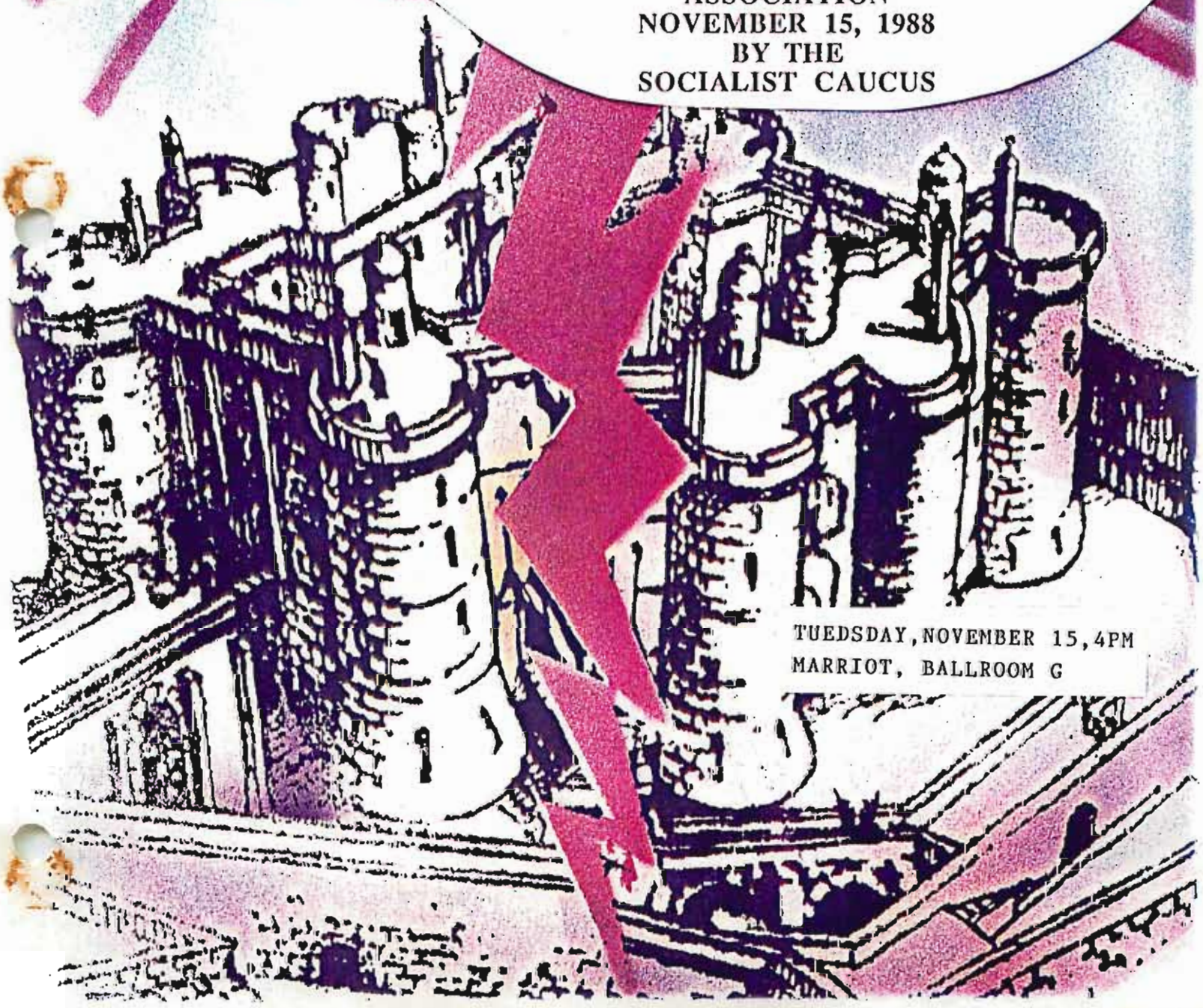
CONTROL UNIT PRISONS: HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

PRESENTED TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
NOVEMBER 15, 1988
BY THE
SOCIALIST CAUCUS



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This information packet has been prepared by the Health Committee of the Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Control Unit

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THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF CONTROL UNIT PRISONS

Control units are prisons within prisons that are used to suppress internal dissent and manage problems created by the overcrowded general prison environment. They are designed to intimidate prisoners into passivity.

Control units also serve a larger social function as part of a strategy of social control and stifling of dissent in our communities. People convicted of crimes related to political and social ends are frequently housed in control units and given especially severe treatment.

Control units are the "end of the line" and teach deep lessons both inside and outside the prison.

INTRODUCTION

The term control unit is used to describe a maximum security prison lockup that often has a stated behavior modification component. The conditions of confinement are harsh and punitive. Prisoners are kept in their individual isolation cells 23.5 hours per day without sun or fresh air. No physical contact with other prisoners or visitors is permitted. They are denied participation in educational, cultural, social and religious activities. Very few, if any, personal effects are allowed. Library access to much needed legal books is very limited. Rules of conduct in these severely restricted settings are rigid and demand absolute obedience to the authority of the guards. Any infraction of the numerous rules prolongs the prisoner's stay in the control unit.

The programatic aspect of such a lockup usually involves earning through good behavior less restrictive confinement in a stepwise fashion leading to release back into the general prison population. There is rarely true rehabilitative effort. Personal or psychological counseling, vocational training and other growth skills are specifically denied the prisoners. The control unit functions through the brute force of denial in an attempt to regulate certain behaviors the prison administration finds disruptive, threatening or inconvenient.

Prisoners are assigned to the control unit for various reasons. These reasons are frequently at variance from the written administrative guidelines governing placement in the unit. In the Marion Control Unit independant investigation showed that 80% of the men housed there did not meet the published criteria for placement. The units may contain rule breakers, gang members, violence prone prisoners, those with psychological problems who act out, sex offenders and others in protective custody. There are some who are in the control unit because of rumor, innuendo or mistake despite a clean record. Also found are jailhouse lawyers, prisoner organizers and political prisoners who are segregated to stop their prisoner and human rights activities.

There are more than 120 people serving time in United States' prisons for their political activities and beliefs. The government portrays political prisoners as "terrorists" in an effort to blind the public to the prisoner's political goals and desire for social justice and change. The continuing colonial oppression of Puerto Rico by our government has resulted in the conviction and incarceration of independance fighters who are truely prisoners of war.

The overall effect on prisoners of such maximum security lockups is debilitating. The social and sensory deprivation is severe. While presumably making the prison easier to manage, the control unit drains the prisoner of spirit, initiative and personal integrity while illness of a physical and/or psychological nature often develops.

In this paper the history and health consequences of control units will be explored.

HISTORY

Isolation, segregation and solitary confinement have been used ever since there have been prisons. In the United States solitary confinement was the exclusive mode of inprisonment in the beginning. It was considered a quasi-religious form of penance and contemplation.

But the enchantment with solitary confinement was short-lived. By 1830 evidence indicated an increase of physical morbidity and insanity among prisoners in long term solitary. In 1890 the United States Supreme Court condemned solitary confinement on psychiatric grounds. Both German and American studies in the early 1900s cited severe symptoms caused by solitary confinement including hallucinations, dissociative features, agitation, aimless violence and delusions of persectution.(1)

In 1976 the European Commission on Human Rights stated:

> The international literature on criminology and psychology indicates that isolation can be sufficient in itself to gravely impair physical and mental health. The following conditions may be diagnosed: chronic apathy, fatigue, emotional instability, difficulties of concentration, diminution of mental faculties, disorders of the neuro-vegetative system.

The control unit is a concept that developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was originally intended to be a maximun security lockup unit that incorporated ideas from behaviorist psychology. At a Federal Bureau of Prisons wardens' conference in 1961 Dr. Edgar Schein, a prominent psychologist who studied the Chinese thought reform program used in the Korean War stated:

> This (thought-reform) model of behavior and attitude change is a general one which can encompass phenomena as widely separated as brainwashing and rehabilitation in a prison or a mental hospital. 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 behavior and attitudes by a group of men who have relatively complete control over the environment in which the captive population lives. If we find similar methods being used by the Communists and by some of our own institutions of change, we have a dilemma, of course. Should we then condemn our own methods because they resemble brainwashing? I prefer to think that the Communists have drawn on the same reservoir of human wisdom and knowledge as we have, but have applied this wisdom to achieve goals which we cannot condone. These same techniques in the service of different goals, however, may be quite acceptable to us.(2)

Prison managers who had long used various methods of privilege manipulation to change behavior welcomed this outside professional justification and encouragement. Of course, the prison administrators exclusive goal was to make the prison easier to manage, not thought reform. A prisoner from Folsom State Prison in California described his warden's goal as creating an environment(of intimidation and despair) in which "all inmates will be reduced to predictable blue denim clad cattle who travel the well worn path to and from the mess hall for their thrice a day feeding".

