

MARION REPORT

Enclosed are several documents that pertain to the work and the issues surrounding it: included are 1)report on recent trip to Detroit; 2)CEML outline for proposed book and South End Press' response; 3)exchange of letters between 2020 producer and head of Bureau of Prisons; 4)list of CEML resources; 5)newsclips; 6)MLN's proposal re national human rights campaign (this latter one is an issue for other areas of work as well as CEML). There's lots of other documents; if people want more, feel free to request.

I believe this work is very important. Although it is difficult given the general climate re crime, etc., as well as the state of the Black movement, it has a great deal of depth and possibility. Politically, it enables us to develop an understanding of how white supremacy operates in a very specific and particular way. We are able to move out of the realm of generalities and into the concrete. To me this is major. The role that prison plays in the lives of third world, especially Black people, and how it plays out in the Marion situation. It leads to a discussion of the roots of crime, to an understanding of how white supremacy is woven into the fabric of life in the U.S. Of course, to build enough momentum to somehow change the situation would be a tremendous victory.

The material around conditions can be developed more to really explore the psychological aspects, and not just the immorality, but what it means for the American psyche that there has been this process of dehumanization, of objectification of so many human beings, whole sectors of society, particularly given who those sectors mainly are. What it says about society's irreponsibility towards people who are a product of it. The work challenges bourgeois concepts of the development of personality and behavior, genetic notions, much of the stuff that underlies the law n order mentality and the pervasive blaming of the victims.

Particularly at a time when the Soviet bloc is going through glasnost, etc., dealing with the human rights issue, opportunities will unfold to pursue this work creatively and perhaps in an international context. And, of course, there are the current openings created by Americas Watch, etc in regards to a reciprocal Cuban visit. Marion is one of the places the Cubans intended to visit.

In terms of who we've reached, at the beginning stages of things:

1. religious folks -- i.e. AFSC trip to Michigan. (see attached report) The Episcopal Bishop sponsored us in Detroit. AFSC did tons of work. We have not been very successful locally with religious sector. In a limited way have involved religious activists i.e. Bob Bosse, Jean Hughes, Jade, Mike S., Darla. Jade wrote an article for Methodist paper. Bob participated in last

press conference. Etc. But need more direct exposure, to talk directly with folks in congregations. Maybe some kind of ecumenical thing?

AFSC will have a 200th year commemoration of the penitentiary. They were the ones who originally advocated for it in the belief that spending solitary time with a bible would be rehabilitative. Now they feel repentant for having helped create it. We are proposing to them that they focus on Marion in some significant way. Some of them, like Chuck Barrett and others, are very excited about it and are helping us. We'll see. If this happens, it will advance the work tremendously -- give it national scope and resources.

2. Legal community, criminal just reformers, social workers, psychs, activists in that area. We have done some good work with the criminal justice department at Northeastern (Bernard and Shell especially), and a bit at U of I. We have an invitation to speak this fall at some correctional association national meeting. And we have assorted national contacts and reach. But locally much has gone through Jan. Although she has great strengths, there are probably weaknesses in terms of the ongoing work. Our attempts in this real^{ly} are somewhat limited because of lack of personnel.

3. artists, cultural workers. Just beginning. Michael Misrock videoed the Tribunal. He has subsequently gone down to Marion and did a short video piece on it. Also arranged a slideshowing with his friends. They will put the slideshow in video format, something we've wanted for a while.

4. media people--we've done a fair amount of this. We worked ahrd with 2020 and developed a good relationship with them. That show was a breakthrough (as was the Amnest Report). We have been in touch with Leyden and Schiller (the NPR folks), transcribed their program. These people have been deeply moved by the Marion situation, although not always willing to step out beyond their media roles and agitate about it. We have an extremely well-attended press conference 7/27 after the rotten court of appeals decision.

5. substantial and rich correspondence with people around the country; great potential for travel (unrealizable right now).

6. some famous and beloved people have become involved in the work--Dellinger wrote an article for Fellowship of Reconciliation magazine; Morton has volunteered to travel around Europe where he has a lot of contacts on behalf of Marion. People like Imari O and Raphael have participated (though not primarily through our relationship to them, obviously).

We have developed a whole bunch of great resources, printed and

audiovisual, that we are constantly distributing. We have made this come together much better as of late. (Haven't gotten any feedback from any of you on Tribunal book; I don't think any of you have bought it; I could set up a lending library!)

Questions:

1. Human rights campaign (proposal attached): what should CEML's relationship to it be? Excellent thrust around political prisoners and amnesty but somewhat different than our emphasis which I think we should continue to pursue--prisons as a form of control re people of color, warehousing, end point of overall white supremacist system, etc. I think CEML should relate to the campaign but not in central way, unless Marion demand and content around it were to be more prominent, and I don't really know if it should be in that context. Radical amnesty thrust should probably be main thing. It is very radical, I think, but possible given the incredibleness of the Puerto Ricans. But CEML work different in approach and also important. Aside from CEML, we have to figure out our relationship to this work and should have more general discussion about it.

2. The book: enclosed is a proposed outline for a book that Southend Press wants to publish. When I first started this report we were trying to decide whether CEML should do it. We've decided not to. The personnel does not really exist within the committee. However, Steve, Jan, Michael Deutsch and others will have a go at it. I would like to try my hand at the Women in Prison part, time and energy willing. A question could be -- does anyone else from us want to take part in this project? I will make an argument. We need, in general, to pursue ideological work. This is a great opportunity and the end result could have a good impact. Most of our work regarding prisons has flimsy ideological underpinnings. Here's a chance to develop that.

3. personnel -- oral report

4. lots of interesting political questions get raised in course of work. Difficult to sort out which are our political weaknesses and which reflect where the people we're talking to are coming from, etc. The slideshow has been criticized for being too much about white supremacy, the term reminds people of Nazis and the right wing, causes fear and flight reaction, not enough acknowledgement of people's fears of crime whether completely rational or not, not enough about conditions especially psychological impact of Marion. There seems to be a general struggle in the work between the conditions aspect and white supremacy. We're striving for a better integration. Just rewrote the slideshow again.

5. This is the key question: what to demand, where are the levers of

power, how to develop a strategy for moving work forward, giving people something to do with their outrage. At the same time to have widening numbers of people involved and contributing. Our numbers have not increased much at last demos. We do not simply want to repeat them but...If AFSC proposal is accepted, it could really help. But, what now? and what if it doesn't? And, what else?

6. Related to the above. What should we do this October. A short outline proposal for an Oct event is attached. But doesn't sound that exciting to me. Any ideas people have would certainly be welcome. Darla said to me, "oh, what's happening this October? people are expecting something." I think that attitude's great. I hope she's right. But I would like to do something really good.