

Update on the High Security Unit

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In September 1987, Alvin Bronstein, Adjoa A. Aiyetoro, and Alexa Freeman of the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union met with the Director of the Bureau of Prisons, Michael Quinlan. He indicated at that meeting that the Lexington High Security Unit would be closed in approximately nine months, when he brought on line a maximum security facility that would house approximately 150 to 200 women. The new facility is in Marianna, Florida, and is reportedly scheduled to open in May 1988.

Mr. Quinlan also agreed to make a number of changes in the women's living conditions. The showers were equipped with curtains. Random strip searches and routine pat searches replaced the routine strip searches after the exercise period. These are reportedly sexually demeaning at times. Two of the women are now employed in computer jobs. Social visits are now allowed by policy, although implementation has been slow and only one woman may have a visit at any one time — a scheduling requirement unique to this unit. This requirement causes recurring conflicts in scheduling social as well as attorney visits.

The isolation from other prisoners and the distant, if not hostile, staff continue to plague the women. In addition, the women have not been told how they may qualify for less restrictive confinement, other than, of course, having been informed that they will be moved to a larger, maximum security facility for women some time in the future. Additionally, three of the women's assignments continue to be fundamentally unfair because they are based in large part on their alleged political beliefs and affiliations.

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Special Incapacitation: The Emergence of a New Correctional Facility For Women Political Prisoners

Gilda Zwerman

We arrived here last night at five in the evening. We had travelled in jump suits and slippers in an 8-seater plane with the marshalls, stopping in Ft. Worth, Texas, and then to the airport at Lexington. We were caravanned with four cars, and a van, one of the cars being the local sheriff.

We drive right up to the entrance of this unit. The entire prison was locked in, and there were hundreds of prisoners' faces at the windows watching this entrance. There must have been 25 police of one type or another. One woman screamed out "Hello Susan, we know it's you." I started jumping up and down, and screamed, "Don't let them bury us down there." Someone else screamed, "We won't." I wish and hope. They hurried us inside. Inside three doors and into the unit's own R & D [Receiving and Discharge]. Such a big deal for the two of us, it was both frightening and ridiculous at the same time (Susan Rosenberg, November 11, 1986).

In Fall 1986, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons announced the completion of a new 16-bed, high-security unit (HSU) at the federal penitentiary in Lexington, Kentucky. The new facility is essentially a separate, underground wing of the existing prison. It is completely self-contained, possessing its own cells, showers, kitchen, library, day room, and visiting room. There is even a separate recreation area — an inner courtyard measuring 50 square feet at ground level.

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HSU represents a radical departure from prevailing purpose and design for segregated housing units. In most prisons, segregated housing is used as a punitive measure. The unit is simply cut off from most of the population, activities and interaction are restricted, and prisoners spend a limited period of time there. This is not true of HSU. Prisoners have been sentenced to an indefinite stay in the unit, with no stated policy of how to earn their way out. The entire facility is wired for optical and acoustical control. Every move of the prisoner is visually and voice monitored. The unit is also colorless (painted an off-white beige) and climate controlled, lacking windows and fresh air. Most significantly, HSU is defined as an "administrative," not a punitive facility. Prisoners may spend the duration of their sentence in this unit.

This extraordinary facility is the only one of its kind in the country. It is akin to the "maxi-maxi" secure prison for men at Marion, Illinois, where inmates eat, sleep, write, read, and even exercise in their cells. However, the placement of a prisoner in Marion requires demonstrated behavioral problems within the correctional system and does not utilize intrusive technology.

The HSU at Lexington reflects the emergence of a new strategy in neoclassical correctional philosophy which may be termed "special incapacitation," that is, isolation with extensive surveillance and sensory deprivation.¹ Its purpose is to contain and monitor primarily (though not exclusively) women political prisoners.

The importance of examining the HSU as an emergent correctional strategy is three-fold:

1. It utilizes and manipulates the "terrorist" label, as defined by conservative ideologues, in order to justify the "special" treatment of political prisoners within the correctional system;
2. It demonstrates how intelligence and counterinsurgency policies may be infused into the correctional system; and
3. It represents an expansion in the use of incapacitation, surveillance, and deterrence as mechanisms for social control and repression to a degree heretofore unprecedented in the U.S. correctional system.

