

Kansas: Police-Student Violence Imperils University

Lawrence, Kansas. "Two weeks ago I never would have dreamed it could happen here," said Kansas University graduate student Rick Von Ende, expressing a thought that is common in this once placid university town.

The "it," which happened in the middle of the July doldrums, was a week of violence and student altercations with police stained by the separate shooting deaths of two young men who had been freshmen at the University of Kansas last year. The first student killed was black, Donald Rick Dowdell, 19, of Lawrence; the second student killed was white, Harry Nicholas ("Nick") Rice, 18, a resident of a Kansas City suburb. In the same shooting in which Rice was killed, which occurred on Oread Avenue a few yards from a main entrance to the K.U. campus, a black graduate student in chemistry, Merton R. Olds, 26, was wounded slightly in the leg as he stood in the same crowd with Rice in front of the Gaslight Tavern.

Observers here agree that the reaction to the killings would have been even more profound within K.U.'s student body and faculty if the university had been in regular academic session. And, they say, the killings will have serious effects at the university in September, even if there is no further violence in Lawrence this summer.

How Avert a Spiral of Violence

After Kent State, Jackson State, and now Kansas, what is clear is that some policemen or other armed authorities are willing to shoot at students, even without extreme provocation. And, with the deaths that are likely to result, it is almost certain that students will become even more hostile and violent. Killings of students can produce a spiral of violence that will destroy universities as stable centers of learning. With the knowledge that shootings of students are becoming a fact of American life, rather than mere accidental occurrences, what can university administrators and professors do to help avert such disasters?

One relatively simple thing that adults in universities can do is to help establish permanent regular channels

for communication between students and police. It is unrealistic, in most cases, to expect that students will have the initiative or the influence to establish such channels, but university administrators and professors may well be able to persuade these groups to sit down and talk to each other. It is not wise to assume that either intelligent students or intelligent police officers will reject such requests for communication.

One hopeful thing that came out of the Lawrence violence was the visits and conversations that Colonel William Albott, head of the Kansas Highway Patrol, held with students on Oread Avenue, the street where Nick Rice was killed.

Albott initiated his unescorted visits to Oread Avenue the day after the killing. Dressed in his police uniform, complete with holstered revolver and shiny black leather boots, the 49-year-old colonel sat on the grass and "rapped" with the long-haired, bizarrely dressed Oread Avenue "freaks," as they call themselves. Some of the conversations took place only a few yards from where Rice had been fatally shot. Rice's blood still stained the brown grass growing along the street and a crudely lettered sign at the death site promised revenge—"Ten Pigs for Our Brother."

"In my first rounds of discussion with the students," Albott explained, "they called me 'pig.' But that stopped quickly and they started calling me 'colonel.'" The colonel and the young people disagreed on several points, but they conducted their discussions with mutual respect and, even, with warmth. The youths seemed "hungry" to find a decent "cop" to whom they could talk as a fellow human being. Albott was often credited with helping to keep Oread Avenue cool in the days that followed the shooting.

"What I know is that if people lose communication between each other, they lose all common ground to settle their disputes peaceably," Albott said. "What's important for people to learn is that if they can converse with one policeman, one 'pig,' if you will, they can converse with others."

The young people responded favor-

ably to being treated decently by a policeman. They contrasted the colonel with the "Lawrence pigs" who not only did not talk to them, they said, but also did not even order them out of the way when they came storming up the street, but, rather, opened their communication with tear gas cannisters. As Albott goes back to his regular duties, a Lawrence policeman is scheduled to take his place and talk to the young people along Oread Avenue.

Such initial attempts to establish communication between young people and the police are much needed in Lawrence, as they are in other American cities. In Lawrence, as elsewhere, it is easier for students to feel free to harass police if they never talk to any of them personally or learn about the pressures under which they work. Similarly, it is easier for police to send tear gas cannisters or bullets flying at students if they have never had direct opportunity to learn that there are likeable human beings under all that long hair.

Problems of Growth

One of the troubles in Lawrence, believes Francis Heller, K.U.'s vice-chancellor for academic affairs, is that the university has grown at a much faster rate than the city and that the once comfortable relationship between town and gown has disappeared with the pressure of greater numbers of students. Heller, who has been at the university for 22 years, points out that students not too long ago could entertain themselves in the open fields at the south edge of the university, fields that have now disappeared with greater urbanization. Heller believes that tension has grown steadily in the last 7 to 8 years, partly as a result of numbers and partly because students began carrying their political protests and marches into the downtown area. (When youths marched protesting the "murder" of the two students by Lawrence police on 23 July, they were met with visible hostility from some townspeople. One middle-aged man yelled at them, "Get along there you, you draft-dodgers, move along there.")

Some students believe that they are in physical danger from armed, white vigilante groups in the town. ("Red-necks" is the term often used to describe such opponents.)

Several older, white observers in Lawrence spoke well of the police force. It is not commonplace for Lawrence policemen to kill people; before

this July, the last killing by a Lawrence policeman is reported to have taken place 4 years ago, during a robbery attempt. "For a community of this size, we have a very good police force," Heller said. "I'm not prepared to dismiss them as hick town cops."

