



Attica

chronology of events

1971 - 74

attica 1971 - 1974

chronology of events



August, 1970: Uprising at NY State's Auburn Prison. Petitioning and sitdown strikes.

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

July, 1971: Demands are presented to Commission of Corrections for New York State, Russel Oswald, by the Brothers at Attica.

August 20th: GEORGE JACKSON IS MURDERED at San Quentin Prison.

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



*Hurl me into the next existence.
The descent into hell won't turn me.
They won't defeat my revenge, never,
never. I'm part of a righteous
people who anger slowly, but rage
undamned. We'll gather at his
door in such a number that the
rumbling of our feet will make the
earth tremble.*

*Brother George Jackson
murdered, August 27, 1971*

September 3rd: Commissioner Oswald visits Attica and discusses the demands of the prisoners. He leaves behind a tape recording asking for more time. 300 Prisoners go to sick call to dramatize their demands during Oswald's visit.

September 9: UPRISING AT ATTICA! ABOUT 1500 PRISONERS FROM ALL CELL BLOCKS TAKE OVER D YARD AND D BLOCK. THE PRISONERS HOLD HOSTAGES FOR PROTECTION AND ELECT THEIR OWN ADMINISTRATION. ATTICA IS LIBERATED!



WE HAVE THE SOLUTION!
THE SOLUTION IS UNITY!
The Brothers

September 10: Prisoners control of Attica continues. Outside, observers arrive at the request of the prisoners to aid in negotiations.

September 11: 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: Control by the prisoners continues. Oswald refuses further negotiations in the Yard. Rockefeller again refuses the pleas of the Observers Committee and of the hostages; he refuses to come to Attica.



"Governor Rockefeller is guilty of malfeasance because he sat back and conducted business as usual during the Attica situation. He is obviously more interested in becoming president of the United States...than in the value of human lives."

Attorney Charles Garry



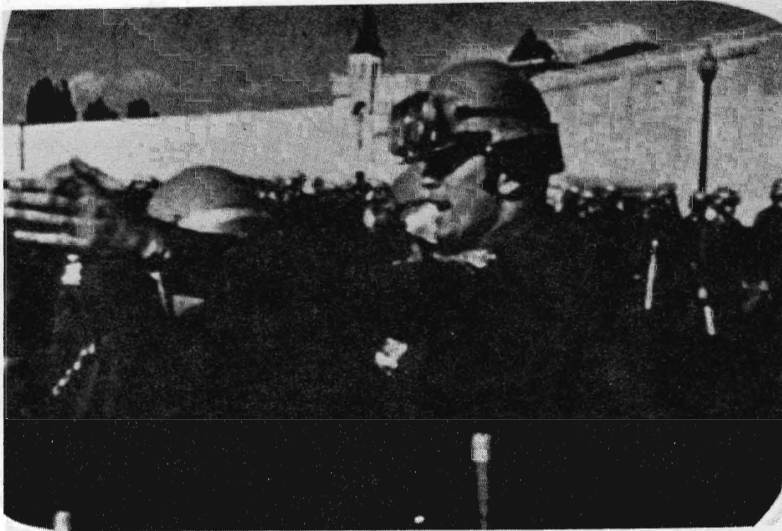
National Guard, State Police, Sheriffs' Departments and Prison Guards fired their arsenal, ranging from the Army M16 to shotguns with double "0" buckshot to hunting rifles loaded with soft-belly bullets (in violation of the Geneva Convention)...all at unarmed Attica prisoners.

September 13: BLOODY MONDAY. Rockefeller orders thousands of National Guardsmen, State Police, and Corrections Officials to attack the Prisoners. Hundreds 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 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 inmates.

"We at Attica are not the criminals, we are the victims. The criminals are the Rockefeller, the Mancusis, and the rest of the officials who have committed the atrocities that have occurred."

