

The Women's Center

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female offenders*
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Women

WOMEN BEHIND BARS

An Organizing Tool
By Resources For Community Change



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BY RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE**

THANKS TO . . . all the projects who sent us information, sometimes taking time out for long conversations and letters. Special thanks goes to the people who spent extra time giving us a grasp of basic issues and ideas on what would be useful in the booklet. Thanks also to our friends in the D.C. community who worked part-time with us; the people who provided funding; the many authors, pamphleteers and photographers from whom we drew so much of the booklet; and to the National Student Association who made office space available to us. And, of course, we want to express our deep feelings of appreciation to the prisoners and ex-prisoners whose determination has been a special source of inspiration to us.

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This booklet is divided into three sections: articles, groups, and resources (books, articles, films tapes, etc.). The articles provide analysis, strategies, and an overview of the problem. The groups are examples of how people are working for change. The resources offer more extensive information and analysis than we could cover in the booklet.

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introduction to abolition

introduction

"I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there, and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad he would be a United States Senator."

—Mother Jones
Labor Organizer. Circa 1900

The prison system as it exists in this country must be abolished. The rationale for the system lies in people's (often very justified) fear of crime, and in myths of criminals as alien beings: sick, corrupt, incomprehensible. Year after year, legislators, police and prison officials call for more money for bigger and better prisons. But while the money keeps flowing, the crime rate keeps rising. Prisons do not stop crime or "rehabilitate" criminals. Their only real function is to reinforce social and economic injustices. The more closely one looks at the U.S. prison system, the more clear it becomes that there is only one sane response to it: tear it down.

Not everyone who commits crimes goes to prison. White collar embezzlers, middle class shoplifters, young lawbreakers whose parents are "substantial citizens", those who can afford bail and good lawyers: such people tend to get fines, short sentences, suspended sentences, or no conviction at all. An overwhelming number of inmates of U.S. jails and prisons are Third World and are from poor and working class backgrounds. Proportionally more Third World people are poor, and they face the added hazard of racist police and courts. The poor of all races are under pressure from the survival needs which lead to economic crimes, and they also meet with consistent discrimination in the judicial system. Equal justice for rich and poor, for all colors is an empty myth.

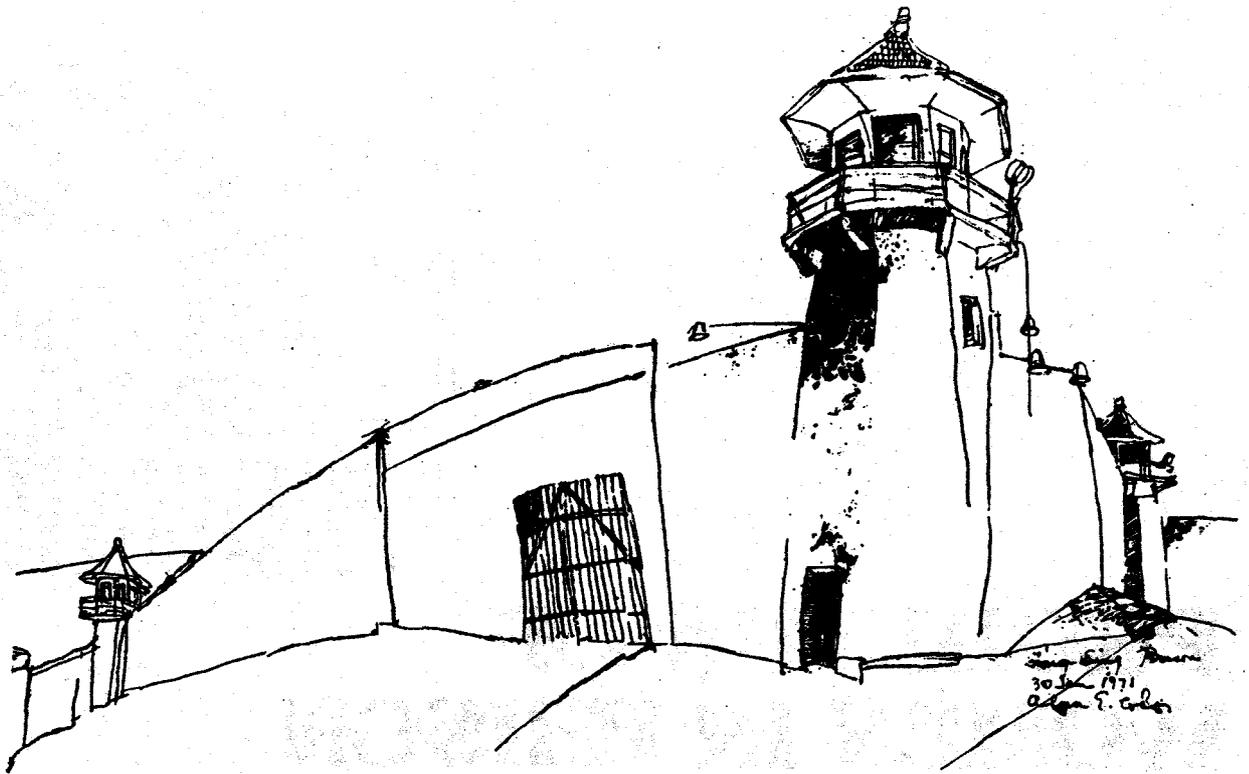
Upon examination, other prison myths break down as quickly—myths that the fear of punishment stops people from committing crimes, that criminals are essentially different from people outside prison, that our society is healthy and criminals are sick, that the purpose of prisons is to rehabilitate people. Rehabilitation, the watchword of prison officials, is revealed as worse than meaningless in the face of the realities of prison: endless boredom; sporadic brutality; therapy based on contempt for the prisoners; tranquilizers distributed wholesale to ensure passivity; token sex-tracked or non-existent training programs; petty rules; denial of even minimal civil rights; isolation from family and friends; helplessness in the face of arbitrary authority.

The concept of rehabilitation itself is questionable as long as long prisons are controlled by people who have no respect for prisoners' rights and self-determination. It is true that some

people have developed attitudes which need to be changed—people who turn to violence in their dealings with others, for example, or men whose sexism leads to crimes against women. But the idea of rehabilitation in U.S. prisons has provided the rationale for intolerable punishment and coercion. In women's prisons, it also means conforming to the feminine role, often in the most blatant ways: being encouraged to wear make-up, dress traditionally and behave with lady-like submission. Always rehabilitation means learning to conform to society and accept it as it is rather than struggling to change it. This conformity is enforced, not only by punishment within the prison, but by the threat of failing to get parole until rehabilitation is deemed successful.

Although prisons do not perform their stated functions, they play an integral part in our political economy. They provide the scapegoats for people's anger, fear and sense of powerlessness in the face of a disintegrating, often hostile society. They are the place where people end up who cannot or will not adjust to their position in that society. Some of these people act out of a strong political consciousness. Many act out of a long-accumulated desperation, an unwillingness to accept the results of economic, racial, or sexual oppression. Some have simply acted out of the same competitive, self-protective, watch-out-for-your-own-interests mentality of the whole society, in the ways open to the poor. For all, the message of prison is clear: "Submit. Adjust to your situation and your status." This message is taught on the outside as well, but in prison it can be drummed into people with all the force of an inescapable and inhuman institution. Thus, what happens behind the prison doors is a crucial issue both in terms of what it indicates about our society and in terms of its implications for anyone seriously challenging the present system.

We chose to focus this booklet on women prisoners for two reasons. First, the problems of women in prison are often ignored because they are a minority of prisoners in a sexist system. We recognize the grimness of the situation male inmates face, and the need for solidarity between men's and women's prison groups. But there is little specific prison information and organizing material aimed at women; this booklet is an attempt to help fill that gap. Secondly, as the women's movement grows in its scope and analysis, it seems vital for feminists to explore the common experience and oppression of women inside and women outside. This means ending the isolation of women in prison, learning from those imprisoned for resistance to unjust conditions, sharing knowledge in order to oppose the sexist conditioning and control which is even more blatant in prison than outside.



The problems of women prisoners under 18 are not dealt with in this booklet. These women are often subject to separate laws, courts and procedures. Unclear and arbitrary legislation, indeterminate sentences, and other devices are used to imprison young people, often for special "juvenile" offenses. We felt that it would be impossible to deal adequately with these issues in a short booklet.

The present prison system must be dismantled. It has no place in the society we are trying to build. Though we recognize that in any society it may be necessary to confine a very few people who represent a threat to the autonomy of others, prisons as they now function are irrelevant to the real problems people face and are a bulwark to a system of gross social and economic injustices. Reform of prisons is not enough. Many of the worst evils of confinement—from solitary confinement to behavior modification and indeterminate sentences—were at some point billed as humanitarian reforms.

Reforms are, to be sure, a strong concern of the prison movement—reforms that provide some protection from the prison system, that give inmates space to survive and grow. But reforms cannot be seen as an adequate answer to the destructiveness of prisons. Nor can we indulge in the illusion that reform "within the system" will ever be allowed to go far enough to actually humanize prisons. Poor and working people for the most part do not have decent health care, legal protection, education or job training outside prison—to ensure them such things inside prison would be a supreme irony. Prisons are a reflection of the society as a whole. We must work for the abolition of the prison system in the only context in which that is possible: in the context of widespread political, social, and economic change in this country.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE, an offshoot of the Source Catalog Collective, is a small, anti-profit organization of women and men acting as an information clearinghouse for radical social change. The RCC Collective publishes booklets on specific issues where we see a need for a compilation of organizing resources and strategies. Our next booklet will be concerned with organizing for economic justice, especially during the current crisis.

In addition, we're always looking for new collective members who are interested in lots of hard but satisfying work and a subsistence lifestyle. Contact us at P.O. Box 21066, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 387-1145.



PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN PRISON

(material in quotations excerpted from "Women in County Jails and Prisons," by Margery L. Velimesis)

Imprisonment is difficult for all human beings, but women, because of their socially-defined roles, have special problems of their own. Relationships with daughters and sons, the lack of job skills or education, dependency rather than self-sufficiency, all these are magnified in the case of women.

County jails are an extreme example of the conditions imprisoned women face. "Very often women are not provided with exercise yards, day rooms, or religious services because women were an afterthought in the construction of a jail that was built primarily to hold men. Therefore jails—especially the smaller ones—often must 'make do' for women. This sometimes means confinement in cells that are the least accessible (more isolated) because few women are confined and those cells that are most useable are utilized for men. In many jails women must be locked in all day because no other provision has been made for them; women must eat locked in their cells although a dining hall has been provided for the men. Women inmates in county jails are idle 75-100% of the time. No real vocational programs are available in the jail and usually women are not eligible for work or study release."

"In state prisons, maintenance of the institution comes first and jobs required for production in prison industries are the second priority. A coherent rationale for assigning inmates to jobs is seldom present. Attempts are often made to show that these institutional maintenance and prison industries jobs furnish vocational training or teach good work habits. Most women already know how to scrub a floor and wash a window; many detest the power-sewing jobs which they are forced to undertake for twenty or thirty cents a day to provide uniforms for other state institutions. Good work habits are difficult to form when the jobs are performed under coercion."

"Little time is available for academic education even in state prisons. It often amounts to about six hours a week during eight months of the year and involves about ten or fifteen percent of the population. The courses stress the ability to read and often end at the eighth grade. High school level work concentrates on preparation for a general equivalency diploma and further educational work is usually unavailable."

"It is safe to say that with one or two possible exceptions no jail or state prison offers adequate medical attention for women. A doctor's presence 12 hours a week for 100 women is typical. Matrons see the women as malingerers or hypochondriacs. Untrained matrons determine who will see the doctor during his/her hours. Specialists are listed as 'on call,' but the decision to call those specialists rests with an untrained person."

Once a girl across the floor had an epileptic fit and she fell off the top bunk into the floor and she was unconscious and the officers wouldn't turn on her light so that her cellmate could hold down her tongue. So we made enough noise so that they had to turn on the lights before the whole building went into a riot. Finally they took care of her but it was only because people acted and made them move. . . . That's a very political act, sticking together. It's not just for survival.

quoted in the Women in Prison slide show

"In view of the economic needs and the traumatic nature of the lives many of the women have led, almost nothing in program or personnel is available which could conceivably assist women in leading a more positive and fulfilling life in the community. The regimented, semi-military design of daily life even in the cottage-type prison can never help women to meet their individual problems."

The isolated, rural locations of state and federal prisons presents further problems. Seventy percent of the inmates of these prisons are from urban areas. Family visits are difficult to arrange when the prison is so inaccessible. And the rural location further guarantees that prison staff will be composed almost entirely of people from a different cultural background than the largely Third World, urban prison population.

Over 80% of imprisoned women are mothers. Virtually no jails or prisons have child care facilities, and many don't even allow visitors under 16 years of age. Worrying about where her sons and daughters are and what they are doing is a common preoccupation for imprisoned mothers. And behind the pain of separation lies the ominous possibility that it may be made permanent—according to a California prisoner, 38% of prison mothers permanently lose custody of their daughters and sons.

It was two years more before I saw my child for the first time since the hospital. My family was seated in the lobby of the administration building and when I came out and tried to hold my baby she screamed and would continue to scream every time I approached her throughout the entire visit. I left the visit unable to speak and went back to my dormitory and laid my head on the lap of a friend and cried for what seemed to be an eternity. She and I never discussed what happened at the visit—I guess we both just understood, as she has two children of her own."

—Sharon Smolick, ex-prisoner

Because of socially-conditioned passivity, women prisoners tend to be less willing to demand their legal rights than their male counterparts. Women's institutions have fewer jail-house lawyers, fewer prisoners who will seek outside legal help or register a grievance. But women inside are becoming increasingly militant. Once the lack of a prison law library or the unsupportiveness of a public defender would have gone unprotested. Today such grievances are more likely to produce an angry reaction from women prisoners.

Inevitably, a confined group of human beings, isolated from the rest of society, will seek emotional and physical support from one another. Yet prison officials often are obsessed with restricting and punishing any evidence of intimacy among prisoners, since it might indicate homosexuality. In some institutions, touching or holding hands is a violation of prison rules and can result in disciplinary action. Even liberal staff assume that gay relationships are merely substitutes for heterosexual ones. In fact, a number of women are in prison who had previously chosen to relate primarily to women. Others entering into such relationships for the first time discover them to be an important source of strength and affirmation.

Barbed wire, tall walls, brick, cement floors walls ceiling, cement all around, long halls, echoing loud, smash of metal trays at meals, shuffle of feet, slam of metal doors, gray levi bodies, machine gun rat-a-tat-tat as cell doors are opened by push button in control, mindless labor, no wages, no medical care, tension, rasping reports of police walkie talkies, flashlights pain your eyes at every hour throughout the night, work, why?, sweat, police watch constantly, run naked through showers, sprayed for bugs, teeth counted, numbers, no names, code names, nicknames, cussing, frustration, despair, loneliness, isolation, greasy food, musty smell of units, units of cells, cold cells, cement, rain on the barred windows, helpless, pronounced civilly dead, nightmares, hootch, snort stuff in the john, kicking cold turkey, miss my family, hostile, angry, no outlets for creativity, children adopted away, divorce for two dollars, futility, slashed wrists, am I going crazy?, cell shrinking, silence, hand-rolled cigarettes, my sister's hand, resist, persist, resist dehumanization, pray, puke, program, rifles, toilet, gotta adjust, gotta please the Board, when can I go home?

*—Donna Hansen, prisoner
California Institution for Women*

The physical effects of prison conditions, from inadequate medical care to lack of exercise, take their toll day by day. But, as women in prison say again and again, the effect on their minds is often deeper and much more devastating. The techniques of psychological control are becoming more advanced. Behavior modification concepts once reserved for male convicts are making their way into women's prisons: mood altering drugs like Prolixin, which produces a sensation similar to drowning; ego-demolishing forms of therapy; and brain surgery. Less dramatic but also effective are the constant regimentation, the arbitrary enforcement of petty regulations and the equally arbitrary withdrawal of commissary or visiting privileges, the threat of segregation, and the indignity of strip searches. All of these systematically break down a woman's sense of herself and reinforce the submission, dependence and sense of powerlessness that women know all too well.



WHOSE CRIME - WHOSE PUNISHMENT?

[The following is excerpted from "Anarcho-Marxist Criminology" by David Greenberg. Ed. note: Use of he/his as neuter pronouns has been replaced by s/he, her/his, etc.]

The way America operates brings into existence people who cannot function under the rules it has set up. So we get draft resistance, drugs, theft, rape, murder, riots. Under the impact of military defeat abroad and increasingly militant opposition at home, the contradictions are becoming more severe and more obvious. The system is losing its legitimacy.

From the viewpoint of the people who control our society, this loss of legitimacy and concomitant increase in crime is intolerable, though not because crime itself threatens the stability of society. The close links between the crime syndicate and local politicians in many cities show that crime itself poses no threat to the existing political order. On the contrary, some forms of crimes, particularly illegal acts carried out by businesses, may be necessary to the functioning of the economy. As long as criminal activity doesn't get out of hand, as long as it is not seen as explicitly political by the people doing it, no threat to stability arises. The situation changes drastically when all the rules that traditionally govern behavior begin to break down, when authority disappears, when people no longer feel safe in the streets, when crime takes on openly "political" overtones. The government cannot look on with equanimity when the loyalty of the army is being undermined. Capitalism would be in serious trouble if the unemployed came to the realization that their economic problems could be eliminated under a different economic system and began to get themselves together as a political force to help bring about the necessary changes.

At this juncture it is incumbent upon the ruling class to put a stop to the trouble. Prisons play an important role in that effort.

Insofar as the "criminals" themselves are concerned, the primary contribution of prisons to the task of preventing social change does not lie in deterring people from committing illegal acts or opposing the status quo: rather, its contribution lies in crushing individuals, breaking their spirits, and leading both the "criminals" themselves and the "noncriminal" public to believe that criminality is the fault of individual evil (or sick in the case of liberals) people, not a product of a social system, that poverty and unemployment are the results of laziness, not of a decision made by government and business leaders to bring on a recession. In emphasizing the societal origin of criminality, we do not deny that individual personality and decision play an important role. We may not be able to predict in advance which of the unemployed will steal, but we can predict with certainty that some of them will.

We have long been made aware that imprisonment generates passivity, inability to make decisions, exacerbates sexual problems, disrupts family life and generates deep hostility toward guards, toward all of society, and often towards the prisoner her/himself. In addition, educational and vocational training programs, when offered at all, are designed to keep inmates at the bottom of the economic ladder. And prisons propagandize them to accept their low status: on the wall of the dining room in the penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana, is an inscription: "Whatsoever is brought upon thee take cheerfully and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate for gold is tried in the fire and acceptable man in the furnace of adversity." Ecclesiasticus 2: 3-4.

The destructiveness of the prison system thus serves an extremely important social function. Its purpose is to incapacitate the criminal, to render her/him impotent in opposing the system even while virtually guaranteeing her/his future criminality. Prisons try to teach inmates, among other things,

that "you can't win," that you can only get slapped down if you oppose the system, that instead of uniting with others to effect change, you should look out for yourself and not worry about anyone else (not exactly a novel idea in American culture). The effort isn't always successful; from time to time, hunger strikes or work strikes manage to bring inmates together in opposition to prison policies, at least temporarily.

Much of the effort to keep prisoners from focussing on the social origins of their problems centers on the attempt to make them believe that they have individual problems. Many prisons, for example, have courses in "positive thinking", as if to imply that inmates are in trouble primarily because they lack the right attitude. The assumption that inmates' problems are individual in origin lies behind almost all rehabilitation programs, since these take the view that the individual criminal is defective and must be remolded until s/he can return to an unchanged society.

Imprisonment is part and parcel of a class society: the contradictions we saw as responsible for criminal behavior (i.e. law violations) are all reflections of this one basic aspect of our society. Our rulers need prisons—not to accomplish their stated goals of deterrence or rehabilitation, but precisely because the manner in which prisons fail in accomplishing those goals makes them an essential institution in the perpetuation of the status quo. Those of us who see as our political task the building of a political movement for radical changes in the way America functions, changes in its economic and political institutions involving the elimination of class as a feature of our social life, and all that follows from that, naturally raise as part of our program the demand that prisons should be abolished. This demand is obviously one that cannot be realized within the context of our present society. The call to abolish prisons is therefore also a call to abolish societies that build and maintain prisons, and to build instead a new society, a society in which prisons will be superfluous because the contradictions responsible for "criminality" will have disappeared.

POWER TO THE PRISONERS!



INSIDE VIEW

The following has been condensed from three separate interviews with women ex-cons. Marilyn Isabel was incarcerated at Dwight Correctional Institute in Illinois from January, 1969, to June, 1974. Ila Mason spent one year at the Women's House of Detention on Riker's Island in New York City and was released in November, 1972; she also did time in a county jail in Georgia. Joanne Johnson was incarcerated from 1961 to January, 1975 at the California Institute for Women in Frontera.

(Editor's note: Questions in bold print were asked of all three women. Other questions were asked of individuals and are included occasionally for clarification.)

WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN PRISONERS?

Joanne: My major gripe was with the rehabilitative services. I really felt that until the prisons are abolished, which is really what should happen, I think that they should be doing some of the things that they say they're gonna do. Really, you would expect a person to come out in better condition than when they go in. Now we all know that men's prisons are no haven of paradise, but the few funds that they have for rehabilitative services, for instance, training and higher pay in occupation, the women never see at all. We're trained as domestics. It's an exploitative condition in every possible way, with taxation on inmates' funds.

Marilyn: The special problems of women prisoners are, strangely enough, the same problems of women everywhere. I see the women's movement as centered around prisons because that is a typical manifestation of the social phenomena that have been going on for women for a long, long time. If they just took a good look at the prisons, they would see themselves all over again. The only difference between them and the women doing time is that they have freedom of movement. One of the things that I'm greatly concerned about is the way that the state feels that women have no worth. They don't invest in rehabilitation programs like vocational and educational programs because they feel that all women are going to do is go out and get married and have babies and they wouldn't use any of the things that they were taught. Plus there's a great deal of sex-exploitation in female institutions by male employees and by male inmates. Because society considers a woman a sexual object, she does not have a legal complaint as far as they're concerned if she says she's been molested by an employee.

Medical treatment of women is far more gross than medical treatment of men. I think this comes out of the fact that women traditionally haven't been told enough about their bodies. And recently women have gotten into wanting to know about their bodies more. So now they're better educated and now they're becoming aware of the fact that they're being medically mistreated.

There's one universal problem to organize around, and that's all these strange hysterectomy problems that come up, always on Third World women. People who never have complained about any kind of vaginal infection or having any abnormality as far as their periods are concerned, suddenly the doctor says you have to get a hysterectomy. It happens often. And the thing that's frightening is that it usually happens on young people.

Physically the men's joints are far worse than women's, in most cases. However, when you start talking about the privileges extended to males to help themselves legally and otherwise, women just don't have them. Dwight just within the last two years has gotten a library and just within the last four months has gotten a law library. They have forbid-

den women to even have anything to do with law books, using the old premise that women just don't understand these things.

Programs—I did some work as the director of education's secretary at Dwight. And I quit because I filed two thousand and one federal programs going on in men's institutions and with each one of them I filed, I got angrier. They had training programs in electronics, they had medical assistant programs, they had work release programs geared so far above what we had that it looked ridiculous.

SOURCE: Do you think there were any decent in-house programs at Dwight?

Marilyn: Definitely not. While I was there, the programs that they had were secretarial school, kitchen training (which was a joke), industry, where you learned to sew on out-dated machines at a profit for the institution; beauty school, which is a joke once again because after you pass your state boards, you discover you really don't know how to do hair. Secretarial school is not realistic in that most of the people who participated in that school were Blacks. And Blacks find it extremely difficult to get a secretarial job and make a decent salary. And then too, the machines that they were using were outdated.

Ila: The whole business of women being incarcerated—it's kind of a hands-off policy that works more psychologically and mentally. They use brute force to keep men in jail. With women they use a bunch of other different things like differences in the kinds of things they sell in commissary, selling make-up, allowing women to have a beauty parlor, to get her hair fixed, this kind of thing. Most of the jobs that are available are cleaning. There's also stuff like sewing and beauty culture. It's a very heavy thing in terms of food preparation. All of these things that are supposedly so-called women's duties—they use these as a means of distracting women from understanding the fact that they are in jail. Also, when they deal with women with discipline, they do it with a very soft sell. Sit down and say, "you know, now, we don't expect these things out of you" . . . a very quiet voice, very reassuring words, with a very reasoning type attitude. Whereas with a man they just beat him over the head, throw him in segregation and that's the end of it.

They also try to establish through the guards and the women very much of a motherly or sisterly relationship which is usually not present in a men's jail. That cuts down on the number of transgressions because then it's like you're transgressing against that person instead of breaking a rule. And then they can sit there and say "I'm so disappointed in you, I'm so hurt that you did this." Also, to a certain degree, there are more favors done for women than in the men's institution. Favors like the ability to get passes to go to different

"I WAS IN THE BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

areas of the building. They'll bring women make-up, junk like that. All of this in an effort to keep any kind of rebellion, any kind of contradiction down to a bare minimum. In most instances, it really works.

