REFLECTIONS ON
A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION
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Philip A. Mann and Ira Iscoe
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FOREWORD

Turmoil on the college campus and community reaction to student demonstrations rose to new peaks in the late 1960's and early 1970's, often leading to widespread bitterness and distrust. Demonstrators claimed the right of peaceful assembly and free speech to express deeply felt concern for American involvement in the Vietnam war, perceived hypocrisy in society, and other social issues. Citizens of the surrounding community reacted fearfully to the possibility of counter-demonstrations, unruly crowds and violence, often refusing to grant parade permits and demanding firm police action. The killing of students at Kent State by National Guardsmen called in for riot control shocked the entire nation, leading to hundreds of assemblies, tense confrontations, and the closing of some colleges.

The heaviest responsibility for maintaining law and order falls upon the local police force who are in the unenviable position of carrying out orders to prevent disturbances, make arrests, and control crowds by force if necessary. The peaceful control of crowds in explosive situations requires an unusual combination of courage, calmness, understanding, and timing that few policemen have had an opportunity to acquire without special training and experience. Fortunately for Austin and The University of Texas, such training was provided for Austin police by Chief Robert A. Miles and Dr. Philip Mann. A two-year grant from the
Hogg Foundation in the fall of 1969 established an in-service program in the mental health aspects of police work, a demonstration project designed to improve the policeman's understanding of human behavior and crisis management. Dr. Mann and his students rode with police patrols, conducted community relations training programs, assisted in the selection of new candidates for Police Cadet School, gave training in techniques of interviewing, and, together with the Austin Mental Health Association, organized police workshops. As a result, both students and police came to know each other in ways that proved invaluable when crisis hit the campus and the community in the first week of May, 1970.

Reflections on a Peaceful Demonstration is a first-hand account of the satisfactory resolution of conflict in a major confrontation involving the City of Austin and University of Texas students. The tireless efforts of Drs. Philip Mann and Ira Iscoe, as well as countless other faculty, students, and Austin citizens, during this week of crisis are largely responsible for the success that was achieved. Much of the credit, however, must go to the police themselves for the skillful, restrained manner in which they functioned under difficult circumstances. Important lessons may be learned from this detailed account of forces and events. In these times when the role of police is critical yet often maligned and misunderstood, it becomes essential to strengthen training programs for police officers by appropriate inclusion of mental health concepts, human relations training, and frequent community exchanges.

Wayne H. Holtzman, President
The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
THE AUTHORS COMMENT:

Psychologists are assuming new roles in community activities at a time when society is groping for solutions to its problems. Just as many of society's old solutions appear to be no longer sufficient to meet today's problems, the mere application of the psychologist's traditional methods in new locations is an inadequate response to the challenges of social crises.

In times of crisis, the individual, organization, or social system which is able to turn a potential threat into a growth-producing experience is likely to be characterized by the availability of resources which can be employed to deal with spontaneous events. Through its far-sighted support of a psychological consultation project with the Austin Police Department and its participation in developing innovative mental health services through the Counseling-Psychological Services Center, the Hogg Foundation helped to create the resources which were applied to the event described in this article.

An important lesson from this experience has been the need for anticipatory planning, a role which is developing as a characteristic of the community psychologist. This article demonstrates how the Hogg Foundation's practice of fostering innovative community programs constitutes a significant resource in meeting the social demands of today and tomorrow.
REFLECTIONS ON A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION

Philip A. Mann and Ira Iscoe

The University of Texas at Austin

The week of May 3 through 9, 1970, touched and involved many persons throughout the country. On college campuses, activities protesting the invasion of Cambodia by United States troops were widespread and frequently marked by violence. This article is a participant-observer account of events that took place that week on one campus, The University of Texas, and the community of Austin in which it is located. As community psychologists, we have tried to assemble and integrate the unfolding of activities surrounding a potentially explosive situation which in the end became a peaceful and, we believe, constructive event. In doing so, we hope to point out some elements that probably are common to such situations elsewhere and to develop a perspective on how such events might be handled constructively.

The Setting

Certain background factors are important in developing an understanding of the events that occurred. The University, with a student body of approximately 35,000, is a somewhat conservative institution. The bulk of the faculty and an increasing number of students are from out of the state. The University is viewed by many citizens of the state as a hotbed of liberalism and communism.

