

ATTICA

WE ARE ATTICA

Interviews with Prisoners from Attica

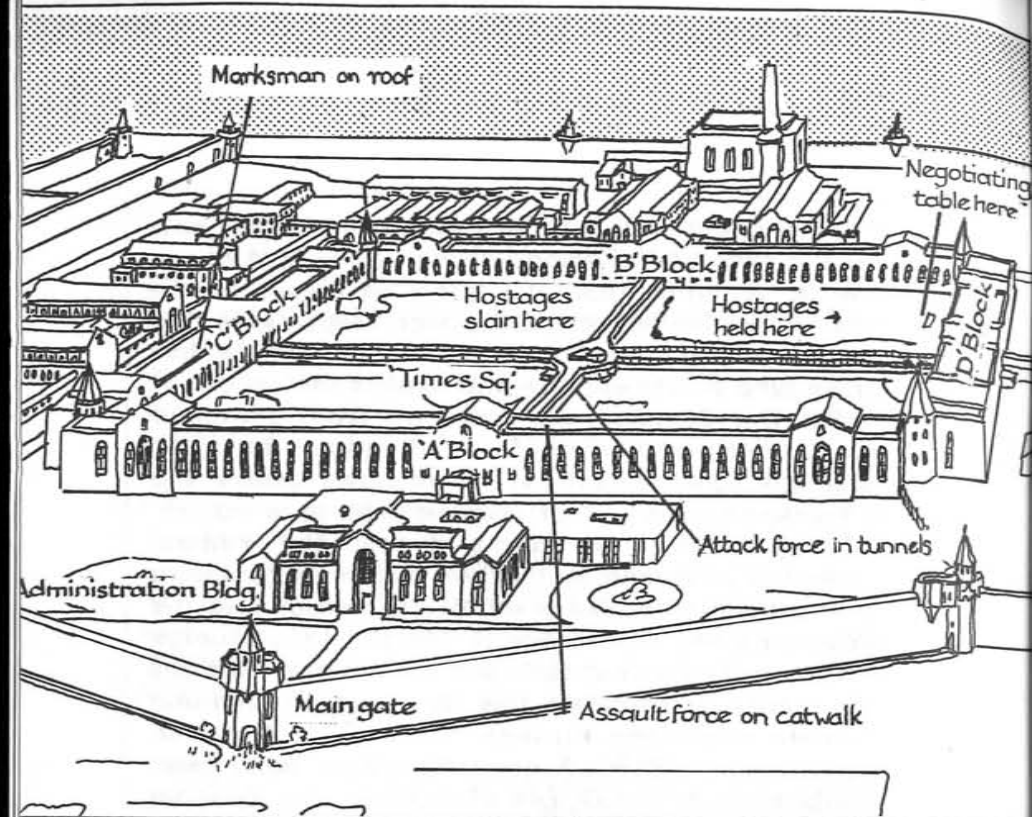
ATTICA DEFENSE COMMITTEE
GENERAL DELIVERY - BIDWELL STATION
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14222

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The People of the United States of America: first of all we want it to be known that in the past we have had some very, very, treacherous experiences with the Department of Correction of New York State. They have promised us many things and they are giving us nothing except more of what we've already got: brutalization and murder inside this penitentiary. We do not intend to accept or allow ourselves to accept this situation again. Therefore, we have composed this declaration to the People of America to let them know exactly how we feel and what it is that they must do and what we want primarily, not what someone else wants for us. We're talking about what we want. There seems to be a little misunderstanding about why this incident developed here at Attica and this declaration here will explain the reason:

The entire incident that has erupted here at Attica is not a result of the dastardly bushwhacking of the two prisoners, Sept. 8, 1971, but of the unmitigated oppression wrought by the racist administrative network of this prison throughout the year. We are men. We are not beasts and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace, that means each and everyone of us here, have set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the United States. What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed. We will not compromise on any terms except those terms that are agreeable to us. We've called upon all the conscientious citizens of America to assist us in putting an

end to this situation that threatens the lives of not only us, but of each and everyone of you, as well. We have set forth demands that will bring us closer to the reality to the demise of these prison institutions that serve no useful purpose to the people of America, but to those who would enslave and exploit the people of America. Our demands are such: we want complete amnesty, meaning freedom from all and any physical, mental and legal reprisals. We want now, speedy and safe transportation out of confinement to a nonimperialistic country. We demand that the Federal Government intervene, so that we will be under direct Federal Jurisdiction. We want the Governor and the Judiciary, namely Constance B. Motley, to guarantee that there will be no reprisals and we want all factions of the media to articulate this. We urgently demand immediate negotiations through William M. Kunstler, Attorney at Law, 588 9th Avenue, New York, New York; Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve of Buffalo; The Prisoner Solidarity Committee of New York; Minister Farrakan of the Muslims. We want Huey P. Newton from the Black Panther Party and we want the Chairman of the Young Lords Party. We want Clarence B. Jones of the Amsterdam News. We want Tom Wicker of The New York Times. We want Richard Roth from the Currier Express. We want the Fortune Society; Dave Anderson of the Urban League of Rochester; Brine Eva Barnes; we want Jim Hendling of the Democratic Late Chronicle of Detroit, Michigan. We guarantee the safe passage of all people to and from this institution. We invite all the people to come here and witness this degradation to an end. This is what we want.



CHRONOLOGY

August 1970: The men in Auburn prison revolted. Forty of them are transferred to Attica. At the same time a struggle begins at Attica for higher wages and lower commissary prices. It included petitioning and, later, a strike by hundreds of prisoners. This results in the alleged leaders being shipped out to other prisons and all the men in cell block "B" being locked in their cells for two weeks. It also results in commissary prices being lowered and, a short while later, in a small increase in wages.

October 1971: Rebellions occur at several New York City Jails.

June 1971: The Attica Liberation Faction is begun.

July 1971: The 27 demands are presented to Commissioner Oswald.

August 20, 1971: George Jackson is murdered at San Quentin Prison.

August 27, 1971: A hunger strike is called in honor of George Jackson. Only 13 men eat breakfast. Only 7 eat lunch. There is total silence.

September 3, 1971: Commissioner Oswald visits Attica and meets with Frank Lott, Chairman of the Attica Liberation Faction. Oswald asks for more time to implement demands. 300 prisoners go to sick call to dramatize their demands during Oswald's visit.

September 9, 1971: The Rebellion begins. About 1500 prisoners from all cell blocks take over "D" block and "D" block yard. The prisoners hold hostages and set up their own government in the liberated yard.

September 10, 1971: Rebellion continues. Outside observers arrive at the request of the prisoners to aid in the negotiations.

September 11, 1971: Rockefeller refuses to come to Attica to aid in the negotiations. He also refuses the prisoners demand for amnesty. William Quinn, a guard held hostage and then released due to injuries, dies.

September 12, 1971: Rebellion continues. Oswald refuses further negotiations in the yard. Rockefeller, again, refuses pleas of the hostages and the Observers Committee, as well as the prisoners, to come to Attica.

September 13, 1971: Bloody Monday. Rockefeller orders thousands of National Guardsmen, State Troopers and Corrections Guards to attack the Rebellious prisoners. Hundreds of prisoners are shot. The State's forces also shoot and kill nine of the hostages. The prisoners have no guns. Many of the alleged leaders of the rebellion are selectively marked and assassinated by the State's forces. 43 men die in the retaking of the prison. The Corrections Department says that hostages throats were slashed by the prisoners. Guards torture and beat prisoners.

September 14 and after: Coroner's report shows that no hostages died of slashed throats. All died of police gunshot wounds. Demonstrations protesting Attica Massacre begin in New York and around nation. Beatings and harassment of prisoners continues. Several hundred of the rebel prisoners are shipped out to other prisons. 80 of the alleged leaders are put in 24 hour segregation. On May 1, they also are shipped out. Wyoming County Grant Jury prepares to indict prisoners for the rebellion. McKay Commission, created by Rockefeller, holds hearings about Attica revolt.

The following interview with the two recently released Attica brothers was conducted and edited by the *Liberated Guardian* (L.G.) in March, 1972.

L.G.: *You could start with what's happening at Attica now.*

Joe: Well, I was up there over the weekend to see if conditions had changed, but it is the same as when I left on Feb. 1. I think the only thing that's changed since I was there is that they've put showers down on the floor.

L.G.: *Is it once a week or can you take showers every day now?*

Joe: Well, it's very inconsistent. Sometimes once a week, sometimes twice a week, depending on the attitude or the mood of the police. But, you know, the 28 demands haven't been met. They want the public to believe that they have been met, but conditions have more or less deteriorated since the eighth.

L.G.: *The only thing that's happened since Attica is that they're trying to put plans for the maxi-maxi prison into effect.*

Joe: Attica is a maxi-maxi now. When I left they had M-16s on the wall and they can shoot some 840 rounds a minute. So you can sure enough clip a whole lot of people down with that much ammunition. I don't think it can get any more maxi-maxi than it is. Money can trickle down and the guards and the Union will capitalize on it.

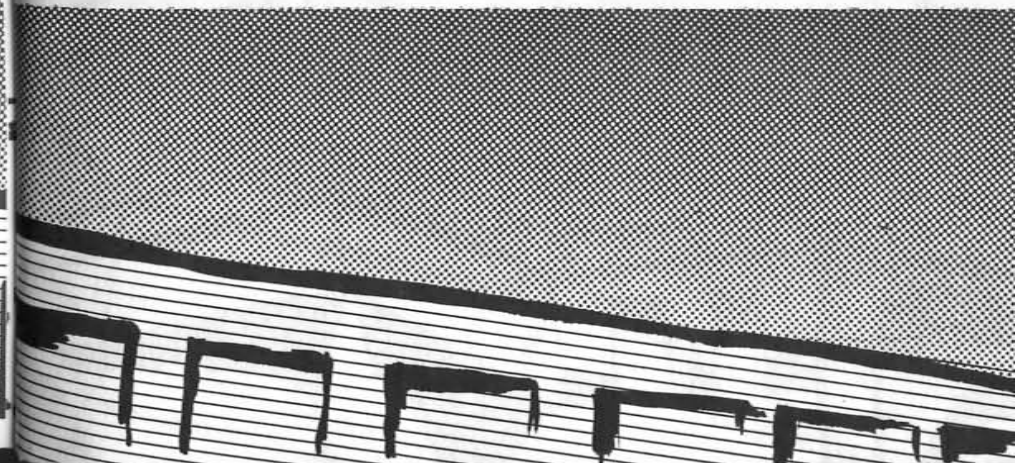
L.G.: *Are people locked in more now than they were before the rebellion?*

Joe: Well, I was locked in 23-1/2 hours a day after the rebellion.

Ron: Before, I think it was about 16 hours.

Joe: Like I was in a grading company. We didn't do anything all day.

L.G.: *What's a grading company?*



Joe: A grading company is supposed to cut the grass and mow the lawn and all that stuff. I did this for almost 20 months.

Ron: It's really for malconformancy.

Joe: Malconformants, revolutionaries—so they can keep watch on you. From there you go to the box. LD was on that company too. So were Sam Mellville and Brother Richard. Of the brothers that were killed approximately 15 of them were from that grading company: John Barnes, Sam Mellville, Tommy Hicks, L.D. And Red, he's paralyzed.

L.G.: *And that was set up for guys like you who were troublemakers?*

Ron: Well, see I was transferred to that company somewhat mysteriously. They were breaking up this other grading company in "B" block and LD, myself, and a couple of the other brothers had been moved over there about a week before the rebellion jumped off.

Joe: Well, that was because of the George Jackson Memorial. They started moving people from one block to another block cause that really came out boss. People really showed solidarity. We had complete silence in the mess hall. We decided that we were going to fast that day and we were going to wear black armbands. We had about a 90% turnout. Only a few people ate, nobody talked and everyone wore black armbands. They were completely caught unaware cause nothing leaked out. They were surprised and they didn't know how to deal with it. This was a real psychological move and it worked out, and the next thing we know we were being transferred to another company.

Ron: They say 5 company was the cause of the revolt

because of an event that had been triggered the day before in the yard dealing with two guys who supposedly had been sparring. One of the guys was from our company and was taken out of his cell and beaten and put in the box. We saw this with our own eyes. At the time the skirmish took place on 5 company the next morning coming back from breakfast, which triggered the rebellion for "A" block, something else took place in the metal shop which had triggered something and by the time the horn started blowing, the metal shop was completely subdued by the inmates. And this happened simultaneously in various spots of the penitentiary.

Joe: When I first came to that joint Attica in October, 1970, there was rumors that there was going to be a riot. This was after the thing at Auburn and the thing at the Tombs, too. What happened was that the guards union wanted something to transpire so they could get more money from the state—hazard duty pay, more training, more people working inside the institution, so that they could have less work to do. So what they used to do was say there was going to be a riot. You could just feel the tension in the air building up.

