the riot in Saint Hyacinthe on last January 27, during which some 300 youths threw rocks at a handful of overwhelmed cops, put the plan to develop a community wing of the municipal police back on the agenda. In his three-page report of the event, Lieutenant Bessette wrote, "It is necessary to multiply our efforts, both on the part of management and on the part of the union, in order to establish a set of fundamental principles for community policing, particularly with regard to resolving the problem of partnership." Jacques Berger, a spokesman for the *Maison des Jeunes*, called for closer relations with the police: "All they need to do is to stop at places like ours or in playgrounds on a regular basis during their patrols, if only for five minutes, and ask those present if everything is okay." (*Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe*, February 3, 1999)

Community policing thus represents more than anything a modernization of the police apparatus, the goal of which is to defuse revolt before it erupts. It does not involve a new police, but rather a strategy to maintain the social status quo, a complement to that which already exists, an extra string in the law enforcement bow. However, the fears of the authorities cannot by themselves explain why we now find ourselves coming to grips with the institution of community policing. Chris Murphy has provided us with another part of the explanation: "With some exceptions, Canadian policing is typically a modified response to, or copy of, U.S. police ideology and practice. This perhaps unavoidable importation of police ideology, research, and technology, though sometimes modified and reformulated to meet Canadian conditions, explains the origin and pattern of much development and innovation in Canadian policing over the last ten years." (*Community Policing in Canada*, p.14)

Wherever the project of community policing has appeared, it has first of all run up against the suspicion of those primarily concerned; i.e., the cops themselves. These individuals are not noted for their openness to change. Eventually, certain among those that are least challenged intellectually (!) come to understand that the police apparatus has everything to gain by the move to

**February 11, 1998:** The second and final phase of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Police begins, even though only 16 of 26 new stations have set up in their new locales. A new promotional circular makes its appearance, and the previous-years' posters reappear in the buses and subways of the MUUCTC (Montreal Urban Community Transportation Corporation).

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE

**October 3, 1995:** The neighbourhood policing project, as conceived by the MUC (Montreal Urban Community) Police, is made public at the Public Security Commission.

**October 24 and 25, 1995:** Only 18 organizations (and one solitary citizen) express opinions about the project during consultations organized by the Public Security Commission. The principal opposition comes from the Police Brotherhood.

**November 29, 1995:** the MUC Council adopts The Neighbourhood Police project

**February 23, 1996:** A majority of MUC Councillors vote to loan 18.5 million dollars in order to set up the neighbourhood police. \$1,600,000 is earmarked for salaries to be paid to the nine members of the Committee in order to establish and develop neighbourhood police, and \$15,000,000 is to be spent on the purchase of computer equipment (including the replacement of mobile terminals with 462 portable personal/micro-computers at a cost of \$6.9 million).

**August 14, 1996:** Agreement in principal with the police brotherhood to renew its collective agreement. The union withdraws its opposition to neighbourhood policing as 4000 officers receive a pay increase of 5.3%.

**January 1997:** Launching, accompanied by great fanfare, of the Neighbourhood Police (phase 1): MUCTC subway cars are (for several months) inundated with posters; an 8-page English and French circular is distributed to 900,000 homes, etc. Twenty-three new stations are promised by the MUC police, of which a dozen open their doors.

**August 19, 1997:** The MUC Police Department announces the creation of a program offering people the opportunity to take courses in police work. The Institute for Police Partnership with Citizens (Institut de Partenariat de la Police Avec les Citoyens-IPC) is to welcome 40 citizens to its first session of 11 classes beginning on October 1.

**October 7, 1997:** Police Chief Duscheneau threatens to withdraw participation of the MUCTC in the Carcajou Squad if the Quebec government does not honour its promise of providing \$25 million necessary for the hiring of 259 police officers so as to complete Phase 2 of the Neighbourhood Policing Project.

**December 3, 1997:** The Police Force emerges victorious in its budgetary impasse with the MUC, receiving a \$9,000,000 increase. This will permit the force, among other expenditures, to hire needed personnel, whereas, for the second consecutive year public transportation will be hit with a financing cut directly linked with the implementation of neighbourhood policing.

community policing. This is no doubt why different adaptations of community policing exist today in dozens of countries over five continents.

