

NYTimes

3 INMATES CHARGE THREATS IN ATTICA

Tell a U.S. Hearing Guards Beat and Harassed Them After End of Uprising

By JAMES F. CLARITY

BUFFALO, Sept. 30—Three inmates of the Attica Correctional Facility testified today that guards had beaten them and repeatedly threatened their lives since the rebellion at the prison was quelled Sept. 13.

The inmates, who are being held in a special section of the prison with about 50 men believed to have been most active in the revolt, were the first prisoners allowed to speak publicly since the uprising ended. They appeared in United States District Court at a hearing on allegations that they were being physically abused and deprived of their legal papers in violation of their constitutional rights.

Because all the actions involve the period after the end of the uprising, Federal Judge John T. Curtin ruled that the hearing would not cover the events of the uprising itself. Lawyers for the inmates are seeking permission to represent the prisoners as a group and court orders enjoining the prison from continuing the alleged abuses.

Judge Curtin denied a request that the three inmates be placed in the Erie County Jail rather than remain at Attica. He did, however, issue an order from the bench that prison officials should refrain from "verbal abuse" of inmates.

'Respectful Treatment'

Before the inmates spoke, the facility's superintendent, Vincent R. Mancusi, who has been publicly silent on the revolt and its aftermath, testified that after the suppression of the revolt, he had issued an order that he expected "courteous, respectful treatment from the inmates and to the inmates."

He said he "wanted to make sure no officer was in an emotional state that might result in mistreatment of an inmate." Under questioning, however, he conceded that eight correction officers had been relieved of duty Sept. 13 because of their emotional condition.

Mr. Mancusi said that about 50 of the prisoners involved in the revolt were being kept in a

segregated section of the prison known as Housing Block Z. Inmates were put in the section, he said, based on his own knowledge, that of other officials and on newspaper pictures.

Such prisoners, he said, "I believe were the people who had been among the fomenters, or leaders, or had taken active participation in the disturbance."

Frank Lott, one of the inmates who testified, said that immediately after the prison was retaken by state troopers and guards he was forced to strip. "They herded us into a cellblock officers on both side of the gantlet hit us with sticks and belts," he said.

According to Lott, it took him 10 to 20 seconds to run the gantlet, with one hand tied behind his back. He added that the side of his body was skinned later when he was dragged along the ground.

Incidents Cited

On the night of the 13th, Lott said, two guards led him into a prison yard and "put guns at my head." He said one guard had asked him: "What's the matter? You're not going to beg?" Lott said he had not replied.

On another night, the inmate said, Carl Pfeil, deputy assistant superintendent, and 12 or 13 guards approached his cell and one of them said: "Turn around, coon. Let me see your mouth."

Lott said the group had gone from cell to cell "threatening the other guys that they were going to kill them." Of such alleged treatment, he said: "This is every night. Not just one night."

Lott said also that prison officials had told him that legal papers he had compiled "for many years" had been "destroyed."

Lott said that in Housing Block Z the food was "all pork meals" except for breakfast and when public officials were scheduled to visit the prison. Mr. Mancusi had testified that pork was served in the facility "about three times a week." Many of the inmates at Attica and other prisons in the state say they will not eat pork because it violates the religious tenets of the Black Muslims.

'Kicked in the Throat'

Another inmate, Roger Champen, testified that after the revolt ended, "I was told to crawl on the ground."

As he was crawling, he said, "I was snatched by my collar and kicked in the throat and hit in the head" by an officer he identified only as "Redick."

Then, he said, he was stripped, taken to a wall, his feet spread

apart, and "a man marked an X on my back" with chalk. "I was spit upon and matches were thrown at me," he added. Then, Champen said, "They beat us down the hall into the cells."

That night, he said, "the officers became hysterical, sticking their guns through the bars, telling us one of them was castrated."

Champen also said that Mr. Pfeil and other guards went through the prison threatening the lives of prisoners and using abusive language. "Blacks, Puerto Ricans and poor white brothers" were all called "niggers," he testified.

Champen said "several hundred dollars worth" of his law books were missing.

The third inmate at the hearing, Herbert X. Blyden, said that he, too, had been beaten and that his life had been threatened by guards. But he declined to specify his injuries. He said that one prison official had told him he was being saved "for the electric chair."

Deputy Attorney General Robert E. Fischer, who is investigating the uprising for the state, represented state officials involved in the court action. He did not challenge the inmates' account.

Mr. Fischer asked them repeatedly if they had been visited a number of times by their lawyers and various public officials. The inmates said they had.

Judge Curtin adjourned the case until Monday at 10 A.M.

Weapons Are Sought

By ERIC PACE

Special to The New York Times

ATTICA, N. Y., Sept. 30—State officials disclosed today that anxiety over possible weapons hidden inside Attica prison was so great that five teams of security men armed

with mobile metal-detecting devices had been set to searching the prison compound.

Confirming the disclosure, a spokesman for the State Correction Department said the detectors were probably being used to search for, among other things, "shivs," as convicts' illegal knives are known.

Officials at the prison declined to comment, but one guard called through an iron gate, "shivs can hurt you."

Man ylong-time guards feel that laxness in such matters as searching for inmates' hidden knives underlie this month's revolt, in which 42 persons died. One former hostage said privately today, "They better look for those things, there's lives at stake."

Protection Against Attacks

Many inmates value homemade bladed weapons as defensive arms to ward off homosexual or other attacks. Edged weapons of various kinds were used and displayed during the four-day rebellion, and three prisoners were later found slashed to death, apparently by their fellow inmates.

The spokesman, reached in Albany, confirmed reports that a cell-by-cell search had also been undertaken.

Other developments here included the following:

Officials reported that 32 out of 200 guards on the prison day shifts reported sick today. Officials said this was a normal absentee figure, but sources close to the guards' union said it was abnormally high and reflected low guard morale since the revolt.

A Buffalo rabbi, Daniel E. Kerman, arrived at the prison to hold an abbreviated, belated Yom Kippur service for 14 Jewish inmates. Rabbi Kerman said one of the alleged rebel leaders, Jerry Rosenberg, would not be able to attend the service, which was to be held in the prison's reception building, because he was being kept in the prison segregation area.

Two of the 42 dead are unofficially said to have been Jewish. About two dozen practicing Jews were in the prison at the outbreak of the revolt. Several have been transferred to other prisons since then, the rabbi said. A total of 1,250 inmates remains here.