
Editorials

Many students and faculty were upset about reports that police were among the audience at the recent Viet Nam panel discussion. The police were indeed there; one city detective and one detective from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation of the State Police. A panel member reported that he had been told before this panel discussion took place that an FBI member would be present, but whether the FBI was actually there we do not know. The Bureau of Criminal Investigation asked a photographer from the "Press-Republican" to take some pictures for the Bureau as long as he was going to be at the meeting. The coverage of the meeting was switched to another photographer, who intended to keep the photographs in the possession of the newspaper. He reported that they were missing and had probably already been turned over to the police.

Dean Piccard made clear that the

only way for anyone to be barred from a discussion on campus would be to label it students and faculty only, that not only did the college not ask these investigators to be present but that they came on their own without notifying the college. It is, of course, almost impossible to keep the police out of campus affairs, and perhaps it's not even desirable. But a resolution has been introduced into the Student Life Assembly calling for a college policy barring investigatory personnel from all college functions. The problem, of course, is that there is no sanctuary from the law in the United States, nor should there be. We feel that while the presence of these investigators may be entirely legal, it is not in the best interests of education to subject the students and faculty who dare to venture opinions that differ from the norm to the inevitably intimidating presence of police. The point has been made, and it is a good one, that

dissenters should be happy to achieve the widest possible audience for their views. But within recent memory Americans have found that in the periods of reaction, the words and actions of the past can be used against them. It is true that dissenters should have the courage to air their views openly, but is it in the best interests of this college, of the State University system and the nation to create an atmosphere in which growing minds and thoughtful scholars feel that to speak out, however right or necessary they may believe it to be, is to jeopardize their studies, their jobs and their futures? A climate of fear and suspicion of one's fellow faculty members and students, to which Plattsburgh faculty have attested, strikes at the very vitals of an academic community, which thrives on openness and candor. The university is irreparably damaged when it becomes the target of intelligence operations.