Ron: First thing we asked, well what kind of riot is it going to be? Is it a racial thing, a political thing, or what? Nobody really knew, so nothing was really happening. But events started to move. Guys got tired. The most we had going for us was when we were able to just lock our doors. That was our means of rebelling up to the revolt. We would just stay in our cells. We wouldn't come out. But this was only an individual attack against the system. We never really got together. But then, like you had the metal shop strike. All the



guys involved in that were shipped all over the place and beat and gassed and all kinds of funny stuff, and this put fear into all the rest of the people. It took a little while, but then you started hearing the murmurings again. People started talking again. Individual revolts. Every day guys would get keeplock for seven days for petty infractions. For exercising in the yard you get keeplock; standing in a group—"conspiring against the penitentiary." Just because instead of lifting weights you might be over there discussing the problems of the penitentiary, the problems that's going on outside in the world. You know, you don't want to be ignorant. You want to educate yourself. This is an infraction against the penitentiary.

They would break classes up, but, we were persistent. We would get back out there and do it again. Especially with the law. They'd overlook the other subjects, but they didn't want you helping nobody with his law. You know, you're supposed to get yourself out of this situation. You can't help no one else.

Joe: Any time more than three black people come together, there's when the police will come. They would vamp down on you. They would harass you. You go out to the yard, they come into your cell and steal your literature or destroy your literature and your notes.

What I call Attica is the revolution in the revolution. The jails are nothing but a reflection of the society. The society is going through a change and the jails are going through a change too, cause we want to be treated like human beings, not like some animals institutionalized and programmed. They have a little stick called the nigger stick. Hit it two times you walk. Hit it one time you stop. Three times, you be quiet. This was all part of the conditions which caused the tension to build up and for just one little spark to set it off. They always try to say it was the revolutionaries that did it, it was the muslims that did it, but never talk about the conditions that set it off.

L.G.: *But the conditions have probably been bad in Attica for 50 years with people being beaten, but there hasn't been a rebellion there of this nature before.*

Ron: These rebellions were strictly of a racial nature; inmates against inmates, and then they sit back. But when peoples consciousness became aroused, they began to know

more. I don't have to fight you. We are in this situation together. They started to band together.

L.G.: *How come you think that happened now?*

Ron: Cause this was the mood outside the penitentiary.

L.G.: *Can you talk about overcoming the racism among the inmates.*

Ron: You see, it's hard to build up the trust.

L.G.: *How did that get built up?*

Ron: It was a do or die situation.

Joe: The solidarity that transpired in the yard. It was the conditions that brought us together. If we didn't stay together we would have killed each other.

Like I said, the jail is nothing but a reflection of the society out there. To get some kind of change in the jails, or what I call state concentration camps, you're going to have to change society and people's attitudes. They pay twice. They pay through their tax thing and they pay when you rob them too.

L.G.: *How do you know when something like the revolt actually happens. What comes down before that makes you know there's going to be 1200 other guys with you?*

Ron: We started to form little groups. What happens is that you get guys that play football, they form a clique. Then there's a link with that clique to the guys that play basketball because some of the guys play basketball and football. Now somehow the intellectuals in the penitentiary might deal in sports. So it all hooks up. It's interdependent.

See, Attica is a real odd place for communication cause it's broken down like that: A,B,C,D. It's four independent yards. It's just like going to a different joint.

They even let you buy fish. You can set the fish up in your cell and you can sit there all night and watch the god damn fish. Then you go to sleep, you get a pornography book, you masturbate yourself to death man, you go to sleep. Play basketball. You be exhausted, you hit the bed. So you're not really dealing while you in here. You're not thinking. It's just another form of escapism. You play basketball, you got the earphone, you can bugaloo too man. You got some guy with shortice (pornography) that the officers bring in.

The officers have inmates that do little favors for them; bring them a little information, and they bring them a box full

of shortice books. This guy in turn has a market now, right, cause everyone wants to read shortice books. He'll sell them. And this is another form of corruption. Same thing with drugs.

Joe: And like I said it gets back to that control thing. Any penitentiary is a money making thing. It's the only industry that profits off of failures. Cause if you go out and you fail you come back and this is a self perpetuating thing. You try to get your head together, man they harass you, they take your books, hit you with parole. Boy, this is how they killed George Jackson. All he tried to do was get his head together, maybe try to educate some people who wanted to be educated. You can't force knowledge on no one. You can't raise no one's consciousness unless they want it raised. People are searching for knowledge.

Ron: I know because I tried to get guys to put down them weights, to leave them basketballs alone. To come over and talk about what's going on around here. But, you couldn't do it. When he's ready to come, he'll come and then you can't get him away from here.

L.G.: *What do you think the effect of the rebellion has been on Attica?*

Joe: I think it's really hard to say because I haven't dealt, and I don't want to deal with, the people in Wyoming County. Some of their consciousnesses might have been raised to the point where they might say, wow, Rockefeller don't give a fuck about nobody. He'll kill niggers and he'll kill whitey's.

L.G.: *Did the guards get that consciousness from Attica?*

Joe: I don't think so, man, I think they got more fascistic.

Ron: First of all, guards were killed at Attica. So they can't do anything to Rockefeller and them guys. So who're they going to take it out on? "My friend was killed you're gonna pay for it" I've gotta pay for it. Why? Because I'm there and he can fuck over me.

L.G.: *If the guards got more fascistic and the demands didn't get met, why did people rebel?*

Ron: First of all, they just wanted to raise attention to what was being done. It was a cry out for help. We had tried everything. You see, we presented the demands in July. They had strikes, they had hunger strikes, they had work strikes. So it just came to that. That was the next step. What else could they do?

L.G.: *What did people think would be accomplished by the rebellion?*

Ron: Our cries would go outside of the regular channels, like the mails and stuff like that where it was just squashed. We cried right directly out to the people. The penitentiary was taken over by the best means available, force. And then by the observer committee and other channels we tried to use the media, which was taking a great risk because we had no control over the media and we tried to control it as best we could to get what we had to say out to the people. The media messed us around again. They depicted us as a bunch of savages with knives and sticks; bloodthirsty people, just looking to kill and beat up on people. But that wasn't true at all. We were trying to make the people see that we are human beings. We don't want to be messed over.

L.G.: *What do you think people should do?*



Joe: I don't have all the answers. I can't say, well, do this, do that. One thing I think about the youth today—they're not creative. You have to be really creative to create alternatives to the penitentiary. You've got to create new channels of things which are going to be successful. The colleges don't do this, so the youth are going to have to start doing it on their own; getting together collectively and trying to create new ways of dealing with the penitentiary. Not just the penitentiary, but different problems that might arise. They have to take a little bit of this, a little bit of that and, you know, get together and formulate new strategies or a new plan or a new program to really bring about a concrete change. And like, the children, or youth, I was going to say children, cause that's what they think like, really they don't think unless you program it down for them. And what they do is say "what should I do, what should I do?" Goddamn, man I'm human just like you. You think like me, so you think of something. I'm giving you what little knowledge I have, so



why don't you get up off your ass and use your brain. I know it's been distorted for the last 19 or 20 years. You haven't been really motivated to think, but you've got to start somewhere. Just think of something new. Don't always go and say, "well, what should we do, what should we do?"

Ron: You know that more poor people go to jail than rich people, when you know all the time that rich people is ripping other people off on a larger scale than any poor man that ever did anything. Statistics point out that more businessmen steal more money than the average thief from the ghetto. So everything's out of perspective.

L.G.: *Do you think it's true, what George Jackson says, that the best of our kind are in the San Quentins and the Folsoms?*

Joe: Right. The conditions produce revolutions. They don't just happen. You can take Rap Brown. You can take him out of the ghetto, he can talk all the revolutionary bullshit he wants to, but nobody's going to riot cause the people got their basic needs met. But he says the same thing in the ghetto and the people will react cause he is serving their needs now: showing them who's the enemy and how they can go about meeting their basic needs. So it's the conditions that produce the men that are leaders of the society or push the society to a higher stage of development. The George Jacksons, the Malcolm Xs, the Stokley Carmichaels, even myself. We are all products of society that we live in. And once you become aware of certain things, we say now wow, now you dig society, you got to go forth and change your conditions. Once you become hip to what's going on, you're going to want to change it.

Attica is not a unique thing. Rahways jumping off, 25 people just broke out of the penitentiary in Ohio. The society is sensationalism oriented. When something fantastic happens they come out of the woodwork. All the white liberals come out and say, "oh my god, what happened?" The reforms that the commission recommended were reforms that had been recommended over the last century. So they knew about the thing for a hundred years already and they let it keep on perpetuating. It's not surprising. Look at the outside world. It's just as bad. People are just as racist and fascistic as they are in the penitentiary.

L.G.: *Did either of you have political consciousness when you went into prison?*

Ron: I had the regular ghetto mentality, the nigger mentality. I went in and right away I got into the filth of the penitentiary.

L.G.: *How old were you?*

Ron: When I first went to the penitentiary I was 16 and I stayed 19 days. To me at that time, I didn't stay long and it was O.K. I had a good time. I was hanging out with the guys. I was a juvenile, did a lot of wild stuff. Then I came home. I was on probation. This time was a little different man. It was like a thing for survival. I had to learn to survive. That was constantly on my mind. Just like out here. In there it's closer, smaller, and it's a little more vicious.

L.G.: *Do people in Attica feel that the people outside are behind them?*

Ron: It's hard to really judge. I was surprised when they said 43 killed. I thought it would have been 1 or 200, because knowing what Rockefeller has done, knowing what he will do, I was surprised there wasn't more killed. But, I think it was only due to the fact that the news media and the people were really aware of what was going on.

Joe: It was just that 43 people died. Something like 300 guys were wounded, shot up. They never tell you this, though.

L.G.: *Do you think you've been able to bring more of the truth to people since you've been out?*

Joe: I feel the truth has been told, the lies have been told also. Now it's what you're going to believe. People have their certain way of thinking. They're going to believe what they think is right. The bigots, the racists, are going to believe the

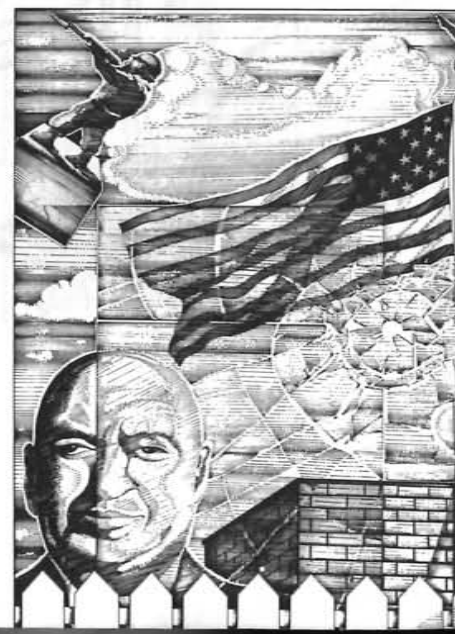
establishment side. The more liberal type people are going to believe what the inmates are saying.

Ron: We have the truth on our side so this is why we don't have to resort to all the distortion. The truth doesn't always manifest itself, but sometimes the truth does have a little sway. People do tend to believe lies before they believe the truth cause usually the truth kinda hurts, cause once you recognize this is a fucked up society, now what you gonna do about it. You got to make change. Better than do that, they'll say, "Oh, this is a beautiful world." They condemn communism, but this is no better than what they say about communism.

L.G.: *What do you think about the Prisoners Labor Union at Greenhaven?*

Joe: It won't solve the problem. Like I said I'm not in favor of penitentiary reform. I'm in favor of abolishing the whole penitentiary. I don't desire that you make the penitentiary like the Holiday Inn. It depends how the Union is administered. You have a lot of things on paper, but the way it's administered can fuck the whole thing up.

Ron: Like he said, we don't need black guards. We don't need nicer guards. We don't need nicer jails. We just need a whole new system because this system is messed up. So I don't care whatever you make as far as the penitentiaries are concerned. If the outer core is messed up, you know the whole thing is gonna be messed up.





The following was conducted by Bruce Soloway of Pacifica Radio, WBAI, in February, 1972. It is an edited transcription of separate interviews with nine of those the prison administration had isolated as "leaders" of the rebellion.

