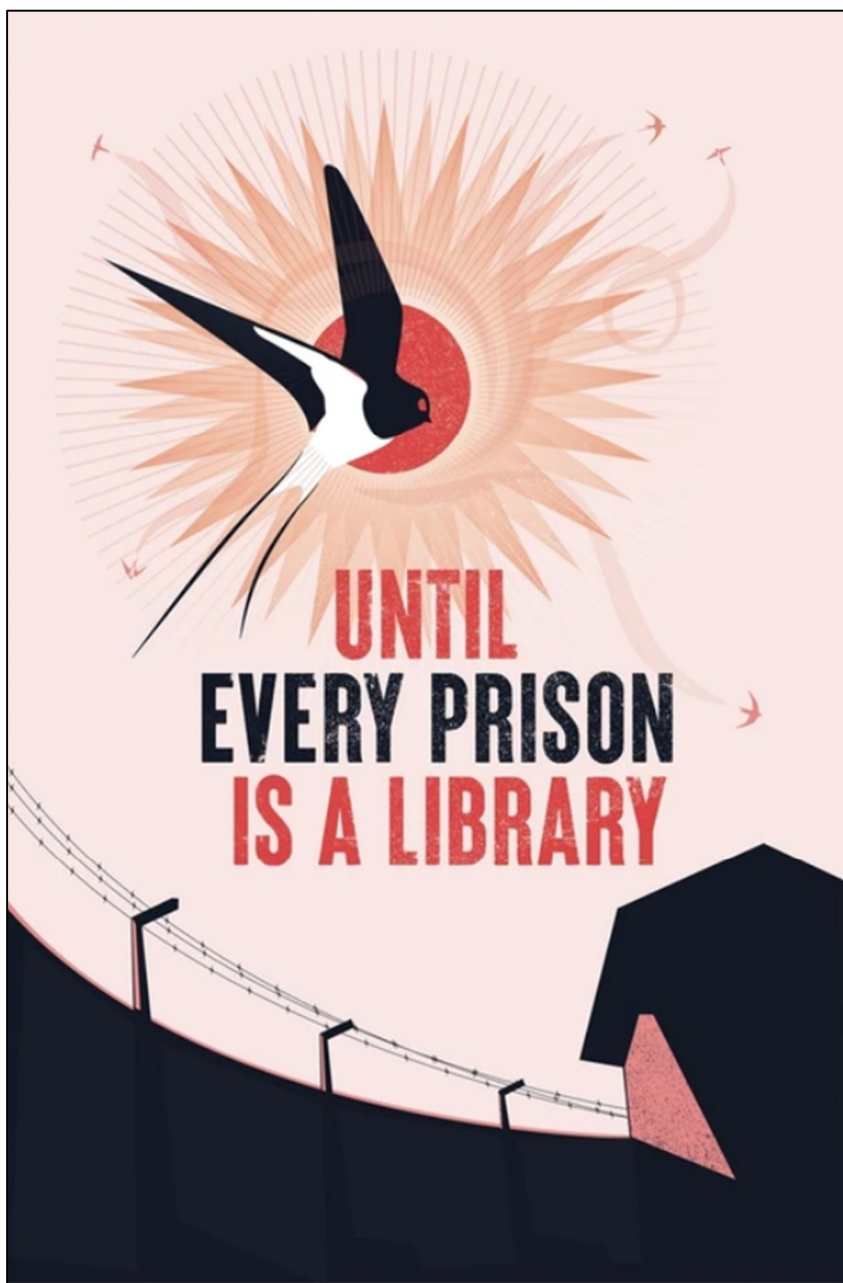


CLASS ACTION NEWS!



ISSUE #32 WINTER 2023/24

< *Editor's Note* >

It is Winter & Issue #32 of 'Class Action News'. This zine is by & for the 'Prisoner Class' on Treaty Lands with Canada.



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

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

Quality & Quantity:

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

Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best. Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation.

Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (½ page = 325 words max).

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

'Class Action News' is published 4 times a year & is free for prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or an organization, please do consider a donation. It really, really does help to get this inside!

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< *Contents* >

News	3-10
Resources	11-16

< *Artists in this Issue* >

Cover: Seize the Mean

< *Donors for this Issue* >

Very special thanks out to:
You !

Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

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

< *Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment* >

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

≈ 'Dish With One Spoon' Treaty ≈

Almost all the anti-social behaviour which makes us think it's necessary to have armies, police, prisons and governments to control our lives, is actually caused by the system inequalities and injustice those armies, police, prisons and governments make possible.

