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Jose*

WHEN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REPLACED ALCATRAZ  
WITH MARION IN 1962 IT CREATED . . .

# HELL IN A VERY SMALL SPACE



DANIEL BERRIGAN, S.J.

Eddie Griffin

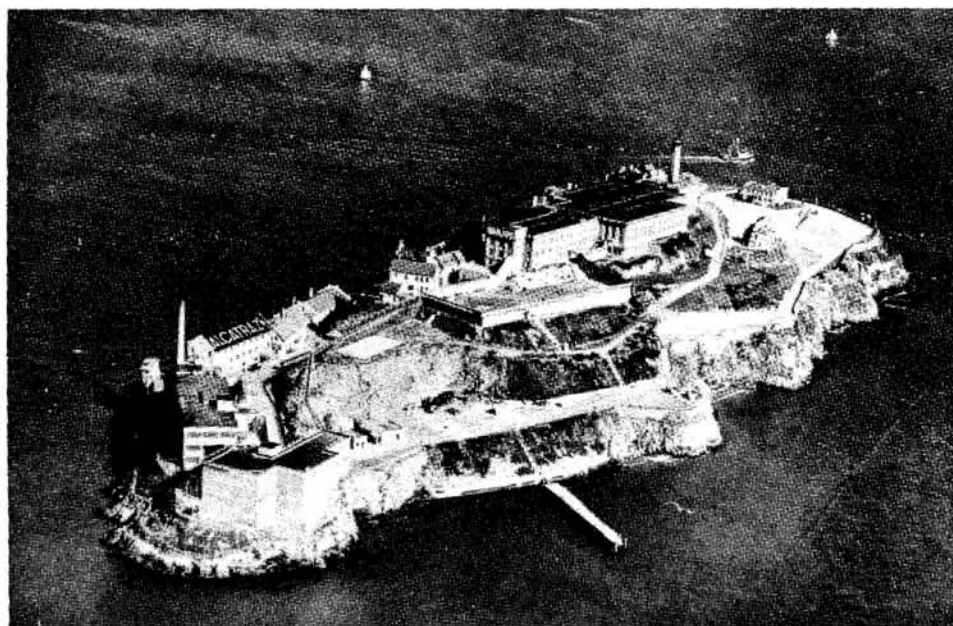
REV. LEON WHITE

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ALCATRAZ FEDERAL PRISON San Francisco Bay 1934 — 1963

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## PREFACE

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**T**HERE IS a growing crisis in the criminal justice system in America. Rising unemployment, falling health, education and welfare benefits, deteriorating housing and inflation are forcing more and more people below the poverty line. And since it is illegal, for all intents and purposes, to be poor in this country, many of these people are being thrown into the hands of the police and courts. There they are treated as human waste—to be processed by the system and either thrown back onto the street with less than they had before, or sent to jails or prisons.

An ever increasing number are sent to the jails and prisons. In fact as long ago as 1970, then-director of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, James V. Bennett, proclaimed, "The U.S. has the largest prison population of any nation in the world." And the situation is worse today. In 1975 there were 226,000 people in state and federal prisons. In 1976, 249,000, and on January 1, 1977, there were 283,000. This represents a 25% increase in only two years—the largest increase in U.S. history! And that doesn't include the exploding population of our city and county jails, or our youth detention centers.

To contain this skyrocketing prisoner population the federal government, together with state and local governments, has undertaken a two-part program that threatens our freedom, indeed our lives. The first part is a stepped-up expansion drive. That means building more prisons; converting existing facilities, such as army barracks or Olympic dormitory housing, into prisons; or expanding existing prisons.

The second step is the establishment of behavior control programs and special long-term control units in these prisons. This "Penology of Control" involves the use of drugs, sensory deprivation, long-term solitary confinement, pseudoscientific therapy techniques, and total visual and sound surveillance—so that more and more prisoners can be crowded together in the prisons. Some people, such as U.S. Bureau of Prisons Director, Norman Carlson, have even begun to talk about "incapacitation" of prisoners as a legitimate purpose of prisons.

The control units are the backbone of this entire strategy because in them are held the prisoners who resist or protest against deteriorating conditions in the prisons. These

so-called "troublemakers" are sent to the control units for long periods of solitary on the grounds that they are "dangerous" or a "security risk." In fact, these are the jailhouse lawyers, the activists, the inmate leaders, Muslims, Marxists. They are more often than not the Black, Native American, Hispanic or Asian prisoners, though White prisoners who protest are also put into the control units.

These special units are spreading throughout the U.S. prison system. Control units already exist in state prisons in Georgia, New Jersey and Michigan. Two are being built in new federal prisons in New York and Alabama. Two are planned for the New Mexico and Arizona state prisons.

The arch-example of this type of program, though, is the Long-Term Control Unit at the Marion, Illinois, Federal Prison—the replacement for Alcatraz as the maximum-security prison in the U.S. Opened in 1972 to break a work stoppage, the control unit is a "prison inside a prison," an indefinite solitary confinement unit where men are held in 6' x 8' cells, 23½ hours a day, for two, three and four years. Prisoners from all the federal and many state prisons are sent to the control unit.

But the more important thing about Marion is that an eight-year struggle, involving prisoners, ex-prisoners, activists, lawyers, churches, professionals and students, has emerged as a force that the U.S. Bureau of Prisons cannot ignore. Years of lawsuits, hunger strikes, work stoppages, demonstrations, marches, petition drives and even sit-ins have begun to crumble the walls of secrecy and total authority that surround the federal prison system's operations.

This pamphlet is an attempt to re-tell the Marion story from as many different views as possible. The priest, the bishop, the journalist, the activist, the prisoner—Black, White, Hispanic and Native American—all the voices that have been raised over the past eight years are represented here, if not as a story-teller, then as a subject of the story.

Here you will find Dan Berrigan's "Hell In a Very Small Space," the article that first kindled the fires of support in religious communities across America. In the section of prisoner writings, there is an editorial by Eddie Griffin, the former control unit inmate who wrote the pamphlet "Breaking Men's Minds," the best description of behavior control in prisons published to date. Two very different kinds of material were contributed by Scott and Audrey Aronson Myers, the founders and co-directors of the National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers, the organization that has spearheaded a five-year public support drive. Other contributions come from Fred Bustillo, a jailhouse lawyer who spent many long months in the Marion control unit, Jake McCarthy, a columnist for the "St. Louis Post-Dispatch." And there is an article on the National Interfaith Delegation which did an inspection tour of Marion in November, 1979 under the leadership of Roman Catholic Bishop Maurice Dingman (Des Moines, Iowa) and included other Catholic and Protestant religious leaders.

We hope you will find this pamphlet an educational tool and that you will want to share it with others in your church, community, school or other organization. Finally, at the end of the pamphlet you will find a section entitled "What Is Being Done." Not surprisingly, not enough is being done. We need you to join us and others in this struggle, and so some simple ways of joining in and helping are explained in this final section.

## INTRODUCTION

By Reverend Leon White  
Commission for Racial Justice  
United Church of Christ

**I**N FEBRUARY, 1974 Dr. Charles Cobb, the Executive Director of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, led a ten-person team on a fact-finding mission to the Butner, North Carolina Federal Center for Correctional Research. Butner, then under construction, was under attack by many community organizations, churches, civil rights and prisoner rights groups because it planned to conduct behavior modification research on prisoners.

I was not a member of that fact-finding team, but I recall reading the statement Dr. Cobb wrote when the behavior research parts of Butner's program had been eliminated. Dr. Cobb said: "We shall not condone or submit to anything that seeks to control the behavior of men, whether that be called behavior modification or behavior correction. We stand foursquare against any procedure or practice that makes us automats rather than men."

While the Butner Prison did not institute a behavior modification program, Marion Federal Prison in Illinois did. Prisons are designed for many purposes—for punishment, for rehabilitation, for control—and we may all argue the relative merits of these and other correctional systems and methods. Yet, I urge, prisons ought not be designed to strip the humanity of their inmates. The Behavior Modification Unit at Marion Federal Prison is operated to do precisely this: to isolate, to drug, to brainwash, to change the personality, beliefs and behavior and thus to dehumanize the seventy-two men who live there. Marion is the behavior control experimentation center of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons and may, before long, become just the first of many such units in the country.

Dr. Cobb's statement and the 1974 mission were fresh in my mind not long ago when I joined a similar mission, this time to the Marion, Illinois Federal Prison and its notorious long-term control unit. Our team, which consisted of five people representing a broad cross section of religious groups and denominations, spent a day at the Marion prison. We saw the entire control unit, listened to and

watched presentations by the prison administration and interviewed eight prisoners—four from the control unit and four from the prison's general population.

I am seriously disturbed by what I saw and heard, and I believe you would be disturbed too, had you been there with us. You would have heard top level officials talk about the purpose of the prison as "containment," as though this were a military operation. You would have heard them talk about "giving up" on men who, from all appearances, do not merit such expressions of despair and futility. And, as if this were not enough, you would have heard the prison's warden say that twelve prisoners had been released in 1978, then added, "But if we were doing our job, that number would be zero."

The administration must have realized that such statements had a deep impact on our visiting team because the associate warden asked for our reaction as we were leaving the prison. He wanted to know if we could say anything good about the prison. Our answer was a simple, "No."