ROGER CHAMPEN

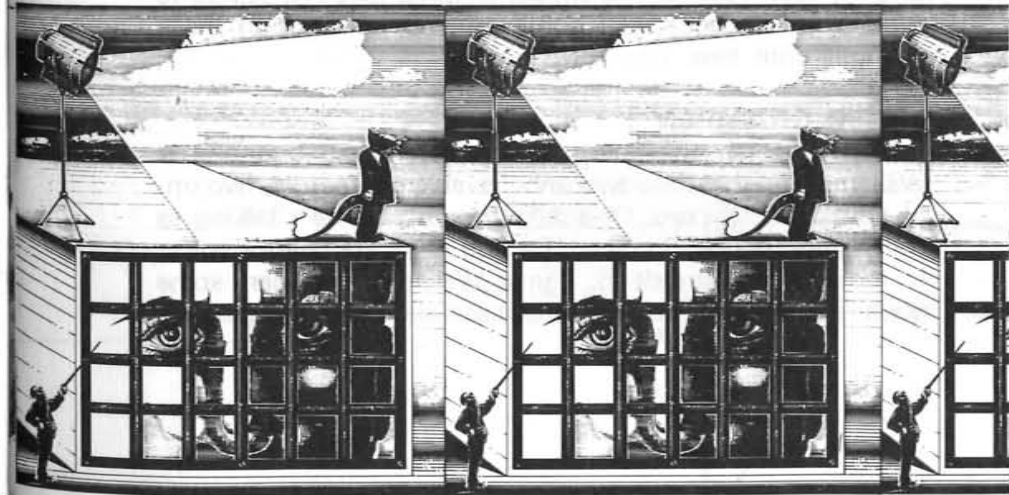
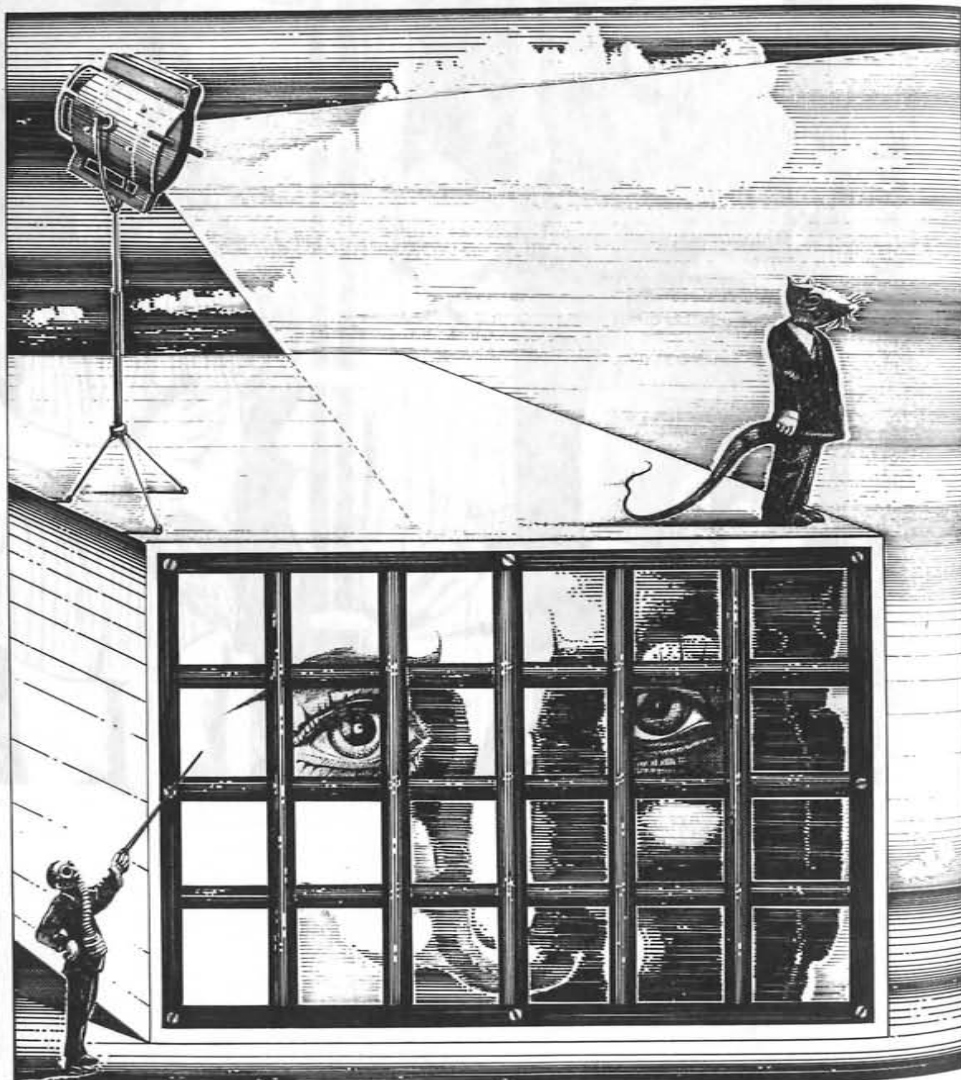
My name is Roger Champen. I've been here since March, 1971.

Everything is done to you and not for you. See, very little is done for you. When I say something done for you, I mean some or other rehabilitative program. You see, ostensibly we're supposed to be here to be redeemed. This is my understanding of prison. You're supposed to come to prison to pay society a debt, and then you're supposed to be redeemed. I would say eight out of ten people eventually return to society. So if you don't redeem them, you're gonna have recidivism; they'll be coming back and forth.

FRANK LOTT

My name is Frank Lott. I'm from New York City, and I'm doing a life sentence. I'm doing a fifty year to life sentence, and I've been in ten years and some months now.

The doctors here, they're very insensitive. Not only in this place here, but all over the five prisons that I've been through over the past twenty-three years. They're very insensitive; they always think that you're malingering, you know. Long as they have Dr. Williams in here, long as they have Dr. Sternberg in here, nothing never gonna be done. They don't have no kind of sensitivity man, they don't care.



I went there, in fact I got two days keeplock one time because I went and told him he was supposed to give me some medicine. I had some type of rash that was coming on my head with scabs. And after he told me there was nothing, he couldn't see anything and all this thing, and I told him, I say he was supposed to give me something, he immediately had me locked up. I was locked up for two days. This is what they give you; I got locked up.

DONALD NOBLE

My name is Don Noble. I'm from New York City, the Bronx.

Two doctors we have here, Sternberg or Williams. These are the ones who come around with the attitudes they don't want to have no dealings with anybody you know. They don't want to give the proper medication. All they know is to give you castor oil. If you got a broken foot, the bone is showing, they gonna give you some castor oil. They never talk to people on a human level. The day is nice until the doctors come around. The doctors come around and you start one, like a person up there. Guy's got a little problem with his privates, you know, and he speaks to the doctor about this. He's been speaking to the doctor about this since September. And the doctor just block him off—"see, I don't want to hear it," you know. This man was scheduled to go to the hospital to have a circumcise operation, but the doctor just block him off. The man is having problems with himself. The doctor come down with his attitude. The man's gotta curse the doctor out. The doctor's cursing him out. This is what's happening every day, and you're scared to stop them to ask them for anything. You gotta just lay around suffering. Like my feet is still in bad shape, it hurts. Like I'm scared to even stop him because I don't want to go through these changes with him, you know.

ROGER CHAMPEN

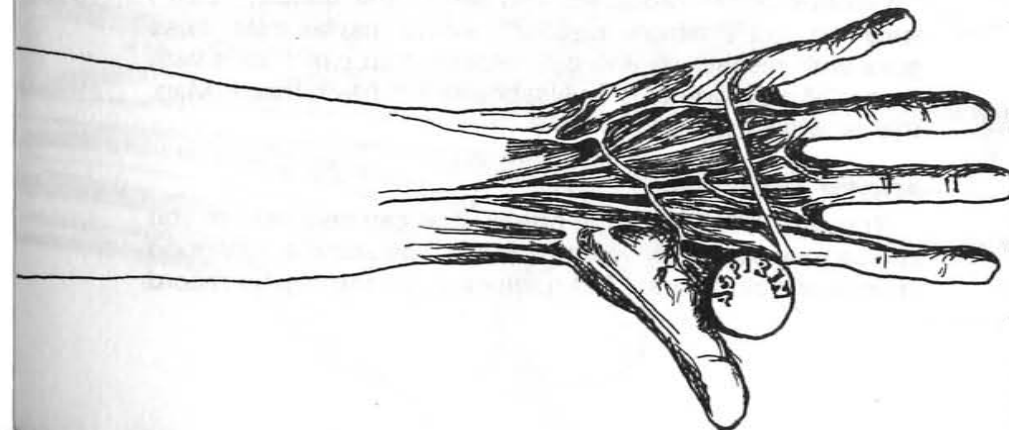
Well, this Dr. Sternberg, one is Sternberg and one is Williams, and these are two unbelievable characters, two unbelievable characters. One talks to you as if he's talking to the ceiling. He doesn't recognize you at all. He hears a voice, he looks up at the ceiling. That's Williams. He wears some glasses and I don't believe he can see even with the glasses.

That's the way he looks; he gives the impression that he doesn't know where to look. He's trying to guess where you are. And the other one, Sternberg, he's very stern. He says, "Listen, what is it you want?" "Well, doctor, let me first tell you what my problem is." "You don't have any problem," he tells you. He don't care what it is. Goodbye. All he'll give is aspirin, and that is the wonder drug. That does everything. Aspirins cure ever-y-thing: broken arm, broken leg, gunshot wound, anything; it's aspirin. So I haven't spoken to him. I don't like the way he talks to people; he talks very nasty. I know I wouldn't be able to respond decently to no one talking to me like that. I don't care if he is a doctor. I understand this same doctor was just running around here like a maniac in the yard. Just kicking bodies and turning people over, people who were actually hurt. And just walking right on by. Yet they allow him to stay here, him and Williams.

JEROME ROSENBERG

Jerome Rosenberg's my real name, but call me Jerry the Jew, you know, as an alias.

The doctor is a butcher. An inmate in HBZ (Housing Block Z), his hands got infected by some soap that they gave us to use. His hands were perfectly alright before this. He tried to see the doctor, and the doctor's name is Sternberg. He refused to look at the man's hands for approximately five to six weeks. Then when he did look at them, he didn't examine them. He just looked at them and gave him some salve. The condition was very bad. The bones were protruding out of his skin because of the doctor's refusal to look at his hands. Approximately at the same time after the first six weeks,



Mancusi, the warden, walked around at night, and the brother told Mancusi about the doctor not treating him. He showed him his hands which the bones were protruding through, and the warden just laughed at him. He says, "Well, see Dr. Sternberg": the same doctor that refused for six weeks to examine him.

Upon seeing Dr. Sternberg, he says "I gotta see a doctor, a doctor that will look at my hands and treat me." Sternberg told him, "Write a letter." He couldn't even move his hands. We submitted a court litigation on it. Subsequently, after the court litigation was submitted under the Civil Rights Act, they shot him right out to a specialist in Batavia after the court ruled. And the specialist was shocked; he couldn't believe how his hands got like that. And he wanted to keep him there and continue the treatment, you know, and they wouldn't allow it. So they sent him back and they gave him treatment over here now. Right now he's in a cell; he has to wear special gloves and certain solutions and all kinds of medications that they're giving him. His hands have again worsened.

FRANK LOTT

Dr. Sternberg and Dr. Williams, they're collecting all this money. They come here, they don't want to give a guy no type of medical attention. I got a guy up there now, he's got some type of sore or something on his penis, man. The doctor refused to even look at it. They don't want to do nothing to it. There's another guy with a big cyst on his neck. They told him to leave it alone. They don't want to take him downstairs and give him some type of drawing medicine to relieve him, man, they don't want to do that. They talk sharp, yet they still want respect, you see. They come, they say, "Whadiyawant?". You stop and say to the doctor, "Can I speak to you a minute please?", cause maybe treat these guys with respect so you get respect. You can't do it with them: "Wadiyuwant," "Tellusaboutit," "Leavitalone." Man, this is what they do.

ROGER CHAMPEN

You can do two things in prison. You can be a man or you can be a robot. See, if you be a robot, you stand a very good chance of going home. But notice this, all the papers record

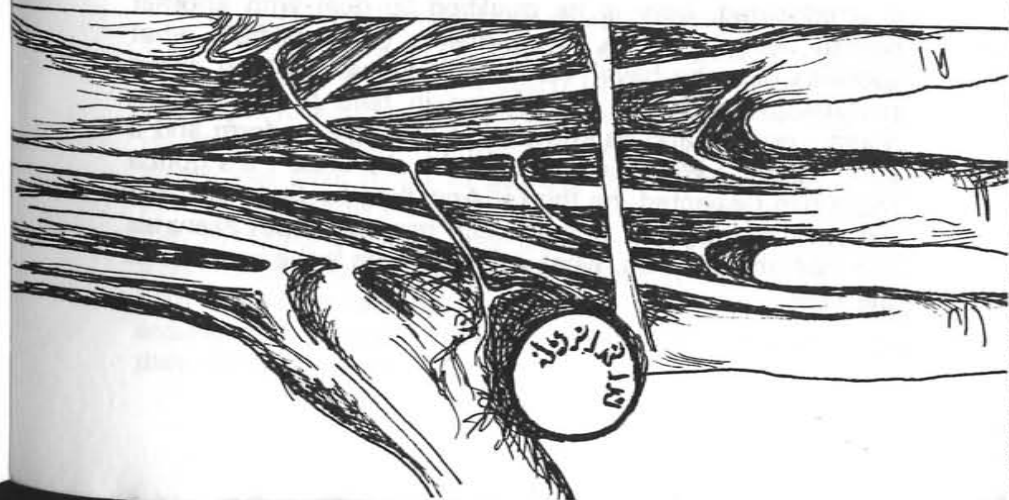
this is a fact, that those who stay in here become submissive. When they get outside, all the things that they have inside, boil over onto society after they come back. You see, so there's two things you can do, you can be a man or a robot, and I chose to be a man. I'd rather be that than be a robot; I stay here with them. And the attitude toward you is, like I said, if you're a robot, you're alright. They'll call you a good boy and any small favors they can do for you, they'll do. But if you take the position that you'll stand up and you speak about things, then all of a sudden you're a horrible person: either you're a communist, you become a radical. You become a lot of things other than a man, you see. Anything they want to label you, that's what you become.