The promotional discourse of community policing, poor in ideas but rich in ambiguities, camouflages insidious projects that are hardly admissible in a régime which ritually congratulates itself on its democratic character. It is important to avoid the error of assuming that the implementation of community policing represents a reaction of weakness or sign of softening on the part of the authorities. On the contrary, however bizarre the peculiar combination of the words "police" and "community" may seem to the ears of sensible people, this formula serves as an ideal cover for a broad-based police offensive against society. Wherever the seeds of community policing have been sown, the abuse of power against the civilian population has intensified. This is especially true for the cops' favourite victims, those who, marginalized by capitalist society, have become easy targets. This is a reference to those among the poor who have been pushed into illegality in order to survive, and who practice trades posing a high risk of criminalization.

Despite everything, it is worthwhile to make a closer examination of one of the most popular expressions in community policing terminology: "problem solving". By this, the community police pretend to turn over a new leaf in rejecting the old, worn-out model of "reactive police." The community police sets as it's a goal not simply to anticipate the "problem" but to eliminate its source. Will the community police campaign against the inequality in income between rich and poor, and against the criminalization of people consuming drugs, two of the principal causes of most property-related crimes? Surely not, as this would lead to more unemployed police! Given this irreconcilable disagreement as to the source of problems, the intention of the police to definitively solve them is hardly promising.

In fact, problem solving is only an excuse to increase the repressive mandate of the police. The reasoning of community policing with regard to problem-solving relies essentially on the "theory of the broken window" of the criminologists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling. This theory can be summed up as follows: If a broken window in a building is not replaced, it is most probable that the remaining windows will come to the same end, quite simply because neglecting to resolve this problem sends a signal that no one could care less; and this, in turn, will ostensibly be interpreted as an invitation to window-breakers that they can repeat the infraction without fear. For the police, this theory is the ideal justification for the policy of "zero tolerance" for misdeeds, no matter how insignificant. As the old maxim says, "give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile." Thus, the traditional mission of the police to curb crime is enhanced by a new vocation: attacking all manifestations of "public disorder", such as pissing in the street, running a red light, etc.

Imagine for one moment, if the police would tolerate the unemployed who spend the day sitting in public places, what kind of lesson this would give

the rest of the “active” population. For the good of all, the community police officer has to order the jobless person to get up and march down to the employment centre before everyone imitates her or him and takes off from work! Seriously, between this coarse exaggeration and the reality of the situation there is only a step, and it is one that numerous cops make with disconcerting ease. It must be maintained, though, that the eagerness with which the police dislodge the experts in loitering is surely more attributable to their mentality of narrow-minded suburbanites who don’t like the sight of poor people than to an elastic interpretation of the theory of broken windows.

### **A RAPIDLY GROWING POLICE APPARATUS**

The promoters of community policing themselves acknowledge the goal of making the police more “visible”, more present on the street. This increased visibility is obviously not brought about by waving a magic wand, but indeed by squandering public funds:

- In Laval, having community police, allowed for the addition of six new stations referred to as “public security centres” and the hiring of twenty-four auxiliary police officers. (*Journal de Montréal*, November 27, 1998) A week earlier, the Police Brotherhood signed a new contract authorizing an increase in salary amounting to 5.16%. (*Journal de Montréal*, November 18, 1998)
- In Halifax, the advent of “community based policing” resulted between 1985 and 1988 in an annual police budgetary increase of five percent at a time when the municipal administration insisted upon a three percent growth limit for other services. (*Community Policing in Canada*)

### **USA: A COMMUNITY FAÇADE FOR A WAR ON CRIME**

After more than a decade along the community policing road, this formula succeeded in convincing the heavyweights; that is, the occupants of the White House. On September 13, 1994, President Clinton, with the support of the members of congress from both of the two parties which dominate American Political life, the Democrats and the Republicans, signed into law the “Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act”. This law authorizes the Federal Government to spend 8.8 billion dollars over six years to allow local police forces to hire 100,000 supplementary officers to patrol streets! Using the circumstantial pretext of “promoting community policing strategies”, the Clinton administration has managed to mobilize a veritable army of cops! The program responsible for financing the one hundred thousand new police officers is, indeed, called the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

By using the alibi of community policing as a façade, the Clinton régime has realized a *tour de force*, managing to rally to its crusade for law-and-order the few influential liberals who still believe that the war against crime does not deserve the pure-and-simple abolition of civil rights. In order to guarantee the

“non-violent harassment”: One night, while walking her dog, the vigilantes wanted to know why she was wearing a pastor’s shirt which had... short sleeves! “Today, I work in a district which has a much worse reputation, but I feel safer there than with the vigilantes of Balsall Heath,” she said. (*Courrier International*, February 4, 1999)