One pervasive techique of humiliation used on control unit prisoners is the strip search. It is used much more than needed for institutional security and is used as a threat to the personal integrity of the prisoner. Women political prisoners have been subjected to forced body cavity searches performed by male staff.

During these last 30 years various experiments in behavior control have been tried. Five such examples will be summarized below:

1. Stress Assessment Unit at the California Medical Facility(2)

This now defunct prerelease unit was run by the custody staff without professional psychological participation. The centerpiece of the program was a popular group therapy tool of the 1970s called the "attack game" which was identified with the Synanon Community. During the game a prisoner was brutally abused in a verbal manner in an

attempt to breakdown defenses and get to the "truth". There was little evidence before and no evidence in followup studies that this program aided a prisoner's re-entry into society. However, the attack game is still used in many prisons.

2. California Department of Corrections' Adjustment Centers

These are prisons within prisons that serve as control units for the state prisons and have their counterpart in almost every state prison system nationwide. When built there were modest programatic goals regarding using tier privileges to encourage re-entry in the main prison(see Marion). Now the ACs just serve as warehouses within warehouses.

3. Hunter Unit in Walla Walla State Prison (Washington)

This notorius unit was closed after a public airing of the conditions inside. The Hunter Unit was perhaps the most blatent and bizarre attempt at programing on psychological grounds. Prisoners could be chained to their beds, dressed in diapers and forced to feed from bottles. The idea was to induce regression and then rebuild their personalities.(6)

4. Marion Control Unit in the Federal Bureau of Prisons

Marion was built in 1963 as the new Alcatraz along the adjustment center model. It contains 3 units with different sets of privileges that go from 23 hour a day lockup in a virtual strip cell to lockup except during work assignment to a cell with a desk and more out of cell time. The unit is on permanent lockdown status and is notorious for the brutality of the custody staff (see page 17).

5. Lexington High Security Unit for Women (Federal Bureau of Prisons)

Recently closed, the Lexington Unit was the first of its kind in the United States. It was a small group isolation prison used primarily for female political prisoners. Small group isolation is considered a form of torture by Amnesty International (8). AI defined these facilities as those in which "a prisoner is housed in a cell alone, but may associate for a certain amount of time each day with one or more other prisoners(a limited small group)..." Through TV and direct visual monitoring all common areas were continuously observed. Sensory and social deprivation was strictly enforced in this basement dungeon with no natural light or fresh air. Much of the health data presented here was obtained from interviews with prisoners housed in this experimental unit (see page 11).

HEALTH EFFECTS

The health effects of prison life are not studied sufficiently. While the prevalence of some conditions are known, there is little data on the effects over time of imprisonment itself. Clearly the health of prisoners is no different on entry into prison than others in their home communities (9). One of the best studies remains one from 1975 which showed that blood pressure readings rose significantly in the most overcrowded conditions in prison (10).

Delivery of Care

What can be said of prisoners in control units is that they are denied routine care for their illnesses. Security concerns dominate their medical needs. Long delays even for the treatment of known serious conditions are common. A man with cancer had to wait over 8 months for his "quarterly" checkup. A woman with severe palpatations and mitral prolapse waited months to get an EKG and had to demand that her shackles be removed for the test. Abnormal PAP tests discovered at one prison are not followed up despite repeated requests. At Marion it can take months to see the doctor. A transfer to a local hospital is essentially impossible, so even urgent cases(eg. chest pain) often will have to wait for a helicopter transfer to a prison hospital rather than a quick ride to a nearby diagnostic center.

Even dying patients are kept in solitary confinement cells denied human warmth and comfort during their last months. Control unit prisoners often are transfered back from hospitals too early making postoperative recovery or medical recuperation more difficult. All of this medical mismanagement is tolerated because of the prisoner's special security status, despite the legal and ethical demands on the prison for adequate medical care.(5,6)

Physical Illness

One of the most frequently reported consequences of control unit confinement is the worsening of pre-existing medical conditions. With lack of special diet and exercise Diabetes Mellitus will worsen. Cramped quarters, lack of exercise and frequent shackling causes musculoskeletal problems to exacerbate. The simple tasks of walking and sitting become difficult if shackled in leg, hand, waist and groin chains. The lack of visual stimulous and inability to exercise distance vision causes eyesight problems. Illnesses affected strongly by emotions like eczema and colitis have been reported to get worse. In one prisoner with mitral prolapse palpitations became severe and debilitating.(5,6)

The harsh environment that the prisoners experience would be expected to mobilize the multisystemed catabolic processes associated with the arousal state(stress response). Physiological mechanisms promote the breakdown of tissue to supply energy for the permanent crisis. Stores of fat, glycogen and protein are broken down elevating serum glucose, cholesterol and blood fats. Repair of bone, skin and lining cells of the gut are slowed. Immune function is suppressed and salt and water is retained.(7)

Amnesty International reports from Germany similar symptoms as observed in control units here. Low blood pressure and circulation problems are associated with dizzy spells and headache. Severe digestive problems occur.(8)

Prisoners here report heart palpitations, weakness, dizziness and chills with uncontrolable trembling. Weight loss is common and can be profound. Nausea and vomiting can be so severe as to make one prisoner take antiacids with meals and pace while eating just to keep the food down.(5,6)

These psycho-physiological reactions can be expected over time to lead to illness such as gastritis, ulcers, colitis, asthma, tachycardia, diabetes and hyperthyroidism. Ultimately even cancer may develop.(7) The two political prisoners who developed cancer while incarcerated in control units suggest this might be the case and make further study important.(6)

Psychological Problems

Added to the isolation and depersonalization of control units is humiliation and boredom. These conditions predictably produce a variety of psychological complaints as the prisoner's personality structure is assaulted. It cannot be stressed enough how the needless and frequent strip search is used as a tool of humiliation in an attempt to weaken and degrade the prisoner. Political prisoners may be strip searched four times for a noncontact social visit or a legal visit in which they are completely seperated from the visitor by plexiglass and never out of sight of the guard. Correctional staff may also circualte false rumors about political prisoners to isolate them from other prisoners.(5,6)

Prisoners are very reticent to say how their conditions of confinement adversly affect them. They try to minimize their symptoms so as not to show weakness. Interviews with prisoners in various settings show similar symptom pictures and are detailed below.(1,5)

1. ANXIETY

Prisoners often experience severe free floating anxiety. They have obcessive thoughts about issues like failing health, suicide or being trapped in a fire. These episodes can be accompanied by tachycardia, sweat, shortness of breath and dread. Many fear they will loose control and do something drastic.

2. CHRONIC RAGE

The prisoners are justifiably angry at their circumstances but cannot express themselves. They become irritable and hypersensitive to all stimuli especially noise and odors. The anger may come out as indirect violence such as throwing things around, self mutilation or aggression against staff or other prisoners. Some political prisoners in Germany did, in fact, commit suicide, while others died under suspicious circumstances with claims of suicide by prison officials. Many control unit prisoners report fantacies of aggression and revenge.

3. BLUNTING OF AFFECT

Defensive withdrawl is a common reaction to overwhelming circumstances. If prisoners can't control their environment, they will at least control themselves, so they go within. They decrease their feelings of suffering by decreasing the capacity to feel anything.

4. DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR

Seen as a result of suppressed anger and withdrawl, depression is common in control units. Suicide ideation constantly appears in the mind in a desire to end the suffering.

5. INTELLECT IMPAIRED

Concentration is difficult, memory poor and the mind becomes dull. The relatively invariate character of the prisoner's milieu mitigates against the supply of new stimulation which is necessary for sustaining interest in and engagement with one's suroundings. Previously avid readers find they can't read or study as well.

6. PERCEPTUAL DISTORTIONS

Mild hallucinations like movements in the peripheral vision, black spots or strings of the wall are frequently reported. Noises(especially at night) are heard and interpreted in fearful ways.