Why No? Why so emphatically? And why are we so anxious for you to read these pages and then raise your voices, along with ours, in protest? Because special long-term control units like Marion's work to demean the value of human life, not enhance it. Behind the long periods of solitary confinement, the twenty-four-hour-a-day surveillance, the behavior pattern logs, the sensory deprivation and all the other methods, is an insidious idea: that certain human beings do not possess the faculties of rational and moral comprehension which we call "being human" and therefore are to be treated as sub-human, as animals. This idea is contrary to Christian faith and morality as well as to Jewish and Muslim faith and morality.

The idea is even more insidious when you consider that the Marion control unit and the other control units modeled on it contain high percentages of Black, Hispanic and Native American prisoners, and that these units hold so many articulate, educated men, capable of expressing their political and religious beliefs and acting on them with faith and consistency. Why, concerned people must ask, is the prison system so adamant about presenting these men to us, the public, as violent, dangerous, even sociopathic individuals? And if the answer is that the prison system is trying to conceal a greater wrong, a greater crime being committed by the prison system itself, should we not raise our voices? Should not all of us, from the religious community, from the Black, Hispanic and Native American communities—working people, students, and teachers—should we not all be challenged to confront the moral issues raised by this Marion control unit?

On the eve of his death in Memphis in 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King stood with men who had never been accorded respect for their humanity. They were collectors of garbage. Together they stood in dignity and proclaimed to the world, "I am a Man." Our mission in the 1980s is to continue to stand with the powerless to proclaim this simple truth. Nowhere is this needed more than in our jails and prisons. And as a beginning we must stand with the men at Marion to proclaim to our keepers, "We too are men in the eyes of our Lord."



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## Marion Prison

### Hell In a Very Small Space

By DANIEL BERRIGAN, S.J.

Writing about prisoners is a little like writing about the dead: the mass dead, the unknown and unknowable, those killed in disasters like Managua or Nagasaki or Lebanon. No one cares, no one knows; who the dead were, what difference they made dead or alive, why they perished, what our debt is to them. Prisoners are the 'undead' of today's horror films (low budget) and the gothic novels of the 19th century. They inspire horror and dread and revulsion. A different planet, different beings, hardly human. Who wants to know hardly humans?

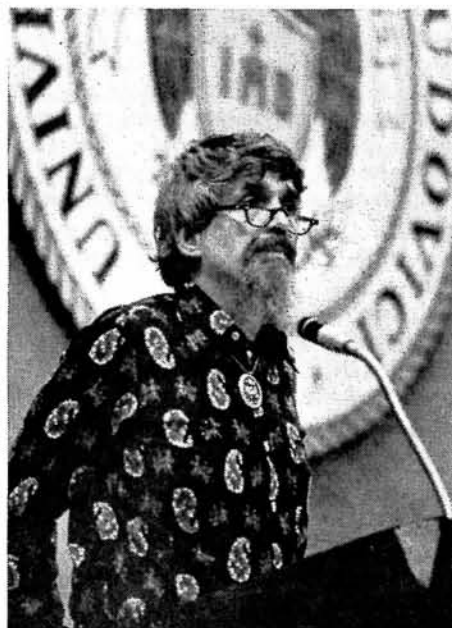
For just such reasons—that no one wants to know, that most people fear to know, that no one listens or ponders—for such reasons, it is entirely crucial to keep writing, keep talking about prisoners. What no one wants to know may be exactly what everyone needs to know. What everyone is afraid to know may be what will snatch us from damnation. I call it the Cod Liver Oil principle, out of my boyhood; the least savory taste in the world saves lives, saves reason. Or, I think of a sensible application of the old 'analogy of faith' principle we learned in theology. A truth in one realm sheds needed light on all truth. Everything real touches everything real.

Another reason why people shy away from knowing about prisoners: what a drag, they sigh. The facts are such a burden, piling up, lying unassimilated and inert there in the mind. What are we to do with the daily need of horrors? We can carry it about like a sack full of snakes. But where shall we lay it down, or exchange it for something lightsome, a cash product, a prestige item? Let's just take our Jesus weightless, please.

This trembling, awe, fixation, fear. It gathers around the fate of the great mass of prisoners in America, it disrupts our stereotypes about ourselves, free, brave, white, benign, just . . . Then the prisoners loom up, the largest concentration of prisoners in western history, some quarter of a million of them—largely non-white, male, poor, Ourselves? Ourselves and not our-

selves, we and the havoc we wreak. We, and the needful victims of—we.

A like fear and trembling arises at the spectacle of political prisoners. To the outside worlds, prison is somewhat like a cancer ward. Those who walk in will never walk out; so the myth goes. Prisoners are portents, sources of awe (revealers of our



Dan Berrigan speaking at St. Louis University forum on *Human Rights In a Nuclear World*. Forum was co-sponsored by National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers and the Social Justice Commission of the Missouri Province of the Jesuits.

condition?). We resist the truth they have to offer. This is why, even among peace people too, there is such fudging on the question of serious civil disobedience. At meetings evaluating the June actions at the U.N., discussion on the conduct, ethos, of those taking part, was minimal. What counted was, in a curiously sanitized obscenity, media 'exposure.' The leadership, at least the voluble part of it, seemed to dread above all, the essential invisibility of prison, the wipe-out. Arrest, well maybe. But disappearance, even for a few days? Hell no, we won't go.

Sheer hopelessness. Resignation. You read it in the faces. Before the fact, before the attempt to do something, all of modern life, at its boiling, tossing center, seems hopeless. Acceded, admitted to, the bent heads, cop-out, retreat, jogging, health spas, kids' games for adults, homemaking, money making . . . Resistance is hopeless, a waste. 'They' are too big, omnivorous, powerful. Our side has no one, no money, no energy, etcetera, etcetera. The etceteras would fill a Kelly girl's (sic) waste basket with a macho stutter.

We don't want to be helpless. We don't want to be inarticulate. We don't want to be off the street. We don't want to sit alone in a box, be shunted around in cuffs. We don't want to be losers. We don't want to die, even a little. We want, maybe, to talk about the poor, or prisoners, or refugees, or the ghettoized—to write about them, or commiserate, or (on occasion) leaflet at a prison, or protest the death penalty. To go far enough in, as the song has it, to be able to say we were there . . . It is a little like the terrified fear of the seriously ill, 'I've tried everything.' And often you find they've tried everything but the one essential thing. Christians have tried everything but Christianity.

#### The Undead Come Alive

What does one do with knowledge of the facts, the atrocious, unbearable treatment of people, prisoners? the kind of knowledge that might heighten empathy, send blood racing in compassion? and yet does something quite different—leaves one with folded hands?

You unfold your hands.

And then there is the question of prayer, which consists for the most part in insisting that God do for us what we are unwilling to do for one another. Resolve: Let's do for one another what we would have God do for all. This is known as godlike activity.

In such ways, the undead (ourselves) come alive.

Prisons have a radically different relationship than other public structures, to a given culture. In a morally-underdeveloped land such as ours, one still hears talk of the reform of universities or the renewal of political forms, or even the rebirth of the churches. These are not inherently lost causes, though the times conspire to make them so. But the reform of prisons! One would have to be fond as Macawber or mad as Lear to propose such an oxymoron, in America, in '78. An inherently lost cause, which mad times invest with an altogether spurious, mad-eyed legitimacy. It is a legitimacy lent by fear to the absurd; fortunes are built on it, bad jobs multiply like maggots, bureaucrats, academics, chaplains clone like crazy. Everyone wants a cut, everyone has something to offer—the cosmetic job on a dead horse.

For at least some prisoners, the situation has a kind of wry picquancy. They are ornaments of a system which manages at one and the same time to be anti-biblical, anti-historical, anti-human, morally outrageous, socially unworkable, ruinously expensive, and metaphysically repugnant. A cancer spot on the universal karma. Is there a consolation in being pitched into a madhouse? Out of the worst may come the best. Meantime like the hero of "King of Hearts," the prisoners dance, mime, grimace, mimic the insanity of society-at-large.

The most neglected texts of the New Testament in our lifetime, refer directly to the greatest crimes of our lifetime: war, capital punishment, abortion. These are flagrant assaults on the God of Life, the command which is a self-revelation of God, 'Thou shall not kill.' The implications of violating the command, in our shucking off our godlike aura, are appalling. The second most neglected texts of the New Testament today, refer to the second greatest of crimes: those committed against people whose fate, for one reason or another, falls short of actual murder. In general, the condemning of vast numbers to servitude, victimhood, exploitation. And among those so reduced, mauled, made sport of, reduced to zeros, we must surely count the prisoners. Their fate cries out to heaven for vengeance. It is a consequence of the hardening of heart, brutalizing of conscience, which the Bible speaks of as a common affliction of the last times.

Now there remain these three — faith, hope, and professionalism — but the greatest of these is professionalism.

I could count on the fingers of my left hand the number of Jesuits I know who give a hang about prisoners. We are professionalized out of our skulls. Young people who enter the Order without a clue to the real world, are tracked into academe as surely as, say, ghetto kids are tracked into Attica. Thus on our side, does classism replace Christianity.

