



**Midwest
regional
Hearing:**

**CONTROL UNITS,
PRISONS
POLITICAL
PRISONERS**



Saturday, April 20, 1996

United Methodist Temple • 77 W. Washington • Chicago IL



There are now at least 36 control unit prisons in the US, housing approximately 15,000 people.

Welcome to the Midwest Regional Hearing on Control Units, Prisons, and Political Prisoners. Programs similar to this one are being held throughout the country this month, as part of a coordinated effort by the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons. We hope today's program will inform you, stimulate you, inspire you, and energize you to become involved in this work. Only by joining together and opposing the racist imprisonment binge will we be able to change this appalling situation.

We offer this page as a brief guide to the day. As you will see from the schedule, much is planned. We will begin with five concurrent workshops, followed by a lunch break. After lunch, Marc Mauer, Assistant Director of The Sentencing Project in Washington, DC, will provide the keynote address. After Marc's talk, we will hear from a variety of witnesses, who will present first-hand evidence on the nature of the "criminal" "justice" system to the general assembly as well as to a panel of eminent persons. Finally, these eminent persons will present summary statements of how they view the evidence they have just heard.

In addition to attending today's proceedings, we hope that you will check out the literature tables and talk to people from the various sponsoring organizations. Most importantly, we hope that you will sign up for the caravan and join us on Saturday, May 4 as we travel to Indiana to protest two brutal prisons, the US Penitentiary at Terre Haute, and Wabash Valley State Correctional Institution. Sign up sheets for the May 4 event can be found in several locations at the Hearing. Please fill out the form and arrange to come along with us.

Schedule for the Day

9:30 AM
Welcome

10:00 AM to Noon
Workshops

Noon to 1:00 PM
Lunch Break

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM
Keynote Address
Marc Mauer

2:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Testimony from Witnesses

5:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Response to Testimony by
Eminent Persons Panel

6:00 PM
Closing

Prisoners at the Administrative Maximum (ADX) at Florence, Colorado, are kept in their cells 157 hours of each 168 hour week.

Since 1983, the entire federal prison at Marion, Illinois, has been locked down, confining prisoners to their cells 23 hours per day, without human contact.

About Marc Mauer

The New Jersey Management Control Unit (MCU) inmate population is 95 percent black, in a prison where the overall African-American population is 64 percent.

Marc Mauer, Assistant Director of The Sentencing Project, has directed programs on criminal justice reform for twenty years. He is the author of some of the most widely cited reports in the field of criminal justice, including "Young Black Men and the Criminal Justice System," and the "Americans Behind Bars" series, comparing international rates of incarceration.

His most recent report on racial disparity and the criminal justice system led the *New York Times* to editorialize that the report "should set off alarm bells from the White House to city halls -- and help reverse the notion that we can incarcerate our way out of fundamental social problems." Mr. Mauer has served as a consultant to the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and is a member of the American Bar Association's Committee on Race and the Criminal Justice System.

Mr. Mauer directed state and nationwide efforts in criminal justice for the American Friends Service Committee from 1975 to 1986 and served as that organization's National Justice Communications Coordinator. Since 1987, he has been Assistant Director of The Sentencing Project, a national organization which develops alternative sentencing programs and conducts research on criminal justice issues. In that capacity, he has testified before Congress, addressed a broad range of national and international conferences, and appeared often on radio and TV networks.

Mr. Mauer is frequently interviewed by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and other newspapers. In 1991, Mr. Mauer received the Helen L. Buttenweiser Award from the Fortune Society in New York.

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Mauer today as our keynote speaker.

Eminent Persons Panel

Dr. Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs

Margaret Burroughs was the co-founder in 1961 of the Museum of Negro History and Art, now known as The DuSable Museum of African-American History, and until 1985 she served as its Executive Director. She is currently a Commissioner to the Chicago Park Board, a title she has held since her appointment by the late Mayor Harold Washington in 1985. She is completely dedicated to the creative arts, international culture, and specifically to African and African-American life, history, and tradition.

Carolina García

Carolina García is an active member of the Rudy Lozano Community Rights Assembly, and of Centro Sin Fronteras, in the West Town neighborhood of Chicago. She is a community organizer, activist, and advocate for human rights.

