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Stark Raven Digest: Sept 8, 2008  
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The Stark Raven Media Collective takes a critical look at prisons and issues of criminalization.

Podcast, News Highlights, More Info: <http://www.prisonjustice.ca>

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The digest is now available as a PDF on our website:
http://www.prisonjustice.ca/organizations/stark_raven.html

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The below email contains:  
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== c u r r e n t i s s u e s ==

- a) Upcoming Radio Programs
- b) Recent Audio & Podcasts
- c) Recent Prison News

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- d) How to Podcast Stark Raven
- e) More Info on Stark Raven
- f) Support Stark Raven: Become a Member of Co-op Radio

a)

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Upcoming Stark Raven Radio Programs  
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*Mon Sept 8th, 7-8pm: The cancellation of the Mother and Baby program in BC jails; update on women prisoner health research project

*Mon Sept 15th, 7-8pm: INTO THE MINDS OF THE JAILER AND THE JAILED
Interview with Karen Connelly, author of The Lizard Cage on imprisonment, Burma and writing.

*Mon Oct 6, 7-8 pm: TARGET TOUGH ON CRIME: DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE (Part 1:
Drugs behind bars (tentative))

*Mon Oct 13, 7-8 pm: TARGET TOUGH ON CRIME: DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE (Part 2: tba)

b)

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Recent Stark Raven Audio Interviews  
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Links to download and listen to recent interviews:
(always available at <http://www.prisonjustice.ca>)

== Sept 1st: TORONTO PRISON JUSTICE DAY RALLY.==
Highlights from the August 10th rally in Toronto. Prison Justice Day is a day to remember those who have died behind bars.
<http://www.radio4all.net/index.php/program/28900>

== Aug 10th & 17th: VANCOUVER PRISON JUSTICE DAY RALLY.==
Highlights from the Prison Justice Day memorial rally held in Vancouver on Aug 10th at Trout Lake Park.
Audio: <http://www.radio4all.net/index.php/program/29052>
Video & Audio: <http://www.workingtv.com/prisonjusticeday2008.html>

== Aug 3rd: "JOE CONVICT" FROM SEGREGATION ==
"Joe Convict", a prisoner who has been in segregation for several months in an Ontario prison, talks of his struggle with the prison authorities and his fight for human rights behind bars.
<http://www.rabble.ca/rpn/episode.shtml?x=74489>

== July 21st: NATIVE SPIRITUAL HEALING BEHIND BARS || BOOKS 2 PRISONERS ==
*Prince George singer songwriter Marcel Gagnon talks about native spiritual healing inside BC's northern prisons.
<http://www.rabble.ca/rpn/episode.shtml?x=74323>
*Feature on Books 2 Prisoners.
<http://www.rabble.ca/rpn/episode.shtml?x=74710>

== July 14th: GANGS: THE PROBLEM WITH THE LAW ENFORCEMENT APPROACH ==
Sometimes presented as the only solution, using police, prisons and punishment to deal with gangs is ineffective. The US-based Justice Policy Institute makes this argument in a recent report. Interview with Nastassia Walsh from the Institute on this issue.
<http://www.rabble.ca/rpn/episode.shtml?x=73826>

== July 7th: RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION ==
These little chips can be implanted into you and you can be tracked. Find out about the technology and the implications for privacy and social control. Interview with Richard Rosenberg from the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association and the BCCLA.
<http://www.rabble.ca/rpn/episode.shtml?x=73379>

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Recent Prison News

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~written and compiled by members of the Stark Raven Media Collective~

