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I. Introduction

The Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)-National Union of Cuban Jurists (NUCJ) Joint Commission on the Conviction & Treatment of Prisoners in the United States & Cuba is a very positive development. Such exchanges can go a long way toward dispelling the cloud of disinformation that surrounds both U.S. & Cuban penology in this country. That is an essential prerequisite to exposing its counterproductive elements to the corrective scrutiny of public debate.

Imprisonment is one of the most extreme forms of action a society can take against its members. Due to its extremity, it is the one most susceptible to abuse, be it active or passive & well intentioned or not. This makes public participation & understanding of its use most important in order to protect it from the divergence from societal standards that can easily take place in secrecy & isolation. And public involvement is the means by which people whose deviation from social behavior norms requires so draconian a measure as imprisonment to protect the community can be reintegrated into the community instead of pushed further from it.

Cuba demonstrated principle as well as commitment to that goal of reintegration by granting unlimited access to its prisons to a delegation from a country whose ruling class has been consistently hostile to the Cuban Revolution. The IPS delegation was accorded that access in the expectation that the Joint Commission's work would be facilitated by a similar, reciprocal tour. Despite that expectation, the U.S. State Department, in a blatant display of hypocritical censorship, denied the NUCJ delegation the requisite visas. The U.S., which holds itself out as such a champion of human rights, should also hold its own handling of human rights out for scrutiny by anyone interested, reciprocity notwithstanding.

In an effort to help limit the effect of that censorship, I have prepared the following observations & comments about Marion prison. It is not exhaustive; books could be written on the subject. I have tried to survey briefly only what I feel are the most salient points. I trust that it will be of some utility. After the Marion parts is included some information on my political perspective & incarceration.

II. U.S. PENITENTIARY AT MARION, ILLINOIS

A. Survey of Marion Reality

USP Marion is a locked down prison. Prisoners are required to spend more than 22 hours per day on average in their cells. In groups of nine, they are allowed one hour, 15 minutes per day out on the long, narrow tier that runs in front of the cells. Prisoners can talk only to those other prisoners in the 35 cells on each side of the block during these periods. A two hour yard period + a two hour gym period are also provided each week, to + from which prisoners are taken with hands cuffed behind their backs by gangs of club-wielding guards. Education consists of prisoners being allowed to take one correspondence course + rudimentary basic education self-study courses. The library is a cardboard box of paperbacks outside the bars at the end of the tier. There is no work available for any but a few prisoners.

Idleness + isolation are not, however, nearly the extent of Marion oppression. Harassment is carried right into the cells with endless petty regulations + rules + requirements. These are subject to be made up on the spot + are very unevenly + selectively enforced. No one can even know, let alone comply with them all. The penalties for transgression of even the most insignificant of these edicts are severe: the slightest infraction is used as justification for up to another year of confinement at Marion. And the harassment is frequently tailored to individual prisoners. Everything -- education, medical treatment, personal property, food, etc. -- is a potential weapon with which to abuse prisoners.

The imported goon squads have long been returned to other prisons, + the rampant brutality that characterized the period in 1983+84 following the initial lockdown is now more a threat that needs only infrequent demonstration. Nevertheless, there are still occasional beatings + goonings + chainings to concrete slabs. The total domination by the administration of all aspects of prisoners' lives is predicated down to the most insignificant detail on the always imminent + immediately available use of force. Nor is direct attack by guards the only form of physical abuse: food, medical

treatment, segregation, + other methods may also be used.

There is no appeal from any of the depredations of Marion. A prisoner may be sent here "for any reason or no reason at all." Although there are almost always reasons for the sending, many are not legitimate. And though there are vague guidelines for transfer out of Marion, none of them are mandatory. They are sometimes merely ignored + often used to make prisoners feel as if they are responsible for their continued confinement at Marion. There is no entitlement to transfer that can override staff decisions to deny it. Prisoners are often taken to segregation "pending investigation." They are often surprised with silly infractions, all of which are said to require the victim to "start over" on his indeterminate sentence to Marion. The hearing process is a joke that officials will sometimes verbally acknowledge but which becomes very serious on paper. Appeals, be they administrative or judicial are similarly bankrupt + may take years.

Contact with the community is discouraged + virtually nonexistent. Prisoners have no contact with non-custodial outside people such as outside mental + other health professionals, teachers, work supervisors, + providers of community services + activities. The only exception is miniscule contact with two contracted chaplains. Should prisoners develop any other local connections such as with church groups or media, every effort is made to destroy them. Visits are needlessly restrictive, being permitted only through glass + via phones, unlike all other state + federal prisons. Combined with the remoteness of the area, the oppressive character of visiting makes for relatively few visits. Mail is closely censored + often rejected for inane reasons like mentioning the name of another prisoner (even if s/he is in another country!), + disappearance + delay of mail are not uncommon. This further impedes communication which may be all the community contact a prisoner has.

1. MARION AS DECEPTION: Marion + its program of repression are characterized by deception. What is visible to the public is a gleaming, modern prison that conveys an impression of cool + deliberate efficiency in the discharge of an ordained task. The U.S. is a rich country + thus

has great resources to spend on appearances. In the case of Marion, that translates as money with which to disguise its violations of human rights as "humane incapacitation". People see shining, empty corridors, electronic gates, TVs in cells, a well-appointed infirmary, & other show items & are led to believe that prisoners have nothing about which to complain. The impression conveyed by the physical plant that Marion is the professionally conducted, high security operation of a concentration model & not destructive abuse does not, however, accurately portray the reality experienced by prisoners. The difference between the material implications & the actuality of Marion subsistence is only part of the deceit, though. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) & Marion administration ~~tries~~ to use the picture reflected by these facilities to lend credibility to their disinformation about who is subjected to the Marion non-program, its effect, its intent, & its efficacy.

B. Administrative Disinformation

The BOP & Marion administration claim that Marion is filled with violent & vicious predators who constitute "the worst of the worst" in American prisons. Marion prisoners have been characterized as rotten apples "concentrated" into one barrel. The fact, however, is that Marion prisoners are no different than prisoners in other maximum security prisons. They may even be less threatening because most mass murderers, sex criminals & the like are in state & not federal prisons, & Reagan appointees are in country club prisons & not Marion. Nor are all Marion prisoners who have committed acts of violence in other prisons & many who have committed such acts are not here. There are many sent to Marion on vague allegations of plotting escape, for administrative reasons, to fill space, or for no specified reason. Others are sent directly from the streets. By attempting to shift responsibility for prison problems entirely onto prisoners, & onto Marion prisoners in particular, who live under the complete control of guards, officialdom shows * that it is the barrel that is rotten or at least incompetent.

