

COMMITTEE TO END THE MARION LOCKDOWN

April 2, 1989

Dear

Enclosed is a leaflet for our upcoming demonstration. We will bring several buses and a couple of hundred people to the southern Illinois area on April 29 and will be demonstrating at several sites. In addition, we have been working with several local people and they are helping us to publicize and build for the demonstration in the area. If you know people who would like to attend, please have them get in touch with us.

We would very much like it if you want to send a message to the demonstration. We haven't yet worked out all the details, but we will be stopping in several locations, one of which will of course be the prison, and probably we will read messages from you all at each stop. We don't know how many messages we will have time for but if we can't read what you write, we will at least distribute your words in written form. We would recommend short messages, on the order of 100-200 words.

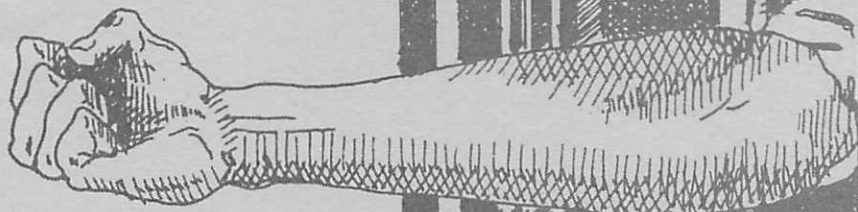
Since it is never clear when the prison lets things in, we would appreciate just a note from you letting us know that you received the leaflet and what you think of it.

COMMITTEE TO END THE MARION LOCKDOWN
343 S. DEARBORN, ROOM 1607, CHICAGO, IL 60604 (312) 663-5046

DEMONSTRATE! MARION PRISON — APRIL 29th

WE DEMAND:

- NO MORE CONTAMINATED WATER AT MARION!
- END THE LOCKDOWN!
- ABOLISH ALL CONTROL UNITS - EVERYWHERE!
- END THE SELECTIVE MISTREATMENT
OF POLITICAL PRISONERS!



On April 29, several buses from Chicago and other cities will bring hundreds of demonstrators to the Marion/Carbondale area of southern Illinois, where we will join with local activists. Our demonstration will march and bus to several sites in the area. At each we will voice our opposition to Marion Prison and forcefully express our demands. Together we can make a difference. We urge you to join us. For more information, or to register for the trip, contact us at:

National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War

Box 476698, Chicago, IL 60647
(312) 278-6707

Committee to End the Marion Lockdown

343 S. Dearborn, Suite 1607, Chicago, IL
60604 (312) 663-5046

Ellen Wipperfurth

WHY WE ARE DEMONSTRATING

Marion is a unique prison. Its barbaric nature has been condemned by national and international human rights organizations. But Marion is unique not only because of its extreme brutality. It is the mission of Marion, the only level six prison in the U.S., that also makes it unique. In 1975 the then-warden of Marion, Ralph Aron, testified to a federal court that: "The purpose of the Marion control unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and the society at large."

Why is an institution like Marion allowed to exist? Perhaps it is because not enough of us know enough about Marion. For example:

Did you know that prisoners at Marion are forced to drink and shower in water from Crab Orchard Lake, a contaminated water supply in the midst of a toxic waste dump so severe that it is on the EPA's Superfund priority list? Long ago the town of Marion stopped using this water supply. The prisoners are the only people who are forced to use it. As a result, they have been reporting for quite a while such symptoms as dizziness, rashes, and lipomas (small, benign tumors).

We demand that the prison stop using water from Crab Orchard Lake and find another water source immediately.

Did you know that Marion has been locked down for over five years? Prisoners are locked in their tiny cells the size of a large closet for 23 hours a day; they sleep in their cells, eat in their cells and defecate in their cells. In addition, the men are subjected to finger probes of the rectum, which they see as a form of rape, and spread-eagle chainings to their concrete-slab beds, for hours and sometimes even days at a time. Conditions at Marion have been condemned by many human rights groups, most recently by Amnesty International, the Nobel prize winning organization. Amnesty wrote that conditions at Marion "amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment." Amnesty also reported that Marion appears to violate every one of the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

We demand that the lockdown be ended and that all aspects of the barbaric treatment associated with it be terminated.

Did you know that virtually all of Marion is a Control Unit where the authorities attempt to control every action of the prisoners? Marion serves as a model which is being tried in many places. A Control Unit for women was built and opened for two years at the Federal Penitentiary in Lexington until mass protests shut it down. Recently, a Control Unit was opened at Shawangunk Prison in upstate New York and another is now in the process of opening at Ionia Prison in Michigan - where it is proudly being proclaimed to have been designed on the "Marion model." This epidemic of Control Units will spread unless we stop it.

We demand that all control units be abolished.

Did you know that the Bureau of Prisons tells us that Marion is for violent, uncontrollable prisoners, but a study by the government's own consultants found that only 20% of the men at Marion had a designation appropriate for Marion? The truth is that many prisoners are at Marion simply because they are disliked by the BOP, often for writing "too many" lawsuits, for standing up for themselves, or for fighting for religious freedoms. In fact, Marion has always incarcerated many political prisoners. Those currently either at Marion or designated there include Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Oscar Lopez Rivera, Black/New Afrikans Hanif Shabazz Bey, Kojo Bomani Sababu, James Miller and Richard Thompson, and North Americans Alan Berkman, Tim Blunk, Bill Dunne, and Ray Levasseur. This is more than is held at any other prison in the United States - a fact that is even more remarkable since Marion is one of the smallest prisons in the country.

We demand an end to the selective mistreatment of political prisoners.

Now that you know all of this, won't you come and join us as we pursue our demands and stand in solidarity with the prisoners at Marion against the prison and the Bureau of Prisons that designed it?