

Comment

Toronto needs a little naughtiness

In Toronto," warns the *IN World Guide*, "life ceases after dinner." This is not exactly hot news but I was still deeply disturbed to read it in this rarely-wrong guide that has steered me to wonderful places from late night Berlin to early morning Bangkok.

In New York recently, I told some people that I lived in Toronto. "Oh yes," was the reply, "Toronto is so... ah... er" and then, triumphantly finding the right word — "clean!" Somehow, I am not entirely happy living in a city noted for being boring and clean. If Toronto really wants to be a big city, what it needs is a little naughtiness and dirt.

With these grim thoughts in mind, I repaired to Miguel's, my local watering hole. Sipping a Cuba libre right next to me was none other than Commandante Uno, leader of a new revolutionary group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Yonge and St. Clair (PFLYSC).

"Hombre," he told me, "we are sick of the blue noses that run Toronto. This is a town for elderly librarians, not men with fire in their loins.

"We can never change the power structure," warned the commandante, "only revolution can overthrow the ruling class of used car salesmen, school teachers, lawyers and accountants that runs this province."

My ears perked up, remembering what the *IN Guide* had to say about our modern Sodom and Gomorrah on Lake Ontario. Could this little band of freedom-loving desperados really overcome Ontario's legions of pigs? Might Toronto some day be regarded as more exciting than Sask City, Wis., or Three Toes, Sask? In a careful whisper, Commandante Uno explained

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his party's revolutionary agenda. "First, we get rid of the oppressive LCBO. We want cheap liquor like in California, sold in grocery stores or liquor stores! We demand to drink until dawn." I gasped at the sheer daring of this idea.

"Next," he went on, growing impassioned, "we have 24-hour shopping and stores open on Sunday, like other grown-up cities. Then, we get gas stations open after 7 p.m." I was beginning to grow uneasy, looking over my shoulder for undercover cops.

"And the hookers," he said, banging his glass down on the bar. "We will set up a special red light zone and end all of this nonsense once and for all. Why does Toronto have to look like the Vatican City after midnight?"

"We will take those dried-up prunes on the censor board, teach them macho-style how to make their juices flow and send them home to watch dirty videos."

My head spun. Being risqué in Toronto usually means putting ground pepper on your cardboard pasta at one of those dreadful trendy Italian restaurants on

middle Yonge St. I had no idea such violent radicalism was seething in my neighborhood.

The commandante would not be stopped. "Next, we ban stomach-churning TV preachers — they are obscene — and legalize a pay smut channel."

Hmmm, I thought. Would I rather watch naked sweethearts or a drooling Peter Popoff whining for money in the name of Jesus — but sent to Popoff, of course, not to Jesus.

By now Commandante Uno was in a fever of revolutionary ardor. Grasping my arm, he fixed his burning black eyes on mine: "When the PFLYSC has seized power, we will even allow bookstores to stay open on Sunday!"

Now this was just too much for me. Pleading an urgent phone call, I broke away and ran home, wondering if I should call the police and turn in this dangerous *enrage*. Okay. We were lucky once. A lot of us thought God — who everyone knows is strict Scottish Presbyterian — would smite the city when the *Sun* brought out a Sunday edition.

We just escaped His wrath. Let's not push our luck by allowing books to be sold on Sunday. The next thing you know, unruly people here will demand that bars stay open after 1 a.m. on New Year's Eve.

Our good city fathers and mothers know all too well that giving even an inch will throw open the gates to a flood of pornography, vice, smut and immorality. Next thing you know, their semi-clad daughters will be dancing with sweaty Third Worlders to the libidinous beat of jungle drums. The PFLYSC must be stopped.