

# THERE ARE WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN U.S.

A political prisoner is anyone jailed because of their self-conscious political acts against the government. Special "control units" designed to isolate and break the spirits of political prisoners and prisoners of war (POWs) are the newest part of the US "justice" system. Some of the people in this country imprisoned for taking an active stand against racism and US imperialism are being subjected to conditions in these new units that have been classified as psychological torture by the ACLU in a recent report.

In October 1986, the Women's Control Unit at Lexington, Kentucky was secretly built in the basement of an existing prison. Control Units are not a new concept. Since 1977, the Bureau of Prisons has set up at least three of these facilities, each one more advanced in sensory deprivation than the last. New techniques for psychological torture have been refined by Germany and Ireland. The US has implemented several of these techniques in the Lexington Control Unit. These include:

- Random non-consensual vaginal and rectal "searches" by male prison employees
- No visits by anyone other than immediate family and lawyers — no contact visits at all
- No interaction with other prisoners outside the Unit — even the guards are forbidden to have more than minimal communication with the women on the Unit
- No privacy, continuous guard presence and 24-hour electronic monitoring using video cameras, harsh fluorescent lighting 24 hours a day
- Placement in small closed cells painted beige in a unit painted beige — no personalization of cells or person is allowed (i.e., no jewelry, only prison-issue uniforms)
- There are no procedures set up for transfer out of the Unit — the prisoners are given no hope and no power to effect any changes on their situations



There are over 100 political prisoners and prisoners of war in the US now, at least 25% of them are women. Currently incarcerated at Lexington are:

**Alejandrina Torres:** Active in Chicago's Puerto Rican community through her church as well as an alternative high school and clinic. When arrested in 1983 she assumed Prisoner of War status. Serving 35 years for seditious conspiracy.

**Susan Rosenberg:** A North American political prisoner who has worked in solidarity with the New Afrikan and Puerto Rican movements. She's dedicated her life to anti-imperialist struggles. Sentenced to 58 years for possession of weapons, explosives and false I.D.

**Silvia Baraldini:** An anti-imperialist Italian national who worked for years in solidarity with the New Afrikan Independence Movement. She comes from an Italian family long involved in the resistance against fascism. She is serving 43 years for charges of conspiracy (under RICO) stemming from Grand Juries called to investigate the 1981 Brinks case.

**Debra Brown & Silvia Brown:** Two women who don't describe themselves as political prisoners. We have no detailed information about them at this time.

**"I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping the work going. The people in charge are going to respond only to increased pressure. . . . The issue of political prisoners must be raised. This is the reason why we have been sent here and this is the reason the conditions are so harsh. Everything is aimed at isolating us from the struggle developing outside. . ."**

*Silvia Baraldini*



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Write a letter or send a telegram to: Warden, P.O. Box 2000, Lexington, Kentucky 40512

Send a copy of your letter to: J. Michael Quinlan, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, 320 1st Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20534

In your letter include the following:

1. Protest the treatment that the women in Lexington are receiving
2. Demand their immediate transfer to the general population
3. Call for the closure of all Control Units
4. Demand an end to the selective harrassment of Political Prisoners and POWs

For more information, contact **OUT OF CONTROL: Committee to Shut Down Lexington Control Unit**  
3543 18th Street, P.O. Box 30, San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 550-8274 or 647-6695.