



# CAMPAIGN TO STOP CONTROL UNIT PRISONS

## HISTORY OF CONTROL UNIT PRISONS

IN 1829 EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY IN PHILADELPHIA BECAME THE FIRST SOLITARY CONFINEMENT PRISON, BASED ON THE QUAKER PENAL PHILOSOPHY THAT SOLITARY CONFINEMENT COUPLED WITH RELIGION WOULD RESULT IN REFORM. THE RESULTS WERE THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE HOUSED THERE WENT INSANE. THE SOLITARY CONFINEMENT MODEL OF PRISONS WAS ABANDONED WITH THE "AUBURN MODEL" WHICH PROVIDED FOR CONGREGATE ACTIVITIES. IT WASN'T UNTIL 1983, WHEN MARION FEDERAL PRISON IN ILLINOIS WAS LOCKED DOWN AS A RESULT OF THE DEATH OF TWO GUARDS, THAT THE RETURN TO EXTENDED SOLITARY CONFINEMENT WAS REINSTATED. PRIOR TO THIS, LOCKDOWN WAS USED TO CONTROL AND SUPPRESS DISRUPTIONS WITHIN A PRISON BY SEVERELY RESTRICTING PRISONERS' RIGHTS FOR A LIMITED TIME. MARION WAS THE FIRST PRISON TO MAKE LOCKDOWN A PERMANENT CONDITION. MARION COMBINED PERMANENT LOCKDOWN WITH SENSORY DEPRIVATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE (RATHER THAN DISCIPLINARY) CLASSIFICATION TO ISOLATE PEOPLE.

CONTROL UNITS OR "SUPERMAX" PRISONS, HAVE BECOME THE NEW MODEL FOR PRISONS. AS OF 1995, APPROXIMATELY 25 STATES HAVE CONTROL UNITS, AS DO THE US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND CANADA. A NEW CONTROL UNIT HAS JUST OPENED IN FLORENCE, COLORADO, WHICH IS TO REPLACE MARION. THIS NEW PRISON IS THE HIGHEST SECURITY FEDERAL PRISON, WHERE PRISONERS ARE KEPT IN PERMANENT SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. IN A CONTROL UNIT PRISON PEOPLE ARE LOCKED IN SINGLE CELLS FOR 20 TO 24 HOURS A DAY. THERE IS LITTLE HUMAN INTERACTION WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN PRISON GUARDS. VISITS AND PHONE CALLS FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE SEVERELY RESTRICTED AS ARE EDUCATIONAL, RECREATION AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES. IN ADDITION TO ISOLATION THESE PRISONS OFTEN USE ABUSIVE "BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION" PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PHYSICAL BEATINGS, MEDICAL NEGLECT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE. PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES OF THESE PRISONS IS ESSENTIALLY NON-EXISTENT.

## HOW WE DEFINE "CONTROL UNIT"

RECOGNIZING THAT SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF CONTROL UNIT PRISONS VARY, THE GOAL OF THESE UNITS IS TO CAUSE SPIRITUAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND PHYSICAL BREAKDOWN OF PRISONERS. THIS GOAL IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH SYSTEMATIC PROGRAMS OF OPPRESSION INCLUDING:

- \*ARBITRARY ADMINISTRATIVE PLACEMENT RATHER THAN ANY PROCEDURAL PROCESS.
- \*YEARS OF ISOLATION FROM BOTH PRISON AND OUTSIDE COMMUNITIES WHILE BEING HOUSED IN SOLITARY OR SMALL GROUP ISOLATION.
- \*VERY LIMITED ACCESS TO SERVICES SUCH AS EDUCATION, WORSHIP OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING.
- \*PHYSICAL TORTURE SUCH AS FORCED CELL EXTRACTIONS, FOUR POINT RESTRAINT, HOG-TYING; BEATING AFTER RESTRAINT, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UPS FOR VIOLENCE BETWEEN PRISONERS.
- \*MENTAL TORTURE SUCH AS SENSORY DEPRIVATION, FORCED IDLENESS, VERBAL HARASSMENT, MAIL TAMPERING, DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, CONFESSIONS FORCED UNDER TORTURE AND THREATS AGAINST FAMILY AND VISITORS, ETC.
- \*SEXUAL INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE, USUALLY AGAINST WOMEN PRISONERS BY MALE GUARDS, USING STRIP SEARCHES, VERBAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL TOUCHING, AND RAPE AS A MEANS OF CONTROL.

## HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN

THE CAMPAIGN TO STOP CONTROL UNIT PRISONS IS A COALITION OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PRISON WALLS WHOSE GOAL IS TO SHUT DOWN ALL CONTROL UNITS. THE COALITION WAS FOUNDED AT A GATHERING HOSTED BY THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE IN PHILADELPHIA, PA IN DECEMBER OF 1994. TOWARD THIS END, CAMPAIGN MEMBERS ARE ENGAGED IN DATA COLLECTION, EDUCATION, FOSTERING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ACTION TO PUT AN END TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES OCCURRING DAILY IN CONTROL UNITS.

## STRUCTURE

THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN IS FORMED AS A FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO AGREE TO CARRY OUT THE STATED PURPOSES. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THIS, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CAMPAIGN ARE CONDUCTED BY TWO INTERDEPENDENT AND PARALLEL COMMITTEES.

### 1. MONITORING COMMITTEE

IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING OF CONTROL UNIT PRISONS SERVES TO COLLECT DATA, CREATE PRACTICAL INSIDE-OUTSIDE BRIDGES AND INVOLVE CITIZENS IN A COMMITTED WAY. THE INFORMATION COLLECTED WILL BE INVALUABLE FOR KEEPING TRACK OF ABUSE AND FUTURE LITIGATION. REGIONAL MONITORING COORDINATORS ARE:

CHRISTIE DONNER: MIDWEST. ROCKY MOUNTAIN PEACE CENTER, 1523 6TH STREET, BOULDER, CO 80302. (303) 449-2543.. CO,NE,OK,LA,MS,OR,TN,IN,IL,MI,WI,MN,MO,IA,ND,SD,AR,KS.

COREY WEINSTEIN, NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO STOP CONTROL UNIT PRISONS WEST, PO Box 2218, BERKELEY, CA 94702 (415) 821-6545. ID,MT,WY,HI,AK,NV,CA,UT,AZ,NM,TX.

DEMA MANTOOTH: EAST, NIGHTCRAWLERS ABC, PO Box 1034, MOTT STREET STATION, BRONX, NY 10454. (718) 292-5340.

NJ,DE,CT,DC,FL,GA,AL,WV,NC,SC,VA,OH,PA,KY,MD,NY,NH,MA,RI,ME,VT.

### 2. POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

MEMBERS WILL MEET, PLAN, AND CARRY OUT ACTIVITIES THAT WILL FORWARD OUR STATED PURPOSES. EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON BUILDING THE CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE PROTEST, PUBLICITY, EMERGENCY RESPONSE OR DIRECT ACTION. PRISONERS IN CONTROL UNIT PRISONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS COMMITTEE CONTACT:

(YET TO BE DETERMINED)

THE CAMPAIGN ALSO HAS AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK CONSISTING OF A PHONE TREE AND E-MAIL. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: NANCY KIRSHAN, COMMITTEE TO END THE MARION LOCKDOWN, PO Box 578172, CHICAGO, IL 60657.

BONNIE KERNESS OF THE AMERICAN /FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL COORDINATION, ORGANIZING AND INTERNAL MAILINGS. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT AFSC, 972 BROAD STREET - 6TH FLOOR, NEWARK, NJ 07102. (201) 643-3191.

PAT CLARK OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL MAILINGS. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT AFSC, 1501 CHERRY STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

19102. (215)241-7130.

**HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED: WE ARE CURRENTLY TRYING TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ACROSS THE US WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING US MONITOR AND OPPOSE CONTROL UNITS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE PERSON FOR YOUR INTEREST. WE ARE ESPECIALLY SEEKING MONITORS WHO WILL COMMIT TO THE YEAR WE EXPECT THAT FUNCTION TO TAKE.**