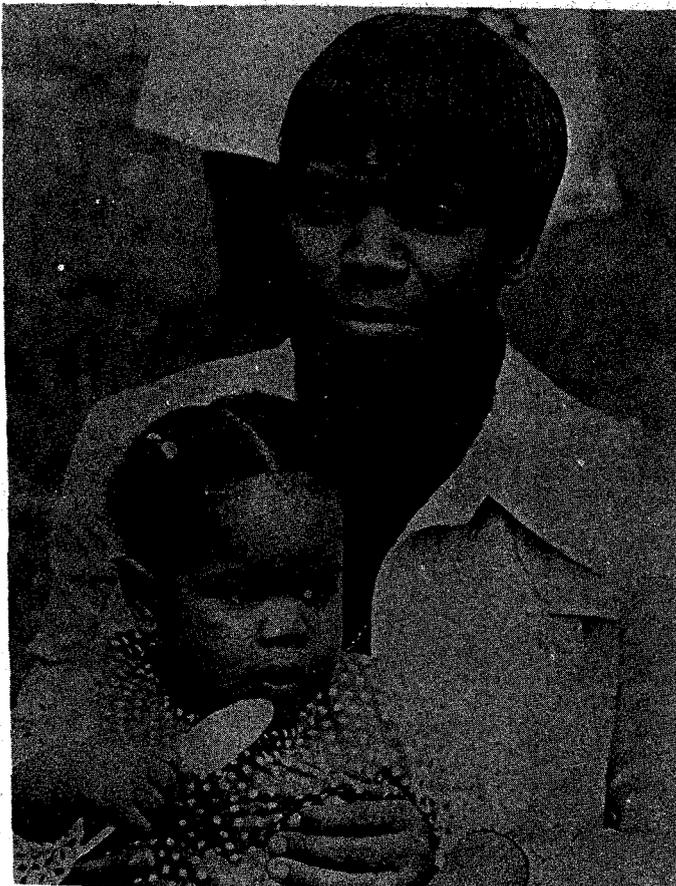
WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THIRD WORLD WOMEN PRISONERS?

Joanne: Third world women suffer much more in the prison because of job discrimination. This is the case with the board procedures; this is the case with disciplinary procedures. Third world women will stay in lock-up longer; they'll be written up more arbitrarily; they'll usually do longer time on parole, more time inside—just the shitty end of the stick.

Marilyn: One of the things that really frightened me when I was incarcerated is the way they demand all Third World people to conform to White culture, White value system. In particular one of the things that really frightened me was the way they demand Latinos to speak English, refuse to let them send out mail in Spanish or read mail in Spanish. They don't sit down and try to explain to them why certain rules are what they are.

Ila: Before the riots went down here in New York in the sixties, prison riots, there was this big complaint that the majority of the guards were White and the majority of the inmates were Black or Chicano, whatever, and therefore that was racist. So what they do now, they have a great many of the guards are Black. Nothing in terms of the prison system has changed except for the faces are now Black.

I was also in a county jail in Georgia, and in that particular prison there weren't even a whole lot of women. Most of the women they brought in were White. The difference came in the charges that were leveled against them. Most of the White women had misdemeanor charges; most of the Black women had murders, robberies, that kind of thing.



And guards used to say to us, "Well, we know they [the White women] couldn't commit the crimes that you all commit." They were trying to say that these women knew better and just wouldn't do that kind of thing because they realized the penalties, trying to say that we were stupid and that's why we were there. Consequently a lot more Black women got sent to the state prison than White women, at least in that particular county.

WHAT IS THE SPECIAL OPPRESSION OF GAY PEOPLE?

Marilyn: I am angry about the way gays are treated. I had my parole denied because I am gay. I saw another woman be denied the things that she qualified for because she was gay. The oppression of gays in places like Dwight is really, really fantastic. Even the most so-called "humane" frown on homosexuality and they've all got it in the back of their heads that "they force those women to do that kind of stuff." And the reality is that there is no force involved, no rape involved.

DID YOU HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN PRISON?

Joanne: The Management Cottage at CIW was about 40 women, who were completely segregated from the rest of the grounds. They ate early in the morning before the rest of the people. They were housed and lived in this one unit, which had different acoustics and plastic windows instead of glass and grouping six hours a day. You couldn't get a goddam thing if you didn't do what they wanted.

As far as I know, they weren't using chemotherapy.* (But they did use chemotherapy in the psychiatric unit—Prolixin, all those other types of depressant drugs). But the behavior modification was, inmates were trained to police each other, six hours a day of group. They wouldn't allow a person to come out. When you went into a room, they didn't have lamps; there was nothing there. You had to earn everything.

The women who got put in this unit were always dissenters. They like to say it was people who couldn't get along with others, but it was people they didn't want to be in a position to be out talking and organizing. Although there were some who were half-way psychotic. It was an abnormal atmosphere.

SOURCE: Did fear of being put in there ever occur to you?

Joanne: I was in the behavior modification unit, for about six months.

SOURCE: How did you survive?

Joanne: Oh, I guess I was just too mean not to.

WHAT TYPES OF WOMEN DO YOU THINK END UP IN PRISON?

Joanne: There aren't any really wealthy women in the institution. There were mostly poor people, mostly there for victimless crimes, addiction or minor type things like bad checks or thievery or the various things that poor people are sometimes forced into doing to survive. And once they get onto that merry-go-round, it's very hard to get off of it. There are very few people who ever live to get a discharge. They set all kinds of policy, have all sorts of stipulations, parole stipulations, worded very ambiguously. They could violate you for anything, including breathing, and it's a very deliberate thing.

Ila: Mostly what I've found is two types of women: it's those who really need money, who are in a very bad economic condition; and then there are those who do not necessarily need the money but want the money. But most of the women are just in for hustling, just whatever they can do to make some

*See Glossary p 10

UNIT FOR SIX MONTHS." "HOW DID YOU SURVIVE?" "I GUESS I WAS JUST TOO MEAN NOT TO."

money. And really that, basically, is the crime that they commit: the fact that they really need the money and they can't do it legitimately for one reason or another, which may be a lack of education, a lack of motivation—could just be a lack of job availability. I really think that that's gonna be escalated a whole lot with the economy. Just the lack of people having jobs is gonna drive people to feel, "Well, maybe I'll just take it." That's gonna bring a lot more people to court who are used to working, people who would never have any thought of stealing anything. And maybe that just might change the whole way that the courts have to deal with people who get arrested just because the differences of people who will be coming before the bench. It may not change the way the court would approach me, 'cause I think their attitude about me or sisters like me would always be the same: we don't know any better. But maybe to a great degree it would soften up some of their procedures in terms of dealing with criminals, supposed criminals.

WHAT ARE THE WORST ASPECTS OF THE PRISON SYSTEM?

Joanne: The indeterminate law. It's supposed to be a very, very progressive thing, but actually it's an albatross around the people's neck in California. Anyone who's sentenced to one of the prisons in California is sentenced by a judge to the time prescribed by law. And then after that, the release power and the amount of time inside and time one does outside on parole is given over into the hands of what people consider experts in human behavior. This is the Board of Trustees in the women's case, and of course the men have the Adult Authority. The Board has the power of life and death over a person's life between the minimum and the maximum terms. And they even have a very slick way of taking a person over their maximum sentence which is what happened to me—I had a six months to ten years sentence for receiving stolen property but I ended up doing 14 years on it.

Also, the labor exploitation—it's just a big financial rip-off.

Marilyn: The worst aspect is the dehumanizing, the reducing of you as a person, making you into a thing, stereotyping you and refusing to see you as you are. For instance, the greatest humiliation that I've ever seen bestowed upon a woman is when a woman has to walk up to a correctional

guard, which is a woman, and ask her for a sanitary napkin or to ask her permission to take a douche, or to ask her permission to go to the bathroom. The way that they refuse to let you be a full-grown woman; the way they always refer to you as a girl; the way they never give you a choice of anything—you do it my way and that's all there is to it. The way they refuse to give you an explanation for doing certain things. It's like you don't have any mind. I think the greatest anger comes out of that. The physical institution you can cope with. The psychological institution you cannot cope with. There's so much anger and bitterness out of that. Anger and bitterness over how they pit you one against each other, how they pit the Blacks against the Whites, or Whites against Chicanos. The way they put the situation so that urban people resent rural people and young people hate old people. And how they keep that little game going every time everybody unifies on one constructive subject. Then they come up with one way or a system to turn us all at each other.

WHAT INCIDENTS AFFECTED YOU MOST IN PRISON?

Joanne: Well, the main thing that affected me the most was not having any control over my life, none whatsoever, not being able to be trained as I would've liked to, just having no control. None, inside or out.

Ila: Some of the things [that affected me] were just the whole way that they used to put women in segregation. The burden of proof was on you, but there was no way you could prove that you didn't do it, because they just weren't going to believe you. The first couple of times that I went into segregation, the whole thing just really blew my mind, how it was supposed to be set up like a courtroom. I had this whole idea that at least in a courtroom, you could have your say, and people would weigh that fairly. It wasn't until a couple of months later that I found out that they were modeling it on a courtroom exactly as it was.

You get put into segregation for damn near nothing. I went to segregation at one point for wearing a hat—you're not supposed to wear a hat; you could be carrying something. They went to segregation for supposedly threatening guards with abusive language, just a bunch of different things. Some-



"THE MOST EFFECTIVE

times the medicine cart, where they keep the diagnostic medication, Thorazine, Mellaril, all designed to keep you doped up, would get ripped off. And if they found out, you definitely went into segregation. Actually that was more of a slap on the hand type of thing, cause if you really wanted the medication, they'd give it to you. They'll give you as much as you want.

Joanne: They got people walking around in CIW so loaded that they don't know their hand from a hole in the ground.

Ila: Also, the things that really got me was how scared people are of any kind of rebellion, no matter how small, for fear of having their commissary taken away for a week, fear of maybe being locked in your cell all day, instead of being locked in it at certain designated times. That was old hat to me, because by the time I got to Rikers, I had been in a county jail in Georgia, and we never walked outside the cell. We came out once a week for an hour and that was it.

Marilyn: At one point Springfield sent down a new dietician who set up a new diet for us. The food got better but the servings got smaller. This went on for two weeks. Finally we were tired. One inmate went to the staff dining room, where they had generous servings and told the assistant superintendent that she was hungry. She was tired of being hungry—they work her like a man, feed her like a baby, and she wasn't gonna put up with it anymore. Ms. Powers told her that they would write to Springfield to see what could be done about it. Minnie Byrd, the woman, said "I'm hungry now, man." So Ms. Powers paid her no attention. The woman went to the counter and said, "I'm gonna serve myself; I'm hungry." So she went behind the counter, piled her plate up with food. Because she had the heart to do it, because she was doing what everybody else wished they had the heart to do, everyone applauded her and whistled. That was construed by the administration as inciting to riot.

Two weeks later they called the girl to the hospital and told her she was going to the doctor. When she got there, every guard in the institution was there and they locked her up. Okay. This is what made us angry: the way that they locked her up. If right then and there they had locked her up, she would have had the total support of the population. Not only that, she would have had anything she wanted, we would have saw to that. We would have tried legitimately to petition her out of the situation. And if that hadn't worked, we would probably have gotten physical. But they waited two weeks hoping that it had cooled off and nobody was even thinking about it.



It is very hard being handicapped in a place like this. Here in CIW I was once put in solitary with not even a shift, not even panties, no water in the cell, no toilet, just a hole in the floor with a pipe. . . just a stone floor and my bare skin. I was sixty-five years old at the time, seventy-one now. I was in there for three weeks' lockup over crackers. Just because I had a few illegal crackers that were given to me by a kitchen girl in my room."—Louise Bezie, deaf inmate at California Institution for Women, quoted in Women in Prison.

WHAT IS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON IN-PRISON ORGANIZING TACTICS, STRATEGIES, AND PROBLEMS?

Joanne: As far as I was concerned, the most effective tactics were speaking up, speaking out, trying to educate the people to what was really happening to us. Because the worst thing that happens in women's prisons is that women don't know that they're being abused. California has a hell of a labor exploitation; the average woman in the penitentiary doesn't realize that they're making millions off of our labor and paying us 40 cents an hour, 80 cents an hour. No one ever questions the fact that these people who are "experts in human behavior" are middle class, White, retired people who have no idea, no thought whatsoever of our background and our lifestyle. They never question any of the policies, they never question any of the illegal things, and it's all a matter, I think, of making people aware of what's happening.

TACTIC IN OUR ORGANIZING WAS TO FIND PEOPLE WHO HAD NOTHING TO LOSE"

SOURCE: Were you involved in any other kinds of organizing?

Joanne: Yes, I was involved in one of the Black groups for awhile and the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project, that sort of thing. I was in Circle's Edge, which is a N.O.W.-sponsored group, a feminist group. We had consciousness-raising and addressed ourselves to sisterhood, self-worth of women, you know. This was a group of White women and Third World women.

SOURCE: Did many women inside have much of a feminist consciousness?

Joanne: Not too many. Because of the indeterminate law, the average woman goes in and does whatever she thinks the institution would approve of, and the women in there are really not those that have the most initiative in the world as far as trying to do things themselves. Because from the beginning to the end of being in the institution, they're programmed for failure and there aren't too many that get off their ass and do anything.

Marilyn: In Illinois, I don't know if you're aware of one thing we're organizing behind, and it was a first. The Department of Corrections with their sexist policy decided to ship the women out of Dwight and turn it into an all-male institution. That meant women would be shipped to the Cook County Jail's new complex or Vienna State Correctional Center, which is an all-male institution 350 miles from Chicago. We resented being sent to Cook County Jail, for a number of reasons. We were all gonna have to be re-classified. Most of the women had worked themselves up to minimum security status, and they would lose that status because the whole institution is a maximum security institution. We would lose a lot of physical privileges that we had worked hard to get. We would lose psychologically because there are a lot of cameras and mikes hidden all through the place, and we would have the feeling of being doubly paranoid. We would lose as far as the medical situation was concerned. We would lose in so many ways it wasn't funny. Beyond that there was great fear among the gay members of the population because of certain staff members who openly admitted what they would do to gay people once they got there. There was a plan to separate us and classify us as young aggressives, young passives, and gays.

We had some law students coming down teaching us law. Together we came up with approximately 150 things that we would suffer if we were removed from the environment we were in. We got the support of the community behind us: the Ecumenical Women's Center, Chicago Women's Prison Project, Chicago Women's Liberation Union, Rising Up Angry, other groups, and we filed a federal lawsuit against the head of the Department of Corrections. And we won. They stopped the move. It's the first time in the history of this country that a class action suit like that has ever been won.

We won, but the Department of Corrections was determined to have their way, so now Dwight is a co-educational institution, and there are plans to ship in more males. And the situation now is that they're making the females as uncomfortable as they possibly can so that they hope that they will literally beg to be transferred to either Vienna Correctional Center, which nobody wants to go to either, or Cook County Jail. And it's not gonna happen.

The most effective tactic in our organizing was to find people who had nothing to lose. When I say that, I mean if a person was there doing a year, they wouldn't be the healthiest person to get involved as a leader, because you've got women there doing forty to a hundred years and they're not going to respect a person who's only going to be there a year. It pays to get people who don't mind saying what's on their

mind, people who are aggressive. It also pays to get people who are repeaters, because they tend to say, "well, I may have to come back, and I want the situation to be better." Strangely enough, it's best to get everybody who the administration considers to be a trouble-maker.

Ila: The things you can organize against in women's prisons here in New York are so subtle that a lot of the women don't even see the need to rebel against those things. It's like it's easier to organize against getting beaten, say, once a week regularly. It's easier to organize against strip searches. But those strip searches don't even happen at Rikers. It's hard to organize against the subtleties of having a beauty parlor or the subtleties that the only class that they teach in prison is sewing. Most of the women think, "well, that's a really good thing. I don't know how to sew." But aren't there other things that you could learn how to do? That kind of point is very hard to get across. And that stems basically from the kind of treatment that the women get in the streets. You know, like there are just certain things that women do and certain other things that women don't do.

There is a prison in New Jersey—Clinton—where at least for a while they had some really good things going. As far as I know, the women were organizing their own school. And they were organizing against getting beat, against searches, against disciplinary proceedings. And they were doing a good job. The problem with it was, of course, that they started transferring people out of jail. As long as there was grumbling among the inmates, as long as there was somebody

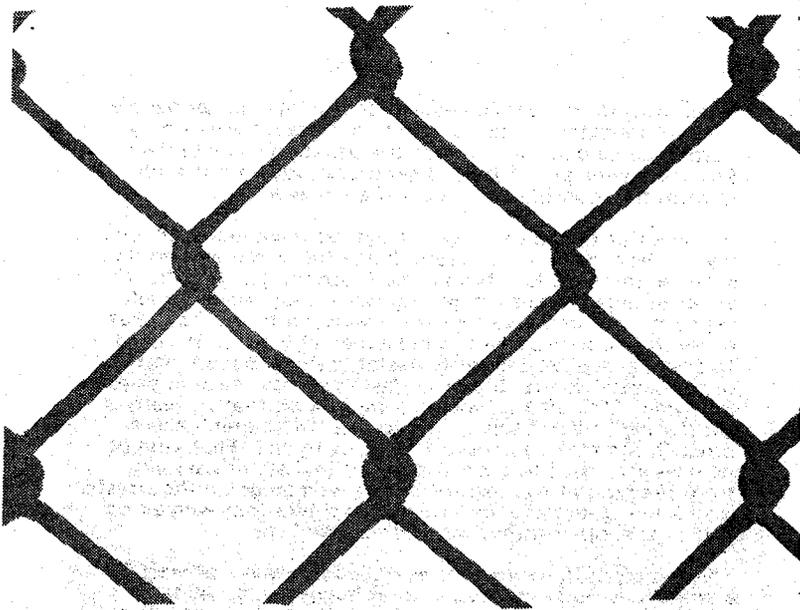
around who was really up on [resisting], they could always be talked into it, given a pep talk. As soon as that person was gone, it was "Now what?"—that kind of thing.

WHAT CAN OUTSIDE SUPPORT GROUPS DO?

Ila: One of the best things they can do is fight hard to continue to exist. They have access to the jail so that they can carry a lot of information in and people cannot be cut off from the outside world. I think the next most important thing is to make sure that there are other people that they talk to on the outside, get those people interested in what's happening to those women in jail so that there's even more pressure put on the prison system and the courts system to keep those people coming in and out of there.

In a lot of instances different groups can sway a judge in terms of sentencing somebody. It can make a difference in terms of appeal for bail reduction or just also in terms of character references or the pre-sentence reports that have to be done. Because the picture of most women when they go into court is always painted by the DA's office, by the probation/parole department, and it's not a very human picture at all. To have somebody else come in and be able to say, "I know this woman, she has so and so many kids, she's really concerned about those children, she writes to people"—it makes that person a whole lot more human in terms of what the judge sees.

The cadre of people who go in and out of prison can be cut off at any point. I mean passes and stuff can be taken away, but what happens when you have this mass of people who are beating down the prison door, demanding to have these people let back into the prison, demanding to know what's going on inside. While I was at Rikers very recently the women were on work strike and there were rumors that the women who actually organized the strike had been put in segregation and were not allowed to take showers, have commissary, have visitors, have mail. So we counted this campaign and we called out to the warden's office. We got bunches and bunches of people to call the warden's office



three and four times a day and demand to know what's happening to so and so. It really flustered the warden; first she started out by saying "There's nothing going on, there's nothing going on." Then after awhile she got really tongue-tied and she would just be stuttering on the phone—she could not deal with the pressure that was being put on her. And also we got some radio stations to do one or two really short spots on the newscasts about the fact that these things were going on at Rikers, and that totally blew the Department of Correction's mind. They thought they had successfully clamped down the lid; they love to think they can keep everything that goes on in the jails from ever getting out. And for the women in the jail it's really good to be listening to the news and to hear this stuff coming out about what they are doing. The women are totally happy about that: "God, there's somebody out there who knows."

SOURCE: We've heard of some programs where law students come in and teach law classes. Do you think that's important?

Ila: Yeah. Because it would give women just a whole lot better sense of what they're dealing with when they walk into a courtroom. We depend to a great degree on lawyers. And a lot of lawyers have jammed up a lot of people. That's how some people get coerced into plea bargaining; it's not so much that they want to plea bargain, but their lawyer's pushing it on them. Also during the whole phase of the trial it's much better for you if you can see what's going on. I think basically you can just keep a lot more people from being messed over.

Joanne: I think the most important ways for people outside to support women inside are writing about them or helping them organize on the inside, contacting them, telling it like it is. Groups like the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project are very, very important. Because what they're doing is making people politically aware that they're being used and that they put themselves in positions of being used as pawns in a fucked-up system. Our lives are very restricted prior to being incarcerated and we just didn't know what was happening.

I think that anything and all that would raise the consciousness of the people in the larger community has validity because there's such a black-out about prisons. It's something the average person thinks never will happen to them.

ARE PRISONERS UNIONS VIABLE FOR WOMEN?

Joanne: I think they're very, very valuable. Anything that addresses itself to prisoners as a whole.

Marilyn: Very much so.

IS CONFINEMENT EVER JUSTIFIED?

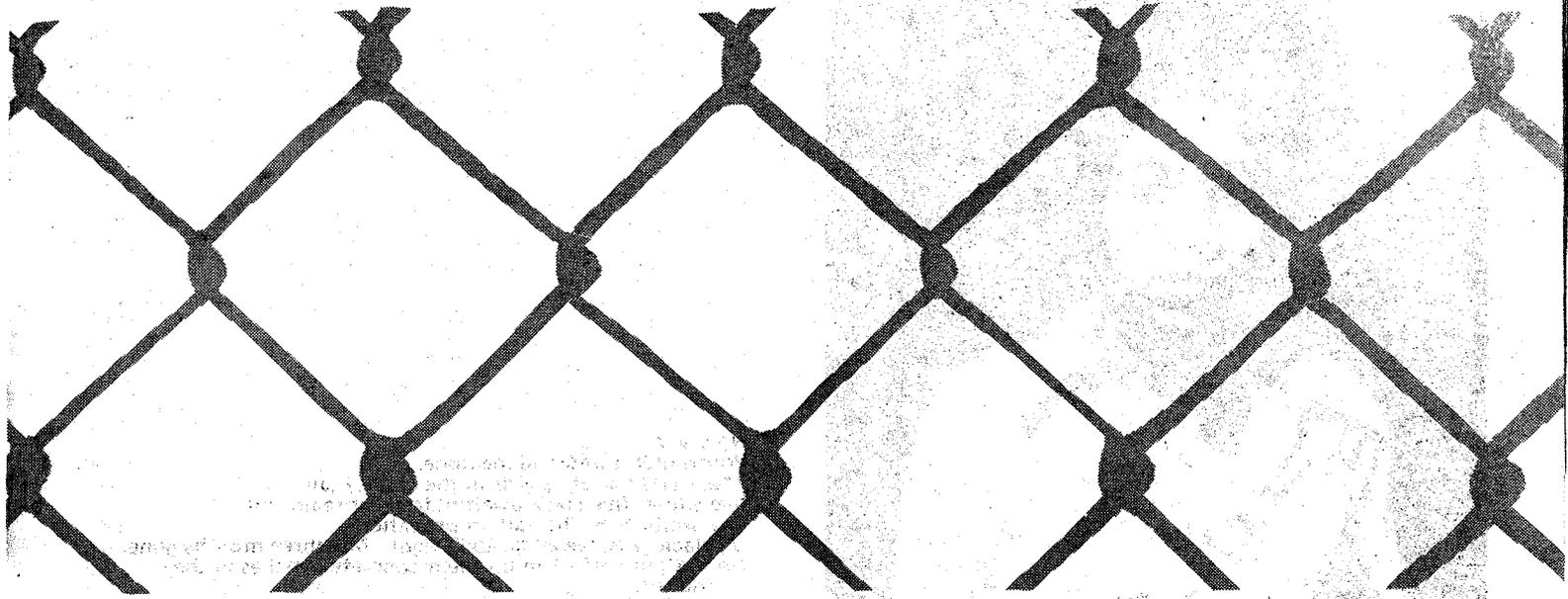
Ila: Whew. That's a question I've been wrestling with, and I've never come to any satisfactory place with myself about that. Cause on one hand there are certain types of crimes that are committed that to me are definitely wrong. Usually these types of crime are committed by people who have problems that can't be cured by locking them up. On the other hand, nobody has come up with any other viable alternatives dealing with those kinds of people.

SOURCE: What percentage of the people now in prison do you think still need to be there:

Ila: Probably an infinitesimal number, much below one percent.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE PRESENT PRISON SYSTEM?

Marilyn: I don't believe in confining people in the environment of correctional facilities as they are today because they create criminals. It doesn't destroy anybody's tendency to want to go out and break the law—in fact, it makes you angry enough to want to go out and tear up the world. I feel that if we cannot deal, in our community, with our social illnesses such as crime, there's something drastically wrong with the system.



Joanne: I think, really, that the whole prison system should be challenged. This is my premise, and until it is, I think that people should fight for at least that prisoners are treated humanely. I just can't see anything that the prisons are doing and that they're supposed to be doing other than warehousing human beings, and feedin' 'em and sleepin' 'em. Sticking people in an abnormal society and snatching them away from children, friends, and the opposite sex and abusing them in every possible way.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF HALF-WAY HOUSES?

Ila: It seems like a good idea, as an alternative to prison. I mean, strictly as an alternative to being locked up 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Of course there's more to it than that. There's the idea that what are the half-way houses trying to do? Are they trying to eliminate the need for prisons or are they just trying to eliminate over-crowding? And then too, most half-way houses that I've come across are usually funded by some government agency and therefore they have to do certain things in order to get that money. And that really waters down what individuals working in the half-way house have the ability to do.

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH WORK RELEASE PROGRAMS?

Marilyn: Originally we had to work in a community, with a lot of racial prejudice. And we got shit jobs. In fact, that was my job: cleaning shit off of people. I was a nurse's aide—paid minimum wage, always given the dirtiest jobs because we were ex-cons, always threatened by the people because they had the power to send us back. The work release center now is in Chicago; it is still corrupt. The thing that angers me the most is the sex exploitation that goes down. They have males workin' as counsellors that do the mid-night roaming routine. They go to the inmates' rooms and sexually molest the inmates, who are scared to death to tell anyone 'cause they're afraid they'll get sent back, or because they may get into some other kind of trouble.

WHAT DOES THE TERM "REHABILITATION" MEAN TO YOU?