#### Collusion

I spoke at a State campus in Illinois on the horrors being even then perpetrated at the Marion Federal Prison in that state. I was immediately taken on by a huffing bureaucrat of the university. (I had suggested that the evidence showed a strongly-forged collusion between the academics and prison officials, in the creation of ever more sophisticated punishment centers.) He declared with some heat, and in the teeth of the evidence, that such things were unthinkable at Urbana. I was reminded of an old horse we had for years on the farm, blind in the left eye. We used to concoct tricks, stratagems, surprise assaults on the poor animal, all in silence, all on the blind side. He never knew, until it was too late. Which is to say, he never knew.

But in the matter of the Marion Illinois Behavior Modification Center. Prisoners who remain unbroken by the bone breakers, sometimes perform marvels of making do. One of the marvels is the research and writing done, somehow, by a group of inmates, subject to duress and snooping at the Marion Center. What follows draws heavily on their work.

In 1962, a watershed meeting was held in Washington, between prison officials and social scientists. A Dr. Edgar Schein of MIT there presented certain ideas on the subject, 'Man Against Man (sic): Brainwashing.' The ideas were seized on by penologists and practitioners with considerable fervor, and laid, in fact, the ideological and practical basis for the Marion Center. Said Schein:

**In order to produce marked changes of attitude and/or behavior, it is necessary to weaken, undermine, or remove the supports of the old attitudes. Because most of these supports are the face-to-face confirmation of present behavior and attitudes, which are provided by those with whom close emotional ties exist, it is often necessary to break those emotional ties. This can be done either by removing the individual physically and preventing any communication with those whom he cares about, or by proving to him that those whom he respects are not worthy of it, and, indeed, should be actively mistrusted.**

Schein had arrived for the meeting prepared to offer more than theory. He fairly bristled with practicalities, of which I quote only a few:

- Physical removal of prisoners to areas sufficiently isolated to effectively break or seriously weaken close emotional ties.

- Segregation of all natural leaders.

- Spying on prisoners, reporting back private material.

- Exploitation of opportunists and informers.

- Convincing prisoners they can trust no one.

- Systematic withholding of mail.

- Building a group conviction among prisoners that they have been abandoned by or are totally isolated from their social order.

- Using techniques of character invalidation; i.e., humiliation, revilement, shouting, to induce feelings of fear, guilt, and suggestibility; coupled with sleeplessness, an exacting prison regimen and periodic interrogational interviews.

And so on and so on. But the above will convey something of the flavor.

Are we to conclude that Dr. Schein is without human feeling? Perhaps rather, that he is in stern control. His psyche is untrammelled, he is ready for the job to be done. And he urges a like discipline on his hearers:

**I would like to have you think of brainwashing, not in terms of politics, ethics, and morals, but in terms of the deliberate changing of human behavior and attitudes by a group of men who have relatively complete control over the environment in which the captive populace lives.**

It would be a fatally simple error to consign Dr. Schein and his likes to the closed cabinet of Dr. Cagliari. He is no moral mutation. Indeed the treason of the intellectual is a crime at least as old as the groves of academe, whose values have sheltered, over the centuries, every type from the impassioned socratic to the nit-picking aberrant sophist, making the worst argument appear the better.

What is new in the situation is the wide largesse of the federal cornucopia, the outpouring of whose goodies on campus research (especially in the social and pure sciences) the Vietnam decade illustrated. The truism was revealed to cynic and innocent alike—no campus, however private or prestigious, can exist without government benefits. And, on the other hand, no war could be waged, no public opinion be turned around, no prison technique be introduced or tested, without the collaboration of the academics. From 'value free,' the campuses had turned necrophilic, parasitic.

This is the strangled and purring background music that played to Schein and his well-bred savageries. And for counterpoint, a fervent and grateful response. That a gentleman's agreement was being reached, that great things would follow, no one could be allowed to doubt. The Director of Federal Prisons offered an even-handed invitation to those present to get the work underway:

**... we have a tremendous opportunity here to carry on some of the experimenting to which the various panelists have alluded. We can manipulate our environment and culture. We can perhaps undertake some of the techniques Dr. Schein discussed... Do things on your own. Undertake a little experiment with what you can do with the Muslims. Do it as individuals. Do it as groups, and let us know the results.**

Thus the principle was blessed: campus go-getters with the smarts, do what has to be done. They are like the Iscariot with a briefcase of credentials; they like their betrayal clean and direct, they would steal coins from a dead man's eyes. And those others who claim some connection with a humane tradition, who like to call on the shades of Socrates or Luther or Aquinas — they don't know what goes on in the labs or board rooms, or don't want to know. It comes to the same thing. There is a corrupting innocence as there is a blustering upfront corruption.

In such wise, by silence and collusion as well as Judas' bargaining, the fate of the



sweating prisoners at Marion is settled and sealed. In, among other places, the academic clots and clusters of Urbana campus. There, as elsewhere, it is as rare to encounter a right-minded, passionate, faculty member, as it is to meet his/her counterpart among say, the Jesuits. We are, in one of the baser coinages, 'privatized.'

When I was in Danbury prison, I had occasion to ask a prison doctor a question. (He had been a student in a college theology course I taught at Le Moyne. A good man, but weak, in a bad spot.) How long, in his opinion, could a prisoner bear with solitary confinement, without psychic harm? He put the outer limit at one week. "After that, one can expect disorientation, growing intense as the isolation goes on." Yet in Danbury, a relatively benign box, stretches in solitary often went for 30 days or more.

The Marion Pen, however, is not fooling around. There is a concentrated effort to push matters to the limit; the limit of endurance, the limit of the law, the limit of ethics. And over. It is not merely that the proposals of Schein and his crew of man-eaters have been put into practice, built in, quite coldly and literally. One can expect, after all, that a free hand will be offered when the silk-suited, brief-cased scalpers descend on the defenseless. A wink, a covert nod, a bargain struck. Who has not seen it? Who, after all, need know, if this or that rule is bent, this or that new idea tried out? And if something leaks, who cares? And who says (this is the clincher) who says the caring must begin with those who are assaulted, bewildered, thrown off balance by a brand of new and fractious prisoners, politically reborn, hip, beyond impressing with a stick or winning over with carrots?

And Marion, be it noted, is not simply a prison where the ante is up, or the prison heat turned higher. Marion cannot really be compared on a yardstick of high-security, legitimate violence, with conditions at Atlanta or Lewisburg. What all these pens have in common is, in other words, far less significant than what Marion alone practices and pushes.

In common, arguably, in the high voltage federal system are the following: murders, brutalization, drug pushing, destruction of mail, intimidation and harassment of visitors and families, racism designed to fragment the prisoners, abuse of religious belief and practice, misuse of therapy techniques, moronic labor assignments, slave wages and practice of solitary confinement.

Then we come to Marion. Literally and symbolically to the end of the line, the Behavior Modification system. This is the darling of the federal workhouses, the 'iron maiden' of that chorus of furies whose chant is all of a new creation. There, straight-jacketed, alternately cherished,

cossetted and cursed, permanently kept off balance, marinated in numerous sweet and sour juices, persuaded that conformity is all, drugged if need be, therapied out of his skull, victimized by every free-floating ploy of the psycho trade—there dwells the prisoner who has made it, who is in process of making it, who horrors! may for a time resist making it.

We must linger over this obscure figure, his existence, his secret thought, his dark vision of life. These are of moment to all. And one need not cheaply or carelessly draw lines linking his fate and ours. The linkage is there, for those with eyes to see; indeed it has been boldly and explicitly drawn by prison authorities: "The purpose of the Marion control unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large." (Ralph Aron, former warden of Marion. Emphasis mine.)

### Rage in Secret

Unique! Still, we are told that, at Marion even, a few prisoners hold out. They are jealous of their souls. They guard their thoughts, nursing their rage in secret. And let us not stop there; that dark rage is not what makes them dangerous; indeed, it is arguable that hatred is a serviceable tool of captivity. No, these holdouts cherish their anger, separate it with a jeweler's precision from the detritus of racism and frenzy. Justice is their passion. They are pure anger, cleanly fueled; like a blow torch laced with oxygen, they burn straight up. They are in service. And this makes them dangerous as a laser in skilled hands. They cut through adamant, they cut through time and the walls of hell itself. They cut through lies and rhetoric and false promises and threats and black looks and descending goons' clubs. They cut through the opaque culture, the omni-resistant curtain that hems them in—a spiritual slavery.

At this point the battle is joined.

One must be careful in the name of the heroic resisters of Marion, not to mystify the issue. Humans created Marion, humans must render it less lethal, or better still, must dismantle it. A mitigation of its horrors, of injustice and the degradation of souls, must be sought by legal and illegal means. Humans oppose humans, in a contest to the death; seizing on public apathy, certain minds are determined to make of the defenseless the victims, and of victims (if required) corpses. This must be resisted, the guilty brought to the bar.

On the other hand, it seems to me extraordinarily significant that the prisoners have grasped something deeper: the spiritual conflict that underlies their plight. Humans indeed created Marion but Marion is out of control, a technique gone berserk. To insist on this, to document it, the pris-

oners have done their homework on prison religion as well as prison economics, prison miseducation, prison discipline. More; they have had to create forms of faith that would help them to nurture the roots of resistance, speak for the soul, function in strikingly traditional ways; fasting, non-violent reprise, care for one another, discipline, meditation. They have thus created whole cloth, a community deserving of the name prison religion has sold out; resisting, faithful improvising, tactically naive, witty.