The Marion lockdown is not the last-resort response to

depredations of prisoners that culminated in three deaths in October of 1983. Circumstances & documents, including one cited on ABC's national news magazine 20/20, show that it was being planned much earlier. Nor is Marion the "humane incapacitation" that is alleged, as its violation of many of the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners & condemnation by Amnesty International shows. Neither is it only a "concentration model" though it does act as such in some respects incidental to its real function. If people here are not all the nasties alleged & there are nasties not here, then there is no concentration. It is not merely a "high security operation" because the repression goes well beyond what could reasonably be related to security. It is not "behavior modification" because that term implies that objectionable attitudes are being replaced with something more appropriate. Marion is merely destructive without the constructive element. It is also not only a "mind control" prison, though developing the means of exercising psychological influence over people is part of its intent. The effect of Marion is mental impairment & a decrease in the stability of its victims, thus making them more unpredictable & less controllable. Though they may then be akin to human mines that can be aimed at least vaguely & may be useful for bureaucratic purposes, specific control is undermined. Marion is a laboratory for experiments in social manipulation & control.

C. Impact of Marion on Prisoners

1. INDUCED INSECURITY: Prisoners at Marion are first stripped of virtually all control over their lives. "Taking all their decisions away" was specifically stated as official policy in a BBC radio interview. To this atmosphere of complete lack of control, the constant & visible threat of force is added to enhance the insecurity. The insecurity is further compounded by the complete uncertainty of existence. U.S. prisoners have a number of rights, but none of them are certain for any individual at Marion. No one knows when he will be accused of some real or imagined rule violation or if any other aspect of his life will be suddenly attacked by official action. These attacks can range from the infliction of minor irritants on up to beatings & chainings. The stress is so severe that I've seen prisoners fly into a rage at having an official

standing in front of the cell + staring into it. No one is permitted to escape from the insecurity by creating an at least psychologically secure niche of, say, study or some other connection to reality beyond Marion in the privacy of a cell. Officialdom pursues prisoners into the very corners of their existence with myriad arbitrary demands that may be made at any time + have unknown consequences. Capricious orders to do (or not do) something inane become so obviously harassment or personal insults intended only to be demeaning without purpose except as a demonstration of power. With such basic needs as those for security + control of one's life going unmet, these intrusions can break into a prisoner's consciousness with a stab of anger + resentment that can last a long time + impede constructive thought + action. It also has a cumulative effect. Tension + stress are enhanced.

The effect is multiplied by the extent to which it prods prisoners into self-policing. In order to avoid the intrusion + its psychological + physical consequences, many prisoners try to figure out what will attract official interference, reasonable or not, + to eliminate it. This can be extremely stressful + frustrating because it requires acceding to the unreasonable + bowing to adversarial pressure without being specifically required to do so -- doing "the man's" job -- + is often not possible. For example, sometimes enforced rules forbid the hanging of clothing anywhere but on the one plastic hook in each cell. A prisoner with a handful of wet clothing looks around the cell in which he stands alone + unobserved + must make the choice between a mildewed mess + possible accusation of misuse of government property or sanitation violations + opening the door to intrusion by some itinerant guard with unknowable consequences. When asked what to do to resolve such dilemmas or for explanations that would make them at least understandable, staff members merely shrug + insist that the rules be obeyed.

Guards, too, are made victims of this manipulation as they are also subject to Marion experimentation. Supervisory staff, usually above the custodial level, pressures guards to pressure prisoners gratuitously. Guards then try to eliminate the cause for intrusion into their

consciousness by trying to anticipate the hierarchy's whims. But then they are constantly faced with the reality of having to carry out repressive acts that bear no legitimate relation to any penological objective in exchange for a salary, a sell-out. This pressure + the agent of oppression syndrome it induces are much more the cause of the stress in guards than the administration attributes to the supposed dangerousness of Marion prisoners. And whether for guards or prisoners, the least stressful response is to move through the situation so incapable of analytical rationalization without thinking about it. But that is not always possible + certainly not desirable.

The intent of these practices is apparently to see how far prisoners can be conditioned to an unthinking habit of knee-jerk compliance with the edicts of any authority no matter how unreasonable without inducing reaction + defiance. Though such conditioning is obviously attractive to prison crats, the object is more the mechanism than the result. A problem is that such conformity is not consistent with any progressive society that depends upon the initiative of its citizens. To the extent that people need some ability to be self-directing in order to get by in a free society, they -- whether former prisoners or otherwise -- are not going to be able to do so according to its norms when conditioned to be unreasoning automatons. Moreover, while this experiment in social programming does + is intended to succeed in breaking some prisoners into thoughtless malleability, its more common result is to be more dangerous. Along with a partial breakdown or at least undermining of the person, it creates a consciousness that power is the only reality: one grovels however obsequiously is necessary in the face of power + follows whatever random impulses one may find attractive when power's face is averted. It also creates an impetus to retrieve "face" or self-status as an adherent to principle lost in the breaking process. The possible detonation of the load of tension + stress induced in victims of Marion makes this especially dangerous for the community.

2. DEPRIVATION OF COMMUNITY CONTACT / ISOLATION FROM COMMUNITY: Under this regimen of maximum restriction + psychological

assault, there is very little to counter its deleterious effects, even to the limited extent possible for prisoners denied rudimentary security. Although the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) does acknowledge the importance of family & community ties & sometimes lives up to the paper policies designed to facilitate their maintenance, Marion practice is a deliberate impediment to such ties. Arbitrary harassment rules that change whimsically are imposed on visitors & prisoners. The conditions are made so artificially difficult to the point at which many prisoners do not want to subject themselves or their visitors to the humiliation & emotional trauma. Even for the few prisoners who have some skill at written communication, the non-visit contact with the outside is generally insufficient to maintain positive relationships over time. Access to the community more broadly is even more limited. There is no way for prisoners to be exposed to the elements of community life, let alone develop connections with a particular one.

Relationships, be they with a community or individuals, are dynamic & not static things. They are predicated on practice, on interaction. People & communities change over time. When they change in isolation from one another, they tend to diverge, to grow apart from previous points of sharing. This is not necessarily a negative fact, just a fact. Even in the case where a relationship does not deteriorate, by not being exercised it becomes a smaller & smaller part of a person's consciousness as the years contribute to total mental accumulation & people are conditioned by their respective experience. For prisoners isolated at places like Marion, this means being increasingly divorced from their loved ones on the streets. It also denies them satisfaction of their human needs for affiliation with something outside the individual, identification, acceptance, & affection. But prisoners without the morale & psychological support of outside connections tend to be easier to manipulate & better experimental subjects in the Marion laboratory.

This separation by itself is counter to the goal of reintegrating prisoners into society. People are more willing to exploit & oppress where they feel no sense of connection or identification. But it is more than just that.

