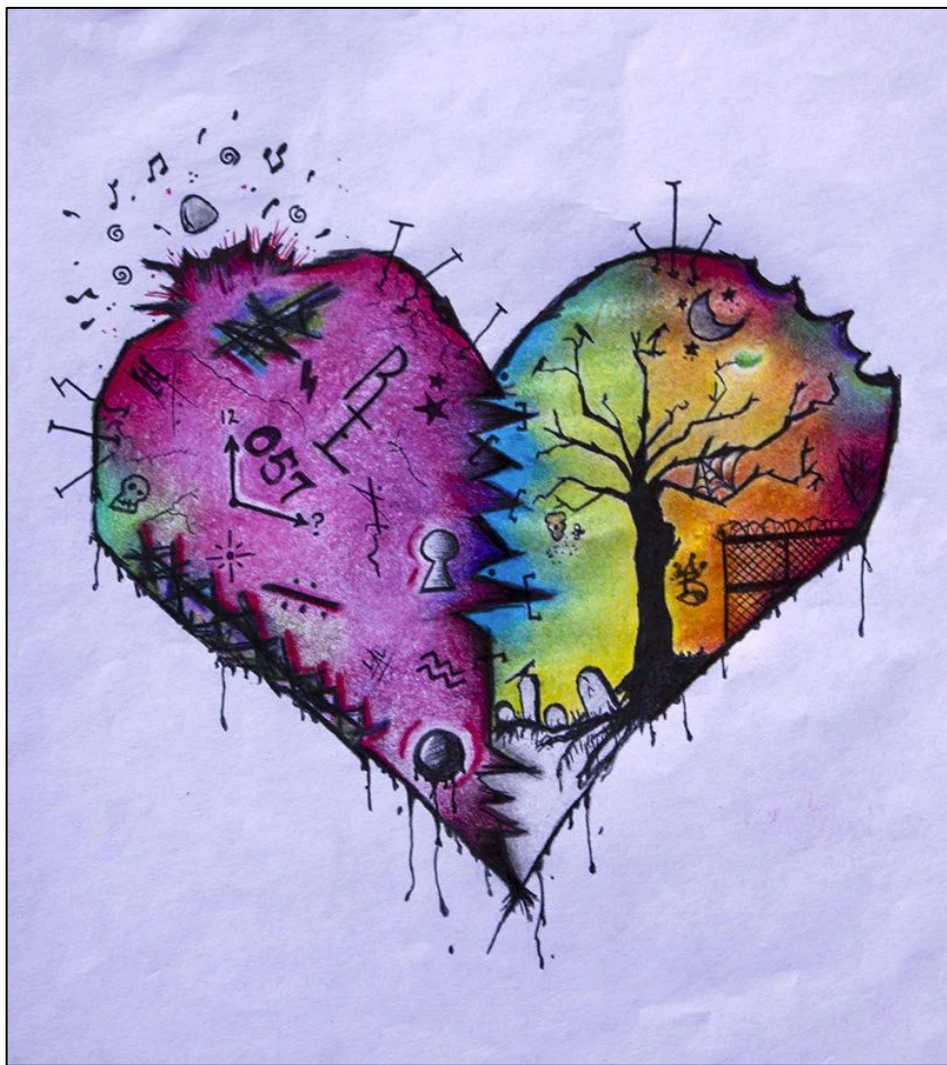


WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



WINTER - 2023 / 24
- ISSUE #33 -

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #33 of Women's Prison Network, a zine by & for women, trans & youth prisoners on Treaty Lands with Canada.



In every Issue we strive to provide a safe space for creative expression, informative news & support resources. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything of sincere value to share.

Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please.

Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best.

Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation.

Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ...

Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (½ page = 300 words max).

For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous' unless requested.

'Women's Prison Network' is published 4 times per year.

It is sent out for free to Women, Trans & Youth in Prisons in Canada.

If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

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Cover: Brittany Thomas – 'The Crux'



< Donations for this Issue >

Very special thanks out to:

Trans+ Prison Project !

Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

< Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment >

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which Prison Free Press operates is the Traditional Territory of the Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

~ 'Dish With One Spoon' Wampum ~

The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.

One had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or a rat in a trap.

