

Prison Justice Network *newsletter* Winter 2020

unceded Kwantlen, Katzie, and Semiahmoo lands (Surrey, BC)



(with thanks to PASAN for permission to use its and Red Dress Productions' image, above)

INSIDE: calls to action, news, publications, memorials, and inspiration by, for, & with prisoners/detainees!

March 15 (Sunday) Surrey (Central City) 2pm March and Rally Against Police Brutality with Coalition Against Bigotry-Pacific on Int'l Day Against Police Brutality facebook.com/events/230795217960519

March 15 (Sunday) Vancouver concert by Charles Labra y amigos de Sol y Lluvia 5:30pm **Russian Hall** 600 Campbell Avenue, \$25 (cash only) "All proceeds go to victims of police-inflicted eye mutilations in Chile" through **Ojos de Chile** <https://losojosdechile.cl> **Van 4 Chile** van4chile@gmail.com Van4Chile.ca

March 20 Edmonton courthouse "seminar on practical approaches to prison-related advocacy" presented by the **Alberta Prison Justice Society** <https://twitter.com/PrisonApjs>

April 4, May 2, June 6 (first Saturday every month) **prisoner letter writing event 3-5pm Spartacus Books** 3378 Findlay Street, x̱m̱əθḵ'əy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətaʔṯ (Tsleil-Waututh) territory Vancouver, BC V5N 4E7 <https://spartacusbooks.net/events>

April 6, May 4, June 8 (first Monday every month) **Stark Raven radio 7-8pm** Vancouver Co-op Radio 100.5 FM, Starchoice #845, and <https://coopradio.org> "in-depth interviews, news and analysis on issues related to prisons and criminalization" c/o Co-op Radio, 370 Columbia St., Vancouver, BC Coast Salish territory V6A 4J1 starkraven@prisonjustice.ca <http://prisonjustice.ca/stark-raven>

Every Thursday "Enough is Enough! ...demand the release of Vaughn Prisoners into General Population! Solitary is Torture - honor the third Year of Vaughn17 Uprising ...express your concerns on behalf of the Vaughn17 prisoners who are being tortured under the hands of PA DOC [Pennsylvania Department of Corrections]. "...If you can't call, or want to support in multiple ways, participate in the **email zap** by going to <http://bit.ly/vaughn17>. It takes less than 60 seconds to fill out the email zap template. "Please send your feedbacks and responses to Vaughn17@protonmail.com" vaughn17.com **The Peace House DC**, 1535 Olive St. NE, Washington, DC USA 20019 facebook.com/thepeacehousedc

“August 21 - September 9, we [Jailhouse Lawyers Speak] call on everyone...to organize an action, a panel discussion, a rally, an art event, a film screening, or another kind of demonstration to promote prisoners’ human rights” to “amplify immediate issues prisoners in your [region] face, the demands from the National Prison Strike of 2018, and uplift Jailhouse Lawyers Speak new International Law Project” so “prisoners are heard and that prisoners’ human rights are a priority.”, P.O. Box 414304, Kansas City, MO USA 64141 facebook.com/BlkJailhouselawyer jailhouselawyerspeak.wordpress.com

Write city council to stop facial recognition surveillance openmedia.org/NoFacialRecognition

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Inspiration

Jail Release Support Nights, 18-19

Solidarity actions ongoing in support of “(Yinka Dini – People of this Earth) **Unis’tot’en** – People of the Headwaters” “The Unis’tot’en (C’ihlts’ehkhyu / Big Frog Clan) are the original Wet’suwet’en **Yintah** Wewat Zenli distinct to the lands of the **Wet’suwet’en**.”

<https://unistoten.camp> **Gidimt’en** <https://yintahaccess.com> February 20 **Secwépemc Women’s Sacred Fire Council**, with members of the Elder’s Council, “blocked the railway corridor for the entire West Coast of so called Canada” <https://facebook.com/groups/897266756960556>



“Tell your MP and Bell that prisoners need access to free phones!”

“In many federal prisons across Canada...prisoners can only dial-out by making

collect calls to landlines. There are no free calls, and calls can cost over a dollar per minute. Marginalized families and community members - including parents, women and children - bear the financial burden of incarceration and often cannot pay the price to keep in touch with loved ones in prison. “The high cost of prison phone calls also affects lawyers, health care providers, and community agencies who support prisoners upon release. Most prisoners re-enter the community, but reintegration is at risk when they cannot access social support, housing, and employment.” Over 5,000 have signed the petition this year since organizers in Toronto and Ottawa joined forces after the first public campaign in Ottawa in 2019. *image: Lydia Dobson - CPEP* <https://change.org/p/bell-give-prisoners-access-to-free-phones-now>

Cdn Students for Sensible Drug Policy-Ryerson
<https://cssdp.org/letstalkbell>
PASAN
526 Richmond St. East, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3
(416) 920-9567 <http://pasan.org>
Toronto Prisoners’ Rights Project
<https://twitter.com/letstalkjails>

Criminalization and Punishment Edu. Project
Aaron Doyle, Department of Sociology
Carleton University, Loeb Bldg – Room D793
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
cpep.action@gmail.com
<https://www.cp-ep.org/prison-phones>

“#JusticeForKyaw Petition: demand justice for RCMP murder of Kyaw Din”

“Kyaw Din was murdered by Ridge Meadows RCMP officers on August 11th.

“Officers attended Kyaw Din’s home after his sister, Yin Yin, called the police for assistance taking him to the hospital. Although Kyaw was calm and non-violent, RCMP officers insisted on confronting him, rather than heeding Yin Yin’s multiple requests that they wait for her older siblings. Without even communicating to Kyaw, who spoke little English, two police officers were outside his bedroom door, opened it with a taser drawn, and then, within seconds, shot him three times in the face, neck, and chest.” “When the police show up to confront people who are in mental distress or using drugs, they put those people’s lives at risk.”