- David Graeber

Canada is failing the wrongfully convicted, again

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Almost 20% of the 87 people on the Canadian Registry of Wrongful Convictions originally pled guilty, including five women and three racialized men who were victims of Charles Smith's flawed

expert evidence. None of them would be able to apply to the proposed commission because they did not appeal until others discovered evidence that they were not guilty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harry LaForme, Kent Roach
The Star
Nov 5, 2023

There's a good reason why nobody studies history, it just teaches you too much.
- Noam Chomsky

A national travesty: Prison watchdog urges reform to tackle Indigenous over-incarceration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Correctional Service panned

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

The correctional investigator's team conducted 223 interviews with Indigenous prisoners, elders and spiritual advisors, CSC staff, and executive

directors of healing lodges and community-based residential facilities at 30 penitentiaries and 81 healing lodges countrywide.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key takeaways

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

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

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

cultural differences between and among First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

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

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

Brett Forester
CBC News
Nov 02, 2023

Quebec tribunal says jail violated rights of Black man left naked in cell for hours

Quebec's human rights tribunal has found that provincial jail guards violated the rights of a Black inmate who was left for hours naked and wet in a cell without a mattress.

In a Nov. 3 decision, Judge Christian Brunelle ordered the provincial government and several guards at a Quebec City jail to pay Samuel Toussaint a total of \$41,500 in damages and ordered the Public Security Department to create a plan to fight discriminatory profiling. Toussaint, who was 21 at the time of the 2016 incident, was serving an intermittent sentence on weekends.

The tribunal says that he flicked a cigarette toward a guard who had told him to stop smoking in the parking lot, resulting in a series of escalating interventions by jail staff.

Brunelle says guards found Toussaint uncooperative and cut his clothes off with a knife, moved him around the jail while he was naked, and didn't follow decontamination procedures after they pepper-sprayed him.

The judge says the behaviour of the guards - at least one of whom uttered a racial slur toward Toussaint - suggests the inmate was racially profiled.

The Canadian Press
Nov 13, 2023

Women will not simply be mainstreamed into the polluted stream.

Women are changing the stream, making it clean and green and safe for all:

every gender, race, creed, sexual orientation, age, and ability.

- Bella Abzug

Watchdog finds 'significant wrongdoing' with inmates' medical care at Alberta jail

An investigation by Alberta's Public Interest Commissioner has found that "significant lapses" in the standard of medical care for inmates at an Edmonton jail put patients' lives, health and safety in danger.

A whistleblower's concerns that medical staff were failing to properly care for and monitor inmates prompted the investigation by commissioner Kevin Brezinski's independent office.

According to a report published Wednesday, the whistleblower identified seven patients who allegedly had severe medical outcomes because of inadequate care from health-care professionals. The health-care professionals - nurses and their supervisors - were employed by Alberta Health Services (AHS).

The whistleblower, who first brought concerns to the office in the summer of 2020, declined an interview with CBC News but shared a letter sent from the commissioner's office in April, which identified the jail as the Edmonton Remand Centre.

As part of its investigation, Brezinski's office examined medical records, treatment history and retained an expert nurse consultant to review medical records.

"Based on the expert report of the nursing consultant, I found that for five of the individuals identified by the whistleblower, medical staff did not provide treatment that met the requisite standard of care," the commissioner's report says.

The report cites problems with reassessing symptoms, managing pain concerns, reporting vital signs and documenting physical assessments.

In one case, it took two days for medical staff to begin treatment after observing an inmate's toe was black and swollen with fluid.

Based on the consultant's opinion, the commissioner also found medical staff did not properly implement protocols for two patients undergoing withdrawal.

The report calls the lapses in the standard of care as "serious and significant wrongdoing."

The investigation also found that in two cases, medical staff made decisions based on protocols that didn't exist, and in one case, medical staff denied care to a patient who had reported

vomiting because the vomiting had not been witnessed. The latter practice did not conform with standards expected in other jails, the report said.

Brezinski said in the report that he did not view the wrongdoing as being the sole responsibility of specific individuals but that there were systemic lapses in medical care, stemming from a lack of clarity surrounding treatment standards for patients with abnormal trending vital signs.

Brezinski made four recommendations to AHS for corrective measures, including examining the circumstances of the specific cases and referring matters to regulatory and disciplinary bodies if appropriate.

'Horror stories' for decades

Tom Engel, a defence lawyer and president of the Canadian Prison Law Association, said he has been hearing "horror stories" for decades about bad medical care at the Edmonton Remand Centre.