### **COMMUNITY POLICING AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **- SOUTH AFRICA:**

In his White Paper, Security Minister Sidney Mufamadi has proposed a reform of the Police Services. His proposals and the principles of community policing are as indistinguishable as two peas in a pod. One of his suggestions aims to give civilians more control over the policies, strategies, monitoring techniques and verification procedures of the South African Police Service. The White Paper advocates making the police more visible in various ways: preventive patrols, controlled patrols of limited duration targeting specific locations, and high-density patrols in areas reputed to have elevated crime rates. Mufamadi also pitches the creation of a unit specialized in prevention. In addition, he calls for improvements in arrest techniques and the analysis and management of criminal information, and recommends the institution of specialized investigative departments and enlarging the institutionalized responsibilities of investigators. (*Panafrican News Agency*, May 20, 1998)

#### **- BOLIVIA**

In La Paz on January 14, 1999, an inauguration ceremony for a community policing program, baptized the Citizen Safety Plan turned into open defiance when six hundred licensed workers who had come to protest against government policies were brutally repressed by the forces of law and order using tear gas. In addition to the damages inflicted upon the “community” image that the police are trying to sell the public, the confrontation also left two cops with broken teeth. Under the CSP, district councils work together with the police. As a local journalist has testified, “The slogan was ‘The Police Force Closest to the People.’ And so it was, closest, but with sticks and blows.” (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, January 17, 1999)

#### **- PAKISTAN**

Founded in 1989 by a group of businessmen dissatisfied with the inefficiency of the Karachi police, the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) leads rescue operations seeking to liberate other businessmen who are victims of kidnappings. In its first year of existence, the CPLC claimed to have solved eighty percent of abductions without paying one cent in ransom. Nine years later, the CPLC is on the cutting edge of repressive technology, employing telephone-tapping and “voice-matching” equipment, and possessing a data bank on local criminals. (*Guardian Weekly*, week ending March 1, 1998)

Written by: Bobov, member of COPB (French acronym for “Citizens Opposed to Police Brutality”), March 14, 1999, Montréal, Québec

- Police Reserves, formed of volunteers who have completed the Police Officers Standards and Training course at the Reserve Academy. They enjoy "limited powers" of street patrol.
- Critical Incident Management Volunteers, who assume responsibilities on the level of communications, operations of command posts, evacuations, etc.
- The remainder of the citizen-participants of VIP forms a nucleus of people who can be found inside each of the facilities of the SDPD, including the Police Academy, the Pistol Range and the Crime Laboratory, holding down more than 25 different functions.

In New York, a police officer came up with the idea of using homeless war veterans to patrol the streets of certain rough areas. Thus were born the "V-COPS" (Veterans' Civilian Observation Patrol), who keep a lookout in the vicinity of banks the day that welfare cheques arrive. During the first nine months of 1995, twenty-seven members of the V-COPS provided more than eight-thousand person-hours of street presence. One of the V-COPS described the impact of their group on the security of the neighbourhoods: "Our presence deters [criminals] from coming into the neighbourhood. They know who we are. They know we're veterans. They think we're probably psycho or Rambo, and they walk away." (*Community Policing: Theory and Practice*, 1994)

You have to be extraordinarily naïve, or purposely shut your eyes to not see that these types of popular vigilantism give a free rein to the worst deviations. If the police have become masters in the art of dodging the institutional controls fencing in their power, imagine how zealous citizens, free of all ethical rules might take advantage of the situation! In Birmingham, England, the authorities take pleasure in citing the example of the mobilization of the residents of the reputedly "hot" district of Balsall Heath, who organized as vigilantes. As a replacement for urban insecurity stemming from the concentration of dealers, procurers and customers prowling around in cars, there emerged the authoritarianism and even terror of the Street Watch groups. According to Cari Mitchell of the English Prostitutes Collective, "The women in our network have complained of numerous assaults perpetrated by members or ex-members of Street watch, attacks which in certain cases were potentially fatal or which necessitated hospitalization. To whom can the women complain if their assailants are working hand-in-hand with the police?"