Sign the petition - the first signatures of which were delivered in person by surviving family members and supporters like two who also participate in our Prison Justice Network - <https://redbraid.org/2019/10/15/justice-for-kyaw-petition> **Red Braid Alliance**, 10679 King George Boulevard, Surrey, BC V3T 2X6 organize@stopdisplacement.ca <https://redbraid.org>

sign petition to support Santina Rao assaulted by security and police *petition by El Jones*

“On January 15 2020, multiple police officers inside a Halifax, Nova Scotia Walmart assaulted Santina Rao in front of her two children after accusing her of stealing groceries. When police and Walmart staff confronted Santina, and she offered that they search her belongings, police shifted tactics and asked for Rao’s identification.

“Multiple officers ultimately attacked Santina, broke her wrist, and left her with a concussion and bruises all over her body. The police then laid three criminal charges on Santina, saying she assaulted the police, resisted arrest, and created a disturbance...”

“demand that: 1) The Crown’s office in Nova Scotia immediately drop all criminal charges against Santina Rao; 2) The Crown’s office investigate and charge all officers involved in the assault on Santina Rao; 3) Walmart Canada immediately lift its nationwide ban of Santina Rao, and compensate her for the violent intervention initiated by its employees.”

<https://change.org/p/nova-scotia-public-prosecution-services-justice-for-santina-rao>

“**Black Power Hour**”, CKDU 88.1 FM, Suite 427-6136 University Avenue, Halifax, NS B3H 4J2

<https://ckdu.ca/shows/227>

Sign the petition to stop the deportation of Celina Urbanowicz who fled Yugoslavia in 1997 and sought refuge in Canada where, with no official status, she has lived with her family for 23 years. Amnesty International advises that women like Celina “would face multiple risks on account of their intersectional vulnerabilities stemming from their identity as a Roma woman, wife of a Muslim man, and as the mother of a lesbian woman.”

<https://change.org/p/marco-mendicino-justin-trudeau-bill-blair-stop-deportation-of-roma-family-from-canada-save-celina-roksana-and-camila> See also Jan 29 article by Matthew Behrens

<https://rabble.ca/columnists/2020/01/why-canada-still-deporting-roma-people-persecution>.

Sign petition to **free Yasser Albaz**. Request Canadian government leaders help bring Canadian citizen Yasser Albaz home from Egypt where he has been imprisoned without charge for over one year after Egyptian State Security “disappeared” him at Cairo International Airport.

<https://change.org/p/justin-trudeau-free-yasser-albaz-from-arbitrary-detention-in-egypt>

<https://facebook.com/freeyasseralbaz>

Please sign the petition by **Solidarité Québec-Haïti** “asking the Canadian government for information and accountability” about Canada’s formation of the “Core Group” of countries to put Haiti “under trusteeship” at a secret meeting “without any Ayitian [Haitian] being present”.

“Press Canada to withdraw from the ‘Core Group’ and to stop propping up a corrupt, repressive president Haitians overwhelmingly reject.”

<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-2448>

solidaritequebechaiti@bell.net

<https://facebook.com/SolidariteQuebecHaiti>

Write Ramsey Orta imprisoned and targeted for recording the police killing of Ramsey’s friend **Eric Garner**. In February Ramsey was cut in “suspicious” circumstances - “write Ramsey and let him know he’s not alone”

<https://facebook.com/SupportRamseyOrta>

Ramsey Orta 16A4200, 9005 Old River Road, P.O. Box 2500, Marcy, New York 13403” USA



Write to support Dawna Brown in maximum security with no parole date

"Dawna Brown is a 2-Spirit Trans Ojibwe HIV+ woman who is federally incarcerated indefinitely, meaning she has no parole date. Dawna has been placed in maximum security at Grand Valley

Institution for reasons that do not merit her isolation, removal from general population and access to traditional culturally appropriate care. She is in a cell with very little socialization or freedom to roam and has undergone a tremendous amount of pain and trauma recently... Dawna is a strong woman, a compassionate and caring friend...and a story-teller who has been denied her freedom for most of her entire life [since 1994]. "... We want YOU to write 2 letters! That's all! Here's what to do: **"-First write a letter to Dawna Brown** (address below) sending her love, strength and resolution. Tell her you follow [facebook.com/]Free Dawna Brown and pray for her freedom and remind her of her dignity and humanity. (...Use just a pencil or BIC pen and lined paper.) ... **"Dawna Brown, C/O Grand Valley Institution Maximum, 1575 Homer Watson Blvd, Kitchener, ON N2P 2C5** **"-Second, write a letter to Commissioner for Correctional Service Canada, Anne Kelly, and remind her...of her responsibility to those in custody, ...to work with Indigenous communities to restore traditional practices such as healing lodges; understand the complexity of Indigenous women experiences while federally incarcerated; and to acknowledge the difficulties lgbTTTTT prisoners experience. ... "Commissioner Anne Kelly 40 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON K1A 0P9"** Dawna was moved to a women's prison May 2, 2019 after being held at an all-male one in Gravenhurst. (705) 840-0585 <http://FreeDawnaBrown.com>

Towards "building **international solidarity with women and trans people** ... we want to reach out to international movements that are **struggling against the entire carceral system**" contact California Coalition for Women Prisoners, 4400 Market Street, Oakland, CA USA 94608 (415) 255-7036 ext. 4 info@womenprisoners.org
<https://womenprisoners.org/firestorm-international-solidarity>

