

Attica 'Leaders' Charge Conditions Are Worse

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ATTICA, N. Y., Nov. 16 —

Two of the inmates of the Attica Correctional Facility who emerged as "leaders" of the 1,200-man prisoner revolt two months ago said today that an appearance by Governor Rockefeller at the prison during the tense negotiating period "would have saved lives."

Richard Clark, known as "Brother Richard" and Roger Champen, called "Champ" said in interviews inside the prison that the Governor's reluctance to go to Attica was a contributing factor in the 38 deaths that occurred when authorities assaulted and retook the prison from rebellious inmates on Sept. 13, five days after the uprising. In all, 43 men died as a result of the riot — 31 prisoners and 11 guards and prison employes who had been held hostage.

Clark and Champen were among six men who were designated as spokesmen by the 46 men who have been confined to Attica's solitary confinement block called HBZ since the insurrection was put down. All six interviewed today agreed that conditions had worsened rather than become better since the rioting.

Complaints Voiced

All said that their diets had not improved, that medical treatment had been perfunctory, that they had been harassed and threatened, that they had been beaten. Clark and Champen said they expected to be killed by prison guards.

The charges of ill treatment and brutality were denied this afternoon by Superintendent Vincent R. Mancusi in an interview in his office. "They will always say those things. I will deny them," he said.

Following a complicated series of procedures, Mr. Mancusi permitted the interviews following a departmental ruling last week by Russell G. Os-



C.B.S. News

Richard Clark during interview at Attica prison.

wald, State Commissioner of Correction, that newsmen would be permitted to enter Attica for the first time since the uprising.

The interviews were held in a tiled, desk-lined lecture room of the prison's reception building in the northwest section of the 50-acre compound, with one prison official present. Few vestiges of the rioting could be seen in the grassy field directly behind the 30-foot-high, 6-foot-thick concrete walls and the brick reception center.

D Block, which had been captured by the inmates, was hidden behind the walls of the other cell blocks. Observers who have been in the prison, however, say that the block is still in a shambles.

Maltreatment Not Evident

Each of the men interviewed wore white zippered coveralls and thin cloth sandals. Two wore socks. None exhibited outward signs of maltreatment, but all complained that they had been beaten, that they were not eating properly and that they have been subjected to psychological and physical abuse on a regular daily basis.

They stood behind a wooden lectern one at a time. Two lawyers — Herman Schwartz, a University of Buffalo law professor and director of the

American Civil Liberties Union's prisoners' rights project, and Dennis Cunningham of the National Lawyers Guild — alternated sitting beside the inmates as they requested.

They interrupted questioning, advised the men when not to speak, when they might compromise themselves before the forthcoming Wyoming County grand jury investigation, the impaneling of which began today.

The inmates refused to answer questions directly connected to the deaths inside the prison yard and those that bore upon the composition of the inmate government that grew in the captured yard. Clark and Champen refused to be designated as leaders. Clark said "there are 1,200 leaders."

'Afraid to Be Talking'

Clark came in first. He said that he felt "I'm going to be killed as soon as the support for us dies."

"The only thing that saved us is your seeing us," he said, alluding to the reporters present. "I'm afraid to be talking because I want to live."

He said that prison conditions were "worse" than they were before the riot.

He said HBZ inmates got one set of coveralls a week and one set of underwear, and were allowed to bathe only once a week, and with a lye-based soap. Clark, 25 years old, is serving a four-year term for an attempted robbery in the Bronx.

He was asked why inmates had not returned hostages when they won their 28 demands during the negotiating. "They weren't agreed to by Oswald," he said, "I don't care what they told you. He never agreed to them. Oswald was a puppet. Rockefeller pulled the strings."

Champen, who has already served 14 years of a 20-to-30-year robbery conviction, agreed with Clark that Governor Rockefeller's appearance at Attica could have "changed things."

"He would have saved live-

if he would have had the inclination to come down and see the people who he directed," he said. "If the Governor had come I believe it would have been done differently."

Champen, 39, said there had been no improvements in prison conditions. "They've retrogressed," he said. He derided the grand jury investigation and any court proceeding in which he might be involved. "You have a right to a grand jury of your peers, right?" he said. "How many blacks and Puerto Ricans live in Wyoming County?"

Gary Haynes, one of the two men of 46 in HBZ who are neither black nor Puerto Rican, said he was continually ha-

Since Rioting

arrassed by guards for "getting too friendly with blacks."

"The hacks come up with nigger lover," he said. "There's a lot of pressure if you're friendly with black people."

The red-haired 24-year-old youth, the victim of a terminal kidney disease, is one of those who contends that medical treatment was denied him.

Mr. Mancusi denied the inmates' allegations. He said that the report of lye-based soap was untrue, that "I'm told it's the same formula as Ivory." He asserted that reports that prisoners were being given experimental toothpaste was similarly untrue, that it was "Pepsodent without the label."