Dr. Richard Korn, an experienced prison psychologist, summarized the ultimate effects of the Lexington High Security Unit in a report to the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union. "Unfortunately, there is no question in my mind but that the experiment being conducted in the HSU at Lexington is an attempt to replicate, under modern constraints and by 'acceptable methods', the program originally developed by the Chinese. This program sets up a hierarchy of objectives. The first of these is to reduce prisoners to the state of submission essential for their ideological conversion. That failing, the next objective is to reduce them to a state of psychological incompetence sufficient to neutralize them as efficient, self-directing antagonists. That failing, the only alternative is to destroy them, preferably by making them desperate enough to destroy themselves.

SUMMARY

In summary, it is clear that control units injure prisoners in predictable and characteristic ways. The ultimate effect is to worsen pre-existing medical conditions, cause new illness and create psychological distress and disease. This brutality amounts to torture and should be stopped immediately on medical and humanitarian grounds. The control unit is used as a tool of political repression designed to break the spirit and will of prison activists and political prisoners while intimidating community activists.

The prison forms the very foundation of our society's ethical and moral structure. If we brutalize prisoners in this fashion, we injure our whole social fabric and undermine our standards of decency and fair play. The suffering caused by control units not only falls on the prisoners but also on the communities from which the prisoners come and to which they will return. Those communities are largely made up of poor people and people of

color who get put in prison more frequently and serve longer sentences for the same or lesser crimes as those with more money and less skin pigment.

Our society is presently engaged in a debate over whether prisons should serve a punishment or rehabilitative function. That debate is irrelevant to the legal and ethical requirement of these total institutions to provide accessible, well organized and decent medical care for all incarcerated people.

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APHA Opposes the Lexington High Security Unit and Supports Health Care Rights for Prisoners

LEXINGTON

The APHA Executive Board acted quickly upon learning of the abusive nature of the Lexington Security Unit for women prisoners. The Board voted to provide "every possible support" to the National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Control Unit.

Bailus Walker, President of the APHA wrote a letter to the warden at the Federal Correctional Institution at Lexington in May 1988...

> The American Public Health Association, representing over 55,000 community health leaders and public health professionals, requests that a delegation of public health officials, including a representative from APHA be allowed to visit the Women's High Security Unit/ (HSU) at the Federal Correctional Institution in Lexington, Kentucky.
>
> APHA is concerned with recent allegations of human rights abuses, including sensory deprivation, psychological manipulation, and other forms of cruel and unusual treatment, at the facility. For many years our Association has been involved in the struggle to provide acceptable health care to incarcerated populations. In 1973, APHA appointed a task force to devise a set of standards for the delivery and maintenance of health care at correctional facilities. The result was the publication of *Standards for Health Care in Correctional Institutions,* the first document of its kind. Our commitment to this issue has continued over the years and the standards were revised in 1986.
>
> Due to our longstanding involvement in prison health issues, we are concerned about conditions at the High Security Unit, and would appreciate the opportunity to visit and inspect the facility. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

The warden replied that the request for a visit by an APHA delegation was denied because of "security needs of the Unit, and in keeping with past practices." He also assured Dr. Walker that "the inmates housed in this unit are not deprived of any human rights, and are provided with suitable health care services."

APHA was denied a visit despite the fact that many delegations of corrections officials had toured Lexington to learn how to build a similar unit in their own prison system.

The warden's attempted cover-up about the lack of rights violations was unmasked in federal court when Judge Parker ruled that: "The treatment of the plaintiffs (Lexington HSU prisoners) has skirted elemental standards of human decency. The exaggerated security, small group isolation and staff harassment serve to constantly undermine the inmate's moral."

The adverse health effects of lack of adequate care found at Lexington HSU is documented elsewhere in this booklet.

HEALTH CARE RIGHTS

The APHA provided significant testimony in a recent Supreme Court case concerning prison health. In a ruling on a North Carolina case, the Court ruled that prisoners have a right to sue in federal court any doctor who treats them because that doctor in essence is working for the state or local government. This holds true whether the doctor is under individual contract, salary or working for a private company under contract to deliver the facility's medical services.

Thus prisoners retain a significant tool for better health care. They can continue to sue in federal court if a local or state government violates their civil rights.

APHA told the Court why professional discretion and independence is not assured in a prison setting:

> In reality, the prison's nature as a closed 'total institution' constrains the medical discretion of even the most independent physician in numerous...ways; and many of the customary safeguards, such as accreditation and peer review, that reinforce adherence to medical standards are absent."
>
> ***
>
> "The practitioner will necessarily weigh a patient's medical need for special clothing, a special diet, an extra shower, a permit for a cane, or more frequent access to equipment against the administrative difficulty of deviating from the normal rule and the effect of granting such an exception may have on other patients who might seek similar treatment or the institution's willingness to accede to such exception in the future..."
>
> ***
>
> "Prescribing drugs poses unique problems in corrections because many medications are valuable in the inmate economy."
>
> ***
>
> "More generally, inmates cannot self treat such minor ailments as headaches, upset stomachs, or colds; nor may they just stay in bed when they feel ill. Such common items as aspirin, dental floss, antacids, and band-aids typically must be obtained from the prison's medical staff."

***

"The institutional environment produces continual presure to tailor the quality and quantity of medical treatment to demands of institutional security, productivity, discipline and administrative convenience."

***

"Health staff also assist the institution in ways that are directly adverse or coercive toward their patients, such as conducting body cavity searches or other procedures to gather forensic evidence for disciplinary proceedings, documenting the consequences of the use of force by staff, and authorizing placements or retentions of inmates in solitary confinement or in physical restraints."

***

"This involvement of medical staff in custodial and disciplinary functions, although condemned by national standards, is widespread, in the experience of APHA. Indeed, it is sometimes required by statute or regulation. The effect is destructive of the professional relationship between provider and patient and engenders widespread distrust."

The Nation.

June 27, 1987

BRAINWASHING IN AMERICA?

The Women of Lexington Prison

WILLIAM A. REUBEN AND CARLOS NORMAN

On October 29, 1986, the United States Bureau of Prisons formally opened a special facility for "high security" women prisoners in Lexington, Kentucky. Built to house sixteen inmates and the result of more than a decade's planning, the Female High Security Unit (H.S.U.) is a kind of prison within a prison, occupying the basement of the Federal Correctional Institute. The unit's first two inmates were Alejandrina Torres, a 49-year-old Puerto Rican nationalist, and Susan Rosenberg, 31, a self-proclaimed revolutionary.

The Lexington unit is America's second high-security prison. The other is the Federal prison at Marion, Illinois, which has the dubious distinction of being the first penitentiary in the United States to be investigated by Amnesty International. On June 4 the human rights group announced its finding that conditions at Marion amounted to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment," in violation of the minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners promulgated by the United Nations.

The Marion prison was built to house inmates who had presented disciplinary problems. The mission of the H.S.U. at Lexington is hazy, but it is not to reform or rehabilitate its inmates, who are assigned there by the director of the Bureau of Prisons.

The two women at H.S.U. are confined to subterranean cells twenty-three hours a day. They are permitted one hour of exercise in a yard measuring fifty feet square; upon their return they are strip-searched. That daily outing is the only time they see sunlight, except when they leave the facility for medical or dental treatment. On those occasions they are handcuffed and manacled by chains around their waists. In their cells they are kept under constant surveillance by guards or television cameras. Whenever they leave the cells, even to take a shower, they must be accompanied by guards.

William A. Reuben, a former national public relations director of the American Civil Liberties Union, is the author of The Atom Spy Hoax, The Honorable Mr. Nixon *and other books. Carlos Norman is the pseudonym of an attorney and journalist living in New York City.*

Torres and Rosenberg charge that they are the subjects of a pilot study of behavior-modification methods, which are being tested on them and will be applied to future inhabitants of the H.S.U. They say that they are exposed to various forms of sensory deprivation designed to alter their personalities. The lights in their cells glare down on them continuously, and they are forbidden to cover them in any way. Nor are they allowed to place photographs or pictures on the walls. They may wear only prison-issue shoes, undergarments, drab shirts and culottes. Virtually the only contact they are allowed with the outside world consists of a fifteen-minute telephone call to their lawyers each week and a visit with members of their families, separated by a glass partition, once a month. Guards are instructed not to converse with them. They are denied access to the prison library as well as the entertainment and recreational facilities. They may read only magazines, books and newspapers that are approved by prison officials, and are permitted only five books at any one time. For companionship they have a color television set in their cells. "Only in America," says Rosenberg, "can you abuse people, take away their human dignity, and then give them a TV and that makes it O.K."