People will seek to satisfy their needs to the extent possible in whatever circumstances they find themselves. For prisoners forcibly separated from their families + the outside community -- especially but not only those in conditions as oppressive as Marion's -- this means satisfying social needs with other prisoners. It is only from other prisoners that individuals will get any mutual aid or understanding in real time. A kind word, a pack of cigarettes, some conversation, sympathy, support against threats -- the range of human interaction possible under locked down conditions -- all can be of the utmost importance. And they represent only the most obvious elements of prisoner association.

None of that comes from prison staff, whom the administration sets up as an adversary that exists across a hard + fast line across which only enmity + mistrust can fly. There are no teachers, social workers, work supervisors, paralegals, etc., etc. that in other situations might help bridge that ~~gap~~ barrier as much as can be within one of the repressive institutions of this society. Such people also help bridge the gap between prisoners + the outside community. They also diminish the negative socialization of prisoners by serving as representatives of society who are not solely agents of draconian repression + offer some alternatives to the things of a strictly prison society.

The result of this isolation from the community is most pronounced at Marion. Prisoners have no choice but to identify with + seek acceptance by other prisoners. Because at a place like Marion there are no other social endeavors through which to interact, prisoners are impelled to affiliate on the basis of irrelevant characteristics that are frequently reactionary + often considered problems in other jurisdictions. These include but are not limited to race, region, + gang +, more broadly, the criminal element. Insecurity exacerbates this identification, not only for the obvious reasons but also because these are characteristics of which a prisoner cannot be deprived. The complete lack of security of location or individual association further aggravates the problem of identification with groups + ideas primarily +

people secondarily.

3. DEPRIVATION OF WORK + EDUCATION: At USP Marion, there is no work for the large majority of prisoners. Only a relative few in the pre-transfer unit are allowed to have jobs --+ even they are forced to work on military contracts rather than more productive projects. Working prisoners are the victims of all of the exploitation suffered by outside workers subject to unfettered capitalism: speed ups, poor + hazardous working conditions, threats of retaliation outside the job for job performance, low pay, insecurity, etc. Thus, the work experience is not what it should be even where it is not completely withheld.

As mentioned previously, there is no substantive education to fill the work gap because, claim staff members, there is no budget for more. Given the demonstrated benefits of education + at a prison that spends substantially more per prisoner than any other federal prison + over three times the federal average, that excuse is exceedingly weak. It is also contrary to the notions of security advanced by officialdom because prisoner intellects absorbed in educational pursuits are not being applied to endeavors that might undermine security in a variety of ways. Recreation is needlessly limited, too, +, in some instances, discouraged, diminishing the benefits prisoners can reap from the meager activities that are permitted.

It is through activity, primarily work, that people satisfy their need to feel some sense of self-worth, competence, + accomplishment in addition to identification as, say, machinist. Education is intimately tied to this equation, too. It adds to one's capacity to work, to accomplish, to contribute to the community, + also provides accomplishment in itself. It allows one to better understand + deal with his or her world outside of a narrow + parochial existence + to be more capable of making rational assessments of it. It helps create community consciousness + awareness + appreciation of the knowledge + values that sustain a society. It breaks isolation + the errors of ignorance. But both meaningful work + education are denied to USP Marion prisoners, allegedly due to the dictates of security. The case is similar with

recreation. Given the many work + educational + recreational possibilities available even within the context of the lockdown, the denial is an absurdity. Work, education, + recreation, however, + their physical + psychological benefits are not compatible with Marion's mission of social experimentation. They would empower prisoners + make the desired results impossible to obtain.

The results that are obtained by the deprivation of work + education are another condemnation of Marion. Further negative socialization of prisoners is one such result. The denial of a sense of self-worth, of productivity, of usefulness in some effort of value to the individual + the community creates a perception of valuelessness that encourages prisoners to view others similarly. People who feel themselves to be of little value + have no feeling of security of person or property (contributing to worthlessness in a property based society) are inclined to have fewer inhibitions in their treatment of other people + things. This amounts to one less social safeguard for members of the community against deliberate criminal victimization by someone in whom the legacy of Marion pressures contributes to carelessness or a psychotic incident. Prisoners are also impelled to seek elsewhere the self-value + satisfaction of accomplishment they are denied through work + education + recreation. This usually translates as developing the skills of "jailin'", developing knowledge if not skill in the felonious arts, or developing associations with others who have value in the prison society, not always for laudable attributes. These things become what are valued + pursued, also to the detriment of the community.

At Marion, the extent to which the skills of prison society can be developed is limited in practice but exaggerated with respect to attitudes. Self-aggrandizement is forced to take on a more negative aspect. With very little a person can do to feel competent + valuable via dynamic accomplishment, there is an enhanced tendency to try to feel it through static condition. That means stronger identification with people with similar inherent characteristics (race, region, gang, etc.), greater

exaltation thereof, & harder lines drawn between people with different ones. Within these groupings, there is an increased impetus to denigrate "outsiders" (&, to a lesser degree, insiders in jockeying for position) for all sorts of real & imagined faults toward the end that the denigrator &/or those not sharing the characteristic being denigrated are raised, at least relative to the victim. This occurs with non-characteristic actions, too. Tolerance for diversity is crushed by Marion oppression. And Marion victims tend to develop a habit of looking at people generally in a negative manner instead of positively or neutrally until there is some reason to carry them otherwise. To be hard & tough & unfeeling becomes a desirable goal & emotional response is impaired. This pushes prisoners further from desired social norms & strengthens identification with "the element". And all of it is in addition to the fact that this deprivation of work & education leaves prisoners without the social & job skills necessary to survive in a society where every aspect of existence is not controlled by someone else

4. VARIABILITY OF MARION IMPACT: Of course, all prisoners do not succumb to these negative effects, & those who do do so in differing degrees. Ability to resist & extent of the stress inflicted vary. If they did not & prisoners did not respond differently, there would be no need for experimental station Marion. The experimental outcome & byproducts vary between prisoners. Many have their own more or less coherent belief systems &, good, bad, or indifferent, adhere to them in a manner that is principled according to those systems. Such beliefs contribute to the psychological strength to resist oppression. Indeed, it is people with identifiable belief systems that are particularly the target of Marion experimentation. It is they who will best yield the data desired by the experimenters on how to undermine & destroy belief systems that become threatening -- & what variations may exist among those they encounter. That is what puts political prisoners at particular risk of Marion abuse. Unprincipled criminal opportunists are much more easily able to squirm through the Marion system -- & it is not designed to catch them except as camouflage for its less

legitimate aims.

Nevertheless, whatever integrity a prisoner is able to maintain, the tension & stress & frustration artificially & deliberately created at Marion does take some toll. No one is immune, as the Marion staff psychologist contends. Individuals may survive more or less intact, but not better for the experience. Psychological scars, separation from people & community, negative socialization, & tension may express themselves in a variety of ways from the very minor up to major explosions. It can be seen in daily life at Marion when people are put "on the grit" by inconsequential things, when the accumulation of small (& large!) psycho-cuts is manifested in neighbors who are irascible or otherwise unpleasant, in some health problems, & in varying forms of misbehavior. Sometimes prisoners feel compelled to assert some control over their lives, even if only momentarily & destructively of self or other people or things, to demonstrate their humanity & power over something, anything. Other times prisoners just lose control & "go off". Nor does the potential for the emergence in active expression of the damage done by Marion end when the prisoner leaves Marion.

