

# END THE NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN

A CALL TO ALL THOSE CONCERNED ABOUT PEACE, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Imagine yourself confined to an 8'x10' windowless room for at least 22 and a half hours per day with no human contact. Your "recreation" consists of one and a half hours alone in a tiny covered concrete yard. Meals are eaten in the cell, delivered by guards through a slot in the door. There are no educational or recreational programs, no correspondence courses, or work opportunities. Prison authorities read all mail. They file toothbrushes down to one inch and remove toothpaste from tubes "for security reasons." Prisoners suffer beatings (often while stripped and/or chained), sleep deprivation, and other human rights violations. The rare visit occurs through Plexiglass barriers and over a phone. This lockdown enforces total isolation.

These conditions illustrate the reality of "Control Unit" prisons. These institutions make no attempt at rehabilitation, but rather serve to warehouse prisoners and break the human spirit.

Today, U.S. prisons incarcerate more than one million people. **More than one-third** of these people are in "maximum security" or "Control Units." The vast majority are low-income people of color. The U.S. has the largest prison population and highest per-capita imprisonment rate in the world.

Control Units represent one of the sharpest expressions of the dehumanization and militarization in our society today. The U.S. government and mainstream media seek to legitimize this institutionalized inhumanity, calling it a response to violent crime and

violent prisoners.

Control Units such as California's Pelican Bay State Prison act as a threat to the general population by stifling dissent, and by controlling any form of resistance to the brutally racist prison system. Pelican Bay targets those with leadership potential, as well as gay prisoners, jailhouse lawyers, and those generally seen as the prison underclass.

To keep these issues out of sight and out of mind, the California Department of Corrections decided to build Pelican Bay in the remote northern border town of Crescent City (at a cost to taxpayers of \$277.5 million). Pelican Bay's 800 mile distance from Los Angeles (home for more than 60% of its inmates), makes visits by families, communities, and legal support difficult and impractical.

While Control Units proliferate, consistent opposition to them has grown from inside and outside the

prisons. In 1989, this movement forced the closure of the Lexington, Kentucky High Security Unit for women, designed for sleep and sensory deprivation, and infamous for the sexual assault of the political prisoners and P.O.W.'s sent there by the government.

This demonstration in San Francisco is part of a national network of mobilizations during May to protest the proliferation of Control Units across the U.S. and Canada.

**SPEAK OUT!** We call on all people concerned about peace, justice, and human rights to join in the work against these atrocities.

