

Attica Prisoners Demands

Once the inmates of Attica Prison took over the facility on Thursday, September 9, 1971, a committee of inmates drew up five demands as preconditions to end the takeover. These five demands would be broadened into "15 practical proposals" that would form the basis for the attempted negotiations among the prisoners, the committee of outside observers, state prison officials, and representatives from the governor's office.

The Five Demands

To the People of America:

The 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 administration network of the prison, throughout the year. WE are MEN! We are not beasts and do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace has 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 that are agreeable to us. We call upon all the conscientious citizens of America to assist us in putting an end to this situation that threatens not only our lives, but each and every citizen as well.

We have set forth demands that will bring closer to reality the demise of these prisons, 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:

1. We want complete amnesty, meaning freedom from any physical, mental, and legal reprisals.
2. We want now, speedy and safe transportation out of confinement, to a non-imperialistic country.
3. We demand that the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT intervene, so that we will be under direct FEDERAL JURISDICTION.
4. We demand the reconstruction of ATTICA PRISON to be done by inmates and/or inmate supervision.
5. We urgently demand immediate negotiation thru Wm. M. Kunstler, Attorney-at-Law, 588 Ninth Ave., NYC, Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve of Buffalo, the Solidarity Committee, Minister Farrakhan of MUHAMMAD SPEAKS, Palante, *The Young Lords Party Paper*, the Black Panther Party, Clarence Jones of the *Amsterdam News*, Tom Wicker of *NY Times*, Richard Roth of the *Courier Express*, the Fortune Society, David Anderson of the Urban League of Rochester, Blond-Eva Bond of N ICAP, and Jim Ingram of *Democrat 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, so that they can better know how to bring this degradation to an end.

—The Inmates of Attica Prison

THE 15 PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

Practical Proposals

1. Apply the New York State minimum wage law to all state institutions. STOP SLAVE LABOR.
2. Allow all New York State prisoners to be politically active, without intimidation or

reprisals.

3. Give us true religious freedom.
4. End all censorship of newspapers, magazines, letters, and other publications coming from the publisher.
5. Allow all inmates, at their own expense, to communicate with anyone they please.
6. When an inmate reaches conditional release date, give him a full release without parole.
7. Cease administrative resentencing of inmates returned for parole violations.
8. Institute realistic rehabilitation programs for all inmates according to their offense and personal needs.
9. Educate all correctional officers to the needs of the inmates, i.e., understanding rather than punishment.
10. Give us a healthy diet, stop feeding us so much pork, and give us some fresh fruit daily.
11. Modernize the inmate education system.
12. Give us a doctor that will examine and treat all inmates that request treatment.
13. Have an institutional delegation comprised of one inmate from each company authorized to speak to the institution administration concerning grievances (QUARTERLY).
14. Give us less cell time and more recreation with better recreational equipment and facilities.
15. Remove inside walls, making one open yard, and no more segregation or punishment.