FRANK LOTT

First, after the mess hall, you got a scene like squares of oleo on the table, or buns. And the summertime, and it's still summer in September, all the green flies flying all over the place like that, and dirty utensils, dirty trays and cups. They have plastic cups they use, you know, and a lot of them were burnt, had cigarette butts in them and holes in them. Maybe the inmates used them in the mess hall, they put them on the counter. And then a lot of times you ask one of the officers, give him a dirty spoon. He gets his attitudes, because they figure that you're all animals anyway.

DONALD NOBLE

It's their way to keep you down, because a man just don't like to be served like he's a dog, you know, and this is how they serve the food to you. You would leave and go into the





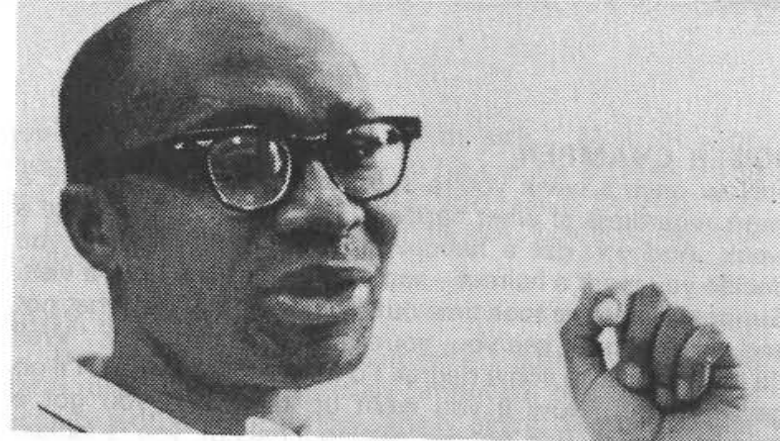
Roger Champen

mess hall, and they got cakes and different types of things laying up on the table that you have to sit down on. They got butter hanging all on the wall, falling. They got flies all on the food and everything like this. They got guys working behind the counter with sweaty shirts on. And you see this, it just do something to your gut.

In the whole mess hall the food is all bad. Like one time a guy called the officer over to say there was a worm in his soup. The officer say, "Well, don't say nothing because at least you lucky, at least you got some meat."

ROGER CHAMPEN

Your general correction officer, oh, very small percentage of them have any education, very small percentage. You have people here, this is a rural area which employs most of the personnel, prison personnel. I don't think you have one man here that comes from an urban center population. All of them come from the rural area outside the prison. So, a man is uneducated; how is he qualified to deal with another human being? I mean, what makes him qualified, what specifics does he have? He doesn't know anything about psychology, sociology. He comes in here to make eight hours, you see, and he knows that he has a uniform and a stick. "Look, I will be respected with the stick"; it's gonna make him respected, he thinks. And then he finds out that the stick is not going to make him respected, but alienates him from the men. So, what you have here is the keeper and the kept.



Frank Lott

CARL JONES-EL

My name is Carl Jones-El, and my number is 24534.

The officers, a few of them try to relate with the inmates, but the big majority don't. There're petty charges they bring you up on: oversleeping, and you're walking and talking in the hallways and it's a petty place, man. A man oversleeps in the morning, and the next thing he knows he have a keeplock on his door. He may stay in his cell three days before he goes before a disciplinary board. Now when he gets there, the officer is never wrong. You're either guilty with an explanation, or you just, you're outright guilty. Whoever is conducting these interviews, they'll read off the charge against you that the officer has written up his report that you overslept, and he came around three or four times, and each time you was not ready to come out. And you would get something like ten days for this.

DONALD NOBLE

They have a big bathroom up there where they got hot and cold water. So you would come into the shower with your razor blade to shave, and you'd be in there shaving, well you'd get locked up. You have to have both hot and cold water if you want to shave up there because downstairs where you have to go to get the shaves, they don't have nothing down there to sterilize these razors. A lot of people, they're breaking out on their faces and all this. You have to shave once a week. Everybody like to go walking around with their face looking clean. Now, if you want to walk around with a beard, then you going to get locked up. So they got you confused.

ROGER CHAMPEN

Now once a week you're supposed to shower, ONCE a week regardless of what happens you get a shower, once a week. And you get a haircut once a month. Now if you decide you want a haircut—suppose you gonna have a visit. Suppose someone took time out from their job and what not and came here to see you, your family. And you say, "Well I'd like to look, to some degree I'd like to look neat, so I'll go get a haircut. Now if you went up there and you got a haircut, and you was noticed getting a haircut, you're locked up. You know, if you're locked up for getting a haircut, it's foolish. You see the rule itself is very foolish. So therefore it forces you to break a rule that is a foolish rule to begin with. And then they're gonna punish you: "Look you was out of bounds, you was up there getting a haircut, now you know you have rules to abide by." So either they will take some time from you, or they'll lock you in the cell for a week. It's this kind of thing. Well you get to the point where you say, "Well, look it, if I have to get a haircut, well I'll pay this price then."

DONALD NOBLE

Well, there was one fellow he came in. He was an old man, he was maybe about forty-seven years old. When he came here he wanted to go in the carpentry shop because this was his trade in the street. And he got to do out twenty years. So they rush him off into the metal shop. And he had asthma. The fumes in there makes him sick. He refused to work, so they locked him up for seven days. He went back to court. They asked him, "You don't wanna go back in the metal

shop?" He says "No because I'm sick." Now he's on medication. They put him back in his cell for another seven days. Anyway he stayed locked up thirty days. So what they did, they ended up putting him in the box, isolation. And this is what was happening here.

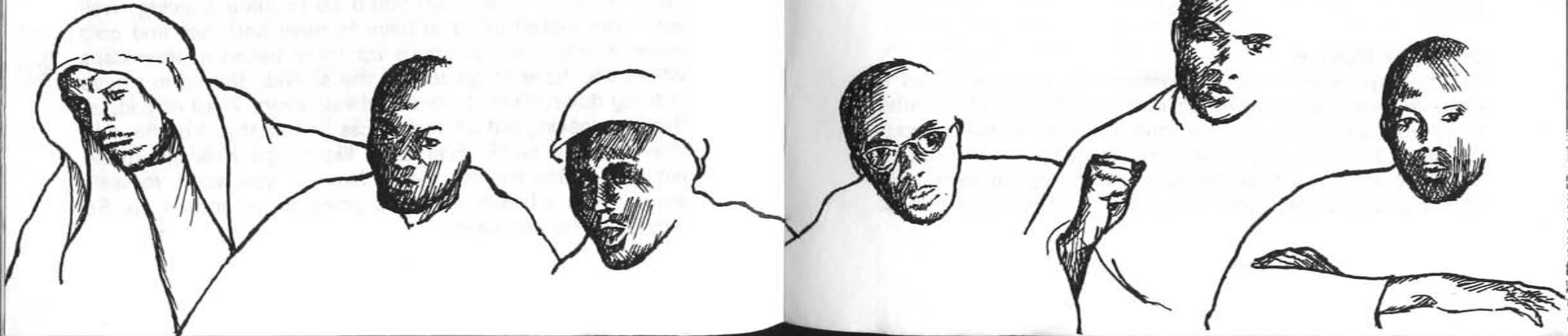
JERRY ROSENBERG

The law so states, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that prison officials cannot bar one inmate who is competent in the law from legally aiding another inmate. That is by drawing up legal petitions and instituting litigations. Yet, the prison officials have destroyed my legal work for helping other inmates, and punish me for doing what I'm allowed to do under the law.

Well, I was working on a case, a murder case, correction officer grabbed the legal papers that I was working on, destroyed them, took them before the warden, the disciplinary board. Destroyed all the stuff and all my law books and locked me up for fifteen days in my cell. Took away my privileges of commissary, packages, and destroyed my legal stuff, my own personal legal books I paid for, you know, things like that. The next time I was warned, I would go to the box. I instituted a suit against that right away.

GEORGE NIEVES

My name is George Nieves. I'm fortunate to speak English, being that I was raised in this country. But at the same time, it hurts me very deeply to see many of my people within these prisons that come into these prisons that do not know how to speak the English language, and be subjected





Donald Noble

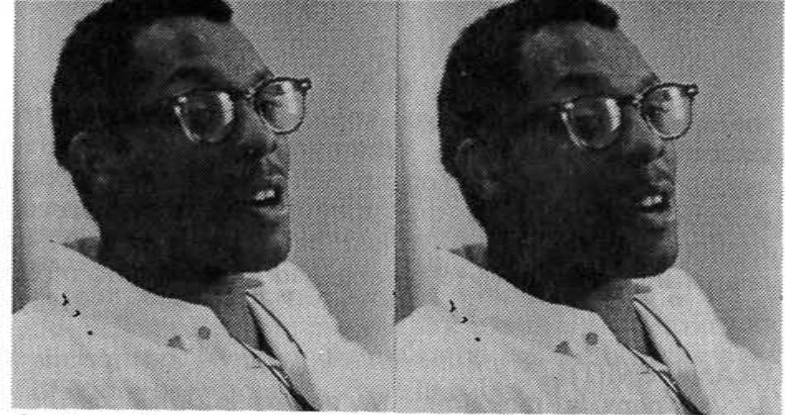
to the conditions they are subjected to. They got a kangaroo court here, you know, they lock you up, right, they lock you up for petty stuff. So when you go before the p-k or the lieutenant, whoever may be down there, let's say for instance you don't speak English, so it's impossible for you to communicate. There's a barrier there as far as communication is concerned. Many Latino brothers of mine are subjected to these things, and being that they do not know how to speak, so they get time anyway.

JERRY ROSENBERG

You go before the board. And then the assistant warden told me, he says that I was illegally aiding another inmate drawing up legal papers for him. I explained I have a right to do that. He says, "Well, what makes you have the right?" "The law so states that." "Well I don't give a damn about the law, we don't care what the Supreme Court says, this is Attica. We do what WE want." These are the exact words. And they admit this in Federal Court, that they destroyed all my legal stuff for helping another inmate. And "we don't give a damn about your Constitutional rights or your civil rights."

DONALD NOBLE

You gotta make some contraband, what they call a dropper, to make hot coffee up in the shop. It's a steel metal thing you gotta put in there, and this isn't good for your stomach. But a lot of people, they got coffee habits and so forth. So they would ask the man, could they put some type of hot plate up there where they could have some coffee.



Carl Jones El

And this is outlawed; he says no good. Now certain guys get caught with these droppers, now they get locked up. And certain guys get caught, they don't get locked up.

CARL JONES-EL

In the commissary they sell canned goods that should be cooked. Yet you have no facilities to cook these things. So in the metal shop, with our own ingenuity, we make stoves. Now this is common knowledge around the institution. However, if you get caught with one of these stoves, you're subject to lose a month's commissary or fifteen day keeplock. This has been in relation to who gets caught. The majority of blacks and Puerto Ricans who get caught with this, they're the ones who suffer the most. Whereas I have noted personally that a lot of whites if they get caught in the same act, they have lenient sentences, suspended sentences.

It's mostly the white establishment. It's very hard for black inmates to relate to this sort of establishment. Try to picture an all black establishment and 85% population of whites. There's a certain amount of rapport that can't be accomplished. Especially here at Attica they've shown racist policy. They discriminate against blacks and Puerto Ricans as far as job positions. We are given the worst jobs, such as sweeping floors and sweeping bathrooms. A select few are given clerical positions, hospital positions. It causes us to be more separated from one another.

Now we try to get along because we live here together, and by living here, we want the best conditions for ourselves. Any form of togetherness that is tried to be brought about by

the inmates as a whole, you know, no one excluded, the institution don't want this. When you see black and white associated together, hanging out, first thing that will happen, a rumor will start, is that they having a homosexual relationship. You know, it just can't be a straight up relationship, they have to be engaged in some kind of sex act.

FRANK SMITH

My name is Frank Smith. My number is 22747.

They have officers in this institution that want to relate. But things that he would do as a man to another human being, you can't accept this, because he can't give this, because if he gives this then that makes him another nigger. A nigger lover. That's the main word in the institution: nigger, nigger, nigger. If you hang out with me, you-are-a-nigger.