Danny K. Davis

Danny Davis is both a Cook County Commissioner and the Democratic Committeeman for Chicago's 29th Ward. Until his election to the Cook County Board in 1990, he was also the Alderman for the 29th Ward. He has received numerous awards for his political work, and has held a variety of non-governmental positions, including President of the National Association of Community Health Centers, and the Chairman of the Black Elected Officials of Illinois.

Patricia Hill

Pat Hill has been the President of the African-American Police League since 1990. She is a ten year veteran of the Chicago Police Department, and has twelve years of experience a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. She was born and raised in Chicago, where she continues to live.

Eduardo Negrón

Eduardo Negrón is an Assistant Principal at Roberto Clemente Community Academy High School, and prior to that, worked at Rezin Orr High School on Chicago's West Side. He has been active in community affairs since the



Whites, while 74 percent of the general population, accounted for 36 percent of state and federal inmates in 1993; and Latinos, who comprise 10 percent of population, were 18 percent of those behind bars. When Latinos and African-Americans are combined, they constitute 50 percent of the state and federal prison population.

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Between 1980 and 1990, the overall crime rate remained relatively stable, while the overall imprisonment rate increased 112 percent.

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Between 1980 and 1994, the number of inmates in federal and state prisons tripled from 329,821 to 1,053,738.

early 70's, struggling for Puerto Rican educational empowerment and representation in the West Town and Humboldt Park areas. A life-long resident of the community, Negrón has played a key role in the reform process at Clemente.

Coy Pugh

Coy Pugh is the Illinois State Representative for the 10th District, a position he has held since his election in 1992. Previously, he had founded both the Westside Small Business Development Corporation, and Wescor, Inc., a small construction firm that trains and employs homeless men and women to give them a second chance. He is a husband, a father of two children, a political leader, and a community activist.

Eddie Read

Eddie Read is the President of Chicago Black United Communities (CBUC) and of the Black Independent Political Organization (BIPO). He was the co-convener of the Million Man March Chicago Local Organizing Committee. He has done considerable work in the black community around employment issues. He has purposefully never pursued a college degree but urges education at all levels. He is married and has three children.

William H. Rentschler

William Rentschler is a columnist with the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and five times his writings have been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. He is a longtime director of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, in San Francisco, and recently he became the Chair of the Advisory Board of Citizens for a Safe America, headquartered in Virginia. A widely published editor and writer, he has won many awards for his trenchant, rational commentary on criminal justice and prison policy.

Dr. Nehemiah Russell

Nehemiah Russell is currently the Principal of Englewood Academy in Chicago. He was a prominent black nationalist militant leader in the 1960's. He has been a consultant on gangs for over thirty years, in Illinois and throughout the United States. During this time, Russell has developed and

implemented several gang deactivation programs. He is also supervising three doctoral theses at three different universities on gangs in the US. He was co-convener of the United for Peace Program, and is the author of the biography of Larry Hoover, which will be published in the next few months.

Howard Saffold

Howard Saffold was an officer with the Chicago Police Department for 25 years, until his retirement in 1991. He was co-founder of both the National Black Police Association and the Afro-American Patrolman's League of Chicago. Saffold has won many awards for community service and is a volunteer consultant for a variety of community organizations, prison ministries, and public schools. He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Positive Anti-Crime Thrust, Incorporated, in Chicago.

Quentin Young, MD

Quentin Young was one of the founding members of the Medical Committee for Human Rights, an organization that delivered medical care to those beaten during civil rights demonstrations in the south and at anti-war demonstrations throughout the country. For a time Young was Chair of the Department of Medicine at Cook County Hospital. He was fired twice from that job and rehired each time when his firings were ruled illegal. Young is currently the National Coordinator for Physicians for a National Health Program, and the Chair of the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group.

An estimated 1,471 African-Americans per 100,000 African-American residents were incarcerated in the nation's prisons at the end of 1993, compared to 207 whites per 100,000 white residents. This is an incarceration ratio of African-Americans to whites of seven to one.

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Witnesses

Sundiata Acoli

Sundiata Acoli is one of the longest held political prisoners in the world, having spent over 20 years in US prisons. In 1973 he and Assata Shakur were captured after a gun battle on the New Jersey Turnpike. Acoli was wrongly convicted of killing a trooper and has been in prison ever since. He was recently denied parole despite an exceptional prison record.

