

# Recent Uprisings at Prisons Similar to Those in 1920's

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Rebellions in state and local prisons have been characterized by penologists as a symptom of troubled times, and many penologists—along with politicians as well as prisoners—believe the number of prison disturbances is certain to increase.

One of the bloodiest prison riots in recent years—at the Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York last September—led to the loss of 43 lives.

In the two years before the Attica riot there were major outbreaks at San Quintin Prison in California, the Kansas State Penitentiary, Philadelphia Holmesburg Prison, major New York City facilities and other prisons.

In 1968, five convicts were shot to death at the Ohio State Penitentiary as a riot there was being quelled. The same year 700 rebellious inmates did about \$2-million worth of damage to the Oregon Penitentiary.

Since the Attica riot there have been major uprisings in the Massachusetts state prisons and at the Pontiac branch of the Illinois State Penitentiary, where two prisoners were wounded.

## Symptom of Problems

Many penologists, ex-convicts and prison administrators agree with former City Correction Commissioner George F. McGrath, who said in August, 1970, that rioting in five New York City prisons was symptomatic of complex social issues.

But others agree with the sentiments expressed after the Attica uprising by Senator James L. Buckley, New York Conservative-Republican, and Vice President Agnew. They said lenient courts and a lack of respect for law and order were the causes of recent prison problems.

Almost all those concerned have stated that there is a new militancy among prisoners, especially black prisoners, reflecting the ideas and militancy

that developed outside prison walls in the nineteen-sixties.

For whatever reasons the recent prison revolts occurred, they were more reminiscent in their violence and demands of prison riots in the late nineteen-twenties than they were of riots in the early nineteen-fifties, when a series of prison disturbances broke out across the country.

In 1952 and 1953 there were 20 major prison riots. Federal prisons—then as now—were relatively unaffected by the disturbances.

New Jersey had four prison outbreaks during that period. In March and April, 1952, Trenton State Prison exploded twice and again in May of that year. At Rahway, there was a five-day revolt.

## Prison Riots Listed

Other riots in that period occurred at Southern Michigan Prison, San Francisco County Jail, Louisiana Penitentiary, Idaho State Penitentiary, Central Prison in Raleigh, N. C., Kentucky State Prison, Soledad State Prison in California, Concord (Mass.) State Reformatory, Menard (Ill.) State Prison, Utah State Prison, Ohio Penitentiary and Pennsylvania State Penitentiary.

Although inmates rebelled at some of the institutions more than once during this period and much property was damaged, only one person was killed.

In the late nineteen-twenties, however, many died as a result of prison riots.

At Folsom Prison in California, for example, nine prisoners and three guards taken as hostages were killed in 1927 after battles between inmates and men of the National Guard.

In 1929, three prisoners were killed at Clinton Prison at Danmora, N. Y., during riots on July 22 and six days later two more inmates and three guards were killed at the State Prison at Auburn, N. Y.

Seven guards were murdered at Colorado State Prison in October of that year during an abortive escape attempt in which five convicts involved reportedly committed suicide.

In December, 1929, another riot at Auburn resulted in the deaths of eight inmates and a hostage prison administrator.

The only riot in which more persons were killed than at Attica occurred on April 21, 1930, at the Ohio state penitentiary when 317 inmates locked in their cells died because of a fire set by other, rioting, inmates.



The New York Times

**MEETS WITH INMATES:**  
Assemblyman George Richardson of Newark talking to newsmen after he conferred with inmates.

## Flood Disrupts IRT Service

A water-main break at 2:30 yesterday near a construction site in the vicinity of Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, flooded some streets and halted service on two IRT subway lines till 5:15 A.M. No trains were trapped between stops. The police said the break cut a pavement hole about four by six feet, just south of the intersection of Grand Army Plaza and Flatbush Avenue in the Park Slope section. The cause of the break was not determined.