

# Pig Riot Manual Exposed!

Howard Kohn

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(via *The Ann Arbor Argus*) When the insurrection of July, 1967 began, Detroit police were ready with Schutzstaffel rules.

The *Argus* secured an official copy of the police riot manual issued in 1966 and signed by Ray Girardin, police commissioner, 1961–68. Among the manual policies still in force are the following.

- All policemen must remove their badges and collar insignium before entering a riot area.
- No officers should go to the aid of a wounded person, whether a fellow officer or a civilian.
- Police must take bold steps, e.g. arresting people in large groups, to “retain their initiative.”
- Any ranking officer, even a sergeant, can give the order to shoot.
- When teargassing people out of buildings, all avenues of escape must be first blocked with gas and then the occupied room should be gassed, thereby forcing the barricaded people to leave by the windows, whether first, second, third, fourth, et al; stories high.

As of this printing, these remain the standing policies of the Detroit police under Johannes Spreen, present police commissioner.

Spreen says he has plans to modify the rule on badge removal by issuing uniforms with the officer’s name stenciled on the shirt. But he defends the embargo on wearing badges.

“You can obviously see that a badge makes a great target for snipers at night,” Spreen explained to the *Argus*.

Spreen would not comment on reports which indicated Detroit police covered up official designations with black tape on patrol cars in 1967.

Spreen said the teargas strategy insured maximum safety for police flushing out snipers. He would not comment on reports that only one sniper was officially identified in 1967.

The manual, which Spreen has inherited as a tribute to police efficiency during 1967, is a precise exercise in police propaganda.

The list of acknowledgements includes the provost marshal general, the department of the Army, the FBI, the California attorney general’s office and police departments of metropoli like Philadelphia, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Its 70 pages are invested with stereotyped military prejudices e.g. differentiating between a “cohesive” crowd and an “aggressive” crowd on the basis of the crowd leaders. That is, a George Wallace rally equipped with beer-drinking rednecks goosing everything in skirts could be categorized “cohesive” while a Black Panther breakfast line for kids could be “aggressive.”

The manual has some fascinating details, including several pages on squad formations and hand signals, as if copied from a Bear Bryant notebook. And it reveals some frightening facts, e.g. riot shotguns use oo pellets which

can kill up to 700 yards but which can't be controlled accurately after 50 yards. Of the 43 officially listed killed in 1967, 15 were shot accidentally.

The manual introductions points out that under Michigan State Act 28.795 if “any person there present as spectators or otherwise shall be killed or wounded, the said officers and all persons assisting by their order, or under their direction, shall be held guiltless and fully justified in law.”

Under the section analyzing mob behavior, the police mentality describes an “expressive mob” as one led by professional agitators or local demagogues...[who] may whip the people into a frenzy which may then be exploited culminating in explosive, violent aggressive action.”

An entire section is devoted to Principles of Riot Control. Police are urged to “exercise initiative and control, to set the pace and determine the course of action; to exploit the mob's weaknesses.”

The manual continues, “Surprise can decisively shift the balance of power...Surprise is achieved by striking the mob at a time, place, and in a manner for which it is not prepared to react effectively. Factors contributing to gaining surprise include speed, deception, application of unexpected force, effective intelligence and counterintelligence.”

Police are told that verbal and written abuse constitutes “violence” and can therefore justify police retaliation. Verbal violence ranges from “obscene remarks to taunts and ridicules” and written violence is “printed material such as posters, signs on walls and streets, leaflets and handbills which attack police or police policy.” This gives them extrajudicial powers on converting peaceful demonstrations into “riots.”

Also “singing, chanting, and hand-clapping” are classified under “types of violence.” The manual explains, “This serves to increase the level of excitement and interferes with police command and control.”

The manual additionally provides built-in police rationales: “The rioters' purpose of using women and children, aged and crippled individuals, or clergy in clerical garb is to open the way for charges of police brutality...particularly in the case of women where on occasion, disrobing techniques have been used.”

Standard police methods of combating insurrections include isolating the riot area and setting up barriers which consequently trap people inside and make everyone unwitting victims of police action.

Besides inspiring unnecessary fear in innocent people caught within the web, riot policy also accentuates police hysteria. Injured personnel must shift for themselves, the manual says, “Officers *shall not attempt to administer aid or assist in evacuation* of civilian casualties except under most extenuating circumstances. As in the case of police casualties, police personnel cannot be diverted from the accomplishment of its riot control mission to render aid to the injured.” [Emphasis is theirs.]

This means police are sent into a riot situation with orders to shoot knowing that if they get hurt first they'll be left to the mercy of whoever finds them.

According to the manual, wounded personnel will be evacuated only by emergency squads similar to military medical corps—which promotes police attitudes like “kill or be killed.”

Police are divided into “commando squads” which consist of 13 patrolmen—the leader, a machine gunner, a gas man, and nine shotgun men.

The manual devoted 15 pages to formations suitable to every conceivable contingency. Underlining each is the simple maxim, “When this department is committed to restore order there must be no hesitation.”

In a supplement to the manual, the seventh precinct lists our “potential trouble spots”—Mack between Field and Van Dyke; Kercheval between E. Grand Blvd. and Van Dyke; E. Jefferson between Bellevue and E. Grand Blvd.; and Perrien Park, Chene and Hancock—all in the black ghetto.

Again this provides the super-sadistic cop an excuse for provoking a riot at any of these places.

The same supplement also names 11 parochial schools which are marked “as assembly areas, rest areas, prisoner detention facilities and/or location for a command post.”

The 11 are St. Anthony, St. Charles, St. Elizabeth, Felician Academy, St. Hyacinth, Immaculate Conception, St. John's Lady of Sorrows, Resurrection, St. Stanislaus and St. Thomas.

An administrative aide to Fr. John Cardinal Dearden, archbishop of Detroit, told *The Argus*, “I suppose the police can use any facilities they want without our permission.”

This, of course, is a lie. In fact, several laws based on the First Amendment have been enacted to prevent church-state complicity.

The Detroit arrangement violates the meaning of the Constitution as well as dishonors a tradition of religious sanctuary for the oppressed.

If the tales of the church taking in victims of tyranny were ever true, they at least no longer are.

According to Spreen, policemen and “plants” are authorized to use personal weapons in a riot. “Plants” are stakeout or undercover men who are often behind police lines where they can operate as snipers or as riot provocateurs.

“A policeman is on duty 24 hours a day and can take any action he deems necessary whenever he wants,” Spreen said.

Although Spreen has set up the structural machinery for keeping city officials and high police officials in contact with police at a riot scene, he pointed out most orders are given without downtown knowledge or consent.

“I can’t control my men from headquarters,” Spreen said. “A riot demands split-second decisions.”

The manual gives special attention to riot decision making: “Indecision, reluctance, lassitude or defeatism on the part of leaders can contaminate the entire unit and render it completely ineffective in operations.”

# **fifth Estate**

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