Today regrouping close to 200 volunteers, Street Watch qualifies its tactics as "non-violent harassment". The vigilantes insure nocturnal surveillance, inspect the identity of those entering the neighbourhood, note the registration numbers of automobiles and install cameras and alarm systems. Certain social workers, including some who have helped women who have left prostitution, have also become the targets of these Protectors of Puritan Order, and have been insulted, spat upon and had their cars riddled with stones. Macho-Rambo culture has obtained the upper hand and many women feel imprisoned in their own homes. Even Reverend Pam Nicholson, who was vicar of Balsall Heath, got a taste of

success of the COPS program with police forces, there is no question of hindering the gendarmes by insisting that they supply details of the ways in which they plan to use the above-mentioned moneys to provide innovation in the domain of community policing. The Secretary of Justice has managed to simplify the procedures necessary to obtain funds. For small cities applying for the program, a one-page form has been deemed sufficient. For any request for additional community cops, there is not even any need to submit a new application: one just has to indicate the quantity of reinforcements desired!

Clinton's electoral opportunism does not provide a complete answer as to why he has gotten so heavily involved in generalized coppery. Having played the role of sheriff of the whole world, Washington discovered that it had perhaps neglected what might be called the "home front". It is true that the phenomenon of insecurity had reached such a level that the rich were no longer able to gaze at the news programs on their 27 inch colour-tv screens without hearing about the poor in the ghettos who can't stop killing each other. Ignoring the existence of the classes living in misery became difficult if not impossible, seeing that the daily spectacle of their armed deeds, broadcast in living colour, had emerged as part of the ever-present plethora of ultra-mediated criminal exploits. Worse yet, the image of an America in the grips of uncontrollable urban violence risked being hazardous to the first imperialist power on the planet!

In order to join battle with this "threat from inside", who can be better placed than all those ex-GI's from the US Army, having been discharged for lack of a cold war and certainly in need of action? The Clinton administration asked the very same question. In collaboration with the Department of Defense, the funds from the COPS program finance the recycling of freshly-demobilized soldiers into happy community police officers! The military/police association does not stop there: In an article appearing in the American police union magazine *Law and Order*, an advocate of community policing reveals what inspires this type of strategy: "The military calls changing an enemy's or a population's thoughts "Psychological Operations" or PSYOPS". Community Oriented Policing does the same thing." (*Law and Order*, May, 1995)

## COMMUNITY POLICING TO THE RESCUE OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

Many people must wonder where the police dug up that idea of "community". What does it really mean to live in a "community" in a large city such as Montreal, where the rate of people living alone is staggering, where multitudes of people, living in a silent, asphyxiating anonymity pass each other daily in the subway or on the street without ever exchanging words? In the absence of a real "community", where neighbours know and relate to each other on a non-fictitious basis, the idea of "community" conveyed by the police would clearly be a fabrication, essentially based on the representation of this concept by the small neighbourhood weekly newspapers. Leafing through the pages of these rags gives the portrait of the "community" that the police seeks to *Serve and Protect*. All the respectable (?) members of the local establishment have

their photos there as often as possible. So do the various elected officials, pictured handing over envelopes to the representatives of associations and self-proclaimed spokespersons for their respective memberships. Side-by-side with these images lie the various ads from small businesses. It is in newspapers such as *Les Nouvelles de l'est*, distributed in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and *Le Progrès de Villeray* that the neighbourhood police put out their little columns, written up by designated socio-community officers who don't happen to be illiterate.

Because this "community" only really exists for those whose function it is to represent it, it is the interests of the latter that the neighbourhood police dedicate themselves to defend. Fundamentally speaking, the community police in no way modifies the dominant social structure; it only attempts, rather, to solidify it locally, volunteering to be its avowed accomplice and acting in collusion with its mercantile aspirations. With its new "community mission", the police wishes to legitimize its practice of "protection", a practice which has always existed, in order to exploit it without hindrance. The police finds itself pushed in this direction by the fact that its position in the security market is being threatened by private agencies experiencing an electric expansion. According to the Canadian census of 1991, there were 61,500 cops working in police forces as opposed to 104,000 security agents employed in the private sector. Seven years later, police force personnel had decreased to a total of 54,311 whereas the number of private security agents had doubled, to reach 200,000! (*Maclean's* January 12, 1998). The Reign of Competition has thus not spared our police forces.

