

# OVERVIEW



Although women in prison comprise nearly 7% of the U.S. prison population, their numbers are increasing more rapidly than those of their male counterparts: between 1990 and 2000, the number of women in prison rose 108%, from 44,065 to 93,234. The male prison population grew only 77% during that same time period.<sup>4</sup> As of June 30, 2009, there were 114,979 women behind bars.<sup>5</sup>

Many of these women defy commonly held stereotypes of prisoners as violent and predatory males:

- ▷ Women of color are overrepresented in the prison system:  
The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that one in every 300 Black women, one in every 704 Latina women, and one in every 1,099 white women have been to prison. The incarceration rate for Black women was 3.7 times the rate of white women. The rate for Latinas was 1.5 times more than that of white women.<sup>6</sup>
- ▷ This overrepresentation is caused, in large part, by racial profiling, not by an increase in crime among low-income African Americans and Latinos: policing policies have disproportionately targeted inner-city African-American and Latino neighborhoods. Within the past decade, many police departments have increased the use of “stop and frisk” tactics, in which regular patrol or special

## Resistance Behind Bars

tactical officers stop and question those they perceive as acting suspiciously and often pat down the person for weapons. These tactics often disproportionately target people of color. An April 2005 study by the U.S. Department of Justice found that African Americans and Latinos are three times as likely as whites to be searched, arrested, threatened or subdued with force when stopped by the police.<sup>7</sup>

- ▷ Class also impacts the likelihood of going to prison: only 40% of all incarcerated women had been employed full-time before incarceration. Of those, most had held low-paying jobs: a study of women under supervision (prison, jail, parole or probation) found that 2/3 had never held a job that paid more than \$6.50 per hour.<sup>8</sup> Approximately 37% earned less than \$600 per month.<sup>9</sup>
- ▷ Approximately 30% had been receiving public assistance before being arrested.<sup>10</sup>
- ▷ Only 40% had obtained their GED or high school diploma before arrest.<sup>11</sup>
- ▷ At least 65% report being mothers to children under the age of 18.<sup>12</sup>
- ▷ The majority of women in prison are convicted of nonviolent crimes, mostly property and drug offenses.<sup>13</sup> In 2007, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that nearly 65% of women in state prisons are incarcerated for drug, property or public order offenses.<sup>14</sup>
- ▷ Unlike men's substance abuse, women's substance abuse is often tied into their past histories of trauma and abuse. (More than half of the women in state prisons and local jails report having been physically and/or sexually abused in the past).<sup>15</sup> The Bureau of Justice found that women were three times more likely than men to have been physically or sexually abused prior to incarceration.<sup>16</sup>

## Overview

- ▷ In 1973, New York State passed the Rockefeller Drug Laws, which required a sentence of 15 years to life for anyone convicted of selling two ounces or possessing four ounces of a narcotic, regardless of circumstances or prior history.<sup>17</sup> That year, only 400 women were imprisoned in New York State. As of January 1, 2001, there were 3,133. Over 50% had been convicted of a drug offense and 20% were convicted solely of possession.<sup>18</sup> Other states passed similar laws, causing the number of women imprisoned nationwide for drug offenses to rise 888% from 1986 to 1996.<sup>19</sup>
- ▷ Unequal sentencing laws also play a role: Although crack and powder cocaine have the same active ingredient, crack is marketed in less expensive quantities and in lower-income communities. Until August 3, 2010, a person convicted of possessing 5 g of crack received a mandatory five-year sentence, the same penalty as a person possessing 500 g of cocaine. In 2010, the sentencing disparity was changed from 100:1 to 18:1.<sup>20</sup>

Prison scholars and activists have noted this dramatic increase, writing books and organizing conferences and symposia to examine the causes, conditions and consequences of female incarceration. However, ways in which incarcerated women have individually and collectively challenged these conditions have largely been omitted from the discourse.

This omission is not new. In the early 1970s, recognizing that prisoners were one of the most marginalized and voiceless populations in America, activists expanded their interests to include those of prisoners and their rights: new, critical analyses of prisons emerged, prisoners' rights organizations and unions were created, and new communications among prisoners, academics and community activists were established.<sup>21</sup> Activist academics also brought university courses inside prisons.<sup>22</sup> However, the focus largely remained on men and their issues.

Women prisoners' voices and concerns were overlooked not only by outside activists but also the politicized male inmates who benefited from the developing prisoner rights movement. While male prisoners

## Resistance Behind Bars

gained political consciousness and enjoyed support from outside groups and individuals, these same groups and individuals ignored the female prison population with the exceptions of a few well-known political prisoners such as Angela Davis and Assata Shakur.

Although female incarceration has increased drastically during the past few decades, prevalent ideas of prisoners remain masculine: the term “prisoner” continues to conjure the image of a young, black man convicted of violent crimes such as rape or murder. Politicians seeking votes and media seeking sales play on this representation, whipping the public into hysteria to get tougher on crime and build more prisons. Obviously the public perception of the violent black male felon overlooks the growing number of women imprisoned under the various mandatory sentencing laws passed within the past few decades.<sup>23</sup> Because women do not fit this stereotype, the public, the politicians and the media often choose to overlook them rather than grapple with the seeming paradoxes inherent in women prisoners, who, by virtue of their incarceration, have somehow defied the societal norm of femininity.<sup>24</sup> Such neglect leads to the definition of prison issues as masculine and male-dominated, dismissing prison issues that are distinctly feminine (e.g., the scarcity of sanitary hygiene products, the lack of medical care specifically for women, especially prenatal care, and threats of sexual abuse by guards) and thus any actions that women take to address and overcome these concerns.

Today there is a renewal of interest in prisons and prisoner issues, with a growing body of literature examining female incarceration. However, the new literature largely ignores what the women themselves do to change or protest these circumstances, thus reinforcing the belief that incarcerated women do not organize. Karlene Faith, coordinator of the 1970s Santa Cruz Women’s Prison Project, does not bring up examples of women’s collective resistance until the second half of her book *Unruly Women*. In *In the Mix: Struggle and Survival in a Women’s Prison*, Barbara Owen includes no instances of prisoner organizing despite the fact that her chosen prison, the Central California Women’s Facility, had housed Charisse Shumate and many other women who organized to change

## Overview

the facility's appalling health care; their actions resulted in the *Shumate v. Wilson* class-action lawsuit which charged that the abysmal medical care amounted to cruel and unusual punishment.<sup>25</sup> More recently, Julia Sudbury's *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender and the Prison-Industrial Complex* recognized incarcerated women's agency and organizing in other countries, but failed to acknowledge efforts within U.S. prisons. The absence of these tales perpetuates the assumption that women imprisoned in the United States are not actively fighting to challenge or change these conditions.

There have been only two books about organizing among incarcerated women: Juanita Diaz-Cotto's *Gender, Ethnicity and the State* (1996) and the collectively written *Breaking the Walls of Silence: AIDS and Women in a New York State Maximum-Security Prison* (1998). Both focus on women's activism in Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, New York State's maximum-security prison for women. In *Gender, Ethnicity and the State*, Diaz-Cotto details organizing strategies among Latina prisoners between 1970 and 1987. *Breaking the Silence* follows the creation of the AIDS Counseling and Education (ACE) program. Written by many of the women involved in ACE, the book documents the organization's history and shares its curriculum with others seeking to create similar programs in other prisons. However, because many of its writers were still imprisoned at Bedford Hills and because they wanted to avoid jeopardizing the program, it does not frame the formation and continued existence of ACE as an act of collective resistance against existing prison conditions.

Since then, no other book-length work has focused on incarcerated women's activism and resistance.

Literature about women in prison that has emerged in this decade articulates how the needs of incarcerated women differ from those of their male counterparts. It does not, however, examine how these differences either act as obstacles to collective organizing or change the ways in which women organize. It also ignores how these differences prevent outside recognition of female agency. Women in

## Resistance Behind Bars

prison face different circumstances during their incarceration and thus have different priorities—and different ways of challenging their conditions—than incarcerated men.<sup>26</sup>

### *Challenges in Organizing*

Approximately half of all incarcerated women have suffered past physical or sexual abuse.<sup>27</sup> A 1999 study by the U.S. Department of Justice found that 57% of women entering state prison and 40% entering federal prison had been physically or sexually abused prior to incarceration. In contrast, only 6% of men entering state prison and 7% entering federal prison had suffered prior physical or sexual abuse.<sup>28</sup> Barrilee Bannister, a former prisoner in Oregon, pointed out, “A lot of women believe themselves to be helpless because of how they were raised, or perhaps because of childhood abuse. I see a lot of women with very low self-esteem and self-worth.” Prisons further erode low self-esteem: a woman at the Central California Women’s Facility stated, “It is easier for women to get bullied in here. If an officer raises his or her voice to you, some women are petrified. The fear from past abuse comes back and they are scared. Very scared.”<sup>29</sup> As a woman incarcerated in Illinois put it, “Do you think women who are conditioned to be subservient to their men (and the world) are going to come to prison and suddenly just grow a backbone ?”<sup>30</sup>

Women prisoners also lack a commonly known history of resistance. While male prisoners can draw on the examples of George Jackson, the Attica uprising and other well-publicized cases of prisoner activism, incarcerated women remain unaware of precedents relevant to them. Virtually none know about the collective organizing that led to the 1974 August Rebellion at New York’s Bedford Hills Correctional Facility or the 1975 riot at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women.

Women who do challenge the system face extreme levels of administrative harassment. “Tricia,” a woman in the federal prison system, incurred the wrath of a guard when she attempted to help another woman who had been unfairly sent to the Special Housing Unit (or SHU, a punitive



## Overview

form of segregation). Shortly after, the same guard sent Tricia to the SHU. She then searched her room to create a justification for her placement, throwing out many of her personal belongings, including photos of her children and other family members and items that Tricia had bought from the prison commissary. Although prison staff is not permitted to tamper with or destroy a prisoner's legal documents, the guard also threw away Tricia's papers for her appeal. The guard found files from the chapel that Tricia had been organizing for the chapel's sister. Although both the chaplain and the sister attested that they had authorized Tricia to take the documents, the prison administration refused to release her. After she had spent a month in SHU, the administration finally dropped the charges.<sup>31</sup>

Tricia's experience is not an anomaly. Solitary confinement—euphemistically called “Special Housing Unit” or “SHU”, “control units”, “administrative segregation” or even “therapeutic segregation”, depending on the prison—is increasingly used to isolate and punish prisoners who challenge their conditions of confinement. In the 1960s, with the rise of prisoner organizing, prison officials used segregation or “the hole” to separate politically active prisoners, jailhouse lawyers, nationalists, communists and those they deemed threatening to the daily operations of the prison. George Jackson, for example, spent much time in San Quentin's Adjustment Center for his organizing efforts.

Most female facilities have some form of “the hole.” At California's Valley State Prison for Women, the Special Housing Unit consists of eight-foot-by-six-foot cells with blacked-out windows where women are confined for 23 hours a day. Even in their cells, the women have no privacy—toilets are in full view of the cell door windows, guards can look through those windows at any time and male guards often watch the women in the showers. If the women complain, the guards turn off the water.<sup>32</sup> The federal prison at Lexington, Kentucky, opened a control unit specifically for women political prisoners in 1986. It was built underground and painted entirely white. Women were prohibited from hanging anything on the white walls, causing them to begin hallucinating black spots and strings on the walls and floors. Their

## Resistance Behind Bars

sole contact with prison staff came in the form of voices addressing them over loudspeakers. Although the unit was shut down in 1988 following an outside campaign and a court decision that determined their placement unconstitutional, the practice of solitary confinement continues today, with jailhouse lawyers and other incarcerated activists often targeted.<sup>33</sup> Often this threat of staff retaliation dissuades others from acting. One woman stated that the level of harassment is “so great that most of your fellow prisoners think that you must be crazy for even attempting to challenge the prison system wrong doings.”<sup>34</sup>

Lending to the silence around incarcerated women’s resistance, those who do agitate or organize may also hesitate to write about their experiences. Barrilee Bannister in Oregon, Dawn Amos in Colorado, and a California prisoner who wished to remain anonymous have also stated that they are reluctant to write about certain aspects and instances because their letters can be read by prison officials. When Barrilee Bannister attempted to mail a drawing depicting a guard walking away from a prisoner who had obviously been sexually assaulted, the mailroom confiscated it. Bannister received a misconduct report. In the following three months, she was removed from the prison’s minimum-security section, placed in medium-security and barred from attending a transition program for which she had previously been approved. She received two additional misconduct reports, one for allegedly making threats against another staff member during a phone conversation and the other for not saving receipts for items she had purchased between 1995 and 1999, years before the prison had been built.<sup>35</sup> Bannister’s case, too, is not an anomaly. When “Tricia” attempted to use the Bureau of Prison’s new e-mail system to describe certain conditions, prison authorities intercepted her e-mails, then closed her e-mail account. She was also threatened with placement in the SHU.<sup>36</sup>

Women also fear that speaking out or organizing will jeopardize their chances of an earlier release. “Often, you’ll hear ‘I would do something about it, but I come up for review in \_\_\_\_.’ There is a prevalent fear that writing grievances, etc., directly has a negative effect on parole,” wrote Dawn Reiser, a woman incarcerated in Texas.