Selection of Designees

During both the first and second terms of the Reagan administration, measures to dismantle and destroy a variety of antigovernment organizations were expanded and intensified. This included the widespread use of antiracketeering and conspiracy laws, grand jury investigations, the introduction of the Executive Order of Protection Act, and an escalation of security initiatives within the Federal Emergency Management Agency.² In this period, more than 150 political activists connected to movements on the Left, including the Puerto Rican independence movement, the North American anti-imperialist

movement, and the Black liberation movement, were arrested and tried under these statutes and are currently serving sentences. Dispersed throughout state and federal correctional institutions, over one third of these activists are women.

Of the five women currently incarcerated in HSU, three (Susan Rosenberg, Alejandrina Torres, and Silvia Baraldini) have long-standing political histories.³ Rosenberg has worked for years in solidarity with the Puerto Rican independence movement, the New Afrikan independence movement, and other national liberation struggles. She was an acupuncturist at the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America (BAAANA), a radical health center in Harlem, New York. In 1981, Rosenberg went underground to help build an anti-imperialist clandestine movement. She was arrested in 1984 and convicted of possessing explosives, weapons, and false identification. Rosenberg was sentenced to the maximum term of 58 years.

Alejandrina Torres has been an activist in the Puerto Rican community in Chicago since the early 1970s. She helped to found and then taught at the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School, a private school located at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and worked as a program organizer at the First Congregational Church, and participated in the activities of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War. She was arrested in 1983 and accused of membership in the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN); she faces 35 years for seditious conspiracy and other charges.

Silvia Baraldini became involved in the student movement working with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in support of the Black Panther Party and the Vietnamese national liberation struggle. She has been an organizer in solidarity with the New Afrikan Independence Movement in the U.S., and with ZANU in Southern Africa. In 1982, Baraldini was arrested and later convicted under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) in the New York federal trial against the Black Liberation Army on charges of racketeering and conspiracy to racketeer. She received a 40 year sentence.

Carol Manning, a member of the "Ohio 7," a group of radicals currently awaiting trial for seditious conspiracy, has also been designated to Lexington. Manning has been involved in community and prisoners' rights work since 1973. She was an organizer of the Statewide Correctional Alliance for Reform (SCAR) and of the Red Star North Bookstore; both organizations were involved in prisoners' rights and prison reform issues in Portland, Maine. Manning went underground in 1976 and was arrested in 1984 when she was charged with the bombings of U.S. military reserve centers and corporate headquarters of U.S. industries operating in South Africa.

For Rosenberg, Torres, Baraldini, and Manning, the term "political solidarity" refers to the support of actions, including paramilitary operations,

which they believe further the goals of the national liberation movements with which they are allied.

Although documents issued by the central Bureau of Prisons and its regional offices state the criteria for designating and transferring a female inmate to HSU to be related to her "violence-prone" or "escape-prone" classification, it is not to the individual's *demonstrated behavior* that the documents refer. Not one of these women has been convicted of charges that involve direct participation in assaultive actions. Nor have they been charged with any major infraction or involvement in a violent incident within the correctional system. It is the reputation of their political associations that is at issue. Due to the government's classification of the Puerto Rican independence and Black liberation movements as "terrorist" organizations, decisions concerning the designation, treatment, and transfer of prisoners associated with these movements do not remain within the jurisdiction of "local" prison authorities. These prisoners are classified as "high profile" inmates. As such, they are subject to "Central Inmate Monitoring," a federal classification which allows the Central Bureau — often in conjunction with intelligence agencies, primarily the FBI — to override local institutional recommendations (United States Bureau of Prisons, 1986).

In the cases of Rosenberg, Torres, Baraldini, and Manning, there is clear indication that they have been designated to the HSU because of their political perspectives and affiliations. In his "Request for Transfer" of Susan Rosenberg from FCI Tucson to the HSU at Lexington, Tucson Warden William Perrill provided the Regional Director of the Bureau of Prisons with the rationale for redesignation, which stated:

Rosenberg has been associated with the FALN, Black Liberation Army, and other groups. She also was thought to have been involved in an 1981 Brinks Armed Car Robbery and has previously been linked to the Joanne Chesimard escape in 1979. She also has threatened in open court to take her armed revolution behind prison walls. For the above reasons, we are referring her to a maximum security institution (U.S. Department of Justice, 1986).

