

ATTICA DEATH TOLL 37

9 Hostages Slain as Prison Retaken

Troops Crush Revolt
28 Cons Die in Final Battle

Final Battle

Examiner News Services

ATTICA (N.Y.) — Nine hostages and 28 convicts were killed today as state police, backed by helicopters dropping tear gas, shot their way into Attica state prison to put down a four-day rebellion.

The insurgent inmates had held 38 hostages since the outbreak erupted last Thursday. Twenty-nine hostages were freed, including four in critical condition.

Eight of the surviving hostages were thrown into a pit and doused with gasoline but at the last minute the convicts decided not to set them afire.

Some of the dead hostages had throats slashed. One was shot to death.

A state police sergeant who asked not to be named said the main fighting took eight to 10 minutes.

'Shot on Spot'

"When the helicopters came over the prisoners just slit the throats of the hostages they were holding," he said. "Sharpshooters were able to save some of them by knocking off the prisoners that were holding them."

"Each of us had an executioner assigned to us," Lynn Johnson, 25, a correction officer said. "The sharpshooters saved many lives."

Temporary hospital facilities were set up inside the

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WAITING FOR NEWS—IT MAY BE TERRIBLE, IT MAY BE GOOD
Relatives of hostages held in Attica gathered at prison gates

—AP Photo

—From Page 1

prison where a bloodstained medic said at least 100 injured inmates were being treated. He said some of them were so seriously hurt that he thought they would die.

More than 500 pounds of blood was rushed in.

The sergeant said that most of the inmates who killed hostages "were shot on the spot."

A helicopter decoyed the prisoners at the start of the assault by flying over one corner of Cellblock "D." When the prisoners seemed distracted, two other choppers began dropping tear gas and the authorities opened fire as they attacked the high-walled prison.

Returned to Cells

Five hours after the massive assault began, the entire 54-acre facility was under police control. Troopers and Guardsmen systematically returned the 1000 inmates — mostly blacks and Puerto Ricans — who took part in the revolt to their cells.

A spokesman for Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller said some of the hostage guards and villainous prison employes had been killed hours before the all-out assault on a lone cellblock still in convict hands. The governor called them "cold-blooded killings" by revolutionary militants.

Only one death had been recorded prior to the final storming of the prison yard. A guard injured in the early hours of the riot Thursday died Saturday.

Amid the rampage, one of the hostages, guard Captain Elmer Huehen, found his life spared by a convict assigned to kill him, who whispered instead:

"I don't have the heart to do it. I'm only going to prick you."

Huehen said the prisoner nicked him enough to draw blood, then lay down on top of him so other convicts would not notice he was still alive.

Negroes, Puerto Ricans

About 85 percent of the convicts in the 40-year-old prison 40 miles east of Buffalo are Negro or Puerto Rican. Their guards are white.

With Rockefeller's approval, State Corrections Commissioner Russell G. Oswald gave up efforts to negotiate the hostages' release after nearly four days of trying. He said the mutineers "calously herded eight hostages within our view with weapons at their throats."

Oswald said the demand for total amnesty was out of the question.

When Oswald's ultimatum to release the hostages was ignored, he unleashed the state's armed forces. They were armed with shotguns and rifles, and had helicopter support.

Made Guns

The prisoners, driven back early in the riot to Cellblock D and its adjoining yard, had started out with only clubs and their fists as weapons.

But Oswald said they had since armed themselves with zipguns and knives made in a captured prison workshop.

At the same time, he said, they were filling underground tunnels with electrically triggered explosives, and power was shut off to prevent them from setting off the charges.

Found Bodies

State troopers and deputies stormed through the front gate toward the cellblock, halted for several moments by barricades at every intersection.

When they entered the outer part of the cellblock, they found eight bodies.

"It was horrible, just unbelievable," one trooper said.

Twenty minutes after the assault began, a National Guard artillery battalion entered with several hundred men and Red Cross ambulances. Three hours later, a plea went out for more ambulances to bring out the dead and injured from the gray walled prison.

Wired Tunnels

An Army demolition team discovered explosives inside the prison and said the prisoners had dug underground tunnels and wired them with homemade bombs.

A light rain fell on the prison throughout the morning. Tear gas clung like fog to the prison buildings.

Although it took five hours to regain control of the prison, the main action lasted about an hour and a half.

Troopers said they were slowed by barricades at every turn.

Within a few minutes, the first of the freed hostages stumbled drawn and tired through the prison gates. All looked haggard, but they had been given clean prison clothes and a chance to wash and shave.

As an official began reading a list of those released, the mother and wife of one guard who were standing nearby began crying hysterically as the name they were waiting for was read.

Capt. Frank Ward, a prison guard, told newsmen a knife was being held at his throat when the assault began.

"Troopers apparently on the prison wall picked off the man who was holding the knife to me," he said. "Suddenly a bomb or something went off and knocked me down and I was unconscious for about five minutes."