And they have done all this, it must be remembered, in circumstances designed to daunt all but the hardest spirits.

We are to imagine a cell, six-feet-by-nine, in which one is locked for an unspecified number of days, weeks, months, for twenty three and one-half hours each day, on unspecified charges.

There you sit. And there you stand, and there you pace. And there you bend over and in Daudet's wonderful phrase, 'teach the ants their ABC's.' In principle (as apart from practice) no one can lay a hand on you: no drugs, no screaming, wheaming, therapy sessions, no chaplains' soft soap, no yard, no sky. A double door, a sheet of steel, a sound-proofed existence, also people-proofed, time-proofed, motion-proofed.

Worth pausing over; considerable genius has been expended here. Your body will bear no marks of brutality, sadism, technique. Physical torture, its principle and instruments and skills, is for export; your internal colon is unmarked. Apart from calling attention to what must remain a discreet enterprise, such stigmata would make the prisoner a less pure subject of soul bending. For the Marion Center is, after all, a laboratory. It may also be a confessional, a gulag, a Devil's Island up to date. But it is first and foremost a laboratory of social and soul change; it must approach the decontaminated purity of Skinner's famous Cambridge cellar.

Congratulations. You are now a candidate, honored in principle, dishonored in practice (a truly Pauline irony)—a candidate for the twice-born human. Within such a vocation, it is understandable that the choices are not large. You may hasten the process, or abort it by suicide, as many do. A regrettable outcome, cheating on the state, whose outreach cannot prevent this final evasion. Or you may sabotage the process by an altogether wilful stubbornness. Some have even memorized portions of the Bible or the Bill of Rights as a bright bulwark; they incant the words night and day as though some secret virtue exuded from them, to make one untouchable by calipers and saw.

And finally, and in large part, others submit; and thus rejoin America, restored in limb, chastened in soul.

## Prison Within a Prison

### Silencing Critics in the Marion Control Unit

By SCOTT W. MYERS

The date is December 31, 1977. The time: around midnight. Prisoners in the long-term control unit at Marion, Illinois, Federal Prison hear strange sounds coming from the cell of Scott Caldwell. Concerned, they call for a guard. A few minutes later the night man appears. He goes to open Caldwell's cell door but can't find the key. Telling the prisoners he will return soon, he departs. About ten minutes later he comes back, this time with the correct key. He opens the cell door and enters. Inside he finds Caldwell hanging from a make-shift noose. He is dead. The guard calls for assistance and the body is quickly taken away.

Scott Caldwell is not the first man to commit suicide as a result of confinement in the Marion long-term control unit. Since 1972 eight men have killed themselves in the control unit, or shortly after being released: Paul Duhart, Willie Adams, Le Comte Bly, Charles Alfano, and others. This might not seem extraordinary considering the suicide rate in some jails. But there are only 72 cells in the Marion control unit, making the suicide rate higher than in any other federal prison.

What is it about this long-term control unit that has driven so many men to such despair that they have chosen to end their lives? What type of confinement would extinguish the will to live in so many people?

First, the control unit is a prison within a prison, a maximum-security cell-block inside the top maximum-security prison in the United States. (Marion replaced Alcatraz when it was closed in the early 1960s.) Inside the unit, men are kept in solitary confinement in six-foot by eight-foot cells, twenty-three-and-a-half hours a day, for an indefinite period of time. Some men have been kept there two, three and four years. One man, Hiller "Red" Hayes, was kept there nearly six years before dying after a heart attack in 1977.

The control unit is not merely Marion's "hole," either. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons sends prisoners to the control unit from every federal prison in the country, from many state prisons, and even from U.S. protectorates, such as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Bureau's official line is that these are the most dangerous prisoners in the country, and that extreme security measures are needed to prevent them from doing harm to other prisoners.

But last April, after a three-year court inquiry into the control unit's operations, a federal district judge found that the control unit "has been used to silence prison critics, religious leaders, economic and philosophical dissidents." The judge's findings have been supported by no less an authority than former Marion warden, Ralph Aron. In an amazingly frank piece of testimony in the 1975 trial of a class action suit, 'Bono vs. Saxbe,' to close the control unit, Aron said, "The purpose of the long-term control unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large."

Aron's statements have been taken seriously by control unit prisoners, their lawyers, and a prisoner rights organization called the National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers. They have charged that the U.S. Bureau of Prisons is conducting a well-planned behavior control program in the control unit to repress criticism and opposition by prisoners. They say the control unit employs indefinite solitary confinement, sensory deprivation (cut-

cidents in which guards have thrown urine on prisoners.

Many of these charges have been documented. In a 1977 court ruling, the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago ordered the release of a prisoner from the control unit's sensory deprivation "boxcar" cells. The court said the closed-front cells, used to punish prisoners who continue to resist even in the control unit, "represent a form of punishment equal to the rack, the screw, and the wheel of medieval times." In 1976, prisoners reported that 12 beatings had taken place in the unit in three months.

Congressman Herman Badillo (D-NY) called for an investigation into the beatings and two U.S. Bureau of Prisons employees were assigned the job. Although these investigators refused to interview any of the victims, they found that guards had kept bottles of urine in a cabinet to throw on prisoners. Even earlier, in 1975, an investigation by the U.S. General Accounting Office prompted Congressman Ralph Metcalfe to call for the immediate closing of the unit. "The long-term control unit," he said, "is long-term punishment under the guise of what is, in fact, pseudo-scientific experimentation."

Revelations such as these have brought the control unit under intense legal attack in the courts. In July, 1972, when the unit was opened to confine more than 100 prisoners who had joined in a work stoppage at Marion, officials claimed the unit's purpose was "treatment." But the prisoners filed a class action suit, 'Adams vs. Carlson,' charging that the unit was a punishment unit, not a treatment unit. The U.S. District Court in East St. Louis, Illinois, ruled against the men, but their appeal was upheld by the Seventh Circuit Court. As a result, most of the men were released.

Soon after, however, the Bureau of Prisons replaced the released prisoners with other men. So in 1974, another class action suit, 'Bono vs. Saxbe,' was brought in the federal courts. In this suit the prisoners called for an end to indefinite solitary confinement, closing of the boxcar cells, an end to restrictive visiting, and expanded legal rights in disciplinary hearings. They said confinement in the control unit violated Constitutional guarantees against cruel and unusual punishment.

'Bono vs. Saxbe' was tried in 1975 in southern Illinois, but it was not until April, 1978, that Federal District Judge James Foreman ruled on it. Under the pressure of a writ of mandamus, which forces a judge to explain why he shouldn't be compelled to issue a ruling, Foreman ordered the closed-front doors to the boxcar cells removed, but allowed the control unit to remain in operation. Indefinite solitary confinement, he argued, was not cruel and unusual punishment, but a form of preven-



ting off light and sound from a person's environment), restrictive visiting (over telephones through a plexiglass shield), and pseudo-scientific therapy programs to break the spirits of activist prisoners. They have charged that prisoners have been fed tranquilizing drugs in their food and are beaten if they don't accept the conditions of their confinement. They even report in-



# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## The Control Unit at Marion

*Tiny, Isolated Cells Used to Make Prisoners Conform*

By Eddie G. Griffin (29484)

*Inmate, Federal Prison, Marion, Ill.*

tive detention, a necessary tool for preventing prisoner disruptions before they occur.

At a demonstration held in front of Foreman's court building two days later, one of the prisoner's lawyers, Michael Deutsch, denounced the decision and said it would be appealed.

"The doctrine of preventive detention is just another form of behavior control," he told more than 100 demonstrators. "Because of the court's ruling, the Bureau of Prisons can now legally lock up prisoners indefinitely on the basis that they can predict their behavior, that they can predict they will join a hunger strike or a work stoppage. This is a very dangerous doctrine." Apparently prisoners are not the only ones in danger. Two Marion guards attended the East St. Louis demonstration and took photos of each of the demonstrators.

The final outcome in the battle over the Marion control unit will have far-reaching impact on U.S. penal policies. The Bureau of Prisons and many state prison systems see control units as the solution to widespread prisoner unrest in U.S. prisons. If they can lock up their critics indefinitely and cut them off from the outside world, they will have carte blanche to run their prisons in any way they please.

There are already plans for more control units. The spread of such units throughout U.S. prisons raises serious questions about Christian's ministry to prisoners. Traditionally, Christians have sought to establish chaplaincy programs in prisons. In more recent years, prisoner visitation and support programs have been undertaken in many areas.

The effect of control units is to render both approaches impotent. This is not to condemn visitation, counseling, and worship services. But can one who professes faith in Jesus Christ walk away from these prisons and remain silent about the misery and death that pervades them? Or is one led instead to recall the very first sermon of Jesus Christ in the gospel of Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives . . ."

This is the call we must start answering if we wish to prevent more Scott Caldwells from ending their lives in control units like Marion's.

There are a number of prisoners who, officials concede, cannot have their behavior modified by conventional means. As a last resort, they are sent to the Control Unit.