Rosenberg's lawyer, Mary O'Melveny, who was allowed to visit her client on December 14 and 15 of last year, recorded these impressions of conditions at the H.S.U.:

> Imagine a world without color, any color. Only bright, high-glossy white, everywhere one looks. Even uniforms—ludicrous clothes selected for their "feminine" look—are bleached out. Nothing is permitted to brighten up, or even add contrast to, these bleak, colorless surroundings.
>
> Next, imagine a world without daylight, without fresh air. Only artificial fluorescent lights—on all of the time. Artificial air—too hot or too cold but never real. The prison pallor one reads of takes on new meaning; both women looked gray. . . .
>
> The overwhelming sense of loneliness of this place is all-pervading, the isolation is overwhelming. It is much like stepping off the regular world into some sort of frozen limbo state where an occasional real person floats by, but always by accident and always before one can get ready for enlarged human contact.

The Lexington prison is a world away from Manhattan's Upper West Side, where Susan Rosenberg was raised. (We interviewed her recently at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City, where she was being held temporarily for questioning by defense lawyers in an unrelated case. We were not allowed to talk to Torres.) Rosenberg, dark-haired with soft features, is the only child of well-off, middle-class parents. Her father is a dentist, and her mother worked in theater and film production. She was educated at the Walden School, a progressive private school, Barnard College and the City University of New York. Radicalized by the black power and antiwar movements, she became involved with clandestine revolutionary groups in the late 1970s. She was indicted on conspiracy charges for her alleged participation in the 1979 prison escape of black activist Joanne Chesimard, and in the 1981 Brink's armored-car robbery by former members of the Weather Underground in which two policemen and a Brink's security guard were killed.

Those charges were later dropped for lack of evidence. In 1984 she was arrested for possession of arms and explosives and, two years ago, convicted on those charges and sentenced to fifty-eight years in prison by Federal Judge Frederick Lacey, who recommended that she be denied parole.

Alejandrina Torres is also from New York City, but she was raised in a working-class neighborhood and educated in public schools. Her family moved to the United States from Puerto Rico when she was a child. After graduating from high school, she moved to Chicago, where she married the Rev. José Torres, a minister of the United Church of Christ. She worked as an executive secretary at the University of Illinois's Chicago campus. She became active in the Puerto Rican independence movement and, according to the government, was a member of Fuerza Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (F.A.L.N.), an underground group that has claimed responsibility for a number of bombings in the United States. In 1983 she was arrested on charges of possessing weapons and explosives. In addition, she was charged with seditious conspiracy—"conspiring to use force to oppose the lawful authority of the U.S. over Puerto Rico." She was convicted on those charges in 1985 and sentenced to thirty-five years in prison.

Although neither woman was convicted of committing acts of violence, each received an unusually harsh sentence. Rosenberg's term is sixteen times longer than the average sentence meted out to weapons-possession offenders, and twice the 1985 average for first-degree murderers in the Federal courts. Both steadfastly maintain that they never engaged in violence; neither had a previous criminal record.

Why, then, did they end up in a maximum-security facility? It could not have been for disciplinary reasons, because neither woman had been in any trouble during the time she spent at other Federal prisons. And, in any case, the H.S.U. was not set up for violent or unruly prisoners. According to a Bureau of Prisons directive dated September 2, 1986:

> The 16-bed High Security Unit for females [was] developed to meet the needs for very secure prison space for females where placement in less secure facilities is not appropriate. Candidates for placement in this unit are those females whose confinement raises a serious threat of external assault for the purpose of aiding the offender's escape. . . . Assignments to the unit will be made without regards to such factors as . . . disciplinary reasons, but are a matter of classifications.

On March 25, Norman Carlson, the director of the Bureau of Prisons, gave the same explanation for the women's incarceration at Lexington, in response to an inquiry by Representative Robert Kastenmeier, chair of the House Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice.

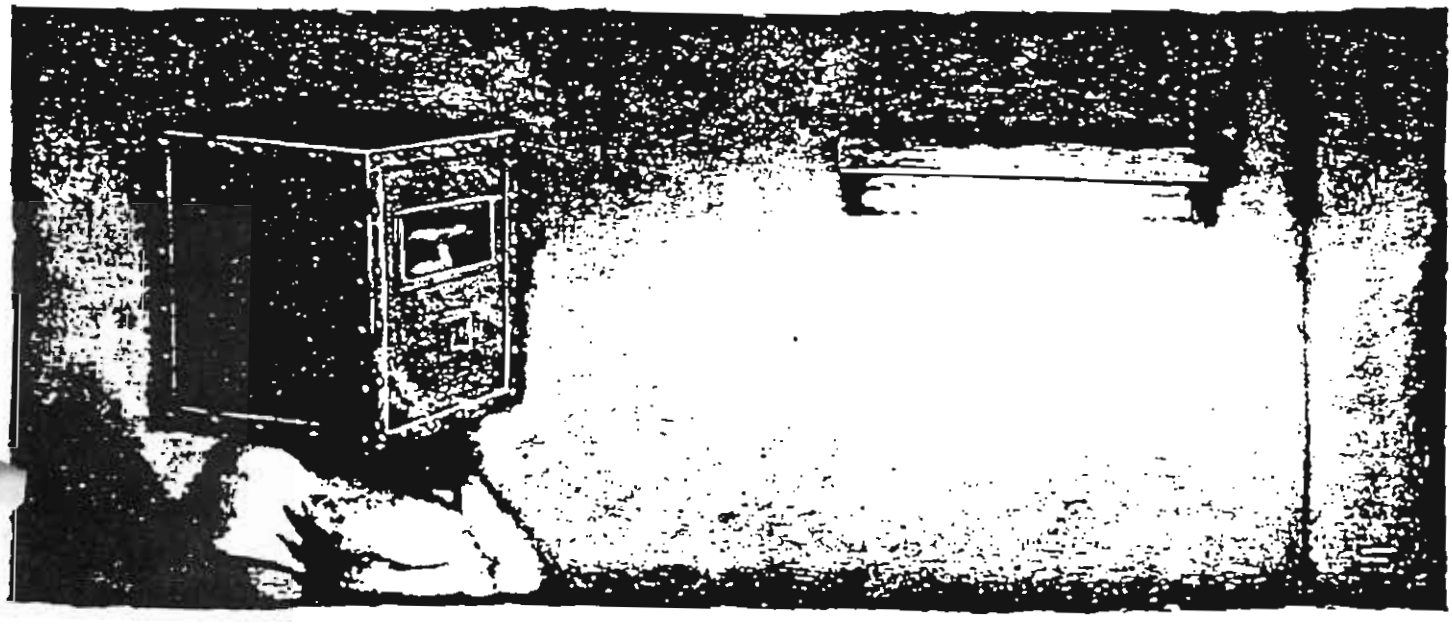
The reasons were spelled out more explicitly in the August 19, 1986, Rationale for Redesignation, which authorized Rosenberg's transfer to Lexington:

> Rosenberg has been associated with FALN, Black Liberation Army, and other terrorist groups. She also was thought to have been involved in an [*sic*] 1981 Brinks Armed Car Robbery and has previously been linked to the Joanne Chesimard escape in 1979.

Appended, almost as an afterthought, is a statement that the United States Attorney's office had confirmed that the charges in connection with the Brink's case "had been dropped." Not mentioned is the fact that at Rosenberg's one and only trial the government produced no evidence tying her to the F.A.L.N., the Black Liberation Army or any other terrorist group.

Clearly, Rosenberg and Torres were sent to Lexington not because of any particular act or behavior but because unnamed persons might attempt, at some unspecified time in the future, to help them escape. The idea that an individual can be punished by being subjected to special confinement for the hypothetical actions of unidentified others rather than her own conduct is a radical departure from the norms and established practices of the U.S. legal system.

Rosenberg contends that conditions at the H.S.U. are "designed to destroy those who are in it, psychologically and physically," and "to disintegrate people's personalities." The constant surveillance, the basement cells, the absence of fresh air and human companionship, the ever-



blazing lights—all those things have a single purpose: "They are trying to drive us completely out of our minds."

When Rosenberg sought an explanation of why she had been transferred from the Federal prison in Arizona where she had been serving her time, officials at Lexington told her that the decision was, in her words, "based on an internal criterion that is secret." As she recalled it, "They said, It's not disciplinary, it's not punitive, it's got nothing to do with that," and they also said, "The only way you can get out is if you change your associations and affiliations." We asked her how she could prove to the authorities' satisfaction that she had purged herself of such ties. She said, "I think one would have to go to them voluntarily and say, I don't want to live under these conditions any longer, and, therefore, I'm sorry. I will never communicate with these other people, and, moreover, I will never desire to communicate with these other people."

