

A victory for justice came on March 10, when it was announced that two of the prison guards responsible for the killing of Robert Gentles would be prosecuted. This is the first time in Canadian history that prison guards face criminal charges in the death of a prisoner.

The rate of prison deaths is high in comparison to deaths in the community. Prisoners have set aside August 10th to remember those brothers and sisters who've passed through the prison gates to never leave. A majority of prison deaths are unnecessary. One of the most recent tragedies was the slaying of Donzel "Chili" Young at Collin's Bay Penitentiary-stabbed while he was trying to break up a fight among prisoners in the gym. Chili's conviction was under review by the justice department as new evidence came to light to support his innocence.

There will be an inquest into Chili's death, providing an opportunity for the public to raise questions about the abusive and dangerous nature of prisons, and why so many people are murdered, driven to suicide or die of neglect. Prisoners' Justice Day is the day to remind everyone that people sentenced to prison are not sent there to die.

It is already time to begin planning events for August 10th this year. We need to raise awareness among prisoners and their supporters that this solidarity event must be recognized as a broader based prisoner support network that could be utilized to the greater good in our common struggles. This is also general call for prisoners to fast and not work during the 24 hours of PJD, while we ask community groups to plan and hold solidarity events at local jails and prisons.

A number of groups in north amerikkka, england and other countries have been organizing and holding events. Many of them who maintain contact with PJD Committee: Toronto have held vigils, rallies, theatre performances, radio programs. They will be planning Aug. 10th events again this year and need active support.

A pot-luck dinner and meeting of activists, representatives of the various organizations, as well as anyone concerned about prison issues, will be held on Friday May 12th, 6:00 p.m. in Room 237 at 517 College St. We will be generating ideas, ask for people's participation and help with events being planned for August 10th, 1995.

The following is a list of resources for people interested in making contact with individuals and community groups who have been hosting August 10th events in their locales.

Prison Activist Resource Centre  
P.O. Box 3201, Berkeley, CA. USA 94703

A.B.C. London  
121 Railton Rd, London SE 24, England

Prisoners' Justice Day Committee: Edmonton  
Box 1, Egremont, Alberta Canada T0A 0Z0

Books to Prisoners/Joint Effort  
315 Cambie St., Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6B 2N4

Prison News Service  
Box 5052, Stn. A, Toronto, Ontario Canada M5W 1W4

BULLETIN OF THE PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY COMMITTEE OF TORONTO Vol.3, No.1 March/95

THIS BULLETIN IS BY AND FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS, THEIR SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS AND FOR PRISONERS RIGHTS ADVOCATES. OUR AIM IS TO AGITATE, EDUCATE AND ORGANIZE SOLIDARITY FOR PRISONERS' COMMON RESISTANCE ON AUGUST 10TH EACH YEAR. WE KINDLY ASK THAT YOU TRY TO COPY & DISTRIBUTE THIS BULLETIN. AND THAT YOU SEND SUBMISSIONS (NEWS, VIEWS, ARTICLES, STORIES & POETRY) & DONATIONS OF STAMPS OR WELL CONCEALED CASH TO:

PJD Committee of Toronto  
c/o A Space, 183 Bathurst St. Toronto, Ontario Canada M5T 2R7  
or call (416) 599-1524

# PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY

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Prisons have been hot news in the mainstream this year, with headlines declaring such atrocities as 'TB epidemic in Kingston Pen, brutal abuse of punitive segregation and the male Emergency Response Team on women in P4W,' citing dangerous conditions and failing nature of prisons in general. Plenty of critical editorials have appeared. One of the biggest kept secrets – the monster known as Correctional Services Canada – is being exposed! At best, CSC is guilty of deliberate indifference to the human rights of prisoners and their families, while abuses committed using tax dollars are causing concern and outrage.

In the aftermath of the publicity surrounding brutality at P4W, various solidarity initiatives have begun. Confronted by prisoners' rights advocates, Solicitor-General Herb Gray called for an inquiry into the April 26/94, when male guards entered womens' cells while they were sleeping and conducted a strip search, cutting off their clothes and torturing them. When the video showing this assault hit prime-time news, people started asking hard questions about CSC policy regarding the strip-searching of women by male guards. Newspaper editorials support the call for an inquiry, noting that CSC's report of the incident was a white-wash attempt.

On March 4, a workshop on Justice For Womyn Prisoners, was held at the International Women's Day Fair. It was a good opportunity for people to get involved in support letter writing to the six women attacked by the ERT and to plan future discussions on organizing prisoner solidarity work. One of the agreements was to hold a meeting in May to plan for Prisoners' Justice Day. A petition was circulated, calling for a federal inquiry into prisons in light of abuses suffered by women prisoners, the killing of Robert Gentles, criminal medical neglect and lack of treatment for sex offenders. Another petition passed was in support of women political prisoners in Chile.

On March 5th, there was a presentation, "Beyond the Wire: Women in the prisons", at Sistah's, a local women's cafe. The speakers included: Sonia, secretary general of Gabriela, the Philippine national coalition of women's organizations; Theresa Ann Glaremin of the Prisoners Justice Day Committee-Kingston; and Amber of Prisoners HIV/AIDS Support Action Network.

On March 8th, a group of twenty demonstrated at the gates of P4W in support of the six women who had been abused, tortured and segregated after the April 22/94 incident.

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## TILL THE BARS BREAK:



### prisoner art show

Toronto, Ont. • June '95

Forward art by May-end to: Tom Jackson  
269 Gerrard St. E.  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5A 2G3

THE SPIRIT IS UNBROKEN



# PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

August 10th each year has been set aside as Prisoners' Justice Day, in memory of those who have died unnatural deaths in prisons. Since the first anniversary of Eddie Nalon's death on August 10th, 1974, at Millhaven Penitentiary, prisoners and their supporters have commemorated the day with a show of solidarity. Prisoners join in fasting, worship and work stoppages, while supporters in the community gather to hold vigils and demonstrate at area prisons. Each year, there have been an increasing number of events on and around August 10th. Radio shows, theatre, press conferences and rallies are only a few of the variety of events that community activists have been participating in for a number of years. There has been exceptional participation in prisons as well and the show of solidarity has been increasing steadily of each year.

In such dark and dangerous dungeons as Millhaven Pen and Prison For Women (where five women prisoners committed suicide in less than 2 years prior to March 1991), as well as in more physically modern prisons, untold numbers of prisoners have died violently: victims of murder, suicide and neglect, mourned only by family and friends. That is not to mention murders by state execution!

Prisoners' Justice Day offers an opportunity to draw attention to the demands of prisoners and activists, which are fundamental to improvement in justice systems.

*Prisoners' Justice Day Committee, Toronto*  
c/o A Space,  
183 Bathurst St.  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada, M5T 2R7  
or call (416) 599-1524



**IMAGE :** from the cover of *Dead Times: Poems from Prison* by John Rives (graphic design by Ron Dube)  
The symbol 13 1/2 is a traditional tattoo design popular amongst prisoners. It means 12 jurors, 1 judge, and half a fuckin' chance.

Some of the prisoners' and public's demands have been and remain:

- JUSTICE FOR WOMEN PRISONERS**
- AN END TO EXCESSIVE SENTENCES**
- ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY EVERYWHERE**
- EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC ON PRISONS**
- PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY OF PRISON ADMINISTRATORS & STAFF**
- A PRISON OVERSEER ANSWERABLE ONLY TO PARLIAMENT**

The gatherings on August 10th are another way to remind society that prisoners are people too. All prisoners need support and help in reminding the community that they have been sent to prison for punishment, NOT TO DIE!

## THURSDAY AUGUST 10