The Control Unit is 70 solitary confinement "tombs," some of which are encased by heavy steel doors. Here a prisoner is concealed from other prisoners and the outside world for an extended period of time — sometimes for years. His only relief is 30 minutes of recreation and a 10-minute shower.

The process begins like a prison administrative procedure — like typical disciplinary action — except that a prisoner usually does not know what specific offense or infraction he is charged with. To the contrary, he is led to believe that the administration is merely giving him a taste of its notorious Control Unit as a warning. He is told that he is under a 30-day observation and that he can (if he wishes) appeal through remedy procedures (a process which takes at least six months to complete). But it makes no sense to go through the long-drawn-out procedure when a man believes he will be out of solitary in 30 days anyway. He waives his Sixth Amendment right — a move he will regret for months to come.

On the next occasion — more often than not — he is remanded to the Control Unit for an "indefinite term." And all is lost.

The first 30 days (the so-called observation period) are usually spent in the "box-cars" — a nearly soundproof cell impounded by a thick steel grill door. The 6' x 8' x 8' chamber which serves as living quarters is recessed beyond the wall where only a peep of sunlight is allowed to enter. The atmosphere is bleak and depressing, the air stagnant and stifling. Some cells are without lighting, except for the 60-watt bulb which burns 24 hours a day between the two doors.

The chamber itself contains a stainless steel toilet and a "therapeutic" bed contrived of a cold steel slab, attached to the wall by two rails, and overlaid by a one-inch thick piece of foam rubber wrapped in coarse plastic.

A man's eyes grow weary of the scene, of the poor lighting and drab walls. Sometimes his vision is interrupted by a series of quick white flashes or invaded by shadows creeping around the periphery. His reflex is automatic. He flinches and dodges from the nothing that is there. He must struggle to stave off hallucinations and fight to suppress the skull-splitting headaches.

But prison guards contribute to the headaches. On their once-a-month "security checks," guards make their rounds with a rubber mallet, banging against the steel bars. It sends shock waves to the brain. Sensitive membranes cannot withstand the shocks, consequently, some prisoners suffer nosebleeding afterwards.

Some guards found pleasure in administering these shock-wave treatments once a week, in the early morning hours when most prisoners were trying to sleep. Occasionally, they conduct surprise raids on a prisoner's cell, confiscating any bread, jelly, butter, sugar, salt or other foodstuff which a prisoner might save for hard times. And usually, some guards find it necessary to explore the ceiling also, thus leaving the prisoner with dirty sheets to sleep on. All the while, the man must stand in handcuffs and watch his cell being ransacked. One word could cause a beating (of the worst description). During the first six months of the Bicentennial year ('76), there were no fewer than a dozen such beatings and, on several occasions, guards threw buckets of urine on prisoners. An investigation revealed that a stockpile of urine was kept in a cabinet in the unit for such purposes.

The accumulation of effects, induced by the environment, harrassments, druggings, beatings and psychological manipulations (mind-games) have produced a multitude of physical and mental debilitations—some effects develop into irreversible psychoses. As a result, there have been six deaths — four in the unit and two less than a month out — all officially labeled as suicides. But death, by any means in the Control Unit, is no suicide. It is itself a Death Row for the living. Its creation added the ultimate dimension to the behavior modification system. The subtle implication behind its meaning is made sharp and clear: Conform or Die.

# St Louis **ARGUS** News & Views

*Representing the Black Community and Working for the Welfare of all St Louisans*

## **Inside Marion:**

### **"The Air Is Constantly Stale"**

Akbar Rahman (Horace Graydon) has been held in the control unit of the U.S. Penitentiary at Marion, Ill., since April.

He is serving a 15-year term for bank robbery and says he is considered by prison administrators as "too influential among Black inmates."

Rahman, 32, from Washington, D.C., was previously held in Atlanta and is now working toward a college degree through the Campus Education Program.

At the time the ARGUS talked to him in August, Rahman estimated his cell temperature to be 110 degrees, and he emphasized that officials frowned on control unit inmates talking to reporters.

While there with Rahman, a control unit tour was being given to Washington officials.

**What changes have they made for them [The Officials] ?**

There's no real changes you can see. Actually, there are no changes, except for a more complex behavior modification program.

**What does that entail?**

Probably the most outstanding thing about it is the six steps you have to go through, and it's probably the most oppressive thing I've seen lately. It's step-by-step. You have to keep your cell clean. You can get disciplinarys. How well you participate in the work program. How well you get along in the unit. Any violation of these steps, and they won't credit you for any of your time. Like 12 of us got disciplinarys for breaking plastic spoons. So we won't get credit for our 30 days when we come up for our 30-day review.

**How long have you been in here?**

I've been in here since April. I was initially locked up for the incident on I-unit, and I've only been credited with two months. I had originally six months. It's a reward-punishment type thing, and that's behavior modification. They say they don't have behavior modification here, but that's what it is, no matter how well disguised it is, and guys are suffering behind it.

**What have you done wrong?**

I've got one disciplinary for breaking the spoon, but we had to do almost four months

By **SCOTT F. ANDERSON**

*ARGUS Staff Writer*

before getting credit for even one month.

**Is that because of the strike?**

Well, the first 30 days they don't credit you with. The second 30 days is just to see how you act, just a review. That's the type of program they have down here. We have to pay for the spoons. They cut back on your recreation. They take away your 30



**AKBAR RAHMAN**

days, no commissary, plus not crediting you with your month, plus getting a disciplinary that goes in your jacket.

**Do you get a half hour of recreation a day?**  
Yes.

**Outside?**

No, no, inside. Sometimes we get outside once a week, if we're lucky. But if they've got 16-17 people on the range, we might not even get out. And when you bring out about the Bono vs. Saxbe case, that we're supposed to have recreation every day, they'll tell you, 'Well, we didn't have the time.' And sometimes they'll let dudes have more than their time, and the others don't get a chance.

**What part did you play in the food strike last April?**

Well, I was one of the main organizers of it. Like things were really bad. They weren't ruling on the Bono vs. Saxbe case. They constantly had a lot of strip searches, plus there was a lot of discrimination on groups like the Black culture group... the Muslims. So we said what we can do, what sacrifices can all the inmate population make?

The strike was 100 percent, and they just started grabbing people they thought were potential ringleaders. What happened was, they broke the strike by use of racism... 'This is Black-led.' You don't want to do what the Blacks do.'

There's a lot of racist attitudes out in the population anyway. What they did was isolate the Chicanos from the Blacks. They put the Chicanos over here, the whites here and the Blacks here. The whites said it was a Black thing, and that's how they broke the strike. The whites started eating. The Blacks went back to eating and in order to pacify the Chicanos, they had a Spanish meal... because very seldom do they have a Spanish meal, about once every six months. They play a lot of little games up here like these that are very dangerous — mind games — putting group against group.

**Have you been able to have any success at all with the Black Culture Society?**

I used to be the chairman, but I've been barred from holding office in any organization since the boycott. We had a show here from SIU-Carbondale. We had Black poetry, and a lot of white guys walked out because they didn't want to hear it, which was their prerogative. But the administration gets on the stage, pulls out the microphone and says (it) was creating problems with the administration. So when they did that, we organized a boycott. Dudes will not stop working, but there's nothing in the record... that says they have to play sports. So we stopped playing basketball, stopped going in the pool room. This was right around Christmas time, too. After they locked us up, in order to pacify most of the Black dudes who were out, they got beef hamburgers and beef hot dogs.

But the food boycott forced Judge James Foreman to rule on the Bono-Saxbe decision. He would of never ruled on it if we didn't put pressure on from here, even though he didn't do anything when he ruled on it. He closed down nine or ten cells, the boxcars.



They [ administrators ] said they're still open.

They are.

**Who's in there now?**

They're in there on their own request. You have to sign a paper to go into boxcars, it's quiet. There's really no difference in the boxcars from the rest of the range.

**Have they taken the steel front off?**

The steel front is still on there.

**So the cell is the same as before the latest Foreman ruling?**

Right. They're the same. They were supposed to take the doors off.

**After the ruling, did they empty the boxcars?**

They went by and asked guys if they wanted to come out, and most said they would. A few stayed back. Then a majority moved out. Then as they bring people in, they tell them they don't have any place else to put them, so they have them sign a paper, place them in a boxcar and tell them they'll be moved later. This is how they stretch the ruling. The only difference in the control unit from five years ago is that they have television. I feel the television in the cell is the worst thing I've ever seen because you can get hooked on the boob tube, and you won't get nothing done. You get hooked on that thing, and that's it. Dudes are constantly being rendered passive. Their mental faculties are slowed down.

**Is there anybody up there that's close to suicide now?**

There are maybe nine or ten guys that are very close to going off or being hurt by the administration. The administration is constantly pushing on them.

I see it as being a very potentially explosive spot behind some of the things they're doing.

**Is there any type of Black organization still in existence here?**

The last I heard, there is, but they're catching natural hell. They define Black culture here as singing and dancing. They said we're too political. That's why the control unit has lasted so long. The prisoners in the population, besides various groups and various people, do not deal with the control unit because they don't know what's happening down here.