When we asked Lexington prison officials about the conditions described by Rosenberg and her attorney, they refused to comment. Our request to visit the facility was denied. According to Dave Dove, the facility's public information officer, our presence would pose a threat to security. The Bureau of Prisons' only comment was that "conditions of confinement within the High Security Unit at Lexington are closely reviewed and consistent with its mission."

Little is publicly known about that mission. The planning and construction of the Lexington H.S.U. was done secretly. And today, despite inquiries by Representative Kastenmeier and other members of Congress, secrecy continues to cloud its operations.

Are the conditions described by Rosenberg a form of cruel and unusual punishment? Is she correct in charging that she and Torres are part of an experiment in behavior modification? Alexa Freeman, a staff counsel with the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project, which has reviewed the correspondence between the attorneys for Rosenberg and Torres and Representative Kastenmeier and the Bureau of Prisons, told us: "It would appear that there are serious questions as to whether these women's First Amendment rights are being violated because of the blanket restrictions controlling visitation and communication and access to reading materials; whether their Fourth Amendment rights are being violated because of the frequent strip searches and the constant surveillance, which would seem to be an intolerable invasion of their privacy; and whether these inmates' very assignment to Lexington in and of itself constitutes cruel and unusual punishment." But Rosenberg's charges of psychological coercion should not be dismissed out of hand.

The idea of brainwashing is not foreign to American prison policy. In 1962, at a seminar for wardens and criminal psychologists chaired by James Bennett, then director of the Bureau of Prisons, Professor Edgar Schein of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology presented a paper called "Man Against Man: Brainwashing." Schein had conducted five years of research, funded by the Central Intelligence Agency, on the brainwashing techniques used by the North Koreans and the Chinese on American prisoners of war during the Korean conflict. The most important of those techniques, Schein said, was placing the subjects in conditions of extreme isolation: "It is necessary to weaken, undermine or remove the supports to the old patterns of behavior and the old attitudes . . . if change is to take place." Elaborating on this idea, Schein wrote:

> 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 . . . by removing the individual physically and preventing any communication with those whom he cares about. . . . If, at the same time, the total environment inflexibly provides rewards and punishments only in terms of the new behavior and attitudes to be obtained, and provides new human contacts around which to build up relationships, it is highly likely that the desired new behavior and attitudes will be learned. They will be learned as a basic solution to the problem of how to survive in the inflexible environment. . . . 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 behavior and attitudes by a group of men who have relatively complete control over the environment in which the captive population lives.

Schein's paper was enthusiastically endorsed by Bennett, who told the assembled wardens, "We here in Washington are anxious to have you undertake some of these things . . . on your own." It was subsequently published in the scholarly periodical *Corrective Psychiatry and Journal of Social Therapy*.

In a recent letter to us, Schein wrote that he had had no contact "of any sort" with the Bureau of Prisons after presenting his paper, or with anyone "in authority relating to the treatment of prisoners." He said that his point in the paper was that behavior-modification techniques "have always been used by people who have power over other people. . . . What the Chinese did was to refine these techniques, and what I did was to describe as clearly as I could what these refinements are."

In her book *Kind and Usual Punishment*, Jessica Mitford argues that in 1968 the prison psychiatrist at Marion Federal Penitentiary, Dr. Martin Groder, "applie[d] the proposals outlined in Dr. Schein's paper to 'agitators,' suspected militants . . . and other troublemakers." According to Mitford, Groder continued his work at the Behavioral Research Center, a Federal institution near Butner, North Carolina.

Thus far, despite the questions asked by Kastenmeier, Representative Ted Weiss and other legislators, and more recently by Amnesty International, which has launched its own inquiry into the conditions at Lexington H.S.U., the Bureau of Prisons' grim wall of silence remains in place. Recently, two more inmates, Debra Brown and Silvia Baraldini, were assigned to the facility. Brown appears to have no connection with any political group, but Baraldini was imprisoned for conspiracy and racketeering in the Brink's case. Before more join them, Congress and the press should demand to know what is going on at the Lexington H.S.U. and what its "mission" really is. □

LETTERS.

OUT OF CONTROL

Chicago

The *Nation* article "The Women of Lexington Prison," by William A. Reuben and Carlos Norman [June 27], is an important break in the almost complete media silence on the existence of the first High Security Unit (H.S.U.) built specifically for female political prisoners in the United States.

As one of the attorneys for Lexington inmate Alejandrina Torres, I would like to add some information about the Lexington H.S.U. One of the deliberate aims of the "control unit" is to control every single aspect of the women's lives. Every moment of their day is under the watchful eye of a video camera. Every movement they make is under the control of the ever-present guards. To move from one small room to another, permission must be received from the guards and buttons pushed to unlock doors. A logbook details every action taken or not taken by the women. This includes, for example, the exact amount of food left on the dinner tray and details of each conversation the women have. The goal of this attempt at total control is not only to disorient the women psychologically but to develop a psychological profile that can be used against other political prisoners as well. What upsets them? What makes them mad? The results will be studied and applied.

In addition, the prison is not permitting the women to receive political literature. Any literature mentioning Lexington is routinely denied. And recently, an article in *The Guardian* on a gay and lesbian film festival was denied for "security reasons."

The women have also been attacked on a sexual level. For the first three months of her incarceration, Torres was confined to an all-male floor of the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago. After suffering a minor heart attack, she was put on a women's floor. She has been unnecessarily stripped and searched by a male guard three times. Most recently, in October 1986, as she and Susan Rosenberg were transferred to Lexington H.S.U. from the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Tucson, Arizona, a male guard conducted an unprecedented vaginal and rectal cavity search of (read raped) the women.

The intent of this treatment is not just to break the will and spirit of the women prisoners. Its goal is also to intimidate progressive people, so that we will not take actions for justice because of our fear of repression. Despite this threat, many people have responded. On International Women's Day, March 8, 250 Puerto Rican and North American people demonstrated outside the gates of the control unit, demanding that it be shut down. As a result of a letter-writing campaign, over 5,000 letters have been sent to the warden and the women prisoners. The H.S.U. was forced to lift a ban limiting the women's correspondence to ten approved persons. As a result, their correspondence is unlimited.

Protest groups, such as the Committee to Shut Down the Lexington Control Unit, have formed in Chicago and other U.S. cities. The United Church of Christ and the National Lawyers Guild have taken positions condemning the control unit. One can participate in the following ways: Write letters of protest to Warden Matthews, P.O. Box 2000, F.C.I. Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky 40511; urge Congressman Robert Kastenmeier (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, D.C. 20515-6216) to continue his investigation of the control unit; write to the Puerto Rico Subcommittee of the National Lawyers Guild at 343 S. Dearborn, Suite 1640, Chicago, Illinois 60604 for more information.

The existence of the Lexington H.S.U. is intolerable, not only because of the inhumane treatment of the women prisoners but also because the existence of such a repressive institution clearly indicates the development of a more repressive society. We will not rest until it is shut down.

Melinda Power
Puerto Rico Subcommittee of
The National Lawyers Guild

VICTORY IN LEXINGTON LAWSUIT

An historic victory has been won in the lawsuit against the Lexington Control Unit. On July 15 a federal judge in Washington, D.C., ordered that political prsoners Susan Rosenberg and Silvia Baraldini be moved into general population.

Judge Barrington Parker determined that the two women had been singled out for harsh isolation and harassment in Lexington solely because of their radical political beliefs. He barred the Federal Bureau of Prisons from "considering a prisoner's past political associations or personal political beliefs" in deciding prison assignments.

This ruling is unprecedented in that for the first time in modern history a federal court has proclaimed in the clearest of terms what the Justice Department has always denied: that the U.S. government not only holds political prisoners, but *cruelly violates their human rights*.

In his written opinion, Judge Parker said that the government "may be concerned that the two plaintiffs will persuade inmates within the general prison population to share their political views, but those fears cannot be accommodated at the expense of constitutional rights."

He expressed outrage at the conditions the women experienced in Lexington: "The treatment of the plaintiffs has skirted elemental standards of human decency. The exaggerated security, small group isolation and staff harassment serve to constantly undermine the inmates' morale."

But despite this sentiment, Judge Parker failed to rule that the Lexington unit itself was a violation of the 8th Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. He was apparently constrained by narrow Supreme Court and appellate court guidelines on the kinds of prison conditions that may be considered unconstitutional.

For this reason his order excluded Sylvia Brown, an inmate in Lexington and co-plaintiff in the lawsuit, who has not been placed in the prison for her political activities. Sylvia's friendship and solidarity with the political women in Lexington will not be forgotten, and our campaign will continue to demand that the unit be shut down for *all* prisoners.