The administration creates a racial problem in all of these concentration camps. They create the racial problem because if a white and a black have a relationship such as friends, being buddies, they gonna put it in a derogatory manner or degenerate manner or in some type of form where that relationship will no longer exist.

In any group that you see, there is no doubt in my mind that you won't just see black. And if you see a white, two to one he's gonna get a conversation later on. "You hanging out with them niggers, huh?" Understand? And if they see me hanging out with fifteen to twenty whites, then they gonna tell the white that that's a nigger you're hanging out

with, don't you know it rubs off?

JERRY ROSENBERG

In prison we're all discriminated against because we're prisoners. But there are certain groups that are discriminated against more. For instance the blacks are discriminated against more because of the official racism. They are discriminated against more. But the whites are discriminated against too. They are discriminated against because maybe of ethnic backgrounds. If you're a Jew, if you're Italian, you know, personal with the correctional officials. They hate when you mix. This they despise when the different nationalities mix: black, white, brown. They don't like that. They do anything in their power to keep that separation. They use any methods they could, to brainwashing, things like that. And they use this deceptive method to brainwash the public. And in fact to brainwash the inmates themselves in prison. This is like a brainwashing process that they're trying to use to turn one inmate against another inmate: a black inmate against a white inmate. Divide and conquer. And they stand on top and laugh. This way they don't have nothing to worry about. They just sit back. They're bigots. They're racists. They sit back and wait for you to destroy each other, and meanwhile they're still holding the power. This derives from one thing: that they don't consider you a human being. They come in here with no intelligence whatsoever. They have no way of communicating with you. To them it's the stick, the gas gun, the keeplock, torture, the beating—psychologically and physically. This is their whole





Frank Smith

system. They're not interested in you one way or another. It's always been like that, and it looks like it's gonna stay like that. In fact, it's getting worse than it was before.

FRANK SMITH

Once you are incarcerated, in the Atticas such as this one, they take it upon themselves, meaning the administration, that you no longer think or act or have the right as a human being to express your political beliefs, to be able to talk about and do the things which is in yourself to do. I have been robbed of all my thoughts, feelings, cultures. I don't think no more for myself. All my thoughts is brought about through him. If I don't think the way he wants me to think, then I am going against the system.

GEORGE NIEVES

Exploitation is exploitation. You know, they exploit you in the street, they'll exploit you in prison. It's the same thing, just like in the metal shop. They give you thirty, forty cents a day and they extract most of your labor out of you to such an extent you're exhausted.

FRANK SMITH

You take wages in this institution, right. They got a modern day slave labor camp, such as the metal shop. Look at the wages that they pay you. It's nothing. You sweat in 105 degrees, little room big as this, all day cutting steel. But at the end of the month, you get a minimum slave wage, thirty cent, forty cents, in that category, a day. But yet, still you doing twenty, thirty dollars worth of work a day. Now



Jerome Rosenberg

where the money gonna come from; what happens to the money. What happens to the money that is being made behind all of these different shops and things being made in the institution that's going out, that's being manufactured and produced and shipped. What's happening to that money?

JERRY ROSENBERG

You have the money system in here. Slave labor. Guys working in the metal shop turn out millions of dollars. What're they giving them? Quarter a day. Where's the money go? Money's supposed to go for better conditions in the prisons. I never see no better conditions in here. Where's it go? In Mancusi's pocket. And the higher ups, that's where it has to go. From Mancusi up.

CARL JONES-EL

I was working in the central office, and this is where they do a lot of the adding and counting of the money that's made here. Chief money that's made here comes out of the industry, metal industry. When I first came here, I have noted in the Buffalo Evening News that one of Attica's good years they had made something like 5.2 million dollars. This come out of the industry. Now with this money, a portion was taken to finance this Attica Village out here, a shopping center. All this was built at the expense of the inmates' labor. Yet we did not benefit. We didn't get no proper share of all this money.

FRANK SMITH

They got a yard, consist of 100 by 100; they got five hundred and some odd men in one yard. How much

recreation can you possibly have? What can you do in order to participate. Everything is jammed in one corner. We don't have anything to do. We got to make a program for ourselves. So what we do is we try and learn about ourselves because they won't teach us. They won't give us the literature or any information in reference to a black man, because that's what I am. I want to know about a black man, that's who I want to know about. I want to know about ME. I want to know what's happening with me. I want to think about My ideology, because this is mine. I want to study this. So what I do; I seek help. Maybe from my brother. I try and get further information about me and my people so I'll be able to deal with myself and understand myself and my people. But they deprive you of this because if you are studying and trying to get any kind of further education in reference to yourself, they deprive you of that. The first thing that hits their minds is that you are plotting to overthrow this concentration camp.

DONALD NOBLE

They don't have no valid programs to educate a man so that when he leave out of here and go out in the street he can

do something about himself. That way he can be aware of his conditions in here. There are different programs set up in here by the inmates to try to help yourselves. We would have a culture class, and we would have a class dealing with our conditions and what makes us do wrong when we're in the street, what we could do about getting in touch with ourselves. We're going through more or less a reorientation program, like where's the hangup in the street. What caused you to do wrong, man, why you can't get a job. And a lot of us know that we don't have the proper training for certain jobs out in the street. And these are the things we talk about. We talk about a little history and so forth and what we could do. We try to get different reading material, and we had classes, like in law. We try to learn a little bit about law so we'll be able to protect ourselves when we're out in the street, and then we could look into our own cases while we're in here. These are the things that we try to do.

CARL JONES-EL

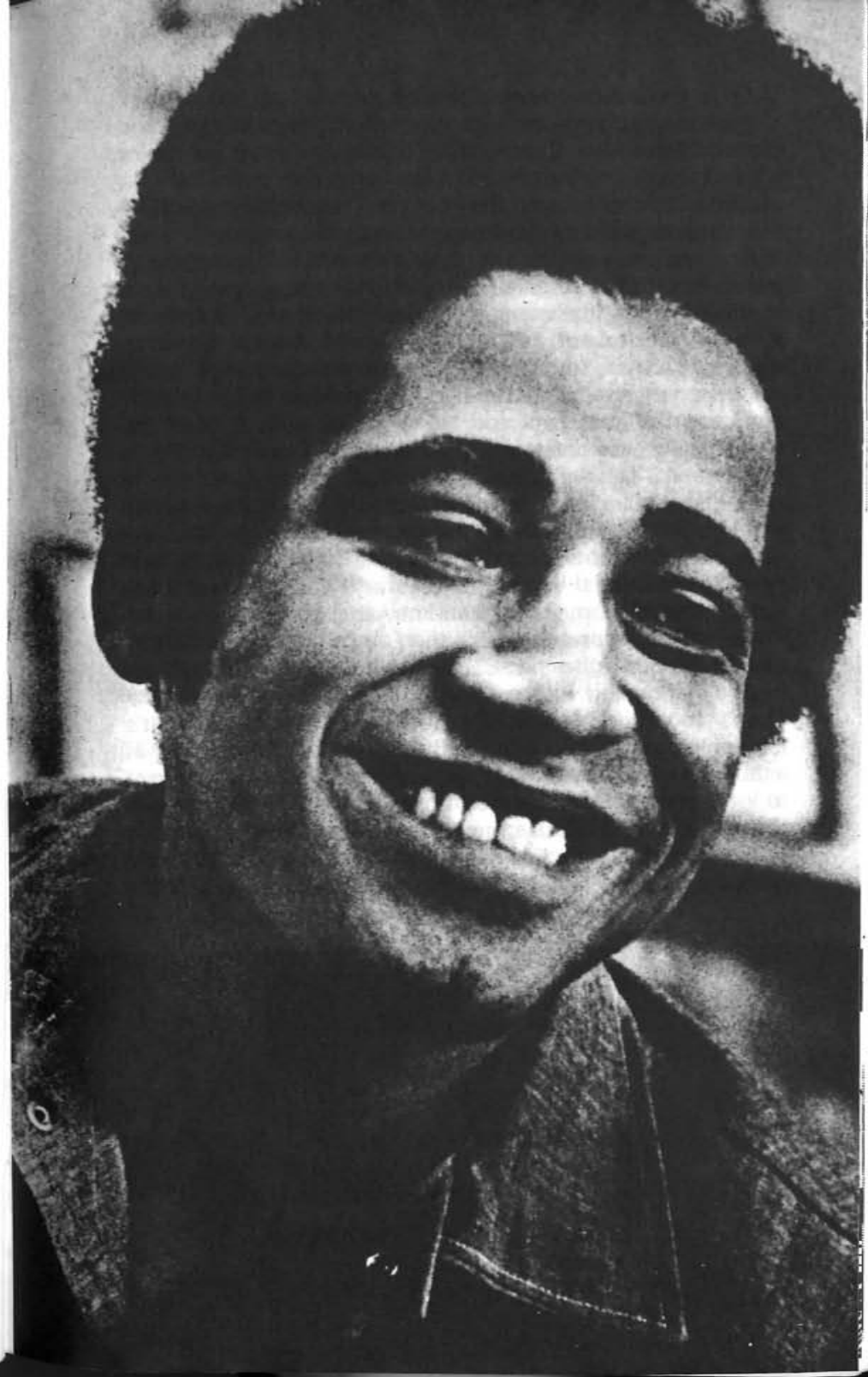
The education department, school system that they have,



it only goes so far, far as trying to give a man an education. We more or less have to educate ourselves. When we came here we knew the conditions and we felt that people should come together and get a better understanding of the conditions here, what was being did to them by the administration. So behind this we would hold meetings in the yard. We'd hold open house and whoever wanted to come and listen to our political ideology were welcome. We didn't bar anyone. This was frowned upon by the institution and they would break it up. If we congregated too big, this wasn't allowed. In order to reach everyone, we had to set up some sort of communications. We had to get along with different factions here: the Muslims, the Five Per-centers, and all the other factions to become one solid movement, rather than just be separate parts here trying to accomplish the same things, better conditions for the inmates. So we start moving towards this end. We start talking about a strike because at the time they were paying something like fifteen to twenty cents for the work that was done in the metal shop. It was felt that the inmates should have more money. So this was the purpose of that strike. And this lasted for awhile. They made a lot of promises about conditions would be better: the food would get better, the medical conditions would be better. It was a lot of promises. So everyone laid, they waited. And nothing was did. Situation kept being the same. So something else had to be did. This is around between April and May. This is when the Attica Liberation Faction began.

FRANK LOTT

When I first came out I seen the conditions were so bad. I seen the guys were always wanting to play ball and things like that. And I seen a lot of young fellas, and I figured I could help them. So I started this thing called the Attica Liberation Faction. The fellas made me chairman, which was only five guys. We were going into the conditions here. I had to set up educational programs, law programs. So I had the guys, the five men, see the guys that they knew to donate books and magazines to the fellas that wasn't getting them. See, a lot of things that come in here, they don't want you to have, like Black Literature, mostly, and political books. They don't want you to have these things, man, cause they don't want to let you know what's happening outside in the world.



Q: Is there any problem getting papers into the prison?

Well yes. It comes through the mail. It comes through the United States Mail. But the thing about it, when it comes in, a lot of times, articles critical of the institution or critical of a certain official in Albany, they hold it. They hold it back for a month or so. You're not allowed to hear this, because it's not in line with rule six or rule three. It's too inflammatory, it incites riots. They're telling people what's happening, man, in these papers, man, and they don't want you to have it. And you better not ask anything about Angela Davis or nothing like that. You'll never get it. So what we were doing, we were getting all these guys to donate these things in each block, so the guys can read these things. And a lot of the time they want to break us up, so we go and sit in the middle of the yard like we're talking football. As long as you're talking football, or something like that, it's all right. And we would write different things on current events, on the law class, on different sections of the law. I had guys that handled different things. I had a library. Man, we had a big stack of books, library books and newspapers and **Speckled Birds** and all these papers like that, so the guys could know what's happening, man. 'Cause you're not gonna find out what's happening in the **Daily News** too tough or **The Times** too tough, to let the people know exactly what's happening out there politically. If there was more than four at a table, they would try to halt you up and maybe they'd want to lock you up, because they thought that maybe you was getting educated. 'Cause they knew it wasn't nothing to try to get over that wall. I've said it myself. Jesus Christ! If the guys are trying to set up a program of education, which the

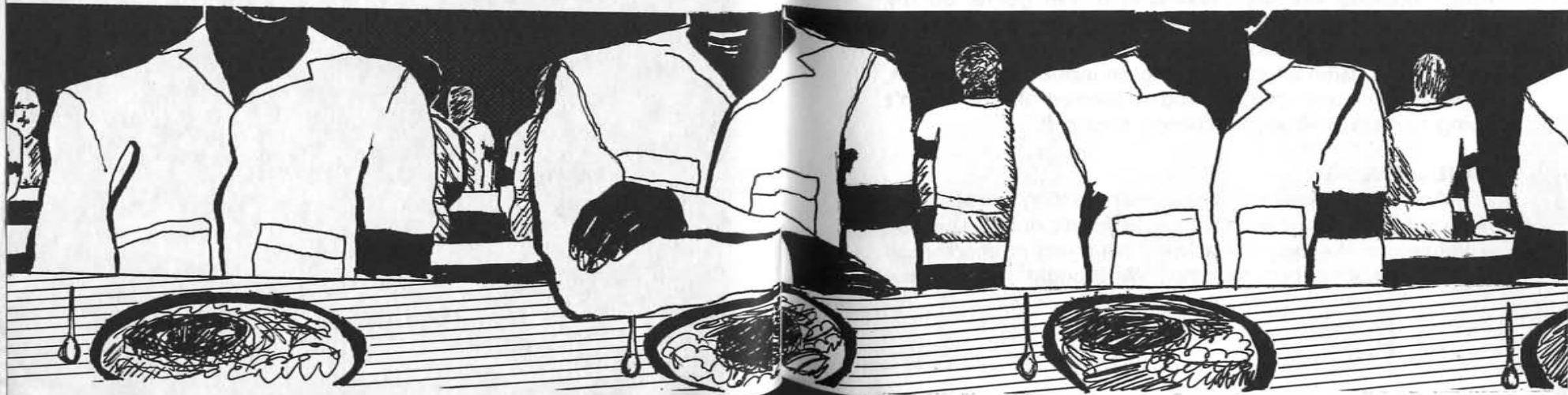
institution themselves fail to do, they should be glad. You know, it's better than trying to think about getting over the wall.

