

Visiting Day at Attica Stirs New Charges of Brutality

By ERIC PACE

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ATTICA, N. Y., Sept. 29—

More than 200 visitors streamed through Attica prison's iron gate to spend an hour with inmate relatives today, and many emerged weeping, relaying prisoners' accounts of brutality since the four-day revolt here was put down.

Mrs. Leo Paul of Rochester said her son Michael had told her: "They're all getting treated the same way in there: rough." He said they can't do much more to him.

Mrs. Dorothy Trimmer of Buffalo said her son Wayne had been "savagely beaten" about the genitals and elsewhere and had been forced to walk over broken glass.

Mrs. Paul and Mrs. Trimmer were among the relatives who lined up to visit 133 inmates on the first visiting day since the revolt was crushed on Sept. 13.

Abuses Charged

When they emerged, many of the visitors told newsmen at the gate that their inmate relatives had said that guards had carried off prisoners' crucifixes and other possessions and stomped and smashed their glasses and dentures.

They said prisoners also had complained of verbal abuse by trooper and guards, poor medical care and scanty meals.

These charges elicited a written statement from Deputy Corrections Commissioner Walter Dunbar in which he acknowledged that inmates' personal property had been pilfered and eyeglasses and false teeth had been taken away and broken.

He did not say who had done the pilfering. But critics of the Attica prison administration have said that authorities cleared out all the belongings from many prisoners' cells.

One inmate's mother, Mrs. Bertha Hanley, said that when state troopers went past cells and saw photographs of blacks, they said: "This is a nigger cell, Destroy it."

A Record for Visiting

Today was the prison's first visiting day since the five-day revolt by convicts ended Sept. 13 at a cost of 42 lives. Officials said that more than 200 relatives had visited the 133 inmates—more than in any one day since the prison was built 40 years ago.

Mrs. Trimmer said the officials who had beaten her son had been "very careful not to mark his face . . . they made the men take their false teeth out and stepped on them."

She said her son had been singled out for persecution because of an interview she had given to an upstate paper. After the state regained control of the prison on Sept. 13, Mrs. Trimmer said, a guard told her son, "I wasted a lot of bullets trying to get you."

Now, she said, her son had

told her that guards sometimes pointed high-powered rifles at prisoners' heads to cow them.

The visitor seemed to agree that the beatings had stopped, although some complained that the prisoners were still being harassed by being awakened by guards in the middle of the night for "head counts."

A hush fell on the little throng of visitors waiting at the gate as Deputy Commissioner Dunbar, looking flushed and tired, emerged and drove away after a curt "good morning."

Statement by Dunbar

Mimeographed copies of his statement were distributed by an aide after the 9 to 3:30 P.M. visiting hours were over and the visitors had dispersed. Following is the text:

Statement by Walter Dunbar, Executive Deputy Commissioner Department of Correctional Services, in response to allegations made by visitors to inmates of Attica Correctional Facility, Wednesday, Sept. 29, 1971, under general headings:

Indiscriminate Shooting—
This is a matter of continuing investigation, and no comment can be made concerning this.

Loss of Personal Property of Inmates—Clean-up operations continue, and correction officers are sorting damaged and pilfered property for salvage and identification, for return as quickly as possible to original owners.

Mistreatment of Inmates—Any specific complaints of physical abuse are to be investigated by Deputy Attorney General [Robert] Fischer. Volunteer medical teams have provided medical and health services throughout the facility.

Verbal Abuse—Monitoring reports of all cellblocks indicate a minimal amount of problems between staff and inmates.

Loss of Eyeglasses and Dentures—A complete record of breakage and losses has been made. Dentures will be replaced or repaired as quickly as possible. Glasses will also be replaced according to the currently existing prescription. The Goldman Committee continues its work of monitoring staff-inmate relationships and providing assurance that inmate rights are protected.

Additionally, a tired, hard-working correction officer staff continues the difficult job of cleaning the institution, salvaging inmate property for identification and return to owners, bringing three meals a day to those inmates still in their cells, supervising the exercise of an expanding number of inmates in the yards, work details and, of course, the hundreds of visitors arriving to visit inmates on the first day visitations have resumed.