There is no reason to believe that this is an atypical university community. Several observers describe Lawrence, which is about 30 miles west of Kansas City, as a conservative town in which a liberal university is located. The Lawrence police force is small, and small city police forces do not usually match the pay and professionalism of big-city forces. Also, small forces do not have the manpower necessary to deal adequately with emergency situations. Such police are forced to work long, overtime hours, and, as a result, they grow progressively more tired and short-tempered. Lawrence's police understandably feel harassed by armed militancy in Lawrence's black community, growing disturbances among the participants in the "drug scene," student protests, and a growing number of arson and bomb attempts against property in the city.

The April Disturbances

A principal antecedent for the July troubles in this city was the disturbances of late April. In a small city such as Lawrence (about 30,000 permanent residents and 16,000 students) troubles in one part of town quickly influence all other sections. Late April was marked by black-white conflicts in the high school, an attempted fire bombing of the school administration headquarters, and a still unsolved \$1.1 million fire in the university's student union. A state of emergency was declared, the national guard was called in, and a curfew was imposed for 3 days.

In retrospect, according to observers here, this curfew was a major factor in escalating the tensions between the police and students. Police intensively patrolled the area around the university and arrested many youths for curfew violations. (Because of the strong April protests against the curfew, no curfew was imposed during the July troubles.) It was during the April curfew period that the practice of setting fires and throwing rocks at police developed for the first time on Oread Avenue.

This avenue, a pleasant, tree-lined street one block long leading into the K.U. campus, looks like a typical mid-western "Fraternity Row" without the fraternities. There are several large,

frame residences along the block, a few stores, a university religious organization, and two student hangouts—the popular Rock Chalk Cafe at one end and the Gaslight Tavern at the university end of the street. Within the past 4 or 5 years there has been an influx of "hippies" into the neighborhood. They have no connection with the university and call themselves "freaks" but, as in other college towns, there is no question that the street people are attracted by the presence of the university. The street has become a center for drug use and distribution. Under Kansas law, it is difficult to convict anyone for mere possession of marihuana, and police have left users alone most of the time. One young man commented that Oread Avenue is "a good street scene where people can smoke their dope and play their guitars." Most of those who frequent the street are white; many are university students and graduates but others have no connection with the university.

Illustrating the close relation between contemporary university problems and those of the rest of society, the troubles of 16 July in Lawrence did not start around the university but in the predominantly black section of East Lawrence.

On that night Lawrence police say that they tailed two people they believed to have been involved in some shooting in East Lawrence to Afro House, a cultural center in that area. While waiting near the center, they saw two people (not necessarily the same ones they were tailing) emerge and drive away in a Volkswagen. The police gave chase and, when the car stopped against a curb, a white officer said that he chased Rick Dowdell down an alley, ordered him to stop, and that he killed Dowdell after Dowdell had fired at him once. Franki Cole, a black K.U. student in the car, says that she heard only one shot and did not see Dowdell carrying a gun. On 22 July an all-white coroner's jury ruled that the killing was not a felony, a decision roundly condemned by many Lawrence blacks and some whites. (There are several confusing pieces of information about the shooting of Dowdell, but space does not permit the exploration of all these facets of the case.)

On the following night, a Lawrence police lieutenant suffered a gunshot wound from an unidentified assailant in the black section of the city and a police car was hit by bullets in the same section. On Oread Avenue, near

the university, whites set minor fires, partly to protest the shooting of Dowdell and partly to prevent the police from concentrating in the black section of Lawrence. Policemen who accompanied fire trucks were often met with verbal abuse and rocks and often used tear gas against people on Oread Avenue.

The actions on Oread Avenue seem to be "minor league stuff" in the perspective of these tumultuous days, and most big-city police forces would have probably taken them in stride. It is, however, understandable that Lawrence police, already feeling endangered in the black section of the city, would greatly resent further harassment, especially from long-haired "freaks."

A Fatal Shooting

The fatal shooting of Nick Rice a few yards from the K.U. campus took place on the confused night of 20 July. On that night, small fires and the opening of a fire hydrant brought police to the scene. The police ejected 150 persons from the Rock Chalk Cafe and used tear gas. Most of the crowd went up the block toward the university and congregated in front of the Gaslight Tavern. A Volkswagen was overturned on the street about 40 yards from the crowd and an attempt was made to set fire to the car.

As the would-be arsonist fled, Police Captain Merle Rice explained, approaching police opened fire on him with 30-caliber carbines. Rice said the police fired "about six shots," three with carbines and three with shotguns; the later shots, he said, were fired into the air as warning shots. In the crowd at the end of the street, Nick Rice fell fatally wounded, with a high-velocity bullet through the neck and head, and Merton Olds was wounded.