CARL JONES-EL

We wanted to do things, let's say, diplomatically. We were seeking reform. Although, many were not in favor of reform, because they didn't believe that the people would listen. So, five of us had gotten together. This is how we started. We met in the yard and we'd draw up drafts as to proposals we should make. And we sought support from the entire population, the four different blocks. And the only way we could accomplish this was that by us not being able to see everyone in different blocks, we, more or less, had to get on the traveling list. In other words, if you were a baseball, a football, a softball official, and you were in a position to travel and get around to different blocks. So we did this. One of us would go to different blocks, and there we would set up an educational program, and bring to their attention what the manifesto was going to be about. So we got a lot of support on this. Then we moved on it. Everyone was not in favor of signing their names to it though, because they didn't want to spotlight themselves. So five of us did.

DONALD NOBLE

Well, I'm one of the men whose name was on the manifesto was submitted to Oswald. We submitted a manifesto, 28 demands, to Oswald in July. We also submitted one to Rockefeller. We also submitted one to Shirley Chilsolm. We also submitted one to Arthur Eve and different



other legislative people and lawyers and so forth. you know, we got a beautiful reply back from Oswald, think it was sometime in August. He acknowledged our letter and so forth, and he was enthused about the way the manifesto was drawn up, because this was more or less coincide with his ideas. And he stated that he is for all these here changes that we talked about, because he sees that they are needed, but to give him time. And, everybody went along with him, because a lot of us have had dealings with Oswald for years, coming back and forth while he's sitting on the parole board. Like there was things that all he had to do was more or less get in touch with the warden here that would have gone into effect. And these things more or less didn't take place. Like, they didn't have no pitcher, no water pitcher, in the mess hall. A guy had to raise his hand to get up and go and get some water. And sometimes the officer, he would say something smart. And we was more or less trying to get them to have a little cleaner conditions in the mess hall. And these things didn't have to take no two or three years to do. And a lot of other miscellaneous things, like Black entertainment, Latin entertainment up here, something that we could relate to. And different educational books that we could get involved in, because what they had up in the library—they didn't have nothing up there that you could identify with to learn about yourself. He said he was going to look into these things, but they would take time. So he came here. He made a speech, but the speech he made, a lot of people didn't like it because he talked about long range things. But people wanted to know what he was gonna do about the problem what exists here. 'Cause it seemed like the way we see it, a lot of us, that if he tells Mancusi "Do this here," Mancusi will say "Hell with it. I'm gonna do my thing." Which was nothing. This here warden who was here, Mancusi, he disregarded. He just had a thing going here, he didn't give a damn what was going on inside the institution, he wasn't for any changes and it seemed like he wasn't trying to help anybody to change their self.

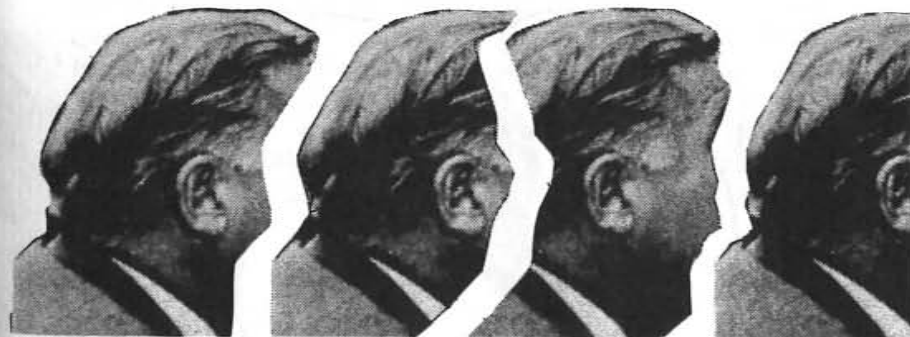
CARL JONES-EL

And nothing was did. Things were getting worse. What really solidified things was George Jackson's death. This had a reaction on the people that we were trying to accomplish all along, to bring them together. We thought of, well, how

can we pay tribute to George Jackson, because a lot of us idolized him: the things he was doing—the things he was exposing about the system. So we decided that we would have a silent fast that whole day, in honor of him. We would wear black armbands. So we did this. No one was to eat anything that whole day. This had an effect. We noted that if the people could come together for this, then they could come together for other things. Now it wasn't our aim, we wasn't going around talking about overthrowing the institution. They're going to try to make out that this was our purpose, but this is a lie. What we were trying to do was to make everyone aware of what was happening to them, give us a chance to come together, in other words, let's resolve all this stuff that you people are doing to us. We tried to meet again, but this time no one wanted to listen. People are fed up. The manifesto's been gone out three or four months and nothing has happened. As I said, the conditions, they just got worse.

CARL JONES-EL

The thirteenth, everyone was in the yard and there was a lot of tension, because you could see that these people were getting ready to come in. They was going to use force. Now from where I was, I'm in the middle of the yard, so to speak, near the trench. Next thing I knowed there's this big helicopter flying over us and tear gas coming from everywhere, and there's a whole lot of shooting and carrying on. So naturally, everyone is running for cover. So I'm next



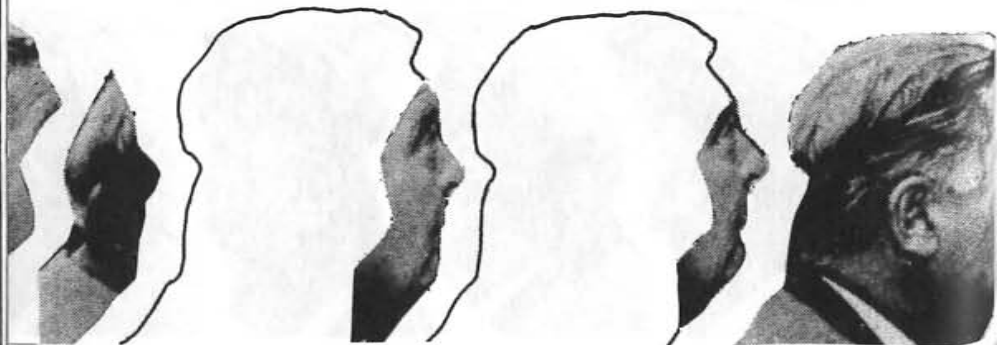
to the wall and I note that everyone around me is hiding his face and guys spitting in rags and putting it to their nose. But what I know was troopers start coming from everywhere, then I start seeing different people fall, you know, they was shot. Guys was losing their hands and shot in the head and the neck. Like it's been stated about indiscriminate firing. I don't see it as indiscriminate firing because the people that were shot, and the people that were killed, they were selected, man. How you going to call this indiscriminate? You take the troopers that came in, they wasn't hurt. Now if it was indiscriminate, why didn't some of them get hurt? You see, why was it just inmates and hostages that got shot, that got killed? At the same time the helicopter was flying overhead, the helicopter was telling everyone to surrender and they wouldn't be hurt. A lot of people were doing this and they were still getting shot. They were putting their hands up and this helicopter just kept flying around talking about surrendering and nobody would get hurt. So after everyone seen what was happening, they didn't come out. It was a slaughter like, man, the people were defenseless. They had sticks and homemade weapons to defend themselves, but this doesn't compare, man, with magnums and carbines. This is ridiculous, you know.

GEORGE NIEVES

State troopers told me to jump in the grass. They told me to fall on my face and start crawling, which I did. I didn't have no other alternative. As I was crawling state troopers was kicking us in the sides and some of the state troopers was saying that if we raised our heads any time, our heads



would be blown off. We reached a certain place, some of us. The officers told us to get up and undress, and gave us an approximation of a few seconds to undress, which is impossible, you know, to undress 'cause many of us had heavy clothes on. So many of us who didn't undress, many of us were beaten. After we had took off our clothes, he made us go through the normal routines that they do have here which is to lift up your organs, your anus, they look up your anus and what have you, and then they told us to run to a particular wall. When we ran to a particular wall, they told us to put our hands on top our heads. So we reached a particular wall then we started walking in circles. Many of us started being singled out, for what reason I did not know. I know that I was singled out and placed before the wall, a wall they had. But before I was placed before the wall, they put an X upon my back. We theorized that this was intentionally done, man, to exterminate us, because we were the last ones to



leave the yard. We were the last ones. All of us were fingered out as ringleaders, which really meant if we looked at it, objectively speaking, we wasn't ringleaders. There was more than almost 2,000 inmates in that yard. Everybody, man, didn't have to stay in that yard. If anybody did stay in that yard it's because they wanted to stay in that yard. They put us before the wall, they told us to put our heads on the wall and spread as far away from the wall, which automatically, this position started hurting our heads. Many brothers, man, made various attempts to fall because they just couldn't resist it no more. But they couldn't, 'cause if they was to fall, the fear itself within these brothers, man, they remained in this position for the simple fact that the state troopers say if we moved, we were dead people, you know, dead men.

DONALD NOBLE

Taking us into A block, where they took me, they had officers lined up in the hall and everywhere. You were scared to death 'cause you were stripped naked, and all you seen and heard was a lot of nasty words, you know, being thrown at you and so forth. Everybody was swinging out with sticks or rifle butt to try to hit you, to knock you down and so forth.

Q.: Is this inside the yard?

No, this is inside of A block, you know, coming in the block and as you go up the stairs everybody's hitting you across your back with a stick, one of these billies and so forth. Calling you all kinds of niggers you know, calling the black niggers, the white niggers, calling us Puerto Rican niggers and so forth. You get up on the gallery, you run into a whole lot of troopers up there, a few correction officers. They cracking you all alongside the head, talking about "Run, nigger, run." You got to run through a line of them and everybody's beating on you, throwing you in the cell naked with three or four men. Coming by, telling you you'd better not be caught sitting down, nothing like that there. Different ones may come by and they may spit on you inside, and so forth like that there.

JERRY ROSENBERG

Thrown in a cell, three at a time, no blankets, no clothes. Beat by the troopers on the way down and by the correction guards with clubs and rifles. They was lined up on two sides,



as you'd come down they would hit you with the sticks and guns, spit at you. If you fall down, four of them would come on top of you and start beating you with the back of the rifle butts. Once you got in the cell, they'd take you out of the cell. They'd give you a beating, throw you back in the cell. They wouldn't feed you. When they did feed you, they'd put their hands in the food, spit in the food, stuff like that, right in front of you. They'd come down and wake you up every few minutes for harassment. Shake on the bars, "Get up, get up," they wouldn't let you sleep. This went on for days. Left the windows open, no clothes, no shoes.

CARL JONES-EL

Now, I was the first who came up on the south side and while I was laying there I noticed that they brought Frank Smith in. Now when they brought him in, he was in pretty bad shape, his head was banged up. All that night they were harassing both of us, but they did more to him than me. They had a thing about that they believed that he was one of the men cut out one of the officer's testicles. And they kept accusing him of this. They threatened to bring him out and cut his testicles out, you know. I don't believe he got any sleep that night. Going back to the yard, on my way over, I did notice him on the table with a football under his neck.