Write IL Governor to release incarcerated survivors of police torture. "The Chicago Police Department (CPD) has a proven history of torturing Black and Latinx people into giving confessions for crimes they did not commit." "Many torture survivors are still in prison. Some of them have had their original convictions vacated, and are still in prison. Many have been in for over 25-30 years." "Illinois is the only state...that has a Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission (TIRC)" **demand "Governor Pritzker...release all of the people that the TIRC has found to have credible claims of torture"** <https://caarpr.org/cfistpetitiontogov> "We are a group of survivors, family members, and advocates of justice. We seek to free all survivors of police torture and wrongful conviction, and to support their success upon release. Our goal is a community-focused, transformative justice system." **Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression**, 1325 S. Wabash Ave. Suite 105, Chicago, IL USA 60605 (312) 939-2750

Have you achieved a goal, a recent success, or overcome a challenge lately? **Self-Advocate Net** pays **\$100 for each 250-350 word story about "Success and Achievements"** they select written by self-advocates who live in BC. They ask people to submit through <https://selfadvocatenet.com/submit-your-story2>. The Home Society, 31581 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC V2T 1T8 (604) 852-7888 fax (604) 852-7801 selfadvocatenet@gmail.com

NEWS

People gathered September 14 at Spartacus Books to **view short film clips, discuss prisoner justice, and raise funds for Joint Effort** (a women in prison abolitionist group involved in solidarity work with women prisoners in the Lower Mainland <http://prisonjustice.ca/joint-effort>) – hosted by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union. Excerpted films included "Inside-Out" (2019) <https://sub.media/video/trouble-20-inside-out>, Angela Davis (2018) <https://democracynow.org/shows/2018/12/24>, "Life Inside Out" (2005, Sarah Zammit) https://nfb.ca/film/life_inside_out, "On the Brutality of Prisons" (2016) <https://youtu.be/f77oA5fDBk>, " 'They want no people between them and the riches of the land.' " (2013, Ruby Smith Diaz) <https://youtu.be/ls6k34GLcj4>, "You're obviously not from here" (2017, Cecily Nicholson) <https://youtu.be/767zoeNp7qs>, "Naked Island - Detention" (2017, David Seitz and Elle-Maija Tailfeathers) https://nfb.ca/film/naked_island_detention, and "Jalil Muntaqim - Voice of Liberation" (2002)*. **Vancouver IWW** contact@vancouveriww.org <https://facebook.com/VancouverIWW> <http://incarceratedworkers.org>
* https://search.freedomarchives.org/search.php?view_collection=81&media=Video

People from various groups "gained entry to the site" of a **future immigration prison in Surrey*** October 3 after "CBSA/construction workers left the door open" and they "found that CBSA training at this facility is already underway." The people came from No One Is Illegal, Anti-Police Power Surrey, and Vancouver Prison Justice Groups/Joint Effort and "gathered in **solidarity with actions across Canada, called for by Solidarité sans frontière**". *Surrey "occupies the unceded traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt and Kwikwetlem peoples." No One Is Illegal reported the prison will include a maximum security area. <https://nooneisillegal.org> <https://antipolicepower.org> <http://prisonjustice.ca> <https://solidarityacrossborders.org> <https://sansad.org> <https://facebook.com/prisonjusticevan/posts/2441563115898620>

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) newly requires its officers - when with immigrants in detention - wear "steel-toed boots," "soft body armour," and carry "a defensive baton, pepper spray and handcuffs." This is opposed by the United Nations and many doctors, lawyers, and human rights groups in Canada. The union representing border-security officers raised concerns internally. <https://ctvnews.ca/canada/all-cbsa-agents-to-carry-batons-pepper-spray-when-working-with-detained-migrants-1.4507413>

Three grandmothers - water protectors of the Shubenacadie River in the Sipekne'katik District of Mi'kma'ki - are being prosecuted in NS for opposing a gas project on **Mi'kmaq** territory. Treaty Truckhouse Legal Fund <https://ca.gofundme.com/f/720lt7c> twitter.com/StopAltonGas



Thousands of people gathered at Main and Hastings February 14 for the 29th Annual **Women's Memorial March** "to honour the lives of missing and murdered women and all women's lives lost in the Downtown Eastside [DTES]. Increasing deaths of many vulnerable women from the DTES still leaves family, friends, loved ones, and community members with an overwhelming sense of grief and loss. Indigenous women disproportionately continue to go missing or be murdered with minimal to no action to address these tragedies or the systemic nature of gendered violence, poverty, racism, or colonialism."

"This event is organized and lead by women in the DTES because women — especially Indigenous women — face physical, mental, emotional and spiritual violence on a daily basis. The February 14th Women's Memorial March is an opportunity to come together to grieve the loss of our beloved sisters, remember the women who are still missing, and to dedicate ourselves to justice." <https://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com>
<https://facebook.com/groups/womensmemorialmarch>

Organizing by friends, family, and groups like PASAN succeeded in winning **Moka Dawkins' release from prison** around Nov 10 who "was arrested in 2015 for defending herself from violence and as a Black, trans-sex worker" - Moka has since already spoken at Trans Day Of Remembrance events in Toronto at the Freedom School and the 519 community centre.
<http://pasan.org> <https://freedom.schooltoronto.ca> <https://facebook.com/justiceformoka>
Mona began a **human rights complaint** against the province of Ontario for her abusive treatment in Toronto South Detention Centre, "one of Canada's most violent all-male jails."
https://huffingtonpost.ca/entry/moka-dawkins-trans-lgbtq-ontario-jail-transgender_ca_5e29c870c5b6779e9c2f0161

Secwepemc land defender Kanahus Manuel and Isha Jules were arrested October 19 after they “stopped to tell construction workers they had no Secwepemc consent” and during which a police officer broke Manuel's wrist. “Manuel and Jules were staying nearby at a camp they built with the **Tiny House Warriors** to protect a river crossing from the proposed Trans Mountain pipeline.” <https://facebook.com/tinyhousewarriors> twitter.com/KanahusFreedom

