

# PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS WE APPEAL TO YOU TO OPPOSE THE MARION LOCKDOWN

We have come to your community today to protest against Marion Federal Prison and to insist the officials end the brutality there. But we also want to gain your support for our struggle. There have been a number of myths propagated about Marion Prison:

**MYTH:** Officials maintain that present conditions at Marion are acceptable and that prisoners who protest have no sound basis for doing so.

**TRUTH:** Marion is a brutal and inhuman place. The prison has been continually locked down for over five years, meaning prisoners are locked in their cells for 23 hours a day. They sleep, eat and defecate in those cells and have virtually no contact with other prisoners or outsiders. The prisoners are subjected to regular finger probes of the rectum and spread eagle chainings to their concrete slab beds. Furthermore, prisoners at Marion are forced to drink and shower in contaminated water from Crab Orchard Lake. All of Marion is a control unit, meaning authorities brutally control every action of the prisoners.

**MYTH:** Officials claim that Marion exists to weed out those within the prison system who are vicious and uncontrollable. They have worked to convince the people of Southern Illinois that the prisoners at Marion are all dangerous enemies of society.

**TRUTH:** The real purpose of Marion is to separate and punish those within the prison system who resist. 80% of the men at Marion are eligible for less restrictive prisons. Many prisoners are sent to Marion not for committing violent crimes, but for successfully organizing resistance at other prisons, or for writing "too many" lawsuits, or for practicing religions not accepted by the BOP. Prisoners at Marion such as Oscar Lopez Rivera, James Miller, Kojo Bomani Sababu and Bill Dunne have devoted their lives to fighting for the rights of poor and working people in this country. It should be clear to people throughout Southern Illinois who live daily with unemployment, welfare and poor health care that there are prisoners at Marion who have been sent there for standing up for oppressed people, and they are not our enemies.

**MYTH:** When forced to acknowledge the awful realities of Marion Prison, officials say that only such harsh and restrictive measures can possibly curb the violence.

**TRUTH:** The methods used at Marion do not curb violence, instead they promote violence. The brutality directed against prisoners produces intense feelings of rage, which are inevitably directed against guards, other prisoners or society as a whole.

**MYTH:** The authorities claim little opposition to Marion Prison exists.

**TRUTH:** People came here today to protest from all parts of the country, representing groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and the Pledge of Resistance. In addition, students came here from at least seven different campuses.

It's hard to give up the myths that we are fed by the federal government, television, and the mass media. Marion is one of those myths but it must be given up so that we all can begin to pursue a human society. Marion does not protect us. Marion does not save us from crime. It is true that Marion provides some jobs in this economically depressed area. But are these jobs really worth it? Marion is becoming an international focal point of human rights violations on a daily basis.

There is either going to be a minimum level of humane treatment in U.S. prisons or there is not. Everyone in the modern world thinks that dungeons are barbaric. Marion is a dungeon. It is the logical place to start the pursuit of human rights in this country. It is a disgrace that Marion is below internationally recognized minimum standard rules for the treatment of prisoners. *Not even the minimum!* We appeal to *you* to refuse to let the government and the BOP act in *your* name in operating Marion Prison. The minute their support among the people of Southern Illinois begins to crumble, the days of Marion are certainly numbered. Together we can stand in support of the prisoners at Marion and demand an end to the brutality.

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