"We're talking about human beings dying, human beings suffering," he said.

Engel said the issue is systemic and goes beyond the one jail.

"Part of the reason of issuing a public report is these recommendations are applicable to all correctional facilities within Alberta," Brezinski said in an interview with CBC News on Wednesday.

Engel said he is pleased that the report, which he plans to use in court, offers an official acknowledgement of problems.

"Now I hope that the government will be forced to do something about it," he said.

AHS makes changes

The report says AHS indicated that it had implemented corrective measures to address all the recommendations. These included reviews of the incidents, discipline, coaching, training and performance reviews with involved medical staff.

AHS also told the commissioner's office that new reviews and audits have led to workplace investigations resulting in coaching discussions, warning letters and suspensions.

AHS has updated and implemented its vital signs monitoring guide, which is now mandatory, implemented facility-specific trending reports to identify gaps in care, changed how it responds to patient concerns, and digitized medical staff records.

"We express our deepest sympathies to the individuals impacted by historic care concerns within the Edmonton Remand Centre," AHS told CBC News in an emailed statement.

Brezinski said in the report that AHS co-operated during the investigation and was already in the process of fixing problems when it began.

"I think the majority of the recommendations have already been accepted and implemented, which is a good thing," he told CBC.

Madeleine Cummings

CBC News

Oct 25, 2023

Newfoundland jail death renews calls for accountability in provincial corrections

It was shortly after another death was confirmed at a notoriously harsh Newfoundland jail that Bob Buckingham wrote to his fellow defence lawyers to ask what they could do to better advocate for inmates.

The August death, which sources say was a suicide, was at least the seventh death since 2017 inside jails in the province, which between 2010 and 2020 had the highest rate of inmate suicide in Atlantic Canada.

Judges in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) have recently reduced sentences for at least two inmates at Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's in scathing written decisions condemning the 164-year-old prison's rodent and mould infestations and its crumbling infrastructure. Buckingham wants lawyers to raise those conditions more often during pleadings and thus give judges more opportunities to take a stand, which he hopes will pressure the provincial government to make changes.

"There has to be a political will, to do something to change the change how things operate, and to bring principles of fundamental justice into the prison system with respect to inmates," Buckingham, who is based in St. John's, said in an interview. "They have to have a fundamental opportunity to challenge what's happening, to challenge the poor conditions."

Unlike the federal corrections system, there is often no independent oversight of provincial jails in Canada. Federal prisons are monitored by the Office of the Correctional Investigator, and

Correctional Service Canada publishes statistics on inmate deaths. The agency alerts the press whenever an inmate dies, and deaths that are not from natural causes are investigated by a four-member team and reported on.

In provinces including NL, the provincial Justice Department will often only publicly confirm an inmate death if the media request information. The public often only learns of suicides behind bars if the family speaks out.

And only some provinces, including BC, launch automatic inquests into inmate deaths that are not obviously from natural causes.

"In most provincial jails, what you're looking at is a closed box, it's a closed system," said Toronto human rights lawyer Corey Shefman, who exclusively represents Indigenous people and organizations. "Generally speaking, the only people who know what's going on in provincial jails are the inmates, the guards and defence lawyers. And no one listens to the inmates. So there's a real lack of accountability."

That's especially concerning, Shefman said, because a large proportion of inmates in provincial jails are on remand, which means they're awaiting trial and haven't been convicted. It is also deeply concerning because Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in provincial jails, he said, adding that in some Prairie provinces, more than 80% of inmates in provincial correctional facilities are Indigenous.

"Then add on to that, the fact that in most provincial correctional facilities, there's no real rehabilitative programming, unlike in the federal system," he said.

Shefman said provincial jails need oversight similar to what exists federally.

"There needs to be somebody who is independent, like the federal corrections investigator, who can hold these systems accountable," he said, adding that most provinces have an ombudsman or a citizens' representative, but they don't have much power. Jen Metcalfe, executive director at Prisoners' Legal Services, a BC clinic, says provinces should at least be required to publish data on deaths in their jails, including the cause of the death, the race of the inmate who died and the circumstances of their death, such as whether they had recently spent time in solitary confinement.

Legal aid services in Atlantic Canada and the Prairie provinces are notoriously underfunded,

Metcalfe said. But that's not the case in BC; her organization is supported by Legal Aid BC, and it's one of the only clinics in Canada set up specifically to offer free legal services related to incarceration and inmates' rights.

