

The Watch Guard

A Prisoner's News Journal Published by the Malcom X Commemoration Committee

January 1996

Control Units and the Community

By M.N.

Control Units. Words you will hear a lot more about in the near future.

Often called "Super-Max", "Maxi-Maxi", "Secure Housing Unit (SHU)", "Administrative Segregation", or any number of other names. The inmates in these "prisons within prisons" always are separated from the normal general prison population and guards. The occupants are locked in their cell on an average of 23 hours, 7 days a week. They only come out for exercise, showers and an occasional trip to the law library.

There has always been a place in all prisons and jails designed to keep prisoners locked up for longer periods than the general prison population. These places are known as the "hole". A "hole" and a "control unit" are a lot different! A hole is a place that a prisoner is sent to admittedly to be punished by the overseers for breaking rules. His/her punishment is defined, labeled and limited to fit the offense.

Even the most severe offenses will not net a prisoner a sentence exceeding six months to a year...if he/she behaves. However, a control unit is a kind of hole that a prisoner can be sent to for any reason or no reason at all...as long as the prison overseers state that your actions, or lack of actions constitute a threat to the security of their institutions. Your sentence can be anywhere from 1 hour till your entire prison sentence expires.

If it was simply a matter of the prison overseers identifying and sepa



Geronimo Ji-Jaga Pratt has been held as a political prisoner for 17 years in a California Control Unit.

rating those prisoners deemed as a "real" threat to their security, and holding them under more secure conditions, this could easily be understood. The control units, however, have different objectives than simply securing and/or punishing the prisoners. The control units are designed to destroy the prisoners!...Psychologically, spiritually and

(Continued on page 5)

A Call to all freedom loving Afrikan/Black people

Help us build the campaign to free our Afrikan political prisoners and prisoners of war!

The Malcolm X Commemoration Committee is calling on our Afrikan/black brothers and sisters to take a stance against the unjust incarceration of our Afrikan freedom fighters by the U.S. government.

Our freedom fighters are in jail as a consequence of the U.S. government's and the FBI's COINTELPRO program (a program designed by the FBI in the late 60s to disrupt, sabotage and neutralize our leaders and organizations, so they won't be in position to organize the community to struggle for empowerment and self-determination).

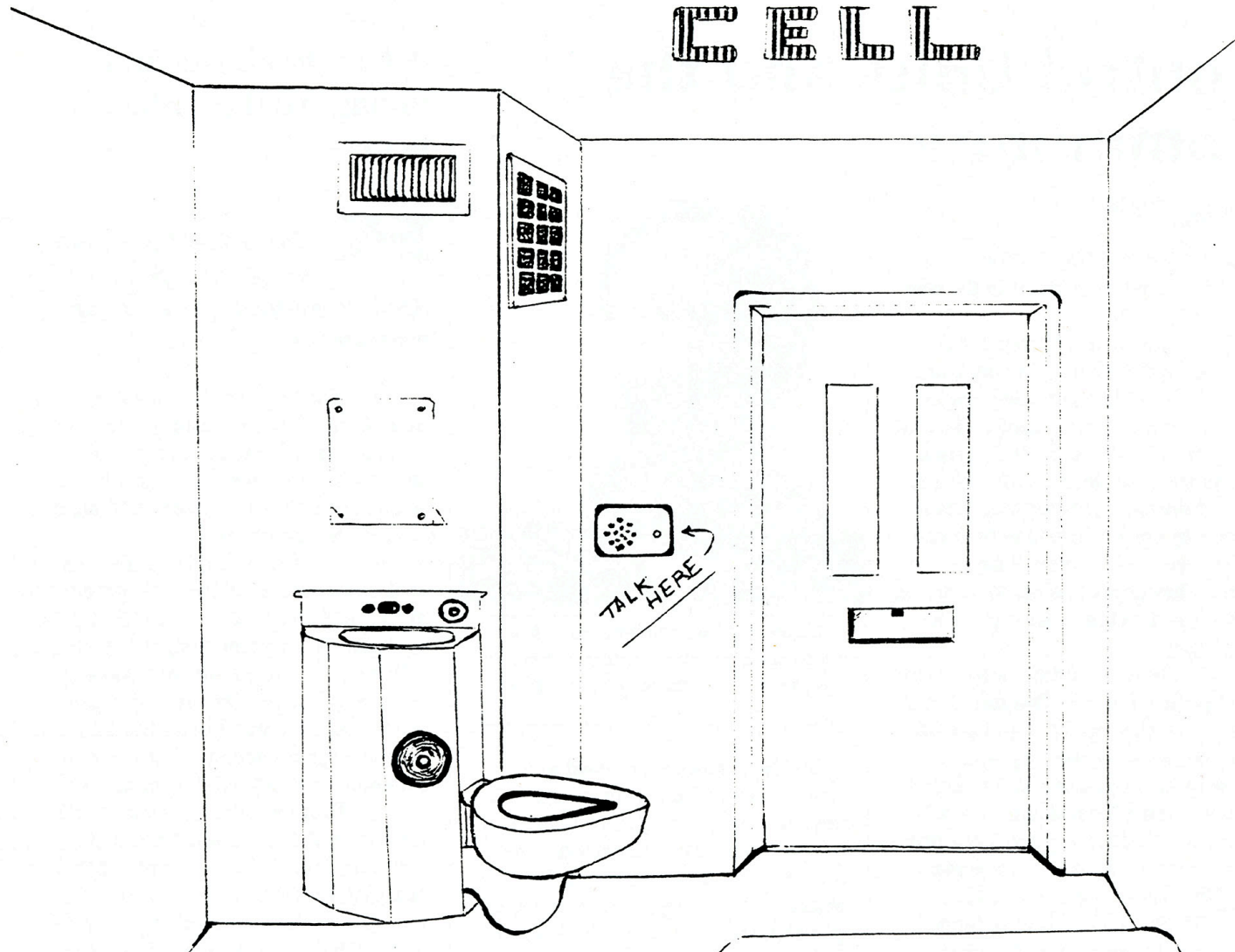
Brothers like Sundiata Acoli, Geronimo Pratt, Russell Shoats (Bro. Maroon), Tayari Uhuru, Mutulu Shakur and Jalil Bottoms have been in jail 13 to 25 years. Many of them have spent most of their adult lives in the hole or in control units. Brothers like Zion Yisrayah, and, of course, our brother Mumia Abu-Jamal are on death row. And our brother Ajamu Nassor was executed on December 8, 1994 at the Indiana Department of Corrections. This is a damn shame brothers and sisters, and we should never forgive ourselves for letting this happen. Our words are a little too late for our brother Ajamu Nassor, but it is not too late to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal and free our