Marilyn: When I talk about total rehabilitation, I'm talking about rehabilitation of the spiritual, mental, physical person. As far as total rehabilitation as a positive thing, it does

not happen in any women's institution. Rehabilitation that goes down behind the closed doors of women's institutions—it teaches you to hate yourself as a woman.

Ila: You know, when you take away a person's self-esteem and self-respect, there's not really a person left there anymore.

WHAT KIND OF PRISON WORK ARE YOU DOING NOW?

Marilyn: I work with quite a few groups. Some of them are not prison groups, but groups who I feel should raise their consciousness as far as incarcerated women are concerned. Most of the groups I work with have male ex-offenders, and I'm the only female who participates, and I'm always screaming, "Well, what about the sisters?"

Ila: I know a lot of people who are in jail in various parts of the country and so I try to send them books, keep them up on what's happening here, try to visit them when I can. I just really try to communicate them, make sure that they are not cut off from the world and that there's somebody around who can apply some kind of pressure if something goes wrong.

Joanne: I'm working with United Prisoners' Union as much as possible. I've only been out about three weeks, and I started working the day I came out.

WHAT MOST HELPED YOU GET THROUGH YOUR TIME?

Joanne: Oh, I read a lot, I did everything inside that I could—which was very little—to benefit myself. I learned to type, taught myself shorthand, read a lot of political material. I just refused to be beaten down. I spoke up when I thought things weren't as they should be.

Ila: I would use certain things mostly as escape tactics. I started out doing a whole lot of reading. I got into a whole lot of letter-writing to other brothers and sisters in jail, and that was what basically kept me going. Because no matter how bad off I thought my situation was, there was always somebody who was in another jail—it might be right there in the city—whose situation was worse.

Marilyn: Hate. I hated them so much, I refused to lay down and die. I hated them so much that I refused to let them destroy me.



No Lady
Prison didn't improve me none.
There was ten of us girls in the county jail
five white, five black awaitin' trial for sellin' shit.
The white girls, they all on probation.
Us black girls, we all go to Dwight. Me, three months gone.
An I ask myself sittin on them concrete benches in the
county.
How come? How come me an my sisters goin to jail
An the white girls goin back to college?
Their mothers come in here an weep—they get probation.
My mamma come in here—nose spread all over her face—she
weepin too
But I goin to Dwight
An I think about that—But I don't come up with no answers.
Ain't got no money for a lawyer.
Hell, I couldn't even make bail.
Met the defender five minutes before my trial
An I done what he said. Didn't seem like no trial to me, not
like T.V.
I didn't understand none of it.
Six months to a year they give me. . .
They ride us out there in a bus.
See my playin' the game—goin to charm class an the body
dynamics, (to learn my Feminine Role)
An I take keypunchin, an I do real well.
My boyfriend, he come to see me twice, and then he stop
comin'
An when I have the baby, I give it up,
Weren't nothin else for me to do.
They give me twenty-five dollar when I get outta there
An I wearin my winter clothes in July, an everyone knows
where I comin from
Six months I try to find a job, make it straight.
But every door I push against closed tight.
This here piece of paper say I'm a first-class keypuncher
But the man who give the job, he say I flunk that test
Sheeit man, I didn't flunk that test.
You think I'm a criminal. I done my time, but you ain't re-
classified me.
I always be a criminal to you
One of the counselors say I "mentally ill,"
I needs treatment. Two hours a week they give me group
therapy.
The other hundred and fifteen, they lock me up—like an
animal.
An I ain't got no neurosis nowadays.
Sheeit, it's this place make you ill. . . .
Other night, I took sick with the cramps;
There weren't no doctor 'til mornin.
He poke me in the sore spot an say, "Girl—
You jus wanna go to the hospital. Get you some tea an
toast."
Tea an toast!
My girlfriend—she die of diabetes, before they do anythin
for her.
She come outta here in a box. Looks like it won't be no dif-
ferent for me
That's how it is, Lady.
No. Prison didn't improve me none.
—anonymous, reprinted from *The Chicago Seed*.

SISTERS INSIDE SISTERS OUTSIDE

[The following is excerpted from an article in *off our backs*, April 1972. Ed. note: Although this article was written for women outside, we feel it applies to all people doing outside prison support work.]

The outside prison support movement's purpose is breaking down the isolation of the people inside by offering political support and concrete services, while educating the public about the real basis of so-called "crime" in America. As long as you have a capitalist system, people will have to steal, fight, and hustle (compete) to live, while the real criminals sit in the White House and executive offices across the country.

Women's prisons are generally obscured—the women's movement must relate to women in prison as one part of women's oppression. Our responsibility is developing this material and political support for our sisters while changing the consciousness of women in and out of our movement to understand race, class and lesbian oppression. Our major task now is building a movement which speaks to the needs of more than young middle class women, a broad based movement working for revolutionary change in economic and political power.

The outside support movement must respect inside initiative and wholeheartedly support prisoner demands. A support movement cannot be the mechanical application of abstract ideas about the politics organizing the downtrodden people or that the prisoner class will make the revolution now. The outside cannot organize the inside—historically prisoners raised our consciousness about prisons. It is important to break down myths about the sisters and brothers inside, and realize that they are not evil and demented (society's myth) nor all super-revolutionary (sometimes our myth) but that they are people who go through changes and fight and struggle (like us) in order to live their lives. An outside support movement can connect the struggle outside to the struggle inside by developing real personal and political ties.

To be absolutely trustworthy and responsible is a priority if a group wants to relate to sisters inside. Services are needed, but it is also important not to become another social service agency. People have dealt with enough agencies. Agencies do not break down anyone's sense of isolation—people need to talk to other people. Agencies, especially prisons, are the channels that society uses to deal with lower class people. Class is very deeply ingrained in us all, and a prison support group must be prepared to struggle with race and class contradictions.

Organizations of prisoner families help bus family and friends to visit people inside, encourage people to think about why their sisters and brothers are incarcerated, and ways that families and community people can ease the isolation of prison and the alienation of returning to the outside. Newsletters printed on the outside but written by prisoners, increase contact between jails and with the outside. Although jobs are scarce for everyone, support groups on the outside that can find jobs (and housing) can help people make parole. Legal help is always needed and various radical law collectives across the country are becoming involved.

Certain changes—reforms—are important in that they provide the sisters and brothers inside with some space to grow. It is not true that the more repressive the conditions are, the more politically aware, more outspoken, more determined to struggle the people are. (Voting for Wallace is sometimes called "heightening the contradiction.") If you can't move you can't struggle. Suits and class actions dealing with prisoner legal and civil rights open up the physical and psychological space. Uncensored mail and literature, open visiting policies, definite legal disciplinary rights, etc., will give our sisters and brothers the space to think, talk, organize and gain power.

We cannot confuse these necessary changes in conditions with the liberal-reformist treatment models and Therapeutic Communities that are now becoming the government's response to crime. Based on the assumption that it was the individual that could not cope with the society (was immature), the therapeutic community idea is to tear a person apart and rebuild them into acceptable, properly motivated citizens. (Such programs have "cured" some addicts; generally, however, they produce guilt ridden, self-hating, repressed, upwardly mobile—in aspirations at least—ex-cons.) These liberal programs also institutionalize competition, stereotypes of male-female roles, class hierarchies, and the "upward and downward mobility" those hierarchies imply.

A sister in the Federal Penitentiary in Texas tells us, "At this writing, I feel almost as if I am sort of 'brain-washed.' You may have heard about this new project at Fort Worth. It is a co-ed institution with only about two hundred inmates at this time. All of our activities etc. are with members of the opposite sex, and we are given quite a bit of freedom. (I am speaking in comparison to other places.) It seems as if the staff for the most part, is truly trying to help us. This irks me to my soul, since it is the very Government they work for that needs help. The whole prison reform thing hits me with mixed feelings. For example, yes, we have it good in comparison to how others are treated; but even in this 'model' program, psychological destruction occurs... and will continue to occur as long as people are being held involuntarily and tortured with indeterminate release dates."

We must understand the subtle strategic importance of these programs and expose them relentlessly, while fighting for real prisoner rights.

Sisters on the inside take pride in the fact that they are *people* and *WOMEN* and they struggle to assert their strength and individuality, and, as understanding, political awareness and collectivity grow, so does their sense of interconnectedness and solidarity with all prison struggles. To support that struggle and tie it to women's struggles and all other struggles on the outside is imperative. Prisons will not change or be abolished until American institutions and values are transformed, until that "strong people's thrust" sets us free.

Women's Prison Collective, Mass.



ON REFORMS

[The following was excerpted from an article by Women Out Now, a radical support group for women prisoners in Seattle, Washington. See section on support groups for a description of W.O.N.]

Since Women Out Now is organized around the needs of the women inmates, we are not always in favor with the prison administration. Getting into the prison and staying in has for WON been very dependent upon good legal support from "credible" community organizations: The American Civil Liberties Union, the National Lawyers Guild, the Urban League, etc. Besides having important resources for the inmates, whenever problems arise the administration receives complaints not only from WON, but from the ACLU staff attorney questioning the legal basis for the prison's actions. Whatever our own analysis of the right or wrong of the whole situation, the reality at this time is that the state holds the legal power (backed by arms) to control the prison. Unless we are to be totally vulnerable and defenseless we must have support from other legal powers respected by (feared by) the state.

Prison support work involves a slow process of building trust between outside people and prisoners. Prisoners know only too well the "waiting for false promises routine". We must have respect for the decisions convicts make. WON doesn't have a line on what convicts should do, we don't control, we support women prisoners in gaining control over their own lives. We encourage people who have condescending or "dogooder" attitudes about helping "those poor convicts" to work on changing their own attitudes instead of further oppressing prisoners.

Because of their vulnerable, powerless position, and the constant perpetuating of resentments and dissension by prison personnel, building trust and unity among convicts is also an extremely slow process. During this process it is easy to get caught up in the day to day problems and temporary stop-gap solutions, and lose sight of long-range progress and goals. People in WON have often felt the contradiction of providing services to inmates that in effect aid the prison administration by lessening inmates hassles, thus keeping them pacified . . . in the short run. It is important to keep clear the context in which we are working: to help prisoners recognize their power to demand change as a united body; and to recognize their ties with the struggles of all oppressed people.

We do not believe that prisons can be reformed under the existing economic and social system. The problem of prisons belongs to all of us. Eighty-five per cent of the people in prison come from the lowest 12% income bracket; racial minorities are disproportionately higher percentages of prison populations. Economic crimes will not be solved by imprisonment, but only when we have dealt with the crimes of unemployment, unequal education, hunger, poverty, racism, sexism, and the denial of human and civil rights to children.



WHILE THERE IS A LOWER CLASS I AM IN IT, WHILE THERE IS A CRIMINAL ELEMENT I AM OF IT, WHILE THERE IS A SOUL IN PRISON I AM NOT FREE. ♡♡♡ GENE DEBS



CHINA'S LEGAL SYSTEM

[The following is excerpted from an article by the New York Women's Bail Fund. Their sources were "The Other Side of the River" by Edgar Snow, and "Awakened China" by Felix Greene.]

When we criticize the present criminal justice system and demand its abolition, many people will immediately ask us what we intend to put in its place. Information about the judicial systems in other countries, particularly socialist countries like China, can help us to answer such questions. There are many aspects of (the Chinese) system which could be used in constructing a new system of justice in this country.

Before 1949, Chinese cities, particularly Shanghai, had more crime than New York has today. Shanghai was practically ruled by underworld gangs who killed to order, sold opium, and ran innumerable houses of prostitution. Within a few years of the communist victory, all this was changed and there was almost no crime in Shanghai or elsewhere in China. How did this change come about?

First, under the socialist system there was work and a modest but adequate income for all. This eliminated the economic motive that underlies most crime. Second, the Communist Party and administration were determined to eliminate the drug traffic and the criminal organizations which controlled it. Third, the basis of the communist organization is the neighborhood or workplace committee which enlists the aid of the people in making and carrying out decisions. This organization helped to restore the sense of community and cooperation in the Chinese cities.

Chinese law is made by the National People's Congress and the laws apply to the whole country—the Chinese system is national rather than federal. The Chinese court system is divided into three parts:

1. The Supreme People's Court
2. Special People's Courts
3. Basic People's Courts

The Basic People's Courts are generally the courts of first instance and the majority of cases are heard in them. Each case is heard by a judge and two People's Assessors whose function is somewhat like that of our juries. The People's Assessors are elected by popular vote for a two year term and are given some legal training while serving. There are 40 to 100 Assessors in each county. When a case comes to trial, two of them are chosen to attend. They have equal rights with the judge and the two together may outvote the judge.

Below the courts are the Neighborhood People's Conciliation Committees. These are composed of trusted community members. The Committees help to settle personal and family disputes and deal with minor infringements of the law. The Committees are able to settle many disputes which would otherwise have to go to Court.

There are not very many police in China and they patrol unarmed. Maintenance of order on a day to day basis is the responsibility of the street and workplace committees rather than the police.

Before an individual can be arrested, a complete investigation must be made and evidence sufficient to satisfy the court must be submitted in advance. The arrest must be made in public, in the daytime, and in front of witnesses. The family of the arrested person must be notified. The accused person must be shown the full evidence against her/him at least three days before trial. S/he may choose her/his own lawyer or

have the court appoint a lawyer. The case must be heard within one month of the charges being laid.

Writers Felix Greene and Edgar Snow visited the Peking municipal prison which has about 1800 prisoners. About 100 of these were women at the time of Snow's visits. This prison has no armed guards or bars. The prison shops are run by prisoner foremen. The prisoners also run the library, canteen, and barber shop. The prisoners have their own band, theater group, and opera troupe. Men and women prisoners eat together and attend plays and movies together.

The majority of prisoners were in for theft of state property, embezzlement and forgery. Few were in for violent crimes against persons. Chinese law provides for the death penalty for murder or rape of a victim under 14. However, the death sentence is automatically suspended for two years to give an opportunity for reform. If a person under the death sentence shows evidence of sincere reform, his/her sentence is usually commuted. Few sentences extend more than ten years.

Besides the regular city jails, a convicted person could be sentenced to probation (for minor crimes or first offenses) or sent to a state reform farm. Snow reported that the reform farms are very much like the ordinary state farms of China and definitely are not a Chinese version of Siberia.

The emphasis of the Chinese prison system is reform. Only a very small percentage of Chinese prisoners are repeaters. The authorities want the prisoner to be persuaded of the justness of the cause of communism and to attain an awareness of how her/his actions can help or hurt that cause. The Chinese believe that real conviction must be the basis of the person's cooperation with the aims of society. The techniques used to achieve this cooperation are study, criticism, and self-criticism. This process of study and criticism is the basis of the so-called "brainwashing" of the Chinese. It is based on the conviction that a person can change in fundamental ways. The Chinese believe that this transformation of the individual is essential in order to create a new society. The reform of prisoners is but one example of the change of consciousness that the whole people must undergo.



Selection of the following women was, in a sense, arbitrary, though each of them has received some national publicity and the support of various political organizations. Stories of injustice and struggle are plentiful among prisoners and many other examples could have been used as well. Not all seven arrested for political crimes but, like most prisoners, they are victims of our political and economic system. The women described here are examples of resistance and strength. Their stories are integrally related with the struggles of all oppressed people.

At the end of each sketch is an address of the prisoner or her support group where further information can be obtained. Though it is important to lend support to these prisoners, it is equally important to break down the walls of isolation around prisoners in each community.

POLITICAL

CAROL CROOKS

Carol Crooks, a popular black prisoner at Bedford Hills in New York, was severely beaten by guards in August, 1974 when she refused solitary confinement unless formal charges were presented to her. Resisting prison injustice was not new to her—she had an earlier run-in with authorities over her demand for decent medical treatment of her asthma. At the time of the solitary confinement incident, other prisoners supported Crooks by refusing to lock in. A battle followed, in which inmates held parts of two buildings and some of the grounds for at least four hours before finally being subdued. Many of the prisoners were injured and put in the prison hospital, others were thrown into solitary or locked in their cells. Crooks was later transferred to Mattewan Prison for the "criminally insane." Janice Warne, Superintendent of Bedford Hills at the time of the uprising, is now being sued for refusal to grant prisoners their right to due process by putting them in solitary confinement without a hearing. Contact National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, P.O. Box 1184, New York, NY 10027, (212) 993-8200.

INEZ GARCIA

Inez Garcia, a woman of Cuban and Puerto Rican descent, was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to five years to life in October, 1974. Her crime? . . . killing the man who shortly before had helped another man rape her. Seven months previously, two men stopped by the apartment in Soledad, California which Garcia shared with Fred Madrano. Drunk and looking for trouble, the visitors assaulted Madrano. When Garcia protested as they were leaving, she was dragged to the back of the house. One of the men then held her down while the other raped her. After she had returned to the apartment, the rapists telephoned, taunting her and threatening her life. Their contempt, on top of the attack against her body, enraged Garcia. She grabbed a rifle and headed to the house from which the rapists had phoned. Madrano had already gone after them. When Garcia arrived, she found them beating him up. A knife was thrown in her direction—she fired, killing her rapist's accomplice. During her trial, the judge repeatedly emphasized to the jurors that the rape was not an issue. To him, it was a simple case of murder. The rapist was the chief prosecution witness. When she testified in

her own defense, Garcia expressed no remorse, affirming a woman's right to seek her own justice in the case of rape. Before the verdict, she said, "We've already won because of all the support. We need people who believe in women and their rights. To me, that's winning. Men are going to think twice now when they try to rape a woman." Contact Free Inez Committee, P.O. Box 840, Berkeley, CA 94701, (415) 648-2520.

Courage to stand up and speak is the beginning of your womanhood. Just because you have a number, why throw away your pride? I'm in prison night and day but for twenty-four hours a day God has given me the courage to be a woman. When . . . someone says something I feel isn't right, I'm gonna stand up and let them know this. I'm not going to say, 'Yes, ma'am, you're right.' That's another ounce of pride from your womanhood. And that's basically all we have in here.

—Barbara Baker, Ohio Reformatory for Women, quoted in *Women in Prison*.

JANE KENNEDY

In 1969, a militant anti-war group calling itself Beaver 55 destroyed draft files in Indianapolis and magnetic tape belonging to the Dow Chemical Company in Michigan. One of them was Jane Kennedy, a White woman in her forties, moved to participate by her pacifist and Catholic beliefs. Kennedy was sentenced to 14 months in the Detroit House of Corrections for her part in the Dow Chemical raid. Conditions inside were so degrading that she felt compelled to publicize them. Several of her letters were smuggled out of jail and published in the radical press. Kennedy was also active in inside organizing efforts. The day of her release, other prisoners decided to show support to her and also signal their continued determination to resist the jail administration. They demanded better food and health care, the right to telephone conversations with their families, and an end to unreasonable regulations (a prisoner could be put in solitary confinement for "silent insubordination"). Kennedy has been sentenced by a federal court to four years in prison for the draft board raid. At this writing, she is preparing to return to prison to serve her sentence. While testifying during her sentencing, her attorney asked what she would do when she was free. "You don't understand," Kennedy said in a quiet voice that brought the spectators to their feet in applause. "I am free. I may be in prison, but I am free." She may be contacted while in prison by writing Jane Kennedy, 54 S. Woodlawn, Chicago, IL 60615.

Everytime she's told something to do she always has to ask why.

—Jane Kennedy's warden, Will Bannan



PRISONERS

LOLITA LEBRON

On March 1, 1954, four Puerto Rican independista standing in the visitors gallery of the U.S. House of Representatives unfurled a Puerto Rican flag, pulled out handguns and fired on the floor of the House. Five congresspeople were wounded. Their leader and the first to fire was a 34 year old woman, Lolita Lebron. A letter found in her pocket after she was arrested read, "I assume all responsibility before God and the world. My blood cries out for the independence of my country. This is an outcry of VICTORY." Lebron is serving a 50 year sentence at the federal prison in Alderson, West Virginia. Although in ill health, she refuses to ask for favors from prison authorities and resists all efforts to dampen her spirit. Six years ago she refused an offer of parole because it required a statement of contrition, a promise of future non-involvement in the Puerto Rican struggle, and there was no guarantee that the three other participants in the House incident would be released. After the Attica uprising, she was instrumental in organizing a sympathy strike at Alderson. Afterwards, prison officials put her in solitary confinement for a year. At the end of January, 1975, Fidel Castro offered to release a captured CIA agent in exchange for Lebron's freedom. In Puerto Rico, she is known as una Hembra (a complete woman.) Contact Comitè Lolita Lebron, 26 W. 20th St., 3rd floor, New York, NY 10011, (212) 243-2310 or the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, 232 E. 11th St., New York, NY 10003, (212) 673-0540.

JOANNE LITTLE

In August, 1974, Clarence Alligood, a White guard in the Beaufort County Jail in North Carolina, was found dead in one of the cells. That cell had been occupied by Joanne Little, a 20 year old Black woman. Eight days later, Little turned herself in to authorities. The story she told is a familiar one—Alligood had tried to rape her. But unlike most in her situation, Joanne Little chose to fight back. And, fearing the retribution of angry guards, she fled for her life. The evidence confirmed this account: Alligood had been killed with an ice pick kept in his drawer; his body was naked from the waist down except for a pair of socks; the shoes which he wore lay in the corridor outside the cell; the medical examiner found semen on his leg. Despite this, the prosecutor chose to indict Little for first degree murder (which draws a mandatory death penalty in North Carolina). Bond was set at \$100,000 and she was kept so tightly shackled in the courtroom that she was unable to rise and greet her supporters. Throughout this ordeal, Little has continued to insist on her right to self-defense. In the words of a poem which she has written, "I, a black woman, stood proudly up for herself, For without pride, dignity, what is there left?" Contact Joanne Little Defense Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 1003, Durham, NC 27702, or Southern Poverty Law Center, Washington Bldg., Montgomery, AL 36101, (205) 264-1412.

ASSATA SHAKUR

Over the last several years, the Black Liberation Army has been one of the most militant groups in the Black revolution. Authorities have responded to their challenge with severe repression. One B.L.A. member, Assata Shakur, has been in jail in New York City since May, 1973, yet has never been convicted of a crime. Bank robbery, attempted murder, kidnapping, and now murder-one rap after another has been thrown at her. Each of the first three charges resulted in an acquittal. Currently, she faces trial for the death of a state trooper on the New Jersey Turnpike. One of her com-



panions was killed during that incident. Another, Sundiata Acoli, has been convicted of murder and sentenced to life plus 30 years. Shakur was pregnant while imprisoned at Rikers Island in New York. Justifiably suspicious of prison officials, she insisted on a doctor of her choice and refused treatment from prison personnel. For this she was continually harassed, given an inadequate diet, and periodically beaten. After many protests and a demonstration by her supporters, her own doctor was permitted to deliver the baby (a daughter named Kakuya Amala Olugbala Shakur, or "hope for the future"). Assata Shakur has earned a great deal of respect among other inmates. Fearful of her potential as an organizer, authorities have isolated her in Rikers' psychiatric unit. Contact Friends of Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli, c/o Midnight Special, National Lawyers Guild, 23 Cornelia St., New York, NY 10014.

One cold winter day in New York City, Jeanette Washington stood firm. Black mother on welfare refused to pay 30 cents to ride the subway. She got on, determined to ride, refusing to let bystanders pay her fare. "I wasn't going to be locked in the community any longer. I was going to use public transportation which should be free." The police apparently thought she was crazy. They called an ambulance and took her to see a psychiatrist. "He asked me why I do what I do. I asked him to think about why society does what it does to me." Police charged Jeanette Washington, Black mother on welfare, with "criminal trespassing on public property." The judge set bail at \$1500 and Jeanette was locked, out of the community, in jail. Later she got a bill for the ambulance.

—Kitsi Burkhart, taken from a taped interview on "Radio Free People."

GROUPS

In the following pages are a sampling of groups providing women prisoners and ex-cons with various types of support and assistance. In addition to general support and service groups there are inmate organizations, in-prison programs, prisoner's unions, drug programs, general resource groups, diversion programs, groups working to decriminalize prostitution, re-entry programs, legal aid and education groups, and pre-trial release programs.

This listing should not be mistaken for a complete directory—it only represents the tip of the iceberg in a growing movement to bring women prisoners' problems into national view. Many of the groups are models for what can be done, and how to effectively do it, in different types of communities around the country. Some of these organizations are

SUPPORT & SERVICE GROUPS

People on the outside have formed a number of organizations to respond to women prisoners' problems. Some of the groups exist primarily to help make prison life more bearable. Their activities may include anything from transporting family members to prison for visits to organizing discussion groups or classes inside. Groups that provide such services without really challenging the legitimacy of the prison system have been labeled service groups.

Other groups recognize that the interests of prison administrators and inmates are diametrically opposed. In practice, such organizations seek to provide prisoners political support in their struggle with the penal system. We have therefore labelled them support groups.

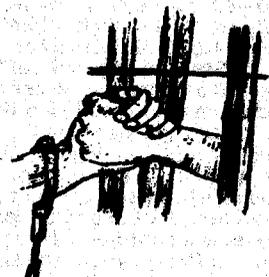
The distinction between support and service organizations can be extremely subtle. Often the activities of both types of groups are practically identical: providing literature, a sympathetic outside ear, caring for prisoners' personal affairs. The fundamental differences boil down to the question of a group's relative political consciousness as expressed in practice. Service groups often are inadequately aware of the political functions which the prison system serves. This leads to important practical errors; by not recognizing the fundamental conflict of interest between officials and inmates, such groups can inadvertently become extensions of prison policy. They take pressure off the system by providing services for which the prison should be responsible.

Armed with political consciousness, support groups are well-equipped to aid prisoners on a number of fronts. Many of their activities are directed towards affirming a prisoner's sense of self-worth and helping to build the inner strength needed for political struggle. Agitation and consciousness-raising about prison issues in local communities can also increase the level of support.