Attorneys for Silvia Baraldini say that her transfer to HSU was completely unexpected. Baraldini had been held at FCI Pleasanton since her conviction three years ago. Recently, administrators at Pleasanton had recommended that her security status be lowered from a level four to a level three based on her "institutional adjustment." The order for transfer issued by the Western Regional Office, however, entirely discounts her institutional record, listing her political affiliations as the justification for redesignation to Lexington (Tipograph, 1987).

Manning (1987) speculates that her designation to Lexington is based primarily on her "jacket" (the FBI profile of her created prior to her arrest) and not on her behavior.

The designation is still confusing to me because during our previous trial, the women [Manning and two other co-defendants, Patricia Gros and Barbara Curzi-Lamaan] made it clear that while living in clandestinity, our responsibilities were centered around the home and the children. We are not "combatants." But the state had already singled me out. I was a fugitive. I had remained underground the longest — 12 years. And they made this big deal about the fact that I had studied martial arts. In the eyes of the state, I have been defined as "violence-prone" and I'm treated as a high security risk.

In addition to the political prisoners, two other women, Debra Brown and Sylvia Brown, have been placed in the unit. Debra Brown is serving two life sentences and facing two death penalties for murder convictions at the state level, and is currently doing federal time in HSU on kidnapping charges. Sylvia Brown has been convicted on robbery charges and has a history of escape.

To the FBI and other domestic intelligence agencies, Baraldini, Torres, Rosenberg, and Manning are individuals whose conviction records and institutional behavior do not reflect the complexity of motives that characterizes political prisoners. They are also not to be treated as "ordinary" criminals: they are "terrorists." Within the FBI-Bureau of Prisons network, it is understood that their crimes exceed their charges. Because of the use and manipulation of the terrorist label, these prisoners are trapped on the other side of the looking glass, in a never-never land of "special" categories and constantly shifting policies, where no security measure is deemed too harsh or inappropriate, where many of the rights of privacy accorded to the general prison population are denied, where congressional, judicial, and local prison authorities have abdicated their oversight responsibilities to Central Inmate Monitoring, and where the histories, motives, and rationality of these individuals as political radicals, are completely drained from their identity (Deutsch and Susler, 1987). Although these "special" standards are often applied to political prisoners in other correctional institutions, the architects of the HSU have built these features into the facility itself.

The "Scientific" Rationale for HSU As New Correctional Strategy

Since the late 1970s, studies in the field of international and domestic terrorism have proliferated. Emboldened by the prevailing anti-radical, anti-terrorist hysteria of the current political climate, this field has been dominated

by neoconservative intellectuals and Western criminal justice "experts."⁴ To understand the justification of the FBI-Bureau of Prisons network for the development of the "special incapacitation" correctional strategy for women political prisoners, it is necessary to examine this body of literature, as it likely shapes what correctional officials and law enforcement agents have come to personally know about the prisoners who they have labeled as "terrorists."

Although this literature addresses a variety of issues and aspects of the terrorist phenomenon, these writings share some essential characteristics. First and foremost, they have not challenged the official policy of the U.S. government, which holds that there are no political prisoners in this country. (South Africa is the only other country in the world that does not formally recognize its nation's political prisoners.)

Second, they espouse the view that contemporary terrorism is the product of the New Left and of welfare state "permissiveness" during the 1960s, and single out left-of-center theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Frantz Fanon as responsible for influencing modern terrorist groups in Africa, Western Europe, and North and South America through their celebration of violence and their development of philosophical rationalizations for terrorism (Grosscup, 1987). Alternatively, the neoconservative texts offer a "management" or social control orientation toward the subject.