**Is the best way to survive in the control unit, to take whatever they give you?**

**Can you stand up in any way to this harassment?**

Complaining to officials will only compound the problem. The best way to deal with these people, the most potent weapon we have — is what I'm doing now — writing, giving interviews, letting people know what's happening. I've found the best way is for each of us to be responsible for

# Chicano/Latino Cultural Group Disbanded

By FRED BUSTILLO

Since the construction of the Marion Federal Penitentiary in the early 1960s, which replaced the infamous Alcatraz, no cultural group had existed to serve the Chicano/Latino here. Because of the low percentage (10%) of Chicanos that make up the populace of 500 prisoners, the administration had always in the past enjoyed the benefit of neglecting and, with no difficulty, assimilating this small group of Chicanos into other groups, such as the Jaycees and groups sponsored by them, or if nothing else, letting them "do their own time" idly; thus, no cultural group ever surfaced to develop.

Recognizing the need for a Chicano cultural group, Tony Cordova, Armando Miramon and myself set out the task to begin the formalizing organization of one; with the deep understanding that our culture and language must continue to be developed and preserved if we are to continue to exist. Also, to be in conjunction with the popular struggles on the outside, striving for the same goals.

In January, 1973, the education department, after our repeated requests, partially approved us as a cultural group. But because of the six months probationary period which was attached by the prison administration before full recognition would be accorded, our group became nothing more than a tool, threateningly hanging over us. It could be rescinded at any time the administration felt the need to do so; if by some slim chance, as they thought, a true fusion of Chicano unity developed.

In the short six-month period of our existence the unity far surpassed that of domestic unity within our own nucleus, but in

who's down here, regardless of what we may believe in or color or whatever, because we understand 11 people have died down here. Don't get into any adverse situations where you can get hurt, unless it's really necessary.

**Haven't the televisions taken away the unity found down here?**

Most definitely. When people down here just started dropping like flies, they had to do something. They had to put something in to take up that excess time spent in the cell. You spend 23 and a half hours a day in the cell, and all you have is a radio, and you can't talk to the man next to you. It's the (TV) visual contact. The television is the drug. It was not put there for the prisoner's benefit. It was put there for the administration's benefit.

fact spilled over, reaching out to other groups, such as the Black Culture Society, Nation of Islam, and others. Through the collective efforts of each group's leadership, a Brown-Black unity was at its embryonic stage of development, forming a unity under the principle, common to us all, of Class and Cultural Oppression, which would unite us accordingly into one fist and struggle.

Upon seeing this unity the warden's foot soldiers quickly moved in, stepping up their repression. Our correspondence with the various Chicano organizations, newspapers and other periodicals, as well as bookstores offering educational materials free of cost, were severely curtailed. One of the most active members of our committee was suddenly whisked away to the segregation unit for allegedly having strike material in his possession, though later this was disproved. Therefore a charge was fabricated, charging him with the possession of a penny nail. The prison officials considered this to be a sharpened instrument and in violation of prison regulations. He remained in segregation well over five months on this fabricated charge. The monthly Unity Bazaar meetings sponsored by the Black Culture Society were quickly terminated under a volley of threats to completely liquidate the entire B.C.S. if such meetings continued. There are many other things contributing to the process of undermining our group by the prison officials, but for the sake of brevity I will not go into this at this time.

After the six-month probationary period, several of the group's committee members appeared before the supervisor of education and his assistant for final word of the cultural group's approval. The following is what was said during the few minutes we met with these officials:

"... the Chicano/Latino Cultural Group was determined by the administration not to be a cultural group but a revolutionary political group..."

The central question asked by us after hearing this was, what in fact constitutes a cultural group? The question was instantly rebuffed, and the meeting ended without affording us an opportunity to be heard.

Because of the events that have occurred since the time our group was disbanded and prevented from pursuing its goals, we have finally begun to challenge this egregiously racist and arbitrary move by the prison officials. With the assistance of the National Prison Project, and other legal organizations that are willing to assist us in litigating a civil suit, we hope to make some headway this year. For those who may be willing to assist us, or for any further information, please contact us.



# A Message from Rafael Cancel Miranda

On the occasion of the November 27, 1978 sit-in at the  
St. Louis office of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons

October 22, 1978  
4556a Oakland  
St. Louis, Missouri

My people, once more we meet in spirit here in St. Louis. In the name of the Marion Brothers, and in the name of all those who care for a better today and a much better tomorrow, I want to thank you once again.

You are here in St. Louis and we are there at Marion, but somehow we are together, walking hand in hand --Yes, even our brothers in the Control Units, which are a man-made hell, are walking alongside you today --yes, because we walk in you! Because we walk inside of your hearts--and we walk in the heart, in the spirit of the brother or sister which is at your side. Those who care for one another become like one.

So, my people, we want to thank you for letting us into your hearts, for fighting for us, for daring to care for those whom society calls worthless and even dangerous. Almost anyone wants a Rockefeller for a friend, but only the special ones would want to stand up for prisoners, to be friend to a prisoner. You are those special ones, and we proudly welcome your friendship, your brotherhood--because if someone could keep our humanity from drowning, that someone is you.

We feel better because you care, and that's the truth! For some you might be fools. For us, you are beautiful people. I can't say that we will change our ways, if there is such a thing, but we do hope and pray that you never change your ways!

Thank you.

Rafael

Rafael Miranda was one of the five Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners held in U.S. prisons for twenty-five years, the longest held political prisoners in the western hemisphere in recent times. He was released from Marion and returned to Puerto Rico in September, 1979 as a result of a pardon from President Carter.

*SIT-IN at Federal Bureau of Prisons office in St. Louis to protest control unit's "dangerous and harmful effects on human life." Charges against 'The St. Louis 9' were later dropped. An internal BOP memo has revealed charges were dropped because BOP wanted "to avoid trial publicity."*



# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## America's New Birdman

By JAKE McCARTHY

### — a personal opinion

He is likened now to the Birdman of Alcatraz. Once he was known as a tough guy. By the time he was 35 he had spent 14 years in prison for offenses committed in the state of Washington. In June 1960, while on parole, he and a woman companion came through St. Louis. He attempted to purchase a new car in Lemay, but aroused suspicions by presenting a check for \$2600. Police were called.

When their credentials were found to be false, Hiller Hayes and the woman produced pistols and took three hostages, including a St. Louis County policeman. After a high speed chase, they were stopped at a roadblock near Waterloo, Ill. Hayes and the woman surrendered without a fight.

According to a Post-Dispatch account at the time, Hayes "was the most heavily guarded defendant at a federal court trial here in many years." Hayes acted as his own defense counsel. Said the account: "He gave his greatest emphasis in an effort to obtain leniency" for his female companion. "He told the court that he had threatened to kill her children if she did not accompany him."

Red Hayes was convicted of kidnaping and received a sentence of 99 years. His woman companion got 35 years. Said the federal judge: "All testimony is that she is an abandoned woman . . . She is a convicted prostitute. She and her partner are both thieves. I have no leniency where robbery and kidnaping are concerned."

For my part, Red Hayes showed some class, trying to save a woman he had met less than a month before. But the story of Red Hayes didn't end with his conviction. It was only a beginning.

In January 1962, he was sent to Alcatraz. According to his own account: "They determined that I had diabetes. I asked for a diet . . . and they said 'we don't have any diet here' so I wrote to the Surgeon General and was placed in solitary for my trouble." Except for 15 months since then, Red Hayes has been in solitary confinement continuously for the last 15 years.

In 1965, while in the general population at Leavenworth, Red Hayes was accused of second-degree murder in the slaying of another inmate. He claimed self-defense.

In 1968, at Atlanta federal penitentiary, he was told that the Federal Bureau of Prisons "ordered me on permanent lockup." On Aug. 13, 1971, he was placed in the notorious "long term control unit" at Marion, Ill., Federal Penitentiary — the strongest solitary lockup in the federal prison system. He has been there five years and nine months.

Says fellow inmate Jesse Lopez: "Red Hayes is probably the only other man besides the Birdman of Alcatraz in the history of the federal penal system to do more than 10 years at a clip without being released from the confines of lockup."

Lopez contends that Hayes's case is "unique in that prison officials have elected him as their prime example as proof of what they can enact upon any one of us at their whim. What he (Hayes) fails to write about himself in the balance of his modesty is that he is the forgotten man. (He is) the forgotten man in the sense of the tragedy of the years that have gradually ate relentlessly on him in prison at the abusive rate which has left him a skeleton of the man he was in body." Hayes is now 52 years old.