- Ida B. Wells

Canada is failing the wrongfully convicted, again

Those who have suffered miscarriages of justice have waited too long for half-measures. Unfortunately, a government bill before Parliament does just that.

Seven public inquiries since 1989 recommended a permanent and independent commission patterned after one in England to investigate refer suspected miscarriages of justice back to the courts. In 2021, the federal government asked us to conduct consultations and make recommendations on the design of such a commission.

We spoke to exonerees and more than 200 other people. We then prepared a detailed report. We fear that, like so many reports before, ours has largely been ignored.

We recommended a commission of 9 to 11 people, chosen through an independent committee and with non-renewable terms. At least one commissioner would be Indigenous and another Black to reflect the populations most at risk for wrongful convictions.

What the bill provides is a commission with as little as five people, appointed through cabinet's nontransparent and slow system of appointments, with a nod to diversity. Commissioners can serve renewable seven year terms, perhaps compromising their independence.

The chief commissioner could be the only full time appointment and would also have to be chief executive officer in charge of negotiating with the federal bureaucracy.

We recommended a commission with powers to determine who can apply to it and powers to access material, even if police and prosecutors claimed legal privilege. The English commission operating since 1997 has such powers.

What the bill delivers is a commission that cannot hear any claims involving sentences and only can hear applications from those who have lost at a Court of Appeal. If this is not changed, the commission will be irrelevant to the vast majority of those caught in our criminal justice. The Commission's investigations could be thwarted by claims of privilege.

Almost 20% of the 87 people on the Canadian Registry of Wrongful Convictions originally pled guilty, including five women and three racialized

men who were victims of Charles Smith's flawed expert evidence. None of them would be able to apply to the proposed commission because they did not appeal until others discovered evidence that they were not guilty.

After speaking with representatives of five foreign commissions, we concluded that a Canadian commission could also be subject to underfunding. To prevent this, we recommended that the new commission be treated on financial matters more like the independent judiciary than a small federal agency in Ottawa.

The bill ignores this recommendation. The commission's budget and pay will depend on the cabinet's discretion with commissioners deemed to be civil servants. A serious problem with the present system is that civil servants advise the minister of justice whether to order a new trial or appeal.

We recommended a proactive commission that could engage on systemic and disciplinary matters. Bill C-40, in contrast, defines the mandate of the new commission as processing applications.

We recommended that the new commission not be able to deny an application on the vague basis that it was "not in the interests of justice." Bill C-40 instead gives the commission a discretion to reject an application on such a basis, even when it finds that there may be a miscarriage of justice.

To be sure, there are some good features in the bill, but its ability to provide legal representation and supports for applicants will depend on the adequacy of its budget.

Given the lack of substantive engagement with our report - which the committee may not have yet reviewed - and its unimpressive first day of hearings, we are not optimistic that necessary amendments will emerge from this process.

During our work on the report, we talked to and were guided by the late David Milgaard. In our respectful view, this bill needs a complete overhaul before it merits having David's and his mother Joyce's name attached to it.

Harry LaForme, Kent Roach
The Star
Nov 5, 2023

Sanity is a cozy lie. - Susan Sontag

Prison Amazon accounts keep Federal Inmates stuck in the 1990s

Inmates have purchased roughly \$130,000 in vintage video gaming technology since federal prisons opened Amazon accounts last year, as security rules keep entertainment options mired decades in the past.

Correctional Service Canada (CSC) policies forbid inmates from buying any technology capable of communicating with the outside world. That means Canadian penitentiaries are places where the CD never died, Smart TVs are unknown and pioneering consoles like the Super Nintendo have endured decades past their prime.

Amazon became CSC's first e-commerce supplier in January 2022, with a B.C. company joining months later. The aim was to give inmates access to wider choice and better prices.

It's proven increasingly successful, according to Ghislaine Sauvé, CSC director general of technical services and facilities.

In 2022, inmates bought \$586,000 worth of goods using the system. So far this year, purchases have already surpassed \$740,000, Sauvé said.

But even with the world's largest e-commerce company on board, the inmate purchasing experience remains decidedly low-tech.

Electronic goods are mostly limited to what CSC called "first-generation" consoles like the Nintendo Entertainment System, the Super Nintendo and the Nintendo 64, as well as the Game Boy and Game Boy Advance.