The majority of prisoners do not express the damage of Marion so visibly; it will more likely come out as a decrease in the quality of their lives & that of any community of which they eventually become a part, most probably due to increased crime, diminished productivity, or merely disconnection. Unfortunately, no tracking of prisoners exposed to the abuses of Marion is or is likely to be done to verify the observations of Marion prisoners & those who live in the other prison communities in which they are visible. The results would contradict official claims about the efficacy of Marion. Nor is there any way to accurately measure the losses or the range of disability inflicted by Marion. Former Marion prisoners are not going to be visible as victims of Marion in the community, further disguising the problem. When the impact is small it will be missed & when serious up to the few deadly explosions that can be expected it will be lost in the sensationalism of the event.

D. Personal Effects of Marion

Many of these results of Marion style repression are not merely my observations of other prisoners but come out of my own experience as well. I am more fortunate in some respects because the Revolution sustains me by giving me some understanding + insight + feeling of connection that others lack. The Revolution is Power + Protection, But it is not absolute armor + does not repeal the laws of material reality. It does not stop bullets nor render one immune to psychological assault.

In the 3½ years that I have been at Marion, the relationships I have had with people outside have deteriorated, though atrophied is probably a better word: they have not, on the whole, gotten worse, just less -- or failed to develop. I am unable to develop the network of connections born of shared interaction -- mutual experience + practice -- that constitutes the personal + social infrastructure that allows both satisfaction + effectiveness in the course of life + struggle. I am alone in the hand of the enemy + have had my nose rubbed in the realization that the world goes on without me. As time goes by I become increasingly concerned about my ability to reintegrate into that real world.

I am frustrated by the passage of time, by endless repetitions of the same day in which I can contribute virtually nothing to the struggle or have even the small satisfaction of, say, repairing a chair upon which someone will sit. The precious, irreplaceable, finite quantity of time is being wasted. I do not gain significantly in knowledge or experience that feels like it will be useful in the future, + I know that what skills I already have atrophy. I feel incapable of ameliorating the waste of time by using it to improve the effectiveness with which I will be able to use future time in which there will be more options. More + more I realize that I don't know how to do anything.

Even the little I am able to accomplish is diminished by the unprincipled intrusion of the Marion regimen. I feel obligated + want to lay down some practice in furtherance of the struggle. About all that

means here is enduring + resisting oppression to the meager extent allowed by administrative appeals + some litigation. Somewhat better in that regard but still of marginal utility under the circumstances, it means writing letters + articles, study + exercise to improve + maintain what I may be able to do in the future. But despite the limitations, even of those things I could + would like to do alot more. But my capacity is diminished. I know from what I was able to accomplish in previous situations. Discipline no longer suffices to make up the energy gap because it is like a drug for which one can develop a tolerance + dangerous dependency.

I waste alot of time dealing with the inanities of Marion. Time waste seems to be some sort of mental defense mechanism to protect from boredom + to speed the passage of periods one is consigned to passive adversity. My ability to concentrate is impaired: I vegetate (daydream) + my mind tends to wander off the task at hand. When my involvement in a correspondence lesson or letter or book or thought or whatever is broken into with some asinine order raised to the level of holy writ + backed by the threat of armed force + potentially dire consequences, it may take hours to restore the desired level of attention necessary to sufficiently constructive work. That compounds the tension + frustration. The impetus to escapeism is great + sometimes tough to resist despite the fact that the result is not really what I want.

I also seem to be growing more rigid + less tolerant, things against which I fight. Right now this does insinuate itself into my perception of people + things, though it leaks out of the space it occupies in my mind more in political argument. But is that still minor beginning only the thin edge of the wedge? Some of my criticisms of this + that, while legitimate, may sometimes be needlessly vitriolic. This creates a contradiction. While I know that progressive people -- + this does not only apply to the most obviously political elements of life -- need to be working toward cooperating on the basis of commonality more + drawing needlessly hard lines less, I seem to be losing sight of the line between appropriate + inappropriate polemic.

The increasing rigidity is also reflected to some extent in

a degree of callousness in my perception of the world. Empathy for incidental victims of the struggle becomes increasingly, "Them's the breaks." Sympathy for refugees seeking only safety & security & material betterment moves more toward, "So why ain't you in the trenches?" And on & on. Such positions may have some theoretical validity, but there must be humanity in how theory & practice are expressed. Again, I have concerns that this could be the repression-induced beginning of a progression that could lead to my justifying inappropriate actions that unduly victimize people on the basis of some too extreme interpretation of theory. Will it allow me to support workers who have segregated themselves on the basis of some artificial notion of nation or sect killing each other at the expense of class war? Or will it lead to some future expropriation in which I hose down a busy street with an assault rifle because I see only arriving agents of oppression? Or will it merely ~~lead~~ mean that I marginalize myself into some extra-stalinist fulminations in the isolation of a dark room full only of musty paper because I have alienated those with whom I would struggle?

On the other hand, another contradiction manifests itself in a tendency to rationalize or minimize or accept the past criminal behavior of people with whom circumstances put me in personal contact. Is this (& to what extent is it) the legitimate outgrowth of having to work in the community in which one finds oneself? Or am I improperly allowing emotions (which do, as does everything, have a political element) to encroach upon conscious politics for command of the organism? But the circumstances are intended to induce contradictions....

I also find myself less able to accept criticism, however legitimate & well intended it may be, tending more to perceive it as an attack that must be resisted. Sometimes even ordinary disagreement in the course of a conversation can elicit this reaction. I recognize it as the result of feeling pressed so far back into a corner of my psychological ground that every metaphorical inch seems to need tenacious defense. But it still seems appropriate. The room for the give & take that is so

essential to growth & development, not to mention mental health, is diminishing. This effect has a corollary in that I am less able to be open with people, particularly on the personal level of politics but also, if to a lesser extent, on the theoretical. This probably stems from some subconscious fear that I will open myself to attack on another front (or will fail or be misinterpreted, really elements of the same thing). Everything is becoming tinged with an adversarial hue, & I am in a position of no power.

The extent of these effects varies. I have not yet been seriously or irreparably impaired in any respect by them or rendered into some kind of geek. But I do recognize the impact & its source & that there has been some impairment. Knowledge of what is happening undoubtedly helps to minimize the disability, but it is also very frustrating. I see it happening &, though I continue to struggle, have been unable to prevent it. I also harbor concerns that the debilitation will have permanent effects & leave me with future diminished capacity. And that is exclusive of the physical concerns engendered by poor medical care & contaminated water, ^{etc} There is that macho conditioning that I'm supposed to be tough & rugged & capable of handling all such attacks with aplomb, to carry them as mental exercise, but that is not the reality. A slight physical dysfunction from a bullet hole in my arm is just sufficient to remind me that everything has a reachable material base & superpersons live only in mythology.