Third, most of the research cited in these texts has been funded by or in conjunction with government and law enforcement agencies. Fourth, their analyses of terrorism and terrorists rely almost exclusively on intelligence information — FBI "jackets," informants' testimony, and derivative knowledge of character based on *modus operandi* and/or media accounts of specific events. Finally, descriptions and inferences about the terrorist's mind are unequivocal in assuming incurable pathology, and emphatic in warning about the futility of social or rehabilitative approaches to their incarceration, especially for women.

In "Political Prisoners and Terrorists in American Correctional Institutions," Edith Flynn (1978) has identified a set of psychological and sociological characteristics that distinguish the political terrorist from the rest of the prison population. The profile includes:

1. An engaging manner which elicits the interest, sympathy, and trust of other inmates and even staff;
2. Verbal abilities that allow them to rationalize their deed in terms of theoretical principles and noble ideals;
3. Extended familial ties and friendship networks that provide access to political, legal, media, and community-based groups;
4. Highly developed organizing skills due to their previous experience in political movements; and

5. An individual and collective capacity to resist institutionalization.

The manner in which this list is constructed implies that when relatively hygienic and sophisticated character traits are derived from or associated with radical politics, they are necessarily bound with subversive intent. Consequently, the author warns that possession of these characteristics by the political prisoner makes dispersion within the correctional system — wherein contact with the general prison population and groups outside the prison walls is maintained — unadvised, lest the prison become a breeding ground for radical ideas and connections with extremist groups. (This connection is often referred to as the "prison-terrorist link" [1978: 361].)

Beyond the recommendation for social isolation, in "Problems of Institutionalizing Political Terrorists," Crenlinsten, Laberge-Altmeld, and Szabo argue that compared with the general inmate population, this type of offender is impervious to traditional forms of both punishment and rehabilitation. The authors stress that the deterrent effect of punishment on the political terrorist appears to be totally inappropriate. "Possible imprisonment, let alone death, is just one of the risks that a terrorist assumes in the name of a particular cause" (1978: 72). Punishment, the authors reason, may even have an affirming effect on their egos, the proof that s/he personally poses a threat to the institution or state.⁵

Similarly, the authors believe that traditional forms of rehabilitation, e.g., work, training programs, recreation, and therapy cannot have a positive impact on the political terrorist in that s/he will not use these as avenues for personal growth, but rather as opportunities to criticize the prison and its authorities. Thus, if rehabilitation and deterrence through punishment is ineffectual, then incapacitation is the only recourse available.

Significantly, when the dimension of gender is added to concerns about the incarceration of the political criminal, the authoritarian element in treatment recommendations is heightened. Recent studies, merging conservative views in the area of political crime together with anti-feminist views in the area of female criminality, have argued that women in this category — "the female terrorist" — are even more problematic than the men, more impervious to traditional correctional strategies, more resistant to institutionalization, and more dangerous.

H.H.A. Cooper's "Woman as Terrorist," considered a classic study on the topic, emphasizes the emerging prominence of women in terrorist activities. He states:

The female terrorist has not been content just to praise the Lord and pass the ammunition; hers has been, as often as not, the finger on the trigger of some of the most powerful weaponry in the arsenal of modern-day terrorism. This new woman revolutionary is no Madame

Defarge patiently, if ghoulishly, knitting beside the guillotine while waiting for heads to roll. The new breed of female terrorist not only must have its hands firmly on the lever but must be instrumental in the capture of the victim and in the process of judgment, as well as in dragging the unfortunate death instrument. Women terrorists have consistently proved themselves more ferocious and more intractable in these acts than their male counterparts. There is a cold rage about some of them that even the most alienated of men seem quite incapable of emulating (1979: 151).

Pointing to figures such as Ulrike Meinhof of the Red Army Faction, Lolita Lebrón of the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, and Dora María Téllez Arguello of the Sandinista guerrillas, Cooper warns that the era of the submissive, dependent, male-oriented woman terrorist has ended.

