



The Los Angeles (Watts) riot of August 1965 marks a psychological, if not a phenomenological, turning point in the role and function of mass violence in contemporary American society. Public awareness of protests, disorders, and mass violence can barely keep pace with the new forms as they unfold. Reporters, public officials, academicians, participants, and onlookers proliferate analyses and recommendations almost as fast as the events change their character.

Black ghetto riots were confused with civil rights sit-ins and marches. Campus-centered protests burgeoned into mass antiwar protests and demonstrations. As political issues were more clearly featured in mass actions, the counteraction of the "hard hats" dramatized the divisions and tensions created. Lately, smaller but more aggressive and dangerous actions, involving bombings and attacks on police officers, have been prominent. They may or may not be in the mainstream of mass actions.

Concurrently, traditional concern for individual crime has created deep and widespread public apprehension. The reported continuing increases in forceful and violent individual crimes—murder, robbery, rape, assault—have been ritualized into an annual flurry of public concern as official statistics flow forth. Public reaction to these manifestations of violence and crime has developed into a political issue of major consequences.

While violence may or may not be as American as cherry pie, the institutional mechanism of the Blue Ribbon Panel or the Governor's Congress or Presidential Commission to investigate a critical public issue seems to have taken root and splendidly flourished in the United States. Crime and violence

in the United States have received the attention of Blue Ribbon Analysis. Four major commissions in the last 5 years include: (i) The Katzenbach (crime) Commission of 1966; (ii) the Kerner (riot) Commission of 1967; (iii) the Eisenhower (violence) Commission of 1968; and (iv) the Scranton (student unrest) Commission of 1970. It seems, therefore, appropriate and timely to review the activities of these commissions on two levels:

- 1) On the substantive level, what have they found, and what light have they shed on the role and function of violence in our society? What policy implications have they or have they not suggested?

- 2) The commission mechanism itself merits review. Why that mechanism rather than others? How is the mechanism operating? What has been its impact on public policy, public attitude, and institutional change?

To address these issues a five-part program covering 2 days has been planned for 29–30 December 1970 as a general symposium of the AAAS meeting in Chicago.

One of the goals of the symposium will be to synthesize and interrelate the knowledge developed with regard to crime, violence, and alternative mechanisms for social control. Three of the sessions will be organized to cover each of those topics simultaneously. To focus on the specific problems and requirements one session will deal with the individual, another with the community, and a third with the police. The panel discussion format chosen for these sessions will include a brief (at most, 10-minute) introductory remark by each of the panelists, followed by an hour of interaction on the topic among them, and a final hour of exchange of views among them or with the floor on issues

raised by the audience. This should encourage interdisciplinary discussion and promote the convergent interaction of divergent expertise.

The trends in individual human violence are difficult to measure scientifically. The most widely reported measures, the crime statistics, have tended to be notoriously misleading; but, at the same time, they apparently have substantial public impact. Questions to be explored by the panel include: What are the nature and significance of violent crimes, not only from the perception of the law, but of the perception of the individual? What are the boundaries on the legitimate application of physical force; and what factors set or adjust those boundaries? The largest areas of ignorance, uncertainty, and criticality with regard to individual violence center around the personal, familiar, and societal factors inducing, facilitating, or inhibiting violence.

A web of related issues confronts society on how to handle the violent criminals at the institutional levels. Chief Justice Burger, in his recent "State of the Judiciary" message, proclaimed the impending crisis in the civil and criminal judiciary system. While, in the short run, correctional systems may protect society from the criminal, in the long run, they may be the training ground for crime and the dominant socialization mechanism in antisocial career formation. The widely acclaimed mechanism of diagnosis counseling, psychotherapy, and educational and vocational training have failed to achieve their objectives. Our correctional and rehabilitation system remains a public scandal.

The relation between the mental health system and the criminal justice system appears to be becoming more intimate as scientific knowledge of narcotics, drug abuse, alcoholism, delinquency, crime prevention, and forensic psychiatry confuse the conventional boundaries of jurisdictional and institutional responsibility. As it now stands, the criminal justice system and the mental health system are roughly on the same administrative scale. Prison inmate population is roughly equivalent to the population of those hospitalized for mental health reasons; those in outpatient clinics are roughly comparable in number to those on parole.

Panelists addressing the problems of the individual in relation to crime, violence, and social control will be Seymour Halleck (professor of psychiatry, University of Wisconsin), Harold

Cohen (executive director of the Institute for Behavioral Research, Washington, D.C.), John Conrad (chief of the Center for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation, U.S. Department of Justice), and Perry London (professor of psychiatry and psychology, University of Southern California).