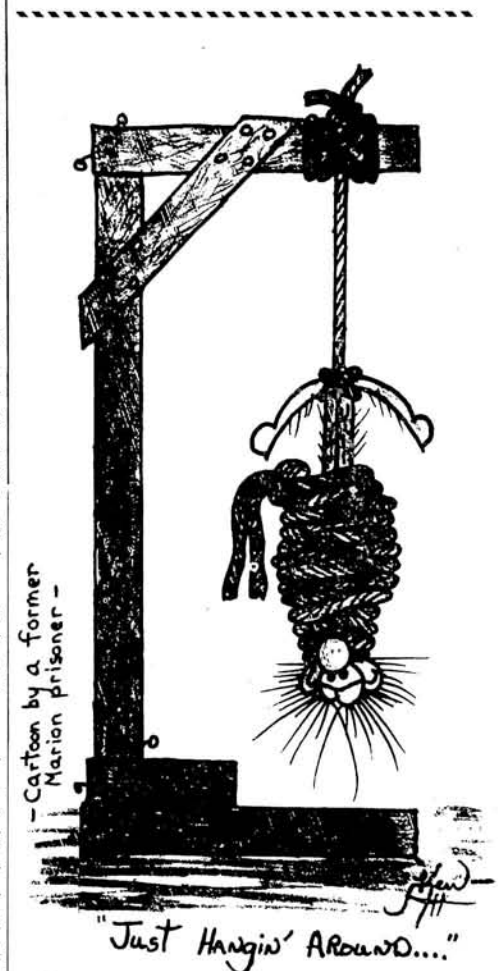
Says Lopez of Hayes: "He is a quiet man in his position as he looks at the bars, wondering whatever thoughts have lingered upon his mind, looking through the years that he has weathered without even the gift of letting the sun wash over his body for any period worth mentioning." Hayes and others in the control unit get only a half-hour a week outside their solitary cells.

"Hayes slowly is withering in health as he sits quietly in his cell, and undoubtedly questions if humanity has a conscience to be as unfeeling about his predicament," Lopez wrote.

The predicament of such prolonged solitary confinement seems unusual indeed. American Civil Liberties Union attorney Arpiar Saunders looked into the case of Hiller (Red) Hayes in March 1975. Then-warden Ralph Aaron of Marion gave Saunders a deposition stating that Hayes had not had a write-up for breaking prison rules since 1964, and restored his "good time."

"So you can see," Hayes writes, "the prison officials did not believe I committed murder [at Leavenworth in 1965]. The question is, why am I in solitary?"

Like the Birdman, Hayes claims to have created a series of inventions during his years alone. But the main question for now is not whether Red Hayes should be in prison for a St. Louis kidnaping but whether he should have spent most of the last 15 years isolated even from his fellow prisoners. Part of the answer is that the imposition of solitary confinement is at the whim of prison authorities, without lawyer to defend or judge to weigh, or rules to govern.



# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## Sense of Humanity

By JAKE McCARTHY ... a personal opinion

A column about America's "New Birdman of Alcatraz" last May told the story of a man in the federal penitentiary who had been kept in solitary confinement nearly continuously for the last 15 years, including the last six of them in the "long term control unit" at Marion, Ill.

His name was Hiller (Red) Hayes, doing a 99-year term for taking three hostages in a police chase in St. Louis County in 1960.

The account quoted by a fellow prisoner: "Hayes slowly is withering in health as he sits quietly in his cell and undoubtedly questions if humanity has a conscience to be as unfeeling about his predicament."

Hayes himself wrote: "The question is, why am I in solitary?" The question was pertinent since the former warden at Marion had given a deposition to an American Civil Liberties Union attorney in March 1975, stating that Hayes had not had a write-up for breaking prison rules since 1964.

Last Aug. 8, Red Hayes was found dead in his cell. He was 52 years old. According to an autopsy, his death was attributed to "heart failure due to natural causes."

Another pertinent question was raised, however, in a letter from an inmate at Marion the other day. "What is natural," wrote Eddie Griffin, "about 15 years of solitary confinement in a 6' by 8' by 8' torture chamber?"

Griffin's description of Marion's "long term control unit," a laundered term for solitary confinement, is not exaggerated. Last April, a U.S. Court of Appeals likened Marion's "Boxcars," part of the control unit, to medieval torture cells. Added to the cruelty is that assignment to solitary at Marion is for an "indefinite term." In the case of Hayes, it was for the rest of his life.

Griffin himself spent three months in the "boxcars" earlier this year, so he speaks with some expertise when he ascribes the cause of Hayes's death to something different. "The primary cause," he said, "was strangulation of the senses. Heart failure was secondary. Red Hayes suffered a heart attack while in the process of being tortured to death."

We have lately seen disclosures that the Central Intelligence Agency in recent years became involved in experimenting with various forms of mind control, sometimes using prison inmates as experimental animals, to learn "brainwashing techniques"

for possible future use against The Enemy.

Although no direct link has come to light between the CIA efforts and the "long term control unit" at Marion, the latter is an outgrowth of a series of proposals by certain psychiatrists and psychologists to the Federal Bureau of Prisons to research methods of altering human behavior within prison walls.

Such experimentation is rendered less offensive to the general public because it is performed upon offenders against society and is beyond the pale of the people's awareness. The "experiment" at Marion, as at the federal medical facility at Springfield, Mo., has undergone changes of form over the past few years, but has included

the use of mood-altering drugs and a study of what sensory deprivation can accomplish in rendering an inmate docile.

In the training of dogs and the breaking of horses, control is achieved by firmness and repetition, but cruelty is frowned upon, and sensory deprivation — removal from light and sound and isolation from other creatures — would not be considered humane.

Men who are paying their debt to society through imprisonment have been sentenced by an orderly process to a term of years, but to subject them to an extra and indefinite layer of punishment — or worse, to experimentation — by administrative fiat without public review violates not only justice but the basic requirements of decency.

If a dog or a horse died in training, we might be prone to criticize the method. Marion's control unit has claimed several lives in the past five years, at least two by suicide. Now the death of Red Hayes, it seems to me, suggests that the control unit at Marion does violence to our sense of humanity.





# Repression Is the Recipe! The Antidote Is Unity!

*In November, 1979 over four hundred people marched in Chicago in support of the Marion Brothers, as well as the Pontiac Brothers and a halt to the death penalty. After the march, a rally was held at DePaul University. One of the main speakers at that rally was the Co-director of the National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers. This is the text of her speech.*

A couple of weeks ago, I had to take a few days off to recover from a bout with the flu, and while I was sick, I started reading some of my cookbooks. In the course of my reading, I came across this book—Now the title says "U.S. Bureau of Prison Facilities, '78." Well, that is not what it really is. What this book is, is the recipe for part of a meal being prepared for all of us by the master chefs of Washington, D.C. Jimmy Carter and his economic assistants have been preparing the economic part of the meal—their recipe shrinks like the American job market and our dollars, each time we go to the store.

The chefs at the Pentagon are preparing their recipes for destruction—trident, MX and whatever new secret concoctions we don't even have names for now. To complement these courses, the chefs at the FBI have concocted their new charter of repression, and in Congress, chefs Kennedy and Kastenmeier and Drinan have helped develop both a Federal death penalty bill and a new streamlined son of a son of S-1. But the real gourmet delight is the entrée being developed over at the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP).

Looking at all these recipes, I realized what this meal was. It was the making of the Gulag—American style! Not French style. Not Italian style. Not even Chinese or Korean style. This is the real thing. No one can beat the United States in this competition when those master chefs really put their minds to it.

The other thing I discovered is that taken all together, this meal can give you cancer—a creeping, malignant, terminal cancer in the body politic. This cancer is the cancer of racism, the cancer of hopelessness and joblessness, the cancer of jingoistic patriotism and militarism. And I realized that the Federal Bureau of Prisons is the system of tumors left by this cancer which is consuming the body. These tumors develop silently without many of us knowing they are there until it is too late. And for that reason, I thought it important to talk about this aspect of the problem more closely.

Now like every good chef the FBOP chief, Mr. Norman Carlson, gives us a few helpful hints in his introduction. He tells us that the Bureau of Prisons in the past has used a too generous measure of rehabilitation as an ingredient, and so this had to be changed. This had to be reduced in the present recipe. In fact, it has been reduced so much it has become impossible to detect it. You can't see it. You can't taste it. It might not even be there anymore.

## By AUDREY ARONSON MYERS

Instead, chef Carlson has added three new ingredients to balance off the sweet taste of rehabilitation and release left in peoples' mouths. In his introduction to the 1978 Facilities Manual, Carlson tells us he has replaced this with the three secret ingredients which have made him a world renowned chef. And these are "retribution, deterrence, and the physical and mental incapacitation of prisoners."

In doing my research for this little talk I learned a few interesting facts about this tumor, what it looks like and how it operates. I learned that it is a series of growing malignant tumors which consume any



person not firmly nailed down. One small slip, one minor crime and you are gone—kind of like the Blob in those old horror movies. This tumor also consumes any empty buildings not nailed down, such as Olympic dormitory buildings in upstate New York, and even abandoned army barracks from New Jersey to California.

And the biggest, ugliest tumor, the one Norman Carlson is most proud of, is called the Marion, Illinois Federal Prison, and its infamous federal control unit. As a matter of fact, Norman Carlson is so proud of Marion that he and his associates have taught chefs from all over the country to whip up similar recipes in places as diverse as Somers, Connecticut, in Trenton, New Jersey, in Marquette, Michigan and Jackson, Georgia.

Since beginning this project, I've been concerned about whether there is an antidote which works, not overnight, but slowly and surely. And I want you to know that I've found one, and it's a drug called Unity. I'm really proud to be here today because this rally and march represents a unity of a lot of diverse forces—the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, pacifists, religious people, Catholic Worker people, socialists and

prison people. As an extra dosage, this antidote contains a multifacial flavoring—a part of the antidote that is key to its effectiveness.