Echoing Cooper's view, nationally acclaimed terrorist expert, Gayle Rivers, states:

The majority of female terrorists I've had to confront are spoiled, well-educated women from so-called good backgrounds who are turned on by aggressive acts. Some of them have first gotten involved in terrorist groups by becoming infatuated with a male terrorist or to prove themselves to a male-dominated society, as they see it, by being more macho than the men. In any event, they soon enough become single-minded bitter killers.... She lives in a world of violence that was long thought to be a male preserve. Therefore, there is great pressure for the female terrorist to keep proving herself. Under pressure, she will pass a point of no return, make a situation non-negotiable. If she is the leader and feels she is losing control over the male terrorists in her command, outrage overtakes discipline. Sad to say, to preserve her status as an operative, she is more likely to kill children (1986: 89).

On this new breed, according to the author, feminism has made its mark — for the worse. These women are amazons and when they are finally captured, new and expanded security measures to contain them must be devised.

The correctional policy implications of this body of literature in the field of terrorist studies is clear. Although the political status of individual prisoners is not officially recognized by the Central Office of the Bureau of Prisons, their references to and manipulation of the terrorist classification removes those individuals they associate with this label from the realm of standard correctional policies and even-handed treatment. Consequently, procedures concerning their incarceration may not be subject to prevailing correctional policies or, as in the case of the HSU, may be used as a justification for creating a new pol-

icy, a new facility, as well as new forms of repression within the correctional system.

Conditions

Imagine a world without color, any color. Only bright, high gloss white/beige — on the walls, floors, ceilings, everywhere one looks. Even the uniforms (ludicrous culottes selected for their "feminine" look) are bleached out beige. No personal clothing or jewelry are permitted. Next, imagine a world without daylight, without fresh air. Only artificial, fluorescent lights — often on all of the time; the windows are grilled over with metal grillwork, designed to preclude any vision of what it reveals of the outside world. Artificial air, either too hot or too cold, but never real.

The isolation is overwhelming — no meaningful contacts with anyone outside of other prisoners in the unit, prison guards, or officials, for years and years and years. Visits with family and attorneys to be contact or not, depending.... No correspondence without subjecting the would-be writer to a "security check." It is like stepping off the regular world...even the regular prison world...into a tomb (Reuben and Norman, 1987: 881).

Yet, despite the isolation and deprivation that attorney Mary O'Melveny communicates in this description of the HSU, the Bureau of Prisons does not define designation to this facility as a punitive measure. Indeed, each prisoner has access to a fairly extraordinary variety of resources — color television, recreational programs, work assignments, a general and well-stocked law library, and a computer. However, the social context that is typically implied by the availability of resources in an institutional setting has been completely eliminated. At Lexington, these resources are organized in such a way that each prisoner engages in these activities by herself and under a watchful eye. Being locked into a high-gloss container with a color television and an Apple computer is, according to one prisoner, "like life in McDonalds with bars" (Blunk, 1987).

Anticipating the experience of spending her 15-year minimum sentence in HSU, Carol Manning (1987) expresses concern about the disorienting effects of an environment that substitutes solitary activities and machines for human interaction. She recalls:

This funny thing happened. Though it wasn't funny after I thought about it. One day, while I was here at Metropolitan Correctional Center (New York), I had gone into this little room on the unit. It's a

smaller kind of exercise room, there's a library, and there's also a TV. I had laid down on the mat and turned on the TV and thought "Oh, I wish I had a TV in my cell, so I could lay down, be by myself, and watch TV." It's just how I felt. Then (weeks later), when I found out that I was designated for Lexington, I remembered this and said, "Oh, no! Here I go. Now I get my TV."

As yet, the Bureau of Prisons has not provided prisoners in the HSU with an approved copy of the rules and procedures applicable to the unit. Currently, the unit is regulated through "post orders," directives sent from the Central Bureau to the warden, and carried out by the five to seven guards that staff the unit on a rotational basis. According to Susan Rosenberg (1978), who has now spent almost eight months inside the HSU, the rules vary from day to day and are modified in relation to each individual. As she describes it:

Even within this leveled environment, they manage to create distinctions that are meant to foster competition and conflict among the prisoners. For instance, there are two cells on the tier that are larger than the others and have windows that are relatively unobstructed. Clearly, these will be the privileged quarters. And then there are the favors — extra phone calls, extra names on a correspondence list, contact visits doled out on a discretionary basis. Favors! Not our rights.