In Ottawa on the 10th of June, 20 **land protectors and allies were arrested before they could petition** the Environment Minister's office against the poisonous effects of the Muskrat Falls dam. To prevent the poisoning of the reservoir of the **Muskrat Falls** dam in **Inuit** territory (Labrador, Newfoundland) a 2011 federal-provincial study found its area “must be cleared of all trees, brush, foliage and topsoil” but one of the people arrested, Nunatsiavummiuk woman Amy Norman from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, said that prevention is not being considered. <https://theguardian.pe.ca/news/provincial/inuit-land-protectors-arrested-on-parliament-hill-320779> <https://facebook.com/OntarioMuskrat>

Prisoners began a **work and hunger strike at Clallam Bay prison in Washington** state last October for demands beginning with “healthy, sustainable food”. Within days, 37 “cultural leaders of groups inside Clallam Bay Corrections Center have been shipped off to Walla Walla and Coyote Ridge Corrections without any of their belongings and put into solitary confinement. They are targeted as advocates of social justice organizing that has been happening in Clallam Bay over the years”. October 15 Abolish Cages: Birds of the Concrete Jungle began a **campaign to end solitary confinement** in Washington state, release the 37 targeted prisoners from solitary and “begin a productive dialogue” with “Prison Population Representatives”. By November 19 **five prisoners filed a lawsuit** because the Department of Corrections “violated their rights to due process, equal protection of the laws and constitutional guarantee against cruel punishment.” peninsuladailynews.com/crime/official-clallam-bay-corrections-center-fight-racially-motivated

Clallam Bay Strike Community Support

<https://facebook.com/ClallamBayCommunitySupport>

Abolish Cages clallambay2019@gmail.com

<https://abolishcages.wordpress.com>

Incarcerated Workers Organizing

Committee (IWOC) Seattle

seattleiwoc@gmail.com

<https://seattleiwoc.net>

Public pressure in late 2018 resulted in the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board selling all its shares** by March 2019 **in two companies that profit from migrant detention camps** in the United States. Various people opposed to this signed petitions, wrote letters, and spoke in person at CPP Investment Board hearings across Canada including people in our Prison Justice Network. <https://thetyee.ca/News/2019/07/08/PPP-Sells-Shares-US-Prison-Companies>

“The **End Immigration Detention Network** was an intervener in the *Canada v. Chhina* case that was successful May 10, 2019. This **landmark decision** won recognition of *habeas corpus* rights of migrants in detention across the country. This means that the **onus is on the provincial and federal governments to justify their detention of migrants**, and not on migrants to prove why they shouldn't be detained without trial or charge.” <http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org>

People rallied in **opposition to the new \$242million youth jail in Seattle** February 18 at its official opening after “organizations fought a seven-year battle to stop the construction of the jail, arguing that the county should stop investing in a harmful, failed strategy that produces poor outcomes for youth health, education, and employment. The No New Youth Jail Coalition continues to assert that the jail needs to be shut down if the county wants to stop disproportionately harming Black, Brown, Native and low-income youth.” “A jail is a jail no matter how many times the county calls it [Children and Family Justice Center] ‘Therapeutic™’



slaps paint and murals on it. “We know what it is and ... we will tear down those cells and repurpose that building to truly serve our communities most impacted by systems of oppression”

Photo:
Anish Kumar

Participant LeKecia Farmer wrote: “One of the earliest memories I have is of my brother, my twin, and I playing a game he made up where he would have a toy and in order to get it, Le’ecia and I would have to run to one side of the room and back to him... He is magical and I love him.

“The second memory I have of him is visiting him in juvenile detention. I remember he was trying to crack jokes with us to lighten the fact that he was in a jumpsuit, but it wasn’t working. I was scared for him and our family. My sister and I got chicken pox from that horrific place and gave it to our whole kindergarten class.

“The last memory I have of him is when he called when our dad died. I hadn’t seen him in years. Institutions ripped us apart and the rest of society threw him to the side. Our family felt broken and to this day is not whole.”

“When I toured the [new] facility where the only fresh air was the tiniest courtyard...and tall/barren walls reminiscent of that on the border, I thought how the life is sucked out of you.”

“I donned on a jumpsuit because I am angry, I am sad, I am hurt, and I never want a family to experience this. And at this moment I thought how I wish I was a toddler again: I would tell my brother that he was my friend, not an enemy of the state. I would tell him that he is loved when school officials and detention centers did not. But I am not a toddler, so I will use my voice and power to free the youth, shut it down, and love him.” **No New Youth Jail Seattle**
nnyjcoalition@gmail.com <https://facebook.com/NoNewYouthJailSeattle>

On January 6, **BCCLA** welcomed **new Executive Director Harsha Walia**: “She has collaborated with us...against discriminatory police stops in the Downtown Eastside, the Justice for Lucía Vega Jiménez campaign, the Transportation Not Deportation campaign to end Metro Vancouver Transit Police’s collaboration with CBSA, and public calls to shut down CBSA’s unethical ‘Border Security’ reality TV show. “Harsha’s background as a community organizer and popular educator, and her work with Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and migrant communities, brings a unique set of skills and relationships to the BCCLA... A prolific writer, she is the author of *Undoing Border Imperialism* [<https://akpress.org/undoing-border-imperialism.html>], and co-author of *Never Home: Legislating Discrimination in Canadian Immigration* [<http://neverhome.ca>] and *Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside* [<http://dewc.ca/resources/redwomenrising>]. Harsha is legally trained, a passionate orator, and a strong advocate.” BC Civil Liberties Assn. <https://bccla.org>

People with New York Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) press the state gov’t to grant parole hearings to **prisoners 55 years or older** with 15 or more years served, towards the goal of everybody's freedom: “**Bring Them All Home**”. In January 500+ supporters rallied in the NY state capitol. Last year, “as a result of our advocacy efforts, the decision over who may serve as a parole commissioner is now a public process.” RAPP, 168 Canal Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY USA 10013 (631) 885-3565 nyRAPPcampaign@gmail.com <http://rappcampaign.com>



