Page 4 Portland Observer Thursday, February 15, 1979

O.S.P. Correspondent



Behind the Wall Larry Baker #35021,

displayed?

and legal manner to reach a

Julius D. Snowden #38013 Poetry Editor

All you can do is sit in anger, listening to radio reports or reading newspapers as the reports roll in. Each giving a different story; each sounding more gruesome and gory than the first . . . "Prisoners Move To Take Over Prison At Oregon State Penitentiary."

For three days now, we've been locked-down in our cells. No visits, no phone calls, no activities of any sort. Just sit and wait. Three steel walls and thirteen iron bars govern our little 9' x 12' world with a cement floor that's ice cold. A cell that all of a sudden begins to play a squeeze game with your imagination.

The air is foul with the smell of unbathed bodies. Windows are shut tight, closing off the ventilation high on the fifth tier. It has been ordered that you are to receive only two meals a day (10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.). Those meals consist simply of two stale sandwiches (baloney and jelly), an orange and a cup of coffee. All you can ask is, "Why me, Lord?'

8:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 7, 1979

It happened so quick: "All prisoners are to return to their cells," came the command. All of a sudden there appeared more guards then you ever imagined worked at O.S.P., directing traffic as each prisoner peacefully makes his way to his cell block to be locked-down.

Many of the prisoners begin to inquire from one another as to what is going on. But it is not long before the answer to their questioning surfaces. Some of the inmates refused to leave their cells from another cell block to work in the prison's laundry. Only then comes a sigh of relief - "big deal."

It had been rumored all week that the inmates were not happy with the wages they were receiving down in the industry area due to a cut-back. But that's all it was, a rumor. Inmates are paid from 50¢-\$3 a day and only a slim few ever make the maximum. These are the same wages paid to inmates for the past thirty years; while prices in the canteen have skyrocketed 100% and more.

One-fourth of their wages are withheld until they have accumulated \$100, along with whatever money that has been sent to them by family

solution? We are not animals. Why subject the whole prison population to the discomforts being But then again, we don't have all the facts or the reasons for this mass lock-down; only the facts on why and how this is affecting you and the other inmates around you at this

moment Oh, well! What else is new?

2:00 p.m. Friday, February 9, 1979 Wow! Another notice.

"You will remain locked-down until every prisoner is interviewed." Same procedure as the previous day, stale sandwiches and coffee.

Flash! News report - "30 Inmates Locked Up In The Hole For Refusing To Work."

A couple of guards stop by your cell, "How are you handling this whole situation?" they ask as a smirking smile crosses their faces.

You can only look at them knowing better then to express your honest feelings verbally. All of a sudden the air has grown a little fouler. Quickly you adapt your mind to the reasoning; to accept everything which is happening because it is completely out of your control.

As you lie on a steel bunk thumbing through today's newspapers, an article suddenly stares back at you.

"Representative Bill Rutherford, R-McMinnville, submits bill to replace cost of \$315,000 gas chamber. Injection of lethal drug costing only \$15 each. (Oregonian)

The Prisoner's Demands

We the coalition, O.S.P., demand to be treated as human beings. Can any human being deny another this right?

We feel the need, and we believe these are reasonable demands. The action we are taking to show our support for them are intended to be peaceful, non-violent, and nondisruptive of O.S.P. policies and routine.

The truth of conditioning, as well as the condition here is our most powerful weapon, and we seek only to expose the truth.



A prisoner alone in his cell.

the people of the outside coalition are being asked to contact Mr. Jim Abel by mail. Write: Mr. Jim Abel #40876, 2605 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97310.

The Other Side of the Coin

To: Oregon State Penitentiary Inmates; Date: February 9, 1979; From: H.C. Cupp, Superintendent; Re: Lock-Up Status.

In early February a small minority of inmates began agitating for a work stoppage in industry shops. On the morning of February 7, 1979 this agitation culminated in work stoppages in the laundry and as a result of this conduct the entire population has been placed on "lock down" status to assure the safety and security of the institution, its staff, and the inmate population.

As you know, my staff is in the process of interviewing each inmate to determine the source and cause of the disturbances in the industries area. Preliminary information indicates that a few inmates, primarily with out-of-state penal histories, have agitated and coerced a majority of inmates who want to work into cooperating in the strike. While individual inmate opinion varies about the cause of the problem, the principal issue appears to be dissatisfaction with the amount of pay awarded to the inmate workers.

2YEARS OF ARMY BEFORE COLLEGE.

If you think you could get more out of college two years from now, consider the benefits of the Army's new 2-year enlistment.

A CHANCE TO LEARN. Joining for 2 years does limit your choice of Army specialties. But there are still many challenging choices available that will test your skill, strength and stamina. Plus, we guarantee duty assignment in Europe. You'll learn discipline, responsibility and leadership. Qualities that can make you a better person.

A CHANCE TO SAVE. Starting pay is now up to \$419.40 a month (before deductions). In addition, the Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP, for short) will help you accumulate as much as \$7,400 for college. (Ask your Army Recruiter for details.)

A CHANCE TO SERVE. Our country has always counted on the soldier. It still does. And you'll be a prouder person for having served your 2 years in the Army. You'll gain experience. Maturity. And a clearer idea of what you want.