## Overview

Such fears are not always unfounded. “Having a major misconduct ticket could prevent an inmate from being eligible for a [parole] hearing and could mean she spends another year in prison,” stated Deborah LaBelle, an attorney representing Michigan prisoners in a class-action lawsuit against the Michigan Department of Corrections.<sup>37</sup>

In 2001, the day after she testified against guards in a sexual abuse case, Michigan prisoner Robin McArdle received a misconduct ticket for not being on her bunk during count time. The officer who issued the ticket had testified in that same case on the guards’ side.

McArdle, who had remained ticket-free during her first eight years in prison, received five misconduct tickets after testifying. These tickets extended her stay in prison by a week.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, staff members at the Central California Women’s Facility warned Marcia Bunney, a plaintiff in the *Shumate v. Wilson* lawsuit, that continuing her legal activities would cost her any chance of obtaining a parole date. “I have been told that I will never leave prison if I continue to fight the system,” she wrote.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Invisibility of Organizing***

Women both inside and out are often perceived as passive. This perception leads to the dismissal of the fact that women can and do contribute to struggles for change. Just as the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s downplayed the role of women in favor of highlighting male spokesmen and leaders, the prisoners’ rights movement has focused and continues to focus on men to speak for the masses. “Something about women who protest bothers many people,” observed lois landis, a prisoner at Taycheedah Correctional Institution in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, incarcerated women who raise their voices face an additional burden: they have already defied societal norms by transgressing both laws and acceptable notions of feminine behavior and morality.

## Resistance Behind Bars

While prisons have always been a form of social control, they have also been used to control women's actions and freedom. The early 20th century saw the proliferation of reformatories for women. Women were sent to the reformatory for defying societally approved gender roles: being drunk, engaging in pre- and extramarital sex, contracting a venereal disease, or keeping bad company.<sup>41</sup> These women were seen as even worse than the men who committed the most heinous crimes and, until the advent of the reformatory, were seen as incorrigible.

The reformatory challenged the notion that “fallen women” were irredeemable. As its name indicates, its mission was to “reform” its wards—that is, to re instill ladylike behavior, good moral character, and perfect domestic skills. Reformatories existed only for women; no such institutions existed for men, who remained unpenalized when they engaged in the same actions.<sup>42</sup>

Although the reformatory—and the ideas behind it—died by the mid 1930s, the moral condemnation of women sentenced to prison continues to influence public perception and policies. In 1994, a warden of an unnamed state prison for women summed up the prevailing attitude towards women prisoners:

Poor men stick somebody up or sell drugs. To me, as strange as this may sound coming from a warden, that is understandable. I can see how you would make that choice. Women degrade themselves. Selling themselves, you should hear some of the stuff they do. There is no sense of self-respect, of dignity . . . There is something wrong on the inside that makes an individual take up those kinds of behavior and choices.<sup>43</sup>

Women who challenge or resist their conditions of confinement continue to defy proscribed gender roles, often leading to further disdain and dismissal. By protesting, they are further refusing to conform to society's expectation that they will passively accept the conditions of their punishment and refrain from stepping out of their prescribed gender roles again. “Women who protest are looked down upon, while

## Overview

male prisoners who protest are considered heroes by other inmates,” stated Lois Landis.<sup>44</sup>

Researchers, scholars and activists often do not search for acts of defiance among the growing female prison population, often assuming that the silence around women prisoners’ agency and activism signifies passive acceptance. “[W]omen inmates themselves have called very little attention to their own situations,” wrote Virginia High Brislin in her research on incarcerated mothers during the 1980s. “They are hardly ever involved in violent encounters with officials (i.e. riots), nor do they initiate litigation as often as do males in prison.”<sup>45</sup>

Statements such as these reinforce the invisibility of resistance among women prisoners. They also overlook the instances in which women **do** riot and initiate litigation.

In the 1970s, Carol Crooks, a prisoner at the maximum-security Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York, initiated a lawsuit against the prison, its warden and several staff members. She claimed that the prison’s practice of placing women in segregation without a hearing and refusal to provide 24-hour notice of charges violated their constitutional rights. On July 2, 1974, a court agreed with Crooks, issuing a preliminary injunction, prohibiting the prison from placing women in segregation without 24-hour notice and a hearing of these charges.<sup>46</sup>

The next month five male guards beat Crooks and placed her in segregation. Her fellow prisoners protested by holding seven staff members hostage for two and a half hours. Male state troopers and (male) guards from men’s prisons were called to suppress the uprising, resulting in 25 women being injured and 24 women being transferred to Matteawan Complex for the Criminally Insane without the required commitment hearings.<sup>47</sup> Only a long struggle and a lawsuit won their return to Bedford Hills. Because it lasted only two and a half hours and because no one was killed, the story was relegated to

## Resistance Behind Bars

a paragraph buried in the back pages of the *New York Times*. Thus, although it occurred at a time when prison issues were still a hot topic for many on the left, the “August Rebellion” remains overlooked by those seeking information on prisoner protests and disruptions.

Similarly, women in a California prison held a “Christmas riot” in 1975: protesting the cancellation of family holiday visits and holiday packages, prisoners gathered in the yard, broke windows, made noise and burned Christmas trees in a “solidarity” bonfire.<sup>48</sup> However, because the impetus for the “riot” was women’s lack of access to family during the holidays, an ostensibly “feminine” (and thus less important and less glamorous) concern, and because no one had threatened violence, this act of disruption is even more easily overlooked by those researching prison disturbances.

Women have also disrupted prison life in more recent years: on August 13, 1992, 90 women at the federal prison in Lexington, Kentucky, refused to leave the yard for the prison’s afternoon count to protest a lieutenant’s assault of a black prisoner the night before. “We sang Bob Marley’s ‘Stand Up for Your Rights,’ and chanted ‘Stop Police Brutality,’ ‘We Want Justice,’ ‘Let Them Out of Seg,’ and ‘Figueroa (the lieutenant) Must Go,’” recalled Laura Whitehorn, a political prisoner and participant in the stand-out. “While we demonstrated, we heard shouts of support from the windows of the housing units, and at least two ‘all available officers’ codes to different units—meaning that the women who had returned to the units for count were doing some kind of support actions too.”

The women were handcuffed and taken to segregation. The next day, 12 were transferred to the new women’s high-security unit at Marianna, Florida. Others were sent to FCI-Dublin in California. That afternoon, a smaller group of women repeated the stand-out, refusing to leave the yard for the four o’clock count. That night, other women protested by setting small fires in various housing units.<sup>49</sup>

In 1995, following rebellions at Talladega, Allenwood and other federal men’s prisons, the federal women’s prison in Dublin, California was

## Overview

placed under lockdown. Although there had been no disturbances at that particular prison, FCI Dublin remained under lockdown all weekend and women were forced to go to work that Monday under lockdown conditions. To voice their protest, women began staying away from meals and, that night, set simultaneous trashcan fires in all of the units. Approximately 70 women were sent to administrative segregation and charged with arson and “engaging in a group demonstration.”<sup>50</sup>

By ignoring instances such as these, Brislin and others researching and writing about women prisoners’ issues reinforce the idea that women do not organize, thus discouraging further research.

While Karlene Faith acknowledges that women have participated in resistance actions, she states that, in the 1970s, incarcerated women “were not as politicized as the men [prisoners], and they did not engage in the kinds of protest actions that aroused media attention.” Her assertion dismisses the fact that women **did** engage in similar types of protest actions, which often garnered some media attention.<sup>51</sup> For instance, between 1969 and 1973, there were four “disturbances” at the women’s prison in Milledgeville, Georgia.<sup>52</sup> In 1975, women at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women held a sit-down demonstration to demand better medical care, improved counseling services and the closing of the prison laundry. When prison guards attempted to end the protest by herding the women into the gymnasium and beating them, the women fought back, using volleyball net poles, chunks of concrete and hoe handles to drive the guards out of the prison.<sup>53</sup> Over 100 guards from other prisons were summoned to quell the rebellion.<sup>54</sup> The demonstration also garnered media coverage from radical alternative news sources such as *off our backs* as well as mainstream newspapers such as the *New York Times*.

Instead of claiming that women in prison did not engage in riots and protest actions that captured media attention, scholars and researchers should examine why these acts of organizing fail to attract the same critical and scholarly attention as that given to similar male actions.

## Resistance Behind Bars

Juanita Diaz-Cotto, one of the few scholars to study women prisoners' activism, argues that books written in the past decade often "highlight the role played by women's prison family groups and kinship networks, almost to the complete exclusion of other types of prisoner organization."<sup>55</sup> The emphasis on prison families not only substitutes for research about resistance but also reinforces the stereotype that women's sole concern is to maintain their traditional gender roles.<sup>56</sup> Past research on women prisoners has overwhelmingly favored details of prison family and kinship networks over the more painstaking task of searching out and documenting the less visible instances of resistance. This becomes a self-perpetuating cycle: by highlighting the various family and kinship networks to the exclusion of other forms of organization, scholars have given the impression that this is the only form of organizing within women's prisons, not only silencing the voice of women prisoner activists but also paving the way for others to do the same.

### *Resistance*

Despite fears of administrative reprisals and a lack of outside support, women in prison have found ways to individually and collectively challenge, resist and organize around their conditions of confinement. These ways are often not recognized by outside researchers and are sometimes belittled by other women in prison: "Women prisoners are notorious for complaining amongst themselves or for writing paper complaints to the administration," wrote Lois Landis, a Wisconsin prisoner, who dismissed such actions as "useless in getting changes within the prison system."<sup>57</sup> While the processes of both verbally complaining and filing grievances may have little effect in changing the conditions of confinement, the fact that women not only utilize them but are "notorious" for doing so indicates that women do not passively accept their circumstances, but attempt to change them in any way possible.

Women's resistance often lacks the glamour and excitement of the prison riots and work strikes for which male prisoners are known.



## Overview

Some actions, such as introducing new methods of teaching literacy, can be seen as working with the prison system. A cursory dismissal of such actions overlooks the fact that seemingly non-threatening ideas are still met with suspicion and refusal by prison administrations. As Kathy Boudin, a former prisoner at Bedford Hills, pointed out, “I, like many other prisoners, wanted to be productive and to do something meaningful with my time in prison . . . Yet prison administrators usually limit the amount of responsibility and independence a prisoner can have.”<sup>58</sup> The premise of prisons lies in obedience and control. Prisoner-generated programs, projects and groups challenge that premise. Conservative prison administrations do not allow any such initiatives on the part of their prisoners; even more liberal prison administrators, such as Elaine Lord, the former warden at Bedford Hills, remain suspicious, if not hostile, to the educational and group work of their prisoners and make every effort to suppress such initiatives. Incarcerated women have observed that lack of literacy plays a large role in women’s lack of protest and resistance. Amos noted that most of the women around her “are very illiterate, they don’t even have education to take a pre-GED test, let alone read a law book or even a newsletter about other prisoners and what they have been subjected to. They can hardly comprehend the rules that we have to live under let alone a way of comprehending a way to stand up for their rights.”<sup>59</sup> “Elsie,” a former prisoner in Illinois, agrees: “I know illiteracy is one of the hindrances to pursuing any relief. We need to educate women about how to write grievances and we need to have available people to help the illiterate and the mentally/emotionally ill prepare grievances regarding their rights.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, a seemingly innocuous act, such as encouraging literacy and critical thinking among fellow prisoners, may lead to greater resistance and more widespread agitation against prison injustices.

Other actions are more gender-specific, focusing on issues that, until recently, were not recognized by prisoner rights activists. More than half of all prisoners have left minor children behind. However, maintaining relationships with their children is an obstacle faced more often by women than men. Ninety percent of the time, when a father

## Resistance Behind Bars

is imprisoned, his children are cared for by their biological mother. Conversely when a mother goes to prison her children are more likely to be in the care of a grandparent, another non-parent relative or have no one to care for them. An incarcerated mother's children are five times more likely to enter the foster care system, thus increasing her chances of losing legal custody.<sup>61</sup> In addition, because they are fewer in number, women's prisons tend to be located farther from the urban areas where they had lived before their arrests. This distance often makes visits from children more difficult and infrequent. Incarcerated women have worked with prison administrations and outside groups, often churches and other religious institutions and individuals, to maintain contact and legal custody of their children. These actions are often overlooked by prisoner rights activists and scholars both because they are not visibly dramatic, and because the issue of mothers and children is often perceived as less pressing by those accustomed to dealing with male prisoner issues.