March 3 RAPP said prisoners are exploited to make hand sanitizer they are banned from having. *photo: Walter Hergt*

Prisoners in Hong Kong have been forced since January 5 to work 63% more hours in unpaid overtime **to produce at least 55% more facemasks** due to the novel coronavirus, **under threat of punishments** like meals in isolation, “more arduous” work, and solitary confinement. Guards “deliberately single out female inmates”, especially aged 40 and older, as well as those “who do not speak Cantonese or English fluently”, for forced night-shifts (8pm to 6am) when they “experience symptoms of overwork like blurred vision and shaking hands” during which they are forced to continue work. Like in Canada, feminized work such as with clothes is paid less than masculinized work (facemask workers in Hong Kong prisons are paid -the equivalent of a few Cdn cents per hour- 30-50% less than the highest prison wage), so for those “reassigned to facemask production, this means a coercive reduction of wages.” After work, “the women would come back to their bunks and start crying.” In addition, prisoners produce facemasks in unhygienic conditions including “insufficient disinfectants”, impossibility of frequent hand-washing, forced reuse of facemasks after exposure to sneezes and coughs, and inability to put toilet seats down. <https://lausan.hk>



Over 400 out of around 4,000 **prisoners** took **strike action at Santa Rita Jail** in Dublin, California -one of the largest jails in the US, 80%+ held without sentence- October 30-November 3 “to protest widespread institutional neglect and abuse, including unsanitary living conditions, price gouging, poor medical care, forced labor, and lack of access to legal resources.”

Their October 29 strike statement, which stated 26 demands, said “Santa Rita needs to evolve its systems and methods away from this punitive justice system and demoralizing, inhumane treatment of citizens and drug addicts to a modernized system and methods of restorative justice! The current system does not make our communities any safer! To the contrary, it makes them less secure! We need to build people up, make them productive and restore their health and vitality.”

The strike began after one person died in custody October 26 when people who called for help were moved “so that there would be no witnesses” and guards addressed the person in distress only after 30 minutes and when he had stopped breathing. His was the 9th death that year and the 43rd since 2014 (excluding those who died in hospital).

The hunger- and work-strike was especially disruptive because “Santa Rita depends on unpaid labor from inmates to produce 16,000 meals a day for its own operations, as well as for other jails across the Bay Area.” Many prisoners work for the private company Aramark although their conditions violate California laws by not paying them wages comparable to workers ‘outside’ and by “assigning women prisoners fewer and less desirable hours to work based on gender.”

In addition to organizing multiple phone zaps in support of the strike, Oakland Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee communicated messages of support to the prisoners and began meeting prisoners upon their release: “To the strikers, the minute we got the word you all were in motion, we also got on the move. Media, phone calls, boosting our support outside for releases (Yeah, we’re those ‘pizza people’ you might have heard about, waiting outside with rides, smokes, and food for releases late into the night) Santa Rita is a grimy, dehumanizing beast and half of us have been locked up in that hellhole, some for a weekend, some for years. No more suffering this abuse in silence and shame!”

The strike resulted in aggressive punishments and two related lawsuits. The November 11 lawsuit “denounces inhumane and unsanitary jail conditions, price gouging, and neglect by the jail’s health provider” including exposure to biohazardous laundry from the coroner’s office with no protective clothing and the November 20 lawsuit violates prisoners’ and immigrant detainees’ constitutional right by “providing uncompensated labor in violation of state and federal law” and under threat of additional jail time or solitary confinement. The complaint confirms that the Sheriff’s deputies threatened to terminate prisoners’ employment if they are sick or injured, and that many prisoners were also threatened with 30 days additional jail time if they participated in the strike.

Oakland Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee P.O. Box 12594, Oakland, CA USA 94604 (510) 368-3426 iwoc.oakland@gmail.com <https://iwocoakland.wordpress.com> <https://theappeal.org/alameda-county-sheriff-prisoners-involuntary-servitude>



#CloseRikers prison in New York City succeeded with the September decision to close it but the struggle continues against four new jails to replace it. Around 50 people demanding “**No New Jails**” at the Ford Foundation’s office after its president defended four new jails as a “nuance”. . See also “Closing Rikers: Competing Visions for the Future of New York City’s Jails” by Anakwa Dwamena. **No New Jails NYC**, PO Box 380523, Brooklyn, NY USA 112138 nonewjails.ny@gmail.com <https://nonewjails.nyc>

<https://artandeducation.net/news/291344/no-new-jails-activists-protest-at-ford-foundation>
http://ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Analyses_12/Closing-Rikers-Competing-Visions-for-the-Future-of-New-York-City-s-Jails.shtml.
photo: Lauren Cavalli

January 20, at least 16 prisoners in **Raleigh, North Carolina** Central Prison went on **hunger strike against the torture of 200 prisoners** in the mental health unit (inadequate medical, punishments of “throwing their personal belongings all around the cell” and spraying cells with chemical mace when they attend group therapy, and barring money from those not “approved visitors” that “only engenders robbery and violence”). <https://incarceratedworkers.org>

By March 2, one prisoner -in solitary “going on 3 years now” - thanked supporters for their “critical” phone zap.: “y’all’s action got a lot done! They released five prisoners from solitary confinement... Three prisoners they’ve been holding back here they have approved for the TDU program (which is a good program that is very difficult to get into)... “The excessive use of mace has ceased! ... “They removed the doctor...and replaced him with one who... “... has seen more of us this past week than the other doctor did the whole time here. Self-meds have been delivered.” “I’m here, I’m alive, I’m struggling. All power to the people.” itsgoingdown.org/north-carolina-prisoners-report-back-on-impact-of-phone-zap-campaign