Five days before his project was adopted by the MUC (Montreal Urban Community), then Police Director Jacques Duscheneau solicited an interview with *Le Devoir* in order to exert pressure on the elected municipal representatives. He used the occasion to self-servingly brandish the threat of "private policing". "Worse than budgetary constraints is competition from the private sector [private detectives, investigation services, security agents, etc.]. We've always seen ourselves as a monopoly and it's becoming less and less the case," said Duscheneau, nevertheless later adding that this competing police "must become an ally." (*Le Devoir*, November 27, 1995)

What Duscheneau was obviously not saying is that in order to pull the rug from under the feet of the private sector, it is necessary for the police to attend to and to fulfil the expectations of those social elements which are providing the demand for security, that is: private interests, whether in the form of well-to-do individuals or enterprises. In short, what we are referring to are those who have enough merchandise to invest in their protection. Last year, the spokespersons for SIDAC, an association representing 120 downtown Montreal merchants, played the private police card in order to put pressure on the MUC Police so as to get the Force to adopt a hard line when dealing with street youth. It was only necessary for Remi Caron of SIDAC to predict that merchants might "hire armed guards" to get the new Director of the MUC Police, Claude Rochon, to announce that an additional sixty officers would begin foot patrols in the district. (*La Presse*, May 15, 1998). Nevertheless, two weeks after the appearance of police reinforcements,

*Presse*, July 9, 1995). According to a reliable source, during the epic Saint-Jean Baptiste riot of 1996, volunteers, armed with baseball bats, stood ready to defend their station.

With the IPC, the MUC Police is but imitating the American version called the Citizen Police Academy, begun in 1985 in Orlando, Florida, which in turn drew its inspiration from a similar experiment in Great Britain. Since then, the formula has spread like wildfire to the four corners of the U\$A. In the State of Massachusetts alone, no less than 103 of these "academies" were registered in 1997, an increase of 50% over the previous year! (*The Christian Science Monitor*, May 15, 1997) This infatuation can be explained by the popularization of police culture through the vehicle of the numerous pro-cop television shows. The Fremont Police Department openly stresses this phenomenon to fill its classes at the local Citizens' Police Academy. Hence the following in the City of Fremont Community Newsletter: "Are you a fan of *Dragnet*, *Hill Street Blues*, or *NYPD Blue*? If these television shows have piqued your interest in law enforcement, here's your opportunity to explore local police activity."

On the website of the Pueblo County Sheriff's Department, the objectives of its "Citizens' Academy" are insultingly obvious. The Sheriff wants "a group selected from community leaders and interested citizens" who will complete the courses to become "our ambassadors to the community to help citizens better understand law enforcement. In addition, these academy classes are the nucleus of an alumni group that supports us on issues we've struggled with for long without overriding, understanding and long-term public support." The citizens who graduate from the "academy" will be invited to devote themselves to the sheriff in numerous ways, among others, by "showing support for the sheriff's department at budget hearings" "entering data in computers" "assisting at fund-raising events" "leading Neighborhood Watch groups throughout the country", etc.

San Diego, California is in the vanguard among cities in the enrolment of civilians to support police actions. On its website, the San Diego Police Department boasts of its successes such as Neighborhood Watch, a sort of hierarchically-organized district vigilante operation, replete with community coordinators and even "block captains" (!), and the famous Citizens' Patrol, which "acts as our eyes and ears to observe suspicious activity and to eliminate problems." Begun in 1990, the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program managed to recruit in seven years of existence more than a thousand citizens craving for law and order. The VIP is divided into five sections:

- A Crisis Intervention Team, charged with providing assistance to citizens who have just been victimized and providing emotional support and essential resources (lodging, food)
- Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol, comprising citizens age 55 and over, who pass their spare time patrolling neighbourhoods and verifying the security of homes whose residents are absent. These tasks are performed with the assistance of a radio-equipped police car, so that real cops might be contacted should their intervention be necessary.

high, since until now, no influential voice has been heard to denounce this ominous eventuality.

However, the promotional material put out by the Neighbourhood Police couldn't be clearer. The publicity posters of the Neighbourhood Police, which massively invaded the vehicles of the MUC Police in 1997 and 1998, extended an invitation by means of a visual message: It is not coincidental that on all these posters, on which one observes citizens in the company of police officers, everyone smiling from ear-to-ear, the police cap sits on the head of the citizens. The targeted psychological effect is not only to break the mental barrier separating cops from civilians, but, moreover to encourage the population to identify with the office, and thus the role of the agents of law and order.