FRANK SMITH

My name is Frank Smith. I was taken out of the yard and I was put on a table, nude. My body at present have cigar burns, cigarette burns, all over it. My testicles, at times, bother me now from cigarette butts, sticks, rifles. Laying on



the table with my head looking up at the catwalk, being spit on, hot shells thrown on my body, cigarettes thrown on my testicles. Every once in awhile they had a football under my throat, I had to lay in that position and if the football fall, I am looking up at a shotgun and if it falls from under my chin, I would be killed. I was taken off the table and was brought to this front door out here and was brutally assaulted for 45 minutes to an hour. This mark that I have in my head, a scar, right there as you can see, I received that. My back, my arms, my legs, everything, I couldn't even walk. That's how bad I was beaten by five pigs, and each and every one I know. I was taken to the hospital, treated as a beast, no assistance at all. I was laying on the floor. I was stepped on five or six times. I was taken in a room by myself and was beat in my testicles, almost to the extent that I passed out, with a rifle butt. "Nigger, Black power, huh, Black power, huh?" that's all was said to me while I was in that room. Criticizing, provoking, trying to make me be the animal that he is; to reverse the victim to the criminal, the criminal to the victim. I was taken out of the hospital brought back outside, where you come in the door, dumped on the floor in the elevator, was kicked, beat, all the way upstairs in maximum security and thrown in a cell, nude with the windows open. Nothing in the cell but a mattress and a pillow and a toilet and a sink for two days. I tried to cover up with my pillow. Can you imagine 250 pounds getting under a pillow? State troopers and police came by and say, "Nigger, get out from under that pillow, if we wanted you to have a cover, we would give you one. You going to die in the morning, nigger, so it don't make no difference no way, whether you freeze or we kill you."

DONALD NOBLE

I stayed in A block overnight and the next day three officers came and they asked me my name and number. I told them, they took me out of the cell and marched me down the hall where there was a lot of glass and I didn't have no shoes on. And I was trying to pick my spots to walk so I wouldn't walk on any glass, and he told me keep walking, don't pick no spots; so I had to walk on a lot of glass, you know, and it was very painful. They took me on up to the box and the smacked me around up there, and run me down the galley into a cell.

CARL JONES-EL

We're placed in cells, and this is when they started bringing out certain people. I was brought out and placed over there in HBZ. After I got over there, they beat me downstairs, man, about eight of them. In my attempt to fight back I got my arm busted over here, and they drug me all upstairs and put me in a cell. They did this to a lot. A lot was less fortunate than me. Some of them got busted heads, broke arms.

FRANK LOTT

They had three guys. Me and two other fellows were in the same cell. They hosed us down and after they hosed us down, they come around later, looking for guys, looking for John Jones and different fellows. They had pictures and what-not. Then they came to the cell, and they say, "Oh, you're Frank Lott. Come on out," he said, "We've got orders to remove you." I said, "Remove me where, man?" He said,

"Never mind, come on." So he's with two state troopers. One had the pump and one walking with the gun like that. So they had me to put on a pair of pants. Then they took me on out. I was required to walk on broken glass in the hallways. I walked and they took me to the D block, over there where the ditches had been dug by some of the inmates. They took me over by the ditches and they asked me was I going to beg for my life? You understand? So I refused to say anything as long as I had decided that they was going to shoot me. Here's a guy here with a gun like this, a 38 snub nose, and another guy with a rifle, and all this. And I thought they was going to like kill me, you know, so I didn't say anything. So just a few seconds or so, a guy hollered out through the broken window, a Correction officer, I'll never forget his face as long as I live, he told him to "bring him back," you know, he's not the one. So they brought me back, you understand, and they took me back and they put me in another cell down the gallery Then, after I'd been down there about a half-hour or so, then they came and they opened each cell individually and they started beating up guys like that and kicking them. Some of the guys were unconscious and things like that. They beat me and dragged me up, blood all over the place. Then they came down and they watered us down. Then they shot the tear gas in, you dig? Each cell—pop, pop, pop—I don't know where they get that much ammunition from, but they were shooting tear gas into each individual cell.

JERRY ROSENBERG

When I was removed from "A" block, on the flats, we called it, just as all the other brothers were, we were made to

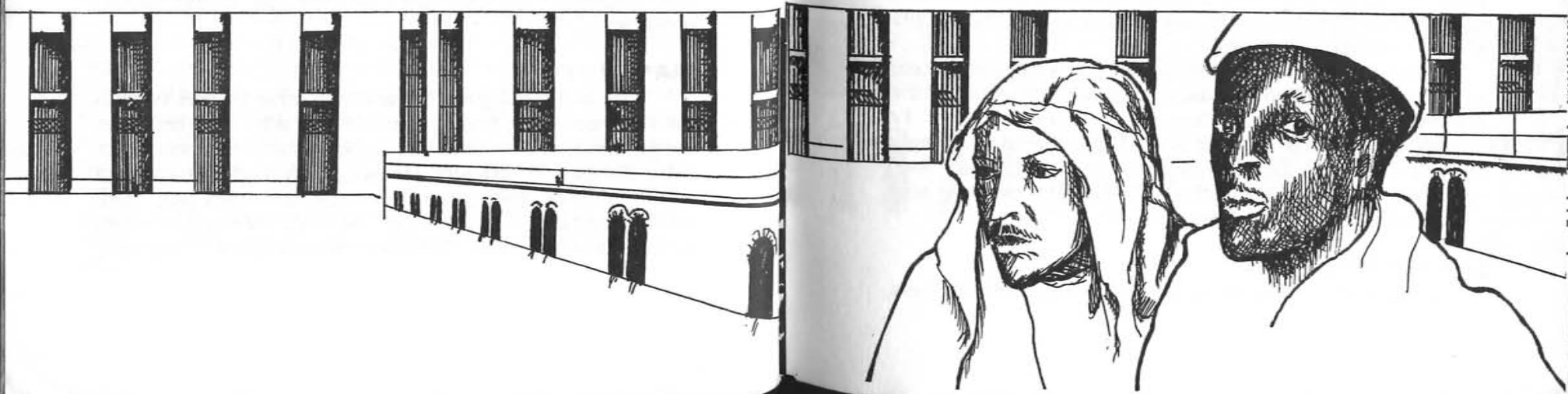
walk barefoot. I had glass in my feet and as I was walking they were banging me and cursing and all this stuff, 'till I got up to HBZ. I got up to HBZ, I got another beating. While I was in the cell up there, they removed me to take X rays. When I went down to the hospital I got another beating by the State Police and Correction Guards, when I went for X rays. When I came up again they put me in a different cell. I was removed from that cell and brought back to the original cell. I was in 1-cell, they took me down to, I think, 14-cell. Then they came down, three of them, opened up 14-cell, says, "You belong in 1-cell." On the way down they beat me again and put me back in 1-cell. That was the last time I was beaten at that time. But there's been continuous harassment and of course you know, we're being locked up 24 hours a day.

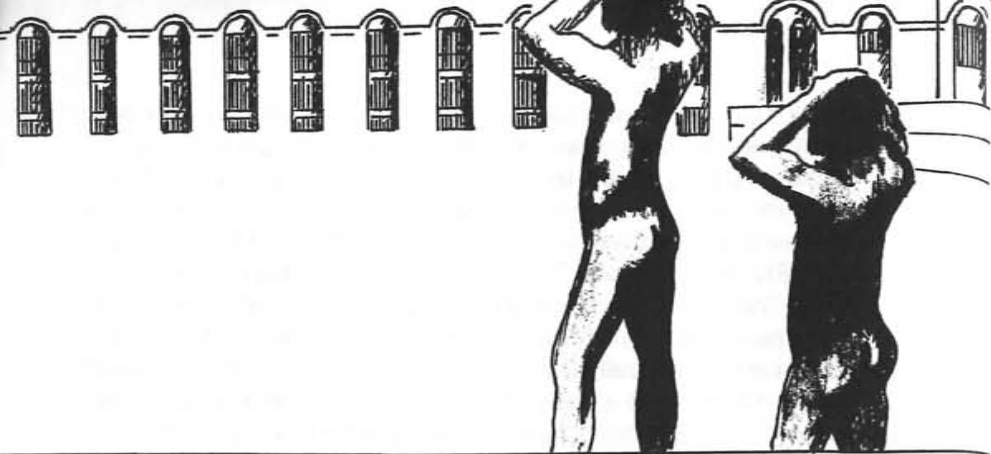
CARL JONES-EL

How've things been since? Not very much different. Food's still the same. The doctors, they still act the same. You have a few officers who do try to relate with you, but then, from time to time, you see some officers that were helping to beat you up. So, right away, this messes up everything.

ROGER CHAMPEN

We're not living; we're existing up there. That's a day to day existence. Believe me. We're kept in a cell for twenty-three and three quarter hours a day, every day. The only exceptions being personal family visits and visits to your lawyer, or, in this instance now, interviews with the news media. That's the only time you come out. Otherwise you





stay in. And they come by every day and they serve you your food in your cell. You don't go anywhere, you see. This has been going on, right now, five months. How long it's go on, we don't really know. At the best guess, I figure, another seven months or so. Each person has their individual cell. They now have us in a cell where they have a steel slab welded to the wall. And this is supposed to be your bed. And they have a unit which is composed of a urinal and a face bowl in one unit. Stainless steel. This is to prevent you from breaking up the sinks and things. And your housing, like I say, it's a small area, a very small area, but it's big enough for one man, but for 23 hours, you know, every day. And they have a yard. Yes, we must agree. They have a cubicle up on the roof that one man at a time can go in. So they lock you all up. You have a grating over your head, a steel grating over your head. And you go in there for about five or ten minutes and that's exercise. They give you one ball, a handball or something and you can throw it up against the wall by yourself. So that's your recreation. You get this five times a week, if they're not busy. If they're busy processing people, it'll be three or four times.

By raising your voice you can speak to the man next to you or the man up or down from you, but that's the extent of any communication you have. Each day I try a little harder. I'd say what I do mainly, I read a lot. I do a lot of studying. I spend most of my day studying and reading. 'Cause I don't see anything else to do in there. There isn't anything else, you sit up there, you go crazy.

DONALD NOBLE

Well, in the cell up there, you have two state blankets,

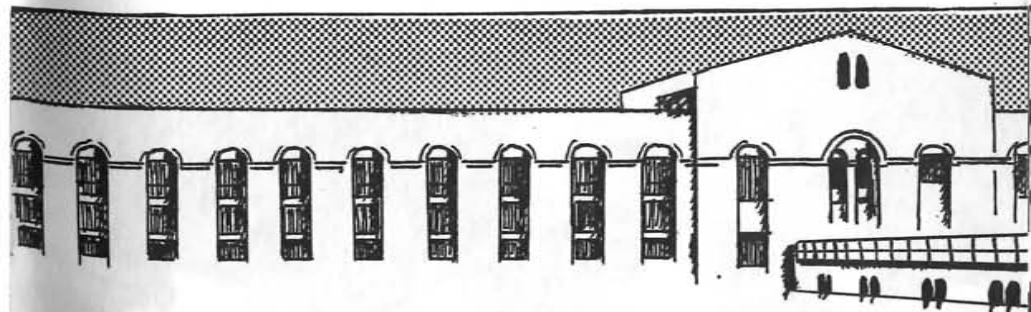
two state sheets. You have books that you was allowed to get. We may have a few old papers, may have cigarettes, different candies that you buy from the commissary.

Q: Did you lose a lot after the . . .]

I lost everything. I lost everything. The only thing I had got back is maybe a few pictures. Because for some reason, I lost everything, I mean, you know, they stole everything, rather. I had just got a box from home with a lot of clothes, you know, silk shorts, I had brand new sneakers, you know, two pair of sneakers I lost. I lost about maybe three or four sweat shirts, you know. I lost a lot of personal pictures of my family, you know, I lost my personal watch. I lost my personal eyeglasses. A lot of law material I had, a lot of law books I had, and a lot of important personal letters I had, all types of clothes and personal things that I had for years.

FRANK SMITH

I got errors in my trial a mile long. I've been fighting my case up until the time of the 9th. I had no further proceedings. I can't take no further proceedings until I get my papers, because the big head hog of the institution for some reason unbeknown to me took it upon himself to destroy all of our legal work, and clothes and personal property. Totally destroyed. Why? He don't have to answer for that. The People should know why. What do the clothes do? The clothes make the difference because you wear them. Is that the reason they was destroyed? Is he authorized to do this? Who authorizes him to do this? The governor? Is he authorized to do this? That's evading . . . or depriving a man of his privacy, his property. This is his. That's the only



thing that I have to perfect my case with, my briefs, my records. But he destroyed these. He burned them, he buried them. Took our legal books. No doubt in my mind, distributed them to the law library. I have nothing left but two shirts out of everything that I had, and one opposition from the Second Circuit Court, out of all of my papers.

JERRY ROSENBERG

And then we got this phoney grand jury sitting, which is a big joke. Officials are trying to whitewash the whole thing through this grand jury process. And, as usual, it'll probably fall back that the inmates are the culprits where actually the state and officials are culprits.

DONALD NOBLE

Well they sent me down some of the institutional charges saying that I'm charged with taking hostages out of the metal shop and charged with hostages up on the catwalk. This is what they got on some type of administration charges against me. But see this is what they're doing here, they're sending people up around these cells up here every day—they come by—officers, you know, and they look at you and they hook a story up and they say you was here, you was there. These are the things they're doing; they're giving

guys parole, saying, "Help us place this guy in this area" and so forth, like that. "We'll make sure you'll go home." Telling guys lines like this here, you know.