The importance of any work which eases the suffering of prisoners cannot be discounted. However the groups which affect the most people in the long run are those which combine concrete services with a long-range strategy to change the system which is responsible for the suffering.

funded or ultimately administered by government agencies, particularly by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the Department of Justice. Despite the strings that are often attached, we feel that most of these groups have managed to maintain a reasonable degree of autonomy and are providing important services.

We have made an effort to contact model groups in all parts of the country. Some we will have inevitably missed and descriptions of others may contain outdated, incomplete, or inaccurate information. When writing to organizations for information, try to enclose return postage, and please don't call collect. Groups that don't rely on major funding sources must be supported by people's ideas, energy, and money when it's available.



support groups

BUFFALO WOMEN'S PRISON PROJECT . . . started three years ago by radical feminists in a women's studies course at the State University of New York at Buffalo. They began art and drama classes at the Erie County Penitentiary and Jail as a means to meet and talk with women prisoners. In the second year, however, the group reorganized in an effort to change its White, middle-class, student orientation. They felt that for the project to be effective, it should be multi-racial and community-based. At present, there are about 25 women in this collectively-run project, 1/3 law students, 1/6 from SUNY-Buffalo, and the rest community people, mostly Third World. Project members are united as feminists and in their belief that prisons should be abolished for all but about 1% of the present inmate population. About half are socialists. Currently, they conduct arts, crafts, drama and exercise classes two afternoons a week, and run errands for inmates in the Erie County Holding Center. Letter contact is maintained with those women convicted of felonies and sentenced to Bedford Hills State Prison. BWPP also has a task force teaching art classes for women detained at the Juvenile Detention Center. Their legal action task force, along with NYC Legal Aid Prisoner's Rights Project, has filed suit challenging conditions in the Holding Center. For Bedford Hills women returning to the Buffalo area, BWPP offers help in finding a job. Contact BWPP, P.O. Box 87, O'Brian Hall, SUNY-Buffalo, North Campus, Buffalo, NY 14260. (716) 636-2167.

WOMEN OUT NOW . . . brings resource people, literature, legal assistance and general support to the women of Purdy Treatment Center in the state of Washington. This collective of six includes ex-cons, mothers, lesbians, and working women whose goal is to open women's prisons to the outside world and help inmates gain greater control over their lives. They conduct a bi-weekly program at Purdy, bringing in an incredible range of community groups and speakers, from

Attica defendants to radical therapists to members of the Seattle Lesbian Resource Center to Puppet Power, a group of radical feminist puppeteers. Although program attendance has so far been small, they are encouraged by the growing trust they feel from inmates. WON staff also bring in a variety of reading material, most of it donated by local bookstores, and try to find outsiders willing to correspond with prisoners. Through these activities they hope to encourage women to educate themselves and fight against the prison system. A major group concern is to establish stronger ties with the law community, especially so that they can help women contest prison disciplinary procedures. In such cases, prisoners have no right to outside legal representation, but an attorney's advice can nevertheless be beneficial. The WON collective sees legislation as a stepping stone toward abolishing the prison system, but feel that the biggest push should be to keep people out of jail. They support themselves through benefits and speaking engagements. Contact WON, P.O. Box 22199, Seattle, WA 98122. (206) 325-6498.

SANTA CRUZ WOMEN'S PRISON PROJECT . . . "conducts workshops within the prison (California Institution for Women) on issues relevant to raising the social and political consciousness of ourselves and the women prisoners." Through these workshops, women gain academic credit and hopefully develop "an analysis of the social conditions which led them to prison." This outstanding group consists of about 40 community people in three semi-autonomous collectives in Santa Cruz, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay area, plus hundreds of others who have participated in special projects. Their workshop topics have included such titles as Politics: U.S. Institutions, Black Studies, The Chicana Women, Radical Psychology, and Women & American Health Care. Each course is a series extending over four weekends. Special presentations are made in the maximum custody and psychiatric units. About 175 prisoners have participated since 1972 and none of those released have been rearrested or violated parole. The work of the Prison Project goes far beyond the workshops, however. They also hold dances, films, poetry readings in CIW, bring in free books, correspond with the women, work with other prisoner support groups, speak to community groups, develop video tapes and radio shows, and print writings of women in prison. (See *no title at all is better than a title like that!* in Resource listings). A parolee support group to expand their job, housing, education counselling services is another priority. It is not surprising that their status at the prison is always somewhat tenuous, particularly the Santa Cruz group which focuses on ethnic and political issues. The prison administration has threatened to refuse them access to CIW, but backed down in the face of organized inmate protests. Contact SCWPP, c/o Karlene Faith, 120 De la Costa, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (408) 429-2625 or 426-2291.

WOMEN AGAINST PRISON . . . is a new organization of women in favor of abolishing prisons. Their work centers around the recognition of the deep oppression of women and the realization of the need for basic societal change. The group started with about 40 women, many of whom have socialist and feminist perspectives. An attempt to halt construction of a new state prison for women in Michigan was the issue that originally brought them together. The state plans this institution for 300 women despite the fact that few female prisoners really require that kind of maximum security. WAP has organized into several task forces. One does community education and consciousness-raising about the role of prisons in society, using movies, public speaking, posters, articles, etc. Another tries to influence groups who have money to lobby against the new prison. A third gathers information about the activities of the state legislature and locates the most valuable educational materials. Their interest is not in direct lobbying; they want to build public support against prisons and, in that way, pressure the lawmakers. Reaching women just released from the Detroit House of Corrections (DeHoCo) is another WAP goal. Because DeHoCo is in very bad physical shape, they do not view it as an alternative to the new prison. Instead, they feel that community-based facilities are a step in the direction of complete elimination of the prison system. From their point of view, the relatively lower security of such programs is more conducive to prisoners organizing to demand their rights. Contact WAP, 520 Walnut, Apt. 2, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, (313) 761-7973.

BAY AREA COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN OFFENDERS . . . is "an educational propaganda systems-change group" whose prime purpose is to keep women out of jail and prison. They would ideally like to institute in California something similar to the Iowa Plan (see p. 29). Much energy has been put into fighting the behavior modification program at the California Institute for Women, and the unjust disciplinary proceedings which impose "isolation and punishment without stated reasons or hearing." They have pressured a state legislator to investigate prisoners' rumors of a new "management cottage" at C.I.W. which will use behavior mod techniques. The Committee is also helping bring suit on behalf of an inmate who stood up to the "therapists" using attack therapy on her—eight hours of verbal bombardment to force her to admit her weaknesses. Because she resisted, she was severely beaten, to the extent that many bones were broken in her face. Other projects of the Committee include pressuring against the building of two new jails and filing suit with the ACLU and Coyote (see prostitution section) to decriminalize prostitution. Contact Bay Area for Women Offenders, c/o Kay Nollenberger, 1541 Oxford No. 207, Berkeley, CA 94709 (415) 845-5052.



CHICAGO WOMEN'S PRISON PROJECT . . . started in 1972 to educate around and act on the problems of women prisoners, particularly at what was then Chicago's women's prison, Dwight Institution. Militantly committed to supporting the rights of prisoners, this group has already helped achieve a number of important victories. For instance, when the project began, Dwight was a very closed institution. After much pressure, the students, ex-cons and professionals who compose CWPP were able to gain access to Dwight. Working through a broadbased task force including everyone from the ACLU to the Black Panthers, the group drew up a list of demands for change. Some of these have been implemented as a direct result of this pressure. In the fall, 1973, the Department of Corrections arbitrarily decided to convert Dwight into an all-male prison, send half the women to Vienna Prison in Southern Illinois, and send the rest to Cook County Jail, "a horror of steel, concrete, and electronic snooper." CWPP spoke out against this; some of the law students filed suit, and the D.O.C. backed down. Now both Vienna and Dwight are co-ed but men's needs still tend to take priority. At present the Project conducts a weekly law class at Dwight and is trying to improve conditions at a work release center where prisoners may go six months before they are paroled. Dwight's job counselling is extremely poor, with no training except as nurse's aides. CWPP also helps initiate newly-released women into the city and directs them to community resources. Contact CWPP, c/o Chicago Women's Liberation Union, 2748 N. Lincoln, Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 953-6808.

ACTION FOR FORGOTTEN WOMEN . . . grew out of the Joanne Little case (see political prisoners section) which has brought to light the conditions in North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women. This Black and White female "citizen interest group" is involved primarily in pressuring the legislature for an equal share of funding for vocational and educational programs in the women's and men's prisons. They're now compiling information about the lack of these funds in the women's prison and are trying to get a bill passed to authorize an investigation of conditions at the women's prison. Presently no women are paid for prison labor, and only some men are. The group's tactics include organizing letter-writing campaigns and petitions as demonstrations of public support for the improvement of prison conditions; hopefully lobbying efforts will begin soon. Contact Action for Forgotten Women, 1601 Sedgefield St., Apt. E, Durham, N.C. 27705, (919) 471-1197.

ART WITHOUT WALLS . . . is a group of women who have been leading workshops in dance, art, exercise and improvisation for women at Riker's Island in New York for about three years. They also lead rap groups which often center on feminist issues. Running programs for both short and long-termers, they see the classes as important in helping people to express themselves and in "getting women together to take control of their lives". Contact ART WITHOUT WALLS, c/o Marilyn Adams, 32 E. 169th St., Bronx, NY 10452.

COALITION FOR WOMEN IN NEW YORK STATE PRISONS . . . first organized in February 1974 to protest the brutality against Carol Crooks by Bedford Hills officials. (see political prisoners section). As oppression and resistance at Bedford Hills has increased over the months, this coalition of mainly Third World women has managed to bring a class action suit against the Department of Corrections to protect all women at Bedford Hills from unconstitutional disciplinary procedures. (The decision is still pending as of this writing). They have just begun work on another class action suit on behalf of women arbitrarily transferred to Mattewan Prison for the criminally insane. It is believed that they have been sent there as subjects for behavior modification experiments; it is known that drugs (thorazine) have been forced on some of them. The class action suits were a contributing factor in the recent resignation of New York's Commissioner of Corrections. Working closely with other legal and prison support groups, the coalition has been trying to publicize all the mistreatment of prisoners that's been going on at Bedford Hills. They are hoping to compile a booklet of writings by the women there and would also like to put together a Women in Prison slide show that would be an impetus to organizing. Contact Coalition for Women in New York State Prisons c/o Afeni, Manhattanville Station, P.O. Box 156, New York, NY 10027 (212) 993-8200.

PRISON HEALTH PROJECT . . . of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is dedicated to providing "comprehensive health services to inmates at the San Francisco County jails and city prison." This federally-funded project has just recently begun serving incarcerated women as well as men. Of the staff, half are Third World and a third have done time. The Project reaches into the prison and county jails, screening prisoners and treating specific complaints, bringing cases to San Francisco General Hospital when necessary. Sometimes they can get people out of prison entirely for medical reasons. Another of the Project's accomplishments has been to establish a medical records system for the county jails where none had previously existed. PHP is concerned with the fact that many people with severe problems in living find themselves in jail, about the worst place they could possibly be. Getting them transferred to the Hospital is an important goal. From there, they hope to help such people return to their communities. Along with such groups as the Medical Committee for Human Rights and Prisoner's Union, they recently helped organize a demonstration over a court case deciding whether medical care would be administered by the Health or the Sheriff's Department. The ruling was in favor of administration through the Health Department. Although the backgrounds and politics of staff members vary, they are all basically supportive of prisoners' interests. Contact PHP, Department of Public Health, San Francisco General Hosp., San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 648-4308.

The chief doctor at Rikers told an interviewer: We only do a Pap smear if there is some indication that it is necessary—if we find a lump or something down there. When the interviewer pointed out that the smear is a preventive measure, that if there was already a 'lump', then the appropriate time for a smear was already past, the doctor seemed bewildered: 'I don't understand what you're saying.'"

quoted in the Women in Prison slide show

AFSC WOMEN IN PRISON PROJECT . . . is a political action support group for women prisoners committed to the abolition of prisons and to helping prisoners gain more self-determination in the meantime. Examples of their work are pressuring for work-release programs for the women at Framingham, and protesting petty rules and the handling of women there by male guards. More recently they have been fighting the transfer of "violent" women from Framingham to Bridgewater State Hospital for the criminally insane. They are also working with the welfare department to pressure them to be more sensitive to the problems of women cons in relation to their sons and daughters. The Project is starting a parolee advocates project in which ex-cons will try to tie women into existing social services, while pushing agencies to offer more. The ex-cons will publish a handbook for prisoners on available services. In addition, WIPP works with the Boston Bail Project and does general research in the pretrial area. Working closely with ex-cons, the Project feels strongly that there must be advocacy at all levels of the system to attack problems in the prison system, as defined by women cons, and that groups should pressure officials to change policies. Any alternatives to the present prison system must be assessed in the same way—do they free people to have greater control over their lives? Contact AFSC Women in Prison Project, 48 Inman St., Cambridge MA 02139, (617) 864-3150.

They be callin' us girl all the time. I ain't no girl. I got ten kids. That ain't no girl there.

—Aletha Curtis, Ohio Reform story for Women, quoted in WOMEN IN PRISON

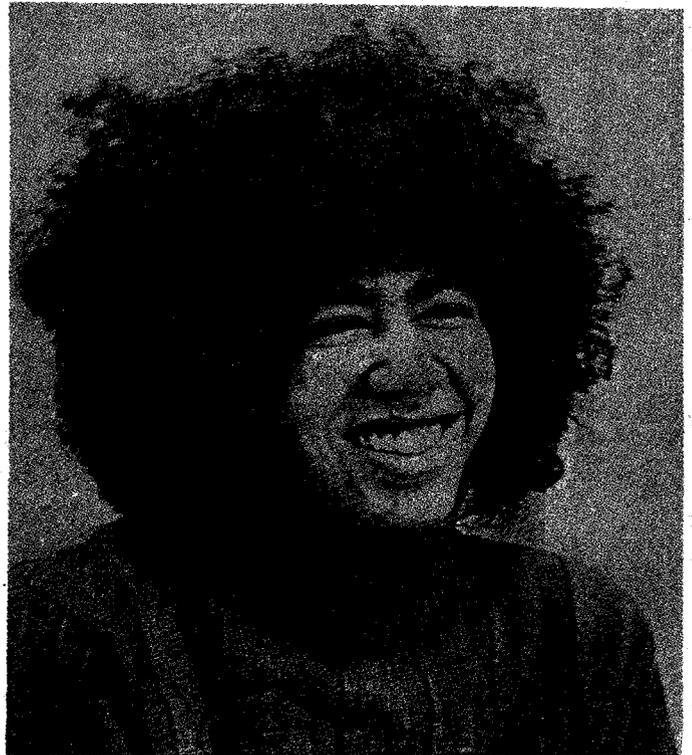
STILL DOING TIME . . . is a group of about 30 Black women ex-cons involved in a program of mutual self-help for women getting out of Cook County jail, Dwight Prison, and other penal institutions. Their name is inspired by the fact that after release, one still has a record and, in essence, is "still doing time." The project goal is to help women coming out find employment, housing, and other needed resources, and to deal with drug and personal problems. This is done through the mutual development of a plan of action by the releasee and a staff person. Still Doing Time is hoping to open a storefront office, hire additional counselors, and open a 24 hour crisis line. Contact Still Doing Time, 4545 S. Drexel Blvd., Chicago, IL 60653, (312) 268-7505.

WOMEN'S JAIL PROJECT/ROCHESTER. . . acts as "advocates of women in the criminal justice system by working to eliminate the dehumanizing conditions affecting our sisters in jail and prisons." The project was begun by two women pastors who identified "their own oppression as women on the outside with the discrimination and oppression of their sisters" in jail. They're currently assisting inmates in Monroe County Jail and at Bedford Hills Prison helping women coming out to find housing and non-sex-tracked jobs; and giving them emergency loans. They also hope to initiate a program of providing funds for families to visit relatives in Bedford Hills (near Manhattan) since one-third of the women there are from upstate New York. In the past year they managed to extend the visiting hours of the jail and to have hired a head matron for women. They're now pressuring for the women to be allowed more contact with the men in the jail. Currently they're also joining with groups around the state to pressure for a legislative investigation of conditions at Bedford Hills, stemming from the brutal treatment of Carol Crooks and other inmates. Dealing with traditional groups in Rochester, the project does public education about women's problems in the criminal justice system, and about the system in general. Contact Women's Jail Project, 101 Plymouth Ave. So., Rochester, NY 14608 (716) 325-1981.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM FOR WOMEN . . . is a "political reformist" group that tries to pressure city agencies and officials to "help women rather than punish them". Feeling that the prison system is generally a farce, they have been trying to close down the Women's Detention Center in Washington D.C. and get the women back into the community. They feel that it is ridiculous to get citizens to learn their rights and responsibilities by taking these from them. The group organized a large coalition to prevent the conferences and talking with city council members. Though the hearings on the subject were token, the new addition has yet to be built. They've also tried to get more programs in the pretrial area, gotten a woman on the LEAA board which allocates funds to projects, and are trying to persuade the recipient of a Labor Dept. grant for job training for young women to locate in D.C. Contact Criminal Justice Reform for Women, c/o Delano Lewis, C & P Telephone Co., Rm. 600, 719 13th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 392-3888.

AFSC MOTHERS IN PRISON PROJECT . . . at Cook County Jail began in March 1975, providing services that ease the problems of imprisoned mothers. The primarily volunteer staff act as advocates for women in jail, are a sounding board for complaints, and give moral support to pregnant incarcerated women who wish to keep their babies. They try to ensure that women are given advance notification of child custody hearings and go to court with women who desire advocacy. Working in conjunction with state agencies, they also try to see that women who sign their daughters and sons into foster homes are kept informed of their whereabouts, and that young people are not put in these homes without the mother's consent. Volunteers are given paralegal training so they can effectively put pressure on prison officials; they also refer inmates to legal assistance when necessary. A further project of interest is protecting the rights of the mothers' daughters and sons. Since the immediate post-release period is lonely and difficult for ex-prisoner mothers, support during that time is another project priority. Generally, MIPP is trying to develop a model which they hope will be taken over by state social service agencies. The group's role then will be to monitor the quality of these services. Contact Mothers in Prison Project, American Friends Service Committee, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 427-2533.

THE LINK SOCIETY . . . connects Alabama prisoners with concerned people on the outside. Their main work with women presently centers on stopping the construction of a new prison to replace Tutwiler Institute for Women in Wetumpka. They are preparing to camp out on the grounds where the new institution is being built. The Link Society believes that the present prison system should be abolished because it provides inadequate job training and no rehabilitation. As an alternative, they suggest that prisoners live in group homes in cities. Contact Link Society, P.O. Box 10157, Prichard, AL 36610, (205) 452-0568.



The following is an excerpt from a poem written by Erika Huggins after hearing the New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band play at Niantic State Prison for Women. She was a pre-trial detainee at the time.

reflections on sunday:
 sounds that come from the soul are always the same
 free, open sounds
 giving the kind that reach out and touch. . .
 that's what our sisters did/minimum
 touching maximum/sharing oppression
 and the wish for its removal. . .
 and it was all a total exchange
 of energy
 communication
 even if we did not share words
 we all knew their soul-songs were saying
 we understand
 we can see what amerika is doing to you—
 mother/daughter/child/woman of oppression
 we can see, they sang—
 and our voices answered their guitars,
 horns—flute—voice—cowbell—tambourine demand
 for freedom with an unspoken right on
 . . . a feeling there that one day—soon—
 all people will be free . . . and
 we left stronger, able to smile
 til we returned to rules that degrade
 schedules that destroy sanity
 racism that they cannot see
 sexism that rapes us of our womanhood. . .
 and the locks, keys, windows, walls, doors,
 threats, warnings, bribes that harden our hearts
 and chain our souls.
 the time must be seized. Venceremos!



NEW ENGLAND PRISONERS' ASSOCIATION . . . is a fine prisoner support group, working mainly with men but also doing some work with women prisoners. They wage a continuing battle against the transferring of women from the prison at Framingham to Bridgewater State Mental Hospital, where conditions are especially abominable. Such transfers are often used against activist and recalcitrant prisoners. NEPA helped launch the American Friends Service Committee's Women in Prison Project. They also organized a major campaign against the construction of a regional prison which would use behavior modification techniques on male and female "management problems"; so far the facility has not been built. This ongoing fight against behavior mod is a major focus of NEPA. In addition to helping organize in-prison and support groups, NEPA has produced several films. It also publishes *NEPA News*. Contact NEPA, 116 School St., Waltham, MA 02154. (617) 899-8827.

FORTUNE SOCIETY . . . is a "penal reform and advocacy group" which believes that "the criminal justice system will be changed only when the public becomes informed and recognizes that it does not pay to maintain the system and then become victimized by its high rate of failure." The seven year old independent organization composed of men and some women, most of whom are ex-cons, takes its name from the prison play "Fortune and Men's Eyes," which was produced on Broadway by the founder of the Society. It offers rap groups, job development, a pen-pal system for people on the outside to reach prisoners, and general support for ex-cons. Public speaking about ex-inmates' personal experiences is a major focus, and this is done about twice daily. They also provide witnesses and testimony before legislators and have regular time on a radio show. Their monthly newsletter, **FORTUNE NEWS**, includes book reviews, editorials by guest writers, poems and a list of prison books available through the society. Contact the Fortune Society, 29 East 22nd St., New York, NY 10010, (212) 677-4600.

HELP OUR PRISONERS EXIST . . . began in 1971 when families banded together to rent buses to visit relatives at McAlester State Prison. They have since become a strong peer advocacy group, concentrating on troubleshooting at McAlester, a coed institution. Using the tactic of holding the prison accountable for its legally designated responsibilities, the group (which includes many ex-cons) receives excellent press in Oklahoma. They still run buses for families visiting prisoners and young people in orphanages; HOPE also helps provide prisoners' families with clothing, daycare and health services and holds programs for families on dealing with the prison system and on the problems of separation from loved ones. At the women's pre-release treatment center, they are putting together a basic health program, and have instituted a program to help with legal problems. In an attempt to help women inmates combat the "fallen woman" image, HOPE is starting to plug them into job training and education programs and encouraging them to be more vocal about their problems. Hammering on parole boards in general, they are challenging the double standard which gives women harsher sentences than men because they are so blatantly violating the feminine ideal by committing a crime. HOPE would like to see a contract parole system implemented (see glossary). Feeling that confinement is necessary for some but that basic human rights must be preserved, HOPE primarily wants to encourage the development of community centers to which people can be diverted from maximum security institutions. They are funded by the Campaign for Human Development. Everyone on HOPE's governing board must be related to a con or ex-con. Contact HOPE, Box 24031, Oklahoma City, OK 73124 (405) 272-0271.

PRISONER COMMUNITY CENTER . . . is a group of prison abolitionists who offer a variety of advocacy and support services to Vermont prisoners and their families. One of their major priorities is public education about the class roots of crime. PCC does some work with women prisoners; there are currently eight incarcerated in the state. Contact PCC, 87 Main St., Windsor, VT 05089, (802) 674-2708, or check with Vermont ACLU, (802) 223-6304.

SCAR . . . brings together men and women prisoners, ex-cons and friends to attack the prison system in Maine. One group interest is bail reform. They do public education about the inequities of the bail system and operate a bail fund along with area churches. Legal referral and legislative lobbying are other areas of activity, but SCAR people feel that this is not a major emphasis. Services to prisoners include transporting family and friends to prisons, writing letters, making calls, running personal errands, and bringing in literature from a local political bookstore. Another project is publishing a newspaper, *SCAR'D*. The state of Maine has recently reshuffled the administration of its women prisoners. SCAR is working to reestablish contacts lost during that process. Contact SCAR, 374 Fore St., Portland, ME 04111, (207) 772-2303.

We submit that the basic evils of imprisonment are that it denies autonomy, degrades dignity, impairs or destroys self-reliance, inculcates authoritarian values, minimizes the likelihood of beneficial interaction with one's peers, fractures family ties, destroys the family's economic stability and prejudices the prisoner's future prospects. . . .

—STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN SUPPORT GROUP . . . works with the Long-Termers Organization at CIW and the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project in order to provide inmates with political backing. They helped LTO arrange a forum on alternatives to prison, and have set up media contacts and interviews for them. Watchdogging the prison administration and public education about prison issues are other group projects. They see the elimination of prisons as a long-term goal. Contact CIWSG, 1848 Washington Pl., Culver City, CA 90230.

FRIENDS OF ASSATA SHAKUR AND SUNDIATA ACOLI

... is an anti-imperialist, mainly White, feminist support group which originally came together around the Panther 21 trial. They have done educational work about the Black Liberation Army and general information spreading about political prisoners, as well as organized displays of support for two members of the B.L.A., Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli (see Political Prisoners Section). Their tactics, which have included large demonstrations in front of the Department of Corrections against the brutal treatment of Assata Shakur, have received good media coverage which pressures prison officials. The group does a lot of public speaking, showing films on Attica and the Women in Prison slide show (see Resources). They also urge people to write to prisoners and to attend political prisoners' trials to show personal support and prove to the state that few people believe the propaganda about these people being "terrorists". They claim "a morning in a courtroom of a political trial can do more to educate someone than all the books in the world." Working to broaden their base, they write a monthly page of information in the New York City Star (a radical paper). In addition, they publish an excellent bulletin about the latest news of various political prisoners and related activities to help "further break down the isolation the government has tried to create around these revolutionaries, and thereby serve the growing movement of support for these people". Contact Friends of Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli, c/o the Midnight Special, National Lawyers Guild, 23 Cornelia St., New York, NY 10014, (212) 989-3222.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIAL AND POLITICAL REPRESSION

... is currently focusing on racism and political repression in North Carolina, which has one of the most backward, prison systems in the country—and the largest death row. Action was begun in this state in response to the particularly vicious repression Black people face when they protest against harassment. The Alliance is publicizing the case of Joanne Little (see political prisoners section) and protesting the conditions at the Women's Correctional Facility in Raleigh. Some of their demands are an end to racism in prisons, decent pay for prison labor, and improved medical care. There are three active chapters in North Carolina, made up of about 100 Black and White women and men. Contact NATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIAL AND POLITICAL REPRESSION, Box 27481, Raleigh, NC 27611

PRISON PROBATION PAROLE PROGRAM/GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER

... supports gay women at California Institution for Women and at the federal pen at Terminal Island. A representative of the center is present daily at the Los Angeles sentencing and probation programs for sexual minorities. They also visit incarcerated women and try to make their lives more comfortable, bringing them clothes, books, offering counseling, etc. In addition, they refer them to lawyers, and to other services of the center. When women are released, the program assists them in finding employment and housing. They hope to get their own halfway house in the near future. Contact Prison Probation Parole Program, Gay Community Services Center, 1614 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90017. (213) 482-3062.



service groups

VISITORS SERVICE CENTER ... is a good representative of many groups like it all over the country that provide basic social services to inmates. Composed of ex-cons, students, and White and Black community people, they distribute brochures at Women's Detention Center and approach women at their individual requests. The all-volunteer Center staff helps women contact families, find clothing, locate lawyers, find groups to act as third party custody, and make general phone contacts which prisoners are not allowed to make for themselves. They also keep in touch with women transferred to Alderson Federal Prison who want continued assistance, and work closely with community legal aid programs, job development groups, community release organizations, etc. High priority is placed on following through with inmates' requests. Contact Visitors Service Center, 1422 Massachusetts Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003; (202) 544-2131.

