

Attica A Year Later

Report Attacks Rockefeller Failure to Visit Prison

Attica, New York (CPS) -- On September 9, 1971, inmates at the Attica State Correctional Facility took control of the prison's "D" block and seized 38 prison guards as hostages. After four days of negotiations between inmates and prison officials, state police were called in by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, fired on the rebellions and quelled the rebellion.

As a result, 43 people were killed, including 11 of the hostages, and many others injured. It was later determined that all 43 had died from police bullets, despite earlier reports that many of the hostages had been killed by the inmates.

A grand jury investigating the rebellion is still meeting, making it one of the longest grand juries in history. Three commissions have been set up to investigate conditions at the prison.

September 12 the New York State Special McKay Commission on Attica came out with a report attacking Governor Rockefeller for failing to inspect conditions at the correctional facility before ordering the state police assault.

The Commission claimed that "no one can be sure whether the governor's presence would have succeeded in producing a settlement ...but... conditions (at the prison) made it appropriate for the governor to go to Attica."

The Commission's report attacked the governor for "committing the state's armed forces to the prison without first appearing on the scene and satisfying himself that there was no other alternative. It is possible that even without a grant of amnesty the governor's presence at Attica would have overcome inmate distrust of the state's commitment to reform and induced acceptance of the 28 points."

The 28 points were a list of demands drawn up by the prisoners, asking for better prison conditions and amnesty for the inmates after the rebellion. Only one of the major demands has been partially initiated.

Earlier this year ten black guards were hired to place minority group members on the security force. The guards represent 25 per cent of the total security force; 85 per cent of the inmates are either black or Spanish-speaking.

The report went on to claim that the presence of the governor would have been a stabilizing force on the state troopers and corrections officers who took part in the assault on the prison. The report criticized the governor's failure to accept a last minute proposal offered to him by his aides. The proposal was that the governor should go to Attica to negotiate further on the 28 points "if the inmates would first release the hostages and return to their cells."

The assault by the state police was condemned by the report as "faulty" since there was no way it could have saved the hostages "if the inmates had been intent on killing them." The report went on to blame poor planning and the lack of a unified command responsible for "coordinating the assault and the various state agencies involved" for the poor medical attention and rehousing services that the inmates received after the assault.

According to the Commission's report, the state's failure to supply police with "non-lethal weapons" along with the types of guns and ammunition that were used in the assault made the occurrence of death and injury "inevitable."

The Commission also criticized the inmates for "taking hostages as a means of bringing about changes in society, even where peaceful efforts of reform have failed."

The author of the report has vowed never to turn over his files on the Attica uprising to the special grand jury investigation. Many prisoners had agreed to talk to the committee on the promise that their testimony would be kept confidential.

The state's deputy attorney general, Robert Fischer, who is leading a separate investigation of the uprising, had subpoenaed the records of the McKay Commission, despite an alleged agreement with commission officials to keep these records secret.

A spokesman for the Attica Defense Committee claims that Fischer, in order to obtain information, had made deals with the prisoners. He claims that prisoners had been offered pardons, early paroles and transfers to minimum security prisons in return for testimony against those inmates involved in the uprising.

Governor Rockefeller failed to comment on the commission's statements concerning his role in uprising and the subsequent assault on the rebellion. He did congratulate the commission on its work, calling it "essential to carrying out our programs for improving our system of criminal justice."

Conditions at the Attica prison, however, have not improved in the year following the inmates unsuccessful attempts to deal with their situation, and many articles, reports and investigations dealing with the uprising, and inmates still receive poor wages for their work, and no efficient training plans have been enacted.

Defense lawyers for the leaders of the rebellion are not allowed to question prospective jurors in the grand jury investigation, many of whom are connected with prison employees who reside near the prison.

William Kunstler, the legal counsel for a number of the inmates, faces a jail term if he refuses to testify in the investigation.

On the anniversary of the Attica uprising, 200 to 300 people gathered outside the prison to pay homage to the 43 men killed during the assault despite having been denied a permit to hold their ceremony by Governor Rockefeller.

A grey stone memorial to the 11 guards had been built, and the dead inmates' families hope to place a sculpture honoring their relatives there also.

In New York City 500 people participated in a candle-light march through Harlem, following a hearse with a coffin symbolizing the Attica dead.

UFW Representatives Presents Lecture



U.F.W. representatives who presented lectures here last week. * * * *

Last week, representatives of the United Farm Workers Union presented lectures at Captiol Campus in an attempt to acquaint people with the plight of the migrant farm workers in this country.

Richard Trejo and Cheri Cinkoske, representatives working in the eastern Pennsylvania area, were on hand to provide information to those students interested in the current movement to improve conditions for the farm workers.

Among the topics discussed in the presentations were, accounts of the miserable living conditions of the migrant

workers, the obstacles they face in trying to unionize and improve their conditions, and the current boycott on lettuce which the U.F.W. hopes will bring the huge farming corporations to the bargaining tables.

In trying to help the boycott, we are printing a pledge which you, the reader, can sign if you feel that you would like to help the movement.

If you have any questions or seek any further information about the U.F.W. and its boycott you can contact Barbara McLane, 223 Wrisberg Hall or phone 944-7502.

Boycott Lettuce.



Migrant lettuce workers are on strike for their union. They want decent wages, toilets in the field, sanitary drinking water conditions. They want an end to racial discrimination on the job, protection from harmful pesticides, and an end to child labor in the fields.

Just as during the Grape Boycott farm workers have brought their cause to you, the American consumer, for your support. PLEASE DON'T BUY LETTUCE, OR EAT LETTUCE! PLEASE DON'T SERVE LETTUCE IN YOUR HOME, AND PLEASE REFUSE IT IF SOMEONE SERVES IT TO YOU.

There are many good substitutes for lettuce - spinach, cabbage, kale, endives, loose-leaf romaine mustard greens and celery.



Migrant workers who pick lettuce need YOUR help if they are to change their living and working conditions. They earn less than \$ 2,400 a year per entire family. Only a small portion of the lettuce industry has recognized their workers. You can be sure that lettuce is harvested under UFW contract only if you see the symbol of the farm workers - the Aztec eagle.

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TED SORENSEN

Special Assistant to the late President John Kennedy

GALLERY LOUNGE

Dear Cesar:

I support your non-violent efforts, I pledge to tell my freinds about the letuce boycott. I pledge to not eat or buy lettuce until the lettuce growers negotiate with the United Farm Workers.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____ PHONE _____

I can do volunteer work, Donate Money , Host a house meeting, Set up a speaking engagement at my church, school, union or organization .

United Farm Workers, 2536 N. Mascher St. Phila., Pa. 19133, Telephone: NE4-4145 or RE9-9111 labor-union opeiu-30 afl-cio