Wallace "Gator" Bradley

"Gator" Bradley is a widely known advocate against violence in the African-American community. He has sponsored and participated in a variety of peace summits leading to gang truces in cities across the US. He is the co-founder, Director, and spokesman for the United in Peace Organization, which organizes peace summits.

Margaret Byrne

Margaret Byrne is an attorney in private practice who specializes in representing battered women. She is the director of the Illinois Clemency Project for Battered Women, which seeks clemency for all battered women currently incarcerated in Illinois for killing or injuring abusers. She has participated in the successful efforts to gain clemency for eight women in Illinois since 1988.

Mardge Cohen, MD

Mardge Cohen has been a doctor at Cook County Hospital for over 20 years. Cohen was the founder of the Women's and Children's AIDS Project, a nationally respected model for the treatment of HIV positive women and their children.

Barbara Echols

Barbara Echols is the Executive Director of the Prison Action Committee, in Chicago. She is a former prisoner who served time at both Dwight Correctional Center and Dixon Correctional Center, in Illinois. She is a recovering drug addict who has been clean since 1992. She has three children.

A report by The Sentencing Project found that on any given day, nearly one in three African-American men ages 20 to 29 was under the supervision of the criminal justice system — in prison or jail or on probation or parole.

Melissa Froiland

Melissa Froiland has worked with People Against Control Unit Prisons (Wisconsin), the Indiana Coalition Against Control Unit Prisons, Free US Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, the Women's Jail Project, and other groups.

Jennifer Johnson

Jennifer Johnson is a twenty-one year old former prisoner who successfully won a sentence reduction and was released in 1995. She is now living at Grace House, a transitional residence for women leaving the criminal justice system. She is currently working, attending school, and is active as an advocate for women who are still incarcerated. While in prison, she gave birth to her son and is in the process of regaining custody and rebuilding her family.

Nancy Kurshan

Nancy Kurshan was a founding member in 1985 of the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, which has been organizing to abolish control unit prisons for over a decade. She is an active participant in the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons. She is also a social worker.

Oscar López-Rivera

Oscar López Rivera has helped found some of the organizations in the Puerto Rican community of central importance. As a community organizer, he participated in struggles for bilingual bicultural education, against drugs and police brutality, as well as to end employment discrimination. He was arrested in 1981, charged with seditious conspiracy and is presently serving a 70 year sentence at the Florence, Colorado Administrative Maximum Prison, built to replace Marion as the prison for the "worst of the worst."

Jo Ann Patterson

Jo Ann Patterson is the mother of death row inmate and torture victim Aaron Patterson, and is an active member of the Committee for the Defense of Aaron Patterson. She is a Board member of the Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty, for whom she coordinates Families and Friends of Inmates of Death Row. She has seventeen years of experience as an educator.

It is estimated that 50 to 75 percent of all state prison inmates are unable to read. Only one-third of prisoners nationwide have completed high school.

More than half of all prison and jail inmates had a reported annual income of less than \$10,000 prior to their arrest.

Prison Wardens indicated in 1994 that 50 percent of the offenders under their supervision would not be a danger to society if released.

Between 1985 and 1990, the money spent on prisons and related costs rose from \$13 billion to \$24.9 billion.

Jonathan Peck

Jonathan Peck is an activist and community organizer with the Southwest Youth Collaborative on Chicago's southwest side. There, he is the co-founder of the Street Law Project, which helps young people educate each other about their rights when dealing with the criminal justice system.

Alicia Rodriguez

The first one of her family to be born in the U.S., Alicia Rodríguez quickly became cognizant of the racial discrimination which later led her to question the antagonistic relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. She attended the University of Illinois, majoring in science. On April 4, 1980, she, along with ten other compañeros, were arrested in Evanston, IL. She is serving an 85 year sentence for seditious conspiracy and related charges.

Delbert Tibbs

Delbert Tibbs is a published poet, death penalty abolitionist and human rights activist, and a former death row prisoner in Florida. He now lives in Chicago.

Erica Thompson

Erica Thompson is a partner at People's Law Office in Chicago, where she specializes in police misconduct cases. A member of the National Lawyers' Guild, she has been active in opposition to control unit prisons since 1989.

S. A. Tinin-Bey

S. A. Tinin-Bey is an Indianapolis based human rights activist, a lecturer, a devout Muslim, and a former prisoner in the Indiana Department of Corrections.

