Greetings!

This is the first newsletter of the National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Women's Control Unit.

The Control Unit is the U.S. Bureau of Prisons' attempt to 'deprogram' political prisoners and prisoners of war by using psychological torture methods. These methods include sensory deprivation, isolation and mind control techniques which have been developed in West Germany and Ireland. The conditions at the underground prison at Lexington led the ACLU to describe it as a 'living tomb', devoid of color, any personal effects, and little natural lighting. The women are subjected to 24-hour surveillance by guards and video monitors. They have no open interaction with each other or with prison officials, and they have no privacy.

In July 1987 various individuals, churches, political organizations, and legal professionals from around the country began meeting in order to coordinate the work to shut down the Control Unit. We present educational, slide shows/videos, circulate petitions and letters, send groups to investigate the conditions at Lexington, fundraise and much more.

As we became more and more involved in shutting down the Women's Control Unit, we realized that the concept of 'control unit' reaches beyond the basement at Lexington. For instance, the men at Marion, Illinois, have been under 23-hour lockdown for nearly four years, and political prisoners in other prisons and jails are often kept in isolation.

We have received letters and support from people all across the United States and Europe. This newsletter and future issues will keep our supporters up to date on the conditions at Lexington, Marion, and Marianna, and provide information about other political prisoners in the U.S. prison system. If you are interested in helping with this work or making a donation, please contact The National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Women's Control Unit at (415) 561-9055 or Out of Control Committee to Shut Down the Lexington Control Unit at (415) 647-6695.

Marianna Control Unit

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is nearing completion of Marianna, a federal correctional institution (FCI) for men in rural Florida. One of the buildings has been designated as a women's control unit which will house approximately 120 prisoners, and will operate as a level 4 and 5 (high security) institution, according to Michael Quinlan, director of BOP. Quinlan also stated that the control unit at Lexington will be closed once Marianna is operating. The political prisoners at Lexington believe that Marianna will be a larger version of the control unit in Kentucky.

Physically, the new prison is self-contained. 'Self-contained' means that the women prisoners will never leave the building. The women's building is enclosed in its own fence within the larger fenced-in compound of the men's FCI. This will greatly limit the women's ability to have any real physical recreation. The exact date for the opening of Marianna has not been disclosed.

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INSIDE LEXINGTON

Imagine a world without color, without fresh air, without sunlight. I couldn't, and I didn't.

Then I went to visit Silvia Baraldini at Lexington High Security Unit. Each morning for four days I waited for passage: two barred cyclone fences, two thick doors, and one golden arch allowed me to enter 'the tomb.' Several video cameras and metal detectors later, down the steps...But what if I had a metal plate or steel pins inside me holding something together? No Entry? And yet the basement dungeon is "wheel chair accessible."

So new, so shiny, so sterile and monotonous, so beige, so spic'n'span with that Clorox-clean smell slightly hidden by the stale air. Hospital—mental hospital—I thought, and not very prison-looking. It feels like a cross between a mental hospital and a prison.

This isn't too bad, Silvia has on black tennis shoes and a...I caught myself before they trapped me. Whose standards am I judging this place by? Theirs—and it doesn't work. Lower the standard to sub-human, sub-ground, sub-zero and sure, this is fine. Because it is that bad. There is nothing much to do. Boredom and wandering around and around is life in Lexington.

The women are strong and living. From day 1 to day 4 I felt changes in Silvia's voice and mood and persona. She was lifting herself out of a daze, or fog. We laughed, and I could really see her eyes. Her spirit is well.

I won't forget 'the tomb'—the world without air, light, color. The world of emotionless faces guarding and keeping these women locked up like laboratory animals. I won't forget that it's not working...

Alejandrina Torres and Daughters Honored.

In late May, Josicina Rodriguez accepted awards on behalf of Alejandrina Torres and her two daughters, given by the graduating law class of Queens College in New York.

Puerto Rican Legislators Condemn the Lexington Control Unit

Two women legislators in Puerto Rico initiated a bill before both houses of the Legislature, condemning the Lexington Control Unit and calling for its immediate closure and the release of the women to general population. In what promises to be a major embarrassment for the U.S. government, all three major parties supported this bill in the Puerto Rican House of Representatives. This unusual unanimity among the Puerto Rican Independence Party, the Statehood Party, and the Popular Democratic Party, is likely to galvanize other mobilizations on the island.

The bill denouncing Lexington has so far passed the House of the Puerto Rican Legislature.

In Puerto Rico:

On June 12, Jan Susler of the People's Law Office and Dr. Emmanuel Rosenberg, father of political prisoner Susan Rosenberg, will address a full session of the Puerto Rican Bar Association on the struggle to close the Control Unit. Dr. Corey Weinstein from the Lexington National Advisory Board will also address a number of meetings of Puerto Rican psychologists who are mobilizing against the psychological torture occurring in Lexington. Susler, Rosenberg and Weinstein also have a busy schedule of press appearances on the island.