With the adoption of the slogan, "YOU ARE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE", appearing on the pages of the second promotional circular of the Neighbourhood Police, which appeared in February, 1998, the message became all the more crass. The promoters of neighbourhood policing have chosen the term "partnership" to define the new relation that they mean to develop with the citizenry. It would have been more appropriate to use the term "collaboration", but the strategists of the MUC Police no doubt understood that their "citizen partners" risked being labeled "collaborators". In order to welcome citizens who missed their calling, that is, to become law enforcement officers, two structures were put into place: Informing Partners Committees (Comités Aiseurs de Partenaires-CAP) and the Institute for Police Partnership with Citizens (Institut de Partenariat de la Police avec les Citoyens-IPC).

Each of the forty-nine neighbourhood police stations has been equipped with these CAPs, "which are made up of a dozen individuals coming from representative organizations of the district." The expectations of the community police are transparent: "We will be asking you to identify public security problems in your neighbourhood and to participate in putting solutions in place." As far as the IPC is concerned, it has offered since October 1, 1997 to participate in a session of eleven free classes on different aspects of police activities, including "utilization of force by the police", "Narcotics Division (plainclothed police and infiltration)" and "participation in an activity of familiarization with the motorized patrol". The forty participants will be encouraged to become involved in demonstrations and role-playing." On the registration form, it states that, "Considering the nature of the sessions being offered, all applicants will have to pass a security check." During a press conference, the then Number One of the MUC Police, Jacques Duscheneau, admitted that, "It is not impossible that we will develop a more elaborate partnership link," mentioning that in Ottawa volunteers were being trained in the neighbourhood police stations. (*La Presse*, August 20, 1997)

This is already an established fact in Quebec City, where since 1995 community stations are directed by youth, representatives of community organizations such as l'Oeil (The Eye) and students in police technology (*La*

as the merchants' appetites were still unsatisfied, the Director-General of SIDAC returned to the charge, declaring that "behind the scenes it's being said that nothing is being done. There will be some contacts signed." (*Le Devoir*, June 6, 1998) In other words, strongarms might be hired to break the legs of certain young people.

As was true for the oldest of police forces, the community police does not merely remain the loyal ally of the powerful. In order to curry their precious favour, it moreover does not hesitate to harden its repression against the poorest in society. Examples abound of the bias of the community police in social conflicts opposing commercial interests and those who are economically deprived population.

Thus, the increase in "police visibility" alluded to above is designed to place a veil over an explosion of poverty which is becoming difficult to hide, particularly in the centres of our great metropolises. In fact, everywhere that the police announce their conversion to the "community approach", we note that the politicians hesitate less and less to adopt a policing approach to social problems, or rather to divert them in such a way as to avoid taking the bull by the horns. From Vancouver to Toronto, where community policing has a longer history than in Montreal, the elected representatives tackle the problem of a skyrocketing homeless population with an approach that is resolutely repressive. And because there are drugs in the street, those living there or even merely "loitering" are automatically deemed to be "mixed up" in narcotics-related violations of the Criminal Code!

Only several months after the inauguration of Station 21, street workers in downtown Montreal made a rare public denunciation of the police, angrily scolding them after an anti-drug operation involving an imposing deployment of a hundred police officers, including thirty-five in plainclothes and the rest in riot gear. The event took place on October 1, 1997, at Berri Square and at Place Pasteur, two locations often frequented by street youth. "They nabbed everyone who looked marginal. They even accosted students on their way to class because they were wearing mauve hair or a leather windbreaker." The new community approach had already left the bitter taste of treason: "During the whole summer long, the police had shown an openness of spirit and a willingness to not needlessly 'judicialize' problems which cannot be solved by repression. Police Station 21 had even assigned an officer who we consider an ally and who many youths consider a friend." This cop could be found in the middle of the action and pointed out individuals to be arrested. "He was acting as a double agent, unless he, himself, was screwed by his bosses," concluded the spokesperson. (*La Presse*, October 23, 1997)

It may be that the war on drugs, which we all know is lost in advance, is not sufficient to convince public opinion of the legitimacy of a repressive action against street people. This represents no problem for community police forces, which are not exactly on the lookout for alternative solutions. It suffices, they

have determined, to undertake an effective lobbying campaign with citizen-partners in order to create new infractions. Thus, in Vancouver in April 1998, panhandling became an offense punishable by fines stretching from a minimum of \$100 to a maximum of \$2000. The by-law adopted by the elected municipal officials forbade begging near places such as banks, automatic tellers, bus stops or liquor stores. Solicitation is only permitted if practiced at a distance of 120 feet away from these "strategic" locations.

