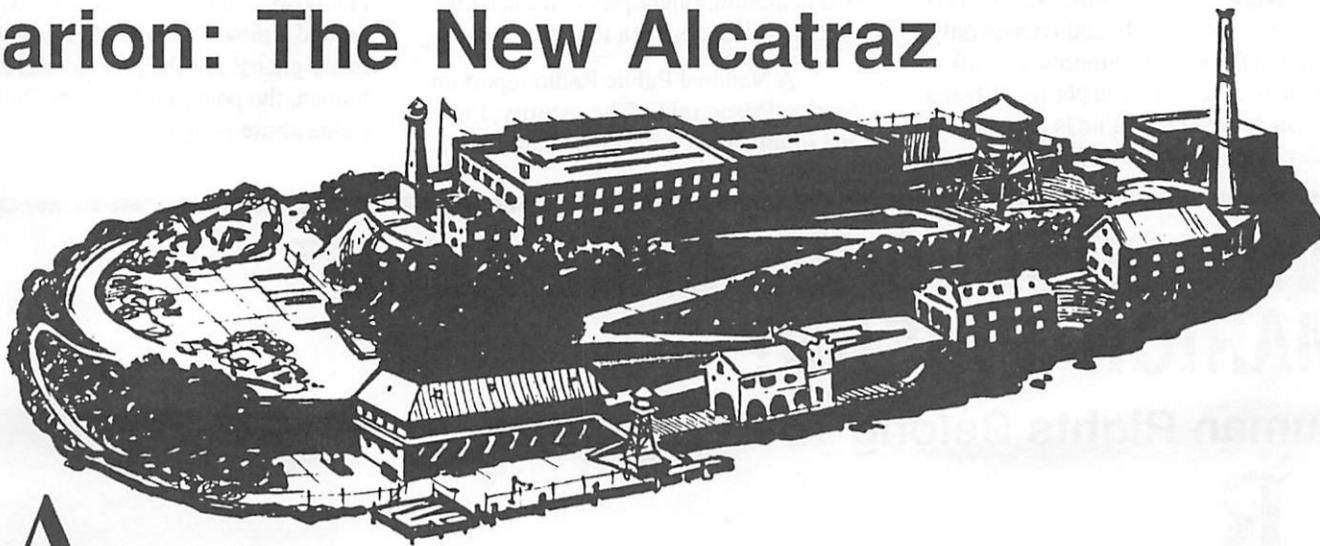


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Marion: The New Alcatraz



Alcatraz is the most notorious prison in United States history. "The Rock" was the original

maximum security prison, with no program of rehabilitation. "Hell-hole Alcatraz" developed the 24-hour lock-

down (confinement to a cell with no exercise or fresh air).

Prisons of the Future



Alcatraz closed its doors in 1963, widely criticized for lack of rehabilitation programs and outrageous expense. It was replaced that same year by the new Marion Prison in southern Illinois, which has proven even harsher.

Marion Federal Penitentiary has the distinction of being the only U.S. prison ever condemned by *Amnesty International*

for violating the United Nations Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoner. Yet, prison officials describe Marion as the experimental laboratory and trendsetter for the entire federal prison system. The Marion model is proliferating among State Prison systems. California recently opened a Marion-style control unit prison at Pelican Bay near the Oregon border.

Living on Toxic Water

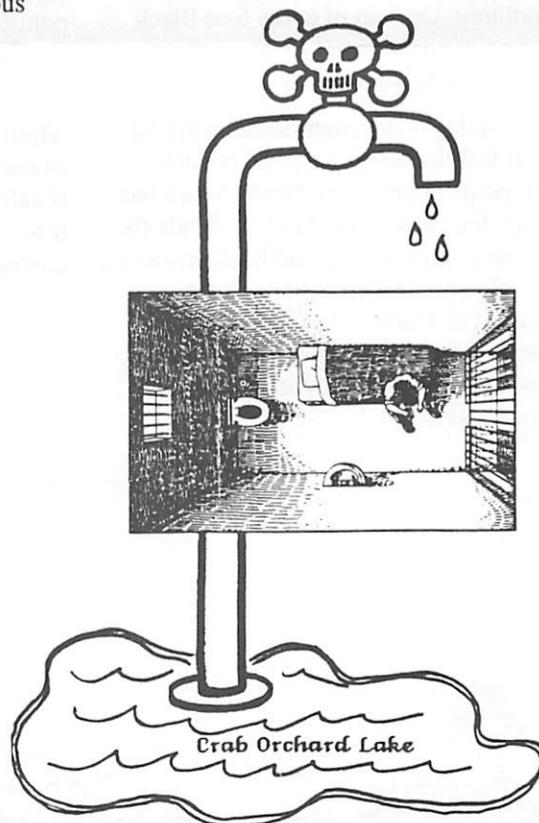
Crab Orchard Lake, the reservoir from which Marion draws its water, contains a significant amount of PCB, lead, and arsenic. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) placed the lake on its Superfund Priority Clean-Up List. The City of Marion, which used the lake as a backup water supply, abruptly stopped in 1982 when PCBs were discovered in their reservoir. The prisoners are the only ones still forced to drink, shower in, and eat food prepared with this water. Studies have shown the Marion water to contain 1,000 times the acceptable level of chloroform—a known carcinogen.

