

Seminar on prison conditions

"State held all the cards in Attica uprising"

The deplorable conditions of American and Canadian prisons and the mistreatment of prisoners was the main focus of a seminar presented by the Law Union of Ontario and the University of Toronto Law Students' Action Committee February 22 in the U of T Medical Sciences Auditorium.

Cathy Beamish, a Toronto law student with five years' experience in working with prison inmates,

moderated the seminar discussion by Joe Heath, a Buffalo "legal worker" active in the Attica Brothers' Legal Defense; Caroline Newell, a recent parolee from the Kingston Prison for Women, who helped organize the Native Sisterhood and Allied Indian and Metis Society at Kingston; and Paul Copeland, a Toronto lawyer on the steering committee of the Law Union. Heath, commenting on the upris-

ing in Attica State Prison in New York in September 1971, recalled that the prisoners had 31 demands, one being that Governor Rockefeller should come to Attica to talk to them.

"Instead," said Heath, "he sent troops to massacre the people. After four days, they moved in and just beat up the people. The courts called it an orgy of brutality. I call it a massacre.

"The state indicted 62 prisoners for 1,300 felonies. These indictments," said Heath, "are just a cover-up for the conditions which led to the massacre and for the massacre itself."

The state had total control over its witnesses since they were all prisoners, said Heath. It had bought testimony for its side using bribes, promises of parole, and threats such as torture, he added.

He said that the conditions in Attica have not changed since the 1971 uprising, and that Attica is not an isolated case; it reflects similar conditions in other prisons, he said.

Newell commented on the Native Sisterhood which formed to help native girls who come to Kingston from as far away as British Columbia and whose families cannot afford to visit them.

The Sisterhood helps the prisoners keep in contact with their culture, and has outside members who speak to white children in the schools in an attempt to break down the stereotypes of Indians which might be taught to them there.

Copeland, currently participating in the inquest of Eddie Nalon, a Millhaven prison inmate who committed suicide last year, commented on the Kingston riots of April 1971

and the subsequent opening of Millhaven Penitentiary.

"Millhaven was opened on a rush basis some two or three months before it was supposed to, because the riots had completely destroyed Kingston Penitentiary," said Copeland.

The federal government appointed a royal commission to investigate the causes of the Kingston riots, and to make recommendations on how to run Millhaven so that the Kingston situation would not be repeated.

The commission's report, called the Swackhammer Report, made many recommendations which have not been implemented at Millhaven. An inmates' committee, in which elected representatives of the inmates negotiate with the prison administration, was instituted, but is not functioning now.

"All the problems that caused the riots at Kingston are still going on at Millhaven," Copeland said.

Staff meeting today at 2 p.m., with screening sessions from 6 to 9 p.m.

Mobile VD clinic accepts all visitors

By BRENDA WEEKS

A new V.D. and birth control clinic touched down at the Fairview Mall Thursday, February 13.

The reception was strategically timed so that the mobile unit could open its doors to the public the next day — Valentine's Day.

The clinic, a branch of a permanent clinic at 2828 Bathurst, will be stationed at the mall for two more weeks, at the corner of Sheppard Avenue and Don Mills Road, before moving on to various other shopping malls.

The unit avails itself to all those seeking information or assistance with any problems concerning or related to venereal disease and birth control. The clinic workers stressed to Excalibur that no visitor would

be turned away.

Carolyn Egan, a graduate of U of T's school of hygiene, and the member of the longest standing of this clinic, emphasized that teamwork makes the group effort successful.

Judy Ramirez and Clara Costa, two such team-mates, are involved in the immigrant outreach program in conjunction with the immigrant services. Both Italian speaking, they seek to lure ethnic women into group activities and to lectures on birth control and V.D. They are seeking special quarters for this, but with some difficulty.

"Some schools are willing to donate portions of a class-room on a part-time basis," said Ramirez, "but so far no offer has been ad-

quate."

Peter Cole, the clinic's doctor, will commute from his family practice in Prince Arthur to work at the clinic two days a week. When asked why he was going out of his way for the clinic two days a week, he made clear his convictions on the need for services of this kind.

"It is uninformed doctors, who don't have time for patients with these problems, who necessitate an educational and referral clinic such as this," he said.

Cole, who sits on the clinic's board of directors, has been a member of the steering committee for the Doctors for Repeal of Abortion Laws, a provincial group.

Family farmer must be assisted, Chauvin tells Glendon forum

Immigrant labour imported on a contract basis for seasonal work in Canada should not be granted the same rights as Canadians, said Gilles Chauvin at last Thursday's Canadian farmworkers forum at Glendon.

Chauvin, a student at Glendon and a panelist in the discussion, felt that in order to improve the lot of Canadian farmworkers, assistance must first be provided to the family farmer who is not usually in a position to pay wages or provide benefits equal to those in industry.

United Farmworkers of America Vice-president Marshall Ganz and Canadian Labour Congress organizer Pauline Anidjar also served as panelists.

AGAINST LAW

Anidjar pointed out that farm labourers in Ontario are still forbidden by law to join a labour union. She blamed the plight of Canadian farmworkers in Canada on the system of discouraging Canadians from entering the agricultural industry by providing a greater income through unemployment insurance than can be earned in the fields.

Insisting that all human beings should have equal rights despite their citizenship status, Ganz called upon family farmers to organize themselves for collective bargaining with the large food processing corporations. He said that if farmers would concentrate on fighting such companies as Green Giant, Del Monte and Kraft, rather than minimizing costs by exploiting migrant workers, the positions of farmers and farmworkers would be improved.

CHILD LABOUR

Chauvin, who belongs to an Ontario farming family and has worked as a migrant field worker since he was six years old, declared that a farmworker who knows what he is doing can make good money with piece work rates, adding that he never received less than \$2.50 an hour for his work.

"Conditions for Ontario farmworkers could be a lot better," he said, "but they could also be a lot worse."

The student Christian movement will be sponsoring a farmworkers

day at York's main campus next Wednesday. The event will feature a discussion in the bearpit with California farm worker Jessica Govea at noon, followed by a film and slide presentation continuing through the afternoon.

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