



FIRE AT RAHWAY: Firemen fighting a blaze in the wing held by rebellious inmates at the Rahway state prison The New York Times/John Soto

Warden and 5 Captured In Rahway Prison Revolt

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Special to The New York Times

WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP, N. J., Nov. 25 — Rebellious inmates seized the warden and five guards at the Rahway state prison last night and retained control today of an auditorium and two of the five cellblocks in the maximum-security institution.

Covering several barred windows with bedsheets scrawled with the word "Remember Attica," the prisoners, whose rebellion began during the showing of a movie, set fires and smashed panes of glass in one of the wings they controlled.

In midafternoon one of the guards who had been listed as a hostage was taken from the prison to Rahway Hospital for treatment of head and back injuries. However, at 8:30 P.M. a spokesman for the prison system said there were still six hostages in the prisoners' hands.

Early tonight a spokesman for Governor William T. Cahill said that the rebels had agreed to release one more hostage if three newsmen were allowed to enter the prison.

The remaining hostages, according to the spokesman's version of the agreement, would be released if the newsmen were allowed to bring out the prisoners' demands.

The spokesman, Thomas Flynn, said that three newsmen entered the prison early tonight, but that the inmates did not immediately respond by releasing another hostage.

The rebels were in control of two cellblocks housing about half of the 1,143 prisoners in the institution, but it was not clear how many were actually participating in the disturbance.

The revolt began about 10



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LISTS DEMANDS: A prisoner shouting to newsmen

o'clock last night with the seizure of Superintendent Vukasin S. Vukceovich and five guards in the prison auditorium.

It was not clear whether Mr. Vukceovich or any of the four guards still in the prisoner's hands were injured. Five guards were injured last night, none critically, in an unsuccessful effort to rescue the hostages.

Fire trucks played water on windows through which smoke from fires set by the prisoners was pouring. Correction officers, policemen and 150 state troopers were massed outside the prison, armed with rifles and holding masks.

The Governor's spokesman said there was no plan to storm the prison, but this was disputed by State Assemblyman George Richardson, a black Democrat from Newark.

Reporters and cameramen at the scene — except for the three permitted inside by agreement — were kept outside the Rahway prison walls today. Newsmen drew information from Thomas Durand, public information officer for the New Jersey Department of Institutions and Agencies, and from the few officials who would consent to interviews.

Mr. Richardson arrived at the prison at 8:40 A.M. and, he said, "they were within five or 10 minutes of going in." It was unclear whether there had been any assault plan.

Governor Near The Scene

The Governor, whose presence was demanded by the inmates, set up headquarters at the Woodbridge State School near the prison, but there was no indication that he planned to talk personally with prisoner representatives.

"We're trying to keep all our options open," the Governor's spokesman, Mr. Flynn, said.

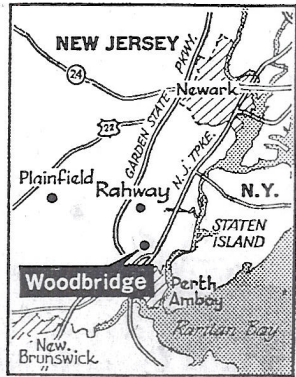
Mr. Flynn identified the newsmen who entered the prison tonight as Carl Zietz of The Associated Press, John Needham of United Press International and Stanley Terrill of The Newark Star-Ledger. He said the proposal for the release of the hostages had been put forward by Archibald Alexander, a member of the Rahway prison's board of governors, a civilian advisory group.

The four-day inmate rebellion at the Attica State Correctional Facility in upstate New York last September, which was put down in an assault by the state police and prison guards, led to the loss of 43 lives. Governor Rockefeller was criticized by many for his refusal to go to Attica.

The prisoners had not presented any formal list of demands to state authorities, according to Assemblyman Richardson. However, he said that since most of the inmates were black or Puerto Rican and most of the guards were white, the disturbance had racial overtones.

"It's a general range of complaints," Mr. Richardson explained, "part of it I think is a general lack of respect; it's what they call racism in the society, food and medical treatment—I assume the list would be the same as in Attica."

Assemblyman Richardson said that a black correction officer, a Captain Hicks from Leesburg State Prison in southern New Jersey, had arrived at



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Rahway and had conferred through the bars with prisoners.

"At the early stages this morning, the administration was most reluctant to establish any contact or dialogue or to admit that there was any need for negotiations," said Mr. Richardson. Electric power had been snuffed off, he said.

"Hopefully, if cool heads prevail, they might be able to work this thing out," he added.

Citizen Observers Asked

Mr. Richardson said he had asked that a citizen group be admitted to the prison to observe any police assault that might take place.

While no list of formal demands was available, inmates shouted some of them from behind barred windows to newsmen standing in front of the prison.

"Total amnesty! Total amnesty!" one prisoner yelled. "Get Governor Cahill."

But most of their words were lost in the icy wind and driving sleet that slanted across the cream-colored prison walls.

One inmate hung out a sheet bearing the words "Governor Cahill: Hostages will be released only when our demands are met."

Time and again through the day, prisoners set fires in the

windows nearest the clusters of television cameras that had been drawn to the scene.

One of several fire trucks that had been standing by approached the walls and sent a high-powered stream of water into the windows to extinguish the blazes.

Trouble Following Movie

Mr. Durand, reading from a prepared statement, described the takeover.

"At 10 P.M. Wednesday evening, following the showing of a film in the auditorium," he read, "one inmate jumped on stage and began making a speech about injustices in society. He said those who wished to leave could do so. About 150 remained out of the original audience of approximately 550. Superintendent Vukceovich went in to talk to them."

The superintendent was seized, along with five guards, whose names Mr. Durand gave as follows: Alfonse Iorio, Benjamin Henderson, Kenneth Koetsier, Anthony Piscatelli and John Motuinas.

Mr. Durand said the three officers who were hospitalized were Robert Madigan, Gerald

Guillen and Edward O'Beirne. Two others, George Riffle and Robert Lisicki, were treated and released.

A young man who identified himself as Charles Leonard, a Red Cross worker who had been in the prison, said that four other guards had locked themselves in bathrooms and had escaped later in the day through windows. He also repeated the rumors that the warden had been injured, but these could not be confirmed.

In mid-afternoon, Mr. Durand appeared in front of the prison to announce that "the Governor has been in constant conferences and is still conferring in person" with a number of state officials, including State Attorney General George Kugler; Colonel Kelly; Dr. Maurice G. Cott, acting commissioner of institutions and agencies; Stanley Van Ness, the State Public Defender, and two members of the Board of Control, Lloyd Wescott and Raymond Brown. The board has policy jurisdiction over the state prison system.

Attorney General Kugler entered the prison late in the day. By then the state troopers had been withdrawn, and a rumor circulated among policemen and firemen in front of the prison that probably no assault to retake the captured wing would be conducted tonight.