Shiriki Uganisha

Shiriki Uganisha is the Chairperson of Stop Targeting the Afrikan Community (STAC), in Kansas City, Missouri, as well as Spokesperson for the Sundiata Acoli Freedom Campaign (SAFC). She is an activist in the Afrikan community, dealing with the prison movement in particular.

Carmen Valentín

Born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, Carmen Valentín is part of the living history of Chicago's Puerto Rican community, involving herself for over twenty-five years in struggles ranging from better housing, to the preservation and advancement of Puerto Rican culture, to the founding of cultural organizations which still exist today, to struggles against police brutality, to prison reform and rehabilitation. She had finished over half of the required course towards a PhD in psychology when she was arrested in Evanston on April 4, 1980. Charged and convicted with seditious conspiracy, she is presently serving a 90 year sentence.

Laura Whitehorn

Laura Whitehorn is a North American anti-imperialist political prisoner, currently serving a 23 year sentence for revolutionary activities against US colonialism and white supremacy. She has been active since the 1960's on these issues, as well as women's liberation and gay and lesbian liberation. In prison she works to educate inmates about HIV and AIDS, and to develop support services for people with AIDS.

Reverend S. Michael Yasutake

The Reverend Seiichi Michael Yasutake, 75, an Episcopal priest since 1950, is Director of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project, working for the release of political prisoners in the US and for prisoners' rights. As a Japanese American, he was incarcerated in the US concentration camps in Washington State and Idaho in 1942 and 1943.

In 1993, 88.3 percent of crack trafficking defendants in federal courts were black, and 4.1 percent were white. Eighty five percent of defendants convicted of simple possession of crack were black; 10.3 percent were white. Nonetheless, in 1991, 64.4 percent of crack users were white, and 26.6 percent were African-American.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

WORKSHOP ROOMS

all workshops to take place from 10 AM to Noon.

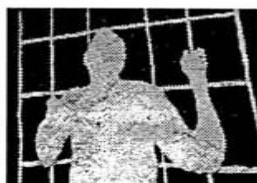
WOMEN IN PRISON
Pierce Hall

CONTROL UNITS
Room #2

POLITICAL PRISONERS & PRISONERS OF WAR
Pierce Hall

PRISON ECONOMICS
Room #1

DEATH PENALTY
Pierce Hall



Women in Prison

Women — particularly women of color — are being incarcerated at ever increasing rates in the United States. In Illinois last year, the number of women prisoners grew three and a half times more quickly than the number of male prisoners. The workshop will examine the relationship between the role of women in US society and their surging incarceration rates. Conservative estimates report that over half of all adult female offenders were victims of physical abuse and 36% were sexually abused as children. Women in prison are more likely than men to be there for non-violent property related crimes and drug offenses. Incarceration for these "crimes of poverty" has a dramatic and immediate impact on their children and families. Panelists include Margaret Byrne, an attorney for the Illinois Clemency Project for Battered Women; Joanne Archibald, a staff person for the Chicago Legal Aid to Incarcerated Mothers and a former prisoner, and Barbara Echols, also a former prisoner and member of the Prison Action Committee. The video, "We Are Not Who You Think We Are," will also be shown during the workshop.

Control Units

Amnesty International has condemned control units or "supermax" prisons as cruel and unusual punishment. Yet the proliferation of such prisons is astounding, and prison officials claim they serve as a deterrent to crime in prison. The workshop will explore the conditions inside control units, their effects on the prisoners and families, the politics which support control units, and ways to stop control units. The workshop will be facilitated by Reverend Mike Yasutake of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project. Speakers include Maryl Johnson, Coalition to End Police Torture, Erica Thompson, attorney at People's Law Office, Melissa Froiland, anti-control unit activist, and Josefina Rodriguez of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War

The workshop will introduce participants to the history and existence of political prisoners and prisoners of war from liberation movements currently incarcerated in the

US. Panelists include Hondo Tchikwa on New Afrikan Political Prisoners and POWs, and others.