Actions such as organizing transportation for prisoners' children, assisting others with their legal work and visiting women in the intensive care unit disrupt prison realities, sometimes leading to more far-reaching change, such as the formation of AIDS counseling and education programs and support groups for domestic violence survivors.

*Resistance Behind Bars* will highlight issues confronting women in prison, including inadequate medical care, sexual abuse, separation from children, and the lack of educational and work opportunities. It will also show the ways in which the women themselves individually and collectively challenge these conditions. It will explore tactics traditionally employed by male prisoners, such as lawsuits and disruptions, and strategies that women have devised to challenge gender-specific injustices such as maintaining contact and custody of their children and combating sexual abuse.

In 1995, prisoner rights activist and scholar Nancy Kurshan, in her history of female imprisonment, provided a one-page overview of women's resistance from the Civil War until the 1970s. She acknowledged

## Overview

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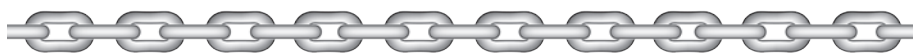
that this one page was not enough: “One topic that has not been adequately researched is the rebellion of women in prison. It is only with great difficulty that any information was found. We do not believe that is because resistance does not occur, but because those in charge of documenting history have a stake in burying herstory. Such a herstory would challenge the patriarchal ideology that insists that women are, by nature, passive and docile.”<sup>62</sup>

*Resistance Behind Bars* expands herstory, challenging readers to re-conceptualize and reframe what is commonly thought of as resistance and emphasizing the voices and actions of the women fighting for change. *Resistance* will hopefully spark further discussion and research into incarcerated women’s organizing as well as galvanize outside support for their struggles.



# UNLIKELY COMMUNITIES

## Breaking the Alienation of Incarceration



When Michigan prisoner Kebby Warner attempted to call her daughter on her fourth birthday, she discovered that the phone number, which she had been calling once a month, was restricted. The reason? Michigan Department of Corrections had started a new phone program with Sprint. Those on a prisoner's telephone list had to pay a minimum of \$50 before they could receive a call from their incarcerated loved one. If the outside person was unable or unwilling to pay, Sprint and the prison kept the number restricted.<sup>63</sup> Wittingly or unwittingly, this new system reinforced the sense of isolation and alienation that prisons inflict upon their prisoners.

"Roberta," an incarcerated mother in California, learned of Warner's situation and offered to pay the \$50 deposit from her own prison wages. (The pay scale at Roberta's facility ranges from eight to 32¢ per hour.) "I know how it is not to hear your child's voice," she wrote in her offer. "I've been there. And thank God for the kindness of strangers that I was able to talk to them [my children] a few times during the roughest times. I would give it [the deposit] to her [Warner], just let me know if I can and where to send it, okay?"<sup>64</sup>

Although women in prison often complain about the apathy among their peers, giving the impression that there is little to no unity in female facilities, these same women have also demonstrated a willingness to share and help each other in times of need.

## Resistance Behind Bars

### *Simple Actions*

Some acts can be as simple as listening. Six years after Michigan prisoner Kebby Warner lost custody of her daughter, she met a prisoner returning from the hospital after giving birth to her first child. “She was distraught! I felt her pain deep in my soul!” Warner reminded the woman that her parole date was only a few months away, encouraged her to focus on that date and offered to listen if the new mother needed to talk about her feelings. Because they lived on different housing units, Warner made plans to meet her on the yard. “I know she’s hurting and I want to be a shoulder that she can cry on,” she wrote.<sup>65</sup>

When Oregon prisoner “Boo” was taken to a prison infirmary after turning yellow, Barrilee Bannister made a get-well card and had 80 women sign it.<sup>66</sup> After Boo was released from the infirmary, the women on her unit, seeing how much weight she had lost, shared their food from the canteen with her.<sup>67</sup>

While these actions do not overtly challenge or change Boo’s medical condition, the inadequate health care system or a protocol that separates mothers from their newborns, they do break through the sense of isolation that prisons inflict upon their prisoners.

In Colorado’s Clear Creek County Jail, women detained on immigration violations are housed with citizen women awaiting trial or sentencing. Although the jails receive money from INS to keep these women, no efforts are made to accommodate their needs, such as translation assistance. Sarah Daniel and RJ, two women awaiting sentencing at Clear Creek, remembered that other women often attempted to help monolingual detainees be understood. Women who spoke both languages, no matter how badly, acted as translators. Those who spoke no Spanish used a Spanish-English dictionary to try to help the Spanish-speaking detainees. RJ, who had taken three years of Spanish in high school, translated for one older Peruvian detainee. “We would also exchange English and Spanish by reading poetry books together,” she recalled. While the citizen women’s actions did not change the jail’s lack



## Unlikely Communities

of translation assistance, they did help alleviate the exacerbated fear and frustration the monolingual detainees must have felt at their inability to communicate.<sup>68</sup>

When Marcia Bunney first began her 25-to-life sentence in California, the prison routine disoriented her:

Mealtimes were traumatic because I had somehow acquired the notion that prisoners were assigned to specific eating areas and that using the wrong door to the cafeteria would be cause for a disciplinary report. This fear caused me to avoid most meals for my first few days in the main population until I became acquainted with a woman on my housing unit who recognized my plight. She literally led me by the hand to the cafeteria, as one would a small child. For years afterward, we often went to meals together, sometimes hand in hand as a reminder of the way our friendship had begun.<sup>69</sup>

The action of that one woman helped Bunney begin to overcome not only her fear of prison, but also the effects of years of abuse she had suffered on the outside. Bunney later became a jailhouse lawyer (a prisoner who assists her peers with their legal cases and paperwork).

### *Larger Effects and Multiplying Resources*

Other strategies have had even broader effects. After Kathy Boudin, a prisoner at New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, began utilizing prisoners' interest and concern about AIDS to teach literacy in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) class, her students became aware of themselves as a community—first in the classroom and then in the larger setting of the prison. They not only began to help one another over the stumbling blocks towards literacy, but also used their new-found knowledge of the disease to support and comfort others.<sup>70</sup>

One student told Boudin that a woman on her unit had attempted suicide after learning that she had AIDS. "I'm the one person she told. I know why she tried. She came to me, I'm the person she talks to."

## Resistance Behind Bars

She was not alone—although HIV/AIDS had previously been a shameful and taboo subject, prisoners began to seek out ABE students on their housing units to talk about their concerns, fears and experiences.<sup>71</sup>

Sometimes women's acts of sharing have multiplied available resources, such as when women have assisted their peers with their legal work. After losing custody of her own daughter, Kebby Warner used the knowledge she had gained in the prison law library to assist another prisoner with the legal paperwork that kept her from losing her own child.<sup>72</sup> While in federal prison, Yraida Guanipa used her self-taught legal skills not only to advocate for herself but also to help the women around her with their appeals. "They don't speak the language, they don't see their children, so I have to file motions for them," she stated.<sup>73</sup> Colorado prisoner Dawn Amos, who financed her college education by finding scholarships, did not hoard that information: she helped three other women find and obtain scholarships.<sup>74</sup>

Similarly, "Marg" and "Elsie," in two different Illinois prisons, have assisted women around them with their legal work.<sup>75</sup> This sharing of resources is often reciprocated: when "Elsie" was placed on a suicide watch after engaging in a hunger strike against the unsanitary preparation of food, another woman lent her a pen and paper to write letters to outside supporters.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, when Kebby Warner filed a grievance against a male officer, the woman whom she had helped agreed to hold her paperwork so that prison officials would not "lose" or destroy it during a search or transfer.<sup>77</sup>

In Texas's Hobby Unit, the "old school" jailhouse lawyers took the time to teach new prisoner Helen Caples about the law. Caples used her newfound knowledge to file a lawsuit against the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, challenging its dangerously unsanitary conditions, including maggots in the shower, birds in the chow hall, rats throughout the facility and contaminated drinking water that caused widespread illness.<sup>78</sup>

## Unlikely Communities

### *Creating Programs*

In the 1980s, prisoners at New York's maximum-security Bedford Hills Correctional Facility visited the patients with HIV and AIDS isolated at the prison's In-Patient Care Unit (ICU).<sup>79</sup> In doing so, they broke through the isolation and ostracization that ICU patients faced from both their fellow prisoners and their unit's medical staff, who often knew little about the disease and were afraid to have physical contact with their patients. In one instance, fear led to a woman dying alone at ICU with no nurse or guard willing to attend to her needs.<sup>80</sup> These women not only visited the ICU to provide contact and counseling, but also helped bathe and cooked for the patients.<sup>81</sup> These early efforts to combat the stigma and ignorance around HIV/AIDS led to the formation of ACE (AIDS Counseling and Education program). Women organizing around the issue began to feel a sense of responsibility to one another. Later, when the AIDS Institute provided the program with English-language educational materials and certification training, two bilingual prisoners voluntarily sat with ten monolingual Latina prisoners during the entire three-day training, translating eight hours each day.<sup>82</sup>

ACE's community-building is not an anomaly. AIDS peer education programs have often had the effect of creating community among women prisoners. Linda Evans, a political prisoner, used ACE as a model for PLACE, the Pleasanton AIDS Education and Counseling program at California's Federal Correctional Institution at Pleasanton. Her fellow prisoner (and PLACE organizer) Laura Whitehorn later recalled, "In every prison I've been in, when we start doing the AIDS work effectively, it's meant that everything improves. There's an overall direction that picks people up and lands them in the center of their own humanity. It's not something you can necessarily articulate. But it exists in the looks and the touches and the being together that we can give each other."<sup>83</sup>

Domestic violence survivors have also reached out to connect with others in similar situations. Bunney, who had been convicted of shooting her abuser, became one of several prisoners who formed

## Resistance Behind Bars

self-help groups for battered women at both the California Institution for Women and the Central California Women's Facility. The groups were originally initiated by the prisoners themselves, then formally implemented through the prison's administrations. The programs use a one-to-one approach between prisoners, a method which Bunney characterizes as "a major strength and source of effectiveness for self-help groups, as it encourages a degree of sharing, frankness, and insight not generally achieved by more traditional methods and exercises."<sup>84</sup> At the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Framingham, "Dolly," a grandmother and a domestic violence survivor convicted as an accessory to murder, did not allow her life sentence to keep her from helping others. She began a support group for other battered women in the facility.<sup>85</sup> Given that domestic violence survivors have often been isolated by their abusers and then further humiliated by court proceedings that refuse to understand the effects of battering and often blame the victim, the simple act of being among others who have had similar experiences is a breakthrough.

### *Becoming Political*

In some cases, groups that were originally formed to support individual women on a path to recovery became more political as women realized that they had come to prison not simply because of their individual choices but because both society and the legal system were stacked against them. Such was the case with the LIFE (Looking Inward for Excellence) Group in Marysville, Ohio. The LIFE Group was originally formed as a support group for women serving life sentences.

It was made up of all women that were doing life and it was sort of like a big support system within itself, because . . . when you're doing life, you had nothing there. All the programs are made up for people with short time. You know, it's about getting you educated or whatever 'cause you're moving on to society. And we were not going back . . . And so they needed something to kind of get through.<sup>86</sup>

## Unlikely Communities

As time went on, members began discussing how the institution was run and actions they could take to improve their conditions. Recognizing that many members had been sentenced to life imprisonment for killing their abusers, the group began working around issues of domestic violence, particularly petitioning for clemency for survivors of domestic violence. In 1990, the group met with Linda Ammons, aide to then-governor Richard Celeste, and Celeste's wife Dagmar. Their stories of abuse and imprisonment for self-defense moved both Ammons and Celeste, both of whom worked to organize a process in which women incarcerated for self-defense could request clemency.

LIFE members spoke with other prisoners and encouraged survivors of domestic violence to apply for clemency. In some instances, LIFE members helped women overcome denial about their abuse, understand that they had been abused, remember incidents of battering, and recall where documentation of their experiences might be found.<sup>87</sup> Their efforts led to 18 additional women to apply for gubernatorial clemency.