The aspect that gives HSU its most prominent distinction, however, is the emphasis on control via behavioral monitoring, camera surveillance, and strip searches every time prisoners are returned to the unit, and through manipulation and the constant logging and evaluation of individual reactions to these conditions. According to Rosenberg, these elements of psychological coercion are part of a "mission" within U.S. prisons to destroy political prisoners and the histories and commitments that they represent.

At a designation hearing for Torres and Rosenberg held on November 18, 1986, the infusion of counterinsurgency concerns into correctional policy was made explicit. At this time, the two women were informed that their maximum custody and security level status had to do with their political "affiliations" (as opposed to their conduct or current institutional record). According to a memorandum issued by the Assistant Director of Correctional Programs for the Bureau of Prisons G.L. Ingram (see U.S. Government Memorandum, 1986) to the Chief Executive Officers of the Regional Office Staff in the Federal System, these political associations "create a serious threat of external assault for the purpose of aiding the offender's escape." Therefore, "classification would be re-evaluated when these factors no longer apply." Rosenberg's and Torres' se-

curity classifications will be re-evaluated only when they have renounced their political associations.

A "Special" Unit: Incapacitation, Deterrence, Experimentation

The neoclassical dictum in correctional philosophy holds that it is necessary to employ measures that contain criminality without regard to the reasons people engage in crime in the first place. James Q. Wilson (1975) proposed this principle as a response to liberal-minded criminologists who, during the late 1960s and early 1990s, viewed criminality as a symptom of widespread poverty and profound inequality in American society. Wilson retorted, "why direct our attention toward social conditions and variables that cannot be easily changed?"

If efforts among correctional reformers to articulate the relationship between poverty, inequality, and "ordinary" criminality were perceived to be so threatening as to incite a revival of classical philosophy, then it is not difficult to imagine what response today's conservatives might have to a systemic analysis of political crime. What would it mean to articulate the social and economic causes of Rosenberg's 58-year sentence for weapons and explosives possession, Torres' charge of seditious conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government, or Baraldini's conviction for racketeering and criminal contempt to obstruct the grand jury? How could the social etiology of these crimes be analyzed without reference to U.S. policies in Southeast Asia, South Africa, and Latin America? Or to the legacies of those who have devoted their lives to radical movements in the U.S. and abroad?

The HSU at Lexington may be viewed as a first effort to develop a strategy which insures that a critical analysis of political crime will have no place in the formulation of correctional policy and practices with respect to political prisoners. This strategy, which I have termed "special incapacitation," affirms and extends the neoclassical model and sanctions the use of counterinsurgency and psychologically coercive measures within the correctional system. While meeting all requirements for custodial care and prisoners' "rights," the HSU promotes the long-term incapacitation of prisoners through isolation, extensive surveillance, and sensory deprivation.

Beyond incapacitation of its prisoners, the unit also serves as a general deterrent. Within the mutually supportive nexus of corrections and intelligence agencies, the terrorist label is imbued with infinite elasticity. While they recognize that the current membership of armed, underground organizations inside the U.S. is small, in their view activists in various student, minority, anti-war, environmental, and women's groups represent potential sources of sympathy, support, and comfort for those in the terrorist ranks (Grosscup, 1987).

Thus, by restricting visits and correspondence, investigating and photographing those who do enter the unit, the stigma that is attached to HSU de-

signees is extended to all those who would seek out interaction with these women. If the visitor or correspondent is involved in a political movement (whether or not it advocates violent or extralegal forms of dissent), then he/she and the entire organization to which they belong can become the subject of a "pre-emptive" investigation regarding the "prison-terrorist" link. This investigation may also be extended to attorneys.⁶

The least clear (but potentially most significant) aspect of this unit is the extent to which it will serve as a laboratory within the correctional system, not just in terms of observing and recording the habits and reactions of political prisoners or, more specifically, "the captive female terrorist," but also as a more general experiment in behavior modification, sensory deprivation, social isolation, and small group confinement.⁷ The deleterious effects of long-term exposure to these conditions have been documented. They include deterioration of physiological and biochemical systems, perceptual and motor capabilities, cognitive performance, and primary process functioning (hallucinations); depression and demoralization also arise.