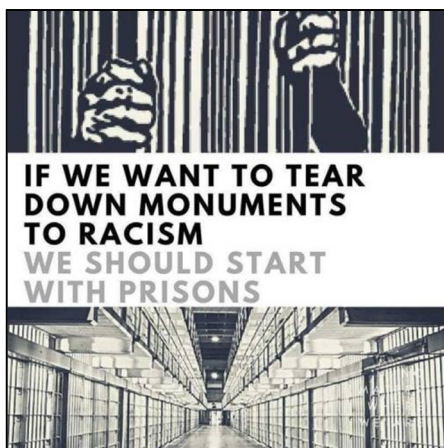
Metcalfe said her organization hears from about 1,000 incarcerated people a year. It can help with individual issues and push for systemic change, she said. In that way, it operates somewhat like an independent oversight body for the province's jails, and it helps shine a light on conditions that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Buckingham said he got a "lukewarm" response to his call to arms, but he expects about six lawyers will meet sometime this month to talk about what they can do.

He said he'd at least like to see automatic inquests or inquiries into deaths in the province's jails. "We've had enough deaths," he said. But he hopes the lawyers will launch a co-ordinated effort to bring about systemic change.

The NL government is promising to replace Her Majesty's Penitentiary, Buckingham noted, but he says that without fundamental changes to the province's approach to corrections, "All we're doing with a new facility is transporting a bad system into a new building."

The Canadian Press
Oct 9, 2023



Only one thing's sadder than remembering you were once free,
and that's forgetting you were once free.
- Leonard Peltier

Locked Up Libraries:

A Critique of Canadian Prison Library Policy

Access to library services in prison is a minimum human rights requirement. These services impact people both while they are incarcerated and as they reintegrate into the community. Since the 1980s, there have been recommendations to improve library services to people in Canadian federal prisons. Although some advancements have been made, recommendations for the improvement of library and educational services in Canadian prisons have been largely ignored by prison administrators and policy makers. Canadian prison libraries at both the federal and provincial-territorial level are still underfunded, understaffed, and sorely lacking in basic library materials, making it impossible for prison librarians to meet the minimum human rights requirements of the people they serve.

Since the inception of the modern Canadian prison, prison libraries have largely been considered a privilege exchanged for good behaviour rather than a well-planned service and a human right. The information they contain is seen as a tool for control and to mould incarcerated individuals into law-abiding citizens, and this insidious moralistic view of the prison library persists today. It is this combination of moralism, budget shortfalls, and a punitive philosophy within Canadian carceral environments that has allowed Canadian prisons to become sites of perpetual punishment and trauma for the people that inhabit them. Within this context, the prison librarian is faced with the impossible task of providing a level of service that matches the model of the public library while still operating under the security constraints of prison.

As library services evolve with changing community needs and advancing technology, I put forth considerations and recommendations which look at the present and future of library services to incarcerated people in Canada. In doing so, I focus on recommendations which directly pertain to prison library policy and services, while also offering recommendations for how librarians working in public, academic, and special libraries can support prison librarians and their library patrons, and why it matters. These evidence and experience-

informed recommendations address four key areas:

- The need for more research on prison librarianship and prison library services;
- The need for adequate library management & qualified library workers in prison libraries;
- The need for changes to the existing policy that governs prison libraries; and
- The need for continued & sustained support from public, academic, and special libraries.

Prison librarians continue to face a plethora of unique challenges which stem from working in a carceral environment. When I worked as a prison librarian, I noted that prison libraries received only limited recognition of the value of library services within their own institutions and were virtually invisible to the greater library and information science professions. This was further exacerbated by the fact that many prison libraries were staffed with untrained individuals such as prisoners, correctional officers, educational staff, and social programs officers.

Furthermore, correctional staff generally considered prison library services to be a privilege rather than a minimum human rights requirement as mandated in The United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners, known today as The Nelson Mandela Rules and affirmed by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA).

The devaluation of their work is only the tip of the iceberg of issues which prison librarians in Canada face. Other challenges include censorship, lack of technological resources or lack of technology altogether, lack of alternative formats such as eBooks and audiobooks, lack of legal reference ability or of a legal reference collection altogether, and lack of library accessibility.

The CFLA's 2016 position statement on the Right to Read in prison, Prison libraries network:

'The right to read, asserts that reading and access to information are basic human rights. It emphasizes the role prison libraries play in guaranteeing those rights, including asserting the intellectual freedom of prison library patrons. It calls for prison libraries to actively promote literacy and technological literacy, that prison libraries be given adequate spaces to provide library collections and programming that meets their patrons' recreational, cultural, educational, and other information needs, and for prisons to acknowledge their key role within colonialism.'