Civil disorders and violent protests and demonstrations have been a principal focus of two commissions (the Kerner and Scranton commissions) and substantial interest of a third (the Eisenhower Commission). Those commissions not only took stock of the state of knowledge; they also undertook to sponsor original research on their subjects and further stimulated and organized a previous and somewhat inchoate academic concern on the origins and implications of domestic mass violence. Both the taxonomist and the system builders, as well as more antiseptically empirical students in the social sciences, have enjoyed a unique opportunity to comprehensively explore a major social phenomenon.

Five years and several 5-foot shelves later, there is no unanimous agreement among the academic investigators on the origins and significance, much less on the social implications, mitigation, and prevention, of mass disorders. Even such apparently simple questions as "What is a riot?", while legally definable, are not as a practical matter adequately defined in social science categories. The larger issue, the attribution of mass black disorders to structural racism, may be widely accepted, but it still finds responsible academic demurrers. Even the notion that rioting is limited to the poor or to the underclass does not hold in the face of growing student protest and terrorist action on campuses.

The panel discussion of the community and violence will consist of Ted Robert Gurr (Northwestern University), Frank Ochberg (National Institute of Mental Health), Minor K. Wilson (judge, Criminal Division, Circuit Court of Cook County), and Harland L. Randolph (president, Federal City College, Washington, D.C.).

Symposia often leave the audience frustrated, either for lack of an opportunity to evoke a response from the speakers on a particular issue or for want of an opportunity to express a criticism, suggestion, observation, or offer a new perspective. This symposium will deal with that problem in two ways: first, in allocating an hour to each of the formal panels for audi-

ence interaction; and second, by providing a full meeting totally unstructured, save for a moderator, to which all attendees at the Annual Meeting are invited. The unstructured evening sessions on "Alternatives to Physical Force in Dealing with Violent Public Behavior" will seek to draw from those in attendance their thoughts and opinions on current and new approaches to institutional and noninstitutional mechanisms for dealing with potential incipient violence. New approaches to dealing with those who have in fact been violent will also be thrashed out. Attendance at the other panels is by no means a condition for participation in the unstructured session, but it may provide the basis for the extended discussion.

The "police riot" was a phrase added to the language after the fracas at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968. While the behavior may not be unique, that particular event had special significance to a nation literally tuned-in. The alleged partiality of public authority against political protest during a national convention to select a Presidential candidate frightened some and soothed others. The response of police to mass action is by no means the limit of the controversy they are caught up in. Survey after survey shows that both in communities racked by riots, as well as in those superficially pacific, the issues of police brutality and misbehavior and differential law enforcement rank close to the top as specific sources of community discontent. The poor man, the black man, and the Hispano-American discontent with the police have found a significant ally in that segment of middle-class youth that sees the policeman as a "pig." The exposition of the myths and the realities, and the perception and the misconceptions of the use of excessive or unjustified police force will be the substance of a panel discussion. What is the nature of the charges against the police? Who makes them? How do the perceptions of the antagonists and the protagonists differ? To what extent do they reflect class and institutional relationships? Among the hypotheses to be explored by the panel undoubtedly will be the policeman as the law who judges and administers punishment; the policeman as monk, that is, the agent isolated by his institutional role, developing a primary allegiance to his institution; the policeman as class victim, that is, the man with public authority,

caught in conflict between his own class mores and the mores of the underclass, on the one hand, and a turbulent middle class on the other; the policeman as bureaucrat, the cog of the bureaucratic machine, with flexibility more than overcircumscribed by rules and regulations, while society simultaneously demands greater flexibility.

The relation of the police to violence and social control will be discussed by Jerry Wilson (chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C.), Norton Long (University of Michigan), Kermit Coleman (director, Ghetto Project, American Civil Liberties Union, Chicago), and Larry Tuft (University of Illinois).

Commissions probably have as many functions and have generated as many hypotheses about their roles as the violence they study.

Immediately after major disorders or, for that matter, after any startling new public event requiring effective action, political leaders often have been unable to take effective action. Many students of the politics of commissions, therefore, see them as a device whereby responsible public authority can seem effective in initiating an activity while simultaneously buying the time to let the dust settle and to formulate coherent policies. It is clear, however, that other things also happen along the way. Expectations are raised in many quarters about the results of the commission's study. The deliberations of these commissions invariably result in conclusions which reinforce or contradict the preconception of special interest groups or individual political leaders. To explore in more detail the dynamics of the formation of these commissions, their approach and operation under close time restraints and limited budgets, and their ultimate impact on the public and public policy, there will be a panel consisting of: William Carey (Arthur D. Little Associates), Lloyd Cutler (executive director, National Commission of the Causes and Prevention of Violence), Erwin D. Canham (editor-in-chief of the *Christian Science Monitor* and a member of the Scranton Commission on Campus Unrest). Arnold Sagalyn, who served in an important role in the work of three panels, will be the chairman.

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