The NC gov’t is also pressed to **investigate Aero Contractors for conspiracy and corruption for transporting at least 49 people “disappeared” and tortured** by the Central Intelligence Agency 2001-’09, incl. “a 16-year-old student and a pregnant woman”. Eight people disappeared 10+ years before were still missing when the report was published in 2019 and after this “the State of North Carolina has made several grants to the county airport, at least one of which was specifically used to fortify the perimeter of only Aero’s corner of the facility.” North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture info@nccit.org <http://nccit.org> P.O. Box 12584 Raleigh, NC USA 27605 Contact@nctorturereport.org <https://nctorturereport.org>



Following **prisoners' hunger strikes in Alabama** and support demos at Limestone Prison Jun 22 and at the Department of Justice in DC Sep 20 and Oct 1 (photo), demands focused on meeting the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) with “two incarcerated individuals with their counsel” to “focus on the ongoing pattern of retaliation against those who are incarcerated and peacefully working to expose the corruption within the ADOC.” Retaliations include “the ordering of continuous transfers, trumped up disciplinarys, the use of solitary confinement, the fabricated listing and validation of ‘enemies,’ and the planting of false rumors among inmates in order to provoke physical and potentially fatal

altercations.” And “absent any response or action to this request...demand the removal of Commissioner Dunn, his deputy and associate commissioners, and Cheryl Price.” The Unheard Voices Of The Concrete Jungle stated the point is “to seek accountability, to end prison slavery, and to stop the construction of new prisons that will take from us our children and grandchildren.” <https://unheardvoicesotcj.wordpress.com/2020/02/11/for-immediate-release-inside-voices-call-for-meeting-with-commissioner-over-retaliation> *photo: Fight Toxic Prisons* <https://fighttoxicprisons.wordpress.com/2020/01/08/kinetik-justice-hunger-strike-day-2>

Free Alabama Movement
freealabamamovement@gmail.com
<https://twitter.com/FREEALAMOVEMENT>

Alabamians for Fair Justice
 P.O. Box #4893, Montgomery, AL USA 36103
<https://alabamafairjustice.org>

People organized solidarity actions with prisoners in **Florida** around **Juneteenth** and again in Dec. Jun 19 -when supporters contacted Florida officials about “rampant food violations and abuses of authority” in prisons - people from an End Toxic Prisons convergence **blocked state Department Of Transportation vehicles** to demand it join at least one local county and city in stopping their exploitation of prisoners' labour. Dec 2 **activists locked-down**



the headquarters of GEO Group (photo), the 2nd-largest private prison company, in Baton Rouge – their bail fund still urgently needs donations. <https://fighttoxicprisons.wordpress.com> <https://facebook.com/FightToxicPrisons/posts/2417585551805363> <https://facebook.com/incarceratedworkers/posts/1025134604345348> See also Comrade Malik sfbayview.com/2019/04/juneteenth-second-annual-day-of-solidarity-to-end-prison-slavery

People in Mississippi organized various activities recently in support of prisoners. The **Freedom Letters Campaign**, led by Reaching and Educating for Community Hope in South Jackson, is “a group of concerned citizens writing every incarcerated person [“all 30,000”] in Mississippi a message of support. We want people inside to know they are loved and not forgotten.”

Solidarity, a student group at the University of Mississippi hosted a public letter writing event January 16 in Oxford <https://facebook.com/UMsolidarity>.

An “**introductory resources syllabus**” is available at <https://medium.com/@MSfreedomletters/mississippi-freedom-letters-campaign-syllabus-8ec9f69c04d9>.

Videos from the “**Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration Conference**” at the University of Mississippi in Oxford December 4-6 are at facebook.com/MUMIConference.

After 12 prisoners died within one month in Unit 29 of **Parchman prison**, the governor of Mississippi announced January 27 that unit “will be shut down as soon as possible.” <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/mississippi-governor-close-notorious-state-prison-unit-following-multiple-deaths> For background, see the mini-documentary “Parchman Prison: Protest & Pain” published February 5 <https://y2u.be/pCPP57TjeUA>

PUBLICATIONS

Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) held a town hall and got the article “**defunding police is our community alternative to drug war**” published December 2 in time for a rally at City Hall around when the city budget was decided <http://vandu.org> <https://straight.com/news/1332066/nathan-crompton-vpd-budget-spirals-out-control-defunding-police-our-community>

“This is a prison, no matter what you call it: **Fighting the construction of a new migrant detention centre in Laval**” by Jon Milton *Briarpatch* 2019 June 25 <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/this-is-a-prison-no-matter-what-you-call-it>

“**Immigration Detention ... Reality Check**” by Migrant Rights Network info@migrantrights.ca (1) “Over 32,000 people have been jailed in immigration prisons under the [2015-'19] government” (2) “Canada jails children, too” (3) “People are being jailed for paperwork” (4) “Immigration detention is deadly” (5) “Immigration detention is part of the unjust prison system” (6) “Immigration detention is growing, and corporations are profiting” (7) “We need to end immigration detention and deportation” <https://migrantrights.ca/resources/realitycheck5>

The **Mexican federal government and the maquiladora (sweatshop) business association opened a “migrant centre” in Ciudad Juárez** August 5, 2019 inside a former maquiladora factory “to integrate a migrant workforce into the industrial labour markets of northern Mexican border cities”. “In concert with recent trade and labor policies, the current slew of anti-migrant initiatives—and efforts to further militarize border communities—only deepen the precarity and immobility of both migrants and border residents.” Nina Ebner and Mateo Crossa <https://nacla.org/news/2019/10/03/maquiladores-exploitation-migrants-border>



