

# Police and Protesters: A Kind of Truce

By JOHN CORRY

For the time being at least, peace demonstrators and the Police Department seem to have reached, if not a rapport, then perhaps an understanding.

There have been, of course, the inevitable cries of "Off the pigs!" and the inevitable charges that some policemen have swung freely with their nightsticks. Still, many of those involved in the protests say that the last two days have shown a sophistication on the part of the police and the demonstrators, too.

At a protest yesterday outside the United Nations, for example, Paul Altesman, a student from the State University at New Paltz, approached Inspector Pearse Meagher.

Mr. Altesman had led 300 students from New Platz, and they had been having a bad day. They had ordered nine buses to carry them to New York and none had shown up. They had made do as best they could, but they arrived here late and missed an earlier demonstration.

"I don't think it's a good idea if we sand here," Mr. Altesman told Inspector Meagher. He said that the students were restless, and that he wanted to lead them to Times Square.

### Best Way to Get There

"The rally there is legal, isn't it?" Mr. Altesman asked.

Inspector Meagher said it was and asked Mr. Altesman if the students would march in an orderly manner. Mr. Altesman said that they would, but that he did not know how to get to Times Square.

"Down 47th Street would probably be the best bet," Inspector Meagher said.

"Which side of the street would you prefer?" Mr. Altesman asked. Then Mr. Altesman and Inspector Meagher worked out details.

"And if there's nothing in Times Square we'll just march

them there and back," Mr. Altesman said. "Now, what about our linking arms?"

Meanwhile, more students and others were approaching the inspector.

"What if we just stand on First Avenue?" one said.

"As long as you don't interfere with the rights of pedestrians, you have every right to do so," the inspector said.

"Can we chant?" someone else asked.

"You can chant, and if you want to use vulgarity we have to protect your constitutional right to do so," Inspector Meagher said.

The the inspector pointed out the television cameras, and suggested that the marchers file by them. "By all means, make yourself heard," he said. "I sympathize with your problem."

Afterwards Mr. Altesman, who earlier this week had led a protest at an International Business Machines plant in Poughkeepsie, talked of tactics.

"We've found that lately we can go up to the police and tell them what we want to do. Even if we intend to get arrested we tell them and then work it out."

### 'General Decorum'

Ed Damato of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, which protested inside the United Nations yesterday, said, "I got the idea that the word was put out." He said that he thought that police policy was to show restraint and that cases of excessive force involved only individual policemen.

One organizer, who declined to be identified, said he had met with a number of police officials.

"We discussed guidelines,"

he said. "We'd stay on the sidewalk, use no electronic equipment and have no vandalism. I felt I was being patronized, but at least they didn't feel threatened by me."

Nathaniel Kramer, an observer from the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, said he was impressed "by the general decorum on both sides" in the last few days, and at least some policemen agreed with him.

"This has been a good year so far," a patrolman on the special events squad said. "They make noise and go home and everything's fine."

Indeed, most of the demonstrators in the last few days have seemed to want it that way.

"I'll be damned if I'm going to lead you into a violent action today," Guy DiDomizo shouted through a bullhorn to fellow students yesterday. Then, when there were some boos, he said:

"We're going to be smart and we're going to be cool."

Inspector Meagher, who was once the only active police officer on the old Civilian Police Review Board, said that Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy was insistent that the Police Department "protect the rights of demonstrators."

He also said that younger policemen who had grown up in the nineteen-sixties were likely to be somewhat sympathetic to the demonstrators.

At an antiwar protest on Tuesday at Park Avenue and 50th Street, some demonstrators kept edging out into the street, where they would block traffic.

"Just do me that favor and go to the sidewalk," a policeman kept saying to them. "Please, just do me that favor."