--- an Indicted Attica Brother



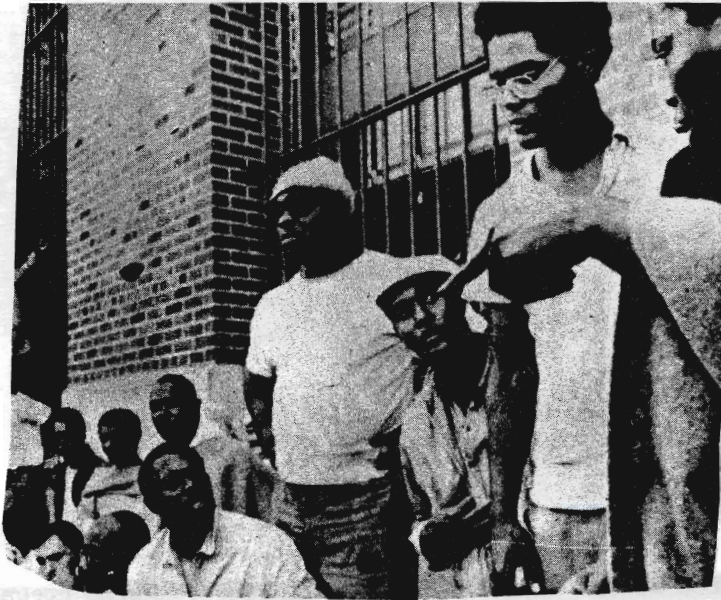


Within 12 minutes, the State Forces had killed or seriously wounded scores of unarmed men, including 10 of its own guards who were hostages. At least 15% of the more than 1500 persons in the Yard were hit by indiscriminate gunfire.

- April 1973: Lawyers are recruited by the Attica Defense Committee to begin preparation for the upcoming trials.
- April 11: Change of venue is requested from Wyoming County to New York City where 75% of the Brothers are residents. William Kunstler argues that if the Attica Brothers can receive a fair trial at all, it can only be there.
- June 1973: Judge Harry Goldmun grants a change of venue for the trials to Erie County and to Buffalo, NY, not to New York City as the Defense requested.
- Summer & Fall: During these months of pretrial work all those who enter the courtroom are searched and 12 policemen are everpresent in the courtroom giving it the appearance of an armed camp. The Brothers refuse to allow the traditional decor and rules of the court to silence them and they prove, by speaking when they wish and what they wish, that the courts have no intentions to pursue justice. At the same time, legal work continues with numerous motions filed on behalf of the Brothers, including: motions for dismissal of all charges, new change of venue, discovery of evidence, bills of particulars, removal of Presiding Judge Carman Ball of the NY Supreme Court, etc.
- September 1: The Special Grand Jury returns sealed INDICTMENTS, #38, 39, and 40. ALL are against Brothers. With these indictments there are now 61 Brothers facing over 1300 Felony accusations. In court, the Brothers label the new charges ridiculous and continue to maintain their position in defiance of the state's one-sided prosecution.

*The prisoners had no guns.
---NY Times 9/15/71*





"We are men, we are not beasts,
and we shall not be beaten
and driven as such."