The 1994-era PlayStation 1 takes top spot as the most popular console behind bars, with about 159 units purchased.

But the Nintendo Switch, Game Boy DS, Wii and GameCube are off limits, according to CSC, as are more recent PlayStations. Policies also explicitly forbid any iteration of the Xbox.

"Some of the more modern consoles can access the internet," said Sauvé. "And this is something that potentially is a risk."

Devices that read MP3s are also banned, according to the policies, although Sauvé could not explain why. And the rules prohibit video-reading devices, which means inmates cannot buy movies or television shows and are limited to cable TV.

Personal computing is likewise stuck in the 20th century. Under the policies, inmates cannot use

any Microsoft operating system more recent than Windows 98 and must rely on Microsoft Office 97 for their word processing and spreadsheet requirements.

Inmates do not have direct access to the Amazon account, according to Sauvé. Instead, they choose from a paper list and take their orders to staff, who log on and place the order.

"At some point, a box like you've seen on your doorstep will get delivered to one of our institutions," he said.

The money comes from inmate accounts. There are limits to how much each prisoner can possess: \$1,500 of property and an additional \$300 of jewellery.

"It is their money," said Sauvé. "So let's be clear about that. This is not taxpayer money."

The Amazon system is the latest step in a journey that gives offenders more and better choices, while also saving CSC staff unnecessary effort.

Years ago, purchases were made locally, leading to "inconsistencies," Sauvé said.

"It was a bit of a burden on an institution having to have somebody [say] 'OK, your turn to go to Walmart and pick up some items,'" he said.

So CSC later began working with a B.C. company called Prototype Integrated Solutions Inc. That centralized the process, but it had its drawbacks.

"Delivery times could be a bit slow," Sauvé said. "The variety ... it is what it is, but then again it's vetted through security. And I know offenders were not always happy with the prices."

That prompted the move to Amazon, though Prototype came back on as the second electronic supplier last year.

One advantage of using e-commerce platforms is that it blunts any accusations of price gouging, according to Sauvé.

"This is the same system that you use, or any other Canadian would use," he said. "We don't take a cut. They pay what's there and they get it delivered."

CSC policies limit more than technological progress behind bars. They also censor content - for video games, clothing and even jigsaw puzzles.

The rules forbid games with any information on how to make drugs or weapons, and those that could explain how to commit or cover up crimes. Games that promote "a theory of racial superiority" or incite hatred against a specific

group are also prohibited, as are those that advocate genocide.

The same goes for "material of a sexual nature that involves violence, coercion, degradation, bodily harm or threats thereof to a person, whether real or fictional," and anything that promotes gangs or terrorist ideology.

CSC was unable to provide examples of any sexist, racist or genocidal games unavailable on its e-commerce accounts in accordance with those policies.

Fashion is also restricted: clothing logos cannot depict gangs, alcohol, drugs, sexuality or violence. Musicians, "pop culture icons" are in most cases fine.

Jigsaw puzzles are subject to similar restrictions.

Music appears to be a free-for-all, with "all genres" allowed and no apparent restrictions on lyrics. But the ban on MP3 players will limit, or at least severely delay, access to the newest releases.

CSC did not respond to repeated requests for the complete list of items available through Amazon and Prototype, referring instead to its written policies for guidance on what is allowed.

But a tendering document that first announced CSC's plan to sign a deal with Amazon revealed more about the "list of goods to be made available to inmates." It included geometry sets, acoustic guitars and harmonicas, as well as hacksaws, carving tools, mallets, drills and X-Acto knives.

Asked why inmates would need access to those potentially dangerous tools, Sauvé pointed to Indigenous cultural practices and "arts and crafts."

"It's not like they're just handed tools and here you go," he said. "There's a lot of different policies and steps in place to make sure that's done safely."

He also explained that purchasing options differ between security levels. Medium-security inmates can order scissors, suspenders and moustache trimmers, according to the policies, but those items are off limits in maximum-security prisons.

Geometry sets are explicitly prohibited for both security classes, though the policies are silent on minimum security. They do not clarify which prisoners have access to hacksaws.

Asked why inmates serving sentences for criminal activity should enjoy such a wide range of products, including a selection of vintage gaming

consoles, Sauvé pointed to the universal human need for leisure.

