

Chicago Failure Due to

By D.J.R. Bruckner

CHICAGO, Sept. 8—A deliberate city policy aimed at frustrating all types of demonstrations here during the Democratic National Convention blew up into violence when city officials who had devised the policy lost control of their own police force.

In City Hall, now that the demonstrators, troops and commentators are all gone, there are many whispered admissions in place of the loud boasts that would have been heard if the policy had worked.

Even the city's efforts to defend itself by broadcasting the well-known intentions and plans of various protest groups, involves, as one aide to Mayor Richard J. Daley said, "an admission that the protesters were smarter than our police."

Eventually it may involve an admission that some of the police were out of control also, which is a much more serious matter to local government, and a much larger problem to Daley.

The intentions of some protest groups—to bring pressure on delegates to force an "open" convention, to break up the convention entirely, to create random violence in the city, to force a different kind of platform plank on Vietnam, or to demonstrate contempt for the whole political process—were widely advertised; and the leaders of the protests had claimed publicly that last year's march on the Pentagon, last spring's huge peace march in New York and even the student takeover of Columbia University, were all "trial runs."

The Chicago officials who planned this convention decided that this was to be the place where government would meet the problem of

over Rigid Plans, Loss

of Control

protest head-on and win out—smoothly.

The success of such a policy might have had significant political implications, for it could have neutralized the "law and order" issue in the presidential campaign as a specifically anti-Democratic Party issue. The national and local response in favor of Daley, even though the policy failed, is so powerful that many local GOP leaders feel that Daley has taken a powerful issue away from them; and their best hope is that he will be un-

able to pass his new-found support on to the national Democratic candidates.

Vast Intelligence Effort

The government intelligence operation behind the convention was one of the largest such operations ever conducted. By the time the convention had opened, Federal agencies and police departments throughout the country had penetrated, cataloged and analyzed most protest movements com-

pletely.

Crucial protest planning meetings were taped, and some of them were filmed. Police and Federal officials had thousands of photographs of individuals, and exact time schedules for the movement of protesters into the city.

Protection of the International Amphitheater and of the hotel suites of major candidates was left to the Secret Service, which assumed control of city policemen on duty at the convention site the day before the convention opened. The security apparatus which annoyed many delegates in the convention hall was directed by the Federal agents and by the staff of the Democratic National Committee.

The outside situation was entirely in Daley's hands; and officials in his office had two major concerns—to prevent a riot in the city's Negro ghettos, and to prevent disruption of the city or the convention by demonstrations.

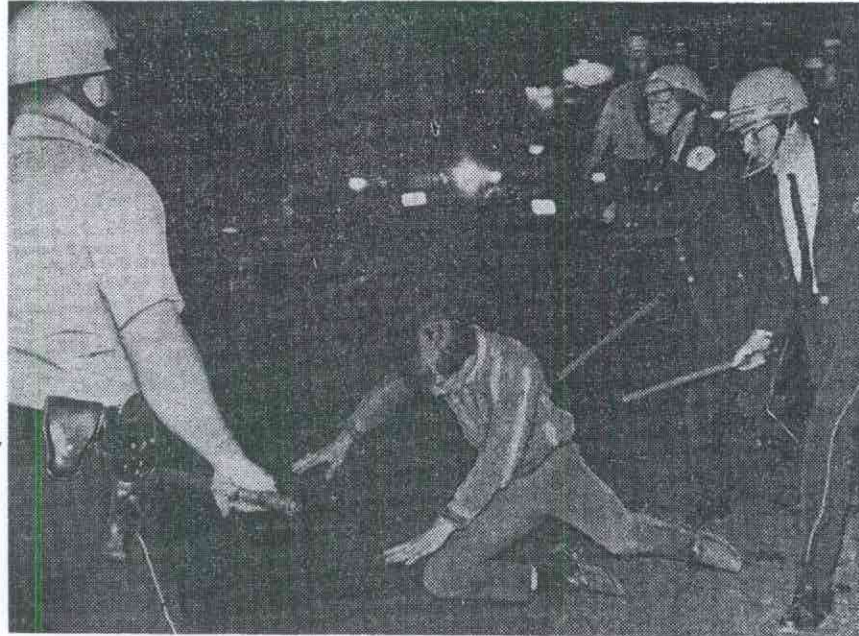
These concerns led the city into policies of restriction which were directly responsible for exacerbating an already difficult situation.

