

# Headin' North, Yank?

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Toronto—as well as most large Canadian cities—is becoming a haven for youthful Americans who, for reasons of their own, don't want any part of U.S. President Johnson's war on the Vietnamese people.

"It's not that I'm scared to fight... I just don't believe in killing people for the phony cause that our leaders tell us we're fighting for," one U.S. draft-dodger told Satyrday magazine recently. He preferred to remain anonymous because Federal Bureau of Investigation officers, hand-in-hand with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Canada's FBI), are trying to keep tabs on draft-dodgers.

They are largely unsuccessful. It's difficult to tally the number of draft dodgers living in various parts of Canada, because it is extremely simple to fit in with the society.

It's easy to remain anonymous among Toronto's 2,000,000 people, and even easier for the hipper draft-dodger to melt into the sometimes schizophrenic, sometimes serene, mood of the city's Yorkville Village, an acre of hip madness at the edge of the downtown core.

There are no embarrassing scenes. This is because there is a set of people in the Village who claim to be nothing but people. When someone new happens along, nobody asks irritating questions like who are you, what do you do, where are you from, etc. This is considered very uncool. To be in the village scene, all you need is soul. Artistic pretensions are not necessary. After a very short "waiting period", needed for the villager to ascertain you are not "The Man" masquerading as a hippie, you are accepted.

The Yorkville scene was inherited from the old-time beatniks and bohemians—many of whom are still around, doing their individual trips—but now one digs literature or dabbles with paint for its own sake, not in order to make his personality more acceptable to pseudo-beats.

Jobs are easy to get, too. And there are usually no questions asked if you are an American citizen, though it is wise to take out Canadian citizenship papers. It's no trouble at all to apply for a social security card: just say you were born in, say, Winnipeg or Calgary, and have only worked for yourself in the past. Then you're in, baby.

Because of the language, customs and dress, there is no hassle assimilating, providing the U.S. draftdodger bones up on Canadian politics, economics and geography. And once you've taken out citizenship papers, the U.S. government can't draft you because you've become an immigrant to a foreign country, (although it's more like crossing a state line). Many U.S. hippies pass through Yorkville and when we hear one with a New York accent claim to be from, say Vancouver, our guess is fairly accurate that he's a draft dodger, but no questions are asked. Accents can be fun. Like, when we hear someone with a Canadian prairie accent, it's often a dead giveaway that he's the narco Man.

(Most RCMP members hail from the prairies, where the RCMP acts in a role similar to that of a State Trooper or Highway Patrolman, with the result that most of the force's recruits are from the midwest).

However, accent or not, it's wise to study Canada first and find out as much as you can when you arrive. Things like it's not a land of ice and snow; the people are not British and speak with a North American accent; there are

10 provinces and two territories; the nation is governed by a federal parliament and the provinces (which operate exactly like states) are governed by provincial legislatures.

The head of state is a Prime Minister (presently Lester B. Pearson) and each province has its own premier; Canada is NOT a bloody colony and, despite its symbolic ties with the British Commonwealth, is a completely free and independent nation. (By not knowing a few, simple facts about Canada, the odd draft-dodger has been picked up and spirited back across the border).

There is also no draft in Canada, and you can speak of socialism without fear of some right-wing nut booting you in the balls. Canada has a socialist party—The New Democratic Party—which has 21 federal members of parliament and is the official opposition party in British Columbia and Saskatchewan and the polls show it will form the official opposition to Ontario (Canada’s most populous province) in the next Ontario provincial election.

The NDP is a democratic socialist party, similar to Britain’s Labor Party government and that in Sweden, Denmark, Israel and most enlightened nations. There is also a Communist Party in Canada—but it hasn’t been able to elect a representative since the mid-1940s.

Canada also trades with the Soviet Union, Communist China, North Vietnam and Cuba, much to the chagrin of Washington.

Another interesting factor for most prospective draft-dodging residents who are reasonably hip is that LSD is legal to possess in Canada. It is only illegal to put out, and then there is merely a fine if convicted. (LSD peddling comes under the Food and Drug Control Act; marijuana and similar goodies r unfortunately under the more oppressive Narcotics Act, which provides stiff terms for possession and selling).

Of course, Toronto isn’t the only city where a U.S. draft dodger can lose himself.

Many Americans, particularly those who don’t like the chilly winters of Toronto (it sometimes gets as cold as zero degrees) head to Vancouver, on the west coast. Vancouver’s 1,000,000 people enjoy balmy weather all-year-round because of the Japanese current.

Montreal is also popular. Besides being Canada’s largest city (pop. 3,000,000) it is the second largest French-speaking city in the world.

You can get by with English, but it would help to know some French to make the “in” scene.

**(Editor’s Note:** Information on emigration to Canada may be obtained by writing Student Union for Peace Action, 658 Spadina Ave., Toronto 4, Ontario.)

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