My mother was there every day and on the third day she painfully told me that she didn't have any more money to stay any longer and would have to leave with the baby on the next day. Four days was all I would have my child to hold, to know, and to remember. There was no relief from that pain other than the tranquilizers the doctor had prescribed. So my child and my mother left, and I was alone again, no child inside of me turning to warm the coldness and indifference of prison. No hidden knowledge that however they treated me I had someone inside of me that would make the difference, only the emptiness and the pain.

—Sharon Smolick, ex-prisoner

PUERTO RICAN WOMEN'S PRISON PROJECT ... is a demonstration project aimed at helping largely-neglected Hispanic women prisoners. Part of the Puerto Rican Forum, the Project has a daily program at Riker's Island which offers individual and family counselling, legal assistance, classes in English (as a second language) and Puerto Rican history and culture. Interpreters are made available for women going to court. LEAA funded and staffed by men and women of Latin backgrounds, the project works with women and their families from the time of arrest until final release. Included are general advocacy work, referrals to training programs, jobs and housing, and the service of keeping track of prisoners' family members. Contact PRWPP, c/o Diane Lugo, National Puerto Rican Forum, 22 E. 54th St., New York, NY 10022, (212) 751-4709.

PROJECT PHOENIX . . . is an LEAA-funded program offering job, housing, and educational counselling and referrals to Native American Prisoners, probationers, and ex-cons. Contact Project Phoenix, 1410 N. 27th St., Milwaukee, WI 53208, (414) 933-7100.

MINORITY WOMEN'S CAUCUS . . . is composed of Black, Chicana, and Indian working class women whose longterm goal is to close down the Colorado State Women's Institution in Cañon City. The women could then be relocated in community facilities in large cities nearer their homes, where work-release opportunities are better. Towards this end the group has presented a report to the state legislature and plans to do personal lobbying with individual legislators. They also do speaking engagements and helped put together a T.V. documentary about the need for programs to prepare women for release from prison through vocational training, etc. (The group has also managed to gain access to inmates at Cañon City who previously had minimal contact with the outside world.) Through pressure on the administration they have been able to change a few institutional rules and to gain for the women slightly greater access to the men's educational/work/pre-parole programs. Contact Minority Women's Caucus, c/o Corina Aragon, 8190 Bradburn Dr., Westminster, CO 80030, (303) 837-2771.

CORAZON Y SANGRE DE LOS MEJICANOS . . . is an all-Chicana service group in the Arizona State Women's Prison. The twelve women involved meet weekly, with educational and entertainment programs open to all inmates. Programs focus around the Chicano heritage, skill development, preparation for life outside the prison, etc. Contact Corazon y Sangre de los Mejicanos, Warden of the Women's Prison, Florence, AZ 85232.

OTHER SERVICE GROUPS:

WOMEN IN PRISON TASK FORCE OF N.O.W., P.O. Box 19398, Denver, CO 80219, (303) 935-6908.

NATIVE AMERICAN REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION, 2324 N.W. Westover Rd., Portland, OR 97210, (503) 238-9483.

IDAHO VOLUNTEERS IN CORRECTIONS, 409 N. 11th St., Boise, ID 83702, (208) 342-4583.

EL-ADA, Community Action Agency, 1705 Broadway, Boise, ID 83706, (208) 345-2820.

WOODSTOCK PRISONER SUPPORT GROUP, Box 83, Woodstock, VT 05091, (802) 457-2459.

FRIENDS OUTSIDE, Box 1, California Institution for Women, Frontera, CA 91720, (714) 597-1771.

WOMEN'S PRISON ASSOCIATION, 110 Second Ave., New York, NY 10003, (212) 674-1163.

DIVERSION PROGRAMS

Diversion programs suspend criminal proceedings against arrestees on the condition that they participate in some alternative program. Diversion recommends itself, not because these alternatives are necessarily the best response to crime, but because almost anything is considered preferable to prison. This heading includes a broad range of possibilities: dismissal of criminal charges, various types of supervised probation, job placement or training programs, community residences, and more. Sometimes diversion is left completely up to the judge's discretion, but the largest number of people are reached by formal, institutionalized programs.

The diversion concept has at least two major weaknesses. First, no matter how liberally diversion is used, incarceration is always available as a last resort. Secondly, although individuals within diversion programs may be opposed to the prison system, the concept of diversion does not itself challenge the basic functions of imprisonment: to manage the behavior of those whose class, sexual or racial backgrounds, or political commitments, are threats to the established social order. It merely seeks to perform that function in a different way. The discretionary power of judge, prosecutor, police, and probation officer remain. In seeking to eliminate these kinds of oppression, activists must minimize the arbitrary power of criminal justice officials, partly through legislation and partly through community pressure tactics.

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CENTER . . . is a newly-funded community residence (YWCA) for women providing an alternative to prison. Referred there directly from the courts, women residents are on work release and may keep their sons and daughters with them. The program emphasizes teaching "parenting skills", helping women feel better about themselves, and putting them in touch with various community resources. Average stay for the women will be about six months; staff includes ex-cons and Third World people. Although funded through the county department of corrections, the center is controlled by an elected board of community people which currently includes (Black and White, men and women, one gay) professionals, students and housewives. Contact Women's Community Center, c/o YWCA, 5th and Seneca, Seattle, WA 98104, (206) 623-4800.

DIVISION OF FEMALE OFFENDERS UNDER THE COURT RESOURCE PROJECT . . . offers a pretrial diversion program to Boston women, aged 17 to 26, charged with misdemeanors or minor felonies. The staff regularly screens arrested women, looking for those who are interested in changing their lifestyle. They would reject, for example, a satisfied and successful prostitute. Those selected are offered counselling and access to housing, day and health care facilities. The counselling tries to provide women with knowledge about their bodies and urges them to "broaden their horizons," so they don't see themselves as mere sex objects. This LEAA-funded project is marred, however, by the staff's tendency toward condescension. All charges are dropped for those women who complete the 90-day program. Contact Court Resources Project, 14 Somerset St., Boston, MA 02108, (617) 723-1820.



LEGAL AID SOCIETY DIVERSION PROGRAM . . . works in New York City courtrooms to keep people out of prison. Most of the staff favor the abolition of the prison system. Their aim is to provide counselling and support to people charged with felonies, in contrast with most diversion programs which concentrate on first time arrestees and those charged with misdemeanors. Working with the defense counsel, the staff supply the judge with a report on each client, suggesting alternatives to incarceration. An attempt is made to design those suggestions to meet the client's individual needs, drawing on community programs, outpatient mental health clinics, and selected drug programs (they are opposed to most therapeutic communities). Women clients are sought, but, at present, there are relatively few. Contact LASDP, 305 Broadway, Rm. 1010, New York, NY 10007, (212) 233-4947.

ONE AMERICA, INC. . . . is a Black-owned-and-run consulting firm which has initiated several programs for women prisoners and ex-cons. The One America Key Program provides practical services to help prisoners before and after release: contacting service agencies, finding housing, and other basic necessities. Also, a pilot pre-trial diversion program is being established in Houston which will divert women into a job training, counselling and placement program instead of prison. Contact One America, Inc., 1330 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Suite 205, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 628-2216.

WASHINGTON OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN . . . presently offers a training program for women probationers in the construction trades. Six women are being trained in each six week training period. Included in the program is individual and group counseling and assistance with housing, health care and child care. Retention rates and job training performances have been high so far. After training is completed, women go to the union hall to sign for jobs; although the job market is tight now, most of the women have found employment. Recognizing the need for women to obtain well-paying employment, WOW hopes to eventually get programs going in auto mechanics and telephone installation. The project is run in cooperation with the D.C. Superior Court and the Bureau of Rehabilitation. Contact WOW, Suite 101, Vanguard Building, 1111 20th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 293-7955.

DEPARTMENT OF COURT SERVICES, 5th JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF IOWA . . . "administers four distinct community programs" spanning a 16 county area around Des Moines. Receiving a great deal of national attention, the Department is unique in its incorporation of all the different components: "a release on recognizance program, a pre-trial intervention program, a probation and pre-sentence investigation program (staff supervise probationers and prepare background studies for judges to use in sentencing), and two community residents—one for men, one for women (felons)." This is a fine example of what is possible under the present system, although such state-controlled programs are always cooptable. In the residential facilities, much emphasis is put on education, job training and work; ideally people have salaries above poverty level when they leave. Upon entering the residence, an individual signs a contract and receives furlough/release if s/he fulfills its terms. Acceptance of responsibility, as evaluated by staff, is very important. A strength of the program is that people go out into the community—to training, to the hospital, etc.—rather than having services brought into the facility. As a result of these programs, 65% of those committing indictable offenses were released directly back into the community last year; 20% of these were women. 83% of the felons were retained in the community. Of the 14 women charged with homicide of spouses in the last four years, none have done time and all were out of jail within 24 hours. Staff for the program are 8-10% ex-cons (some of whom are in decision-making positions), racially and sexually representative of the population. Most of them have not been in corrections work before. The program is now state and LEAA funded. In 1973 the Iowa legislature passed a bill to extend the program statewide. Contact Department of Court Services, 5th Judicial District of Iowa, 1000 College Ave., Des Moines IO 50314, (515) 244-3202.

A woman who gets into trouble with a supportive family who has money will get sent to a shrink or to live with aunt suzi and the court approves. She can be diverted from incarceration. Incarceration is for women without resources—financial and human. If she has economic support, she doesn't end up in an institution. This is not always true, but it's true for the majority.

—Martha Wheeler, Supt. of Ohio Reformatory for Women, quoted in Women in Prison

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY TREATMENT CENTER . . . houses 15 to 18 women who come from various stages of the criminal justice process. The Center can take women who have served part of their sentence, who have just been sentenced, those who have violated probation or parole, and those whose terms of probation involve time at the Center. Only "lifers" are prohibited—beyond that, they look for women who are about ready to return to the streets. The staff hold individual and group counselling sessions whose themes are "how to survive on the street without getting busted again." They try to use outside community agencies as much as possible so that when the women need help when they get out, they will know where to go. Psychological counselling is available through a local mental health clinic. That service is not provided in the Center because they don't believe that if a woman has done time, she necessarily has psychological problems. A program of Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections, the Center is staffed by nine women, most of whom are Third World. Their biggest problems thus far have resulted from the diminishing job market—it is getting progressively more difficult to find jobs for anyone, let alone a woman who has done time. Contact WCTC, 535 S. Aiken Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15232, (412) 681-1202.

PRE-TRIAL RELEASE PROGRAMS

Jails are bulging with poor people unable to make bail. Pre-trial detention is thus the first stage of the vicious cycle of the criminal justice system. Studies have shown that jailed women and men are five to eight times as likely to be convicted if they remain incarcerated during the period before trial (up to one year in some places). Pre-trial release programs enable people to get back into the community and demonstrate proof of "community ties," of their ability to hold jobs, to find a lawyer, round up witnesses, and generally prepare a good case for themselves in court.

Bail funds are a concrete way to begin fighting the prison system because they reach people at such an early stage. Valuable as organizing tools, they also provide a crucial service to those who would otherwise remain in jail. At one time, a New York City fund had prisoners in the Women's House of Detention collectively organized, selecting among themselves those who were most in need of the limited bail money available. Unfortunately, projects like that are able to reach only a small number of people and therefore, the obvious necessity is for the elimination of the bail system as it currently exists.

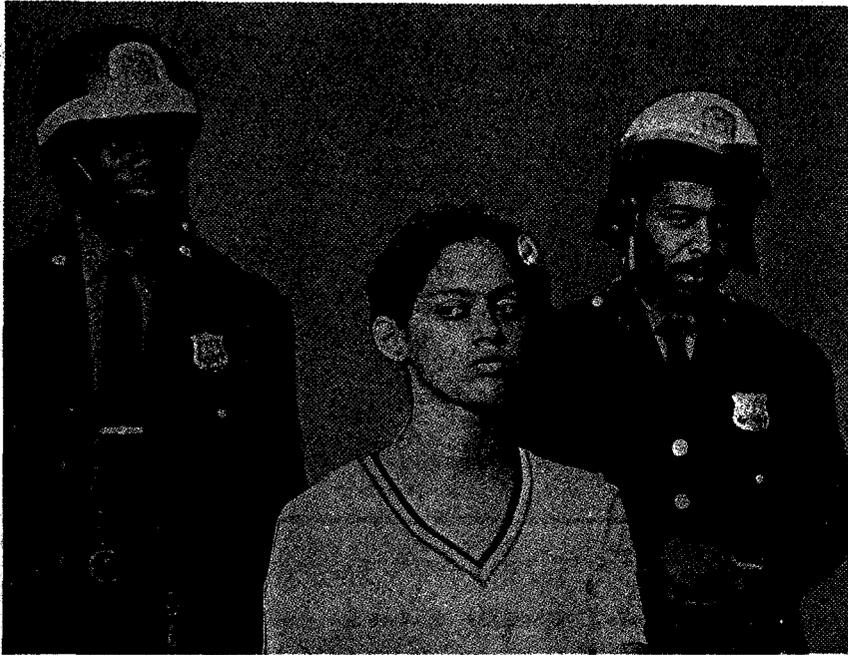


COMMUNITY RELEASE ORGANIZATION . . . exemplifies a neighborhood-based, "person-to-person" approach to the problems of criminal justice, "educating community people's "guts as well as their minds" about the injustices of the system while helping arrested people to get out of jail. Project workers go daily to Washington D.C.'s Women's Detention Center, as well as men's facilities, to interview those arrestees who live in the low-income Adams-Morgan neighborhood. At the arraignment, workers try to get the arrestees released on their own recognizance or, if this fails, on third party custody (see Glossary). CRO offers custody to about four or five people monthly, "high risk arrestees," for whom high bail would otherwise have been set. A volunteer from the community is assigned to each client; together, they review the conditions of release set by the judge. The volunteer maintains close contact with the client throughout the entire ordeal with the criminal justice process, helping find jobs, housing, medical care, etc. Formed soon after the Attica uprising and funded through grants and donations, this Quaker-initiated and, in part, community-governed program also tries to act as a monitor of the criminal justice system. CRO tries to appraise the effects of that system on the individual and the community; seek alternative responses to drug addiction as well as crime, and publicize the information developed in these various projects. By getting people close to the system, they want the largely middle class volunteers to think and act about the relationships between crime, society, and criminal justice. CRO is an excellent example of an attempt to "lead toward change in society rather than adjusting the person to society in its rather dismal state." They also offer an invaluable manual on how to set up a CRO-type program (see Resources section). Contact CRO, 2408 18th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 265-0152.

VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE . . . since 1961 has developed and implemented a range of programs to divert men and women from the criminal justice process. Vera began as a private philanthropic project, but has recently received major Ford Foundation funding. The project goal is "to reach into the apparatus and make it function more fairly in the interest of the defendant and the community." One program, the Manhattan Bail Project, secures the release of many poor arrestees who can't afford bail. The Bail Project provides the court information to support the release of defendants on their own recognizance by conducting interviews to measure the strength of their community ties. The Court Employment Project offers career counselling and job placement to defendants before they come to trial. Charges are often dropped for those who are successfully placed. Contact Vera Institute of Justice, 30 East 39th St., New York, NY 10016, (212) 986-5380.

My daughter hugged me and the staff said, "You can't do that." I told her to send me to lockup if I couldn't. Before my old man came to visit, I had to say into a tape recorder that if we are allowed to visit, we will not have any physical contact in the visiting room"

—Mary Vangi, quoted in *Women in Prison*



bail funds

BOSTON BAIL PROJECT . . . grew out of the Boston Movement Bail Fund, the result of a coalition against political repression formed in 1969. Money for the bail fund originally came from donations and from New England War Tax Resistance. Demanding an end to pre-trial detention, this model project now includes both a women's bail fund and one for men; as well as public education and research components. They want to provide people with the information they need to be articulate in their fight for change. BBP collective members (all women, some ex-cons) go weekly to the awaiting-trial units for women of Middlesex and Suffolk counties and determine whom they can most likely help. Criteria favor people who've been there longest and have least resources of their own. The project can put up to \$2500 on a person; occasionally they are able to work out arrangements with bonds-people to help them with higher bails. They also attempt to get bail lowered through a bail appeals process. People whom they are unable to bail out are visited regularly for support. Those who are bailed out are told that jumping bail is their own choice, but, since it is a revolving fund, the bail is then forfeited and someone else can't use it. Working closely with people who have done time, the project is pressuring for the implementation of the Massachusetts Bail Reform Act which encourages pretrial release rather than detention. BBP also does speaking engagements for community groups and presents an excellent slide show (see Resources). They have been researching the inequities of the bail system as well as doing court monitoring; this will result in pamphlets on pre-trial detention for men and women and on sexism in the criminal justice system. Soon they plan to publish a bilingual resource on getting people out on bail which should be helpful to inmates, community groups, paralegal workers and public defenders alike. Contact Boston Bail Project, 1151 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 491-1575.

ROCHESTER BAIL FUND . . . has been in operation since 1970, the result of funds gathered for the Flower City Conspiracy, an anti-draft action. It has a \$15,000 rotating fund and can provide up to \$500 per individual; women and men are bailed out on a first-come first-served basis. Emphasis is placed on getting relatives to try and raise part of the bail, and the fund will provide the rest. The fund also does limited referral to job training, education, employment, housing, clothing and counseling. Their long-range goal is "a network of support services; ultimately a system that does not involve bail at all." Contact Rochester Bail Fund, 17 Fitzhugh Street South, Rochester, NY 14614, (716) 262-9967.

COOK COUNTY SPECIAL BAIL PROJECT . . . was begun in 1970 as the first project of the Alliance to End Repression, a coalition of Chicago community groups which formed in response to the murder of Black Panther Fred Hampton. The volunteer lawyers, law students, and community members talk to people arrested over the weekends ("holiday court"), verifying information about their community ties and family contacts, all of which can help justify release on recognizance in lieu of bail. CCSBP's intent is to get as many people as possible released in this way. They also provide legal representation at the bail hearing, a service which they have recently been providing in the Women's Court. Since many women are charged with non-violent crimes, it is often possible to obtain their release. Funded by LEAA, CCSBP is comprised of 250 volunteers. Working in the jails often has a strong politicizing effect on these people. In the future, the project would like to develop programs to deal with the problems of incarcerated mothers and people who are put in jail for "safe-keeping" by the police because they have nowhere else to go. Contact CCSBP, 22 E. Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 427-4064.

A first offender who is detained in lieu of bail is more than 3 times as likely to be convicted and almost twice as likely to get a prison sentence as a recidivist with more than 10 prior arrests who is released.

LEGAL AID AND EDUCATION

Legal self-help is an extremely useful skill that prisoners can learn in order to protect themselves within the criminal justice process. Many lawyers are inexcusably lax in the quality of service offered to poor people, and women prisoners are among those most victimized by that indifference. Therefore, those groups which provide an education in basic legal skills and access to necessary resources (such as law libraries) perform an invaluable service. Female prisoners are beginning to take advantage of these and some are now educating themselves as jailhouse lawyers.

But education in the law is not in itself sufficient. Providing quality legal representation, including the fullest possible follow-up of individual cases, is an important function of many groups. Their effectiveness can be hampered, however, by funding restrictions prohibiting suits against prisons or by a reliance on law students whose commitment to a case may only last for a semester's credit.

Such approaches as class-action suits, although frustratingly slow, can be employed to force institutions into public accountability. These are most effective, however, when used as part of a larger strategy which includes other than legal tactics, such as public education campaigns and militant demonstrations. But it is clear that struggles on the legal front must be increased, especially to combat the Supreme Court's recent tendency to undercut the rights of prisoners.

NATIONAL PRISON PROJECT . . . seeks to broaden prisoners' rights and improve prison conditions through administrative, judicial and legislative channels and to develop alternatives to incarceration. Besides bringing class action suits and drafting models for legislation and prison regulations, NPP serves as a clearinghouse for information on prisoner rights and trains students and legal workers in prison litigation. Their work with women presently centers on a class action suit against the D.C. Women's Detention Center. The main issues are arbitrary transfers (which can occur with 45 minutes notice and without word to prisoner's families) and inadequate medical care. One of NPP's landmark law suits helped bring about the closure of the START behavior modification unit in Missouri. They charged that the program used "cruel and unusual punishment" and violated other constitutional rights. Contact NPP, 1346 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 1031, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 331-0500.

PRISON LEGAL SERVICES PROJECT . . . handles dozens of suits around prison conditions and treatment of prisoners in Illinois, as well as doing civil litigation for prisoners. Visiting Dwight regularly, they are assisted by law students in passing out leaflets to the inmates about their services, interviewing those who contact them, and following up on cases. They feel the discrimination between opportunities given to women and men at Dwight is atrocious and may be filing several suits around this soon. They are currently filing a suit about some women who were involved in an incident and were told if they didn't submit to a lie detector test they'd get sixty days in isolation. They took the test but were put in isolation anyway. Basically the project sees its role as watchdogging the prison, trying to keep more atrocities from being committed and making inmates' lives a little more liveable. They hope that some of the court decisions they win will serve as useful precedents in other court cases. Though recently merged with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, they will retain their autonomy. Contact Prison Legal Services Project, c/o Legal Assistance Foundation, 64 E. Jackson, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 922-5625.

LA CASA LEGAL . . . offers legal services to a predominantly low income, Spanish speaking clientele, including women in the local jails. Chicano law students comprise most of the staff. La Casa states that it will not represent drug pushers or men who appear to have violently committed rape. Clients are charged on a sliding scale. Contact La Casa Legal, 1660 East Santa Clara St., San Jose, CA 95116, (408) 926-2525.

PRESENTENCE SERVICE GROUP OF THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY . . . gives "short-term counselling and evaluation for selected clients convicted of felony charges in Bronx and Brooklyn Superior Courts." During the interim period between conviction and sentencing, an eight to nine page report is prepared by the staff of social workers and paraprofessionals. In New York, when a person who is charged with a felony pleads or is found guilty in Superior Court, the probation department prepares information supposedly insuring "judicious sentencing." PSG's report is much more thorough and is written from an advocacy position. This information has had some effect in lightening sentences and getting more people on probation. Contact PSG of the LAS, 305 Broadway, Rm. 1010, New York, NY 10007, (212) 233-4947.

FIRST THEY WANTED THEIR 1ST
AMENDMENT RIGHTS. THEN THEY
WANTED THEIR 4TH AMENDMENT
RIGHTS. NOW THEY
WANT ALL THEIR
RIGHTS...

I THINK I'M
GOING TO VOMIT!



FRONTERA PRISON PROJECT . . . is composed of law students at Loyola Law School who provide legal assistance for inmates at California Institute for Women. Handling criminal and civil cases, the students work closely with a CIW jailhouse lawyer and with a service group, Friends Outside. Soon they may be pressing suit against the institution's new administration for reading the mail between inmates and their lawyers. The four year old project is funded through the university. Contact Frontera Prison Project, Community Legal Assistance Center, 1800 W. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90057, (213) 483-1937.

LAWCOR PROJECT, Washington College of Law, American University . . . works with inmates of the Women's Detention Center in Washington, D.C. The law students and supervising attorney act as advocates for the inmates concerning both internal prison matters—disciplinary hearings, transfers, parole, education/work release—as well as general problems within the judicial system, such as third-party custody, motions to reduce sentences and bond, etc. One of their major purposes is to help inmates get adequate legal representation out of their court-appointed attorneys by applying various kinds of pressure on the latter. The problem is especially severe with male lawyers who often put low priority on their female inmate-clients. Funded by LEAA, the Project is limited by its inability to file suit against prisons. Contact LAWCOR, Washington College of Law, American Univ., Washington, D.C. 20016, (202) 686-2629.

CLINTON WOMEN'S PROJECT . . . originated at Rutgers Law School in 1972. Students in a course about "Women in Correctional Institutions" meet weekly with members of Clinton's Inmates Legal Assistance (ILA). The students help inmates define their complaints in legal terms, bring litigation on their behalf, refer them to legal aid groups, and provide some of the information they need to solve their own problems. The project has prepared an excellent how-to manual to help them do this (see Resources section). One of the biggest problems for inmates is that of detainees—not getting paroled when they are eligible, due to something in their record (and often a court mistake). The project and/or the ILA have often been able to get these detainees dropped. The primary purpose of CWP, however, is education of the inmates rather than representation of their grievances. Contact Clinton Women's Project, c/o Kathy Mitchell, c/o Merck and Co., Rahway, NJ 07065, (201) 684-4060.