"They're going to serve their time in an institution. While they're there, there's [programming] to help their rehabilitation," he said.

"Leisure time forms part of that too," Sauvé added. "It's for them to decide how they're going to spend some of that time, I guess, just like it is for you in your own home."

Arthur White-Crummey

CBC News

Sep 04, 2023

Nova Scotia becomes first province to stop holding immigration detainees

Nova Scotia has become the first province to stop holding immigration detainees on behalf of the federal government.

Canada Border Services Agency says the province ended the practice of housing migrants in its jails on Aug. 8.

Other provinces have said they would stop holding immigration detainees, including British Columbia and Alberta.

However, both of those provinces have agreed to temporarily continue housing high-risk detainees in jails, but they are not accepting new inmates.

Saskatchewan is slated to end its agreement with the agency on Sept. 30, while Manitoba and Ontario are set to terminate their deals next year.

The agency says it does not have agreements with Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador but works with them on a case-by-case basis.

CBSA says it considers several factors for detaining immigrants, including whether a person is inadmissible to Canada, poses a flight risk or is a danger to the public due to a criminal history.

The agency runs its own immigration detention centres in Laval, Que., Toronto, and Surrey, B.C.

The Canadian Press

Sep 1, 2023

Our mistreatment was just not right, and I was tired of it.

- Rosa Parks

Disability and the prison system (Excerpt)

There's a saying among prisoners: if you don't have a disability going into prison, you're probably leaving with one.

Disability justice and prisoner justice advocates often call prisons the new asylums. Canada has long history of institutionalizing disabled people in asylums, institutions for the deaf or blind, and psychiatric facilities. In these institutions, people were subjected to severe abuse and neglect. While asylums no longer exist in the form they once did, Canada continues to warehouse disabled people today in long-term care homes, group homes, psychiatric facilities, and prisons – which further disable people.

Prisons often remove prisoners' assistive devices and medications - or use them as a reason to put an individual in solitary confinement. Kitten Keyes, an Indigenous and disabled prisoner, was made to sleep on the floor of her cell because it wasn't wheelchair accessible, and she could not transfer herself to the bunk. She was unable to manoeuvre to the toilet without grab bars and was forced to defecate on herself when no one would help her. Gregory Allen was allowed his wheelchair, but at the expense of being placed in solitary confinement for 412 days, well beyond the 15-consecutive-day limit the United Nations uses to distinguish segregation from torture.

The fear of being put into extended segregation keeps prisoners from disclosing mental health issues; I myself didn't disclose any of my psychiatric history, having heard stories of how people with mental illness were treated in prison both on the range and in solitary. Another common way prisons disable people is by withholding people's medications or assistive devices like knee braces or eyeglasses – even when they came in with them. This is something I saw first-hand while inside.

For the past year, I've been working with the Disability Justice Network of Ontario on their Prison Project to support racialized, disabled prisoners in Ontario. We run support lines for prisoners to help them connect to people outside, work to amplify their experiences, and help support them in organizing collective demands for things like access to medical care.

Trish Mills

Briarpatch Magazine - Sep 7, 2023

Phone Line Launched for Disabled Prisoners who Experience Ableism and Racism in Ont.

We've officially launched our phone lines in Hamilton, Ottawa, and Milton +. We're looking to speak with current and former prisoners with disabilities who have experienced racism while inside. This project is a two year project funded by the Laidlaw Foundation.

Please share these numbers in your communities across Ottawa, Milton and Hamilton with folks inside and outside of prison who may want to chat with us:

OUT of PRISON: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):

Hamilton - 905-631-4084

Kenora - 807-548-4312

London - 519-690-0836

Milton - 416-775-7938

Niagara - 905-227-5066

Ottawa - 613-768-9951

We're also looking to speak directly with young people, in person, about their experiences with incarceration who specifically are Black, racialized and disabled. For participating in this study group, an honorarium will be provided.

Please email: DJNOPrisonProject@gmail.com

www.djno.ca



A national travesty:

Prison watchdog urges reform to tackle Indigenous over-incarceration

Canada's prison watchdog is denouncing the over-representation of Indigenous people in federal prisons as a travesty while urging significant reform, as he releases the second part of a two-year investigation.