Members also began monitoring parole board hearings, timing the amount of time that each woman spent before the parole board: "We were sort of taking inventory about how many minutes did you stay in that [hearing] room when you went? Some women said three minutes, four minutes. Well, how could you tell a life story in three or four minutes?"<sup>88</sup>

They encouraged women to write follow-up letters to Governor Celeste about events they had forgotten in their applications or brief explanations to the parole board.<sup>89</sup>

These actions countered the usual way that prisons operated. According to one LIFE member (whose application for clemency had been successful):

We were sending out for articles and . . . we would share it. When you're in the institution, you get to be kind of secret . . . But as we started to get information, we would put packets of stuff together, illegally Xerox stuff and kind of under the cover, 'Read this, you know, this is good reading.'<sup>90</sup>

## Resistance Behind Bars

In the end, 25 women were granted clemency.<sup>91</sup>

The actions of LIFE Group inspired women at the California Institution for Women to organize a clemency drive. Members of Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA), the support group that Marcia Bunney had helped form, wrote a letter to then-governor Pete Wilson asking him to consider commuting their sentences and inviting him to one of their weekly meetings so that he could understand how they had ended up in prison. Although the governor declined the invitation, the letter drew the attention of lawyers and advocates who offered to help the women draft arguments and gather evidence for clemency petitions.<sup>92</sup>

Wilson granted clemency to three, denied it to seven (including Brenda Clubine, a cofounder of CWAA serving fifteen-to-life for killing her abusive husband), and made no decision on 24 of the petitions.<sup>93</sup> This did not dissuade women from continuing to use CWAA meetings to share current news regarding domestic violence, homicide cases, and court rulings and their own experiences with the justice system. They also continue to discuss possible legal strategies, media stories about women who fight back and journalists with a focus on domestic violence.<sup>94</sup> The advocates and lawyers who originally helped CWAA members with their petitions did not disappear either. They formed the California Coalition for Battered Women in Prison and continued organizing and raising public awareness around the issue. Over 15 years later, the group, now called Free Battered Women, continues to advocate for the release of women imprisoned for self-defense.<sup>95</sup>

Both LIFE Group and Convicted Women Against Abuse began as domestic violence support groups operating with administrative approval. However, without the groups' work around educating their peers about domestic violence and empowering them to speak out about their experiences, the clemency process would not have occurred on the same scale. In addition, women who had suffered domestic violence—whether they were ultimately released or not—would have continued to feel alone in their experiences and ashamed to talk about them.



### *Sharing as a Threat to Security*

Seemingly simple acts of sharing resources, comforting one another and supporting efforts to win clemency may not seem threatening to prison control and security. However, the potential power of women sharing and networking undermines the operations of a system that seeks to foster an atmosphere of alienation and isolation. Prison administrators recognize this and often impose seemingly arbitrary rules to prevent this threat: the Idaho Department of Corrections has an outright ban on its prisoners sharing resources or materials. Women who are caught either bartering or sharing items more than once are sent to “the hole” or segregation.<sup>96</sup> The administration at Bedford Hills scrapped Kathy Boudin’s model of literacy teaching in favor of multiple choice questions about readings that had nothing to do with prisoners’ experiences.<sup>97</sup> In the summer of 1988, less than six months after approving the formation of ACE, the prison superintendent, Elaine Lord, effectively shut the program down for six months. Years later, Lord identified the cooperation and self-reliance forming among prisoners as the administration’s central concern: “How can you talk about community organizing in a prison when prison itself is a community paranoid by definition?”<sup>98</sup> The work of ACE—and individual prisoners—challenges this definition, threatening the system’s complete control over its prisoners.

Because they pose a threat, women who reach out to their fellow prisoners risk repercussions. After nine years of assisting her fellow prisoners with their legal work, California prisoner Marcia Bunney was fired from her position as a law library clerk.<sup>99</sup> At the Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF), women who demand medical attention for their fellow prisoners face reprisals: “Our administration has elected to punish us because our peers are dying,” one prisoner reported. “A team [of guards] was assembled and trashed our cells within one to two hours of the last death . . . but not one inmate has been afforded grief counseling.”<sup>100</sup>

## Resistance Behind Bars

Despite the risk of retaliation, women in prison continue to help each other. Women at CCWF continue to advocate for proper care of their sick peers as well as work to educate and empower them. “I believe that every person, Black, white, male or female, incarcerated or free, has a right to decent and responsible healthcare,” stated CCWF prisoner Judy Ricci. “I collect information to share with other women here, so that hopefully with education will come empowerment.”<sup>101</sup> At Oregon’s Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Barrilee Bannister reported that prisoners are usually the first to act when another prisoner is hurt or having a medical emergency. Realizing that staff members are slow or reluctant to respond to prisoners’ health concerns, Bannister relied on a medical manual that she won several years ago and which she often lent to her fellow prisoners.<sup>102</sup>

Another woman circumvents her prison’s no-sharing policy by donating her books to both an outside books-to-prisoners program and the facility’s library so that other incarcerated women may also read and enjoy them. Others leave their books in the shower for their fellow prisoners to find and read. The more daring leave their paperback books face down and open to the center. “The girls ‘fish’ from room to room and, using string, can get it in their rooms,” one woman recounted. “It’s amazing to see the girls pass things.”<sup>103</sup>

Occasionally even prison administrations recognize the benefit of prisoner cooperation and community-building: after years of hostility, the administration and medical director at Bedford Hills now ask ACE members to provide 24-hour care and companionship to prisoners with AIDS isolated in the ICU unit.<sup>104</sup>

# NOTES

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- 1 Two of the girls were black lesbian lovers. In a scenario that would be repeated 13 years later in the case of the New Jersey Four, they had been out with friends when they encountered a cab driver who had tried to grab one of them. Her friends intervened, the cab driver called the police and the girls were arrested for assault. I don't remember if the judge refused to set bail or if he set it too high for their families to pay, but both of my cellmates were subsequently sent to Rikers Island.
- 2 Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 20.
- 3 I kid you not. The Oregon Department of Corrections rejects anything that has been drawn or written with crayon.
- 4 Allen J. Beck and Paige M. Harrison, *Prisoners in 2000*, special report for the Department of Justice, August 2001, 1, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p00.pdf>.
- 5 Heather C. West, *Prison Inmates at Midyear 2009—Statistical Tables*, Bureau of Justice, June 2010, 4, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/pim09st.pdf>.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 7 American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), "ACLU Applauds Senate Reintroduction of Racial Profiling Bill, Urges Congress to Finally Pass Comprehensive Legislation Next Year," December 19, 2005, <http://www.aclu.org/racialjustice/racialprofiling/23090prs20051219.html>.
- 8 Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, and Stephanie Covington, *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders* (National Institute of Corrections, 2003) 8, <http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2003/018017.pdf>.
- 9 Tracy Snell and Lawrence Greenfeld, *Women Offenders*, special report for the Department of Justice, December 1999, 5, <http://ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/wo.pdf>.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 C. W. Harlow, *Education and Correctional Populations*, special report for the Department of Justice, 2003.

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- 12 Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*, special report for the Department of Justice, August 2000, 6.
- 13 Tracy Snell and Lawrence Greenfeld, *Women Offenders*, special report for the Department of Justice, December 1999, 5, <http://ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/wo.pdf>.
- 14 Heather C. West and William J. Sabol, *Prisoners in 2007*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, December 2008, revised February 12, 2009, 21.
- 15 U.S. Department of Justice, *Prior Abuse Reported by Inmates and Probationers*, April 1999, 2. See also Doris J. James' *Profile of Jail Inmates*, 2002, special report for the Department of Justice, July 2004, 10.
- 16 U.S. Department of Justice, *Survey of State Inmates*, 1991, May 1993, 6.
- 17 In 2004, the Rockefeller Drug Laws were amended. Under the Drug Law Reform Act (DLRA), prisoners with the most severe sentences could apply to be re-sentenced to a term allowed by the new law. The DLRA also increased good-time allowances for everyone else already serving drug sentences. The DLRA did not increase the power of judges to place addicts into treatment programs or provide money to increase the availability of community-based drug treatment. Instead, it expanded eligibility for prison-based drug treatment. One year later, the Legal Aid Society found that not only was the re-sentencing process much slower than expected, but that District Attorneys were often fighting re-sentencing and asking for higher sentences. Furthermore, the New York State Department of Correctional Services had not expanded its drug treatment program as required. (See Legal Aid Society, "One Year Later: New York's Experience with Drug Law Reform," [http://www.drugpolicy.org/docUploads/DLRA\\_FactSheet\\_1.pdf](http://www.drugpolicy.org/docUploads/DLRA_FactSheet_1.pdf).)
- 18 Women in Prison Project of the Correctional Association of New York, *Imprisonment and Families Fact Sheet* (New York: March 2007), <http://www.correctionalassociation.org/WIPP/publications/families%20Fact%20Sheet%202007.pdf>.
- 19 Marc Mauer, Cathy Potler, and Richard Wolf, *Gender and Justice: Women, Drugs and Sentencing Policy* (Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project 1999), [http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/File/Drug%20Policy/dp\\_genderandjustice.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/File/Drug%20Policy/dp_genderandjustice.pdf).
- 20 Drug Policy Alliance, "Race and the Drug War," <http://www.drugpolicy.org/communities/race>.
- 21 Renowned prison abolitionist Angela Davis was an associate professor at UCLA when she first became involved with prisoner support. Her participation in the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation movement led her to the struggle to free the Soledad Brothers and to her correspondence with George Jackson. The United Prisoners' Union in California was formed in 1970 by attorneys and (male) ex-prisoners. By 1973, it had split into two groups: the Prisoners' Union, which confined itself to prison issues, and the United Prisoners' Union, which allied itself with the more radical Bay Area groups. See Eric Cummins, *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). In 1972, the American Civil Liberties Union formed the National Prison Project, which used class-action litigation

- and public education to defend prisoners' rights. In 1971, prisoners at the maximum-security Green Haven Correctional Facility formed the Green Haven Prisoners Labor Union. Members petitioned the Public Employees Relation Board (PERB) of New York for recognition. PERB denied the petition, ruling that prisoners were not public employees and thus had no right to organize or collectively bargain under the Public Employees' Fair Employment Act. [see Mark Dowie, "Unionizing Prison Labor," *Social Policy*, 4 no.1 (July/August 1973): 56-60].
- 22 In 1969, Boston university professor Elizabeth Barker brought her university debating team to Norfolk Prison for a practice debate. "Beyond her expectations, the prisoner team bested the university team and, learning that she was an English professor, proceeded to deluge her with their poetry." The experience influenced her to coordinate a series of college courses at the prison during the 1970s. (Dante Germanotta, "Prison Education: A Contextual Analysis," in *Schooling in a "Total Institution": Critical Perspectives on Prison Education*, ed. Howard S. Davidson (Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 117. Throughout the 1970s, Peter Linebaugh taught Marxism in men's prisons in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Illinois and New York. (See Peter Linebaugh, "Freeing the Birds, Erasing Images, Burning Lamps: How I Learned to Teach in Prison," in *Schooling in a "Total Institution,"* 65-89.) Karlene Faith taught a political science course to the men in California's Soledad Prison in 1970. Upon learning that her students knew nothing about their female counterparts, Faith focused her attention on incarcerated women, organizing the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project to bring university classes to women at the California Institution for Women from 1972 to 1976. (See Karlene Faith, "The Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project, 1972-1976," in *Schooling in a "Total Institution,"* 173-192.).
- 23 Both Barrilee Bannister and Dawn Amos, white women, were sentenced under their respective states' mandatory minimum laws for violent crimes, and are only two of many women who contradict the stereotype of the young, black, male predator. In California, 54% of the women in prison were sentenced for drug offenses in comparison to 38% of the state's total population. In Minnesota, 27% of women in prison were sentenced for drug offenses in comparison to 5% of the state's total population. (The Sentencing Project, *Gender and Justice: Women, Drugs and Sentencing Policy*. [http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/dp\\_genderandjustice.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/dp_genderandjustice.pdf).)
- 24 Diaz-Cotto details the seeming paradox of women prisoners and the Department of Corrections' reaction to their transgression of societal expectations in her section on Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Juanita Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996).
- 25 Owen admits that she developed a visible rapport with prison staff to facilitate her interviews with the prisoners. This obvious rapport may have led to distrust by prisoners engaged in organizing and other acts of resistance, resulting in either silence about their actions or a total decline to be interviewed. Similarly,