At the United Nations:

Representatives of the Puerto Rican independence movement will present the case of Lexington as one of the issues at the hearings of the Decolonization Committee of the U.N. on August 16 through 18. Each year, a main focus of the proceedings is the status of Puerto Rico as a U.S. colony.

On Friday, August 12, a major play on the life of Alejandrina Torres will be performed in New York. On August 15, all Puerto Rican independence organizations in New York will be leading a march on the U.N. During the entire month of August a major exhibit of art by Puerto Ricans, including many political prisoners and POWs, will be on display at the main gallery of the United Nations.

The Suit

This civil action is brought on behalf of Silvia Baraldini, Sylvia Brown and Susan Rosenberg, currently confined with two other women (Alejandrina Torres, Prisoner of War, and Debra Brown) in the Federal Bureau of Prisons' female high security unit, located at the Federal Correctional Institution in Lexington, Kentucky.

The transfer of the prisoners to the unit, the conditions of the unit, and the treatment of the women prisoners are inhuman and degrading, and in violation of the United States Constitution and international law. All the women in the unit are suffering psychologically and physically, as a direct consequence of their isolated confinement in this underground tomb.

The trial begins June 2, 1988 in Washington, D.C. The Bureau of Prisons tried to win a change of location for the trial from Washington, D.C. to Lexington, Kentucky, but this was denied.

Social Workers Protest The Control Unit

The National Association of Social Workers has 115,000 members and 55 chapters throughout the U.S., Europe, and Puerto Rico. The NASW has mobilized to shut the Control Unit on March 30, 1988. The Association sent a statement to Bureau of Prisons Director Quinlan:

"The cruel conditions under which these women are being held violate acceptable standards for human detention. There is ample documentation that physical and psychological symptoms by the women are the direct results of the human rights abuses to which they have been subjected, and that their physical and psychological conditions have deteriorated to the point of danger."

American Public Health Association and Lexington

The American Public Health Association is composed of 55,000 public health professional and community health leaders. At the request of the APHA president, Dr. Balus Walker, the executive board held an urgent discussion on the Lexington Control Unit. The APHA has written a letter of protest to the warden at Lexington, and committed itself to participating in a delegation to the Control Unit.

National Meeting

The National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Women's Control Unit will meet again in San Francisco on Saturday, June 18. For further information, contact (415) 561-9055.
LEXINGTON CAMPAIGN

TELL THE WORLD!

Internationalizing the Lexington Campaign

Lexington on the Summit Agenda.

On April 17, at the pre-Summit planning meeting between Soviet Foreign Minister Schevarnadze and Secretary of State George Shultz, Mr. Schevarnadze read out loud from the American Civil Liberties Union report on the Lexington Control Unit. Shortly thereafter, the State Department called the Washington D.C. ACLU for “more information about that prison where the three Puerto Ricans are being held.” Although the State Department had the story somewhat garbled, Susan Wasyldorf from the National Lexington Campaign fielded the call and was happy to supply full information.

In an extremely important development, we have learned that the Soviet Union placed the issue of Lexington on the agenda for negotiations on human rights at the Summit.

The Soviet trade union newspaper 
Trud printed an article accusing the American prison authorities of systematically trying to break the will of political prisoners:

“...there is no doubt that methods of exerting psychological pressure aimed at breaking the will of prisoners are being mastered.”—Trud

A summary and commentary were also issued by TASS.

You Won’t Read it in the U.S. Press.

Coverage of the Summit Conference gives extensive coverage of Reagan’s comments on human rights violations in the Soviet Union, with barely a word about discussions of human rights violations in the United States.

On May 26, fifty members of the international press attended a successful New York press conference on human rights violations in the U.S. This press conference, timed for the eve of the Summit Conference, highlighted a number of cases in addition to Lexington: among them that of Liliberto Ojeda Rios, Puerto Rican independentista released just before the summit from the longest preventive detention in U.S. history (three years); Geronimo Pratt, the former Black Panther leader framed by the FBI and imprisoned for eighteen years; Leonard Peltier, the imprisoned leader of the Native American struggle for sovereignty; and the issue of homelessness in the U.S. The self-regulation of the U.S. media was notable in that not one media representative from inside the U.S. attended the press conference.

The initiators of the event were Philippa Winkler and Karen Parker, co-ordinators of the Human Rights Coalition Project in San Francisco.

Repression...

Coinciding with these major advances in international work, Puerto Rican activists in New York have experienced serious FBI harassment. Members and friends of the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional Puertorriqueño, and the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican POWs, have been stopped by FBI agents in the streets and at home.

In one particularly shocking incident, a man who had been hospitalized with a herniated vein bleeding into his brain was approached by FBI agents at his bedside. The agents falsely told him that his prognosis was death, and (unsuccessfully) pressured him for information about the independence movement!