Although the Bureau of Prisons has not made explicit its purpose in simulating these changes in women political prisoners, it is widely recognized by experimental psychologists that production of these states in humans significantly heightens conformity and acquiescence to authority (Zubek, 1969). Undoubtedly, the results of such experimentation could serve as a pseudo-scientific basis on which the Bureau of Prisons will be able to normalize these conditions, to justify the application of these measures to other so-called nonpunitive facilities, and to other types of prisoners.

Among the women political prisoners, their attorneys, and prisoner advocacy and anti-repression groups, there is much discussion about these issues. Political and legal strategies for public awareness and media coverage are being considered.⁸ In July 1987, the ACLU National Prison Project sent a delegation, including a psychologist, to observe the conditions in the HSU; a report (Freeman et al., 1987) has been issued. Amnesty International has already determined that the allegations of human rights violations meet its criteria and is sending a letter of inquiry to federal prison officials. A Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Women's Control Unit has been organized. These organizations have raised serious questions, including whether the prisoners' First Amendment rights are being violated because of blanket restrictions controlling visitation, communication, and access to reading materials; whether their Fourth Amendment rights are being violated because of the frequent strip searches and the constant surveillance; and whether these prisoners' very assignments to the HSU in and of itself constitutes cruel and unusual punishment (Reuben and Norman, 1987: 883).

Yet, as Manning (1987) emphasizes, the women who may spend the rest of their lives inside the unit are engaged in a more complicated and immediate task:

We have to remain two steps ahead of our captors, to figure out how to remain in communication with each other inside and with those on the outside, to keep ourselves mentally and physically alert despite their efforts to break us, and to resist individually and collectively those things they call privileges.

I'm trying to imagine, how do you live your life under those conditions. I can't! And maybe it's good that I can't because it would be kind of giving up.

Epilogue

In summer 1987, the office of Representative Robert Kastenmeier, who is Chair of the Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice Committee on the Judiciary requested that the National Prison Project at the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation conduct a formal assessment of the Female High Security Unit at Lexington, Kentucky. On July 20, 1987, two attorneys and a psychologist toured the facility and interviewed each of the prisoners as well as the staff. The report unequivocally condemned both the political/ideological aspects of the criteria for designation to (and retention in) the HSU and the conditions of confinement (Freeman et al., 1987). It concluded:

Taken together, the reasons given for assignment to the unit and the lack of administrative procedures for assignment, the manner in which the unit environment and procedures are manipulated by institutional staff, and the failure to provide a meaningful mechanism to move out of the unit violate notions of fundamental fairness and create severe mental distress for the unit population. In addition, some of these women's First Amendment rights to freedom of association are being violated.... [There exists] a level of administrative cruelty and callousness that is gratuitous, unnecessary, and extreme (*Ibid.*: 2).

An "Appendix" to the report provided by the psychologist, Richard Korn, describes marked physical and psychological deterioration of the prisoners. Based on its findings, the report recommends that the HSU should be closed or utilized merely for short-term disciplinary confinement (Korn, 1987: 11).

On October 5, 1987, the authors of this report met with Michael Quinlan, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons. At this meeting, Quinlan announced the

Bureau's intention to make formidable changes with regard to the HSU and its current population. These included:

1. Closing the HSU within seven to nine months;
2. Amelioration of some of the restrictions, particularly on visitation, that are imposed on the current population;
3. An end to strip searches; and
4. A re-evaluation of each prisoner's security classification and imminent integration of the women into the general population of another unit with normal programming.

At this meeting, Quinlan further indicated that the Bureau was in the process of constructing a new high-security federal penitentiary for women in Marianna, Florida, that would hold the approximately 150-200 women within the correctional system who are in need of higher security than existing institutions currently provide. (This population may or may not include all or any of the women in the HSU.)

On November 5, 1987, ACLU psychologist Richard Korn conducted a follow-up interview with the women in the HSU and found that virtually none of the changes announced by Quinlan at the October 5th meeting had been implemented. In fact, the women reported subjugation to increased hostility, new forms of mistreatment, and defamation of character (Korn, 1987: 5-8). In his follow-up report, Korn argues that the failure of the Bureau of Prisons to follow through on their stated intentions to conduct security re-evaluations, transfer the women out of the HSU, and ameliorate existing conditions has thwarted the expectations of the prisoners, causing further physiological and psychological deterioration.