## Resistance Behind Bars

- prison staff may have steered her away from “problem” women so as not to expose any gross violations or abuse occurring within the institution.
- 26 One issue particular to female prisoners is the distribution of sanitary napkins. For instance, in New York State prisons, each woman is allocated a set number of napkins per year. Because of the scarce supply, many women are forced to reuse and share them. [Human Rights Watch Women’s Project, *All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 1996). Cites interview with Rhea S. Mallet, The Correctional Association of New York, January 30, 1996.].
- 27 Beth E. Richie and Kay Tsenin, *Female Offenders, Pornography and Prostitution, Child Abuse and Neglect*, research forum on women and girls in the justice system for the Department of Justice, 1999.
- 28 Caroline Wolf Harlow, *Prior Abuse Reported by Inmates and Probationers*, special report for the U.S. Department of Justice, April 1999, 1.
- 29 Barbara Owen, “*In the Mix*”: *Struggle and Survival in a Women’s Prison* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 164.
- 30 Letter to the author from Dwight Correctional Center, Illinois, March 20, 2002.
- 31 Tricia’s sister, e-mail to the author, March 28, 2008.
- 32 Cassandra Shaylor, “It’s Like Living in a Black Hole’: Women of Color and Solitary Confinement in the Prison-Industrial Complex” in *Feminist Legal Theory: An Anti-Essentialist Reader*, ed. Nancy E. Dowd and Michelle S. Jacobs (New York: NYU Press, 2003), 317–18.
- 33 Ibid., 320. The court determined the women’s placement unconstitutional since they were housed in the control unit because of their political beliefs. It did NOT rule that control units constituted cruel and unusual punishment. The U.S. Court of Appeals then ruled that prisons are free to use political associations and beliefs to justify different and harsher treatment.
- 34 Victoria Lynn Simms, *Behind These Walls: A Woman’s Perspective* (Unpublished work, 2001).
- 35 Bannister Barrilee, “Censorship Leads to Harassment at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility,” *Tenacious: Art and Writings from Women in Prison* 11 (Spring 2007): 7–10. Construction on Coffee Creek Correctional Facility did not begin until 2000. The minimum-custody facility was not opened until October 2001 and the medium-custody facility, where Bannister was originally transferred from Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, was not open until April 2002. See [http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/OPS/PRISON/docs/pdf/cccf\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/OPS/PRISON/docs/pdf/cccf_fact_sheet.pdf).
- 36 Tricia’s sister, e-mail to the author, March 27, 2008.
- 37 Melvin Claxton, Ronald J. Hansen and Norman Sinclair, “Guards Assault Female Inmates,” *The Detroit News* (May 22, 2005), <http://detnews.com/2005/specialreport/0505/24/A01-189215.htm>.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Marcia Bunney, “One Life in Prison: Perception, Reflection and Empowerment,” in *Harsh Punishment: International Experiences of Women’s Imprisonment*, ed. Sandy Cook and Susanne Davies (Boston: Northeastern



- University Press, 1999), 29–30. A jailhouse lawyer is a prisoner who uses his or her knowledge of the law to assist other prisoners with their grievances and cases.
- 40 lois landis, “Letter,” *off our backs* xxxi:2 (February 2001): 11.
- 41 Nancy Kurshan, “Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality,” <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 42 Reformatories existed primarily for white working-class women. Black women continued to be seen as immoral or amoral and thus unredeemable and were sentenced to custodial prisons.
- 43 Jill McCorkel, “Criminally Dependent? Gender, Punishment and Welfare Reform,” *Social Politics* 11, no.3 (Fall 2004): 402.
- 44 lois landis, “Letter,” *off our backs* xxxi:2 (February 2001): 11.
- 45 Virginia High Brislin, *The Effect of Immediate Versus Delayed Separation from Infants on Several Dimensions of Inmate-Mothers’ Perception and Enactment of the Maternal Role* (Lexington, KY: 1984), 3.
- 46 “Repression at Bedford Hills Prison,” *off our backs* 4, no.12 (December 31, 1974): 4.
- 47 Juanita Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 324–5.
- 48 Karlene Faith, *Unruly Women: The Politics and Confinement of Resistance* (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1993), 235.
- 49 Laura Whitehorn, “Resistance at Lexington,” in *Criminal Injustice: Confronting the Prison Crisis*, ed. Elihu Rosenblatt (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1996), 109.
- 50 National Lawyers Guild Prison Law Project, “re: Alert: Intervention and Aid for Women at FCI Dublin in California,” e-mail to the Prison Activist Resource Center, November 1, 1995. According to Paul Laird, the executive assistant to the Warden, the women were charged with a number of different incidents, including refusal to leave areas, refusal to go to their rooms, “insolence” and arson. He did not state how many had been found guilty of these charges, only that those who had, were subjected to disciplinary transfers, forfeit of good time, or disciplinary segregation of up to 60 days.
- 51 Karlene Faith, “The Santa Cruz Women’s Prison Project, 1972–1976,” in *Schooling in a Total Institution*, ed. Howard S. Davidson (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 174.
- 52 Juanita Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 318.
- 53 *New York Times*, “Women Inmates Battle Guards in North Carolina,” June 17, 1975.
- 54 *New York Times*, “Officers Charge Women Inmates Staging North Carolina Protest,” June 20, 1975.
- 55 Juanita Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 5.
- 56 For more information on prison family groups among women, see Angela Davis’s autobiography, Jocelyn Pollock-Byrne’s *Women, Prison and Crime*, and Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State*. However, according to

## Resistance Behind Bars

- Diaz-Cotto, the existence of such prison family groups did, in some instances, facilitate inmate organizing: "While individual prisoners might not care much about organizing to reform prison conditions, when requested to do so by other family members, they typed petitions, translated grievances, collected evidence of guard abuses, and passed messages to prisoners in other housing areas." (Diaz-Cotto, 302).
- 57 lois landis, "Letter," *off our backs* xxxi:2 (February 2001): 11.
- 58 Kathy Boudin, "Participatory Literacy Education Behind Bars: AIDS Opens the Door," *Harvard Educational Review* 63, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 209.
- 59 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, March 15, 2002.
- 60 "Elsie," letter to the author, January 2, 2002.
- 61 Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*, special report for the Department of Justice, August 2000, 4.
- 62 Nancy Kurshan, "Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality," <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 63 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, August 9, 2002.
- 64 "Roberta," letter to the author, August 26, 2002.
- 65 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, June 28, 2006.
- 66 Barrilee Bannister, letter to the author, postmarked June 2002.
- 67 Barrilee Bannister, letter to the author, October 22, 2002.
- 68 RJ, letter to the author, January 29, 2008.
- 69 Marcia Bunney, "One Life in Prison: Perception, Reflection and Empowerment," in *Harsh Punishment: International Experiences of Women's Imprisonment*, ed. Sandy Cook and Susanne Davies (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 19–20.
- 70 Kathy Boudin, "Participatory Literacy Education Behind Bars: AIDS Opens the Door," *Harvard Educational Review* 63, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 207–232.
- 71 Ibid., 221.
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- 73 Tom Lowenstein, "Collateral Damage," *The American Prospect Online*, January 1, 2001, [http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=collateral\\_damage\\_010101](http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=collateral_damage_010101).
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- 75 "Elsie," letter to the author, July 2002.
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- 78 John E. Dannenberg, "Prison Drinking Water and Wastewater Pollution Threaten Environmental Safety Nationwide," *Prison Legal News*, [http://www.prisonlegalnews.org/\(S\(w1xtk455tcl0xv550me3xxmu\)\)/displayArticle.aspx?articleid=19162&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](http://www.prisonlegalnews.org/(S(w1xtk455tcl0xv550me3xxmu))/displayArticle.aspx?articleid=19162&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1). Helen Caples, letter to the author, March 16, 2008.

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## Notes

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- 159 A. Clay Thompson, "Cancer in the Cells," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, February 24, 1999. Sherrie Chapman died on December 12, 2002.
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- 161 Judy Greenspan, Beverly Henry, Theresa Martinez, Judy Ricci, Charisse Shumate, and Jess West, "The State of Prison Healthcare Activism: Fighting the HIV and Hepatitis C Epidemics," in *States of Confinement: Policing, Detention and Prisons*, ed. Joy James (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
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## Resistance Behind Bars

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- 164 Delores Garcia, "The Out of Sight Out of Mind Skilled Nursing Facility." Article circulated by Judy Greenspan in an e-mail to the Prison Activist Resource Center listserv, July 18, 2002. Garcia has since been released from prison. She continues to speak out about conditions inside.
- 165 *National Jeff Dicks Medical Coalition newsletter*, "Women Prisoners Have the Right to Fight Medical Neglect: Stop the Retaliation Against Dee Garcia, Prisoner Organizer," October 2002, 8-9.
- 166 Glaze and Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*, 2. At the end of 1999, an estimated 126,100 children had a mother in state or federal prison. Advocates for both children and prisoners believe that the actual number is much higher. No agency is required to gather specific data on children of prisoners. In addition, the threat of losing their children prompts many mothers to keep silent about those left in the care of relatives or friends. "There is such a lack of data that we don't know how many incarcerated women have children, how many of these children are in foster care, how many inmates have a family court matter," stated Tamar Kraft-Stolar, the director of the Women in Prison Project of the Correctional Association of New York. "The [New York] State Department of Correctional Services doesn't track this information." (Sasha Nyary, "Foster Children with Mothers in Jail," *Gotham Gazette*, March 2004, <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/children/20040303/2/901>).
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## Notes

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- 176 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, April 29, 2001.
- 177 Philip M. Genty, "Damage to Family Relationships as a Collateral Consequence of Parental Incarceration," *Fordham Law Journal* 30, no. 5 (July 2003): 1671. Arlene F. Lee, Philip M. Genty and Mimi Laver, *The Impact of the Adoption and Safe Families Act on Children of Incarcerated Parents* (Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press, 2005), 20, [http://www.fcnetwork.org/Resource%20Center/cop\\_pubimpact.pdf](http://www.fcnetwork.org/Resource%20Center/cop_pubimpact.pdf).
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- 179 Mumola, 6. Cites Bloom and Steinhart, Table 2-10.
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- 190 *Overton v. Bazzetta*, 539 U.S. (2003), <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-94.ZS.html>.
- 191 In Texas, state prisoners can call home once every 90 days for 5 minutes only if they have remained (disciplinary) case free for the prior 90 days. The call

## Resistance Behind Bars

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- 192 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, September 17, 2005.
- 193 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, October 25, 2005.
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- 197 Mother at Colorado Women's Correctional Facility, letter to the author, October 14, 2003.
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- 203 Mother at Colorado Women's Correctional Facility, letter to the author, September 28, 2001.
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- 206 Tom Lowenstein, "Collateral Damage," *The American Prospect Online*, January 1, 2001, [http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=collateral\\_damage\\_010101](http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=collateral_damage_010101).
- 207 Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, and Stephanie Covington, *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders* (National Institute of Corrections, 2003) 6, <http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2003/018017.pdf>.
- 208 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, April 29, 2001.
- 209 Marianne Brown, *Woman is the Word* (prison writing class project), 39.
- 210 Marianne Brown, letter to Devon Brown, commissioner of New Jersey State Prison, June 18, 2003. *Woman is the Word*, 47.
- 211 Ibid.
- 212 Brown, 50. Brown and her son were able to have a one-hour, fifteen-minute video conference on July 25, 2003. They were granted a second visit in September 2003.
- 213 Ibid.
- 214 RJ, letter to the author, April 24, 2006.
- 215 This is not to say that women prisoners have not disrupted daily operations to protest changes in prison policy that adversely affect communication and contact with their families. As mentioned in the Overview, in 1975, women at

## Notes

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- 216 Merry Morash, Timothy S. Bynum and Barbara A. Koons, *Women Offenders: Programming Needs and Promising Approaches*, report to the U.S. Department of Justice, August 1998, 8.
- 217 Jean Harris, *Stranger in Two Worlds* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1986), 286.
- 218 Kathy Boudin and Roslyn Smith, “Alive Behind the Labels: Women in Prison,” *Sisterhood Is Forever: The Women’s Anthology for the New Millennium* ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Washington Square Press, 2003), 257.
- 219 Kathy Boudin, “The Children’s Center Programs of Bedford Hills Correctional Facility,” *Maternal Ties: A Selection of Programs for Female Offenders*, ed. Cynthia Blinn (Lanham, MD: American Correctional Association, 1997), 68.
- 220 The success of the programs at Bedford Hills is documented by books, articles and manuals written by prisoner participants. Unlike the writings and publications of most prisoner activists, these documents are more widely accepted and acknowledged by general society.
- 221 For more information about the Incarcerated Mothers’ Law Project, go to: <http://www.wpaonline.org/about/history.htm>. The Women’s Prison Association is a non-profit organization, providing services to women returning from prison to the New York City area. It also administers the AIDS peer education programs at both Bedford Hills and Taconic Correctional Facilities and discharge planning services to women leaving Rikers Island: <http://www.wpaonline.org>. Volunteers of Legal Services (VOLS) recruits volunteer lawyers and law firms to provide legal services needed by children, the elderly poor, incarcerated mothers and people with AIDS: <http://www.volsprobono.org>
- 222 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, December 15, 2005.
- 223 Ibid.
- 224 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, February 11, 2006.
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- 229 Human Rights Watch Women’s Project, *All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 429.
- 230 Ibid.
- 231 Juanita Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 347.
- 232 Stacy Barker, letter to the author, March 22, 2006.
- 233 *Overton v. Bazzetta*, 2002 FED App. 0118P (6th Cir). However, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the appeal court’s ruling: [http://supreme.lp.findlaw.com/supreme\\_court/decisions/lower\\_court/01-1635.6th.html](http://supreme.lp.findlaw.com/supreme_court/decisions/lower_court/01-1635.6th.html).