The convicts left him lying on the floor, and he was released.

Ward said when the rioting broke out Thursday, he and two other guards barricaded themselves in a room.

He said the prisoners tried to set fire to them through the windows and finally broke down the door, capturing them.

'Monstrous'

Attorney William Kunstler, a white legal advocate for black militants, was among a group of outsiders who tried to mediate the deadlock over the hostages, at the request of the rioters. He accused Rockefeller in the assault on Cellblock D of a "monstrous act."

"Officials never seem to

learn." Kunstler went on, "that patience is a virtue and, in this case, would have been a life-saver . . . There would have been room for negotiations if it took six months, or a year."

The riot began following breakfast last Thursday. It apparently stemmed directly from an altercation the night before between a guard and an inmate, with the convict landing in solitary confinement.

Demands

But wide-ranging purported grievances of the convicts were reflected in a series of demands, of which 28 were agreed to by Oswald. They ranged from the prison diet to the application of state minimum wage laws in prisons workshops and a reorientation of guards toward better understanding of prisoners' problems.

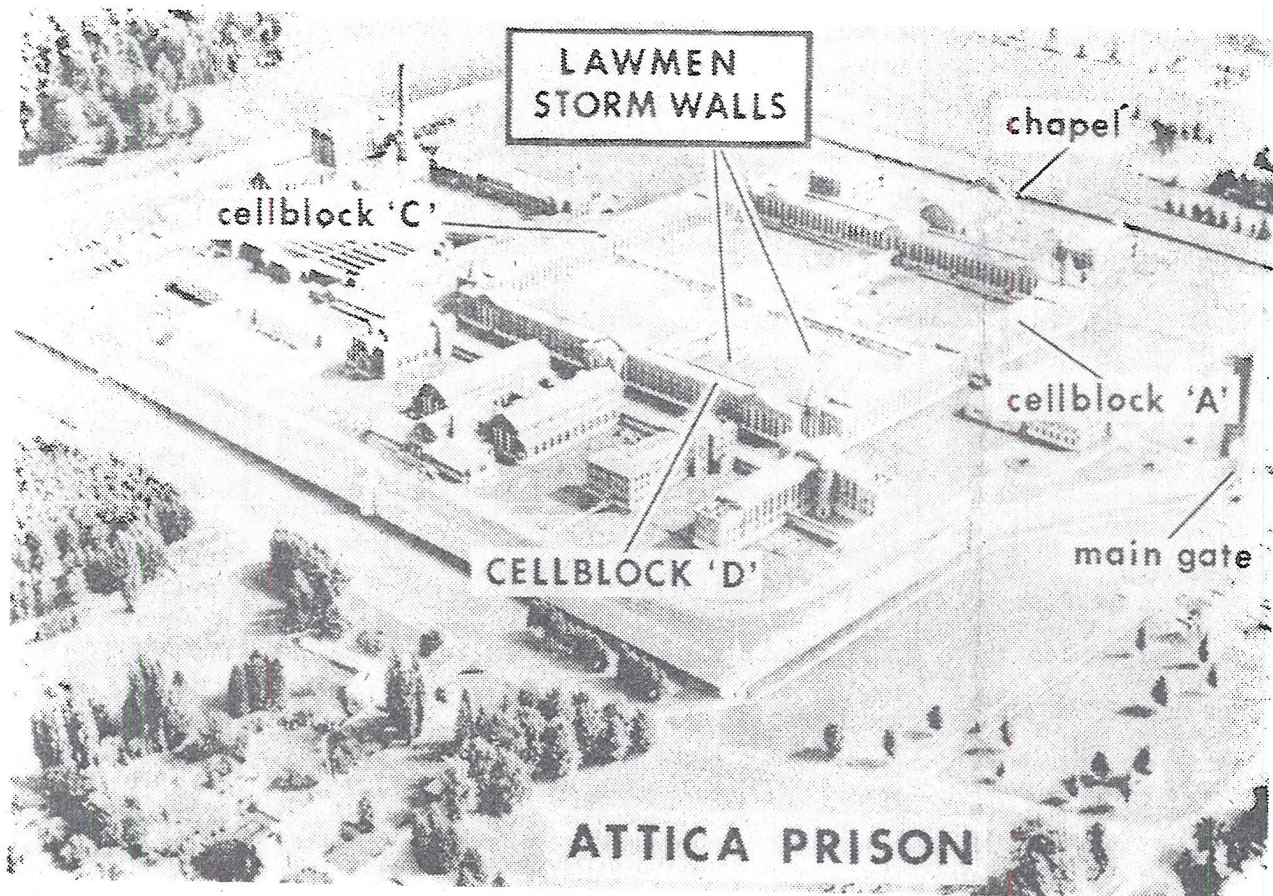
Then on Friday, the convicts tossed in their demand for total amnesty, plus the freedom and transportation of any prisoners wishing to seek asylum in a "non-imperialistic country."