Prison Economics

The growing trend of for-profit industrial production within prisons serves the needs of transnational corporations for cheap labor, low overhead, and union busting during a period of immense growth in imprisonment, particularly of people of color, in the US. Not surprisingly, this new wave of prison industry re-institutes working conditions that seem dangerously close to slavery. Furthermore, with corporations "downsizing" traditional workforces in favor of prison labor, and with State and Federal governments spending increasingly large amounts of money on building more prisons, local communities are forced to struggle with rising unemployment, shrinking tax bases, and the loss of funds for important social services. Panelists will address prisons and the use of prisoners as forced labor as a dangerous threat to both community-based economic development and democracy itself. Panelists include Reese Erlich, producer of the PBS documentary, *Prison Labor/Prison Blues*, Jeremy Lahoud, activist with the Youth Empowerment and Mentorship Program and the Southwest Youth Collaborative, and Stephen Hartnett, Assistant Professor of Communication at Ball State University and a prison educator.

Death Penalty

The workshop will focus on the different, interconnected injustices of the death penalty — its racist application, its politically repressive function, its failure to reduce the murder rate in society, its threat to the lives of wrongfully convicted people, its violation of human rights, and its impact upon the families of murder victims and on society in general. Panelists include Delbert Tibbs, a former Florida death row prisoner who was wrongfully convicted and eventually released; Joanne Patterson, mother of Aaron Patterson, torture victim of Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and current prisoner on Illinois' death row; Doug Cassell, professor of international human rights law at DePaul University; and Jeanne Bishop, a member of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation.

Just over half of the 301 defendants executed since 1976 have been white, and almost 40 percent have been African-American.

A Call to Action

In December, 1994 activists from across the United States, from a dozen states and two dozen cities, met in Philadelphia and founded the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons. A year later, at our second meeting, the Campaign issued a call to action for Spring of 1996. We believe:

Between 1987 and 1993, state spending increases for corrections out-paced higher education by 41 percent nationwide.

- That control unit prisons are barbaric. No human being should be caged in a cell nearly 24 hours a day and denied all human contact for years on end. It is clear that the purpose of control units is to destroy prisoners both physically and psychologically, not to facilitate growth or improvement;
- That political prisoners and other dissidents are especially targeted for incarceration in control units, with the intent of dehumanizing and criminalizing them, as well as keeping them separate from other prisoners and from the movements of which they are a part;
- That control unit prisons are part of the insane imprisonment binge which portrays every problem as the fault of the individual rather than the result of a perverted social structure, one which proposes that most of these problems can be solved by putting people away in cages for longer and longer periods of time;
- That our society's imprisonment binge and the proliferation of control units are essential components of US colonialism and racism. We believe that these components are not "errors" or misguided attempts to control crime. They exist not to control crime, but to attempt to control the democratic impulses of people of color within the borders of the US.

Understanding these issues, we must organize and act, educate and agitate. With this in mind, the National Campaign is calling for coordinated activities all across the US and Canada at the end of April and the beginning of May, 1996. The goal is to hold as many programs and demonstrations as possible at almost the same time. Areas already involved in the planning include Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Boulder, Newark, New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco. A variety of events are being scheduled, including hearings, demonstrations, seminars, delegations, educational pickets, caravans, dinners, concerts, and so forth.

We hope that many more will join the effort. We believe that if we raise our voices against these barbaric control unit prisons, against the racist imprisonment binge, against the incarceration of millions of young people, that together we will be heard. Together, we can organize through practical activity a network of people that will challenge the dehumanizing US society, and that will move towards the construction of a human society in its place. Please join us.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Aaron Patterson Defense Committee
 Autonomous Zone
 Chicago Black United Communities
 Chicago Legal Aid to Incarcerated Mothers
 Committee to End the Marion Lockdown
 The Crossroads Fund
 Crossroad Support Network
 EMPTI SPOON Job Club
 Grace House
 Great Lakes Asian Center for Theology Studies
 Illinois Clemency project for Battered Women
 Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project
 National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons
 National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners
 The Network for Prisoner and Family Ministries
 Passionist Lay Missioners
 Prairie Fire Organizing Committee
 Prison Action Committee
 Union for Puerto Rican Students
 8th Day Center for Justice

INDIVIDUALS

John Bartlett • Herman T. Blumenthal
 Elizabeth and Ed Browne • Richard K Jones
 Linden P. Martineau • Margaret Phillips
 John Poole



At least 70 percent of African-American males will be either arrested or jailed before reaching the age of 35, with the life-long risk being between 80 and 90 percent.

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