III. ANALYSIS OF MARION RATIONALE

A. Difficulty of Determining Official Motivation

All of the foregoing begs the question: Why would officialdom have any interest in creating such conditions & results? The real major reasons may well remain a well kept secret like the contents of the Warren Commission report on the Kennedy assassination. There are several possible explanations. It is difficult to know whether any or all of them provide

enough of a cover for the real intent with the public & the bureaucrats that must implement the plan to obviate documentation of reasons for the lockdown that might not be socially acceptable. Both stated & unstated goals may also vary between being secondary & primary depending on the position or involvement of the responsible officials. Verily, the actual effect +/or resulting focus may not be the overt or deliberate intent at the outset.

Another difficulty is determining how high in the bureaucracy awareness of the true intentions +/or responsibility for the design extends. It is apparent, for instance, that all or most of the guards do not know anything other than official propaganda & are unaware that they are part of the experimentation. They are "jus' followin' orders". Does awareness start at the bottom of the supervisory level? Probably only in the rare instances of someone on a fast-track Transit. With wardens? Maybe some, & maybe some believe that incidental motives are the real ones, with still others truly believing in official propaganda & chicken lips. Is the version of Marion goals & intentions for public consumption the same one that is delivered down to the BOP for execution? Is there a cut off level of awareness, or is it a ragged line, higher here & lower there? Is every official person just following orders without thought or question or concern for the large picture made by the collective following? Hard to say. What is clear is that administrative deceit & subterfuge about the real intent of Marion lockdown indicate that it is not what is claimed in public.

B. Poverty of Administrative Claims

The stated rationale for the Marion lockdown of controlling violence falls far short of credibility as the foregoing indicates. While people locked away in almost complete isolation may be temporarily unable to do much contrary to security, it is apparent that the longer term costs for both security & the community cannot be justified by that meager result. Anyway, it is not only the violent & predatory "worst of the worst" that are at Marion. Nor is the alleged evidence that the lockdown has decreased violence convincing or able to bear much scrutiny. Indeed, the conditions tend to aggravate

objectionable attitudes + behavior. And instead of allowing the other prisons in the state + federal systems to be operated in a more open manner, indications are that Marion acts as a weight that draws them toward its repressive extreme. The claim that Marion is "humane incapacitation" is another fallacy, + some of the elements of the lockdown indicate that it is not intended to be. So it also goes with the "concentration model."

C. Control Via Conditions of Confinement

A likely secondary goal of the Marion lockdown is manipulation of the imprisoned via conditions of confinement. At the time the Marion experiment was being planned, what later became the "Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1984" was in the development stages. As originally envisioned, it included a "Sentencing Reform Act" that would have drastically limited plea bargains, disparity in sentencing, parole, + most good time as well as discretion in granting + denying the remaining good time. Of course, it has not turned out like that, judges + prosecutors + parole commission members being loath to accept any such usurpation of their power by the central authorities. But when it appeared that the law might be enacted as planned, the apparatus needed some new mechanism to coerce accused persons into pleading guilty without time consuming + expensive trials + appeals, to pressure people into informing, + to increase the penalties for crimes against the ruling class + its institutions. Coercive instruments, once fashioned, rarely go away by themselves.

Another thing included in this supposed sentencing reform that it does do + in which Marion aids is to attack the individual presumption of innocence that purportedly exists under U.S. law. It does this by allowing indefinite pretrial detention without bail on the basis of the alleged dangerousness of the accused. Coupled with legal doctrines such as that permitting the use of "smuggler's profiles" that allow people who share visible characteristics with people who have been found smuggling over time to be detained + searched, this was another step toward legitimizing the handling of people according to group characteristics + stereotypes.

rather than as individuals. Marion is another step in that direction. It sets precedents that allow prisoners to be punished individually because they are among the group of prisoners. A recent court decision describes Marion conditions as "sordid & horrible" but justifies them on the basis of bad acts supposedly perpetrated by a small minority of the Marion prisoners in 1983. It goes on to say that the BOP has complete freedom to send any prisoner to Marion at its discretion. And if prisoners can be abused for being part of an involuntary group, so can anyone.

1. PRECONVICTION: Conditions of confinement provided the vehicle for pretrial coercion of prisoners. There is drastic difference between, for instance, the prison camp at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida & USP Marion -- indeed, between USP Leavenworth & Marion -- & the courts have held, essentially, that confinement is confinement & the BOP can put its prisoners anywhere. The difference between a sentence to be served at Marion & the same sentence at another prison is substantial & can fulfill all of the above coercive/punitive functions. Marion has already been used in all of these respects, though I do not know the extent. These functions are also indicated by the many needless restrictions & harassments at Marion that bear no relation to security or any other penological objective.

2. POSTCONVICTION: The BOP has also used conditions of confinement as a threat in order to induce conformity among prisoners already committed to its custody. This appears to be more openly the case at minimum security prisons & camps. In maximum security prisons, it has also been used, though security or administrative needs are generally cited for its use (except in the case of disciplinary segregation).

In cooperation with the Parole Commission, the BOP has been better able to coerce prisoners through the use of "clean time". Most prisoners are accorded 8 to 10 days per month of "statutory" clean time that can be withheld for violations of prison rules. That gives prison authorities a powerful coercive instrument, especially as clean time accumulates. Moreover, whether to release a prisoner between his eligibility for

parole & the expiration of her or his sentence is up to the Parole Commission, a decision upon which prison authorities have substantial influence. With clean time cut more than in half under the reform & required to be certified every year after which it cannot be taken away in addition to the abolition of parole, conditions of confinement become more important as a tool of control.

The evidence, however, indicates that this method of control has not been very effective & has brought with it negative consequences in maximum security prisons. The same is probably true of minimum security prisons, though the effects are less visible owing to the different characteristics of the prisoners & degrees of repression. Indeed, the ineffectiveness of conditions of confinement as a deterrent control mechanism despite all the existing holes, segregations, control units, adjustment centers, intensive management units, etc., etc., ad nauseum is what supposedly led to the Marion breakdown & justifies its continuation. So it also goes with the rationale of Marion as punishment, a use which is usually denied but sometimes leaks out.