Another man was summoned before a Grand Jury. The last Grand Jury which was impaneled to investigate the Puerto Rican independence movement resulted in 3-year sentences for all those who refused to turn informers.

Mounting such an ambitious campaign at the U.N. is very costly, with the art show alone costing thousands of dollars. Donations are urgently needed. Renowned Puerto Rican artist Elizam Escobar and Guggenheim Prize-winner Juan Sanchez have donated pieces of art to benefit the show.

Persons interested in making contributions, or in purchasing art, may make out checks to: Huellas, c/o Juan Sanchez, 346 So 3rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211. Inquiries to (415) 561-9055.

Fund-raising:

Thanks are due to the many people who have contributed to the National Campaign. To make donations tax deductible, checks should be made out to: IFCO Lexington (Inter-Religious Foundation for Community Organization) and sent to any of the campaign addresses.

Join our postcard campaign!

Make sure your organization has a stock of our printed postcards, to keep up the pressure on Michael Quinlan and your Congressional representatives to close down all control units, and prevent the inception of Marianna Control Unit.

Break the Isolation!—Keep the letter-coming.

The women at Lexington have received hundreds of letters of support, challenging the absolute isolation that the Bureau of Prisons hopes to impose. Our notes, letters and news are a vital lifeline. You can also place the sisters on your organization’s mailing list, and send books and pamphlets.

For now, Susan Rosenberg is at:

#233-412, DC Detention Center
1901 D Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Silvia Baraldini
HSU Lexington
(05125-054)

Debra Brown
(93137-024)

Sylvia Brown
(72183-012)

Alejandrina Torres
(92152-024)

What’s All This Talk Against Mine Control in Kentucky...

What About Black Lung Disease, Strip-Mining Blah-Blah-Blah

Not Mine Control!

Mind Control

Oh! Nevermind!

There’s a Women’s Prison in Lexington Where Psychological Torture is Used on Political Prisoners.

Thanks to G.R. for Inspiration
SEVEN INDICTED FOR "CONSPIRACY TO RESIST"

On May 11, 1988, the Meese/Reagan administration released a grand jury indictment against Laura Whitehorn, Linda Evans, Marilyn Buck, Tim Blunk, Alan Berkman and Elizabeth Duke.

The indictment charged the seven with having engaged in activities, "... to influence, change and protest policies and practices of the U.S. ... through the use of violent and illegal means." The specific acts included a number of political bombings supporting the liberation struggles of the people of Puerto Rico, South Africa, Central America and Palestine; and protesting racism in the U.S. The bombing sites included three military bases in Washington, D.C., the Capitol Building (after the U.S. invasion of Grenada), the South African Consulate in N.Y., the Israeli Aircraft Industries Bldg. in N.Y., F.B.I. offices in Staten Island, and the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association in N.Y. (after the racist murder of Eleanor Bumpurs by N.Y. police while evicting her from her home.) No person was injured as a result of any of the bombings.

Six of the seven, (Duke remains uncaptured), were in Federal Custody at the time of the indictment, most of them already serving excessively long terms, (over 40 years) on prior convictions stemming from political acts. The proceedings have begun in an atmosphere of hysteria created by the government, including the use of a partitioned courtroom, (plexiglass between the defendants and the spectators), denial of access to legal counsel, handcuffing and leg shackling whenever out of their cells (including legal meetings), denial of access of the co-defendants to one another, 23 1/2 hour lock down, no fresh air, etc.. Susan Rosenberg, after enduring 20 months of psychological experimentation at the Lexington Control Unit, and Tim Blunk just moved from the infamous Marion Penitentiary, have both noted that the conditions in the D.C. jail, (where the 6 are currently held), are worse.

The six North American political prisoners each have a long history of association with movements for international social justice. The U.S. government is attempting to criminalize their efforts (dubbing them terrorists) and is striking out against them to make an example to the rest of the movement; to scare us from continuing to resist, to dictate the way we choose to resist, to divide us, and to justify the infiltration of our movement by intelligence agencies. All of our progressive forces will be disabled unless we resist these government tactics by supporting political prisoners and prisoners of war.

All six plead not guilty to any crime when arraigned on May 25, 1988 and are currently trying to form a legal team. Write them at: D.C. Detention Center 1901 "D" Street, S.E. Washington, D.C., 20003
MORE ON THE LAW SUIT

After three days of hearings the decision in Baraldini v Meese, et. al., is now under submission. Due to her current, but temporary, location in Washington, D.C., Susan Rosenberg was able to testify at the trial. Apparently the judge responded very favorably to the prisoners' claims, but his ultimate decision remains to be heard. During the course of the trial one spectator was dragged out into the hall and brutally beaten by U.S. marshals for refusing to stand up when the judge entered the courtroom. A friend who went to check on him was also beaten. Both men were arrested for assaulting a federal officer. They are both involved in the peace movement and letters of support to them may be directed to:
Jonah House
1933 Park Ave.
Baltimore, Md. 21217