“Lessons from Prison: A Shackled Pipeline Protester Reflects” by local land defender, poet, and scholar **Rita Wong** about her 18 days in **Alouette** prison for **opposing the pipeline in Tsleil-Waututh** territory, includes a poem she wrote in her cell:

prison candy

*what poverty, confinement & ingenuity
produce—
a tasty brown taffy stretched
from packets of creamer, sugar, peanut
butter
saved from dining hall meals
mixed & microwaved
set & shared by inmates
after count in Birch*

*Camp Cupcake isn't as sweet as it sounds
lockdown is still lockdown
but sisterhood survives in it somehow
bright as a pink volleyball
bouncing off the sand
steady as a bear beyond the pines
chomping down on blackberries
in the prickly late summer bramble
quick as a dragonfly
riding the unseen breeze
that brushes across our cheeks*

<https://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2019/09/24/Lessons-From-Prison-Pipeline-Protester-Reflects>
photo by Hiromi Goto of Drum Circle at Alouette Aug 25 to support women there incl. Rita Wong

Joint Effort interview on women in prisons, solidarity and abolitionist work “Lora McElhinney and Wendy Bariteau are members of Joint Effort [<http://prisonjustice.ca/joint-effort>], a four decade-old prison abolitionist group based in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia that is focused on solidarity work with women in prison. McElhinney is a long-time activist and organizer and has been involved in the group for almost 20 years. Bariteau will be starting full parole as part of a life sentence in January 2020 and has been active in the group since she began day parole two years ago. Scott Neigh interviews them about the experiences of women in Canadian prisons and about the solidarity and abolitionist work of Joint Effort.” scottneigh@talkingradical.ca <https://rabble.ca/podcasts/shows/talking-radical-radio/2019/12/forty-years-solidarity-women-prisoners>

Stevie Wilson spoke November 20 about **Organizing Abolitionist Study Group in Pennsylvania Prison** “Stevie is a Black and queer writer, activist, and student who is currently being held captive by the Pennsylvania department of corrections.” Rustbelt Abolition Radio hello@rustbeltradio.org <https://rustbeltradio.org/2019/11/20/ep33> (transcript included).

Mass political struggle in Hong Kong faces police is analyzed with a “decolonial left perspective” by the **Lausan Collective** 流傘. “**How to abolish the Hong Kong police**” November 13 and “**Abolishing the police**” October 22. The website also translates into English several Hong Kong grassroots groups’ statements including by migrants and sex workers. <https://lausan.hk>

Popular protesters in **Chile** since last autumn have received state violence including mass imprisonment. Many women are especially active, such as the **Coordinadora Feminista 8M** (coordinadora8m@gmail.com <https://facebook.com/coordinadorafeminista8M>), including this **International Women’s Day** March 8 when **2+ million women struck for gender equity**. One article by Vijay Prashad views the fall protests in a global context and includes the detail “In Santiago (Chile) this year, women - organised by the feminist collective Las Tesis [<https://facebook.com/lastesischile>] - gathered on 25 November outside of the Ministry for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality to protest not only the historical patriarchy in their country but also the police’s behaviour—including rape—during the ongoing protests across Chile.” <https://thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/newsletter-49-2019-feminisms>

Prisoner, writer, and organizer **Jason Renard Walker** is now publishing, with help from a loved one, Jason’s Prison Journal website and, since January 23, the e-book *Reports from Within the Belly of the Beast: Torture and Injustice Inside Texas Department of Criminal Justice* <https://amazon.com/dp/B084656JDZ>. Jason is “also Minister of Labor for the **New African Black Panther Party (NABPP)**; a prison based organization carrying on the legacy of the original Black Panther Party, in the hope of forming an organization outside the prison walls.” Jason Renard Walker #1532092, McConnell Unit, 3001 S. Emily Dr., Beeville, TX 78102 jasonmol3838@gmail.com <https://jasonsprisonjournal.com>

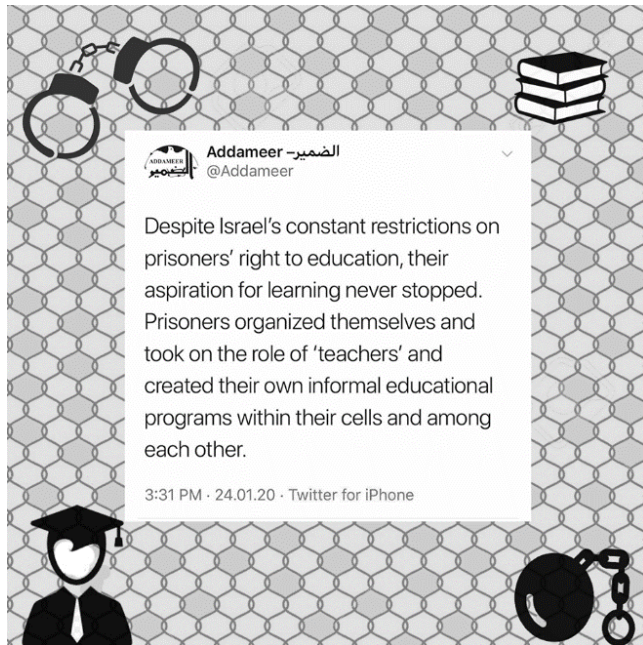
The story of **Jason Goudlock** is available on his website, including the full movie “Invisible Chess” to watch for free, including a How to Help section towards “justice for prisoners that are being tortured by **unjust sentencing laws and Parole Boards** that unlawfully function as de facto judges, juries, and prosecutors.” Jason William Goudlock, #284-561, PO Box 80033, Toledo, OH 43608 info@freejasongoudlock.org <https://freejasongoudlock.org>

“Building a ‘Kinder’ Justice System: **Youth Experiences with Incarceration**” is an Interview with Alexandra Cox by Zhandarka Kurti in *Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics* (whole 256-page journal is available for \$20 [US] or \$10 for prisoners from <https://www.commonnotions.org> <https://abolitionjournal.org/building-a-kinder-justice-system-youth-experiences-with-incarceration>