## Resistance Behind Bars

- 234 Stacy Barker, letter to the author. March 22, 2006.
- 235 Anonymous, "Another Day in Prison," *Clamor* 33 (July/August 2005): 28.
- 236 Human Rights Watch Women's Project, *All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 236–37.
- 237 The USA case was settled in May 1999. MDOC agreed to provide more training on sexual misconduct to both staff and prisoners, to maintain a database of complaints of sexual misconduct, to require male officers to announce their presence when entering women's living quarters, and to suspend pat-down searches of female prisoners by male officers. The settlement failed to provide an independent oversight mechanism to monitor the reporting, investigating and prosecution of sexual abuse. It also permitted MDOC to issue major misconduct tickets to women whose claims of sexual abuse are deemed "unfounded," leaving open the possibility of institutionally sanctioned retaliation.
- 238 Human Rights Watch Women's Project, *All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 6.
- 239 Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, and Stephanie Covington, *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders* (National Institute of Corrections, 2003) 60, <http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2003/018017.pdf>.
- 240 Writing about incarcerated survivors in Canada, Jan Heney and Connie Kristiansen note that "just as 'the healthy, normal, emotionally resilient child will learn to accommodate to the reality of continuing sexual abuse,' an incarcerated survivor may try to adapt to the reassertion of these dynamics in prison using the coping skills she learned as a child." ["An Analysis of the Impact of Prison on Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse," *Women and Therapy* 20 (1997): 6]. The Vera Institute of Justice has stated, "Women with a history of being sexually assaulted are at higher risk of future sexual revictimization than women who have never been assaulted. Research suggests that psychological processes initiated by sexual revictimization may result in behaviors that can increase victims' exposure and vulnerability to potential offenders." [Robert Davis, Pamela Guthrie, Timothy Ross and Chris O'Sullivan, *Reducing Sexual Revictimization: A Field Test with an Urban Sample* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2006), 1, <http://www.vera.org/content/reducing-sexual-revictimization-field-test-urban-sample>]
- 241 Jennifer Bagwell, "Barred from View: How Michigan Keeps the Lid on Allegations of Widespread Sexual Abuse Against Female Inmates," *Metro Times: Detroit's Alternative Weekly*, March 24, 1999.
- 242 Kari Lydersen, "Red Tape Lets Guards Rape Women Prisoners, Suit Argues," *New Standard*, January 6, 2006, <http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/2730>.
- 243 Bagwell, "Barred from View."



- 244 Melvin Claxton, Ronald J. Hansen and Norman Sinclair, "Guards Assault Female Inmates," *Detroit News*, May 22, 2005, <http://detnews.com/2005/specialreport/0505/24/A01-189215.htm>. Hook eventually pleaded guilty to criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree. He was sentenced to four years in prison and served three years and four months before being "Discharged without Improvement." (MDOC Offender Tracking Information System, <http://www.state.mi.us/mdoc/asp/otis2.html>).
- 245 Christopher D. Cook and Christian Parenti, "Rape Camp USA: The Epidemic of Sexual Assault in Women's Prisons," *Disbarred: The Journal of the National Lawyers Guild Prison Law Project* 16, no. 1.
- 246 The Nevada Department of Prisons selected the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) to design, build and operate a prison for women in Las Vegas. The prison opened in 1997 under CCA control. On October 1, 2004, the Nevada Department of Corrections assumed control of the prison. <http://www.doc.nv.gov/snwcc/index.php>.
- 247 Brenda V. Smith, "Rethinking Prison Sex: Self-Expression and Safety," *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* 15, no. 1 (January 31, 2006): 220. Nevada is one of three states that have enacted laws penalizing prisoners who "consent" to sex with staff. Arizona and Delaware are the other two states.
- 248 Associated Press, "Guard, Inmate Get Probation for Pregnancy," <http://www.spr.org/en/news/2005/0420.asp>. See also Carri Greer Thevenot, "Ex-Prison Guard Identified as Father of Inmate's Baby," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 4, 2004, <http://spr.igc.org/en/news/2005/0420.htm>.
- 249 "Dee," letter to the author, September 28, 2001.
- 250 Jennifer Bagwell, "Barred from View: How Michigan Keeps the Lid on Allegations of Widespread Sexual Abuse Against Female Inmates," *Metro Times: Detroit's Alternative Weekly*, March 24, 1999.
- 251 Human Rights Watch, *Nowhere to Hide: Retaliation Against Women Incarcerated in Michigan State Prisons*, July 1998, <http://www.hrw.org/reports98/women/Mich-04.htm>.
- 252 Melvin Claxton, Ronald J. Hansen and Norman Sinclair, "Guards Assault Female Inmates," *The Detroit News*, May 22, 2005, <http://detnews.com/2005/specialreport/0505/24/A01-189215.htm>.
- 253 Jennifer Bagwell, "Barred from View: How Michigan Keeps the Lid on Allegations of Widespread Sexual Abuse Against Female Inmates," *Metro Times: Detroit's Alternative Weekly*, March 24, 1999.
- 254 Ironically, the Safe Prisons program, started after the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act was passed in 2003, is a peer education program to prevent sexual assault, bullying, manipulation, coercion and other forms of sexual abuse.
- 255 Dawn Reiser, letter to author, March 2008. The probability of severe punishment—both officially and informally—is not limited to Texas. When I sent her a draft of this chapter to read, "Dee" wrote back asking that I not use her real name when telling her story. "I'm afraid of someone here or somewhere reading it and all the rumors flying again. I've worked hard to keep it a secret at this [new] facility. It caused me a lot of problems."

## Resistance Behind Bars

- 256 Dawn Reiser, letter to author, May 31, 2008.
- 257 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, September 28, 2001.
- 258 Stop Prisoner Rape, *The Sexual Abuse of Female Inmates in Ohio* (Los Angeles, CA: Stop Prisoner Rape, 2003), 8, <http://www.spr.org/pdf/sexabuseohio.pdf>.
- 259 "Sexual Abuse of Female Inmates in Ohio," 6.
- 260 "Sexual Abuse of Female Inmates in Ohio," 8.
- 261 Human Rights Watch, *Nowhere to Hide: Retaliation Against Women Incarcerated in Michigan State Prisons*, July 1998.
- 262 At the time, Huron Valley was a 400-bed psychiatric hospital for prisoners. It is now a women's prison housing more than double the number of prisoners.
- 263 Human Rights Watch, *Nowhere to Hide: Retaliation Against Women Incarcerated in Michigan State Prisons*, July 1998.
- 264 Regan Ralph, letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, June 11, 1999, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/1999/06/11/usdom4183.htm>. (Ralph Regan is the Executive Director for Human Rights Watch's Women's Rights Division.)
- 265 Stacy Barker, letter to the author, March 22, 2006.
- 266 Anonymous prison employee, in discussion with the author, March 9, 2008.
- 267 *Brief of Amici Curiae, Center for Constitutional Rights et al. in opposition to defendant's motion for Summary Judgement: Amador et al. vs. Superintendents of DOCS*, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, 2005.
- 268 Kari Lydersen, "Watching You, Watching Me," *The New Standard*, January 6, 2006, <http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/2730>.
- 269 Alan Gustafson, "Halting Prison Sex Scandals Has Far-Reaching Effects," *Statesman Journal*, December 4, 2005. Reprinted at Stop Prisoner Rape website: <http://spr.igc.org/en/news/2005/1204.htm>.
- 270 "Prison Rape Elimination Act Becomes Federal Law," <http://www.menstuff.org/issues/byissue/jailhouserock.html#federallaw>.
- 271 Mark S. Fleischer, *Prison Rape Elimination Act—Appendix A: Rape and Coercive Sex in American Prisons*, Interim Findings and Interpretations on Preliminary Research, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University.
- 272 Dawn Reiser, letter to the author. June 3, 2007.
- 273 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, June 12, 2005.
- 274 RJ, letter to the author, June 22, 2008.
- 275 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, March 23, 2008.
- 276 "Rape: Motive for Murder," *The Economist*, April 12, 1975, 71.
- 277 Jerrold K. Footlick, "Joan Little's Defense," *Newsweek*, February 24, 1975, 86.
- 278 Jerrold K. Footlick, "Defending Joan Little," *Newsweek*, July 28, 1975, 34.
- 279 "Joan Little's Story," *Time Magazine*, August 25, 1975, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,913413,00.html?iid=chix-sphere>.



- 280 Although the women's rights movement hailed the acquittal as a victory, Little herself was returned to prison to finish her seven-to-ten year sentence for breaking and entering. Two years later, the North Carolina parole board denied Little parole. She was released in 1979 on the condition that she stay out of North Carolina. See "little parole denied" in *off our backs* (Feb. 1977): 5, and Lee Lescaze, "Joan Little, Free in New York: 'It Feels Good to Be Out,'" *Washington Post*, June 1979.
- 281 Patricia Gagne, *Battered Women's Justice: The Movement for Clemency and the Politics of Self-Defense* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 185. Cites a 1992 interview with anonymous former prisoner.
- 282 Gagne, 185. Quotes from 1992 interview with anonymous former prisoner.
- 283 Barrilee Bannister, letter to the author, June 21, 2001.
- 284 Barrilee Bannister, "I Survived Conniving Corruption Corporation of America," *Tenacious: Writings from Women in Prison* 1 (Summer 2002): 20.
- 285 *Forts v. Ward*, Docket No. 79-2093, 79-2098, U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, <http://bulk.resource.org/courts.gov/c/F2/621/621.F2d.1210.html>.
- 286 Brenda V. Smith, "Watching Me, Watching You," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 15, no. 225 (2003): 11. Reprinted at Stop Prisoner Rape website: <http://www.spr.org/pdf/Watching%20You,%20Watching%20Me.pdf>.
- 287 Human Rights Watch, *All Too Familiar*. See also, *Harris v. Garner: Statement of the Issues, Summary of the Argument* (21 October 1998), Project Diana: Online Human Rights Archive at Yale Law School, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/diana/110998-2.asp>.
- 288 Jan Hoffman, "A Sexual Divide in Prison Searches," *New York Times*, April 9, 1993, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE3D81F3BF93AA35757C0A965958260>.
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- 291 Barbara R. Levine, "Legislature Stops Prisoner Progress in Courts," *Prisons and Corrections Forum: A Publication of the State Bar of Michigan's Prisons and Corrections Section* 3, no.1 (Spring/Summer 2000): 24.
- 292 *Linda Nunn et. Al, Plaintiffs, v. Michigan Department of Corrections, et al., Defendants*. U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division. 1997.
- 293 *Ibid*.
- 294 "Conditions at Women's Prisons: Litigation, Legislation, More Litigation," *Prisons and Corrections Forum: A Publication of the State Bar of Michigan's Prison and Corrections Section* 3, vol.1 (Spring/Summer 2000): 8.
- 295 Stacy Barker, letter to the author, March 22, 2006.
- 296 Caroline Wolf Harlow, *Educational and Correctional Populations*, special report to the Department of Justice, 2003.