First, aides in Daley's office were told to discourage newsmen, especially television crews with their lights and camera equipment, from wandering into the ghettos to take pictures. Their argument was the often-heard one that the presence of the camera may provoke disorder which can then spread rapidly through-

out a city.

Newsmen Turned Down

For months before the convention, the Mayor's office and the police had received many requests from newsmen, photographers and broadcasters for special credentials, special police arrangements or police guards for news assignments in the ghettos during the conven-



United Press International

Chicago police knock down fleeing demonstrator, one of hundreds routed from Lincoln Park early in the morning of Aug. 27, during Democratic Convention.

tion. As a matter of policy, these all refused.

City officials working directly under Daley had decided last spring on a series of measures to discourage the protesters from gathering here during the convention. Six months ago, William L. McFetridge, a Daley associate for many years and president of the Chicago Park District, had let slip the remark that the district would not make its facilities available to "unpatriotic groups."

This policy involved all aspects of protest. Protest gatherings found it difficult to get meeting permits and they were denied parade permits.

In April, a peace march by 8000 persons had to make its way through the Loop piecemeal, obeying all traffic lights and staying on the sidewalks, as it moved to the civic center over a 3-mile route.

Once in the plaza of the Civic Center, these marchers were required by police to keep moving and there was a police outburst which should have been a clear warning to Daley of what could happen during the convention.

As one line of police, on the inside of the plaza,

pushed outward against the marchers, a line of police in the streets kept insisting that the marchers stay on the walk and out of the street. After about 30 minutes of this squeezing tactic, the march line began to break, and many of the marchers were pursued and knocked down by angry police who chased them, in open defiance of shouted orders by their officers, and in the presence of Police Superintendent James B. Conlisk.

Waiting in Cellar

The policy was tested again in the same type of demonstration two weeks before the convention. This time, a group of fewer than 1000 peace demonstrators advanced on the Civic Center under the eye of city government lawyers and a handful of police who did not interfere with them. What the marchers did not know was that in the basement of the Civic Center were 200 policemen waiting to emerge if things got out of hand.

Meanwhile, the policy of discouraging demonstrators was enforced rigidly. The Coalition for an Open Convention was so discouraged by the maze of city regulations and the long negotia-

tions to find a meeting place that it dropped its plans to hold a rally.

The Youth International Party (Yippies) was repeatedly and publicly warned that it would not be allowed to stage marches or nighttime sit-ins. Both the Yippies and the National Mobilization Committee, a loose coalition of antiwar groups, were played along for weeks by city aides as they tried to negotiate parade permits, and all these permits were finally denied.

Many lawyers here have questioned the constitutionality of the city's policies, but local politicians—Republicans and Democrats alike—are virtually unanimous in saying it was a workable device for a powerful Mayor who had determined to put on a demonstration of law and order as that issue could have been handled by a master. As Daley's aide said: "It worked to a point."

The point was police discipline. It is likely that the people of the city, and the press, were more aware of this problem before the convention than Daley was.

It is worth remembering that this is the same police force—many of those involved in convention security were the same men—which

marched out, 1000 strong, every day for more than six weeks two years ago to supply protection to Dr. Martin Luther King's open housing marches, taking bricks, cherry bombs, bottles and abuse every day from white mobs without ever once breaking ranks or discipline.

It was one of the many gifts of former Police Superintendent O. W. Wilson to this force, a rigid and carefully enforced discipline within the department.

When Wilson retired last year, and Conlisk succeeded him, the discipline problems within the police force grew almost immediately.