Alejandrinia Torres, because of her position as a Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, had declined to participate in the lawsuit. As a member of the colonized Puerto Rican nation, she does not accept the authority of the U.S. Legal systen to pass judgment on her. She and the other Puerto Rican POWs assert that their cases can only be resolved before an international legal authority such as the World Court. Alejandrina also apparently will remain in Lexington until the unit itself is closed.

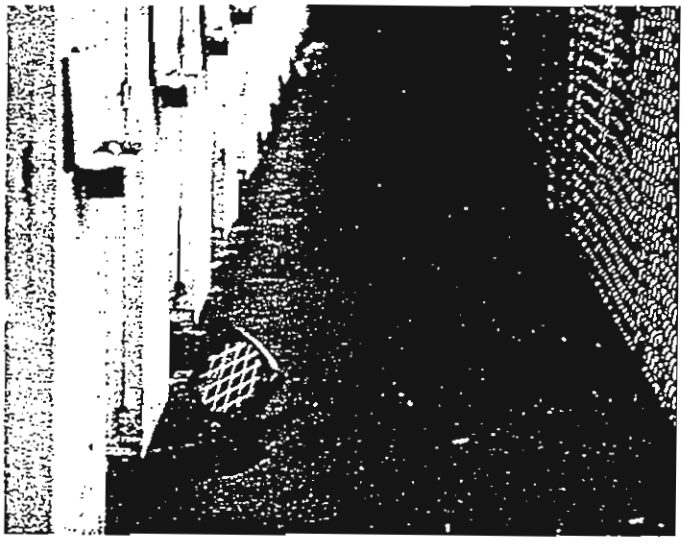
However, all the women were affected by the court decision which went beyond getting Susan and Silvia out of Lexington. Judge Parker was well aware of the government's plan to open a new high-security unit for women this summer in Marianna, Florida. Anticipating problems, he warned the Bureau of Prisons to be careful that conditions in the new unit "do not lead to wanton and unnecessary inflictions of psychological pain."

"Consigning anyone to a high-security unit for past political associations they will never shed unless forced to renounce them, is a dangerous mission for this country's prison system to continue," he said. "This court is afraid the Marianna facility will automatically assume many of the problems haunting the Lexington unit."

The court ruling on Lexington, coupled with Mexico's freeing of William Morales, constitute a powerful one-two punch against the U.S. government's repression of political prisoners and prisoners of war. However, rather than resting on these successes, we must take advantage of this momentum and press for an even broader campaign for human rights in the United States.

The Moscow Summit placed the issue of human rights high on the international agenda. Today more than 100 political prisoners and prisoners of way are locked up in U.S. jails. The time is right for a major effort to obtain amnesty for all these courageous women and men. Join with us to make this a reality.

CLOSE MARION AND LEXINGTON CONTROL UNIT PRISONS



The Control Unit is a relatively new technique developed by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. These units, which are unmatched in terms of their calculated brutality, are used as an attack on all prisoners in the U.S. prison system - the largest in the world. They are particularly designed to single out political leaders and others who dare to speak out as an example of what is in store for those who fight for a human society. Control Unit prisons must be closed! Please read this pamphlet to find out how you can help to accomplish this crucial task.

THE MARION CONTROL UNIT

Marion was opened in 1963 to replace Alcatraz Prison, which was closed that same year. Marion is the most maximum security prison in the country. It is the experimental laboratory and trendsetter for the whole federal prison system. Here, the Bureau of Prisons established the Control Unit--a "prison within a prison" where prisoners have been subjected to sensory deprivation and solitary confinement. In the early years at Marion, prison officials experimented with the use of drugs on Control Unit prisoners. Marion also uses "boxcars"--small, enclosed, soundproof boxes in which prisoners are placed--as a means of psychological torture.

In October 1983, two guards were killed in isolated incidents by two prisoners. Although there was no prison riot, authorities seized this opportunity to violently repress the entire prison population. They turned the prison into one huge Control Unit. Since that date, the 350 men imprisoned at Marion have experienced brutal, dehumanizing conditions:

- For 23 hours a day, prisoners are locked in individual cells, denied contact with each other and forced into total idleness.
- During the initial stage of the lockdown, 60 guards equipped with riot gear were shipped in from other prisons, and assisted Marion guards in systematically beating approximately 100 handcuffed and defenseless prisoners.
- All Control Unit prisoners are subjected to humiliating finger probes of the rectum every time they leave the unit for a court date, hospital visit, etc.
- All contact visits were ended--no prisoner can touch or be touched by family or loved ones.
- Prison authorities shut down work programs, group educational activities and congregational religious services.

In its efforts to justify its actions, the Bureau of Prisons tries to perpetuate the myth that Marion contains "the most vicious, predatory prisoners in the system." The fact is that the criteria for placement at Marion are intentionally vague, and that 80% of the men there are eligible for placement at less restrictive prisons. Although some infamous felons are placed at Marion, the prison also houses people sentenced to short terms for victimless crimes and people imprisoned for their political beliefs and activities.

In fact, the Marion Control Unit was never really designed to contain "vicious, predatory prisoners." The Bureau of Prisons established the Control Unit in July 1972, in response to a peaceful prisoner protest against the guard beating of a Mexican prisoner. About 60 prisoners were placed in isolated, sensory deprivation cells. With the Marion Control Unit, prison officials hoped to extinguish their spirit of protest, resistance and solidarity.

As predicted from its inception, the Control Unit produces in prisoners feelings of intense rage and helplessness that are inevitably expressed in violence--either against themselves or against others. Over the years, many prisoners have committed suicide or have turned on other prisoners or guards. Since the entire prison was locked down in 1983, three prisoners have been killed by other prisoners and several stabbings have occurred. The Marion prison lockdown is a bloody failure--it promotes the very violence it claims to be trying to prevent.

Top prison officials have made it clear they intend to permanently maintain the lockdown status, in spite of Congressional and church inquiries, and a class action lawsuit by the prisoners.

Lexington: Control Unit for Women

Taking lessons learned from Marion, the Bureau of Prisons has built a maximum security unit for women prisoners in the Lexington, Kentucky Federal Prison. It is located in the basement of a high security building, totally separate from the rest of the prison. It is literally a dungeon.

The Control Unit at Lexington is the first of its kind in the country—a special unit designed with the express purpose of breaking women political prisoners. What are conditions like in Lexington?

* The women are never allowed contact with other prisoners.
* The cells are painted bright white to produce feelings of disorientation.
* The few windows in the unit are covered with screens to prevent the women from seeing the outside.
* The women are never free from the eyes of either guards or video cameras.
* Visits are restricted to family members and attorneys; no friends are allowed to visit. Visiting takes place in a "special" room and is of shorter duration than visits allowed to other prisoners at Lexington.
* The women are required to wear special uniforms to identify them at all times as "high security" prisoners.
* The women are guarded by twice as many guards as other prisoners.

Placement in the Lexington Control Unit, as with Marion, has already proven to be completely arbitrary. There is one significant difference—the head of the entire prison system makes the final decision about who is designated for Lexington. He has already decided, without any justification, to imprison Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Alejandrina Torres and North American Political Prisoners Susan Rosenberg and Silvia Baraldini, already the subjects of special abuse, in the Lexington Control Unit.

Lexington presents us with a qualitative change in the repression of women.

Prisons and Society

Feodor Dostoevsky once wrote that to understand a society, one should look within its prisons. What does a glimpse behind U.S. prison walls tell us about our society?

U. S. prisons hold a vast number of people of color. Black people are incarcerated at a rate of 714 per 100,000 population, six times the rate for white people in this country and almost twice the rate for Black people in South Africa! This rate is the highest in the world. Such a large number of incarcerated people constitutes a well-defined system of population control. In fact, it is predicted that U.S. prisons (this does not include jails) will hold over 1,000,000 people by the year 2000, and that more than half will be people of color. This growth is taking place with devastating rapidity. For example, during the period of January - June, 1986, the number of prisoners in the U.S. increased by 25,630 - or more than 1000 per week! It is the case now, and has always been the case, that such increases in the imprisonment rate have nothing at all to do with the crime rate but rather reflect the ideological and economic realities of the times.

A growing disparity exists in this country between those who enjoy a comfortable life and those who must struggle to survive. It is these "have-nots" who fill the U.S. prisons. The society that delivers such a disproportionate number of Third World people to the prison doors is one that has produced a generation of Black and poor youth – 75% of whom are unemployed, who are trapped in deteriorating public housing projects, who drop out of schools at alarming rates, who lose their lives to drugs, crime and violence.