## Resistance Behind Bars

- 297 Two notable exceptions are Michelle Fine's 2001 *Changing Minds: The Impact of College in a Maximum-Security Prison* and Johanna E. Foster's and Rebecca Sanford's "Does Gender Shape Women's Access to College Programs in U.S. State Prisons?" in *Equal Opportunities International* 25, no. 7 (2006).
- 298 Johanna E. Foster and Rebecca Sanford, "Does gender shape women's access to college programs in US state prisons?" *Equal Opportunities International* 25, no. 7 (2006): 590.
- 299 Foster and Sanford, 591.
- 300 The Santa Cruz Community Studies Department and the Extended Studies Department provided credit for the courses and registered prisoners as "mature students."
- 301 Karlene Faith, "The Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project, 1972–1976," in *Schooling in a Total Institution*, ed. Howard S. Davidson (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 180–181.
- 302 Ibid., 177–8.
- 303 Ibid., 177.
- 304 Faith had ended a letter to a prisoner with the word "Venceremos" (literally "we will conquer"), a colloquialism that many activists used to indicate overcoming all obstacles to freedom. However, the guard who read her letter assumed that Faith was connected with a group called "Venceremos," which had claimed credit for an escape from a neighboring men's prison. Faith—and the program—was allowed to return to the prison only after a thorough investigation of her background (Faith, "Women's Prison Project," 182–3).
- 305 Faith, "Women's Prison Project," 185. Faith does not go into detail about what had caused that particular break in the program or what the women had resolved to do in that instance.
- 306 Sarah B. Ames, "Protests Put Women's Prison in Spotlight," *The Oregonian*, October 31, 1988, B02.
- 307 Gretchen Schumacher, letter to the author, July 26, 2002.
- 308 Juanita Diaz-Cotto, *Gender, Ethnicity and the State: Latina and Latino Prison Politics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 351–2. The emphasis on bilingual and Spanish-language materials reflected the fact that Latinas were the fastest growing group within the prison population and had additional language needs.
- 309 Michelle Fine, Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowen, Judith Clark, Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez, "Missy," Rosemarie Roberts, Pamela Smart, Maria Torre and Debora Upegui, *Changing Minds: The Impact of College in a Maximum Security Prison*, 2001, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/changingminds.html>.
- 310 Jerrye Broomhall, letter to the author, January 14, 2008.
- 311 Ibid.
- 312 Marcia Bunney, "One Life in Prison: Perception, Reflection and Empowerment," in *Harsh Punishment: International Experiences of Women's Imprisonment*, ed. Sandy Cook and Susanne Davies (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 24.

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- 313 Ibid., 24.
- 314 Ibid., 26.
- 315 RJ, letter to the author, February 14, 2008.
- 316 U.S. Department of Education Office of Correctional Education, *Pell Grants and the Incarcerated*. Washington (DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1995).
- 317 Michelle Fine, Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowen, Judith Clark, Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez, “Missy,” Rosemarie Roberts, Pamela Smart, Maria Torre and Debora Upegui, *Changing Minds: The Impact of College in a Maximum Security Prison*, 2001, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/changingminds.html>.
- 318 Robert Worth. “Bringing College Back to Bedford Hills,” *New York Times*, June 24, 2001. Reprinted at: <http://prisonreader.org/BedfordNYT.html>.
- 319 Michelle Fine and Maria Elena Torre, “The Impact of College Education on Inmates in the New York State Region,” Testimony to the New York State Democratic Task Force on Criminal Justice Reform. Public Hearings, State Office Building, Brooklyn, New York, December 4, 2000.
- 320 Michelle Fine, Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowen, Judith Clark, Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez, “Missy,” Rosemarie Roberts, Pamela Smart, Maria Torre and Debora Upegui, *Changing Minds: The Impact of College in a Maximum Security Prison*, 2001, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/changingminds.html>.
- 321 Ibid.
- 322 Robert Worth. “Bringing College Back to Bedford Hills,” *The New York Times*, June 24, 2001. Reprinted at: <http://prisonreader.org/BedfordNYT.html>.
- 323 One can see the disparity between Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and other women’s prisons simply by looking across the street. The Taconic Correctional Facility, a medium-security women’s prison, is located literally across Harris Road. Unlike Bedford Hills, Taconic receives virtually no attention or outside support. Taconic did not offer college programming until 2003, when Gina Shea, a long-time advocate for prisoner education, and Johanna E. Foster, a college professor, established College Connections: Higher Education for Women in Prison.
- 324 Marianne Brown, letter to the author, October 5, 2005.
- 325 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, July 15, 2001.
- 326 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, April 7, 2001.
- 327 Ibid.
- 328 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, July 15, 2001.
- 329 Michelle Fine, Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowen, Judith Clark, Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez, “Missy,” Rosemarie Roberts, Pamela Smart, Maria Torre and Debora Upegui, *Changing Minds: The Impact of College in a Maximum Security Prison*, 2001, <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/changingminds.html>.
- 330 Jerrye Broomhall, letter to the author, January 14, 2008.
- 331 Michelle Fine and Maria Elena Torre, “Bar None: College Education in Prison,” *Journal of Social Issues* 63, no. 3 (2005): 573.
- 332 Kathy Boudin, “Participatory Literacy Education Behind Bars: AIDS Opens the Door,” *Harvard Educational Review* 63. no. 2 (Summer 1993): 212.

## Resistance Behind Bars

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- 333 Ibid., 217.
- 334 Ibid., 218.
- 335 Ibid., 219. Juana's story, "Chocolate and Me," was later published by the PWA Coalition in *Surviving and Thriving with AIDS: Collective Wisdom*, vol. 1 (1988).
- 336 Ibid., 225.
- 337 Ibid.
- 338 Ibid.
- 339 Ibid.
- 340 Ibid., 228. Both changes in personnel and the political climate influenced the administration's withdrawal of support. The education supervisor, who had not only supported Boudin's program but also had been the link between the teacher and the prisoner peer educators, left the prison for another job. New York State cut its budget for education, laying off teachers and creating anxiety among those remaining about their own job security. This led to resistance to the idea of prisoners teaching or even actively participating in their own learning process. Finally, the political climate was becoming increasingly hostile towards prisoners, prisoner initiatives and program innovation.
- 341 Linda Caldwell, "A Prisoner's Literacy Experience," *Tenacious: Art and Writings from Women in Prison 2* (2002): 24–5.
- 342 Ibid., 26.
- 343 Ibid., 26–7.
- 344 Prisoner at Ohio Reformatory for Women, letter to Books Through Bars—New York City, n.d. Although there are various programs that send free books to prisoners throughout the United States, only a few exist specifically for women. The other programs receive requests mostly from men, reinforcing the belief that women prisoners neither organize nor network.
- 345 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, April 7, 2001.
- 346 In April 2008, the Oregon Department of Corrections changed this restriction to allow books in from "recognized vendors" who are not book publishers.
- 347 Jerrye Broomhall, letter to the author. March 5, 2008.
- 348 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, February 27, 2008.
- 349 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, February 18, 2008.
- 350 A preliminary study by Johanna E. Foster, cofounder of two higher education initiatives in women's prisons in New York and New Jersey, found that in the 18 states that allow college courses in women's prisons, programs are not available at every facility. Thus, a woman enrolled in Bedford Hills' College Bound program can be transferred to Albion or Beacon, two women's prisons with no college opportunities. See Johanna E. Foster, "Bringing College Back to Prison: The State of Higher Education Programs for Incarcerated Women in the U.S.," 8th International Women's Policy Research Conference (June 2005).
- 351 RJ, "Untitled," *Tenacious: Art and Writings from Women in Prison 14* (Spring 2008).
- 352 RJ, letter to the author, February 14, 2008.
- 353 RJ, letter to the author, March 12, 2008.

## Notes

- 354 RJ, letter to the author, February 14, 2008.
- 355 Rhonda Leland, letter to the author, postmarked September 27, 2002.
- 356 Rhonda Leland, letter to the author, postmarked October 4, 2002.
- 357 Ibid.
- 358 Rhonda Leland, letter to the author, postmarked October 22, 2002.
- 359 Rhonda Leland, letter to the author, October 16, 2002.
- 360 Ibid.
- 361 Jerrye Broomhall, letter to the author, January 14, 2008.
- 362 Jerrye Broomhall, letter to the author, January 30, 2008.
- 363 Dawn Reiser, letter to the author, February 11, 2008.
- 364 Marcia Bunney, "One Life in Prison: Perception, Reflection and Empowerment," in *Harsh Punishment: International Experiences of Women's Imprisonment*, ed. Sandy Cook and Susanne Davies (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 28.
- 365 Ibid., 28–29.
- 366 Ibid., 29.
- 367 Kathy Boudin and Judith Clark, "A Community Of Women Organize Themselves To Cope With The AIDS Crisis: A Case Study From Bedford Hill Correctional Facility," *Columbia Journal of Gender and the Law* 1, no.1, Jan 31, 1991.
- 368 Kathy Boudin, "Participatory Literacy Education Behind Bars: AIDS Opens the Door," *Harvard Educational Review* 63. no. 2 (Summer 1993): 221.
- 369 Ibid., 223.
- 370 The formation of the AIDS Counseling and Education program was separate from Boudin's use of HIV/AIDS to promote critical thinking in the ABE class.
- 371 Kathy Boudin, "Participatory Literacy Education Behind Bars: AIDS Opens the Door," *Harvard Educational Review* 63. no. 2 (Summer 1993): 225.
- 372 Ibid., 226.
- 373 Marilyn Buck, "Women in Prison and Work," *Feminist Studies* 30 no. 2 (2004): 451–55.
- 374 In 1817, New York established the Auburn State Prison. Breaking from the Pennsylvania Quaker model that enforced 24-hour silence and isolation as a means of rehabilitating offenders, the Auburn system allowed its (male) prisoners to work together during the day but live in enforced silence and isolation at night. The Auburn system proved more profitable and became the dominant model for U.S. prisons. In 1825, Auburn began housing women prisoners in its attic. The women were put to work picking wool, knitting and spooling. They were not subject to the rule of silence.
- 375 The discrepancy in ages dates back to the start of the Auburn system. In the mid-1800s, women incarcerated at New York's Mount Pleasant Female Prison worked long hours sewing clothes for male prisoners as well as making buttons and trimming hats. Although their wages were not recorded, they were apparently paid much less than their male counterparts. Critics later used this fact against the prison's reform-minded matron Eliza Farnham, charging that

## Resistance Behind Bars

- her attempts to rehabilitate women by providing time for religious observance, educational programs and reading prevented the prison from gaining more profit. Farnham responded with the point that women in the female prison were paid less than men. See Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons, and Social Control* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 18–19.
- 376 Karen F. Lahm, “Equal or Equitable: An Exploration of Educational and Vocational Program Availability for Male and Female Offenders,” *Federal Probation* 64, no. 2 (2000): 43.
- 377 D.S Young and R.F. Mattucci, “Enhancing the Vocational Skills of Incarcerated Women Through a Plumbing Maintenance Program,” *Journal of Correctional Education* 57, no. 2 (2006): 130.
- 378 Barrilee Bannister, letter to the author, postmarked April 4, 2002.
- 379 Barrilee Bannister, letter to the author, no date.
- 380 Tim Reiterman and Jenifer Warren, “Prison Jobs Program Just Barely Working,” *Los Angeles Times*. July 18, 2004. Reprinted at Prison Talk messageboard: <http://www.prisontalk.com/forums/showthread.php?t=69244>.
- 381 Woman at Central California Women’s Facility, letter to the author, April 22, 2002.
- 382 Marianne Brown, letter to the author, September 20, 2005.
- 383 According to the UNICOR website, this new partnership offers “all the benefits of domestic outsourcing at offshore prices. It’s the best-kept secret in outsourcing!” [http://www.unicor.gov/services/contact\\_helpdesk](http://www.unicor.gov/services/contact_helpdesk).
- 384 Kirsten, former prisoner at FMC Carswell, e-mail to the author, February 28, 2008.
- 385 Tammi Ann Allowitz, e-mail to the author, March 4, 2008.
- 386 Kirsten, former prisoner at FMC Carswell, e-mail to the author, February 28, 2008.
- 387 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, December 18, 2005.
- 388 Woman at FMC Carswell, letter to the author, postmarked October 2, 2002.
- 389 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, July 15, 2001.
- 390 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, March 15, 2002.
- 391 Ibid.
- 392 Marianne Brown, letter to the author, October 5, 2005. Marianne Brown has been incarcerated since June 2001.
- 393 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, March 15, 2002.
- 394 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, October 23, 2005.
- 395 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, January 1, 2006.
- 396 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, April 29, 2002.
- 397 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, April 25, 2007. Relief porters sweep and mop the floors of their housing units. Warner would have earned \$6.52 for the month she worked, but the prison deducted most of that amount to repay a previous indigent loan.
- 398 Woman at Dwight Correctional Center, letter to the author, March 20, 2002.
- 399 Woman at Dwight Correctional Center, letter to the author, March 20, 2002.



