

## Rahway and Attica Lessons

To the Editor:

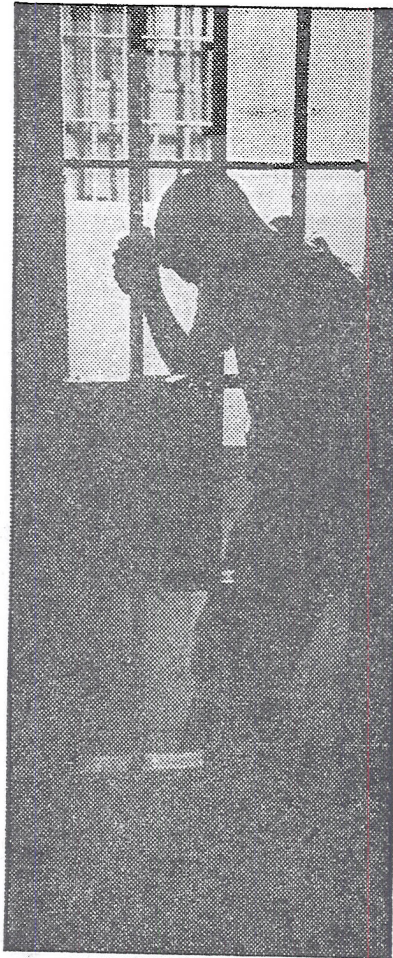
Your recent editorial "Now, Remember Rahway" appropriately compares the disaster of Attica with the constructive solution worked out by the officials of New Jersey. The experience at Rahway again gives evidence of prison reforms that are immediately available without further tax burdens. For example, the following suggestions could change the negative environment of the New York State prison system dramatically:

¶Governor Rockefeller should appoint for each state prison facility a special Board of Visitors comprising representatives of the concerned state-wide community who would have the power to visit anywhere within the prison at any time and the public responsibility of making quarterly public reports.

¶The inmates in each state prison facility should be permitted to elect representatives who will meet on a regular basis to discuss grievances and other prison problems with a committee composed of correctional personnel, Board of Visitor representatives, agents of the Legislature, among others, to hear and resolve grievances.

These steps could be implemented practically overnight. There is no progress in prison reform by making scapegoats or polarizing attitudes. Our major task is to make the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent in our city and state prison systems socially accountable in terms of reduced crime and violence.

The simple steps suggested are only a beginning, but they could show that



Charles Gatewood

we have learned some lessons from both Attica and Rahway.

WILLIAM J. VANDEN HEUVEL  
Chairman, N.Y.C. Board of Correction  
New York, Dec. 15, 1971