Seen together, this set of conditions seems genocidal. In part of its definition of genocide, the United Nations includes "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or part."

Through its actions, the U.S. makes a clear statement: It will not grant Third World and poor people their human rights. It will not provide them with job opportunities, schools that teach, or medical care. It will, however, spend billions of dollars to build bigger and more repressive prisons--prisons which are certain to house the swelling number of unemployed Black, Third World and poor people.

What makes this government's program for social "stability" work? Law and order. Longer prison terms.

The death penalty. More prisons. More police. In the 1980's, prisons no longer pretend to rehabilitate -- they are simply warehouses. While prisons spend money on more guard towers, barbed wire, and new maximum security units, they cut the educational/vocational programs. The message is that crime is caused by bad individuals. Will society be healed by caging and electrocuting them? Attention turns away from the social, political and economic roots of crime. Instead, the individual is blamed--and since most of the blame is directed toward Black people, this leads to the criminalization of an entire people.

If prisons reflect the structure of society, they also reflect the nature of movements for social change. In the sixties, as the Civil Rights and Black Power movements grew, the number of Black political prisoners swelled and the prison struggle became a major part of the Black liberation struggle. Political prisoners like George Jackson stated clearly that prisons are an important tool in the government's effort to contain and destroy Black people's freedom.

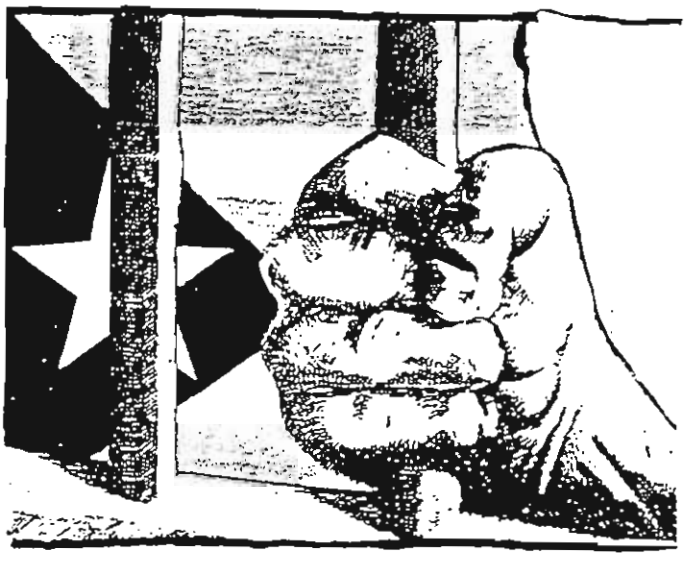
Although the government refuses to admit it, there are nearly 200 political prisoners and prisoners of war in U.S. prisons today. They come from the Puerto Rican, Black/New Afrikan and Native American liberation movements. They include progressive Christians, white anti-imperialists, draft resisters, grand jury resisters. The movements that these people represent honor, love and respect them. Yet the government contends that they are criminals or terrorists. Although the government denies the existence of political prisoners in this country, it often reserves the harshest treatment for these very people. Control Units are designed to break every prisoner's spirit. In the case of political prisoners and prisoners of war, the Control Units are part of a calculated strategy to weaken these movements and to intimidate others from taking a stand.

Legitimate Channels Unresponsive

The Marion lockdown continues despite two U.S. Congressional hearings and the recommendation of Congressional consultants that the lockdown end. The lockdown continues despite a class action lawsuit by the prisoners seeking an injunction to end it, and months of hearings in which prisoner after prisoner testified that guards have beaten them or forced them to undergo finger probes of the rectum, which the men likened to rape. The lockdown continues—and it appears that neither Congress nor the courts will provide a remedy to the prisoners from the inhumane Control Unit at Marion. We can safely speculate that these channels will also be unresponsive to the women who are placed in the Lexington Control Unit when they seek an end to such conditions.

At the same time, our own experiences participating in the anti-intervention, anti-apartheid, anti-nuclear, and disarmament movements have shown us that we also cannot rely on Congress or the courts to recognize or protect the rights of people when these rights are in conflict with the aims of the United States government. We have thus taken to the streets and demonstrated in order to expose human rights abuses caused by U.S. intervention in Central America and U.S. support for the apartheid regime of South Africa.

For the same reasons we must take to the streets and demonstrate to expose and protest the human rights abuses which occur in U.S. prisons. These abuses occur most regularly to Third World prisoners who represent the sectors most often targeted by government repression. Over the years, Marion has been a holding place for leaders of the Black/New Afrikan, Puerto Rican and Native American struggles. In the past few months, Oscar Lopez-Rivera, and Kojo (s/n Grailing Brown) have been transferred to Marion joining Sundiata Acoli and Sekou Odinga. Also transferred to Marion recently are Tim Blunk and Ray Levasseur, two North American anti-imperialist resistance fighters.



We Can Make a Difference

The Bureau of Prisons intentionally builds a wall of silence around its prisons in hopes that the public will never learn about its brutal policies. For this reason, Marion, like so many other prisons, is tucked away in a not easily accessible area. However, when the puolic calls on government and prison officials to account for their abuses, they become extremely uncomfortable and are often pressured into initiating some changes. For example, from a small group of people who began to protest the continued imprisonment of the Puerto Rican Nationalists grew a movement which led to their unconditional release in 1978. In another instance, when several hundred people demonstrated in 1983 at Alderson Prison against the punitive segregation conditions of Haydee Torres and Lucy Rodriguez, two Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, Torres and Rodriguez were transferred out of isolation. In 1984, public attention to Leonard Peltier, the Native American leader who was incarcerated at Marion, resulted in his transfer out of Marion to a less restrictive prison. We <u>can</u> make some changes in the situation at Marion and Lexington.

Prisons and the Movement

Since prisons reflect both the structure of society and the nature of the struggle against that structure, when we work to minimize the brutality of the prison system, we simultaneously work to support those like political prisoners and prisoners of war who have been a dynamic catalyst in the movement for a changed, humane society.

It may be that very few of us will go to prison or even know someone who goes to prison, so it may not be apparent why we should be concerned with this issue. But if we are to be part of the solution, and not part of the problem, we must fight against these racist warehouses. Only by dealing with these stark realities, only by making these kinds of sacrifices, can we build a movement that will some day be an alternative to this system and its repression.

Turn Knowledge Into Action

The wall of silence around prisons will work only if we let it--out of sight, out of mind. Historically, most of us have become aware of prisons only after some terrible, violent event occurs, such as after the 1971 National Guard massacre of 41 prisoners who rebelled at Attica Prison against racist and oppressive conditions. Yet, right now the prisoners at Marion are experiencing physical and psychological violence on a daily basis. Many of us now know about these conditions. The question is, what will we do with this awareness. As Rafael Cancel Miranda admonished us at a conference about Marion Prison, "we cannot just feel bad or sad, *we must do something.*" This organizing process is one opportunity for us to do something--to fight against the brutality of Marion and the new Control Unit at Lexington; to place ourselves in solidarity with those who have been leading the struggle for a new society; and to say that we would rather work on the side of the battle for justice than sit idly by as others wage the battle for us.

THE COMMITTEE TO END THE MARION LOCKDOWN

The Committee to End the Marion Lockdown is trying to generate concern and action among white North Americans over the issues of Control Units in specific and the prison system in general. Black/New Afrikan and Puerto Rican organizations are going to their communities with similar appeals. We can only succeed with the broad support of many people working long and hard at this issue. For those of you who would like to get involved, you can do the following:

1. Join the CEML.
2. Arrange a speaking engagement for us at your church, school, union, etc.
3. Write to a prisoner at Marion or Lexington. Names can be obtained from the CEML.
4. Contribute to our work. Tax-deductible checks can be made out to Citizens Alert, Inc. and mailed to the CEML.

For more information, call 663-5046, or write the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, 343 S. Dearborn, Ste. 1607, Chicago, IL 60604

UN Position on Puerto Rican POWs

Puerto Rico is a colony according to the UN Committee on Decolonization. The present status of Puerto Rico violates the Charter of the United Nations' Declaration Against Colonialism.

In 1973 the Decolonization Committee reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence (1).

In November, 1972, the entire General Assembly approved the report of the Decolonization Committee, reaffirming "its recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle of the colonial peoples...to exercise their right to self-determination by all means available, *particularly armed struggle* (2) (emphasis added).