Four years earlier, the Community Policing Office (CPO) in Britannia, Vancouver had initiated a campaign to have such a measure adopted. In May 1996, during a neighbourhood assembly held in the CPO of Britannia, begging had been placed on the agenda even though not one of the participants in attendance had expressed a desire that this activity be prohibited. Later, however, the community cops of CPO Britannia used one of their phony consultations in order to affirm that "aggressive begging" was disturbing everyone and thus succeeded in convincing the elected municipal representatives. Whatever comes out of this type of meeting, the police say that they have consulted the population, so that they can subsequently add more political weight to their demands.

### **A SPRAWLING POLICE APPARATUS**

It quickly becomes apparent that the interest manifested by the police in drawing closer to the community is for the purpose of exploiting it as an inexhaustible source of information. Informing is central to the relationship between the community police and "concerned citizens." It is for this reason highly significant that that one of the ways in which community policing was introduced to Quebec was the emergence, towards the end of the 1980's, of televised informing programs. In an article entitled, "The real fiction: the Info-Crime programs," the author criticizes this "perversion of the community policing model": "Info-Crime, the Quebec version of Crime Stoppers, is first and foremost a non-profit corporation affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal and financed by honorary members such as the Association of Canadian Bankers, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the large oil companies and the major convenience store chains. Info-Crime is also and above all a program appearing in certain media of prevention and repression of certain crimes. And these media are precisely those that exploit criminal events. In Montreal, these are the television networks CFCF and Quatre-Saisons, the radio stations CKAC and CKVL, the dailies The Gazette and Le Journal de Montréal, the weekly Photo-Police, for the most part popular media with a reputation of making headlines out of incidents."(...)

"Participating private enterprises project the image of good corporate citizens and the traditional police get something out of the operation, since these programs do not appeal to citizens to identify problems as they themselves perceive them, as called for by the principles of community policing, but to collaborate with the police, who preserve their monopoly on the maintenance of order and the struggle against crime." The article thus raises one of the princi-

pal contradictions in the promotional discourse of community policing: Academics, having identified the fear of crime as a factor which engenders it, defend the idea that a police force working closely with the population will be capable of diminishing this phobia. However, this very fear of crime is itself exploited by the police apparatus so as to increase its powers, budgets, resources, etc. (Georges-André Parent, *Revue Internationale d'Action Communautaire*, 1994, pp.171-179)

In 1996, the Cellular Communications Industry Association Foundation instituted the Communities on Phone Patrol Program (COPP). Today, more than 440,000 volunteers throughout the USA are equipped with COPP telephones, which have in turn enabled them to report more than 45,000 crimes per month!!! On July 7, 1998, the enterprises Cellular One and Ericsson Mobile Phones announced that they would offer five hundred cordless telephones to volunteers of Neighbourhood Watch groups scouring the streets of Washington, D.C. "This gift will bring the total number of COPP phones with service donated by Cellular One in the Washington/Baltimore area to 808, maintaining our proud position as the leading provider of airtime for COPP programs in this region," rejoiced Jim Carter, ranked number two in marketing for Cellular One. The donations of cordless phones has reached 12,000, each programmed with an emergency number which places volunteers in direct contact with the police by means of a mere touch. Ericsson is a multinational enterprise with 100,000 employees spread out in 130 countries, whereas Cellular One belongs to SBC Communications, Inc., which owns investments in 10 countries, employs 118,000 and reported revenues amounting to twenty-five billion US dollars. (*Business Wire*, July 7, 1998)

The police of the city of Kanakee, Illinois, offers a very special course, the Landlord's Training Program. This free course, of six hours duration, deals with, among other subjects, the following: screening potential tenants, warning-signals of illegal activities, evictions, working with the police, reducing chronic troubles, etc.

In the city of San Diego, the District Attorney, the housing inspection service, and the police work conjointly in an anti-drug squad, DART (Drug Abatement Response Team). In six months, seventy dwellings were stung by DART.

### **YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME "THE EYES AND EARS OF THE POLICE"**

As a result of its controversial nature, enrollment of citizens in backing-up the police constitutes one of the most delicate stages in the implementation of community policing. The notion of civilians on a large scale patrolling the streets and informing the police does not escape conjuring up the spectre of the classic police state. It isn't necessary to suffer from conspiracy paranoia in order to predict such a somber future. The threat is not imaginary. Developments are taking shape, not in secret, but before our very eyes. The risks are extremely