

# Detroit: G.O.P. Police State

Fifth Estate Collective

1980

What with all the hoopla going on around the Republican Convention—free parties, banners and balloons every where, a city-wide clean-up and the media trying to make us forget the depression—it's easy to ignore the mammoth police state apparatus the politicians have also brought to town.

Seizing an opportunity to cash in on the convention, the cops have used the “security” needs of the political parlay to extend even further their technology and ever growing presence. Detroit, State and Wayne County police have secured over \$3.6 million in federal grants from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) which will provide funds for the convention, but much of the “special” projects will remain as a permanent part of the police machine.

The local boys in blue will be spending \$2 million dollars in overtime pay for the more than 2,200 cops who will be on the convention beat; \$125,000 to import special crowd control barricades from England; \$30,000 for bomb and weapon detectors; \$93,000 for 18 motorcycles to provide motorcade protection for dignitaries; \$7,000 for video and polaroid equipment for surveillance; and, since leftist protests have become almost as much of an institution as conventions themselves, \$32,800 to rent 50 passenger buses and three 20-foot vans to transport police officers, equipment and prisoners during the convention period. All this because the leaders of this society cannot trust the people not to rip their throats out if given half a chance.

However, the most insidious feature of all being utilized at the convention is the police command post that has been established, which includes a camera system enabling the police to spy on a good square mile around the convention center at Joe Louis Arena. Most frightening is that this 1984ish invasion of privacy will be a permanent part of the city. The command post includes a 20-channel dispatch console, 11 smaller dispatch consoles and a closed circuit television system that includes eight cameras, 12 video monitors and two recorders.

The spy cameras are placed so as to allow the cops to monitor the two major expressway exits in the Civic Center, the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel approaches and exits, the Renaissance Center, Hart Plaza, Ford Auditorium, the Veterans' Memorial Building, Cobo Hall, the City County Building and the surrounding streets. Like the command post, the cameras are installed permanently.

This is the brain center of an occupying army whose job it is to enforce society's rules, the written boundaries of our serfdom, against an increasingly restive and unruly population. Ultimately, the cops and their new toys will not be defending the meeting of decrepit politicians, but this society itself from the millions who can no longer tolerate it. Cop equipment, SWAT squads and other pig exotica always look awesome on television, but faced with the determination of people who have had enough of the old bullshit, it will just be brushed away.

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