D. Bureaucratic Self-Preservation

Another consideration that undoubtedly entered the minds of the prisoncrats in creating the lockdown is preservation of their fiefdom. The more fiendish & nasty prisoners are alleged to be, the more of them there are likely to be, the longer their sentences are likely to be, & the larger & richer in employees (constituency) & money the American Gulag Archipelago ~~is likely to be~~ will become. Lockdowns such as that of USP Marion tend to metamorphose into "high security operations" & to proliferate at an alarming rate. They are expensive, giving prison officials power over increased resources. Staff to prisoner ratios range from two to four times that of other prisons. More guards also means more administrators & greater job security. In addition, creation of destructive models of imprisonment insures the expansion of behavior that will increase recidivism & justify yet more repression. That translates

as increased security not only for the prison bureaucracy, but also for the rest of the civilian apparatus of repression, here called the "criminal justice system" but, more accurately, the first line of ruling class defense.

E. Laboratory for Experiments in Social Control

1. NEED FOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT: Finally, there is the rationale that is most strongly indicated by the evidence. Its incidental benefits to prisoncrats notwithstanding, USP Marion is a laboratory for experiments in social manipulation & control. Whether or not that was the intentional original design, that is the current actuality. The U.S. ruling class sees on the horizon increasing dislocation & discontent as the crisis of capitalism deepens & its pains for the populace become sharper. It will need a larger apparatus of repression to deal with the resultant situation in the future as it increasingly fails to provide acceptable social conditions. That accounts in large part for the disproportionate anti-crime hysteria & expansion of the U.S. Gulag Archipelago. It will need more police to serve as occupying armies in poor & working class communities & to protect its institutions & privilege. As well, it will need more prisons with which to threaten & disorganize people resisting their exploitation & courts with which to criminalize them & legitimize their suppression.

Real & imagined fear of crime provides not only the support required for such expansion of the direct, physical means of class domination, but is also a means of dividing people along community, race & class lines. Even more than such physical control, the ruling class needs psychological control. No amount of physical repression can indefinitely sustain minority control without a well developed system of psychological manipulation. People are beginning to see through the current dream (American), belief in which maintains the status quo now.

2. EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS: Enter the Marion lockdown (& Lexington Control Unit for women, where the experimental oppression is even more blatant). At these places, the people seemingly most immune to external programming are singled out for attention. Many are at least

somewhat protected by what to them are clear, principled, + sustaining belief systems, + others are possessed of strong habits of resistance to mental pressure or are psychologically calloused. Being intractable in the sense of resistive to authority is the most relevant criterion. If these people can be induced to surrender tightly held sets of principle or otherwise rendered malleable, that is valuable information to agents of oppression -- much more valuable than the effect on a relatively few prisoners. Political prisoners of the radical left make particularly good test subjects in this regard because their operating principles are less susceptible to assault due to their rationality, not to mention the facts that those ideas are the most threatening to the hierarchy + are those most likely to be held by or attractive to the people who will increasingly populate the prisons. Prisoners belonging to other groups that adhere to more or less consistent codes also provide fodder because results there are similar + translatable. The same is true with respect to information garnered from other prisoners who frequently correspond in malleability, interests + outlook, + common types of rebellion to the populations the ruling class will have to control in the future. They also can serve as experimental controls. And while repressive models such as Marion + Lexington experiment on their victims, those victims are effectively denied to their communities + constitute a warning to them -- an incidental benefit to the experimenters, as ~~what they~~ is what they can glean from observation of those communities.

3. ABSENCE OF ADEQUATE EXPLANATION: There is no other reason for the deliberate creation of uncertainty + insecurity + disability among prisoners than that they are being made victims of some arcane experimentation. There is no other reason to exacerbate the very problems that are purportedly being solved by Marion lockdown. It would be no problem to give at least rudimentary hearings to prisoners prior to consignment to Marion. + to establish specific duration for the "program". Existing rules would allow the lockdown +/or other lockups to fulfill its alleged functions without the indeterminacy feature. But establishing such criteria would provide some security + sense of control that would impede or prevent the desired test results.

It would also inhibit the investigatory + undermining attacks on political prisoners + others with belief systems strong enough to require more time. And it would make the use of Marion as a warehouse or as a weapon against specific people more difficult.

The value of education is so obvious that a reasonable person would expect it to be encouraged, even if that were only within the lockdown via correspondence courses + closed circuit TV + teachers that frequently walk the cell ranges. But that would allow the development of strength + self-sufficiency that would improve prisoners' ability to resist psychological encroachments. The same is true of increases in opportunities for visiting + other contact with the community. All these things would increase community involvement + undermine the "worst of the worst" propaganda, not to mention enhancing intellectual + emotional connection + identification beyond the individual. The same applies to work + education + even congregate activity between prisoners. But that makes mental infringement more difficult leaving less to attack + more with which to resist.

All of the baseless deprivations reinforce objectionable attitudes by making them the only ones possible given the circumstances. The negative socialization inherent in an experimental program such as Marion should be something that any prison administration would be desirous of avoiding, especially one with the resources of the BOP. But Marion deliberately encourages negative developments to move as they will to the detriment of both the prison system + the society it supposedly serves. That yields information about the dynamics of interaction in oppressed populations + how to thwart progressive motion.

That there is some ulterior motive in maintaining the lockdown + its experimentation is further borne out by the administrative denials + diversions of attention from the foregoing effects + their deleterious consequences. Aside from the incidental other benefits, the only reward that seems capable of transcending the political + social costs of maintaining the facade is the acquisition of experimental data that can further ruling class goals inside + out.

IV. CONCLUSION

USP Marion is a backed down prison where the U.S. uses expensive material facilities to cover up its deliberate abrogation of human rights. But it is not merely some atavistic, tough-guy approach to controlling recalcitrant prisoners through increased use of force + physical restraint or even through psychological assault, all of which characterize USP Marion. It is a tool of political repression.

The repression is carried out directly through the infliction of severe conditions on prisoners, some of whom are political + all but a very few of whom are proletarian. It is also done less visibly but more dangerously through the use of Marion as a laboratory for social experimentation toward improving ruling class ability to control people both within + outside prisons. Of that use + other secondary or incidental ones, the conditions are an element.

The Bureau of Prisons denies the experimental use by insisting on other intentions + lying about the character + impact of Marion reality. Marion prisoners are not all "the worst of the worst". Conditions at Marion are more likely to reinforce + create objectionable attitudes + behavior than to have a positive effect. Marion practice also legitimizes draconian responses by the apparatus + the targeting of people according to group characteristics than individual actions. This is an outgrowth of Marion's experimental nature.

USP Marion poses a danger not only for the prisoners but for the communities into which debilitated + stressed out prisoners with impaired job + social skills will be released + against which the information garnered in abusing them will be used. Moreover, "final solutions" always start with the use of special repression like "concentration models" against small + particularly vilified minorities that are usually billed as something like "the worst of the worst" or "rotten apples". But they never end there....

V. POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

There is no term descriptive of a particular ideology that I can accurately & adequately apply to my political motivation. It is without reservation radical left up to & including the left of people's revolution by any means necessary. But that covers a lot of ground & is not very defining as a result. Many of the traditional names for formations of the left--communist, anarchist, socialist, etc.--have also become vague & diffuse & thus insufficiently defining. That is expressed in their having been tied to such a wide range of social organizations that have not supplied enough of the solutions requisite to real world revolution. Clarity & understanding are important in political interchange. If that necessitates the work of more lengthy explanation instead of reliance on specific words that may carry unintended baggage, so be it.

A. Political Theory Distinguished

I am not a communist because the systems that grow out of traditional communist theory seem too prone to authoritarian deformations & rigidity. But I nevertheless recognize that Marx, Lenin, Che, & other communists are at the top of the list of contributors to political theory & practice & that in all the areas following a communist path to socialism the lot of the people has improved. I am not an anarchist because while the ultimate goal of all left struggle is anarcho-socialism in which the state has withered away, anarchy lacks the means to get from here to there. But I nevertheless recognize the value of the anarchist concern with local autonomy, direct empowerment of the proletariat, & the incorporation into political consciousness of issues whose material significance is not yet completely understood. I do not call myself a socialist because the term is only very broadly illuminating & open to misinterpretation without some explanation of which of the many paths to socialism one follows. Nor do I rule out the use of mixed economies as one of them. But I nevertheless recognize the goal of revolutionary struggle to be a world socialism in which all people have the greatest

possible freedom to develop their full human potential. The pursuit of material, political, social, equality on every level is close to my core. I am not a dogmatist, preferring that theory be made to conform to reality rather than attempting the opposite. I do not write this in an exclusionary sense, but as an expression of openness.

B. Political Theory + Practice Affirmed

I am a collectivist, long having recognized that in numbers there is strength + capability + security + satisfaction. There is more humanity in cooperation than in isolation. Moreover, it is necessary to change the character of our daily lives on the micro as well as the macro levels in order to realize revolution. That includes not only the ways in which people relate to + deal with the means of production but also with each other. Collectivity is also an evolution of the means of struggle that led me to participate in collective endeavors. I am a technician, knowing that in both the realms of mechanical + social technology we, the people, can create the revolutionary solutions that will increase our freedom. That led me to study the details of both mechanical + social technology toward creating workable popular machinery. I recognize the primacy of labor + that it is the source of social wealth + individual satisfaction. It will be what determines the success of revolution. That is what led me to work to organize in my trade, there being no general aviation mechanics' union through which we could realize + exercise a greater part of the power of our labor. I see that local autonomy + decentralization avoid some of the social cost of administration + limit the potential for conscious + unconscious exploitation + oppression by power centers out of touch with the community. Hence, I support the right of self-determination for all people. I support all progressive struggles against imperial capital, which translates as all capital in this era of capital's interconnection. That is what led me to refuse to register for the military draft U.S. imperialism used to pit American people against the Viet Namese people. I am not, however, a nationalist, preferring to work for international

solidarity in furtherance of world revolution. In that context, nationalism can be only a tactic dependent on conditions in the area of struggle & not a strategy. I am a partisan of armed & other subterranean struggle in furtherance of class war. Revolution is not & never will be legal. The lesson of history is that the ruling class will never voluntarily surrender without military pressure the power & privilege it has usurped. That partisanship has influenced my practice & led to the action from which my incarceration stems, among others. I consider myself a prisoner of class war. I do not denigrate the other essential elements of revolution, but I know that clandestine direct action has a necessary, inescapable, & overlooked place in the here & now-- both in furtherance of local movements & as a tool of mutual aid.

C. Direction of Struggle My present lack of affiliation with a particular group or organization or theoretical system does not prevent me from struggle. The road to revolution is not that narrow at this juncture, nor should it be. Many vehicles can travel it & be carried in the same & compatible progressive directions. There are many obvious tasks for radical leftist revolutionaries of any stripe that will further the goals of revolutionaries of all stripes. And, ultimately, we have a common goal: the collective to which humanity will evolve, faster or slower according to the efficacy of our work. In order to speed the evolution of revolution.

To speed that evolution of revolution, we need to avail ourselves of the traditional means of people's war pioneered & tested in the crucible of empirical reality over history, especially recent history. Equally important, however, we need to cooperate in developing the new & innovative praxis that synthesizes the lessons of the past & the realities of our unique times & conditions. With it, we can forge the diverse elements of our side of the barricade into a powerful weapon against the depredations of imperial capital. It can be a tool of emancipation from the exploitation & oppression of that class enemy. That cooperation in theory & practice can cut across & erase ideological lines of the left until no significant divisions remain & the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie has been eliminated.

VI. ARREST & CONVICTION

A. 1979-80 On 14/OCT/79, I was arrested after being brought to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, WA, suffering from three bullet wounds. Shortly before that, there had been an escape from the King County Jail, located on the 10th floor of the King County Courthouse, + a shoot-out in the vicinity. I was scraped off the street by paramedics around the corner from a shot-up + wrecked car containing some weapons + a dead escapee about two miles from the jail. The eventual charges alleged that a comrade arrested at about the same time + in a similar manner but some distance away + I had been part of a conspiracy by a San Francisco based radical group to liberate from the jail a comrade accused of killing a federal agent.

Both state + federal courts prosecuted. The comrade with whom I was arrested + I were the only defendants. We had refused to recognize the legitimacy of the grand jury to question us on that or any other subject, + there was apparently not enough evidence without some such testimony to criminalize anyone else. The indictments alleged, generally, that we had conspired to rescue a federal prisoner, had financed the operation through bank expropriation, had materially facilitated it through illegal acquisition of weapons, vehicles, identification, equipment, etc., + had implemented the plan on 14/OCT/79. Considering our inability to reap the potential statement value + the real possibility of limiting our particular oppression + the period of diminished effectiveness attendant to it, we participated in the trials. We advanced no witnesses or evidence, showing instead that the government case was not proven in all its elements + that it was significantly predicated on prosecutorial misconduct.

In state court, I was convicted of escape (which, in WA, includes aiding + abetting, rescue, conspiracy, etc.), car theft, + possession of a machine gun after two highly irregular trials. They were characterized by obsessive security, sensational publicity, constant violations of discovery orders, evidence tampering, false testimony, + manipulation of the jury panel

as well as mistreatment in the jail. The first trial ended in a mistrial after the prosecution was discovered to have been hiding a potentially favorable eyewitness + there was a period when we were hidden from our lawyers at a state prison.

The federal trial was similarly + at least as egregiously characterized by abuses of bourgeois legality. There was prejudicially excessive security, numerous misidentifications were allowed, FBI agents were caught pointing my co-defendant + I out to witnesses through a courtroom door window, weapons + explosives + other equipment not relevant to the charges being tried were paraded before the jury, cross examination was improperly curtailed, + judicial bias was demonstrated, among other things. I was convicted of conspiracy to rescue a federal prisoner + three bank expropriations, the latter on the theory that anyone involved in a conspiracy, ~~whether or not~~ is responsible for all acts done in furtherance of the conspiracy, whether or not s/he actually participated in them. Eight weapons + explosives counts also in the indictment were then dismissed.

