

N.Y. Prisons Chief Had Big Reform Plans

Albany, N.Y.

Russell G. Oswald, the New York corrections commissioner, came to his job nine months ago as a strong advocate of prison reform.

The 62-year-old Oswald, a nationally recognized authority on criminal rehabilitation said in a recent interview:

"The real paradox, of course, is that we insist that people demonstrate to us that they can adjust in an abnormal situation in order to prove they can adjust on the outside."

OFFICE

He had been facing major challenges since he took office in December, over the merged departments of correction and parole.

He was promptly faced, too, with serious tensions at another prison at Auburn, torn by dissension last year.

The Attica revolt came at a time when Oswald was expressing his desire to improve prison conditions.

"I didn't expect this," he said at his Albany office when informed of the riot Thursday morning.

CHANGE

He had visited the prison in August, promising to expand the work-release program that would enable inmates to hold jobs outside the prison walls and predicted new libraries, better training programs for guards and home furlongs for inmates.

"I am certain you realize

Ohio School's New Chief

Cleveland, Ohio

Lewis A. Toepfer, acting president of Case Western Reserve University since October, has been elected president of the school, it was announced yesterday.

Ralph Besse, chairman of the CWRU trustees, said Toepfer was chosen unanimously by trustees in a special meeting Saturday.

Associated Press

change can't be accomplished overnight," he told inmates, "but I can assure you that changes will be made just a some changes already have taken place in the brief period of eight months."

Oswald has said that he believes the most serious problem prisoner today is the political activist.

"The issues posed by such prisoners are the most awesome challenge I have faced in a lifelong career in crimi-

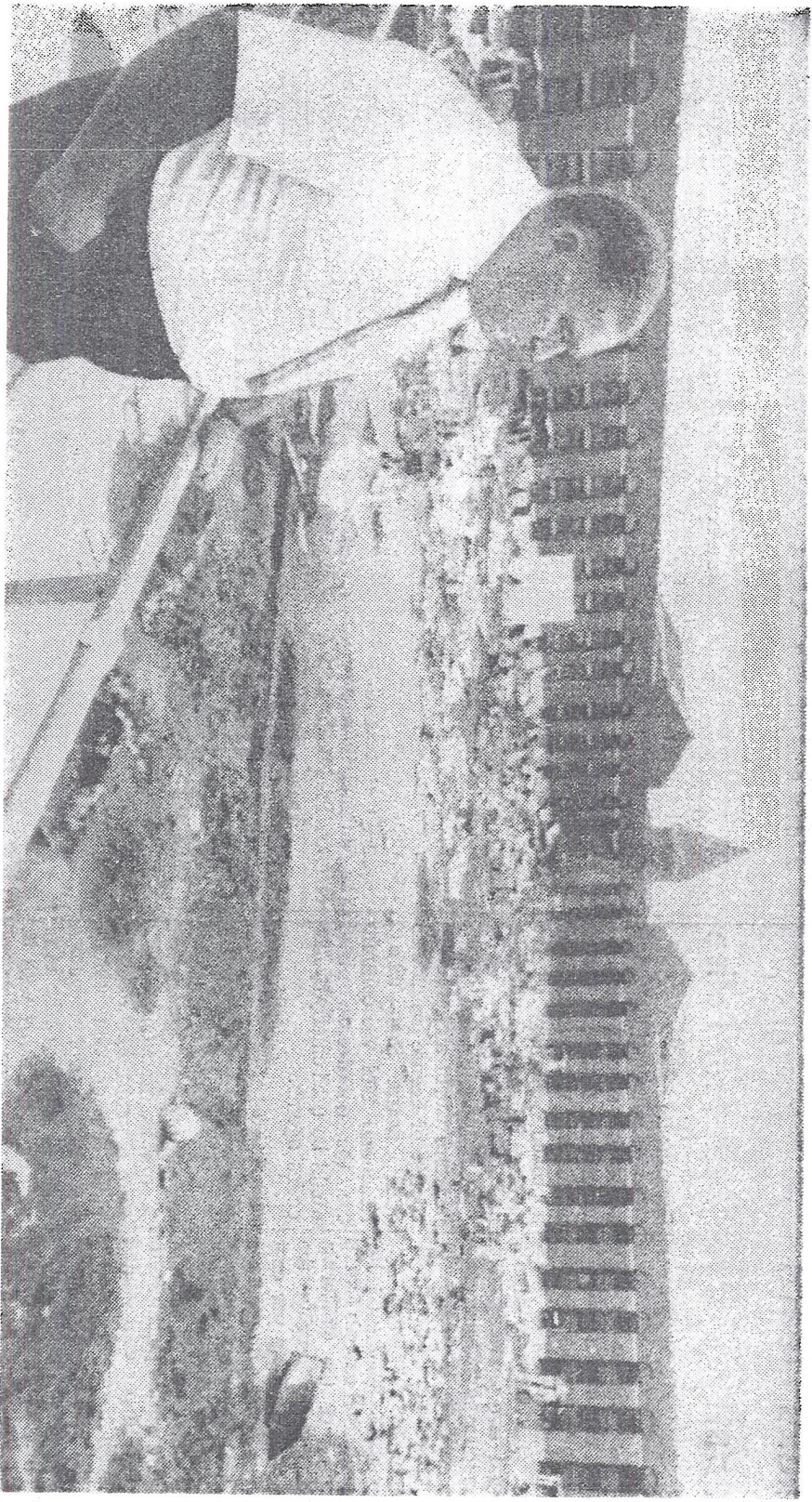
nology"

Noting that a majority of inmates are now black or Puerto Rican, he said, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea, and they have the idea that they are victims of a racist society, repressed by 'racist pigs' and racist institutions.

Oswald came to his position in New York from Massachusetts, where he had been correction commissioner.

There, local newspapers often sniped at him for "coddling" prisoners.

Associated Press



Corrections Commissioner Russell Oswald looked over the debris-strewn Cell Block D at Attica Prison

UPI Telephoto