Surveillance and Society “special issue, guest edited by Gary Kafer and Daniel Grinberg, explores the productive resonances and tensions between **surveillance studies and queer studies**. The issue also launches our new Dialogue section with a set of provocations for ‘**decolonizing surveillance studies**.’ ”

<https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/issue/view/804>

*These Chains Will Be Broken: **Palestinian Stories of Struggle and Defiance in Israeli Prisons***
edited by Ramzy Baroud <https://claritypress.com/product/these-chains-will-be-broken-palestinian-stories-of-struggle-and-defiance-in-israeli-prisons>



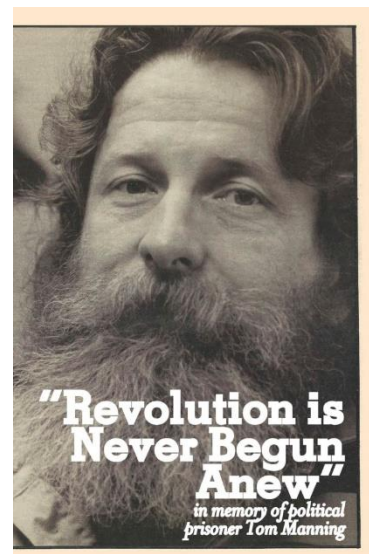
On the International Day of Education January 24, numerous Palestinian groups publicized the imprisonment of students and self-education of prisoners. A summary article about the **educational life of political prisoners** is published by Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, P.O. Box 17338, Jerusalem info@addameer.ps <https://addameer.org/publications/cultural-and-educational-life-palestinin-political-prisoners-occupation-prisons>. “Imprisoned Body...Free Soul”, by Hind Shraydeh about one student’s imprisonment, includes “**Samah was arrested three days after graduating** from Birzeit University with a bachelor’s degree in sociology. This turn of events blew away her

dreams and ambitions, including her desire to become a professor at Birzeit University. The arrest took place on 7 September 2019 where she was taken forcefully from her family’s home in Al-Bireh” Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network samidoun@samidoun.net <https://samidoun.net/2020/02/imprisoned-body-free-soul-samah-jaradat>

“When the world talks about **Palestinians living under occupation and in refugee camps**, it is usually in terms of politics and numbers – specifically, how many killed, injured, homeless and/or dependent on aid. “But numbers are impersonal, and often numbing. What they don’t convey are the **daily personal struggles and triumphs, the tears and the laughter, the aspirations** that are so universal that if it weren’t for the context, they would immediately resonate with virtually everyone. “ ‘word artists’ from around the world have joined with **youth in Gaza, and now, Lebanon**, to create ‘We Are Not Numbers.’ Through this platform, we share and celebrate their stories...” <https://wearenotnumbers.org>

R.I.P. – REST IN POWER

Political prisoner **Tom Manning** passed away July 30. Some friends’ memorials are in ‘Revolution is Never Begun Anew’. <https://kersplebedeb.com/posts/revolution-is-never-begun-anew>



“While it was reported that **Michele [M]** took her own life the evening of November 5 at the notorious Leclerc prison, it would be more accurate to conclude that her life had been stolen from her long ago by male abusers, police, judges, social services agents, media, and a system that refuses to believe or understand the reality of male violence against women.” “When she was in jail, Michele often spoke about the women she met there, many of whom...shared stories of being separated from loved ones. As an older inmate, Michele was often seen as the motherly aunt figure to whom many would go with their problems, their fears, and their tears.”

Supporters in Montreal wrote those “left behind in Leclerc prison.”

<https://rabble.ca/columnists/2019/11/act-institutional-femicide-remembering-life-michele-m>

Robert Seth Hayes passed away December 31 after enjoying around 18 months ‘outside’ after 45 years of political imprisonment. “Seth was one of the founding members of the calendar project (certaindays.org), and we were fortunate...exchanging ideas and learning from each other. From his first involvement with the **Black Panther Party** ... he had many experiences and lessons to explore. This inspiration is one of the great advantages of working in a group that includes members across borders and on both sides of the prison walls.”

<https://certaindays.org/uncategorized/rest-in-power-robert-seth-hayes>

Lina Ben Mhenni died January 27 in Tunisia. In 2016 she starting a books to prisoners collective (<https://facebook.com/livrespourlesprisons>) in Tunisia, which has delivered 45,000+ books. By her birth, her father had already been imprisoned for seven years. She reported on the 2010-‘11 revolution, including workers’ protests in 2008. She published the multilingual blog **A Tunisian Girl** **بنية بنية** **atunisiangirl.blogspot.com**.
<https://middleeasteye.net> <https://bbc.com>



INSPIRATION



Jail Release Support Nights by the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) Oakland “**greet everyone getting out** [of Santa Rita Jail] with hot pizza, phone calls, rides, warm clothes, rain gear, celebration, a listening ear and a lot of love. Often, new members join IWOC after being welcomed home. Many IWOC members were formerly incarcerated.” “Santa Rita routinely releases people in the middle of the night to walk two miles down a dark road to the nearest BART station and hours-long waits for the train.” Oakland IWOC P.O. Box 12594, Oakland, CA USA 94604 (510) 368-3426
iwoc.oakland@gmail.com iwocoakland.wordpress.com

rain or shine • be present • be respectful • it's a great time for political education with friends but no proselytizing! • bring hygiene kits • sometimes people need shoe laces • treat others how you want to be treated • have fun + smile! • celebrate people getting out • freedom is beautiful • solidarity not charity • material support matters • this is basic common decency

JAIL SUPPORT

— by the numbers —



1

gassed up car!

2

types of smokes



4

accomplices

and ALL the PIZZA!



portable charger with

3

plug types

mmm!
awesome!

...for a world without cages, prisons, detention facilities, jails, & police!