

Folk-Singing Arrest Stirs 2,000



Police Inspector William F. Real talking yesterday with demonstrators near fountain in Washington Square Park.

The New York Times

Crowd Nearly Riots in Washington Sq. Demonstration

By ROBERT CONLEY

The arrest of a student at a demonstration by folk-music fans yesterday in Washington Square Park nearly set off a riot. It also raised charges of police brutality and it brought a stern reprimand to the police from the officer in charge.

"Look what you're doing!" Inspector William F. Real, shouted to his detail of sixty men as a crowd of more than 2,000 persons surged out of the Greenwich Village park and followed the arresting policemen.

The student had been grabbed in a sudden flare-up after hundreds of folk-music enthusiasts had skirted police barricades and established a beachhead inside the park to protest a ban against singing there.

He was hustled away when the police moved in on a knot of singing enthusiasts massed around the park's fountain, the traditional site for songfests.

"We've been talking all day to prevent a hassle," the inspector shouted at his men, who were vaulting fences in an effort to head off the crowd. "Now look at the hassle you've caused

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Marc Felix is in this picture

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STUDENT IS SEIZED IN SONG PROTEST

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over one kid. Look at this chaos."

The crowd spilled onto Washington Square South, booing and shouting as a detective and a patrolman dragged the student down West Broadway.

"They're hitting him. They're punching him," a woman screamed, when the detective and the patrolman commandeered a taxi at Washington Square Village, a housing development, and forced the student inside.

"Look out," a photographer yelled, jumping out of the way as the taxi backed up to turn and rammed the side of a parked car.

At the Charles Street station, the student was identified as William French, 18 years old, of 327 West Twelfth Street, an undergraduate at New York University on the east edge of the park. He was charged with disorderly conduct and felonious assault.

Young French appeared in Night Court and was released in the custody of his parents for a hearing today in Adolescents Court.

The arresting officer, Detective David Yanolotos, said the student had kicked him when ordered to move away from the park fountain. The detective was treated for a cut shin at St. Vincent's Hospital.

A Different Version

A number of witnesses gave a different version, however. They said the detective had charged out of the center of the singing folk-music fans and had collided with young French, who was passing by.

The flare-up occurred about 5 P. M. after Inspector Real appeared to have eased tensions brought on by three hours of milling and hooting and a weak attempt to storm the south entrance to the park.

A group of forty enthusiasts, most of them of high school or early college age, had walked into the park by twos and threes and sat down on the sidewalk around the fountain.

Holding hands and forming a circle, they chanted "We demand the right to sing" and then started singing, "This Land Is My Land."

At that point the police moved in to break them up, but were restrained by Inspector Real, who talked to the sitters and won their applause.

Inspector Reasons

"You're young people," he said, "and there's a decision pending in the courts now on the ban. Now, if you want to add up you're going to make a mess out of everything and probably spoil the decision."

The decision, expected this week, will be on the ban on the traditional Sunday folk singing at the fountain imposed by



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ARRESTED IN PARK:
William French at the
Charles Street Police Station.

Park Commissioner Newbold
Morris.

As the inspector spoke, some

of the others in the surrounding crowd started making catcalls, but the sitters shouted, "Let him talk."

A few minutes later, another group standing in a knot nearby broke into song, ending the apparent truce and bringing in the police again. "The fuzz," someone yelled as the police closed in and Detective Yanolotos grabbed the student.

Earlier, about 300 fans had tried to rush into the park led by a teen-ager with an American flag and a youth with a guitar.

Fifty policemen on foot and ten more on horseback pushed them back behind barricades on Thompson Street, at the south end of the park.

The teen-ager with the flag later led a line of about twenty persons into the park from the north end. They marched silently around the fountain twice, then were led back out to Fifth Avenue.

The new flare-up was the latest development in a series of incidents following the ban.

Three weeks ago ten persons were arrested after a three-hour riot in the park. Last Sunday, about 2,000 fans rallied against the ban on Thompson Street.

On Saturday a number of Village residents, organized as the Right to Sing Committee, had warned of possible violence at the demonstration. They blamed the tension caused by the singing ban on the "irresponsibility and inaction of Mayor Wagner and Deputy Mayor Paul R. Screvane."

"We told them this would happen," said the Rev. Howard R. Moody, an organizer of the group and the pastor of Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square. "But they didn't seem to care."