The state + federal sentences were both imposed in SEP/80, + together totaled 90 years.

B. 1983-84

In March of 1984, I was given a consecutive 15 year sentence as the result of an effort at self-emancipation from the U.S. Penitentiary at Lewisburg, PA. On 30/JUN/83, another prisoner + I had gone to the wall with hooks + ropes, but we were too slow + the bullets were too close + the indictment followed. The sentence was about five times that of the longest sentence for similar charges the author of the presentence investigation report could find recorded. That was the result of retaliation for the exercise of legal rights + political conduct of the trial.

My codefendant + I insisted on exercising our rights to trial by jury + to represent ourselves. The government insisted on pushing ahead with the opulent waste of wealth of a high-security federal trial despite the futility of adding time to what were already functionally forever sentences.

We also attempted to put the prison on trial by raising a necessity defense. That defense was denied, though we still tried to bring it up despite repeated objections by the judge + prosecutor, + our conduct of the trial was otherwise impeded. Though nothing was said directly, another prisoner reported that he overheard people in the marshalls' office in the courthouse talking about "dirty commies" + "terrorists". Those opinions were instead expressed in minor harassments. The one small victory was getting to make ^{the court &} marshalls hang around for 10 pages of political allocution at 4:45 on a Friday afternoon.

VII. PRISON EXPERIENCE

The character of my imprisonment provides one more demonstration of the deliberate lie of the U.S. claim that it has no political prisoners. That there are is apparent in the more stringent treatment generally accorded political prisoners accused of illegal acts than to others similarly charged. The political motivations of people imprisoned by the U.S. are rarely given except for the occasional allusion of branding them "terrorists". Political repression is a secret the U.S. hierarchy wants well kept. But it does leak out occasionally as in "Past or present affiliation with anarchist groups" being cited as a reason for adverse action + in snide remarks by officials such as, "Oh, you're a commie from way back. They should fit." made to a prisoner who complained of being given two left shoes. Such comments made by officials unknown to the prisoner at the time of the making indicate that political considerations are a factor discussed by staff.

A. King County Jail

Two days after my arrest + major surgery + constant threats + mistreatment, I was kidnapped from the hospital -- a whole floor of which had been commandeered for the injured from the jailbreak + their many, many guards. With both arms in casts, I was chained + thrown on the floor in the back of a van amid big security + taken to King County Jail, where I was put in a filthy cell. I was fed on paper plates deposited on one of the bunks

(I was kept isolated in a four man cell). If I wanted to eat it, I had to do so like a dog due to the casts. To drink, I had to fill the scabrous sink with water + suck it up. I could not wash. It took 5 weeks before I was able to secure a bath. My wounds became infected, some of the 55 metal staples closing the incision starting to fall out with little pussy shreds of meat hanging on them. The officials impeded or denied treatment + medication. I think that it was only the small hours ministrations of the night nurse -- who was eventually fired for bringing my + my comrade's mistreatment to the attention of the county AMA (American Medical Association) -- that saved our lives. Nor was medical abuse the extent of our victimization in the King County Jail. During + after our recuperation, we were subjected to many of the more usual abuses of prisoners. I was assaulted twice + obsessive searches, moves, isolation, bad food, arbitrary restrictions, interference with legal work, etc., characterized the 11 months of confinement to that bastille.

My experience in King County Jail is a fairly extreme -- but not uncommon -- example of the treatment political prisoners can expect at the hands of the state, but it is illustrative. More usually, it is incessant harassment + poor conditions + stricter subjection to silly rules + stiffer penalties + abrupt + secret + sometimes scary transfers. Though we succeeded in eventually obtaining somewhat less life threatening conditions than prevailed in the weeks following our capture, we were forced to undergo almost a year of hard struggle in isolation against mental + physical victimization as well as dealing with ~~physical~~ legal victimization.

B. Washington State Penitentiary

After sentencing in state + federal courts in SEP/80, my comrade + I were committed to the Washington State Prison System, arriving at the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla in OCT/80 after about a month at the Washington Correctional Center. There we were able to engage in some political activity among prisoners + in support of street struggles, although we were even more limited in the latter regard than

in the former. I started a weekly news service, the Washington Prison News Service that eventually included reports from several of the state's prisons & focused substantial outside attention on the machinations of the Dept. of Corrections. Prison authorities eventually found our presence & the attention intolerable. After some attempts at suppression, they banished my comrade & I & another comrade into internal exile in the federal prison system in JUN/82. The newsletter & politics were cited at the pre-banishment kangaroo hearing.

C. Federal Prison

I spent the next 20 months at USP Lewisburg, 11 of it in segregation, most of the segregation relating to the 1983 escape attempt previously mentioned. Treatment there was poor. I was beaten & chained down three times during the hole time, twice for resisting illegitimate & arbitrary oppression & once along with six others in reprisal for a substantial flood demonstration for which staff could find no culprits. Prisoners expressing political consciousness are more likely to be selected for such attention.

After sentencing on the Lewisburg escape attempt, I was sent to USP Lompoc. There I stayed 11 months, five of them in segregation. I was segregated on the basis of an accusation of possession of escape paraphernalia. Despite the absurdity of the charge, it was used as justification to send me to USP Marion in FEB/85.

D. USP Marion

At Marion, my practice has been pretty much limited to writing & attempting to at least maintain my physical & mental condition. I started a monthly newsletter about Marion called The Marionette in MAY/85. I added to it another called Prison News Service about political struggles implicating incarceration more generally in MAY/87. Circumstances dictated that they both go to a bi-monthly format with the May-June/88 issues (numbers 37 & 13, respectively). Despite their exceedingly small utility, I have filed 100 administrative appeals while here. If officialdom is going to belabor prisoners with such internal

should at least abide by the letter of its own rules in doing so. (Fa Chance!) Moreover, the documentation of some of the senseless deprivations & abuses might turn out to have some future value. I have only filed three petitions for writ of habeas corpus & two lawsuits while at Marion because using the legal system feels somewhat great (not to mention frustrating!) to me, even if principle does demand that we use whatever sticks are available, however small & weak, that do not entail an unprincipled price. I also write occasional propaganda & attempt to sustain some political dialog via mail. I study & exercise in an effort to maintain & hopefully improve what I may eventually contribute to the struggle. But I try to do that wherever I may be.

I can only ascribe my continued confinement to Marion to political repression. I am not particularly notorious & do nothing different than a lot of other prisoners allowed to transfer aside from writing the newsletters & receiving a fair amount of radical literature.

Bill Dunne

August, 1988

USP Marion