For more information, call your local Army Representative. The address and phone number are in the Yellow Pages under "Recruiting." Or call the number below toll-free.



No, this grievance is nothing new; it has been expressed for years. Because of the overcrowding at O.S.P. it has been stated that there are not enough jobs. Over 300 inmates have to roam the "big yard" in idleness. The normal capacity is 950, today O.S.P. holds 1,500.

So you lie back on your steel bunk as anger creeps into your mind.

11:00 a.m. Thursday, February 8, 1979

A slip of paper is handed to you through the bars. "All inmates will remain in lock-down until everyone has been personally interviewed."

Personally interviewed, for what? Personally interviewed to find out who wishes to express views on a wage increase. For those slaving away in the industry or being caged 24 hours a day with all privileges suspended?

This now makes you wonder where the sanity is in this prison action?

Surprisingly enough the inmates remained very calm and peaceful all through the transactions. Oh, a few windows are broken and "cat-calls" express displeasure, but most spend time writing letters, reading, or listening to the different reports on a prison disturbance that sounds as if it were happening elsewhere.

"Prisoners Revolt To Attract Attention Of State Legislature."

"Prisoners Sit-Down Strike To Gain Civil Right."

Prison trouble, displayed with violence is the fartherest thing from prisoners' minds. All through the day each watches another being escorted by a guard down into a small room where they are questioned. Those who are fortunate to be housed in a cell with a view over the wall sit in sadness watching visitors being turned away, many who had traveled countless miles.

Once again anger comes creeping in.

No, it does not make sense, why is it not possible to speak to prisoners in a large group about the wage problem and to air out whatever actions have to be taken in a proper

(1) There is a total lack of communication between inmates, between inmates and staff, between staff and administration.

(a) We feel the need for an inmates council to carry on a continuing dialogue with the staff as well as the administration, aimed at solving existing problems and preventing their recurrence.

(b) We feel, an ombudsman for corrections are useless and helpless without the aide of an inmates council, for they, the ombudsman can't feel the pain of this psychological warfare being perpetuated by the administration and some staff. We, the coalition, see this present situation being particulating by staff and the administration to endangered inmates lives, and we will not tolerate it.

(2) We demand a higher standard of medical care. Inmates will no longer tolerate being denied more than one day to receive doctors attention to their medical problems.

(3) We demand the immediate commencement of regularly scheduled times for group participation, meaning each day, if need be. Self-help groups are the only help an inmate can get in this institution. We, the coalition, see this as being helpful to the individual as well as to the administration.

(a) We demand a chance to satisfy ones own personal needs; (b) to feel secure; (c) to get somewhere and be somebody; (d) to have a feeling of belonging; and (e) to gain respect for ones self.

The use of the word demand, does not imply a threat. A man does not request his basic rights, he demands them.

Prisoners here at O.S.P. are not requested to obey O.S.P. rules and policies, they do not have the option of refusing, therefore it is demanded that they comply or go to the "hole" ("lock up").

We, the coalition, conclude that because of these remarks, the administration and corrections division can no longer evade their basic responsibilities, we do not request that they do so, we demand it!

We, the inside coalition, are asking for your support, we need your help,

The manner which concerns me the most is the way the inmates have chosen to express their dissatisfaction with the existing law. To my knowledge, no other state grants prisoners in a maximum security prison greater opportunity to present complaints and suggestions. These avenues include the ability to contact without censorship or reprisal virtually any public or private organization or individual, including the Governor, Legislators, News Media, and Corrections Division officials. Inmates have participated in the development of rules under the Administrative Procedures Act, as well as submitting their own legislation for consideration. We have provided more formal means of registering problems by providing an Ombudsman for Corrections with full investigatory powers and authority, inmate counselors, an evolving grievance mechanism, and availability of myself and key staff members through the interview request process. When the foregoing methods have failed or been unsatisfactory the record shows that inmates have enjoyed free access to the courts to air their complaints; assisted by the use of the penitentiary's law library with staff and other inmates to provide assistance as well as private or appointed legal assistance when needed. Considering all the available channels, the illegal activity of February 7, 1979 was totally lacking the level of responsibility which these inmates should have demonstrated. Considering the rights inmates already hold, it is unfortunate the action of a few individuals should cause all inmates to suffer the loss of visiting, canteen, regular meals, recreation activities as well as the opportunity to work. However, under the present circumstances I consider the safety and security of the institution to be endangered and I have no reasonable alternative to the present status.

As Superintendent, I will not tolerate inmate disruption or disturbances. Many have expressed a (Please turn to Page 5 Column 3)



1518 N.E. KILLINGSWORTH PORTLAND, OREGON 97211

> 284-7997 February 1979

EXODUS Honors Black History Month

GOONOUT A Lullaby Dedicated 10 the MR

COUT, my child, go on out, ur life will be a series of bouts. rieves my heart and drains my soul o see my baby strapped with chains of old. Your soft dark eyes looked up with fright And you whispered, "But Mommy, there's too many to fight." I held your hand and wiped your face And sweetly explained the human race.

as seen fre Had He thought th aster's plan; ed varieties to fill this land: The flowers, the animals, birds and bees He even meant people like you and me. Sego on out, my child, go on ou ace the world with hate, or doub 's something sp

God said we