In the conclusion of his *Ten Years Since Spirit Matters* report, Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger calls for the devolution of correctional power to Indigenous people to address worsening rates of over-representation.

"The steady and unabated increase in the disproportionate representation of Indigenous peoples under federal sentence is nothing short of a national travesty and remains one of Canada's most pressing human rights challenges," Zinger wrote.

His latest findings were released Wednesday with the office's 50th annual report, which says the over-representation of Indigenous people in federal prisons has been an area of steady concern since the correctional investigator's office was created.

It's a crisis Zinger has sounded the alarm over with stronger language every year.

"I am deeply frustrated and disappointed each time I report on reaching or surpassing yet another sad milestone," he wrote in this year's annual message, dated June 2023 but tabled in the House of Commons on Wednesday.

"Canada's federal correctional system needs to get on board and begin to divest itself of the authorities, controls and resources that have kept Indigenous people over-incarcerated for far too long."

CBC News contacted Correctional Service Canada (CSC) for comment but has not received a response by time of publishing.

Zinger is scheduled to speak to the findings with Indigenous leaders at a news conference Thursday morning in Ottawa.

Correctional Service panned

The original *Spirit Matters* report was tabled in Parliament 10 years ago. When it was released, Indigenous people made up 25% of federal inmates. Today, it's 32%, with things still not improving, Zinger found.

The correctional investigator's team conducted 223 interviews with Indigenous prisoners, elders

and spiritual advisors, CSC staff, and executive directors of healing lodges and community-based residential facilities at 30 penitentiaries and 81 healing lodges countrywide.

The findings offer withering criticism of Canada's prison system.

"The plight of Indigenous peoples behind bars has become steadily and progressively worse," he wrote.

"Indeed, Canada's correctional population is becoming disturbingly and unconscionably Indigenous."

Zinger concluded penitentiaries are "historically and inherently colonial institutions," limiting the progress that can be made in the system as it now exists.

He found "organizational paternalism" and "incapacity for self-reflection" in the correctional system, and expressed worry CSC is "playing a game of recognition politics, where it has learned to talk the talk of reconciliation to increase its resource base, quell the concerns of detractors and advocates, and stall for yet more time."

He also noted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2015 findings on this topic remain relevant, but mostly unfulfilled.

"Loosening the levers and instruments of correctional (some might say) colonial control is consistent with the path toward reconciliation," Zinger wrote.

Key takeaways

The special report is structured into three parts, with each corresponding to an area under investigation: healing lodges, the Pathways program, and the role and impact of elders.

From these, the investigator distilled five key findings, all of them critical:

1. CSC is failing to make changes to address, mitigate and reduce the chronic over-representation of Indigenous people behind bars.
2. State-run healing lodges are funded, resourced and occupied at significantly higher levels than their "grossly under-resourced" community-run counterparts.
3. The contributions of elders are undervalued, under-reported and under-supported by CSC.
4. Signature interventions like the Pathways initiatives or healing lodge programs have no meaningful impact on over-representation because they serve too few people.

5. CSC's pan-Indigenous approach to Indigenous corrections erases significant historical and cultural differences between and among First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Zinger has offered a list of recommendations to implement his call for reform.

The first part of the investigation was released last year; he has released the full two-part version online, calling it a Roadmap for Reform.

Brett Forester
CBC News
Nov 02, 2023

The Overlooked History of Women's Incarceration and Indigenous Marginalization in Canada

The current silence of P4W's abandoned architectural carcass is a betrayal of the histories it housed. The age and emptiness of the buildings can easily mislead passers-by to think that the painful facts of women's incarceration in Canada and the painful facts of colonization are things of the past. Indigenous people are the most marginalized, least secure, and the most incarcerated in Canada. The links between these facts were made clear in the Truth and Reconciliation Report. Recommendation 30 of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action says: "We call on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so." This overrepresentation is especially acute for Indigenous women. Since P4W closed, more Indigenous women have been imprisoned than any other segment of the population (increasing by 109% between 2001-2012). A memorial garden with art and educational panels acknowledging the connections between colonization, residential schools, violence against Indigenous women, and the lives and deaths of women incarcerated at P4W represents a unique opportunity for community engagement and public education. Moreover, it would contribute to Queen's efforts to uphold its commitment to new nation-wide Principles on Indigenous Education.