Those of us involved in the campaign to extricate the federal control unit at Marion from the body politic feel that we have made a lot of progress in our efforts. This rally and march are a united and multi-racial and non-violent show of support for the Bono vs. Saxbe case—a statement that we feel behavior control units constitute cruel and unusual punishment. And we want those units already built closed and the plans for future Marions scrapped.

On November 20th, 1979 a national inter-faith religious delegation, headed by Bishop Maurice Dingman of Des Moines, Iowa, Reverend Leon White of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ, and Bishop William Cosgrove of Belleville, Illinois are going to Marion to tell Norman Carlson and Warden Wilkinson that we want the prison gates opened for people of conscience to be able to take a look at their dirty work.

I feel so strongly about my discovery that I have even found room in my heart to help Norman Carlson. Now a lot of people know my dear husband Scott is an ordination candidate in the United Church of Christ. And of all the things I have learned in the many years of our association, the one I treasure the most is the discovery of the Gospels. He and others—the Catholic Worker people who have supported us, Dan Berrigan and men of faith inside the prisons and out, such as Shahid Faris—have taught me the importance of forgiveness. So I can even say that I really want to forgive Norman Carlson. Forgive him for all the torture and all the incapacitation and all the death he has wrought. I believe this so much that the next time the Marion Brothers Support Committee has a public action we're all going to Babylon. We are all going to Washington, D.C. to see Norman Carlson and his supporters. And we are going soon.

And when we get to Washington, we will have a very simple message—that we want to rehabilitate you, Norman Carlson. But if we can't, we can turn your recipe around and use it too. Now we're not going to get into retribution because we try to be Christians. But we will deter you and we will incapacitate you, and we will come back again and again until you are gone and the monuments to your evil—the control units—have been discredited, dismantled and thrown in the trash heap of history with the rack and the screw and the stake.

# The Catholic Mirror

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## Religious Leaders Rap Marion Prison

By BART POLLOCK

Marion, Ill. — An interfaith delegation of religious leaders that visited the federal penitentiary here, Nov. 20, has called for open congressional hearings on the functioning of the prison's controversial "control unit" to determine if human rights are being violated.

Led by Bishop Maurice J. Dingman of Des Moines, the delegation included: Bishop William M. Cosgrove of Belleville, Ill.; Rev. Leon White, Coordinator of the Criminal Justice Task Force of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, Raleigh, N.C.; Sr. Frances Padberg, SSND, Social Concerns Coordinator, School Sisters of Notre Dame, St. Louis, Mo.; and Rev. Rhodes Thompson Jr., Minister of Memorial Boulevard Christian Church, St. Louis, Mo.

A statement signed by all five members of the delegation criticized the prison's "continued use of closed-front cells, the so-called 'boxcar' cells," and charged that "the main purpose at Marion, which is containment rather than rehabilitation, works against the best interest of persons."

In their statement, the religious representatives explained that they had approached their task "with the conviction that persons are extremely valuable in the sight of God and that prison facilities and policies must be viewed in the light of the Judaeo-Christian principle of the dignity of the human person."

The delegation, the first such group to be permitted to enter the control unit, toured the facility for more than an hour and visited privately with four prisoners from the general population at Marion and four who are currently being held in the control unit.

"Our visit," they concluded, "raised serious doubts about the advisability of continuing this housing unit."

Bishop Dingman, who negotiated with prison officials for several months before securing permission for the delegation to enter the prison, described the control unit as an area "divided into four 'ranges,' each containing 18 single-person cells. Each cell measures approximately 6½ feet by 8 feet by 8½ feet high.

"There's a kind of double-entry to the cells, and they can be closed off completely," he said.

In their statement, the delegation charged that closed-front cells "are being used with only minor modifications. We think this is contrary to the intent of Judge James Foreman's decision in the Bono vs. Saxbe case," which outlawed the use of closed-front cells.

"The change that they made is to put in a partial door made of glass," said Bishop Dingman. "Before that, it was just a blank steel door with a very small opening."

Control unit prisoners who are not permitted to participate in the prison's industrial program "are confined in their cells for an average of 23 hours and 20 minutes per day," the bishop said.

There is no set limit on the length of time prisoners can be held in the unit.

Those who do participate in the industrial program "work right outside their cells, within 20 feet of their cells," according to Bishop Dingman, "and their recreation area is right there in the same place."

Opportunities for exercise are "very limited," he said. "They only have a half-hour, and they are permitted to be with two or three other people at the most," he explained.

According to the bishop, prisoners in the unit are almost completely cut off from any human contact.

He told of one man from the control unit who said, "I am elated just shaking your hand. I haven't done this for two years—just sitting down with people like you."

"The reason we cautioned about the control unit is because of information we received from talking to people who are presently being held there, and seeing the kind of fear and frustration that they exhibited," Bishop Dingman said.

"It just seemed to me that the philosophy of the place is that the cause is lost with these people—that this is the end of the line and there isn't anything you can do for them. And yet when we talked to these men, we really got the feeling that something can be done, that the cause is not lost. We just can't give up on them," he said.

Bishop Dingman explained that by calling for open congressional hearings on the control unit, the delegation is asking that prison officials, legislators and citizens make a principled judgment about the treatment of prisoners at the Marion facility, and about the philosophy of the Federal Prison System that the Marion control unit represents.

"Our duty as the church is to form consciences," he said. "We are bringing certain principles to the prison officials and to our own people and asking that a judgment be made in light of these principles."

"Is this the direction we ought to be going? Is this way of doing things in conformity with our respect for the human person?" the bishop asked.

Rev. Leon White noted that the United Church of Christ has already passed a resolution condemning the control unit and expressed confidence that "once religious leaders really become concerned and involved, then the government will act. The national churches should mobilize around this issue."

Rev. White described conditions at Marion as "very repressive." He said, "I am concerned about the mechanisms used to control the prisoners and to take away from them any degree of determination of their own being."

He praised the St. Louis-based National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers for calling national attention to the situation at Marion.

"Public scrutiny is required to keep the place open and to help the officials to see the potential demonic elements that are present in the system because the system itself is evil," said Rev. White.



Religious delegates confer after prison visit. Rev. Leon White, Bishop Maurice Dingman, NCSMB Co-Directors Audrey and Scott Myers.



**MARION PRISON CONTROL UNIT RANGE** which contains eighteen cells. This range also has a caged work area. Prisoners never leave the area you see here. Exercise is done in the open space. There are four ranges like this one. Each is isolated from the rest of the prison. Some men have spent years confined to the tiny area pictured here.



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### OUR POEM

Chains, bricks, concrete, walls, steel, bars, cells,  
tears of years that have gone by while we have been  
kept behind – forcibly shackled within, without, for  
what crime? For what law? For how long is this life to be?  
Questions asked in the stillness of the darkest  
of the night, questions, questions, questions,  
questions.

— Victor G. Bono

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## WHAT IS BEING DONE

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**T**HE CAMPAIGN to close the Marion control unit and turn around federal prison segregation-control policies is eight years old. In those eight years, it has become a broad based effort involving prisoners, ex-prisoners, lawyers, priests, religious women, journalists, professionals in medicine and psychology, churches, civil rights and peace organizations.

Multi-racial support has been a key to the campaign's success. Blacks and Whites, Hispanics and Native Americans have all joined in various areas of the campaign — from lawsuits and petition drives to Congress and the courts, to marches, rallies and a public education drive.

Plans for 1980 include an all-out drive for open, full-scale Congressional hearings on the control unit and BOP control policies in general. In September, a "Vote With Your Feet / Walk for Justice" effort will be undertaken. This walk, beginning in East St. Louis and ending with a large public rally at Marion, will be a major summer-fall project. National and international religious and political leaders will be invited to speak at the rally outside the prison. Along with these larger events, there is the daily correspondence with scores of prisoners, public speaking, film showings, conferences, local, regional and national meetings to attend.

The National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers is a non-profit prisoner rights organization that depends on grassroots support. The committee has coordinated a public organizing drive for five years now. The committee publishes a newsletter called "Marion Brothers News Report."

You can help this human rights campaign in the following ways:

1. Write letters for open, full-scale Congressional hearings on the control unit and BOP control unit policies. Write your own representative. Also write: Robert Kastenmeier (chairman of prison-related subcommittee), George Danielson and Thomas Railsback (also members of prison-related subcommittee), John Conyers and Ronald Dellums (Congressional Black Caucus) and Don Edwards and Robert Drinan (House Judiciary Committee), and Paul Simon (Congressman in Marion district), all at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.
2. Organize local delegations to meet with your Congressional representative and/or Senators to urge them to join in the call for Congressional hearings.
3. Help distribute the widely renowned pamphlet "Breaking Men's Minds" by Eddie Griffin, a former control unit prisoner. Price is 60¢ (bulk rates available).
4. Set up speaking for committee organizers, ex-prisoners, lawyers and Daniel Berrigan, who has done speaking for the committee for the past three years. Organize meetings with local church groups, community and civil rights organizations, media, prison groups, etc.
5. Send a contribution to help the campaign. Your donation helps pay for postage, phone, office expenses, printing, transportation, etc.

*Send all contributions and requests for information to:*

**National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers**  
4556a Oakland • St. Louis, Missouri 63110

314 533-2234