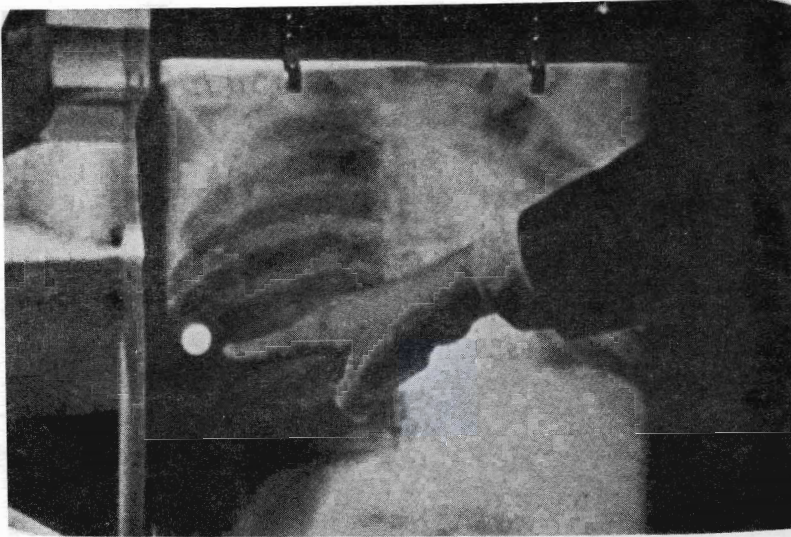
---L.D. Barkley, killed 9/13/71

- September 4: In an unprecedented action, The Buffalo Common Council unanimously votes to set aside September 9 thru 13, 1973, as "days of reflection in memory of those who lost their lives at Attica on September 13, 1971."
- September 5 & 6: Argument for Dismissal of All Charges brought against the Attica Brothers is made before the NY Supreme Court, Special Attica Session.
- September 9: Mrs. Laverne Barkley, mother of L.D. Barkley, a Brother slain during Attica Massacre by State Police, attends a commemoration service outside the walls of the Prison and gives a moving speech in denunciation of the State Officials responsible for the murder of 43 unarmed persons.
- September 13: Attica Memorial Day in Buffalo, NY, 1973.

"The same sickness that caused
that wholesale slaughter of
unarmed, inmates and guards alike,
still prevails."

---Mrs. Laverne Barkley, mother
of L.D., at Attica Commemoration
9/13/73





To justify this MASSACRE, THE State "defended" itself with three major lies:

#1...that the hostages died from slashed throats.

(The McKay Report: ALL DIED FROM STATE GUNFIRE; the Brothers had no firearms.)

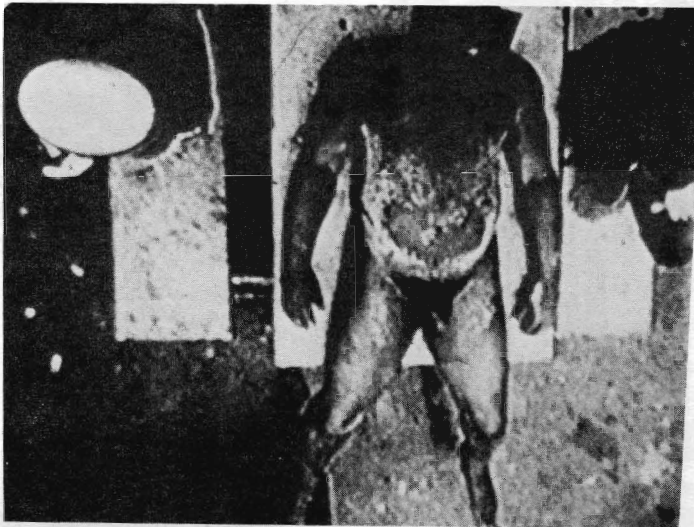
#2...Guards were tortured, their bodies desecrated.

(McKay: Never Happened!)

#3...A Guard was pushed to his death from a window.

(McKay: Never Happened!)

September 14: 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 the nation. Beatings and harrassment of the prisoners continue. Several hundred of the rebel prisoners are shipped out to other prisons. 80 of the alleged leaders are put in 24-hour solitary.



"They took a football and put it under my throat and told me if I moved it, I would be killed. For the next two hours I was used as a human spittoon and as a human ashtray. The scars are still on my body."
--an indicted Attica Brother

October, 1971: Inmates of Attica v. Rockefeller is filed before Federal Judge John T. Curtin, demanding an end to brutality of the guards against inmates.

November 28th: A Special State Grand Jury is empaneled in Warsaw County, NY, to investigate the causes of the uprising and alleged crimes committed at Attica Prison from September 9 thru September 13. Rockefeller's Deputy Attorney General Robert Fisher head the Attica investigation and directs the Grand Jury presentation. Of the 23 persons sitting on the Jury, 12 have admitted to being friends or acquaintances of guards at the prison; the foreman own tha Attica village bus service and admits to being a friend of one of the guards killed on September 13, 1971.

December 1: A Federal injunction is issued against guards and employees of Attica by Judge Curtin, demanding an end to beatings of inmates.

THROUGHOUT THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY, AND MARCH, 1972, beatings continued to occur at Attica while prisoners involved in the Uprising were held in segregation -- solitary confinement -- at all times. Five severe cases of brutality were documented during hearings against guards for contempt of the federal injunction issued in December, 1971.

April thru November: Harrassment continues. Most prisoners who were in D Yard during 1972 the uprising are transferred to maximum security prisons throughout NY.