From the:
"P4W Memorial Garden - Solidarity Letter"

Shit Show

She said this about her & what?
Go lay down, lick your nuts
Learn how 2 do time, ya fuckin' mutt

All big & bad 'cause you're sitting in a cell
This Mickey Mouse Clubhouse ain't no fuckin' jail

I'm about 2 transfer w/ the mentally insane
Share a pool w/ the wackjobs
Somethin' tells me they're more sane

I had about enough of this bullshit show
Unless someone wants 2 hook it up
w/ some 'Grade A' snow, didn't think so!

What's w/ the party @ the RW desk
Should bitches be followed
What the fuck are they tellin'

A tisket a tasket, a mother fuckin' lie
Shit keeps goin' like this, bitches gonna die

A tisket a tasket, \$80 for a casket
Where's the body bag? Is that 1/2 price?

Time 2 leave Reception now
These mice got head lice

A tisket a tasket, save on your casket
I got a 9, 15 out of 16 shots, you'll fit in a basket

I'm gonna set up shop w/ the mentally insane
I'm goin' to get rich off other ppl's pain

Fuck off w/ the lights
You know I like them on

You're goin' 2 school B1
You're gonna be gone

Now back to the business of this shit
This is a PC playground
This ain't no prison

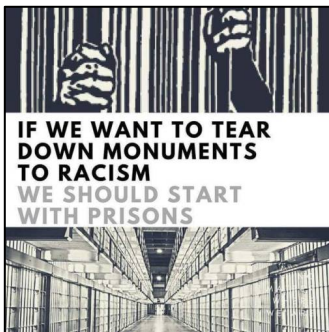
A. Raymes

The secret of our success is that we never,
never, give up.
- Wilma Mankiller

Women Who Matter

There is a group of women who matter
 That live and play upon Nova's hills
 They speak about empowerment & healing
 which has risen
 From the trauma of their lives' darkest chills
 Each morning they rise with the coming of the dawn
 A new day to heal & inspire others until the day
 is drawn
 This place provides moments for their character
 traits to show
 Women of strength, integrity & care for all the
 world to know
 These women who matter, advocate for their
 peers
 And by doing so, make a profound difference
 that lasts throughout the years
 This place sometimes brings days of turmoil &
 strife
 However these women who matter, maintain
 their integrity & holistic life
 On this very day you can see these women
 standing on Nova's hills
 Like a lighthouse pointing the way to safe
 harbour from all of Nova's ills
 These are wonderful, courageous women of
 which I speak
 If you're looking for genuine care & support
 Then it should be the women who matter, you
 seek

The T2S Bunch



Untitled

My energy I leave with you freely
 My sister, my friend
 Memories I leave behind
 To warm you until the world's end

For the hope that you give me
 I thank you! My sister, my soul
 I leave from your midst know
 Once broken & shattered, now whole

You shall not be forgotten ever
 My sister, my guide
 For your kindness, warmth, & friendship
 I thank you, as I leave your side

With the love of Our Father I bless you
 My sister, my teacher, my muse

May life treat you gently, sweet angel
 God Bless every path that you choose

KEW

The Art In/ of Survival

Women in prison waste nothing.

Every bead, every shred of fabric and leather,
 every piece of paper and every pen is used or
 passed on ...

When women leave prison, they take with them
 the love and respect for their sisters in struggle.

They leave behind their tools for survival.

The woman left will be reminded that one day it
 will be her turn to leave and when it comes,
 she will also pass these valuable tools on.

- Gayle K. Horii

Another world is not only possible,
 she is on her way.
 On a quiet day,
 I can hear her breathing.

- Arundhati Roy

Trans+ People in Canadian Prisons Project

In 2017, "gender identity or expression" was added to the Canadian Human Rights Act as prohibited grounds for discrimination. This change, following many years of political and activist pressure, has resulted in changes to the way Trans+ (transgender, nonbinary, Two-Spirit and otherwise gender-diverse) prisoners are accommodated and housed within Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) facilities.