This position statement notes the direct link between access to adequate library collections and programming and lower rates of recidivism. They emphasize the importance of the prison library mirroring the outside world, stating:

‘When inmates’ information rights are respected, their ability to grow positive connections both inside and outside of the prison setting grows. This area of personal growth helps to prepare them for their release. Outside of prisons, libraries in the community can play a critical role in supporting the successful reintegration of former inmates.’

The argument that increased and/ or better library and educational services in prisons reduces recidivism and therefore reduces the cost of the criminal justice system is nothing new, and there is admittedly strong evidence that these programs and services do reduce recidivism.

However, I urge governments and policymakers to remember that these are people, and that prisons cannot and do not reduce recidivism when the people they house are being marginalized, exploited, and utterly failed by a system which prioritizes institutional safety and security over the human rights and the dignity of those in its care.

The library is a minimum human rights requirement - literally the least prisons could be doing to protect the intellectual freedom of the people they house - and yet adequate library services are still not being provided in Canadian prisons. Now is the time to rethink the goals of the prison library and the ways in which we measure its success. The prison library is one of the few spaces in the carceral environment which can help to reverse the sense of dehumanization that people in prison feel every day. As Brenda Vogel states:

‘The prison librarian meets the users where they are: in a non-nurturing environment of deprivation that fosters dependence through humiliation and compliance, in a hostile environment possessed by fear and intimidation, in an environment with limited media and communication. The user meets the librarian in an oasis of equality and respect, where there is opportunity to choose from a variety of media, formats, subjects, and titles, to possess something of value, and to exchange ideas. This is the library as place.’

Many library and information professionals have been faced with the devaluation of the invaluable work that they do. We have all heard the arguments that libraries have become obsolete, that they will not exist in the future, that online search engines have replaced library services. The people who make these arguments have forgotten that the library is not just a warehouse full of books. The library is a safe space and, in prison where incarcerated individuals are not allowed the same access to information and technology as the general public, the prison library is likely the only space which offers not only information but a reprieve from the ennui of prison life. Library workers find themselves in the centre of that space not just as library workers but as educators, public service providers, social workers, and so much more. Our expertise matters, especially within the carceral context.

Library workers cannot thrive in the prison library on vocational awe alone. Prison administrators and policy makers also need to provide support to prison librarians. This support should involve giving library workers a seat at the table when planning prison library policy and services, promoting professional growth and development by ensuring funding for these opportunities, supporting the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of prison library staff, and ensuring that prison librarians are championed by a Chief of Library Services who understands the issues which they face every day. Prison librarians also need support from our colleagues on the outside who can help to advocate for prison library services and intellectual freedom and provide programming and services to people in prison and people returning to society. The prison library’s purpose should not be controlling the prison population, nor should it be supporting safety and security within the institution, nor even reducing recidivism and costs. The purpose of the prison library is to ensure that the basic minimum human rights of incarcerated individuals are met. Prison librarians cannot do this without changes to the existing policy and without the full support of prison admins, policy makers, and librarians on the outside.

Michelle De Agostini
Journal of Radical Librarianship
Jun 17, 2022 (A very, very brief excerpt!)

Trans+ People in Canadian Prisons Project

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

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

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

Longer Sentences

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

High Indigenous Presence

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

Incarceration Rates

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

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

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

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

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

We are hoping to connect with:

Current Trans+ prisoners in Canadian federal prisons,
AND

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

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

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

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

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

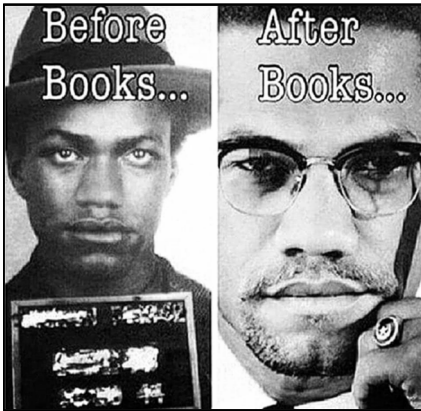
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

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

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

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

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



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

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life.