(Continued on page 3)

Inside This Issue:

Employment Help Corner	Page 5
Cultural Calendar	Page 4
International Afrikan News	Page 3

MUMIA ABU JAMALS CELL



S.C.I. GREENE,
WAYNESBURG, PA.
"SUPER MAX"

(Continued from page 3)

Nigeria, they will not hesitate to harm Africans here in Camden. The environmental problems in Ogoni territory are not unlike the toxic dumps that always manage to find their way into African communities here in the U.S.. We are all niggers in the eyes of the capitalists, no matter where we are born. What's worse is that they put their gasoline stations in our neighborhoods and use our money to do their dirty work. Nigeria, like most of Africa, has extraordinary natural wealth that, if used to benefit Africans rather than western capitalists, could mean better lives for our people all over the world. We beg you to join with us in a struggle to educate and organize Africans to reclaim Africa for the Africans (including we Africans here in Camden). We believe Africans united world wide can defeat any enemy!

Boycott the oil companies! Circulate petitions! Write letters to newspapers! Picket oil company facilities! Research and study! Adopt any form of struggle that will stop the injustice!

Bothers and sisters from Nigeria cannot openly resist because of reprisals, they are counting on us!

For more information, contact the Pan-African Positive Action Committee, at: (609)338-0018, (609)964-9746, or (609)962-0535

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please send any photos, articles, editorials, or mail to :

The WatchGuard
c/o The Afrikan
Internationalist Freedom
Center, 5301 West Girard
Avenue, Phila, PA 19131

If you want any material returned to you, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Contents of submitted articles may be condensed for space considerations.

**ATTENTION BLACK PEOPLE:
NOW IS THE TIME TO STAND UP!**

Brother Mumia Abu-Jamal, a political prisoner and freedom fighter, urgently needs your help to get a new trial! Mumia, like many other political prisoners, has been active in our liberation struggle since his teens. The United States government intends to make Mumia, and others like him an example to our youth, so that they will be afraid to claim their legacy as the force behind our revolution. Please help by signing your name to this petition, and mailing it to the U.S. Attorney General, Janet Reno.

Dare to be free! Free Mumia!

Honorable Janet Reno
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Reno,

I am aware that you have received thousands of messages - including 35 from congressional representatives, the N.A.A.C.P., and the Rainbow Coalition - urging the Justice Department to intervene in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The call for the Justice Department to take action persisted, even after the stay of execution was granted to Mr. Abu-Jamal, and became more specifically directed at asking for a comprehensive civil rights investigation.

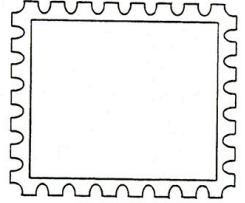
Your response has been that while the Justice Department has the statutory authority to investigate state court proceedings, and where civil rights violations have occurred to prosecute the parties responsible for those violations, there is a five year statute of limitations in both cases - UNLESS THERE IS SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE OF AN ONGOING CONSPIRACY.

Yes, Mumia Abu-Jamal's trial occurred in 1982, eight years beyond the statute of limitations. But there is, indeed, significant evidence of an ongoing conspiracy to deny Mr. Abu-Jamal his human and civil rights and to assure that he be executed regardless of his innocence. To cite just one recent example of that conspiracy, Mumia Abu-Jamal was denied his right to communicate with his attorney in confidentiality. Confidential legal notes were duplicated and presented to the Governor of Pennsylvania, the very person who had signed Mr. Abu-Jamal's death warrant on June 1st. Further documentation of that ongoing conspiracy will be presented to you.

I join with thousands of others, once again, to urge you to conduct a comprehensive civil rights investigation to examine all the ways in which there has been and CONTINUES TO BE a conspiracy on the part of the State of Pennsylvania, from its executive to its judicial branches, to silence Mumia Abu-Jamal once and for all. A Justice Department civil rights investigation would make a significant contribution towards guaranteeing the new trial that Mumia Abu-Jamal must have if justice is to be served.

In light of this conspiracy, we request that all Philadelphia police files pertaining to Mumia Abu-Jamal, including those on police officer Daniel Faulkner be disclosed. A Justice Department civil rights investigation could make a significant contribution toward guaranteeing the new trial that Mumia Abu-Jamal must have.

Yours truly,



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