Student radicalism and organized protest are recent arrivals to the campus. Within the past year, three notable events have marked the increase in this trend. In the spring of 1969, the national convention of Students for Democratic Society was held near the campus after University administrators had refused the use of campus facilities for the meeting. That fall, national attention was focused on student demonstrations staged in an effort to prevent the removal of trees along
Waller Creek which stood in the way of an expansion project for the University of Texas football stadium. This cause involved ecologically minded students, faculty, community residents, and others who usually would not be included in the radical ranks. This incident was followed shortly by a confrontation between police and students in the Student Union over the right of nonstudents to use these facilities.

In the months preceding the Cambodian demonstrations, the City Council of Austin on several occasions had denied a parade permit to the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) for marches to protest the war in Vietnam. Each time, the SMC sought relief from the county-level district court, but to no avail. At the time of the events reported here, a suit was pending in the United States District Court challenging the constitutionality of the parade ordinance.

Almost predictably, a "radical" student was elected president of the student body in the spring of 1970. Frustration with official positions of the University and the community was mounting. The Cambodian invasion escalated the potential explosiveness of the situation.

Some Important Relationships

The Austin Police Department is a modern, sophisticated force. Candidates are highly selected, and cadets receive intensive training for four months followed by two years of supervised probation. Police supervisors receive management-oriented training in interpersonal relationships, many have taken university courses in psychology, sociology, and community relations, and some have had specialized training in managing demonstrations and civil disturbances, as part of an active in-service training program.

The first author, who has had previous experience as a consultant to police (Mann, in press), conducts a mental health consultation project with the Austin Police Department which grew out of prior training contacts with the Department. As part of this project, the consultant has spent some time providing training for and discussing with police officers the problems of police activity in demonstrations and protests. The second author is director of the Counseling-Psychological Services Center on the University campus and has wide connections with various organizations in the community, including the police, as well as sound working
relationships with faculty and students.

The University Law School has for several years conducted a Police Action Project in which law students have ridden on patrol with police officers in order to acquaint themselves with enforcement aspects of law. These students have fed back their impressions to the policemen, and a paper written by one of them appeared in the police department's annual report (City of Austin, 1968).

Main Events

On Tuesday following the announcement of the deaths at Kent State, 4,000 students held a rally on the main mall of the campus followed by a parade. Instead of remaining on University grounds, the parade left the campus and proceeded sporadically toward the downtown area of the city. The paraders were met by riot-equipped police who attempted to prevent the march from entering the streets, a violation of the parade ordinance. The policemen were outflanked by the disorganized and fragmented crowd. They pulled back to the state capitol grounds where it was hoped the crowd would begin to mill and be easier to control. However, violence erupted as some marchers entered the capitol building; windows were broken, and the policemen were ordered to use tear gas. Bottles, rocks and other objects were thrown at the police by some of the marchers, injuring a half dozen policemen. Five marchers were arrested, two of whom were injured while being taken into custody. Although there were no serious injuries, fear of potentially destructive violence was impressed on nearly everyone. Most felt that this event increased the probability that the state police would be called in on any future confrontation, and in the past they have been much more aggressive than the city police in dealing with student demonstrations.

Beginning Wednesday morning, a virtually continuous meeting was held on the mall which lasted through Friday morning. Students demanded that the University president call off classes for the remainder of the week. The president refused, but did agree to arrange teach-ins to be held Thursday morning. Faculty members petitioned for a general faculty meeting to be held Thursday afternoon. About 2,000 students camped on the mall and surrounding areas Wednesday and Thursday evenings.
Thursday morning's teach-ins were lively and well attended. The general faculty meeting in the afternoon drew 837, the best attendance in memory, and the proceedings were broadcast to students outside the building. A resolution urging the administration to suspend classes until Monday morning passed by 2½:1 after much discussion. Other resolutions were passed asking the City Council to grant a parade permit and endorsing a telegram sent to President Nixon by 16 university presidents informing him of student concern over his actions in Southeast Asia.

As the faculty filed out of the meeting, approximately 10,000 students who had gathered outside the building broke into spontaneous applause and cheers. There were more than a few moist eyes among the academicians at this touching display, and a rapport existed between faculty and students which has seldom been equaled on a college campus in these troubled times.

Later that evening, the City Council, by a 4–3 vote, again refused to grant a parade permit, and the chairman of the Board of Regents announced that classes would not be called off. From one perspective, these events made the faculty actions appear to be mere exercise. But from another viewpoint, the community of feeling which existed from the time of the faculty meeting through the next day cannot be dismissed lightly, and probably had a significant effect on the events to follow. The actions of the officials enraged many and deterred few. The students continued with their plans for a parade the following day, incorporating a procedural change to march on the sidewalk, which is within the law.