WOMEN'S PRISON LEGAL EDUCATION PROJECT . . . offers monthly workshops on various legal issues—child custody, prisoner's rights, parole revocation—to inmates at California Institution for Women. They also try to teach basic legal skills to jailhouse lawyers at CIW, bring in political, especially feminist, films, and offer personal support to the incarcerated women. Feeling that "politics is getting people strong," this two-year-old group of women associated with San Francisco-area law schools is committed to the abolition of prisons. Contact WPLER, 95 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 626-6145.

PRISONERS RIGHTS PROJECT/LEGAL AID SOCIETY . . . brings suit on behalf of prisoners if they feel that the case raises a significant issue of prisoner's rights. They are currently pressing a number of suits involving women prisoners, including a class action challenge to the inadequate medical care at Bedford Hills in New York. They also plan to file a suit challenging the general conditions at Riker's Island. Another priority project is investigating why a number of women at Bedford Hills have been transferred to Matewan Prison for the Criminally Insane. Prisoners write to PRP when they have specific grievances. For those cases which are not accepted, the Project does referral. Contact PRP Legal Aid Society, 15 Park Row, New York, NY 10038, (212) 374-1737.

PRISONERS RIGHTS ORGANIZED DEFENSE . . . provides legal assistance for New Jersey prisoners whose cases involve important constitutional issues. At present, PROD is pressing a suit against Clinton State Penitentiary for Women, where a woman was beaten in response to her organizing efforts. A previous PROD suit helped force a former director of Clinton to resign. Fighting discriminatory sentencing is another concern—women are often given indeterminate sentences which can result in longer prison terms. PROD is made up of students, community people, and lawyers who maintain strong ties with other groups such as tenants' unions and welfare rights groups across the state. Contact PROD, 45 Academy St., Suite 209, Newark, NJ 07102, (201) 622-7940.

PEOPLE'S LAW OFFICE . . . does excellent work with Illinois prisoners. Focusing on conditions, rights, and atrocities, they have recently been working with federal women prisoners at Cook County Jail. This has included support work for Marilyn Buck, a political prisoner who had been doing inside organizing before being transferred to Alderson Federal Prison. PLO recently sponsored a conference on women and the law, featuring a panel on women in prison, because they feel that many legal workers have a low consciousness about this issue. One of their prime concerns has been the use of behavior modification on prisoners. Contact PLO, 2156 N. Halstead, Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 929-1880.

NATIONAL PRISONERS' RIGHTS PROJECT/NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK LAWYERS . . . has always done prisoners rights cases but is now specifically zeroing in on the problems of women. Although the project is national, much energy is being given to Georgia because it has one of the largest prison populations in proportion to its general population. The project is interested in taking on class action suits that will affect institutional policies regarding Black women, such as medical (gynecological) care, conditions of confinement, child custody, religious oppression, etc. When the Equal Rights Amendment is passed, it also hopes to bring suits against the disparate sentencing of men and women (women are less often sentenced, but their sentences are often harsher). The majority of women confined in Georgia are there for larceny and prostitution; NPRP is now seeking funding for an alternative to incarceration for women convicted of these offenses. In existence since 1969, this foundation-funded group welcomes correspondence from women prisoners nationwide about violations of their rights. Contact NPRP/NCBL, Suite 583, 805 Peachtree St., N.E., Atlanta, GA 30308, (404) 876-3614.

Additional legal aid/education groups:

BEDFORD HILLS WOMEN'S PRISON PROJECT, 80 Fifth Ave., Rm: 1502, New York, NY 10011, (212) 924-3200.

PRISONERS' RIGHTS PROJECT, NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10019, (212) 586-8397.

WOMEN'S LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, 1424 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 232-5293.

YALE SCHOOL OF LAW, Legal Services Organization, New Haven CT 06520, (203) 436-2210.



"Now for the evidence," said the King, "and then the sentence."
 "No!" said the Queen, "first the sentence, and then the evidence!"
 "Nonsense!" cried Alice, so loudly that everybody jumped, "the idea of having the sentence first!" "Hold your tongue!" said the Queen.

PRISONERS' UNIONS

As with labor unions, prisoner's unions can confront the economic power structure within the institution through refusal to work in prison industries—thus the administration (management) is forced to negotiate with the prisoners (labor). Labor exploitation is a major problem for all prisoners. According to Kiti Burkhardt, "most women earn an average of 19 cents a day", yet "factories run by prison labor are multi-million dollar industries." Recently both women inmates and the unions themselves have become increasingly aware of the viability of these organizations for prisoners of both sexes. Important in building prisoner solidarity, these unions can also be a focus of outside support.

UNITED PRISONERS UNION . . . aims to unionize all California prisoners and then use the power of a state-wide strike to achieve basic civil rights and fair wages for inmates. They also have contacts and members all over the country. The Union supports prisoner strikes; holds rallies in behalf of prisoners; embarks on letter-writing and petitioning campaigns; testifies at hearings of the legislature; educates about prison conditions; and organizes the outside community to support the inside struggle. UPU has also participated in class-action suits over prison officials' refusal to allow copies of the Anvil (UPU newspaper) and ex-cons into the prison. In addition, UPU provides survival services such as counselling on employment, housing, and transportation to nearby prisons for families of cons. As revolutionaries, UPU members see prisoners as the most oppressed sector of the working class and prisons as a microcosm of the class and economic contradictions of society as a whole. They are in the process of writing a play about women prisoners and do considerable work in defense of political prisoners. Contact UPU, 330 Ellis St., San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 441-0228.

America has a higher ratio of prisoners to population than all but four countries in the world. (200:100,000)

—U.N. Secretary Kurt Waldheim

PRISONER'S UNION/SANFRANCISCO . . . grew out of state-wide meetings of cons, ex-cons and community people following a series of prison strikes and riots in 1970. Viewing unionization as a vital first step toward convicts obtaining civil rights, minimum wages and benefits, abolition of indeterminate sentences, etc., this group will help inmates anywhere to unionize. In addition to organizing convicts and pressing for collective bargaining, they are working to abolish indeterminate sentencing in California. Tactics used by the group include: educating community groups so that they will then put pressure on prison officials themselves; publication of a newspaper, **THE OUTLAW**; and creation of grievance procedures. The union files 3 to 4 class action suits yearly on behalf of inmates. Last year they did education against behavior modification at California Institution for Women and would like to see the funds currently being spent on this used instead for a facility where women could live with their infants up to two years. P.U. is opposed to community based programs because they are too expensive and dispersed, making organizing difficult. They do not favor abolishment of the prison system, but feel prisoners are entitled to basic human rights. Contact Prisoners Union, 1315 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94107, (415) 648-2880.



MINNESOTA PRISONERS UNION . . . is committed to economic change within the prison system by working for inmate control over the profits from their labor. A non-inmate organizer is elected by the cons and supported by the Union to do work within the prison. Recently, a local of MPU, called the Women Prisoners Union, was formed by a small group at the Minnesota Correctional Institute for Women at Shakopee. Some of their concerns are an end to the behavior modification program at MCIW, the right to meet with the administration, and re-evaluation of furlough criteria. This is the first women's prisoner union in the country. Contact MPU, 1427 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404, (612) 339-8511.

PRISONERS' ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations of women inmates exist in nearly every women's institution, sometimes helping to build prisoner solidarity and support, and occasionally encouraging a feminist consciousness. Often, however, they are officially-sanctioned groups without substantive power in the prison. Still, they are able to perform important advocacy functions for inmates and, in general terms, anything which gives prisoners a voice and contact with one another is significant.

INMATES LEGAL ASSOCIATION/CLINTON INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN . . . "is an organized legal aid program within the prison designed to aid the many indigent prisoners who would otherwise suffer long periods of incarceration and continued deprivations of their constitutional and legal rights without any avenue of relief, if it were not for this concerted effort." This prisoner-operated organization prepares petitions for post-conviction relief, habeas corpus, motions pertaining to reduction of sentence, etc. ILA members have access to community facilities, do public speaking for community organizations, and travel to the courts as part of their work routine. ILA selects its own members from among Clinton inmates who apply. Penal officials review all applications and provide standard prison wages to ILA legal workers. Contact ILA, Clinton Institution for Women, Drawer E, Clinton, NJ 08809, (201) 735-7975.

PRISONERS REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE/CLINTON INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN . . . is a prisoner-operated advocacy group, recognized and given token salary by the institution, to fill the gap between the prison administration and population. Although their power is limited, the group represents inmates before the adjustment committee and



If 600 women can each say, 'Hey, I'm a woman', regardless of being called homosexuals or convicts or being neglected and hurt and made to live under ridiculous rules and ridiculous pressures and mental brutality and heartbreak—they have something to teach the world. It was a mind blower to me to see the strength, the tenderness and courage of these women and to find out, hey, I'm a woman, too. I'd just never had the chance.

—Marguerite, Calif. Institution for Women, quoted in Women in Prison.

presents to the administration prisoners' problems, grievances and major incidents on the grounds. They have succeeded in obtaining regular furloughs for most inmates, and are currently fighting against the administration's new move to lock their cottages each evening. They are also petitioning against the high commissary prices and have tried to boycott the store, though it is the only place they can get needed articles. In operation for over four years, they have representatives in every cottage. Contact PRC, Clinton Institution for Women, Drawer E, Clinton, NJ 08809, (201) 735-7111 Ext. 205.

CIW LONG TERMERS ORGANIZATION . . . was initiated by prisoners at the California Institution for Women (CIW). LTO has been designed to organize women inside and to establish "work furlough" or "educational furlough" programs as alternatives to being locked up. The group seeks outside support and holds public workshops at CIW from time to time, attracting mainly students, educators, ex-cons, and people from prisoner support groups. Contact Long Termers Organization, c/o Anna Bailey, California Institution for Women, 16765 Chino-Corona Rd., Frontera, CA 91720.

BEDFORD HILLS LONG TERMERS COMMITTEE . . . is comprised of women prisoners at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility who are "serving sentences varying from a minimum of four years to a maximum of natural life." Believing that the long-terminer is systematically excluded from innovative prison programs, they are pressuring to open furlough, pre-release, and other programs to long termers. Contact Bedford Hills Long Termers Committee, Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, 247 Harris Rd., Bedford Hills, NY 10507.

Money talks, bullshit walks. If you're a Kennedy and you get busted for for dope, you never do no time. If you're the President of the United States, you can murder millions of people in Asia, you never do no time. . . . There's a lot of contradictions—you know, a double standard. If you're a corporation, you can fix prices and rip folks off every day, you never do no time. Me, I'm a hype. I sold two nickel bags and I'm doing life, baby, a day at a time. . . .

—Mary, Calif. Institution for Women, quoted in Women in Prison.

PRISON PROGRAMS

Programs for prisoners are of two types: those that take place inside the institution and those that allow the inmate to leave for brief periods. As a rule, outside programs are preferable because supervision of prisoners is less thorough. But regulations are strict for work or study releases, and the nightly return to prison is always cruel. And, all such programs, whether in-house or outside, are to one degree or another under the effective control of prison officials.

The following programs are included because, in some way, they contain features which substantially increase the potential for self-determination among prisoners. Most are in-house—few administrators are willing to take the step of allowing large numbers of inmates to regularly leave the prison. But the new breed of "progressive" prison officials realize that reforms can sometimes pacify the threatening individual more effectively than repression. Each of these programs is therefore part of the disciplinary and socialization apparatus of their institution. Potential "troublemakers" are screened out. Participants are told that it is they, not society, who are in need of rehabilitation. But the wary prisoner may refuse to be pacified and still make use of the opportunities presented here. It is a thin and dangerous line to walk, and those of us outside must provide all the support we can.

PURDY WORK-TRAINING RELEASE PROGRAM . . . since 1971, has allowed from 20 to 30% of Washington State's Purdy prison population to hold jobs or receive training in surrounding communities during the day. Participants live in separate apartments within the Purdy compound, and are driven to and from study and workplaces. Employed prisoners are expected to pay for room and board on a sliding scale, depending on income. The prison superintendent has final authority on applications—prison records are a major consideration. The aim of the program is described "not to find employees for employers, but to find employers for employees." That is, a woman chooses an occupation of her interest. Project staff try to locate a corresponding job or study opportunity. For example, several women wanted to learn carpentry and employment was found for them with a local modular home builder. Funding originally came from LEAA; the state Div. of Corrections has since assumed responsibility. Contact Work-Training Release Program, Purdy Treatment Center for Women, P.O. Box 17, Gig Harbor, WA 98335, (206) 858-9101.

NEW DIRECTIONS CLUB, INC. . . . is a "post-release program . . . designed for ex-offenders who . . . state (that) they want another way of life." Staffed and run completely by ex-cons, the Club spans eight residences all together (10-16 people per house) in Houston, Galveston and Victoria. Two of them are for women. The 97-day program includes helping people find training and jobs (and keep jobs), teaching money management, and getting at the bottom of people's problems through group therapy and counselling. Emphasis is on teaching people to survive in the "free" world without getting arrested. New Directions staff work with Alcoholics Anonymous and other drug programs and have gotten a great deal of community support. Unfortunately their analysis concentrates more on individual change than on the social and economic conditions that perpetuate crime. However, they provide a family atmosphere buttressed by a great deal of concern and support from staff to residents that is probably in large part responsible for the incredibly low recidivism rate of 4.7% (as compared to a national one of 57%). Over 1057 people have gone through the program since its inception. They are presently funded by LEAA but hope to be self-supporting eventually. Future plans include trying to get money for a juvenile home and for an insurance program for cons and ex-cons. Contact New Directions Clubs, Inc., 3520 Montrose, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77006, (713) 527-9474.

HORIZON HOUSE . . . provides food, clothing, and employment and financial counselling for Milwaukee-area women on probation/parole or who have been referred through pre-trial diversion programs. At present the program houses eight women; residents stay about four months in most cases. The staff's goal is to provide support to women and to encourage them to support one another. Although they are harsh with some rules (they call the police if they catch a woman with hard drugs), they push people to make their own decisions about their lives. The surrounding community has displayed interest and support; its representatives (including two ex-cons) control Horizon House's board. During their two year existence, fifty-five women have passed through the program; 88% have not gone back to prison. Horizon House gets some federal money and some from private sources and the Division of Corrections. Their goal is to be completely city-funded. Contact HORIZON HOUSE, 1869 N. 25th St., Milwaukee WI 53205, (414) 342-3237.



California parolees can be returned to prison, up to life, for breaking any any of 16 rules including buying a car without permission, getting married, traveling 50 miles from the place of parole, associating with persons of "bad moral character", etc. . .

CASA DEL SOL . . . is a recently-formed halfway house for 20 women and men alcoholics most of whom are Chicano. Contact Casa del Sol, c/o Mexican-American Unity Council, 712 South Flores, San Antonio, Texas 78204 (512) 225-4241.

Additional women's halfway houses:

Cluster House, P.O. Box 413, Norristown, PA 19404, (215) 272-4496.

Hoffman House, 940 Dawson, Long Beach, CA 90804, (213) 434-0036.

Vocare, 2849 Delaware, Oakland CA 94602, (415) 261-6318.

New Haven Group Living Project, 48 Howe St., New Haven, CT 06511

Washington Halfway Home for Women, 1816 19th St., Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 462-9718.

YWCA Women's Prison Project, 1111 SW 10th St., Rm. 422-421, Portland, OR 97201. (503) 223-6281.

DRUG PROGRAMS

Drug abuse (including alcoholism, its most prevalent form) thrives on conditions of deprivation and alienation. It is therefore not surprising that violations of drug laws and crimes related to drug use regularly land large numbers of women in jail or prison. Women choose programs like the following because they are often the only alternative to imprisonment. They are included here because we believe that they are trying to get to the roots of the problem in meaningful ways. Political education, training in survival skills, and community involvement are aspects of the best of these. Those listed are for the most part drug-free. This contrasts with the frighteningly large number of programs which rely on methadone maintenance despite the fact that it is four times as addictive as heroin and therefore encourages continued drug dependency. Of the therapeutic communities available, some provide a supportive atmosphere, but many are exceedingly hierarchical, sexist, and dictatorial. They may emphasize behavior modification, regarding addiction merely as an individual failing, ignoring the effects of an oppressive society. It is important to distinguish them from the programs which encourage self-determination and hopefully, a political analysis.

WOMAN'S ORGANIZATION TO MOVE AGAINST ALCOHOL AND NARCOTICS (WOMAN) . . . is a collective of 15 working class and professional women who believe that drug use is not the result of individual psychopathology but a response to oppressive conditions. They work in Cass Corridor, a racially mixed, skid-row area marked by low income, high drug use and many transients. They are currently involved in drug education, stressing that drugs are one small part of the problem of community crime. Working closely with Project Transition (see Re-entry section), they have recently begun a "program of drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation for women addicted primarily to heroin and methadone, with supportive services on site for their dependent children." Serving about sixty women at a time, many of whom have had jail experience, the program includes intensive counselling, methadone detoxification, legal advocacy and other supportive services. Contact WOMAN, 4105 Cass St., Detroit, MI 48201, (313) 831-2606.

PROSTITUTION

TODAY, INC. . . . is a drug addiction treatment community based on non-sexist principles. The 70 full-time residents participate in therapy groups that delve into sex-role stereotyping. Women are encouraged to express their anger (also to control it when necessary), and men to express vulnerability and emotions. Since most participants are 19-21 years old, work toward a high school degree and the resolution of family conflicts are stressed. Local advisory boards have input into policy decisions. Contact Today, Inc., P.O. Box 317, Newtown, PA 18940, (215) 968-4713.

Up to 80 percent of women in some prisons receive Thorazine, Librium or other drugs on a daily basis to keep them "manageable".

—Kitsi Burkhart

SERA . . . is a comprehensive program for Spanish-speaking addicts and youth. The only New York drug program for and by Spanish-speaking people, it houses 700 residents (about 15% women) in six facilities in the South Bronx. Residents go through a three stage process involving detoxification, group therapy and informal classes in English. There is also emphasis on academic activities, vocational training (somewhat sex-tracked), and job placement, culminating in employment and gradually decreasing involvement in SERA. Women and men come to SERA from the streets, court referrals, prison, and city programs. 80% of the staff are ex-addicts, and their million dollar-plus budget is paid by city, state and federal funds. Contact SERA, 1771 Andrews Ave., Bronx, NY 10453, (212) 583-9813.

LINCOLN DETOX UNIT . . . is a unique program in the drug field. Working from a political base, the staff teach classes in the politics of heroin, operate collectively and insist on local community control. They oppose methadone maintenance and therapeutic communities, believing that neither confronts the economic and societal causes of addiction, but only perpetuates a new form of dependence. The unit is currently experimenting with the use of acupuncture for detoxification. During the detox period, individuals are assisted in getting on welfare and Medicaid and provided money for transportation. The predominantly Third World ex-addict staff of Lincoln Detox operate through five collectives and treat over 250 people monthly. Collective members each contribute 7% of their salary into a fund which hires attorneys and bails people out of jail. They also were instrumental in initiating the class action suit by women prisoners at Bedford Hills. This prototype project is funded by the state and city government. Contact Lincoln Detox Unit, Lincoln Hospital, 333 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10454 (212) 960-5151.

REGIONAL ADDICTION PROGRAM . . . "is a completely drug-free counter-culture concerned with revolutionary concepts in education, community activity and political commitment." RAP's 15 month to two year residential program draws on the techniques of therapeutic communities, but regards isolated personal change as clearly insufficient. Rather, they want people to understand the social conditions which encouraged them to turn to drugs, and to find new pride and a sense of direction in working to change those conditions. RAP workers go to Washington's Women's Detention Center (out of which comes 12 to 13% of RAP's population) twice a week to show films and video tapes, and to conduct group sessions on why inmates ended up there and how drug use perpetuates the problems. They also do lots of "legwork and lipwork," providing third-party custody, helping those with legal problems, trying to convince judges and lawyers to allow them to come to RAP instead of serving time. Once there, they learn skills for survival in the context of a broad political education. About 70% Black and drawn mainly from Washington's inner city, they believe in the abolition of prisons and the creation of alternatives in the interim. Contact RAP, Inc., 1731 Willard St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 462-7500.

A startlingly large proportion of the women in a typical city jail are convicted prostitutes—up to 50% in some places. The ways in which the laws which put them there are enforced offer a striking example of institutional sexism and the double standard exhibited by society: prostitutes are harassed and prosecuted, while their customers almost invariably go free. Many women choose prostitution because of a lack of economic alternatives. An adequate social response to the issue must therefore include both decriminalizing the act of prostitution and offering decent occupational and educational opportunities to those women who are interested.

ACLU NATIONAL PROJECT ON SEXUAL PRIVACY . . . does work around gay rights and prostitution. Currently their goal is to get rid of laws against prostitution through legislation and litigation; they now have cases pending in California, D.C., Minnesota and Maryland. Laws are being challenged on the grounds of invasion of privacy and denial of equal protection for women (only prostitutes are picked up, not customers). They also do public education about why prostitution should be decriminalized. Contact ACLU National Project on Sexual Privacy, 22 East 40th St., New York, NY 10016, (212) 725-1222.

COYOTE/Seattle . . . works for the decriminalization of prostitution, and gives support to prostitutes in the meantime. Approximately 15 working-class and middle-class women, including ex-prostitutes and ex-cons, actively participate with this volunteer group. (It is legally unsafe for active prostitutes to openly work with them). They do referrals and advocacy for prostitutes in general, in everything from job-training (for those who want to get into something else) to drug counseling. Although they are not allowed access to women in jail and prison, arrested prostitutes can contact them from an institution. Coyote will help locate their children, badger their attorneys, send them clothing, and attempt to get them out of jail on personal recognizance. Eventually they hope to get their own bail fund going. On the legal front, they are working with the public defender to file suits challenging municipal ordinances on prostitution. Currently they are filing a civil suit through the ACLU, charging improper use of the tax money that is used to pay civilians to "entrap" prostitutes. Coyote also does a great deal of public speaking. Contact COYOTE, 105 14th, Seattle, WA 98122, (206) 323-2281.

COYOTE/San Francisco . . . finds inexpensive lawyers for arrested prostitutes and tries to get people out on their own recognizance. They are also working with the San Francisco ACLU which is challenging the constitutionality of vice squads. Feeling that the basic issue is a woman's right to her own body, Coyote puts out a newsletter and operates an active speakers bureau to spread this belief. Contact COYOTE/San Francisco, P.O. Box 26354, San Francisco, CA 94126 (415) 441-8118.





When my children come I can hug them and hold them—but I can't fall apart and let them know how important it is they're there. You gotta give them strength to walk out with. You hurt but you don't impose it on them; you don't force them through your ordeals about them coming and going. When they go they're not going to cry and I'm not going to cry . . . not until after they're gone anyway. What crying I do, I do alone."

quoted in the Women in Prison slide show

GENERAL GROUPS

Some of the following resource groups handle specifically women's issues while others cover general areas applicable to all prisoners. Both of these can be invaluable sources of background information for organizers, putting people in touch with other groups and resources, gathering necessary statistics, and laying the groundwork for coalitions fighting for widespread change.

PENNSYLVANIA PROGRAM FOR WOMEN AND GIRL OFFENDERS . . . offers services to women who have been arrested and "does general advocacy for change in the criminal and juvenile justice systems." Women in municipal, county, and state facilities are offered counselling and referrals in such problem areas as finding housing, drug programs, and legal help. PPWGO is pushing strongly for community alternatives to incarceration, supports a moratorium on the construction of prisons, and is part of a task force proposing standards for women's facilities. Research is a major program priority—publications have been produced on such subjects as Pennsylvania's bail system and conditions in the state's prisons, jails, and youth centers. Funded through LEAA and foundations, the program has representatives throughout the state and operates a job-training program for releasees in Pittsburgh. Contact, PPWGO, 1530 Chestnut St., Suite 711, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 563-9386, or 906 5th Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219, (412) 281-7380.

AFSC MORATORIUM ON CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PRISONS AND JAILS . . . has begun "an intensive information and organizing effort in Southern California to develop a broad-based community call for a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails until alternatives to incarceration are fully explored and implemented." The Federal Bureau of Prisons master plan calling for construction of 45 new prisons includes five new ones to be built in Southern California alone. And nearly every county in this area is planning construction of either a new jail or jail addition. Operating under the belief that as long as there are places to lock people up, they will be locked up, the project aims to set up a communication network of criminal justice groups and to work closely with a similar project in Northern California. They want to establish moratorium committees to pressure officials and explore alternatives to incarceration. Plans also include doing public education: for example, alerting people that they'll spend \$700 million for institutions which are totally ineffective in helping people. When construction of new facilities cannot be prevented, efforts will be made to limit the size of the buildings. Contact AFSC Criminal Justice Program, 980 N. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena, CA 91103, (213) 791-1978.

ENTROPY, LTD. . . has received a Labor Dept. grant to do a demonstration project on community-based pre-trial or post-release alternatives to incarceration for women. Articles on their research will be available at no cost. Contact Entropy Ltd., 92 Leonard St., Belmont, MA 02138, (617) 484-2864.

COSMEP PRISON PROJECT... Cosmep (Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers) offers publications free to prisoners. Selections include magazines on poetry, political education, music, alternative lifestyles, innovations in education, paperback novels, and Spanish newspapers. Although they cannot guarantee that specific magazines will be sent, they do promise at least one copy of a literary magazine to each inmate sending in a request. They have also compiled a list of editors interested in publishing inmate writing and will forward it on request. Contact Cosmep Prison Project, c/o Joseph Bruchac, The Greenfield Review, Greenfield Center, NY 12833.

The American Bar Association is considering a proposal to establish a pilot resource center on women prisoners. If approved, it will begin in late winter, 1975 to collect and disseminate information on a broad range of subjects, from employment and training to child care. The proposed title is FORCE (Female Offender Resource Center). Contact Susan Hillenbrand, c/o ABA, 1705 De Sales St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 223-1528.