July, 1972: The Special Citizens Commission to Investigate Attica, headed by NYU Law School Dean Robert McKay, convenes and begins its special independent citizens inquiry.

September, 1972: The official report of the McKay Commission on Attica makes public its findings. It places the blame for the massacre squarely on the officials of the State and provides evidence of criminal acts by State agents.

November 1972: The Goldmun Report is released, documenting what they described as "an orgy of brutality" which took place inside Attica after the Uprising. The report further documents criminal acts by State employees.

December 18: INDICTMENTS. THE SPECIAL ATTICA GRAND JURY AFTER SITTING SINCE NOVEMBER OF 1971 RETURNS 37 SEALED INDICTMENTS AGAINST 59 ATTICA BROTHERS. THE INDICTED BROTHERS ARE CHARGED WITH ALLEGED CRIMES COMMITTED DURING THE REBELLION, 1971. NO EMPLOYEES OR OFFICIALS OF THE STATE ARE INDICTED.



"Yes, they got me up in segregation, in the BOX. It's Christmas time now my mother and my kids have written me."

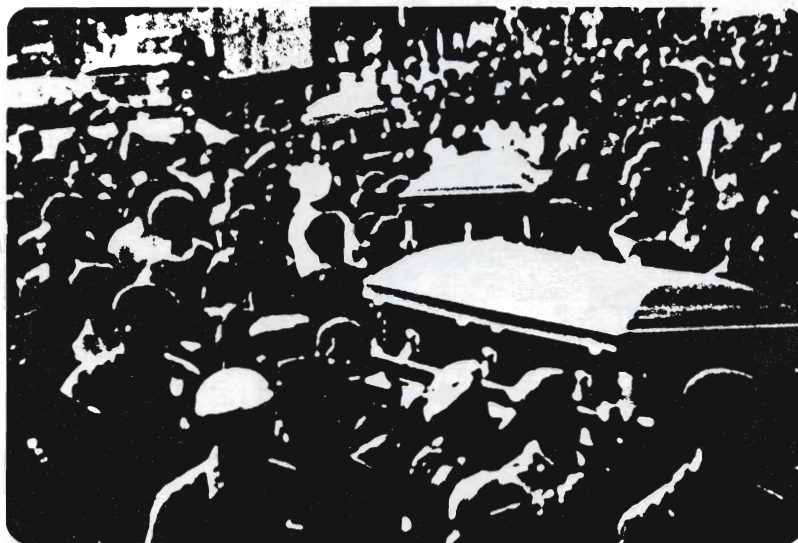
---an Indicted Attica Brother

December thru February: Attica Brothers released since the Uprising are incarcerated 1973 without explanation after the indictments and held in prisons throughout the State during Christmas awaiting the arraignment. The Brothers consistently describe all charges as outrageous and denounce the Grand Jury, the prosecutor, and the courts which have not directed any indictments against state officials or guards for their responsibility for the Attica Massacre of September 13, 1971.

March 16, 1973: Robert Fisher, Attica Prosecutor, in remarks to a Buffalo newspaper indicates that there will be no indictments against any guards or state officials for their actions concerning the Uprising, Massacre, or Aftermath at Attica State Prison.

"you and me, we know, they ain't gonna find justice, just a whole new set of victims."

---an indicted Attica Brother



Too many of us are still dying, thousands of us are buried alive. We refuse to take the xmas meal in a gesture of solidarity with the 60 Attica Brothers who are taking the weight.

---Inmates at Walpole State Prison in Boston

- October 1973: The Brothers still inside jail remain in Auburn in segregation units thereby prevented from preparing adequately for their trials which are scheduled to occur in Buffalo -- hundreds of miles away. Attica Brothers Legal Defense (the central organization for the Defense and its supporters) files a motion for transfer to Erie County Jail. The motion is denied and the Brothers are kept in solitary.
- November 8: INDICTMENTS #41 and #42 are issued against the same 5 Brothers indicted in September. The Special grand jury continues to sit after an unprecedented two years.
- November 22: Thanksgiving. Brother Omar is nearly burned alive in his cell at Auburn. Reports about the origin of the fire are conflicting, but it is evident that the guards' inactions and incompetence contributed heavily to the fact that Brother Omar received 3rd degree burns over 40% of his body.
- December 1973: Inmates at Walpole State Prison in Massachusetts declare a national fast, and boycott the Christmas dinner in protest of "everything ATTICA represents"; "Too many of us are still dying, thousands of us are buried alive. We refuse to take the xmas meal as a gesture of solidarity with the 60 Attica Brothers who are taking the weight."