Another of the so-called mediators admitted to Attica at the rioters' request was Black Panther Chairman Bobby Seale. He returned to San Francisco yesterday, saying he was delivering a message from Attica prisoners to the Black Panther Central Committee.

'Political Prisoners'

Seale claimed the rioters' price for release of the Attica hostages was freedom from the nation's prisons of all "political prisoners," including Angela Davis, and the Soledad Brothers.

Faced with demands they deemed impossible to satisfy,



THE LAYOUT AT ATTICA PRISON, SCENE OF TODAY'S SLAUGHTER

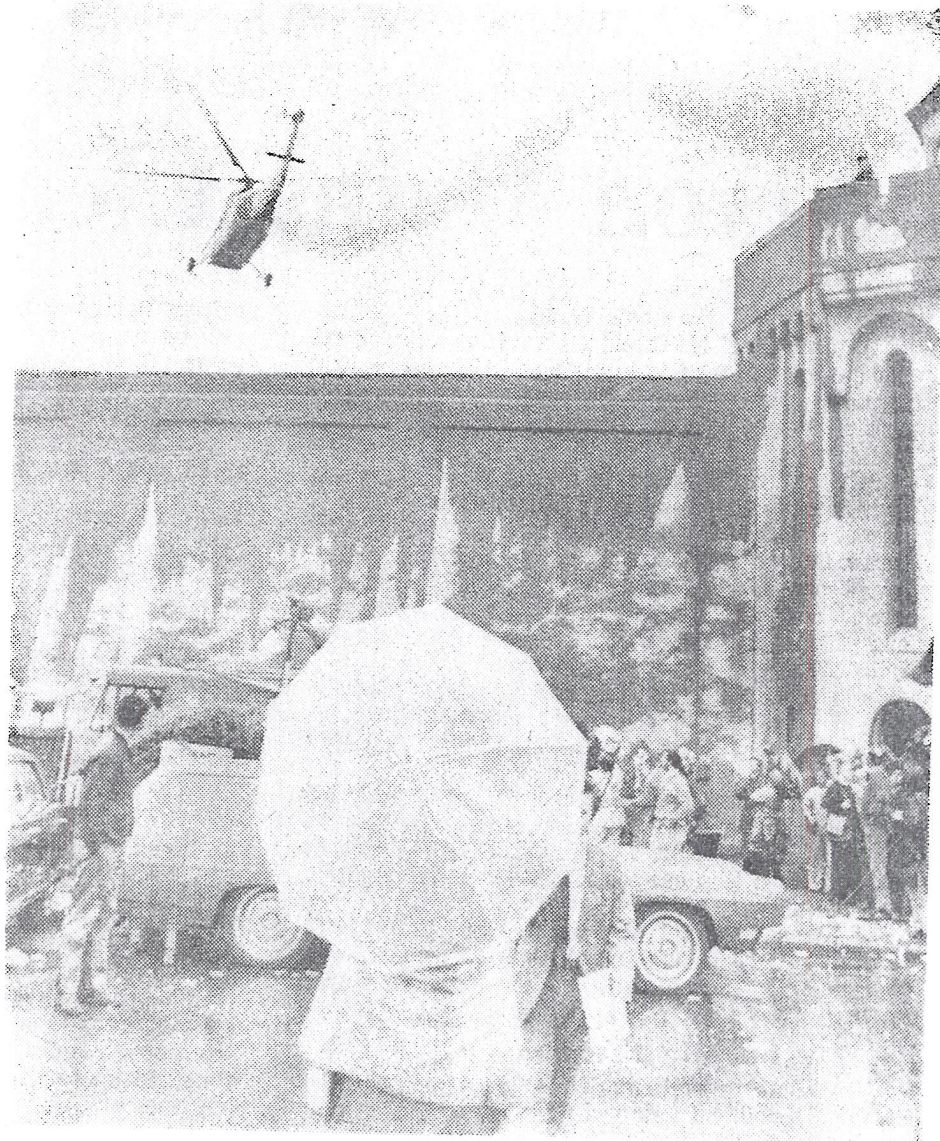
After helicopters dropped tear gas, law enforcement agents stormed into beleaguered Cellblock D

state officials came to the conclusion that further negotiations were fruitless.

Rockefeller said yesterday he didn't have the constitu-

tional authority to grant amnesty and even if he had, he wouldn't do it.

Rockefeller had refused demands of the rioters that he



BEGINNING OF THE ASSAULT ON ATTICA PRISON

A helicopter roars across the area, dropping tear gas on inmates

—AP Photo

come to Attica to discuss their demands.

He said he saw nothing to be served by his presence in the prison yard.

However, the governor postponed a scheduled flight to Puerto Rico for a governor's conference to stand by in New York.

Complicating the amnesty demand was the death Saturday of William Quinn, 28, a guard and the father of two children.