NETWORK AGAINST PSYCHIATRIC ASSAULT ... is taking a leading role in fighting for legislative and judicial decisions guaranteeing the absolute right to refuse chemotherapy, electro-shock treatment, psychosurgery, or any other form of psychiatric treatment. The use of these techniques on prisoners is a major group concern, as is educating community people and health workers about psychiatric abuses. They are part of the group which publishes MADNESS NETWORK NEWS, a paper which has exposed the use of behavior modification in California Institution For Women, Contact NAPA, 2150 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 863-4488.

The behavior
of the
fully human being
is always
unpredictable-
simply because
it
is
FREE

URBAN PLANNING AID PRISON RESEARCH PROJECT

... provides information and technical assistance to prisoner organizations. Hoping to eventually be nationally oriented, they have gathered evidence for some prisoners' suit on cruel and unusual punishment, tabulated the budgets of various state prisons from year to year, and published an excellent booklet for Massachusetts, "The Price of Punishment". Urban Planning Aid is a prototype community organization. Contact Urban Planning Aid Prison Research Project, 639 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge MA 02139, (617) 661-9220.

ACLU GEORGIA CLEARINGHOUSE ON JAILS ... has put

out a report showing how prisons have failed in Georgia and calling for greater community involvement and more pre-trial release programs. Public education about conditions in prisons and jails, and lobbying in the state legislature are other activities of the group. Contact ACLU GCOJ, 88 Walton St., N.W., Atlanta, GA 35303, (404) 523-5398.

... simply because disproportionate numbers of blacks are arrested, detained and imprisoned in urban areas does not mean there are, in fact, more black criminals than white. It only means that police focus more attention on black neighborhoods; prosecutors are not as apt to drop charges; judges are less likely to grant bail black defendants can meet; and more apt to sentence a black person convicted of a crime to prison. Once imprisoned, blacks spend longer periods of time behind bars before being granted parole.

-Kitsi Burkhardt

WOMEN'S BUREAU/DEPT. OF LABOR ... acts as an

informal clearinghouse for information on programs for women in prison. Contact Elsie Denison, Women's Bureau, Dept. of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210, (202) 961-2861.

MANPOWER ADMINISTRATION/DEPT. OF LABOR ...

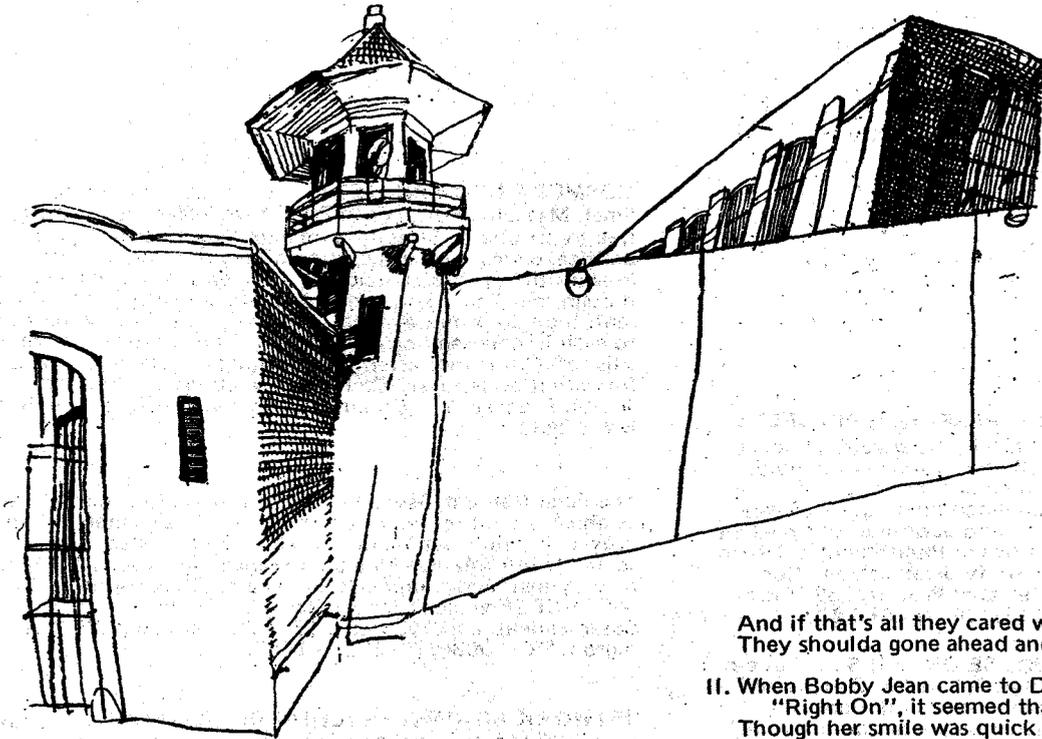
is a source of information on women in prison, particularly in the area of job training programs. Contact Tom Joyce, Rm. 9028, Dept. of Labor, 601 D St., NW, Washington, DC 20213, (202) 376-7360.

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE ...

distributes practical information on setting up post-secondary education for prisoners and ex-cons. They favor programs which take people out of confinement and make the fullest use of community and campus resources. Legislation allowing for the grassroots initiation of such programs exists in most states. The Task Force seeks to publicize that possibility and provide concrete information on how they may be organized. Contact NTFHECJ, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 712 ; New York, NY 10027, (212) 870-2734.

NOW TASK FORCE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE ... started

in April 1974 to coordinate the activities of local NOW task forces in such places as Denver, San Francisco, Seattle, and Miami. The local groups do consciousness-raising and legislative lobbying, and perform services for prisoners. Contact NTFOCJ, c/o Geri Kenyon, Dept. of Social Services, Michigan Technical Univ., Houghton, MI 49931, (906) 487-2189 or -2113.



The following song is taken from an account of these stories given by Marilyn Isabel, who knew both women first-hand.

And we're tired of hearin' 'bout our hidden sisters, after they died.
 And we're tired of hearin' stories 'bout the cause of death: "suicide", how they lied.
 And we're tired of learnin' history from the ones we've lost, before they were found.
 So maybe it's time, maybe it's time, to raise them from the ground.

- I. Veronica, she lived alone with her old man, in some small town in downstate Illinois. She got jealous of the attention he was paying a child, so she killed the child, her sister's little boy. Well, they found the baby wrapped in plastic, hidden away, at the end of twelve days lookin' here and there. Though she probably pleaded guilty, I really can't say, but I know they gave Veronica the Chair.

She spent two years in solitary as a prelude to more, 'cause she studied up and got her time cut down.
 They'll give you anything you want when you're sittin pretty on Death row, they'll give you nothin' but hell while you're still around.
 She spent her money on hair-spray, and make-up when she could, she ate pills like they were goin' out of style.
 But her headaches kept flarin' up like fire on rotten wood, Cause her brain was slowly burnin' all the while.

She went into a coma at the end of one day, Lotsa years of lotsa pills had done their trick.
 And five times the nurse called the doctor and each time heard him say, "Don't bother me, Veronica's always sick".
 They sent her away to die in a hospital bed, her family was too poor to travel there.
 The priest paid for the funeral, and now that she was dead they bought her a pretty party dress to wear.

And if that's all they cared whether Veronica lived or died, They shoulda gone ahead and given her the Chair.

- II. When Bobby Jean came to Dwight she got the nickname of "Right On", it seemed that's all she knew how to say. Though her smile was quick and bright, she was sorta slow to catch on to the monkey business happenin' every day. The hall administrator called her lazy like all the rest, another nigger good-for-nothin-but lyin'. But they all found out later Bobby Jean was doin her best, you can't claim a girl's playin' possum when she's dyin'.

They put her up for three years on a charge of petty theft, Lord knows she musta stole somethin' awful bad. Most likely she was payin' dues for being poor and left alone to make do with the little that she had.
 The first time someone found her flat out cold in her cell, we figured it was time to look into her case, y'all.
 Turns out that the X-ray picture told the story well, her brain contained a tumor the size of a baseball.

They shoulda sent her right home on a medical release, society had nothin' more to fear.
 'Cause even mean arch-criminals have a right to die in peace, but instead they sent her back to finish the year.
 And when she complained that she was slowly goin' blind, they told her she was tryin' to make a bad scene.
 When she tripped down the stairs they figured "outta sight, outta mind," so they locked her up and pumped her full of Thorazine.

And she never woke up for her last hospital trip, And that's the last word anybody's heard about Bobby Jean.

The names remain unchanged to point the finger, though it's been done many times before.
 At the ones who own the prisons and the courtrooms, never seen inside of a prison door. (I'm talkin 'bout) The ones who make their money killin' babies, manufacturin' guns for all the wrong wars.
 And all the big-time winners rippin' off profit, out of the hands of the hard-workin' poor.

I'm talkin' 'bout the ones who do the real crime, when we smash their system down, they'll do their time, and that's for sure.
 If you know what I mean,

Veronica and Bobby Jean

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RESOURCES

Printed, filmed and taped resources can either kindle an awareness of a problem or suggest concrete ways of responding to it. Those that follow perform one or both functions for people striving to support women in prison. Not all prices are listed, and some are very expensive. Books can be obtained at local libraries, either through their own resources or through inter-library loan services. Legal journals can generally be found in university libraries.

BOOKS

THE POLITICS OF PUNISHMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRISONS IN AMERICA, Erik Olin Wright and others. Harper Colophon Books, 10 E. 53rd St., NY NY 10022, 1973 349 pp. \$3.75

... an outstanding book dealing with both "the internal operations of prisons in the U.S. and the political reality of prisons with respect to society at large." The author concludes that "society needs to be radically transformed so that the institutions of the state (including prisons) serve the interests of the people rather than of an elite. Socialism is the context in which this transformation can occur."

WOMEN IN PRISON, Kathryn Watterson Burkhart. Doubleday, Garden City, NY 11530, 1973. 465 pp., \$10.00

... "Baby, you gotta be the voice for us," said a woman prisoner to the author of this remarkable book. Much of it consists of narratives of prisoners, describing their feelings of loneliness, anger, boredom, and, not least of all, comradeship with their sister prisoners. These first-person accounts are effectively put into perspective by thorough investigative reporting about the history and conditions of women caught up in the court and prison systems. As the book points out, women in prison find their labor exploited by profiteering prison industry, their health abused, their sexuality subjected to demeaning regulations and their spirits systematically assaulted. This impassioned document concludes by exposing the flaws behind the "rehabilitation myth" that prisons should help people become "productive citizens," arguing instead for the abolition of penal institutions. "Imprisonment is necessary only for the tiny minority of offenders so dangerous as to pose a serious threat to society." **WOMEN IN PRISON** avoids recommending resources or tactics for the prisoner support movement. Its value is as an indictment of a barbaric and oppressive institution. Kiti Burkhart has also written a brief but excellent article on the problems of women in prison. See June, 1971 issue of **RAMPARTS**, 2749 Hyde Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

THE CRIMES OF SEXISM, edited by Drew Humphries and June Kress. Drew Humphries, Department of Sociology, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, NY 11210

... is an anthology of articles which look at old data on women and crime and try to integrate it into a feminist neo-Marxist framework. Concentrating on prostitution and rape, the manuscript will hopefully be published in the not-too-distant future. Drew Humphries is also working on an article which reinterprets data about women and crime and social control theories.

KIND AND USUAL PUNISHMENT, Jessica Mitford. Vintage Books, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022, 1973. 340 pp., \$1.95

... a scathing indictment of prisons in the United States which exposes a whole gamut of abuses: indeterminate sentences giving authorities arbitrary power over prisoners; medical experimentation on inmates; behavior modification and psychosurgery. But most telling is a critique of the basic functions of imprisonment—the preservation of "privileged of class and skin color" by removing uncooperative poor and Black people. One chapter describes the author's eye-opening experience as a "guest inmate" for a day and night at the District of Columbia Women's Detention Center. A controlled intensity pervades the book from beginning to end, where Mitford analyzes the question of prison reform versus abolition. She concludes that these are not necessarily contradictory goals. Some reforms "result in strengthening the prison bureaucracy ... perpetuating and reinforcing the system." Others "to one degree or another challenge the whole premise of prison." The reduce the arbitrary authority of officials and provide space for prisoners to organize. By agitating for such reforms we move toward the elimination of the entire prison system. A list of publications and groups working in that direction is included.



Jail is a hell of a thing. I went through many, many changes. And one of these changes was to participate in a lesbian relationship. We all grow every day. I grew in jail while others were growing in the "free world." A part of me grew that I never knew existed. And it will always be there—ready to grow some more.

—Pat Singer, ex-prisoner, Ohio Reformatory for Women, quoted in *Off Our Backs*

STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE, prepared for American Friends Service Committee. Hill and Wang, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, 1971. 179 pp. \$1.95

... a compelling action-oriented book which dissects the practice and theories behind prison reform to show the fallacies of most proposals for change. Decrying the whole idea of "rehabilitation," the authors (several of whom are ex-cons) call for an end to indeterminate sentencing, the implementation of a Prisoners' Bill of Rights, a reduction in the number of acts considered crimes, and uniform application of criminal laws. A book of unusual strength and worth.

"The Price of Punishment: Prisons in Massachusetts," The Prison Research Project, available from Urban Planning Aid, Inc., 639 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139, 1974. 67 pp. Priced on a sliding scale

... a pointed critique of the prison system in Massachusetts, this well-illustrated booklet is ammunition in the hands of those working for radical change. Although less than 1/30 of Massachusetts' prisoners are female, the points of indictment remain valid for women as well as men inmates. "The Price of Punishment" attempts to "explain how the (prison) system is run, who benefits from the system, and why prisons make the problems of crime, poverty, and violence in our society worse and worse as years go by." Especially interesting is an analysis of how Massachusetts' prisons spent their \$38 million budget. The booklet concludes: "It's time to stop talking about reforming prisons and to start working for their complete abolition."

ARTICLES

"Kept Women," Lee Concklin, WIN, Box 547, Rifton, NY 12471, August, 1971, pp. 13-17

... passionate, moving, beautifully written. Covers the basic ground on women's jails and prisons: the dehumanization of life inside, the stripping away of each inmate's dignity, the social roots of women's crime, and more. Statistics and hard information are skillfully woven in. Together, indignation and information make powerful consciousness raising.

"Women's Prisons: Laboratories for Penal Reform," Helen E. Gibson, WISCONSIN LAW REVIEW, University of Wisconsin Law School, 975 Bacon Mall, Madison, WI 53706, vol. 1, 1973, pp. 220-233

... a history and general survey of conditions in women's prisons with particular emphasis on Wisconsin. Many problem areas are covered, with special sensitivity shown to the subtle oppression of petty regulations. However, the article is marred by the author's acceptance of the rehabilitation myth: shorter sentences, more training programs, community facilities, all through the benevolence of the criminal justice bureaucracy.

"Women in Prison," Jane Kennedy, WOMEN'S RIGHTS LAW REPORTER, Rutgers University, 180 University Avenue, Newark, NJ 07102, July/August, 1972

... account by a political prisoner (see section on political prisoners) of the conditions in the Detroit House of Corrections. Jane Kennedy speaks as a prisoner and as a woman, discussing common fears, pregnancy, and the low wages. "The commissary makes its profits from the prisoner as purchaser. For the month of October, 1970, the commissary showed a profit of well over \$20,000. But the prison also makes a profit from the prisoner as worker."

CRIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, A Journal of Radical Criminology, 101 Haviland Hall, University of California/Berkeley 94720, published twice yearly, \$5.00/year individuals, \$7.50/year institutions ... is collectively produced by radical criminologists. The first issue (spring-summer '74) includes articles on a citizens' peace force by Huey Newton, the prison movement in Scandinavia, "How I Would Manage the Prison" by Eugene Debs, a people's law school, rape myths, radical criminology course outlines and bibliographies and book reviews.

"The Prisoner-Mother and Her Child," Richard D. Palmer, CAPITAL UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio 43209, vol. 1, No. 1, 1973

... discusses prisoner mothers, and their relationship to their sons and daughters. The article lists reforms that should be implemented such as placing mothers and babies in grouped quarters away from the main prison population, which might resemble an apartment complex. This way, the two could establish a more natural family base and the mother could care for the young person without so much outside interference.

PAMPHLETS

NO TITLE AT ALL IS BETTER THAN A TITLE LIKE THAT, available from the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project, c/o Karlene Faith, 120 De la Costa, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, 1974. 21 pp. \$1.00, free to prisoners

... poetry, other writing, and graphics by inmates of California Institution for Women. Strength ... love ... power ... feeling—beautiful!



*Sing out again so our hearts may burst into flame
And our burning blood may finally melt these chains.*

—Hien Long, Vietnamese woman prisoner

"From Women in Prison Here to Women of Vietnam: We are Sisters," collected by Arlene Eisen Bergman, People's Press, 2680 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94110, 1975. 25 pp., \$.50 ... a moving, strength-giving collection of letters from inmates at the California Institute for Women (CIW) to the women of Vietnam: "I'm sorry for a corrupt government that raped your people and land. I am in prison but I will struggle to change things no matter where I am." "We are women imprisoned in our own country. Your beautiful and strong actions give us courage. Your own courage teaches us."

"Hustling for Rights," Marilyn Haft, ACLU National Project on Sexual Privacy, 22 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016, 1974. 20 pp. \$1.00

... marshals a number of legal, historical, and social arguments for the decriminalization of prostitution. Ultimately the article sees the issue as one of constitutionally protected civil liberties: "Whether a person chooses to engage in sexual intercourse for pure recreation or in exchange for something of value is a matter of individual choice, not for governmental interference."

"Check Out Your Mind," Chicago People's Law Office, available from Chicago Connections, Rm. 605, 21 E. Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60605, 1975. 8 pp. \$.10

... a frightening description of behavior management in prisons through the use of exotic techniques: the administration of tranquilizing drugs; sensory deprivation; electro-shock therapy; lobotomy and psycho-surgery. The pamphlet exposes

several experimental programs, including those at the notorious Federal behavior modification unit in Butner, North Carolina, and proposes measures to counter the stepped-up use of these techniques. The information here comes from men's prisons; but, as women inmates become increasingly difficult to control, the prison system becomes more and more willing to practice behavior modification on them.

REPORTS

"Behavior Modification in Women's Prisons," available from Laura Zeisal, O'Brian Hall, N. Campus, P.O. Box 87, SUNY Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260. 25 pp. 1974.

... an unpublished paper which describes the use of behavior modification in women's prisons in the context of the general difference of conditions in men's and women's institutions. Behavior mod tends to mean different things in each place. In men's prisons, it often implies specific techniques such as psycho-surgery or aversion "therapy." For women, it is more likely to be embodied in "day-to-day procedures" which "do an extremely effective job of modifying ... women's behavior so that it conforms to society's standards. The article cites as an example the bestowal and withdrawal of small privileges (telephone calls or commissary rights, for instance). These serve as a set of rewards and punishments whose purpose is to condition inmates according to the dictates of prison authorities.

The stated goal of the federal penitentiary in Alderson is "to prepare the female federal offender to successfully meet feminine role expectations."

"A Study in Neglect: A Report on Women's Prisons," Omar Hendrix, Women's Prison Association, 110 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10003, 1972. 46 pp

... a concise summary of facts and figures concerning female prisoners, with special attention given to the inmates of New York City's Correctional Institution for Women. It includes statistics and trends on crimes committed by women, statistical profiles on women in the prison system, and descriptions of conditions in and major problems posed by that system. New York statistics are compared to national ones in this model report.

WOMEN IN DETENTION AND STATEWIDE JAIL STANDARDS American Bar Association Commission on Correctional Facilities and Services, 1705 DeSales St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, 1972. 40 pp., \$1.50

... a useful synthesis of previously separate sources of information on women in local jails across the country. A major focus of the study is an evaluation of state standards for women's facilities. It concludes by recommending the "substantial elimination ... of women's jails as we know them, to be replaced by community treatment or open residential centers."

SURVEY OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY & CORRECTIONAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRL OFFENDERS:

Section 1: "The Women, the Jails, and Probation," (51 pp.);
Section 2: "The Courts and the Minor Judiciary," (41 pp.);
Section 3: "Girls and the Juvenile Court," (34 pp.); Pennsylvania Program for Women and Girl Offenders, Inc., 711-1530 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, 1969. Free

... a strongly critical and thorough report prepared in 1969 on jail and probation facilities in Pennsylvania's counties. This study provides a wealth of statistical information on conditions of women in the county jails of a typical state, yet retains a sense of the human realities lying behind those figures—that poor, uneducated, and Third World women are the most frequent victims of the jail systems. It points out that county jails in Pennsylvania, as in other states, are notoriously lacking in job training, counselling, and other facilities, and argues strongly for an increased emphasis on rehabilitation. The report unfortunately does not deal with the question of what rehabilitation means to a woman who must return to the same conditions which encouraged her crime in the first place.

"Task Force on Courts: Reports I & II," Church Women United, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, N.Y. 14614, 1971. 15pp. and 30pp., respectively. \$1.00 each

... Report I presents observations to the community on city criminal court. It includes findings on various courtroom procedures, exposing racism in sentencing and the inequities of the bail system; also discussed are types of cases and services to defendants. Report II contains criticisms and observations of city criminal courts, county courts, family courts and court personnel. Appendices cover plea bargaining and victimless crimes. Believing in meaningful rehabilitation rather than punishment, the Task Force concludes by calling for more diversion programs and supportive community services to which the court could make referrals. Both reports are good models for groups interested in court monitoring. The Task Force also has a report on family courts, available for \$.50.

"The Special Problems of Female Offenders," Edith Elizabeth Flynn, WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS, available from LEAA; National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024, Dec. 5-8, 1971, 5 pp. Free

... a concise summary of the special problems of women in prison. The great majority of women are imprisoned for non-violent property crimes, or for victimless sexual or drug offences. The report points out that the nature of the female prison population is very different from the male, yet rarely are there programs which respond to their special needs. A series of recommendations at the end of the paper argue for alternatives to incarceration in most cases, and for far-reaching reorganization of the prison system for those women remaining inside, including increased involvement with the outside community and the establishment of programs designed to develop personal and vocational autonomy among women.

HEALTH POLICY ADVISORY CENTER, 17 Murray St., New York, NY 10007, (212) 267-8890 ... will soon have available an article about prison health by Nancy Jervis. Approximately 100 pages in length, it consists of four case studies in Massachusetts, New York City and San Francisco of the most significant recent reform efforts in prison health and gives a radical perspective on the feasibility of the policies. Special women's concerns are not a major focus.

DIRECTORIES

PRISONERS YELLOW PAGES, Outmates, P.O. Box 174, Storrs, CT. 06268, 1974

... a remarkably thorough, though slightly outdated directory of organizations, literature, and resources useful to women and men prisoners and their supporters. Organized state by state, it lists both local and national groups. There are also special sections with information about legal resources, free or discounted literature for prisoners, where to obtain job or educational counseling, and more.

"Look at You," Still Doing Time, 4545 S. Drexel Blvd., Chicago, IL 60653, 1974, 25 pp. Free

... a model post-release directory for Chicago area Black women, providing advice and basic survival information. Written in street language, the booklet includes addresses, phone numbers, and contact people of groups offering emergency shelter, job finding agencies, drug programs, educational resources, and organizations of ex-cons.

SOURCE BOOK IN PRETRIAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES AND ACTION PROGRAMS.

National Pretrial Intervention Center, 1705 DeSales St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, 1974. 188 pp., \$2.25
... a technical assistance handbook suggesting approaches to the pretrial diversion concept, aimed largely at police, judicial, and prison professionals. Primarily useful because it contains a national directory of intervention programs, both active and in the planning stage.

SPECIAL ISSUES

"Women Locked Up," WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION, 3028 Greenway Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1972. 72pp., \$1/individuals, \$2.50/institutions, free to prisoners.

... makes the point that prisons and jails are part and parcel of a larger system of control over the thoughts and behavior of women. They are merely "the last resort if socialization doesn't work." Articles describe prisons, mental institutions, high schools, family life—all of them places where women are "locked up." Three women tell of their experiences behind bars; one of them a prison activist. Another article contains a thoughtful presentation of alternatives to imprisonment. The issue provides a good radical feminist analysis of prisons.

Special Issue: "Women in Prison" OFF OUR BACKS, 1724 20th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, April, 1972. \$35

... articles, poems, letters, manifestos combining support for prisoners with outrage at the system which oppresses them. This collection covers a lot of territory: descriptions of health, care and sexuality inside; special conditions in jails; accounts of uprisings at Framingham Prison in Massachusetts, Alderson and elsewhere. Much was written by prisoners and ex-cons. The issue includes a pointed analysis of the role of a militant outside support movement (reprinted in part in this booklet). An indispensable resource.

"Women, Crime and Criminology," ISSUES IN CRIMINOLOGY, School of Criminology, University of California at Berkeley, 101 Haviland Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720, Fall 1973, 179 pp., \$2.50

... radical criminologists' perspective on women and crime. Includes articles on prostitution as a victimless crime; the judicial enforcement of the female sex role, family court and the female delinquent; and a review of pertinent literature.

ORGANIZING RESOURCES

"How to Become an Ally of Our Prisoners," Honey Knopp, FELLOWSHIP MAGAZINE, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960, Sept. 1973, 3 pp

... contains useful organizing information: services people on the outside can perform for prisoners, such as court and jail monitoring, and visitation programs; and how to get access to helpful groups and resources. These are suggested as a place to start in the long process of supporting prisoners, not only as measures to make confinement more bearable. These first steps "seem patently indeed in view of the overwhelming need to restructure the criminal justice system."

"The County Jail: A Handbook for Citizen Action," Friends Suburban Project, P.O. Box 54, Media, PA 19063, 1973. 52 pp., \$1.00

... an exceptionally useful resource for those organizing to support women and men in jail. Sections include a chapter on gathering information, on strategies for change, and on how to organize a community. The booklet advocates programs to severely reduce jail populations and programs to improve jail conditions for the remaining inmates. There is also an extensive discussion of tactics for change ranging from power structure research and lobbying of legislators, to militant non-violent demonstrations and guerrilla theater. A list of resources and groups is included.

