

# Massachusetts Prisoner Strikes Go On Despite Concession on Mail Censorship

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WALPOLE, Mass., Sept. 29—A surprise decision by state officials to end all censorship of prison mail failed to bring the immediate end of prison strikes here, and a third night of uneasiness settled over two prisons in rebellion.

Officials had hoped that this major concession, in addition to other minor concessions made after two days of negotiations, would send some 1,300 prisoners at the Walpole and Norfolk prisons back to work. But, by day's end, negotiations at Norfolk had broken down, and it was still unclear at either institution whether the prolonged, but peaceful, strike would end tomorrow.

"We decided that after we had shown our good faith by meeting with inmate committees and granting some concessions and then announcing the end to censorship, the men would go back to work so we could continue to negotiate in a more orderly manner," said the State Commissioner of Corrections, John Fitzpatrick, at the end of negotiations at Norfolk. "But it has become a matter of give, give, give and we cannot continue to negotiate under this kind of pressure."

## 'No Work, No Talk'

Meetings with four of 15 committees of inmates scheduled for today were canceled, and it was still unclear tonight whether the prisoners — some 100 of them said to be enforcing a continuation of the strike—would return to work.

"It's simply a matter now," Commissioner Fitzpatrick added "of no work, no talk."

He would not say how long officials were willing to wait for the rebellious inmates, adding that such decisions would have to be made on a day-to-day basis.

Meanwhile, less than a mile away, at Walpole prison, there was a feeling of optimism, after an emotional, five-hour meeting between inmates and members of the news media, that the strike of about 600 prisoners might end tomorrow.

At that meeting, arranged by prison officials as part of an agreement by which prisoners would return to their daily routine, about 50 inmates stated—sometimes harshly, sometimes with a quiet rage—their grievances against the system.

Under the glare of television lights and spurred on by the roaring shouts of several hundred inmates in the prison's auditorium, prisoner after prisoner pleaded for "understanding from you people outside that we are human beings."

## Jackson Killing Cited

Although key issues in the strike, such as reform of the state's parole system and higher wages for prison work, were at times lost in the catalogues of personal complaints, the main thrust was clear: The prisoners were asking for a system that would rehabilitate them and help them return to the outside world.

"Our strike," said John Mc-Cambridge, "was the result of two factors. The first was George Jackson being killed at San Quentin; it started to set up a mood here, to pull blacks and whites together. Then 43 people were murdered at Attica ('murdered! murdered!' the audience shouted). These things created an atmosphere, an attitude, a feeling — the dawning of hope that people on the outside might begin to realize we are human beings."

A number of public officials, including two sheriffs and members of the legislature, also spoke at the meeting and agreed to work outside for prison reform and to work with a new citizens committee on prison reform appointed by the Governor yesterday.

The prison superintendent, Robert J. Moore, however, seemed unimpressed. "It was a Roman carnival," he told newsmen later. "They were unfair to the institution."

Commissioner Fitzpatrick, haggard and red-eyed from sleepless nights, said he was hopeful, as long as the men

continued to talk and peacefully pressed their grievances.

"This is all so new," he said quietly. "There's no body of knowledge to fall back on on these days. I just wish, somehow, there was a group of experts to get together and discuss these things."

## Virginia Prisoners Locked Up

RICHMOND, Sept. 27—Most of the 1,123 prisoners at the

Virginia State Penitentiary were locked in their cells today in what prison officials said was a precaution against the rumored possibility of a demonstration Saturday.

Late today the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia called a news conference to issue what they said were 14 demands or grievances by inmates. Prison officials said they had received no such list.