*My husband was killed
by the bullet bearing
the name Rockefeller
on it.*

---an Attica hostage wife

December 1973: Guards charged with contempt of court, a violation of the federal injunction issued in December of 1972 to prevent "the orgy of brutality at Attica".

December 28: NY State Court of Appeals in a landmark decision rules that "the State can be sued for liability in the deaths of prison personnel killed when troopers retook the prison on September 13, 1971." The decision is the state's first recognition of the crimes committed by its Assault Force.



*\$9.8 Million of NY State
taxes has been allocated
to maintain the same
inhuman conditions that
brought about the Attica
Uprising.*

January, 1974: The Defense continues to prepare for the cases. The Brothers maintain their position of unity among themselves begun 2½ years before in D Yard.

Jan. 24: Brothers are convicted of contempt of court. The charge stemmed from Last June when the Brother joined a packed courtroom in applauding a speech by Brother Akil.

Jan. 29: 17 Attica Brothers confined in the special housing unit in Auburn, bring a class action suit to State Supreme Court. The Brothers charge that they are being illegally held in solitary and their constitutional rights have been violated. They also decry the brutal conditions under they are kept. The Brothers demand release into the general population for security.

January: Governor Malcolm Wilson requests \$2.5 Million for the Attica Prosecution, for court security, and to keep the Brothers confined in solitary. \$9.8 Million is requested to maintain the conditions at Attica Prison which remain virtually unchanged since September 9, 1971. Brothers on the street are subject to surveillance and harrassment wherever they go.

- February 7: State Supreme Court Justice James Moore orders investigation into the possible wiretapping of the Attica Brothers Legal Defense phones.
- February 25: Calender Call Begins. Trial dates are attempted for Brothers and lawyers. The Calender call is rescheduled however when the Judge admits on the first day that the Attorney General is indeed not ready for trial. The Prosecution has refused to comply with several court orders and is withholding evidence which may tend to prove the defendants innocent of charges. The courtroom and the court hallway are packed with supporters of the Brothers.
- February: The Rockefeller Project is initiated by the Attica Defense. Its aim is to coordinate a full-scale program which confronts Rockefeller everywhere he speaks in his pre-campaign for the US Presidency.
- March 1: The Attica Defense which has been surviving on street contributions for years, demands \$2.8 Million from the State. The money is to be spent on legal fees, office maintenance, transportation, and investigation of the massive amount of discovery material and evidence. While the state legislature considers the request, the total for money spent by the State Prosecution climbs to \$6 Million for 2½ years, with \$4 Million in new appropriations for fiscal 1975.
- March 4: Discovery motions continue. The State continues to refuse compliance with the court's orders. A gag rule is placed on the Defense, prohibiting any release of evidence, attempting to insure that release of evidence of crimes by state officials is not possible.
- March 28: Defense files motion to hold Attorney General in contempt of court for failure to comply with court orders. Defense demands court hearing after Mike Amico, sheriff of Erie County, admits under oath that he has "undercover" persons working with the Defense. The Attorney General refuses to conduct a reasonable investigation into the wiretapping incident.
- March 28: Attica Defense, in cooperation with several other civil rights and communities groups, files suit challenging the entire Jury selection system of Erie County for its gross and discriminatory nature. "Blacks are underrepresented by 34%, Women by 68% and Young persons by 84%. Note cards of potential jurors are marked at times with the notation 'colored' or 'negro' to indicate race." As stated by Defense Attorney Haywood Burns "There possibility for anyone to get a fair trial in Erie County."
- April 1: Attica Defense issues indictment against Nelson Rockefeller charging him with various crimes, including murder, against the people of New York.



As governor of NY when Attica occurred, Nelson Rockefeller was personally responsible for ordering the murders of 43 unarmed men. Yet, he intends to use that history as proof of his ability to be President.



Attica Brothers Legal Defense

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