P.S. to the NEWS
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HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

Now that the passions of spring campus demonstrations have subsided, some of the students who spent last semester protesting their universities' investments in corporations doing business in South Africa should look at human rights violations closer to home. The recent test mony of the first American political prisoner released from Cuban jails provides qu'te a sta tling picture of a Western Hemisphere Gulag.

Frank Emmick, a 63-year-old American businessman imprisoned in Cuba for 14 years until his release ir: January, has give11 an eyewitness account of heroic physical and spiritual endu ance in the ace of prolonged brutality. Unfortunately, few seem to be interested in his story.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Em ick engaged in the innocuous business of freezi-ng and exporting frog 1 egs from Cuba to the United States. When this country broke uff diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961, he suspended production. Then his troubles began.

Emmick was hartassed and arrested several times and asked what he knew of the coming 11invasion." Although he had no knowledge of any invasion, his home was entered at idnight by five Cuban militiamen who beat him savagely and threw him into the ocean for dead. After he survived that ordeal, he was forbidden to leave Cuba.

Two and a half years later, Emmick was thrown into a Cuban dungeon on the trumped-up charge of be:ng the chief of the CIA in Cuba. After months of typical Communist-style interrogat;ons, occasionally witnessed by Russians or Czechs, Emmick was tried in 964 and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Emmick's descriptions of life in a Communist prison for political prisoners rival Alexander Sol nitsyn's in horror and sadism. Emmick was savage:y beaten,

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kept in solitary confinement in a comple:e"'.y darkenec' refrigerated room, packed in a dungeon with 650 other prisoners w th practica::y no sanitary facilities and no room to lie down to sleep.

"Prisoners were jammed like sardines, forced to sleep on an old, poorly cemented floor full of earthen pot holes, rats, vermin, etc., with little ventilation and where the sun, moon, and stars cou1d never be seen," Emmick said. Captives .l'fought for a measly inch of space to rest our bodies."

Emmick said that there were about 5,JOQ prisoners in that compound. All those who left went straight to the firing squac. There were 20 to 25 executions a week and as many as 27 in one r;g1t. "Among us there were r,o con:mo'l pr soners, only political prisoners -- men in a l walks of life from peasants to priests whose only crime was their revulsion of Comnunism."

In addition to everything e:se, EmT.ick su++ered two heart attacks during his 1•mpr_ •sonmen..+,, and a\.+, one por• a guard,, bayone"'+e d h1• th, e s1• de because he n_+ m r• n s1•mp.1y was the only American prisoner in the fortress. He credits his survival to his faitb and to the couraae of his convictions.

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·Emmick was releasec: this yeas4li@@@1 2di1 E1m11 e!k because "! think [Castro] probably didn1t want me to die on his hands."

How many political prisoners are suffering like this in Communist Cuba? Emmick estimates that ten years ago there were 100,000, and that at the present time the figure is about 40,000 political orisoners.

Castro's barbaric treatment of an innocent U.S. citizen is a worthy focus for the energies of American student protesters, and a.{c,o of the Carter Administration's campaign for human rights. Emmick says that at least four other American political prisoners remain in Cuba in circumstances simi1ar to his own.

Will campus agitators and Carter Adm'1istration orators call for human rights in Cuba? Or will they continue their practice of select've mora1 accusat'on?

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