Witnesses on the street emphasize that there was no danger to police at the time the shooting took place and that there was no harassment of officers in the period preceding the shooting. Police Captain Rice said that the policemen had been subjected to rock-throwing by youths. Captain Rice said that no shots were fired at police during the evening and that no other weapons except rocks and bricks were used. As of this writing, the shooting was still under investigation by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and no formal report had been released nor had a coroner's inquest been held.

Rick Von Ende, 28, a graduate student who is vice-chairman of the execu-

tive committee of the university Senate, said in an interview, "What is happening is that the polarization is becoming ever more evident—it's become a situation of 'them' and 'us.' Students are going to come back this fall, whether they knew the dead students or not, and they will believe only that two students were killed without seeming justification. The students will think that any of us can be killed on the street by police. It will lend credence to the radicals' contention that there must eventually be a radical armed conflict in this country. This may really be the passing away of the nonviolent era."

On 29 July the national commission on campus unrest, headed by Governor William Scranton, announced that it would look into the situation at the University of Kansas. Four days earlier, Joseph Rhodes of Harvard University, the member of the commission who attracted attention because of his disagreement with Vice President Agnew, visited here to meet with students.

Embittered Attitudes Bode Ill

As universities prepare to open in September, it is clear that attitudes are growing more embittered. As the massive Chicago "rock" riot of 27 July illustrated, some young people view police as the enemy and are willing to do open battle against armed police. And, as the killings at universities show, police may shoot at students.

"This is the last nonviolent march I'm ever taking you on," shouted George Kimble, as the Oread Avenue people finished their march to protest police killing. "If it happens again, it will be different." Students, both white and black, say that the number of guns is increasing among students in Lawrence.

"Two students are dead. This university won't be able to go back to what it was before," said one student.

It is difficult to stitch together a university that has been ripped apart by killings of its members by police authority. The time for responsible university administrators, professors, and students to establish continuing channels of communication between students and police is before the shooting starts.—BRYCE NELSON

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U.S. Seeks Cleaner Auto Engines

Sufferers on the smog-bound East Coast last week could take little comfort from government promises to clean up automobile contributions to air pollution. In recent weeks, federal officials have announced that the government would sponsor the development of alternatives to the internal combustion engine, with the hope of having such cars on the market by 1980, and that it would stiffen exhaust emission testing procedures. But at the same time, air pollution officials announced that manufacturers will have until 1972 to meet emission standards originally set for 1970. The standards will have to be met under the new, stiffer testing procedures, however, which have recently shown that cars certified as meeting current standards actually fail them dismally.

Russell E. Train, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, said that by the 1980's, new engines must be developed because even cleaner versions of the present internal combustion engine in the increased number of cars would produce high levels of pollutants. Auto emissions are estimated to cause at least half of the nation's air pollution.

John J. Brogan, who will manage the program to develop new engines under the National Air Pollution Control Administration (NAPCA), said he hopes to have two low-pollution engines by 1975. The auto industry would thus be able to retool its plants and mass-produce the engines by 1980. Among the promising alternatives to the internal combustion engine, Train said, are the gas turbine engine, a hybrid engine combining a low-powered, fuel-burning engine and an array of electrical batteries, and a steam engine. The project is estimated to cost \$45 million.

The new exhaust emission procedures will be used this fall, when 1972 prototypes begin their tests. Under the old, inaccurate procedures, cars tested by NAPCA meet the 1970 limits for hydrocarbon emissions (2.2 grams per mile) and carbon monoxide (23.0 grams per mile). Under the new procedures, the cars emit more than twice as much as allowed.

Under the new testing procedures, exhaust will be measured entirely by instruments, rather than partially by extrapolation; the test cycle will be lengthened and will include more idling patterns, to more closely resemble city driving; durability tests will be done by NAPCA rather than by the auto makers; each engine will be judged separately; and flame ionization detectors will measure hydrocarbon emissions.

Currently, the cars tested are prototypes, which are different vehicles from the ordinary, assembly-line product. Only 1200 cars last year were tested—4 for each of the 300 prototype engines. An individual engine did not have to pass the standards, provided that the average of the four engines in a class was satisfactory. "We don't have a clear authority to test cars on the assembly line," NAPCA Commissioner John Middleton said. The Administration has introduced Clean Air Act amendments, already passed by the House, which would permit such testing, although the author of the original act—Senator Edmund Muskie (D-Maine)—has repeatedly said that NAPCA already has this authority.

Middleton said industry should be able to adapt to the new procedures easily—indeed, NAPCA began consulting the auto makers on the new procedures in February. The emission control devices, which cost new car owners about \$50, are not expected to increase in price.

NAPCA earlier announced the first standards for oxides of nitrogen for 1973 models. The first standards for particulates (the major constituent of which is lead) will be imposed in 1975.

By then, if a recent Commerce report is correct, the gasoline industry can produce an unleaded grade of fuel. "The Implications of Lead Removal from Automotive Fuel," by the Commerce Technical Advisory Board Panel on Automotive Fuels and Air Pollution, also says that a low-leaded fuel could be available by the end of 1972 and that tax or subsidy policies concerning gasoline should be modified to provide price incentives for the purchase of these fuels.—NANCY GRUCHOW