About 6,000 students gathered on the mall Thursday evening. Concerned faculty members circulated among them. Out of factionalization and diffusion, organization began to emerge. Although some felt the march was unwise, the majority were intent that the march would be conducted peacefully. Three hundred students and faculty volunteered to act as marshals. Others briefed students on ways to deal with tear gas and mace and to not respond to provocation. A parade route was planned that would reduce the chances of confrontation. Nevertheless, many students and faculty felt that violence was inevitable, and there was justifiable belief that the state police would relish a confrontation.

Fourteen law students, aided by professors of constitutional law and com-
munity legal talent, prepared a case and brief which was argued before a federal judge early Friday morning at the same time that the parade was being organized. Explicit in the petition was the clear and present danger of violence resulting from the infringement of the marchers' rights to free speech and assembly. Just as the first group of marchers led off, the federal judge issued a temporary restraining order preventing the city from enforcing the parade ordinance.

Word of the decision was passed to the campus, and spontaneous cheering, embracing, and applauding broke out. The lead marchers sat down until the police could clear the streets and adjust their plans for the parade. In short order, an estimated 20,000 students, faculty, and even some parents stepped off, spreading from curb to curb and stringing out 14 blocks in the largest parade Austin has ever seen. Marshals and just plain citizens cooperated in organizing the march and maintaining order.

The sight and symbolism were nearly indescribable. It was truly a multi-purpose march. In addition to the war issue, people marched to support various local and national civil rights causes, and some said they did so only because they believed in the constitution. People in office buildings flashed peace signs to the marchers, onlookers cheered, church bells rang out, and children in an elementary school waved American flags and chanted "Peace now!" as the parade passed. Even antihippies were impressed with the order and decorum. Marchers chanted "higher pay for Austin police" along with antiwar slogans, and offered drinks of water to policemen along the route. A police sergeant was hugged by two girls, and the Austin paper carried a large picture the next day of a long-haired marcher shaking hands with a helmeted officer. Since there was no violence, news media teams left town, and there was no national publicity, a commentary whose implications are by now sadly self-evident.

Almost as a postscript, the cathartic action of the march was such that what was to be a giant memorial service for the Kent State students Friday night was over early and not well attended. The thing that most officials apparently feared, the march, turned out to be salvation in preventing violence. The campus was exhausted but, it should be noted, intact.
In and behind the Scenes

During the week, an organized group of law students devoted most of their time to trying to keep things peaceful. They were in the forefront of both marches and helped to deescalate the confrontations. They established liaison with city officials, policemen, and influential citizens in attempting to work cooperatively to keep things cool.

On Tuesday, the consultant to the police department talked to many of the officers before they were dispatched to control the first march. He had previously made known his beliefs in the use of minimal force and the avoidance of overreaction as a means of coping with spontaneous demonstrations. This was also the philosophy of the police department. While the consultant hoped merely to serve as a stimulus to reinforce that attitude, he was the recipient of humorous remarks, not without hostility, that he should work some psychological magic to control the crowd. His serious opinions were also solicited.

After Tuesday's confrontation, a general debriefing was held for the policemen. Many of their gas masks had malfunctioned; many were angry at the marchers for having thrown rocks and bottles; all were fatigued; and none of them relished a repeat of this incident. An air of tension remained. Most of the policemen were resigned to the situation, but a number of them expressed their opinions following the confrontation. Common remarks were, "I don't like the war either, but why are they taking it out on us?" "Why don't they go to Washington and tell the President? We can't stop the war here." "Why don't they give them their damn parade permit?" Throughout the evening, the consultant interacted with numerous police officers, attempting to share their opinions and prevent the establishment of norms of overreaction.

Conflict and Community

In retrospect, it is important to point out that the policemen were experiencing very human reactions to the confrontation, probably more similar to those that the students were having than people on either side realized. There are many such things that members of the contending forces do not know about "the other side." Such knowledge would take considerable steam and potential for violence
out of encounters of this type. On Wednesday, several students joined a group of policemen who had been stationed near the campus in a rap session that participants from both groups later described as one of the best things that happened during the week.

Attitudes expressed by state policemen and National Guardsmen deployed nearby during the week differed significantly from those of most of the Austin police. The latter are, after all, a part of the community. They have a stake in it and a feel for it. The fact that they also had to go about their regular police duties during the week probably helped to keep their subjective reactions to the situation from building up a head of steam that might have led to overreaction. Such a possibility speaks against the use of outside "riot busters" if one is genuinely concerned with preserving peace, since the latter would have little investment in the community and could be vulnerable to increasing tension while waiting for something to happen.