Daley was well aware of these problems. In one stormy session in his office last spring he loudly demanded more control out of Conlisk over his own men.

But, at the same time, Daley was repeatedly making public declarations that "law and order" were to be observed, that "no one is going to take over the streets of Chicago," and that rioters of any type would be dealt with forcibly.

Backed Man on Beat

Patrolmen on the beat have told a reporter many times in street conversations that they feel the Mayor was "with them" in whatever action they took. In April, Daley even publicly rebuked Conlisk for not issuing strong orders on police conduct in riots, thus increasing Conlisk's problem of controlling his own men.

During the summer, a great quantity of "raw" intelligence on demonstrations and demonstration leaders was fed into the police department. Hundreds of reports from government agencies about militant groups, their plans, plots and speeches were discussed not only in the command structure, but throughout the police department.

Many of these plans were serious, some of the plots were solid, and all of the speeches of the demonstrators were abrasive. The tempers of the police were fairly heated by all of this, and the force was never given any clear guidelines on distinguishing person from person in a protest situation. They were, throughout, instructed only to treat a mob as a mob, as one single unit.

At the same time, the police were continually cautioned by Conlisk's office

that they could be charged, and would be charged, with brutality if they used excessive force. It was this possibility which led to a widespread agreement among patrolmen to remove their badges and identification tags in a tight situation. When the battle started during the convention, many of them removed these items of identification.

The plan devised by Daley's staff to enforce City Hall policy called for the massive use of manpower and not of weapons, and for mass arrests of violators of city regulations, not forceful confrontation.

Discouragement was the purpose and, in the beginning, it worked.

It started to fall apart on the Sunday night before the convention, when the police forced the Yippies out of Lincoln Park amid a barrage of bottles, stones, bricks and shouts from the demonstrators. The police responded by breaking ranks and chasing the demonstrators through adjoining neighborhoods, clubbing down many of them. Many reporters observed sergeants and lieutenants ordering their men to hold back, and the men resolutely ignoring them.

Order Not Read

An order had been issued by Deputy Superintendent James Rochford Aug. 21, to be read at all police roll calls at all districts, ordering the police to respect all press credentials of all cities, and of the Democratic National Committee.

Monday morning, the opening day of the convention, Conlisk issued another, stronger order to his men to respect the press. Monday night additional newsmen were beaten in the second police rout of demonstrators out of the park.

Tuesday afternoon, Conlisk met with a group of newspaper and magazine editors, and agreed to issue yet another, still stronger order. It was apparently obeyed Tuesday night and then forgotten by the police Wednesday and Thursday.

By Wednesday the collapse of the city's discouragement policy was evident in City Hall, as well as to outside observers. The demonstration leaders, confident of their ability to provoke the police to violence, took their movement from Lincoln Park to Grant Park, across the street from the Conrad Hilton Hotel, the Democratic Party headquarters, and directly in front of television cameras.

Grant Park Opened

Rochford had previously offered two of the National Mobilization Committee leaders this same tract of land for their rallies; and, Wednesday, Conlisk issued them permission to use the park throughout the night.

At City Hall, some of Daley's advisers said at the time that "it might be a good thing for the people to see what these demonstrators are doing." The problem with that policy is that few people ever saw what the police claim was excessive provocation by the demonstrators.

In Daley's office now a decision has been made to force the dismissal of some policemen and the suspension of others, but this action will be delayed not only for investigations and civil service procedures, but for policy and public relations reasons. There is considerable pressure from inside Daley's organization to force Conlisk out of office, but this action is considered unlikely at any time soon, since the public response has been so overwhelming in Daley's favor from the city and the suburbs that it would prove politically embarrassing for him to admit that he had lost control over his own police, and that his policy did not quite work out as it was intended.

His position now in the national "law and order" debate is considerably to the right of where he intended it to be. Politically, he is an astute man whose party machine faces a very difficult election. If there is to be a City Hall crackdown on a runaway police force, it will be in the future, not now.