As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

*Love is contraband in Hell,
'cause love is an acid
that eats away bars.*

- Assata Shakur

Phone Line Launched for Disabled Prisoners who Experience Ableism and Racism in Hamilton, Milton, Ottawa

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

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

OUT OF PRISON NUMBER: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):

Hamilton - 905-631-4084

Niagara - 905-227-5066

Milton - 416-775-7938

London - 519-690-0836

Ottawa - 613-768-9951

Kenora - 807-548-4312

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

www.djno.ca



Facts about HIV and HCV

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

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

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

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3%, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49%, respectively.

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

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

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

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

Going to prison is like dying with your eyes open.
- Bernard Kerik

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HEP C = 18-30% in prison
HIV = 1-5% in prison

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

BLEACH DOES NOT KILL HEP C

Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners

For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.

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

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

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

www.djno.ca

OUT of PRISON: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):

Hamilton - 905-631-4084

Kenora - 807-548-4312

London - 519-690-0836

Milton - 416-775-7938

Niagara - 905-227-5066

Ottawa - 613-768-9951

PRISON RADIO

- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM

Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am

Call-in 519-837-2378

- Halifax - CKDU 88.1 FM

Black Power Hour - Fri 1:30-3 pm

Youth Now! - Mon 5-6:30 pm

- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM

CPR: Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm

- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM

PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon

- Vancouver - CFRO 100.5 FM

Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm

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

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

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

**Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University,
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6**

Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net

Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

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

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

**Monday to Saturday
9-11 am & 2-4pm**

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

Why a Jail Hotline?

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

Who Should Call This Hotline?

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

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

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

Free Jail Hotline for EMDC

**Monday to Saturday
9-11 am & 2-4pm**

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

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

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

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



Nov 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

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

☞ Respect ☞

Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

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

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

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-1110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

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

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

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

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

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

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

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration in Canada
- Over 5000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increases with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

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

The Impact

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

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

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

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

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

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

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

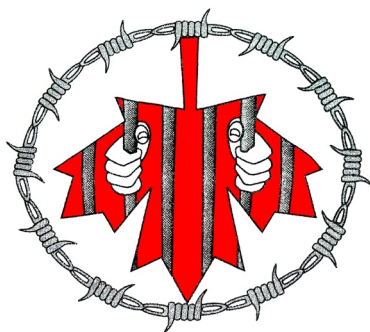
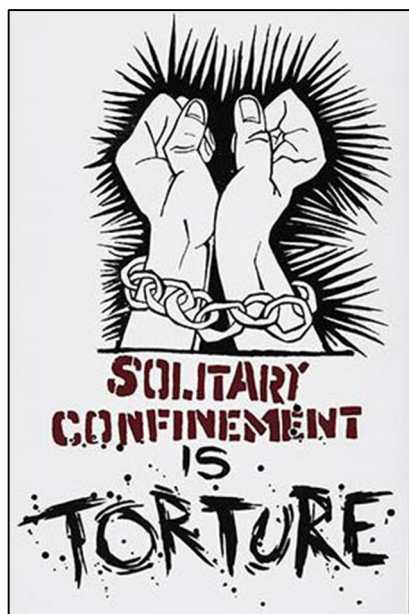
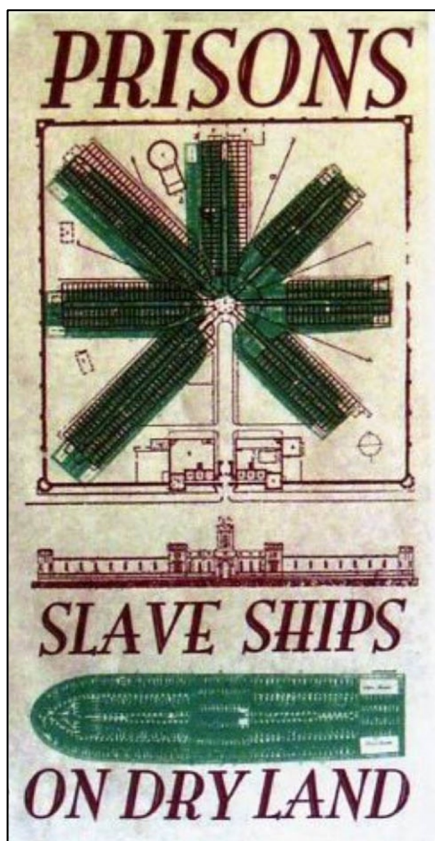
Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

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

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

info.kipcanada@gmail.com

or by phone at: 416-505-5333



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> Jan > Apr > Jul > Oct >

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Mail-out: Apr 1, 2024

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that needs gettin' out?

... Hmm ... ?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