It's terrible when you know that this is a lie and how they're using people.

They're trying to make it seem like a hundred or five-hundred guys kept two-thousand inmates out in the yard. Now this is impossible. Twelve hundred inmates out in the yard, now how the hell is a hundred guys gonna keep 12 hundred guys in the yard? This is what they're trying to do to the public, show the public this.

FRANK LOTT

We know about the mail. They got a thing called special correspondence, with attorneys, legislators, governors, and judges, like that. They're not supposed to read or open according to rule no. 3 of-their-own-rules. But what they do with the mail, they come right on down the gallery, open the mail, and reading it and see who wrote. Here's a guy got a letter from his lawyer in Chicago. Some guard took it and he read it and the guy said, "man you not supposed to read this." So I hollered to him, "Come down here and read these rules," 'cause I have a copy of all the rules that comes down. He says, "Oh I got orders." So I says, "Man, you're going against your own rules." I say now you want us to obey rules, yet you don't want to obey rules. So now the guys are refusing legal mail.

ROGER CHAMPEN

Now they got another thing going, they got a policy



going to put your relatives in prison. Now, this is another gambit Oswald is using. He says now that they can examine your legal mail, they can "examine". Now examine means . . . like I say they deal in semantics. You're always involved in semantics with them. They say examine. "We will not read it, but we will examine it." Tell me how can they examine a letter without reading it? See you can examine an envelope—for the contents of contraband, etc., but how can you examine a letter without reading it? It's impossible. "We will not censor the letter."

Now if your family happens to write to you something that they don't like, then they're gonna send the letter back to your family. You will never even read it. This is a thing where they're bringing your family in prison. They're telling them out there what to say to you in here.

And then they give you earphones, so you can communicate with the outside world. You can hear programs. And they're programs designed to keep you in here: sports. Sports is wonderful, but a man can't exist off sports. You don't know what they're saying about life. And you're not gonna hear that on the radio. You got to get it in a book.

FRANK SMITH

I got studies. We have classes to get to know ourselves. As I say, people of all hue, not just black. People of all color, oppressed people. We are studying to learn ourselves, because we have no time to do nothing else but study, because we are in our cells 24 hours a day. We goes into the political science of this world that we live in and we deals with it. We understand the mechanism and we deals with

that. We see. We studies, so we got to be familiar with the problem. We have approximately 23 men on my side which is the East side. We have a few over there that's educational-wise to a relative degree. They have a little knowledge about certain aspects; such as dealing with semantics, history, arithmetic. You understand. The political vices of the world and we and them, we expound on these things. So we exchange our ideas and the things that we know. And we research. And we deal with it. Communication would have to be hollered or a note, you understand. We're all in one line, you understand. An 8' by 6' or 7' cell. And at certain times of the day, like me, I sleep in 16, if I want to speak about something, I can speak loud enough and everybody can hear. And it's generally the same way when we are dealing with one specific thing, such as I told you; arithmetic, history and so forth and so on. If there's a man down in 1, he relays it to me and I relays it down to 25. That way we continuously try to keep some kind of communication because that's the only kind of education we gonna get. We don't receive any other.

JERRY ROSENBERG

We are all human beings. We have all made errors at one time or another, whether you're in prison or on the street. People outside should awaken themselves to the facts of what are going on now in our system, in our country. People have to unite. There must be unity. In prison we have unity. We have unity in Attica. There's strong unity and solidarity. They can not stop that anymore. No matter what they do, they can not break our unity or solidarity. And on



the street, it's the same thing. People must have solidarity and unity together, as one. All nationalities, religions, ethnic backgrounds, whatever they are, black, white. They all must unite as one, in unity. To attain that one goal: fairness, equality and humanity.

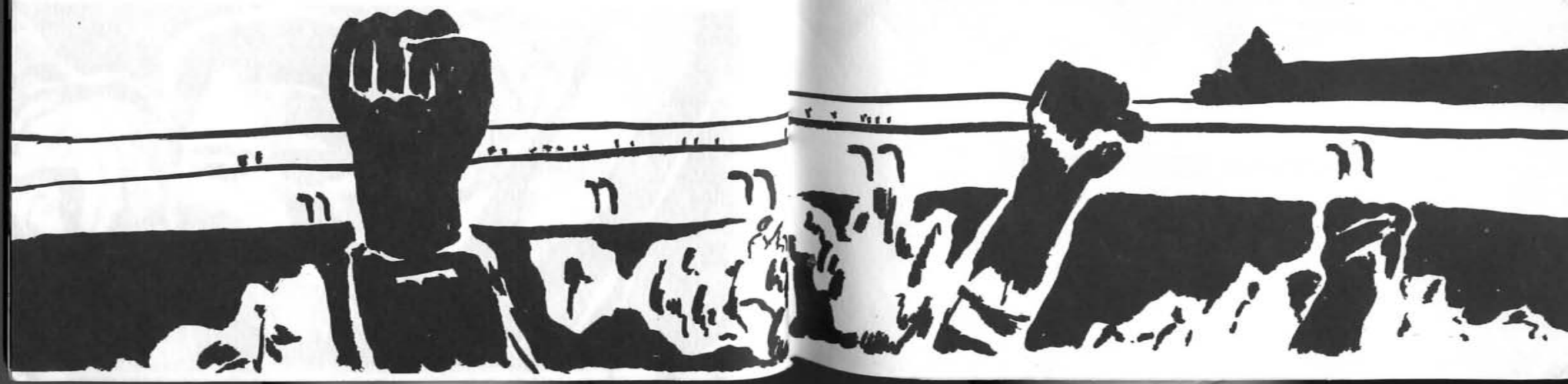
GEORGE NIEVES

We're not criminals in prison. We're people that are here for various reasons. We can't be judged because our conditions were in many cases economical in nature. This is not places for us man, and we want to go back to the community and try to bring the people to the awareness as far as to what's happening in these prisons. September the thirteenth was not something that was revolutionary in nature. This did not start by one man. This did not start by one man, twelve men or fifty men they have now. This was started by the conditions which united all the people within these various blocks. No man should be in prison. They should be exterminated or destroyed. If anything, they should be put back into the community and let the people in these communities run these prisons. Not these profiteers who only run the prisons for profit and personal gain and to create more animosity and more racism and more exploitation because this is only a concentration camp for exploitation. That's all.

FRANK SMITH

The inmate now, since the 13th, has been enlightened, to some extent, to the purpose of him being a man, a human being. Be what color he is. He identify with himself more. He seeks the problem at hand. He has dealt with the problem at

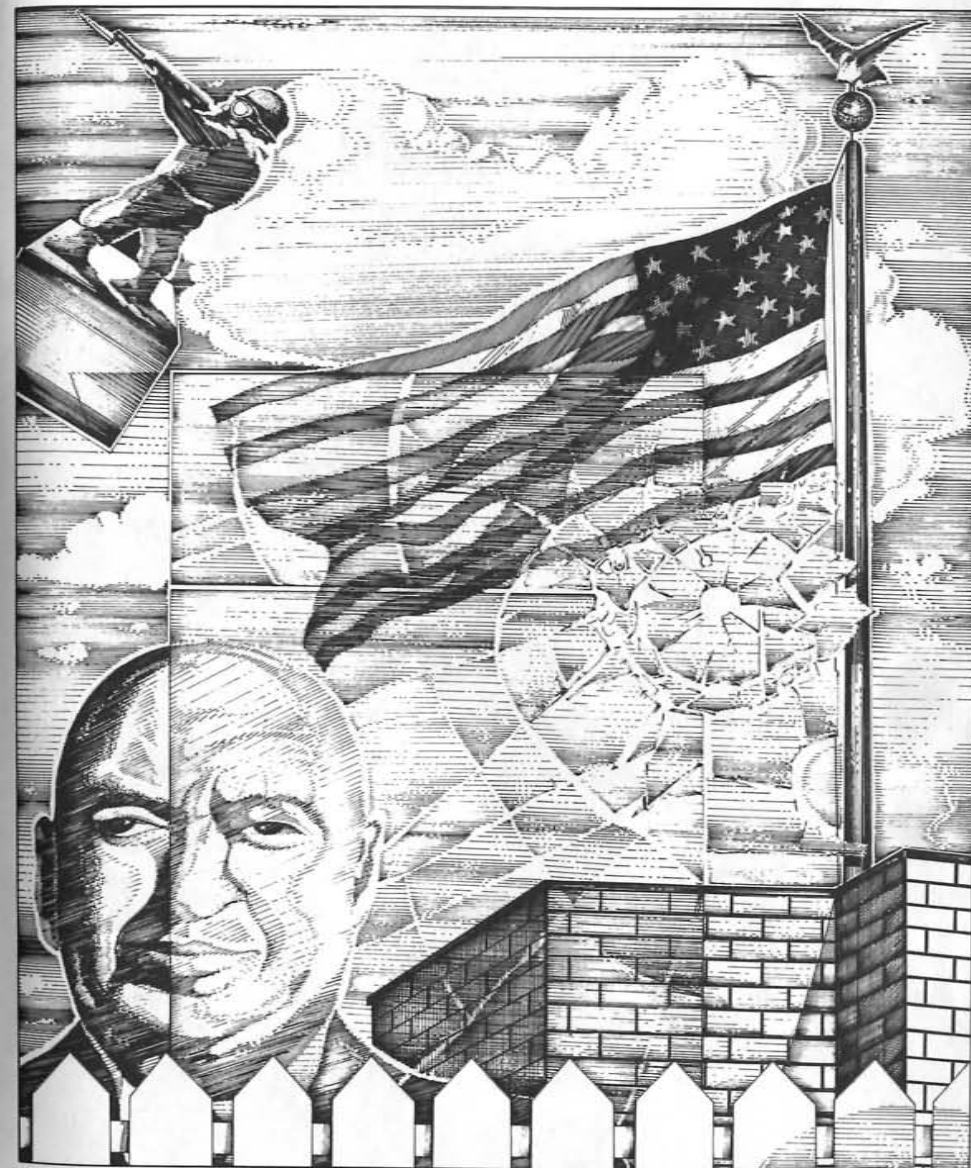
hand. He has laid it out. And he done picked it and then screened it and then looked into it and then found out what is wrong and what is happening. What is right and what is wrong. What is good and what is bad. He is thinking, because, as I told you, that's all we have time to do is think. Even after dealing with the problem and knowing what the problem is, it has been exposed. 43 people. They have still been no consideration. All rhetoric. Everybody's talking about, "we gonna do this, we gonna do that, we gonna do this, we gonna do that." *When* you gonna do this? The problem is now! It's going to continue. And the people here understand this. And my brothers understand themselves because I understand myself. More so now, than ever in my life. And what I'm giving you and the people, I want them to know that they are killing us. And something has got to be done about it. If you care at all, do something about the situation at hand, please! As long as you take a man, a person, or a woman, and treat them as a beast, you gonna always have a problem in these concentration camps. You gonna always have one, because what is happening in these institutions is the most cruel and unhuman punishment and treatment that any person can be exposed to. And believe me, I'm a victim of it. I know. I know so good because when I walk out that door I don't even know whether or not I'll get back in my cell. That's how much my life's worth. If I go in my cell, I don't know whether or not I'll wake up in the morning. That's how much it's worth. Because I know my life's not worth one penny. But to me, it's worth more than anything that you could give me, because, as I told you before, my life is for my people. And as long as I live, I'm



going to think about this. I don't care what you do or what you say, meaning the administration. My ideology will always remain. Because death is now. I couldn't be no further dead than I am now. That's what's happening in these institutions. Not just here. Everywhere. The same problem exists, and it's going to continue to exist until the people do something about it. What I say is this for the people in the street. I say: Wake up! Stop hiding! Stop talking about "it don't exist!" Stop talking about you don't understand it! Stop talking about that coldwater flat you live in is good enough for you. Stop talking about, "Well, you in jail and you getting three meals a day." Wake up! Because the same thing that's happening to me is happening to you. And deal! Petitions, rallies, let the people, let the governor, let the president and peoples that are in a position to do something about this know how you feel about your sons and your daughters that's incarcerated. Other than that, wake up! Because nothing comes to a sleeper, but a dream.

JERRY ROSENBERG

I have a thing that I'd just like to sum up with. The way I put it was, to sum it up aptly, The States official conduct, through their committed acts of repression, oppression, racism and their callousness and the brutalization and premeditated murders of the human beings which occurred at Attica is the product of official lawlessness, incompatible with a civilized system of what society should be. If there be true justice, then these officials and this kind of a system must be destroyed, just as cancer must be destroyed and a system rebuilt upon the true concepts of humanity and equality. We in Attica are not the criminals. We are the victims. The criminals are the Rockefellers, the Mancusis and the rest of the officials who have committed the atrocities that have occurred.



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