The water is making the prisoners sick. They have a high incidence of tumors, digestive problems, dizziness, and other symptoms consistent with chloroform poisoning. The Bureau of Prisons has refused to allow independent testing of the water.

Marion is an ongoing experiment in how far the human spirit can be controlled. In October, 1983, the entire prison became an official "Control Unit," under permanent lockdown. Lockdown means that prisoners remain locked in their cells

for 22.5 hours a day; all normal vocational, educational and recreational activities have been eliminated. Prisoners cannot socialize with each other and cannot participate in group religious

services. Guards may tie them spread-eagled and naked to their concrete slab beds for arbitrarily-defined infractions. Prisoners live in 7x9-foot cells.



Locked Down For Six Years

Denied "contact visits," prisoners seen their family and friends only through a thick glass window and talk with their visitors by telephone. When a prisoner leaves his cell he is accompanied by three riot-clad guards and is subjected

to a degrading finger probe of the rectum that the prisoners liken to rape.

A National Public Radio report on Marion Prison said, "The security, force and intimidation are a demonstration of

raw power...things can go very wrong behind a prison's wall." At Marion, where many guards see the prisoners as less than human, the potential for severe human rights abuse is high.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT MARION PRISON?

Human Rights Belong To Everyone

Regardless of how a person wound up in prison, he or she does not deserve to be forced to drink poison water from a toxic waste dump. Dostoyevsky

once wrote that "to understand a society, one must look within its prisons." If—in the name of protecting our safety and security—we treat people worse than we

would treat animals, then we are in danger of throwing away the most fundamental standards of civilization.

"Total Control" Methods Don't Work

Keeping 350 prisoners "in line" through isolation, beatings, and intimidation makes the situation even more unstable. This pressure cooker environ-

ment has only led to more suicides, murder, rebellion and retaliation. A Congressional audit revealed that 80% of Marion's prisoners do not fit the BOP's

own classification for Marion. Instead of rehabilitation, prisoners are provoked, hardened, or even driven insane.

Violence and Racism in Prison Will Not Solve Violence and Racism in Society

Stopping crime begins by fighting its root causes: poverty, racism, sexist violence, drug addiction, etc., through education and compassion. Instead, U.S. prisons (with Marion in the lead) reproduce the worst of society's conditions. One out of every four Black men go to prison in their lives—a rate eight times higher than for whites!

Today many countries are moving towards fuller democracy and releasing their political prisoners. South Africa has even released Nelson Mandela. While the U.S. denies it holds any political prisoners, several political activists have been assigned to Marion. Among them are Black leader Sekou Odinga and Puerto Rican independence advocate Oscar Lopez Rivera.

The Bureau of Prisons often punitively assigns prisoners to Marion for filing lawsuits against the prison system or complaining too much. The repressive conditions at Marion are expressly designed to force prisoners to renounce their political beliefs, and to "fit in" to the prison world.

As you tour Alcatraz and when you return home, please remember that the island is more than just a Rock with a beautiful view and an interesting history. It is a symbol of a penal strategy that is inhumane and terribly dangerous.

To learn more about Marion, please talk to us from the *Committee to End the Marion Lockdown*, 343 S. Dearborn, Room 1607, Chicago, IL 60604, or call us at 415-330-5363.

**Turn Off The
Poison Water!
Stop the
Lockdown!**