Korn concluded this report with two recommendations:

1. The women must be immediately transferred to the general population of a facility which does not distort their identities and endanger their safety by treating them as personally violent. A different physical setting operating under the present guidelines would be unacceptable.
2. The guidelines themselves, as well as the very questionable legal and ethical assumptions which inspired them, must be subjected to the most searching independent investigation. A novel category of political prisoner has been established by administrative fiat. A new kind of prison is being prepared to deal with this new category of offender. At the very least, each of these new phenomena would seem to require a more deliberative consideration than can be provided by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (*Ibid.*: 15-16).

Upon reviewing the findings and recommendations of Korn's follow-up report, the Executive Director of the ACLU National Prison Project, Alvin

Bronstein (1987a), has asked Quinlan to move the prisoners out of the HSU by no later than December 22, 1987. If this deadline is not met by the Bureau of Prisons, Bronstein (1987b) has stated his intention to request a Senate Hearing investigation.

In addition, the ACLU, in conjunction with the Center for Constitutional Rights and attorneys for the prisoners in the HSU, will be filing a law suit against the Bureau of Prisons, challenging the designation and transfer criteria to and from the HSU and the policies and conditions which have existed in this facility.

Notes

1. In Western Europe, political prisoners have been held in facilities that are similar in design to the HSU. They have been referred to as "isolation units," "dead wings," and "white death sections" within existing penitentiaries. The isolation units in West German prisons, including Stuttgart-Stammheim, Celle, Berlin-Tegel, Berlin-Moabit, Lübeck, and Munich-Straubing are described in P. Bakker-Schut, R. Biswanger, and B. Rambert, "Documentation and Critical Comments about the Report Submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in November, 1977" (October, 1985: 15).

2. Immediately after their 1980 election victory, the Reagan campaign staff and transition team announced that a major priority of the new administration's domestic agenda would be the renovation of the national security system, and that the problem of terrorism would be of central concern to the architects of that system. The specific proposals of this renovation and its linkage to the threat of terrorism were advanced in two sources: the *Mandate for Leadership*, a thousand-page study authored by members of the Reagan transition team under the direction of Edwin Meese; and Keppenman and Trent, *Terrorism: Threat, Reality, and Response*.

3. Biographical information related to Baraldini, Manning, Torres, and Rosenberg was obtained either through personal interviews or through interviews with their legal representatives. These interviews were conducted by the author in 1985-1986 in preparation for a book on women and political violence.

4. The period between 1976-1978 is marked by a significant increase in the publication of books and articles on terrorism as well as the publication of *Terrorism: An International Journal*. The "management" perspective is reflected in the preponderance of books authored by antiterrorist experts and law enforcers, and is implied in the work of leading scholars in the field such as Walter Laqueur, Paul Wilkinson, and Dobson and Payne.

5. Recent studies concerning the "terrorist's psyche" begin to take their assertions beyond simplistic characterizations toward the integration of psychoanalytic concepts, ranging from Theodore Riek's early analysis of the sado-masochistic personality to the more contemporary and controversial theories of Heinz Kohut relating to the borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. See, for instance, Blanchard (1984) and Crayton (1983).

6. In the summer of 1986, three paralegal workers at West Town Law Office in Chicago were arrested and charged with conspiring to aid the escape of their client, a Puerto Rican *independentista* imprisoned in Leavenworth.

7. Efforts to operate a research and behavior modification facility within the federal system of corrections have been made in the past. In 1976, a psychiatric forensic unit was established at FCI Butner in North Carolina. The aversive and coercive techniques that are employed by the

Special Treatment and Rehabilitative Training (START) program at Butner have been under severe criticism. See Holland (1974) and Shein (1963).

8. Information regarding the specific purpose and future plans for the HSU is extremely limited. Efforts to elicit information beyond the superficial description of the facility provided by the HSU's Public Relations Office were met with a reference to the Department of Justice and a requirement to apply under the Freedom of Information Act.

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