Because men-only and women-only prisons assume that there are two and only two genders,(1) Trans+ individuals challenge some of the usual taken-for-granted assumptions about everyone easily and consistently fitting into two gender(2) categories. However, since the legal recognition of the human rights of Trans+ people in Canada, the Federal prison system must accommodate a variety of genders within the two-sex-based system. This has included adjustments to overall prison operations, and balancing risk, health and safety concerns for Trans+ prisoners, cisgender (non-transgender) prisoners, and staff.

While we have very little information about gender-diverse people imprisoned in Canada, or their relations with cisgender people who live with them, here are a few things we do know from previous research:

Longer Sentences

Gender-diverse prisoners are serving longer sentences. Almost two-thirds of Trans+ prisoners are serving a sentence of 6 years or more (39% indeterminate), compared to 47% (27% indeterminate) in the general prisoner population.

High Indigenous Presence

Forty-seven percent of all gender-diverse prisoners are Indigenous, compared to 25% Indigenous in the general prisoner population.

Incarceration Rates

The lifetime incarceration rate of Two-Spirit people is significantly higher than the general Indigenous rate of incarceration.

We, Aaron Devor, PhD and Sarah M. Steele, PhD, would like to know a lot more about the experiences of Trans+ people within Canadian Federal Prisons and are conducting a research study to find out more. We hope that what we learn and report from this project will influence future CSC policies and procedures. We are

writing today to ask for your participation in our research, and we would be grateful if you would help us to make sure that all the right people know about the project.

There are two ways for people to get involved in this research:

- (1) talk to us in a 1-hour private, confidential interview about their thoughts and experiences,
- (2) answer similar questions in writing using the mail.

We are hoping to connect with:

Current Trans+ prisoners in Canadian federal prisons,
AND

Current cisgender (non-Trans+) prisoners who have ever lived in a Canadian federal correctional institution with Trans+ prisoners.

If you chose to participate, no guards or administrators will be present or observing in any way. Each institution will have a CSC Staff person who can help arrange participation and has promised to keep your involvement confidential. This means that only this staff member and the researchers will know who answered our questions. Information that is shared with us that could identify someone, such as names and any other personal details, will not be shared with anyone else. We will use a pseudonym (fake name) when quoting people or mentioning the stories that are shared with us. When reporting to CSC, publishing written reports, in online media, etc. we will never use anyone's real name or give any details that will allow other people to know who participated.

This project is being conducted by the University of Victoria with funding from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).

If people have questions, or would like to volunteer to be interviewed, or participate by mail, they can contact us at 1-800-516-3083 (on the common access list) or at:

Trans+ Prison Project
Chair in Transgender Studies
University of Victoria
PO Box 3050 STN CSC
Victoria BC V8W 3P5

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10-18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction of literary merit.

Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.

Book Clubs for Inmates
720 Bathurst St.
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4

Prison Radio

- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven – 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio – Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or
music request to be broadcast on-air.*

We live in an era where masses of people come and go across a hostile planet, desolate and violent.

Refugees, emigrants, exiles, deportees.

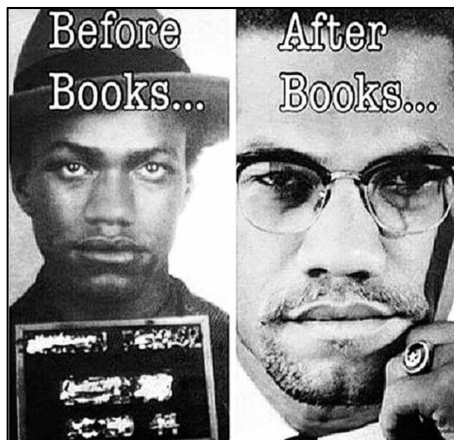
We are a tragic contingent.

- Isabel Allende

We don't have a clue what it is to be male or female, or if there are intermediate genders. Male and female might be fields which overlap into androgyny or different kinds of sexual desires.

But because we live in a Western, patriarchal world, we have very little chance of exploring these gender possibilities.

- Kathy Acker



I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me.

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners

For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.

Funds will be used to help inmates purchase call packages to keep them connected to their family, help out with canteen for necessary things & for transportation home. Maintained by prisoner advocacy groups Beyond Prison Walls Canada and Inmates for Humane Conditions.

