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Comments on police brutality series

WASHINGTON — I want to commend The Tribune and its team of reporters for the probing articles on police brutality. The reporting once again points up the invaluable contributions of the press in a free society. For it is only when the public is aware of the dimensions of the problem that action will be taken to correct these abuses of police authority.

The blue ribbon panel of Concerned Citizens for Police Reform, which I had the honor to chair, issued its report on the misuse of police authority last July. The Tribune articles parallel the sworn testimony in this report. With these articles the public is further enlightened, and this should bring about a constructive change in the Chicago Police Department's system of operation.

Ralph Metcalfe

Member of Congress, 1st District

CHICAGO—As a subscriber of The Chicago Tribune, I have been reading your daily front pages and articles about the so called "police brutality" in this city. I find them highly unfair as tending to create a false image of the best police force in the country.

Sometimes firm action is required, if motivated by violent resistance of the offender, but it is very seldom used. The number of injured civilians constitutes an incredibly low percentage in a city of 4 million people.

I suggest constructive use of your valuable headlines and columns to praise the work and sacrifice of these dedicated men and the man responsible for this excellent police force, Mayor Richard J. Daley, who made Chicago the most prosperous and progressive city in the entire United States.

E. J. Whitehouse

CHICAGO—Your articles on police brutality are shameful. The state of Illinois has given the police officer the authority to make arrests. It also proclaims that citizens should not resist but submit to the arrest, pending their day in court. A person that resists arrest must be restrained. This can account for some of the black eyes and bloody noses.

The Illinois Constitution clearly states that police can use necessary force to

effect a misdemeanor arrest up to but not including deadly force. It also states that police officers can use deadly force to effect the arrest of a felon.

I believe my fellow officers do a fantastic job despite our constant battles with court decisions, political interference, and your one-sided views of freedom of the press.

Bernard A. Finnegan

MAYWOOD — As a pacifist, I am ashamed to admit the thoughts in my mind when I read of police brutality. Still, it must be exposed and The Tribune is to be commended. If the police can't police themselves, they should stop complaining when the courts go too far in protecting the rights of the accused.

Roger W. Bennett

CHICAGO—It was with deep disgust and revulsion that I read the accounts of police brutality. A progressive city like Chicago deserves a police force of the utmost integrity, intelligence, and courtesy. Let's weed out the bully boys and terrorists.

Mrs. Jerry Wallace

HOMEWOOD—There is a difference between the use of force during a difficult arrest and brutality, and I'm sure any well-balanced, professional policeman knows the difference. Unstable individuals must not be given a badge as a free ticket to do as they please.

Carol Meyers

CHICAGO—Your series on police brutality is a great aid to the cause of real law enforcement. We can achieve this only when our citizens cooperate with the police and when they trust the fairness of the police.

Paul B. Johnson

BLOOMINGTON, Ind.—In addition to rackets and payoffs, police brutality has alienated masses of citizens from their police. Without the best psychological screening, every police force will continue to be a haven for sociopaths and psychopaths, who differ from thugs only by wearing a badge.

I wish, however, that your editorial and opinion pages had been as sensitive to the problem of police brutality during the period of "youth unrest" in the 1960s as you are now.

Leon M. Gordon