The General Assembly stated colonialism in all its forms is a crime and reaffirms the inherent right of colonial peoples to struggle by all necessary means at their disposal against colonial powers which suppress their aspiration for freedom and independence (3).

The right to fight colonialism on a second front, within the metropolis, is particularly legitimate for the people of Puerto Rico, since half of them have been literally driven from their homeland, forced by U.S. expropriation of their country's natural wealth to emigrate to the mainland in search of jobs, and then subjected to an internal colonial oppression. Since the effects of colonization are equally real, and devastating, in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, self-determination and armed struggle for liberation are the inalienable rights of the Puerto Rican people no matter where they live.

The Decolonization Committee "considers that the persecutions, harassments, and repressive measures to which organizations and persons struggling for independence have been continuously subjected constitute violations of the national right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence."

At the urging of revolutionary Puerto Rican groups, the Committee deleted all reference to "the right of free association" with the U.S. as one self-determination option.

General Assembly Resolution 33/122 (15 Feb. 1978 entitled "Protection of persons detained or imprisoned as a result of their struggle against apartheid, racism and social discrimination, colonialism, aggression and foreign occupation and for self-determination, independence and social progress for their people".

Article 42 of the Additional Protocol creates a presumption in favor of a captured combatant, that he or she shall be entitled to P.O.W. status upon claiming such status, and that this presumption continues until a "competent tribunal" finally determines the prisoner's true status (4).

As part of its "Programme of Action" to end colonialism, the General Assembly has specifically demanded that captured anti-colonial freedom fighters not be prosecuted as criminals under the domestic law of the detaining colonial power, but be "treated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of August 12, 1949 ." (5)

Captured freedom fighters are afforded P.O.W. status; the colonial power is obliged to recognize the legitimacy of their liberation struggle and to limit how it treats and punishes them.

Resolutions 3103 (XXVIII), 12 Dec. 1973 demands the release of all individuals detained or imprisoned as a result of their struggle against colonialism, aggression and foreign occupation and for self-determination, independence and social progress for thier people.

Resolution 33/24 (8 Dec. 1978) demands full respect for their fundamental individual rights and the observance of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, under which no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Footnotes

(1) Official records of General Assembly, 28th Session, (Supplement N. 23/A/9023/Rev. 1) Vol. 1, Chap. 1, para.69.

(2) Resolution 2908 (XXVII). December 8, 1978, General Assembly Resolution 33/24.

(3) October, 1970, General Assembly "Programme of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples."

(4) Resolution 1514 (XV).

(5) United National Treaty Series, Vol. 75 (1950) Resolution 2621 (XXV) Para 6a; see also Resolution 2852 (XXVI) December 20, 1971; Resolution 3103 (XXVIII) December 12, 1973.

PUBLIC HEALTH: TOOL FOR THE DECIMATION OF THE PUERTO RICAN NATION

To enforce its colonial domination, the U.S. has turned every aspect of its supposedly "humanitarian" efforts in Puerto Rico into an assault on the Puerto Rican people. In 1932, Pedro Albizu Campos made this process clear in a "Circular to All the Powers" prepared by the Nationalist Party:

> "When the number of hospitals increases . . .the epidemics of malaria, anemia, of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases with fatal effects also increase. For impartial observers, there exists no paradox. The American government repeats in Puerto Rico the method of extermination it put into effect in the continent against the indigenous race . . .The Hawaiian nation, which has been under the American empire approximately the same time as ours, is practically extinct already . . . Evidently the people who do not submit, if they fall under the North American empire, then under the protection of their flag, they fall in and die!"

This Circular exposed the particular case of medical experimentation in which physicians from the Rockefeller Institute, established under the auspices of U.S. "Public Health" efforts at Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan, were exposed to be engaged in inoculating patients with cancer and viral diseases. Albizu presented documentary evidence, in the form of a letter to a colleague from a Dr. Cornelius P. Rhodes connected with the project. Rhodes said:

> "It would be ideal (here) except for the Puerto Ricans– they are beyond doubt the dirtiest, laziest, most degenerate and thievish race of men ever to inhabit the sphere . . .what the island needs is not public health but a tidal wave or something to totally exterminate the population. It might then be usable. I have done my best to hasten the extermination by killing off eight and transplanting cancer into several more."

A recent revelation indicated that evidence exists to prove that Dr. Rhodes killed as many as 15 people.

This case is no aberration. The central thrust of U.S. "Public Health" efforts in Puerto Rico since the 1920's has been massive sterilization of Puerto Rican women and men. The San Juan Star reported in 1975: "On an international scale, Puerto Rico is the world leader in female sterilization." The percentage of Puerto Rican women of childbearing age who have been sterilized is the highest in the world– over 40% and still climbing–up from 33% in 1974. In addition, over 25% of Puerto Rican men have been sterilized. In 1949, 18% of hospital births were followed by sterilization; today, the percentage is even higher. It is so common that it is known simply as "La operacion." As a consequence, Puerto Rico's birth rate dropped 36% from 1941 to 1970. Sterilization was initiated in the 1930's during a period of Nationalist struggle and institutionalized in the post-World War II period of renewed resistance. In 1947, 7% of Puerto Rican women had been sterilized; by 1954, with the establishment of the Commonwealth, the percentage had more than doubled to 17.5%. Most recently, 25 free sterilization clinics, each capable of a thousand sterilizations a month, were opened in 1974 and 1975.

At the same time, Puerto Rican women have been guinea pigs for other forms of contraception, especially in the early development of the oral contraceptive pill, Enovid. And high rates of sterilization and other medical problems are recorded among Puerto Rican workers in U.S.-owned petrochemical and pharmaceutical operations in Puerto Rico, which operate without occupational health and safety or environmental protection controls, despoiling Puerto Rico's land and waters as well.

What is more, the same genocidal levels of sterilization hold true for Puerto Rican women in the U.S. In the most recent development, Dr. Antonio Silva, former head of the so-called Family Planning Association of the island, who oversaw a 30% expansion of already-accelerated sterilization in 1975 with special federal funds, has been appointed Director of Obstetrics and Gynecology at New York's Lincoln Hospital, the main health service in the Puerto Rican community in the South Bronx.

This is the benefit which North American society has bestowed upon the Puerto Rican people–a health service which assures the complete eradication of the Puerto Rican nationality.

Oye - Listen

Listen.
I am eating a sweet.
It tastes like medicine,
it containes a chemical from Alderson.

We have to cure, cure,
cure the wound
they have given to mama.
The wound
the yankees gave to our Beautiful Land.
Goodness, don't laugh
at my language.

Have you heard the thicket speak?
I know that the leaves of the malanga
are used as cups.
Listen,
I am made of mud.
I write with mud on
these rosebuds flowering
in delicious nutrients.
It has roots of bone,
flesh and soul
it has the sun
and its whole being
is crowned
by a great spiral snail shell.

-- Lolita Lebron

We must, comrades, we must take up arms, if it is necessary, in order to bring this evil empire to its knees and to destroy it. Companeros, when we attacked the Capitol and Congress of the United States of North America, we had the inalienable right to do this and we felt proud to have taken up arms. We, the people of the world, can't submit ourselves to injustice, indignity and murder. We must rise up against these things, and if we die in the act, then we at least die standing.

Lolita Lebron, speaking in defense of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, May, 1980.

WHAT IS TORTURE?

Amnesty International defines torture as "the systematic and deliberate infliction of acute pain in any form by one person on another or on a third person in order to accomplish the purpose of the fomer against the will of the latter." Using similar language, the World Medical Association defines torture as "the deliberate, systematic, or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering by one or more persons acting alone or on the orders of any authority to force another person to yield information, to make a confession or for any other reason. In 1984, the United Nations adopted a convention against torture in which torture is defined as:

> any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

Canadian Study: Long-term Effects of Torture

Effect	n	%
Physical		
Scars, Burns	21	51
Fractures	8	20
Deafness, blurred vision	5	12
Weight loss	10	24
Psychomatic		
Pains, headaches	22	54
Nervousness	33	80
Nightmares, night panic	14	34
Insomnia	28	68
Tremors, weakness, dizziness, fainting, diarrhea, sweating	26	63
Affective		
Depression	29	71
Anxiety	36	88
Fears, phobias	12	29
Behavioral		
Withdrawal, irritability, aggressiveness impulsivity	13	42
Sexual dysfunction, severe	5	12
Suicide attempt	4	10
Intellectual and mental		
Confusion, disorientation	5	12
Memory loss	12	29
Loss of concentration	13	32

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