These observations point up the need for intergroup knowledge and communication in events such as this one. However, those who would attempt to promote this communication must be prepared to deal with conflicts they will encounter in roles, allegiances, and partisan goals.

The consultant was inadvertently placed in such a conflicted position. On the one hand was the experience of sitting through the faculty meeting, hearing the enthusiasm of the students, and learning later of their resignation to the possibility of violence; on the other hand was knowing that many of the policemen would have preferred to have the parade in the streets, which would make their job easier, minimize the chances of violence, and reduce the tension that had built up during the week. It is a chilling experience to observe both parties to a confrontation preparing for combat, each hoping and wishing that its preparations will prove unnecessary.

While he was talking to students and administrators on the campus Thursday evening, the consultant was approached by a law student who had been active in efforts to maintain peace all week and who was now involved in developing the legal action to obtain the restraining order. He asked the consultant to accompany him to the police station, explaining on the way there that a police officer was
needed to testify in court that there was danger of violence occurring and that the police could control the parade more easily in the streets than on the sidewalk. It was learned, however, that while police officers might be willing to testify to that effect, they could not appear unless subpoenaed. The consultant volunteered that he might testify as an expert witness familiar with the attitudes of the students, the beliefs of the police, and the behavior and management of crowds. The law student asked the consultant to come to a strategy meeting at the Law School the next morning.

The strategy meeting was an intense session of disciplined frenzy which concluded with a decision to concentrate on the federal court petition. The consultant, asked to submit an affidavit giving his professional opinion about the situation, accompanied the law professors and students to the court house, while other law students left to participate in organizing the march and trying to delay it until the court decision could be given.

As the parade concluded its peaceful course, one of the policemen with whom the consultant had observed the march turned to him, shook his hand, and said, "At times like these, I'm glad there are people like you around who I can talk to and trust." This gratifying comment overcame any feeling of conflict the consultant might have had.

While the strategy for peace prevailed in this instance, it is clear that it could not have been accomplished without the goodwill and hard work of a great many people and the fortuitous combination of a number of factors. Just how much luck was involved is difficult to assess. Had there not been the established relationships and communications that come into play, meager though they were, had it not been the case that a suit was already before the federal court and that the courthouse happened to be located in the same city, things might have been very different. It seems reasonable to assume that the actions of the peacemakers in this situation were necessary factors. Whether they would be sufficient in other similar events is another question that cannot be answered at this point.

There are a number of questions that might be raised from a partisan political standpoint about this event. However, given the situation that existed, any question of partisan advantage necessarily involves the assumption that the political
gain would justify the occurrence of injury or possibly death. These questions are overridden, therefore, by the larger goals of social control and the prevention of violence where people are seeking to act within the guarantees of the Constitution. This issue deserves further discussion.

**Partisanship and Social Control**

The influence processes employed by authorities differ in several ways from those of political partisans (Gamson, 1968). Authorities use influence on partisan factions to obtain respect for their legitimate power to maintain social control. Influence is used by partisan groups to attempt to force those in authority to give what they regard as fair consideration to their concerns. The decision to exert influence has different bases for each group. For authorities, it is assumed that they have the power to exercise their will if need be; the major consideration is the risk involved in exercising that will. For partisans, the primary factors are their trust in the authorities balanced against their chances of achieving favorable consideration through the use of influence efforts.

According to Gamson's analysis, there are formal and informal distributions of power to those in positions below the highest point in authority hierarchies. The risk involved when the authority system is challenged and the need for influence appears is that, if those at the top of the hierarchy withdraw the authority they have traditionally distributed to lower levels and exercise authority directly from their offices, a leadership void tends to be created which opens the field for partisan contention at the lower levels. Moreover, this decision may also affect the trust that partisan factions place in the authorities, and further increase the probability of partisan influence activities occurring. Thus, the authorities must assess the prospects of losing social control by generating partisan actions as a consequence of exercising influence. This point seemed not to have been considered by the authorities involved in this event.

Furthermore, when trust in authority is low, authorities are vulnerable to the charge that they are acting as partisans rather than legitimate authorities. To the extent that their influence attempts are perceived by the potential targets of influence as having gone beyond the bounds of legitimacy, such as when influence
attempts appear to infringe on constitutional guarantees, there is danger that authorities will lose the effectiveness of their legitimate power and have to resort to coercive power (French & Raven, 1959). In this case, while the authorities acted within the bounds of legitimacy insofar as local rules and laws affected their immediate positions, they occasionally embellished their decisions with partisan statements, an act that tends to increase the probability of partisan contention and bring on a situation in which they will have to rely on coercive power. Here, of course, there is the fact that the federal court ruled that the parade ordinance was an illegitimate extension of authority under these particular conditions.