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

Phone Line for Disabled Prisoners who Experience Ableism and Racism in Ont.

www.djno.ca

OUT of PRISON: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):

Hamilton - 905-631-4084

Kenora - 807-548-4312

London - 519-690-0836

Milton - 416-775-7938

Niagara - 905-227-5066

Ottawa - 613-768-9951

**Jail Hotline for MCC, OCI, TEDC,
TSDC & VCW**

The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) provides prisoners with free links to advocacy, referrals, information, and support through the Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:

Monday - Saturday

9-11am & 2-4pm

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

Why a Jail Hotline?

Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.

Who Should Call This Hotline?

Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.

If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

Mon - Wed - Fri - Sat

9-11am & 2-4pm

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869 (It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).

**Incarcerated in Canada?
Need Information?**

Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:

General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.

Write to us at:

Write ON!

**234-110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5**

*Just because everything's different,
doesn't mean anything's changed.*

- Irene Porter

Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP)

"Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning"

"Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school"

BCFI's commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children's educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child.

This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent's voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents' choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

Book Clubs for Inmates

720 Bathurst St.

Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4

www.BookClubsForInmates.com

Life is a hard battle anyway.

If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier.

I will not allow my life's light to be determined by the darkness around me.

- Sojourner Truth

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support.

We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.



Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 375 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,
- anything in contact with blood! -

**BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C**



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

K.I.P.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, K.I.P. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at:

info.kipcanada@gmail.com
or by phone at: 416-505-5333

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration
- Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

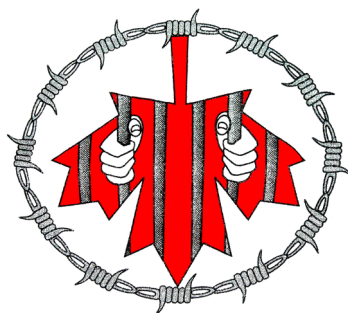
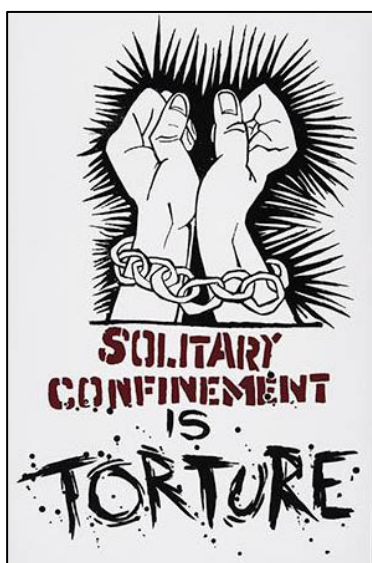
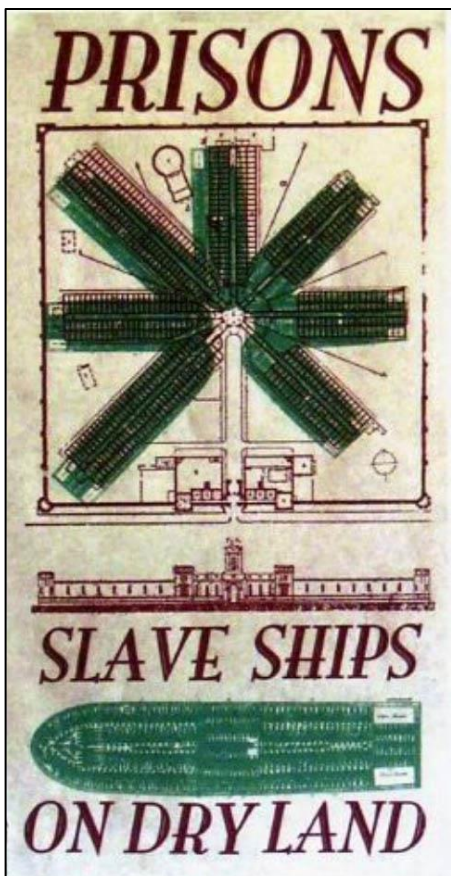
The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333



Women's Prison Network
Winter 2023/24 - Issue #33

PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Spring Issue #34 is mailed out:

Mar 1, 2024

Send in your work before:

Feb 1, 2024

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page
on our website for Prisoners who have died
in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands,
Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered
there, send us a note or email and we will
honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org