COMMUNITY RELEASE ORGANIZATION: A Manual for Community Based Citizen Involvement in the Criminal Justice System. C.R.O., 2408 18th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, 1975. 83 pp.

... an excellent how-to manual for those interested in establishing a program allowing arrestees to be released in the custody of community residents. This useful booklet is based on the experiences of a model community release program which has been operating in Washington, D.C. since 1972. Most of the text describes procedures followed by the Washington C.R.O., but there is also a brief section on how to start such a program in other localities.

People still believe there is some magic in the turning of a key... Yes, they manage to sound very reasonable to themselves as they talk of deterring others from crime; but the act of putting a person in jail remains essentially the act of trying to wish that person out of existence. From the moment of arrest one begins to feel against one's flesh the operation of this crude attempt at sorcery.

—Barbara Deming,

BREAKING INTO PRISON: A GUIDE TO VOLUNTEER ACTION, Marie Buckley, Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 1974. 194pp., \$7.95

... this book contains a sensitive and thorough chapter on the special problems of women prisoners and offers suggestions as to how to respond to them. While most of the recommended activities are essentially officially-sponsored volunteer service programs, there are no illusions that these are anything but "stopgap measures" which cannot adequately meet the needs of prisoners. The book points out the need for legal assistance to protect the rights of prisoners, as well as agitation to change the legal system so that most women never even get to prison in the first place. A broad spectrum of organizations active in supporting prisoners are listed and described in the back of the book.

FROM CONVICT TO CITIZEN: PROGRAMS FOR THE WOMAN OFFENDER, Virginia A. McArthur, District of Columbia Commission on the Status of Women, Rm. 204, District Bldg., 14th and E St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004, 1974. 38pp. Free

... a survey of a number of programs designed to help women at various stages in the criminal process, from the pretrial period through detention, incarceration and release. Also contains practical suggestions on how prisoner support groups can obtain funding, where to locate useful resources, and how to mobilize an organization to give support to women in prison. The good intentions of the booklet are apparent and the information is very useful. Unfortunately there seems to be no awareness of the contradictions involved in suggesting that programs be designed after consulting both inmates and prison bureaucrats.

LEGAL RESOURCES

PRISONER'S RIGHTS SOURCEBOOK: THEORY, LITIGATION, PRACTICE, edited by Michele G. Hermann, Marilyn G. Haft. Clark Boardman Co., Ltd., 435 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014, 1973. 806 pp. \$25. Chapter on women available from CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW, National Clearinghouse for Legal Services, 500 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2220, Chicago, IL 60611, Vol. 8, May, 1974. \$2.00

... encyclopedic legal reference on the rights of prisoners, including an excellent chapter covering the special problems of women: unequal sentencing, lack of equal facilities, non-existent or sex-tracked training programs, separation from sons and daughters, parole problems. Legal remedies are suggested—in particular, the section on women cites the opportunities presented by the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. There is also a description of a model legal education project which provides prisoners not only legal aid, but also instruction in the law so they may better understand their own problems. A useful resource although it lacks a perspective on the limitations of legal tactics.

Anger shines through me.
 Anger shines through me.
 I am a burning bush.
 My rage is a cloud of flame.
 My rage is a cloud of flame
 in which I walk
 seeking justice
 like a precipice
 How the streets
 of the iron city
 flicker, flicker,
 and the dirty air
 fumes.
 Anger storms
 between me and things,
 transfiguring,
 transfiguring.
 A good anger acted upon
 is beautiful as lightning
 and swift with power.
 A good anger swallowed,
 a good anger swallowed
 clots of blood
 to slime.
 —marge piercy



"Women and the Correctional Process," Linda Singer, *The American Criminal Law Review*, Winter, 1973, v. 1, No. 2, pp. 295-308.

... suggests legal tactics that may help protect the rights of women prisoners: the equal protection doctrine and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting racial and sexual discrimination in employment. Yet this article retains a sharp perspective of the limitations of litigation: "It would be tragically short-sighted if legal efforts on behalf of women in the criminal justice system were restricted to demands for equal protection with men. . . . In the long run the legal rights and human dignity of women cannot be protected as long as they are locked away in prisons." While fighting to protect the rights of prisoners on the legal front, the article suggests that people outside simultaneously press for the replacement of prisons with community facilities and for the diversion of the maximum number of women from the official criminal justice system.

THE JAILHOUSE LAWYER'S MANUAL, available from Prisoners' Union, 1315 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94107, 1973, 48 pp. Free to cons; \$5.00/individuals; \$10.00/institutions

... well-written, packed with information, this book tells how "a person in a state prison in California can start a lawsuit in a Federal Court, without the help of a lawyer, to fight against mistreatment and bad conditions." It explains basic procedures and information about the US legal system. The graphics are excellent; so are the appendices, which are filled with useful information, such as which law libraries will lend books to prisoners. NOTE: Prisoners' Union has a limited supply of the manuals left and seeks funding to print more. Their response to requests may be delayed until more copies are reprinted.

THE RIGHTS OF PRISONERS, David Rudovsky. ACLU, 22 E. 40th St., NY, NY 10016, 1973. 128 pp. \$.95, free to prisoners

... although not specifically directed toward the problems of women, is invaluable for an understanding of the legal arsenal available to prisoners and their representatives. It explains, in straightforward language, laws regulating the political, religious and health rights of prisoners; jail and parole conditions; and current interpretations of concepts like due process and cruel and unusual punishment. A final chapter evaluates different legal tactics, including suits and injunctions.

"The Sexual Segregation of American Prisons," YALE LAW JOURNAL, 401A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520, vol. 82, 1973, p. 1229

... an analysis of the differences in the treatment of male and female prisoners. This article focuses on the sex stereotyping and "the lower level of institutional services and rehabilitative programs available to women." It also includes a review of legal precedents in the area of sexual discrimination in prison and a discussion of the possible impact of the Equal Rights Amendment on prison policy.

Sentences were always much lighter [for white-collar criminals], even for people who had embezzled huge sums of money. A person who robbed someone of twenty dollars usually got more time than someone who had extorted more than \$20,000. . . . The more intellectual synthesis, abstraction and creativity in a crime, the less it is perceived as crime and the more it interests lawyers, prosecutors and judges who basically live by the intellect, rather than by action. The same is true of the general public, who condemn a crime of action before an intellectual crime."

—Kitsi Burkhardt

PRISONER'S LEGAL HANDBOOK, Women's Clinton Prison Project, Rutgers School of Law, 180 University Ave., Newark, NJ 07102, 1975. About 150 pp. \$5.00 (reduced rates for prisoners)

... a model legal manual for prisoners written especially for inmates at New Jersey's Clinton Institute for Women by the Women's Clinton Project (see Legal Aid and Education Groups). In clear and precise language, it explains basic criminal law regarding searches, confessions, bail, post-conviction alternatives, prisoner's rights, and many other subjects. Examples are used to illustrate obscure points throughout the text, and relevant legislation and legal precedents are cited. The handbook encourages women to know their rights, question authority, and use the law as a tool, yet it avoids preaching or talking down to its audience.

The state of Pennsylvania, . . . spent thousands of dollars to bring a woman to trial for attempting to steal her neighbor's pig to feed to her children. She didn't even get to kill or cook the pig before she was arrested. . . . the woman was sentenced to twenty years in prison. What will happen to her children without her?

—Kitsi Burkhart

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

The following are personal accounts of women's experiences in prison:

HELLHOLE, Sara Harris. Tower Publishing Co., 185 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1970. 288pp., \$1.95
 . . . derived from interviews with inmates at the New York City House of Detention for Women.

PRISON NOTES, Barbara Deming. Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, 1966. 185pp., \$1.95
 . . . well-written account by a civil rights activist of her experiences in a Southern prison.

THE ALDERSON STORY: MY LIFE AS A POLITICAL PRISONER, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. International Publishers, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, 1963. 223pp., \$2.25
 . . . eloquent indictment of the prison system by a woman convicted under the infamous Smith Act of "teaching and advocating the violent overthrow of the government." Although generally perceptive, the book expresses a traditional attitude toward homosexuality.



Detailed reports show that business and white-collar crimes cause more financial loss, more injury and death than any other crimes in America. In one year, price-fixing by twenty-nine electrical companies alone cost the public more than is reported stolen by burglars throughout the entire country. Violations of safety laws and housing codes, food and drugs sold in violation of the Pure Food and Drug Act cause thousands of deaths. Yet these crimes are rarely dealt with using the full force of criminal sanctions. Standards of right and wrong are less clear when they are committed in the course of business transactions and work.

—Kitsi Burkhart

TAMSIN, Tamsin Fitzgerald. Dial Press, Dell Publishing Co., 1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York, NY 10017, 1973. 180pp., \$6.95
 . . . a collection of poetic, sensitive letters written by an 18-year old woman who failed in a hijacking with her boyfriend and spent 1½ years at Alderson.

Ex-prisoner Norma Stafford is putting out a book of poetry that can be ordered c/o Karlene Faith, 120 De La Costa, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

DRUG RESOURCES

"FEMALE PATIENT AS BOOTY," Jeanie L. Peak and Peter Glankoff, available from Jeanie Peak, P.O. Box 1000, Escondido, CA 92025, 1974. 6 pp. Free
 . . . insightful article on the unique position of the female addict. The authors contend that in our sexist society, "when a woman openly begins using drugs for pleasure she becomes considerably more of a deviant from social norms than her male counterpart." Calls for the elimination of sexist behavior in drug treatment programs, and a genuine commitment to training and advancement for ex-addict counselors.

"The Opium Trail: Heroin and Imperialism," written for the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, New England Free Press, 60 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143, 1972. 84 pp. \$.25

. . . an excellent overview of opium use, which includes heroin and morphine—who and how it profits and oppresses. Tracing the origins of heroin and morphine addiction, it blames capitalists here and elsewhere for the massive international narcotics network. Though not totally discounting therapeutic communities, the authors stress political activism as the most successful therapy.

National Directory of Drug Abuse Treatment Programs, Deena D. Watson, National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information, 11400 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, 1972, 381 pp. Free

. . . an incredibly inclusive inventory, by state, of all types of drug abuse and addiction treatment and rehabilitation facilities (approximately 1300 in all). Each listing includes the name and address of the center, the contact person, the type of program involved, services offered, who is (and isn't) served and staff composition.

PRISON NEWSPAPERS

The following newspapers, written by and for prisoners and their supporters give some significant coverage of women's issues. They are available free, or at reduced rates, to prisoners.

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL, c/o National Lawyers Guild, 23 Cornelia St., New York, NY 10014, (212) 989-3222, \$10/year, free to prisoners

. . . is one of the most well-known prison newspapers in the country, providing a constant source of strength to those inside, as well as those working on the outside. Run by a volunteer collective of six women and two men (including 3 ex-cons), MS publishes articles, letters, poems and art work by

prisoners. Their aim is to provide a forum for prisoners who become politically aware, spread news about prison actions from prisoners' viewpoints and disseminate legal information that will help in securing and expanding prisoner rights. They have fairly good coverage of women prisoners' struggles and concerns, particularly on the East coast. It is an invaluable tool for those active in prison work.

*I hear your deep woman's laughter
ring out through every cell block
and my heart is strengthened
my courage renewed because you are here
just as you are everywhere noble
warrior
goddess of Death to the Power
giver of life sweet sweet woman
soldier*

—Norma Stafford, ex-prisoner
California Institute for Women

THE ANVIL, United Prisoners Union, 330 Ellis St., San Francisco, CA 94102.

CHICAGO CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER, 21 E. Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60605.

NEPA NEWS, New England Prisoners' Assoc., Franconia College, Franconia, NH 03580.

PRISONERS' DIGEST INTERNATIONAL, Box 390, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722.

SUNFIGHTER, Box 22199, Seattle, WA 98122.

THE OUTLAW, Prisoners' Union, 1315 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

The following resources are free to women prisoners. Since radical and lesbian publications are often censored by prison officials, we suggest that outside supporters write for these papers and try to transport them inside. When writing for the papers, indicate that you want them for women prisoners so you can get them free.

TRIPLE JEOPARDY, Third World Women's Alliance, 346 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011, or Box 3065, Berkeley, CA 94703. \$3.50/year for individuals, \$8 for institutions, free to women prisoners

... covers the struggles of Third World women in the US in Spanish and English. Articles focus on Puerto Rico, forced sterilization, political prisoners, health, and more. Excellent perspective on the triple oppression of Third World women: racism, imperialism, and sexism.

OFF OUR BACKS, 1724 20th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. \$5/year for individuals: \$15/institutions ... radical feminist newspaper, published monthly, includes regular coverage of the struggles of women prisoners.

DISTAFF, P.O. Box 15639, New Orleans, LA 70175. ... bi-racial feminist paper, published monthly, includes regular features on women in prison and has one column in Spanish. Free to women prisoners in the South, other women prisoners please send 25 cents.

WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION, 3028 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218. \$5/year ... feminist magazine.

LESBIAN TIDE, P.O. Box 597, Venice, CA 90291. \$7.50/year ... lesbian paper published every 4-6 weeks.

LAVENDER WOMEN, P.O. Box 60206, 1723 W. Devon, Chicago, IL 60660 ... lesbian paper.

AMAZON QUARTERLY, Box 434, W. Somerville, MA 02144. \$1.00/issue ... lesbian feminist arts journal.

JOURNAL OF RADICAL THERAPY (RT), P.O. Box 89, W. Somerville, MA 02144. \$6 /year ... on mental liberation.

I was guilty of every crime I was sentenced for ... and more. I'm not hollering about going to prison. I'm hollering that nothing happens there except that you are giving your money to make people so bitter that they will come out bigger and better criminals who can rob you more efficiently. You can't stop with changes inside. We gotta change it out here—start opening doors for people. You gotta change yourselves—offering to help us live out here, with you, not against you."

—Fran Christman, quoted in *Women in Prison*

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"Women in Prison: An Annotated Bibliography" Susan Sturgeon. Available from the Graduate School of Library Sciences, University of Hawaii, HI 96822, 1973. 20pp. ... an excellent politically-conscious bibliography including references from the radical and feminist press.

"Prisons and the Criminal Justice System: An Annotated Bibliography," American Friends Service Committee, 48 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139, 1974. 42pp., \$.25 ... a fine general reading list on the prison system in the U.S., compiled by activists in the outside support movement.

"Women Offenders: A Bibliography," Institutional Library Services, Documents Division, Washington State Library, Olympia, WA 98504, 1972. 19pp. ... concentrates mainly on sociological and criminological literature.



Abstracts available free from Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

"Women as Offenders within the Correctional Process," 36pp., 1974

"Female Offender and Criminality," 15pp., 1974.

FILMS, TAPES, SLIDE SHOWS

Films and tapes are dependable means for bringing people together, raising consciousness, providing income and spreading the word; however, unlike our book research, our film research was not extensive. The films and tapes with longer reviews were ones we've seen or were recommended by reliable people. But most of the reviews are taken from PR blurbs.

University of Michigan, Audio-visual Educational Center, 416 Fourth St., Ann Arbor MI 48103

"Women in Prison," cl 1974, \$20.55/three days
This ABC television documentary gives a sense of prison conditions in a way that the written word never can: the blare of loudspeakers shouting instructions to prisoners in the highly-automated Los Angeles County Jail for Women; the camera slowly panning along a tray containing dozens of doses of thorazine at the Ohio Reformatory for Women as the nurse explains that these are to help handle the prisoners better. Much of the film consists of prisoners telling their own stories of the abuse of body and mind. Although the film's critical content is not put in a broad political context, it makes a powerful case both for the oppressiveness and the ineffectiveness of confinement.

There were about 10 or 15 of us who'd been in a whole bunch of months and there were a lot of very tight relationships forming. . . . We started hassling them about food and hassling them about the medical staff and not having a dentist and writing the warden every day. And then when those relationships became more than just a basis to have arguments among ourselves, then they broke up every tight relationship. They kept switching people all over the place to try to keep us apart and kept us in double lock. Once they saw those relationships could form a basis for unity, then they really came down on them.

quoted in the Women in Prison slide show

Naomi Burns, 854 West End Ave., New York, NY 10025

"Women in Prison," 40 min. 1973, \$50/rent to individuals (negotiable); \$75/sale to institutions
. . . a moving, politically-aware portrayal of life inside women's prisons, consisting of slides and a simultaneous recorded text. The show relies heavily on the words of prisoners who describe a range of abuses heaped upon them, including the court system which discriminates against Third World and poor women, and the psychological assaults of so-called therapy programs which try to instill submissive and dependent attitudes in prisoners. Two themes weave through the show: One is a strong feminist consciousness which emphasizes the similarities of life inside and out, that incarceration is a particularly intense form of imprisonment reserved mostly for women of certain class or racial backgrounds. The other theme is that in- and outside organizing efforts provide the strength and support necessary to overcome prison isolation and survive the systematic repression.

Delator Films, 2500 Filbert St., San Francisco CA 94123

"Busted," "Dead Time," "A Different World," 20 min. each, b&w, 1973
These three films focus on men and women in the San Francisco County Jail, emphasizing the shoddy conditions, lack of any programs, and the high recidivism rate.

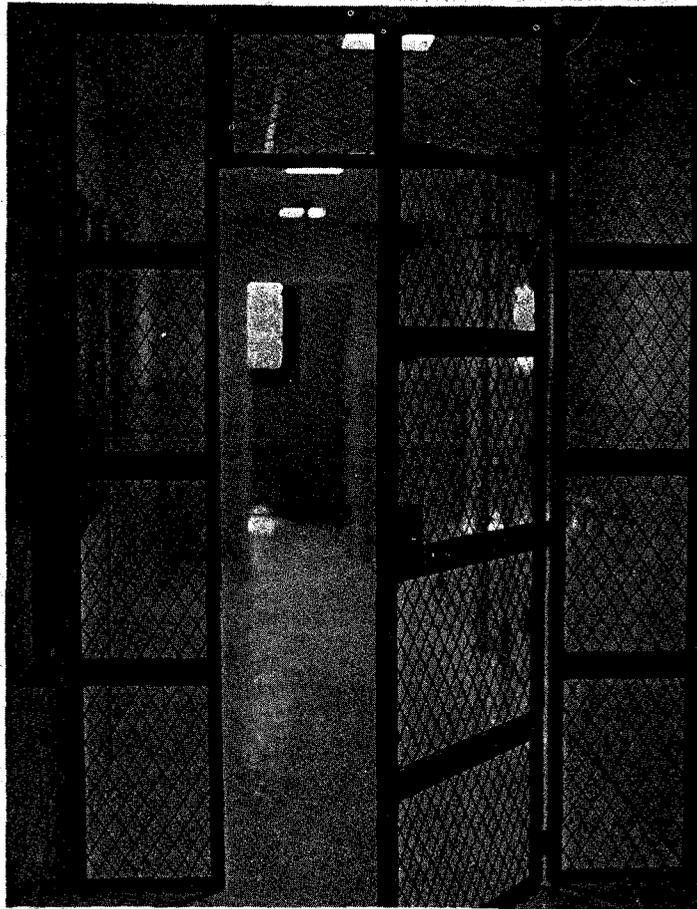
Odeon Films Inc., 1619 Broadway, New York, NY 10019

"Release," 28 minutes, color \$30 + \$3 shipping
This documentary is designed to give viewers a sense of the human problems stemming from incarceration: relationships with family, the difficulty of "making it" on the outside after long confinement.

Rest of the News, 306 E. State St., Ithaca, New York, 14850.
(Tapes come in cassettes and reel-to-reel: 2 speeds).

"Behavior Modification," 10 min. \$6.
The manipulation of prisoners through the use of drugs, psycho-surgery, and rewards for conformity has been practiced at many prisons around the country. At a Boston rally, former prisoners and mental patients discuss the dangers of "behavior modification" and describe efforts to resist it.

"Women in Prison," 11 min. \$6
Black activist Denise Oliver recounts the humiliation, disease, abuse and drug addiction women find behind bars, based on her experience in New York City.



**TEAR IT DOWN? YES. HOWEVER YOU MAY DO IT – TEAR IT DOWN.
IT IS A BLIGHT ON THE LAND. IT IS A MOCKERY TO ALL THAT IS
REAL. TO ALL THAT IS HUMAN. YES. TEAR IT DOWN. HERE IS ALL
PLAGUE, ALL LEPROSY, ALL DEATH. HERE IS CANCER AND CORRUPT-
ION. TEAR IT DOWN.**

–Up From Under

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'We'd better not get involved—he might be a plainclothes policeman going about his work!'

APPENDICES

glossary

[Some of the following definitions were taken from WOMEN IN PRISON by Kiti Burkhardt and from "Pennsylvania County Jails and State Prisons," by the Pennsylvania Program for Women and Girl Offenders.]

ADJUSTMENT CENTER: Area of maximum security cells used for the solitary confinement of prisoners.

ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION: Ways of serving time without going to prison. These can include halfway houses, drug programs, and other community-based programs.

APPEAL: A procedure whereby a party who has received an adverse decision in a lower court may have the decision reviewed in a higher court.

ARRAIGNMENT: The proceeding in which an arrested person is called before a court to answer an indictment.

ATTACK THERAPY: A therapeutic technique embodying the philosophy of totally tearing down an individual's personality and then rebuilding it according to the therapist's design.

BAIL: An amount of money set by a judge which an arrested person must pay in order to be released as security that s/he will return for trial.

BONDSPERSON: An individual whose business is providing people bail money for a price, usually for profit.

CHEMOTHERAPY: The administration of drugs, supposedly as therapy, but usually as a form of behavior control. Drugs commonly used include the tranquilizers mellaril and thorazine, and prolixin and anectine, two powerful drugs which can produce a sensation similar to drowning.

CLASS-ACTION SUIT: A lawsuit brought on behalf of a number of people against an institutional practice. The decision of the court can force policy changes by the institution.

CONTRACT PAROLE: A procedure whereby cons and parole officers agree in a written contract that, when the prisoner fulfills certain obligations (finding a job, for example), s/he will automatically be paroled.

CONVICTION: The act of finding a person guilty of a crime, either through a plea of guilty or through trial by jury.

COP A PLEA: To plead guilty after an agreement has been reached between the defense attorney and the prosecution for a lesser sentence.

DETAINER: A writ authorizing further detention of a person in custody. Often used by officials as a harassment tactic.

DETENTION: The act of keeping a person in custody or confinement, often while awaiting trial.

DETOXIFICATION: The process of eliminating physical dependency on an addictive drug.

DIVERSION: A form of intervention in which criminal proceedings are suspended on the understanding that the accused individual will participate in an alternative program.

FELONY: A crime classified as more severe than a misdemeanor, such as murder, and drawing harsher penalties.

FURLOUGH: An approved leave from prison for a specified period of time and purpose, such as an outside job or visiting family.

INDICTMENT: A legal statement charging a person with a crime.

INTERVENTION: A program which results in the suspension of criminal proceedings.

JAIL: A city or county lock-up for arrested people unable to make bail, convicted defendants awaiting sentencing, and those convicted of misdemeanors and given short sentences.

LARCENY: Theft.

LITIGATION: Legal action in court.

MISDEMEANOR: A crime less severe than a felony, such as shoplifting.

PAROLE: Conditional release from jail or prison before the maximum sentence has been served. Violations of the conditions of parole may result in the individual's return to the institution.

PLEA BARGAINING: See "cop a plea."

PRE-TRIAL RELEASE: Release from jail during the period between arrest and trial.

PRISON: Facility for the custody of prisoners under sentence of incarceration. Prisons are usually state- or federally-run, and most of their prisoners have been convicted of felonies.

PROBATION: A suspended sentence allowing a convicted person to go at large, usually under the supervision of a parole officer.

PROBLEMS IN LIVING: A non-oppressive term for what the psychiatric establishment has labeled mental illness. "Mental illness" implies a diseased condition, and does not accurately describe what troubled people go through.

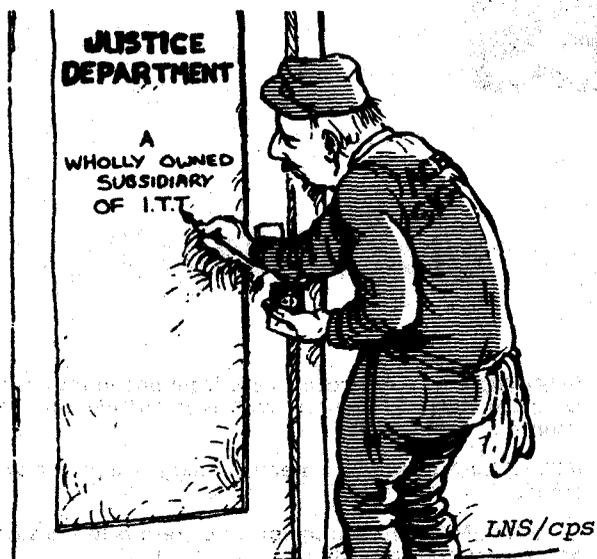
REALITY THERAPY: Supposedly, a pragmatic form of therapy which confronts people with the realistic alternatives available to them. In practice, it often encourages people to accept rather than challenge the conditions in which they find themselves.

RECIDIVISM: Returning to prison because of conviction of another crime or for violation of parole regulations.

RELEASE ON RECOGNIZANCE: To be released before trial on the basis of an affirmation of the obligation to return for trial.

SENTENCE: An order made by a judge directed at someone convicted of a crime. It can be either a fine or a prison term. There are basically two types of prison sentences. In one the judge imposes only the maximum term to be served. This is an indeterminate sentence. In the second type, the judge imposes a minimum and a maximum term. Usually a convict is not eligible for parole until her/his minimum sentence has been served.

THIRD PARTY CUSTODY: Release before trial to a third party, either an individual or an organization, who guarantees the appearance in court of the arrestee.



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