The decision handed down by the federal judge contains a fine point of law which also is important in this context. The judge stated that the court could not act on the presumption that violence would occur, but rather was acting to protect clear guarantees under the constitution. Just the reverse of this reasoning has occasionally been used by authorities to defend their influence efforts. Local officials have been quoted as saying that they could not grant a parade permit under threats of violence, when in fact no one has applied for a parade permit so that they could be violent. The potential for violence was presumed by the officials. Such reasoning overlooks or misunderstands the function of law in preserving order.

As Freud (1964, orig. publ. 1933) pointed out in his essay on war, laws are created by societies as a substitute for the collective violence used in primitive societies to enforce the will of one group on another. When the law is used in a partisan fashion to prevent expression, the legal concern is the violation of constitutional protection. The practical result of such actions, however, is to increase the probability of occurrence of aggressive means of influence and thus deprive the law of its power to maintain order.

Toward Conflict Management

The court ruling served to restore some degree of trust in the system, but it has not restored the image that the local authorities are nonpartisan. Accordingly, further conflict can be expected. Nevertheless, this event reinforced the belief of those moderates who feel that the present system contains the ingredients of peaceful and constructive dissent.
The positive forces revealed in this event will need to be encouraged and expanded. Many steps can be taken to improve intergroup communication and understanding. Students have organized themselves to take their message to people in the community and to establish better understanding between students and citizens. If these efforts can be successful, they illustrate the potential for positive outcome from crisis management. However, the time to manage a crisis is before it occurs. In addition to achieving better trust relationships among partisans and between them and officials, both university and community will have to alter their stances toward some facts of contemporary university life.

The many faculty members who worked to prevent violence during this week did so out of a feeling of obligation to the students, regardless of their behavior or their cause. It was not a sense that the students needed protection or support but a deep feeling that the students meant something to them. To extend this attitude to many other faculty and to the community calls for a reorientation of university-community relationships.

University communities have to accept the risks of having a university as well as its benefits. There are a number of ecological factors involved. No longer can merchants and townspeople look forward to profiting from students' money and allowing nothing in return. The 35,000 or so students at a major university do not ask a city for sidewalks, schools, or recreation facilities. They frequently make otherwise uninhabitable housing profitable. It is conservatively estimated that a student body of this size will spend over $60 million a year in the community. A host city must take this into account in its planning, along with the many other alternatives about which communities have to decide, such as what kind of industry to encourage and how to distribute its resources. Already there are indications of increasing sophistication among students as to where and how to spend their money, as exemplified by rent strikes and boycotts in some communities.

While many are too young to vote, this generation has grown up with a more powerful pocketbook than any previous one, and many of their actions must be interpreted from the perspective that they are becoming discriminating consumers.

Moreover, the university cannot expect to stand as a pillar in a sea of turmoil, nor can university communities expect to remain sleepy little towns. It is impos-
sible to assume that such communities can have business as usual and stifle dissent when there is much about which a significant portion of their population wishes to be heard. They will have to choose which way they will have it, and the decision cannot be postponed.

As long as crisis remains a part of the university scene, there will be a need to establish crisis management terms, interdisciplinary groups whose expertise and relationships can contribute to the handling of situations such as this constructively. Relationships of trust and understanding such as those which played an important part in this situation will need to be cultivated and extended. Rumor control centers to coordinate and check out the flow of information in these events can make a significant contribution. It should be pointed out that those who would take the role of conciliation and construction in the face of contending forces must forego the privilege of partisan advocacy and arrogant detachment.

The events described here provide an example of working within the system. A number of people with varied knowledge and expertise working together are necessary to the constructive outcome of such incidents. For the authors, this was a field trial at avoiding polarization. An important object lesson was that as long as the contending forces kept talking, there would be no shooting. During the entire week, some extreme radicals demanded action now. They had their say, drew a little applause, but nothing else happened. Similarly, some people not on the immediate scene thought the authorities should have acted quickly and decisively to end dissent. Our experience contradicts this notion and suggests it accomplishes little except to increase polarization. These events have reinforced our own conviction that a sense of community among people is a precious commodity that requires intelligent cultivation and protection.

REFERENCES

CITY OF AUSTIN. Annual Report, Austin Police Department, 1968.