## Notes

- 400 “Dedication to Yoland R,” *The Fire Inside* 20 (2002): 1, <http://www.womenprisoners.org/fire/000168.html>.
- 401 Cynthia Chandler, “Death and Dying in America: The Prison Industrial Complex’s Impact on Women’s Health,” *Berkeley Women’s Law Journal* 18 (January 31, 2003).
- 402 Ibid. Cites interviews with Michelle Andrews, CCWF prisoner, June 10 to August 24, 2001.
- 403 California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, *Weekly Report of Population*, July 14, 2008, [http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports\\_Research/Offender\\_Information\\_Services\\_Branch/WeeklyWed/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad080709.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/WeeklyWed/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad080709.pdf).
- 404 Marianne Brown, letter to the author, September 20, 2005.
- 405 Marianne Brown, letter to the author, postmarked February 11, 2008.
- 406 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, April 3, 2005. Warner later lost that job when she was sent to segregation or “the hole.”
- 407 Linda Caldwell, “A Prisoner’s Literacy Experience,” *Tenacious: Art and Writings from Women in Prison* 2 (Fall 2002): 25.
- 408 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, October 19, 2004.
- 409 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, February 3, 2005.
- 410 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, August 19, 2005.
- 411 Buck, “Women in Prison and Work.”
- 412 RJ, letter to the author, June 3, 2006.
- 413 Elisa Brehm, “Arizona Sheriff Introduces Female Chain Gangs,” *World Socialist Web Site*, [http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/nov2003/gang-n19\\_.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/nov2003/gang-n19_.shtml).
- 414 Margie Wood, “DOC Pilot Program Working Well,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, July 11, 2007. The farmers pay the Department of Corrections \$9.60 per prisoner per hour, which covers not only the \$4 daily wage but also the expenses of their supervisor/guard, meals and transportation.
- 415 Margie Wood, “Inmates Prefer Work in Fields to Kitchen Duty,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, July 11, 2007.
- 416 Kebby Warner, letter to the author, July 24, 2002.
- 417 Barrilee Bannister, letter to the author, September 12, 2002.
- 418 Marianne Brown, letter to the author, October 5, 2005.
- 419 Yraida L. Gunaipa, e-mail to the author, November 29, 2005.
- 420 Yraida L. Gunaipa, e-mail to the author, December 18, 2005.
- 421 Ibid.
- 422 Nancy Kurshan, “Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality,” <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 423 Meryl LaTronica, “Prisoners Talk About Labor on the Inside,” *Sojourner: The Women’s Forum*, 15.
- 424 RJ, Letter to the author, June 4, 2008.
- 425 RJ, Letter to the author, June 22–23, 2008.
- 426 Ibid. On June 5, 2008, in response to the continued shortage of farm workers, Colorado governor Bill Ritter signed into law a program allowing migrants from Mexico to work on Colorado farms. The law uses the federal



## Resistance Behind Bars

H2A (agricultural worker) visa program. Although its impact has yet to be seen, RJ and others at La Vista wonder if it means an end—or a significant reduction—to the DOC's farm crew program. "It seems less of a hassle for the farm owners to deal with these workers rather than with DOC and CI [Colorado Industries] contracts plus the different bosses and changing faces of the women," she wrote on June 23, 2008. For more about the new law, see Naomi Zeveloff's "Colorado Scrambles to Secure Farm Labor Amid Anti-Immigrant Sentiment." *Colorado Independent*. June 16, 2008, <http://coloradoindependent.com/view/colorado-scrambles>.

- 427 Laura Maca, "I Had to Quit my Job," *Break the Chains!* 17 (2004): 12.
- 428 Nancy Kurshan, "Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality," <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 429 *New York Times*, "Women Inmates Also Have Grievances," January 14, 1973.
- 430 According to an objection brief filed by Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, the settlement agreement failed to provide adequate standards for pregnancy-related care (according to the CDC, 7% of women incarcerated in California are pregnant); health assessments and follow-up treatments for breast and cervical cancer, gynecological problems, health conditions related to surviving sexual, physical or mental abuse; annual pap smears, especially for women with HIV; and testing for the virus linked to cervical cancer. <http://www.prisonerswithchildren.org/pubs/plata.pdf>.
- 431 Human Rights Watch Women's Project, *All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 2.
- 432 Karlene Faith, *Unruly Women: The Politics and Confinement of Resistance* (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1993), 235.
- 433 Julie Sullivan, "Compromising Positions: Prison Staff Work Closely with Inmates, But When a Relationship Becomes Too Close, It's a Threat to Security," *Spokesman Review*, June 17, 1998, 7.
- 434 Human Rights Watch Women's Project, *All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 256–7.
- 435 *Ibid.*, 259. A letter from Kebby Warner, dated February 27, 2008, confirms that this is still the case.
- 436 Dawn Amos, letter to the author, May 14, 2001.
- 437 *Ibid.*, 123.
- 438 "Elsie," letter to the author, March 20, 2002. In many states, a prisoner must go through and exhaust the prison's bureaucratic grievance system before going to the courts for intervention.
- 439 Marcie Monroe, "Unite and Write—Stop Whining!" *The Fire Inside* 15 (August 2000), <http://www.womenprisoners.org/fire/000237.html>.
- 440 Michigan attorney Sharon Dunn, who works with incarcerated women, stated that the number of grievances did not adequately reflect the women's complaints and concerns. "There was certainly a suppression of being able to file grievances in the weeks after the move," she told Detroit newspaper *Metro Times*. Many women had no access to grievance forms and thus were unable

## Notes

- to voice their complaints. See Joseph Kirschke, "Hard Time," *Metro Times: Detroit's Weekly Alternative*, March 2, 2005, 12.
- 441 *Metro Times: Detroit's Weekly Alternative*, "Hard Time, Long Time," January 25, 2006.
- 442 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, February 11, 2006.
- 443 Yraida L. Guanipa, e-mail to the author, November 9, 2005.
- 444 Dawn, letter to the author, February 11, 2008.
- 445 "Elsie," letter to the author, March 20, 2002.
- 446 Mariane Sadelmyer, letter to *Sojourner's: The Women's Forum* 24, no. 8.
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- 622 Nancy Kurshan, "Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality," <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 623 Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World*, 6–7.
- 624 After instituting the county convict system, counties increasingly charged people with misdemeanors so as to keep them under local—rather than state—control. (Curtin, 7.)
- 625 Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World*, 109. Cites J.D. Douglass letter to W.D. Lee, July 11, 1888 (Letter Book, Feb–Sept 1888, DOC, Alabama Department of Archives and History).
- 626 Ibid., 126. Black women prisoners refused to comply with the rules of either the prison or the work camps, refusing to wear the prison garb assigned to them or to return directly to the prison once they had finished their work in the community, leading one inspector to fume, "The female convicts at this prison are a very unruly set and give a good deal of trouble."
- 627 Mary Ellen Curtin, "The 'Human World' of Black Women in Alabama Prisons, 1870–1900" in *Hidden Histories of Women in the New South*, ed. Virginia Bernhard, Betty Brandon, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Theda Perdue and Elizabeth Hayes Turner (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 20. Cites *Alabama General Assembly, Testimony Before the Joint*

## Notes

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- 629 Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons, and Social Control* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 141.
- 630 Ibid., 132.
- 631 Nancy Kurshan, “Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality,” <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 632 Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons, and Social Control* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 25.
- 633 Joanne Belknap, *The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime, and Justice* (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007), 147.
- 634 Ibid., 147.
- 635 Estelle Freedman, *Their Sisters’ Keepers: Women’s Prison Reform in America, 1830–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981), 16. Freedman asserts that virtually every account of prisons and jails during that time period mentions illegitimate births by women in custody.
- 636 Correctional Association of New York, *Inmates Under Custody: 1950–2003*, <http://www.correctionalassociation.org/publications/factsheets.htm#WIPP>
- 637 Drug Policy Alliance, *Race and the Drug War*, [www.drugpolicy.org/communities/race](http://www.drugpolicy.org/communities/race).
- 638 Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (London: Verso, 2001), 57. Cites *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*, 1982, Table 4.7, BJS (Wash, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983), 400; *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*, 1991, Table 4.7, BJS (Wash, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 444.
- 639 Anecdotal evidence suggests that the act resulted in a significant increase in women sent to federal prison, but I was unable to find any statistics or information on the number of women convicted of “conspiracy” under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act.
- 640 The total number of people in federal and state prison that year was 196,429. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1973, 94th ed, [www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/1973-01.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/1973-01.pdf).
- 641 Julia Sudbury, *Global Lockdown: Gender, Race and the Rise of the Prison Industrial Complex Around the World* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
- 642 Women in Prison Project of the Correctional Association of New York, *Women in Prison Fact Sheet*, <http://www.correctionalassociation.org/publications/factsheets.htm#WIPP>.
- 643 Between 1996 and 1999, over 96,000 women were subject to the welfare ban because of past drug convictions. However, researcher Patricia Allard points



## Resistance Behind Bars

- out, “This [number] represents a very conservative estimate, because some reporting states provided limited data. For instance, some states only provided incarceration data and not probation data for felony drug convictions, leaving a potentially significant number of women unaccounted for in this estimate.” Patricia Allard. “Crime, Punishment, and Economic Violence,” in *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006) 158, 293.
- 644 Lynne Haney, “Introduction: Gender, Welfare and States of Punishment,” *Social Politics* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 338.
- 645 Jill McCorkell, “Criminally Dependent? Gender, Punishment and the Rhetoric of Welfare Reform,” *Social Politics* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 389.
- 646 Lynne Haney, “Introduction: Gender, Welfare and States of Punishment,” *Social Politics* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 342.
- 647 Christopher J. Mumola and Allen Beck, *Prisoners in 1996*, special report to the Department of Justice, July 21, 1997, 1, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p96.pdf>.
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- 650 Mary Ellen Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865–1900* (Carter G. Woodson Institute series in Black studies. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 12.
- 651 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Census of State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2000*, August 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2004*, April 2005.
- 652 Linda Rocawich, “Lock ‘Em Up: America’s All-Purpose Cure for Crime,” *The Progressive*, August 1987, 16.
- 653 Nancy Kurshan, “Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.: History and Current Reality,” <http://prisonactivist.org/women/women-and-imprisonment.html>.
- 654 Dodge, “‘One Female Prisoner is of More Trouble than Twenty Males’: Women Convicts in Illinois Prisons, 1836-1896,” *Journal of Social History* (Summer 1999). Cites Freedman, 13.
- 655 Until the beginning of the twentieth century, there were two models of prisons for women: reformatories and custodial prisons. Reformatories housed women whose behavior had been deemed immoral; their objective was to recondition women to accept socially approved gender roles. Custodial prisons were designed solely to warehouse women. There was no pretense of rehabilitation or reform for prison inmates. No reformatories ever existed for men, regardless of how immoral or socially unacceptable their behavior. While Hudson was the first reformatory in New York State, it was not the first facility for women inmates. In 1835, a women’s custodial prison for women was opened in Sing



## Notes

- Sing. During its 42 year existence, it experienced continual overcrowding and was finally closed in 1877.
- 656 “Albion Correctional Facility,” <http://www.correctionhistory.org/html/chronicl/docs2day/albion.html>.
- 657 Clifford Young, *Women's Prisons: Past and Present and Other New York State Prison History* (Elmira Reformatory, NY: The Summary Press, 1932), 38.
- 658 State of New York Department of Correctional Services, *Hub System*, 3.
- 659 Real Cost of Prisons, “CA: New Prison Beds for Women Rejected by Legislative Committee,” April 17, 2007, [http://realcostofprisons.org/blog/archives/2007/04/ca\\_new\\_prison\\_b.html](http://realcostofprisons.org/blog/archives/2007/04/ca_new_prison_b.html).
- 660 Linda Rocawich, “Lock ‘Em Up: America’s All-Purpose Cure for Crime,” *The Progressive*, August 1987, 16.
- 661 UBUNTU is a women of color and survivor-led coalition in Durham, North Carolina, working to create a world free of sexual violence. They have started by creating small systems of community accountability while also holding film screenings, performances and workshops to raise awareness about the impact of gendered violence. In New York after the murder of two young women by the police, Sista II Sista, a collective of women of color fighting for social justice, established Sistas Liberated Ground, a zone in their neighborhood where crimes against women would not be tolerated. The group instituted an “action line” which women could call and not only inform the group as to what was happening, but also explore the options that they—and the group—could take to change the situation instead of simply calling the police. The group has also pushed the community to hold its members accountable for the harm they caused. In California, Generation Five is working to end childhood sexual abuse in five generations by addressing the root causes of violence rather than relying on incarcerating abusers.
- 662 Angela, Davis. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 103.
- 663 Alexander Lee, “*Changing Actions*” (lecture, the Scholar and Feminist Conference: Engendering Justice: Prisons, Activism and Change, Barnard College, New York. April 8, 2006).
- 664 Rachel Galindo, letter to the author, May 27, 2008.