== Canadian News ==

- 1) Harsh Conditions At Toronto Jails
- 2) Women's Prison Expands
- 3) Mandatory Minimums Ineffective, Expensive
- 4) Prisoners Locked Down Protesting Smoking Ban
- 5) Community Groups Call For An End To Smoking Ban
- 6) Ashley Smith's Death Preventable Says Ombudsman
- 7) Internal Grievance Process Under Fire In Ashley Smith's Case
- 8) Harper Stacks Parole Board With Former Cops, Guards
- 9) One Third Of Kids In Care End Up In Jail
- 10) Justice Bill "Knee-Jerk Reaction" Says NB Youth Advocate
- 11) Outspoken Prisoner Wins Human Rights Award
- 12) Health Activists Demand Prison Needle Exchange
- 13) Tough-On-Crime Policies Ineffective, U.S. Sentencing Expert Contends
- 14) Reporters Finding It Harder To Get Inside Canadian Prisons
- 15) Lack Of Prison Needle Exchange Contributing To Spread of Hiv/Hep C
- 16) Tories Target Youth In Tough On Crime Agenda
- 17) Tories Launch Pilot Project To Electronically Track Prisoners On Parole, Stat Release
- 18) Tories Show Lack of Understanding Of Prison Life With Mandatory Work Plan
- 19) Veto By Tories In Prisoner Transfer Rebuked By Courts
- 20) Court To Review Tories New Stance On Death Penalty
- 21) Cancellation Of Mother-Baby Program Criticized By B.C. Child Advocate
- 22) Prison Warden Dismissed from ACCW
- 23) Tories Continue With Victims Rights Agenda With Focus On Victim Surcharge
- 24) Tories Pre-Election Hype Targets Drugs In Prison With More Surveillance

== US & International News ==

- 25) Australia Ends Automatic Jailing Of Asylum Seekers
- 26) Four Iraqi's Sue U.S. Over Torture At Abu Ghraib
- 27) U.S Supreme Court Rules Lethal Injection Constitutional
- 28) 1200 People Executed Worldwide In 2007

1) HARSH CONDITIONS AT TORONTO JAILS

July 2008

A judge recently heard more details about the harsh conditions facing prisoners at two Toronto jails.

The Toronto West Detention Centre and Don Jail often hold three people in a single 6 by 10 foot cell. This forces one person to sleep on the floor by an open toilet.

Prisoners at the two jails report being locked in their cells for days at a time, with little access to exercise and the outdoors.

Many of the people held in these detention centres have not yet been convicted of a crime. They are awaiting trial and are presumed innocent of their charges.

There have been criticisms about the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions at the Toronto jails for several years. There appear to be no plans to improve the situation.

Sources articles:

<http://www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/story.html?id=632973>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20080619.CAMPBELL19/TPStory/TPComment/Ontario/>

2) WOMEN'S PRISON EXPANDS

July 2008

Another women's prison is set to expand as the number of women in prison continues to increase.

For the second time in less than a decade, the Grand Valley Institution for Women is expanding.

Construction of three new cottages will increase the prison's capacity by 30 beds to 165.

Prison authorities say the new units are needed because of the rising number of federally sentenced women.

The expansion several years ago cost almost \$8-million and increased capacity by one third.

Since then a maximum unit was built that has space for 15 prisoners.

Two other women's prisons are also expanding. The Fraser Valley Institution in Abbotsford, BC and Nova Institution in Nova Scotia, each plans to add a living unit.

Women are one of the fastest growing prisoner populations worldwide, the majority are convicted on non-violent offences related to addiction and poverty.

Sources articles:

<http://news.therecord.com/News/Local/article/377089>

3) MANDATORY MINIMUMS INEFFECTIVE, EXPENSIVE

July 2008

Imposing mandatory minimum prison terms is not only ineffective, but it is expensive.

According to one Ontario judge the mandatory minimum sentences introduced from the recently passed tough on crime omnibus bill, will cost the system an additional \$80-million per year.

This is based on estimates of an increase of 1000 prisoners per year. It costs more than \$80,000 to keep one male prisoner in a federal prison.

Even this \$80-million a year figure, however, underestimates the amount.

It does not include the cost of incarcerating people while they await trial. Nor does it include the cost of the longer trials that are result when people are faced with a mandatory minimum sentence.

This same judge said that there are many cases where a mandatory minimum sentence is simply too harsh.

His sentiments appear to be shared by an overwhelming number of lawyers, judges and legal academics.

They call mandatory minimum sentences ineffective and point out that they do not work as a deterrent and tend to have a greater impact on already marginalized communities.

The Criminal Code currently contains about 45 mandatory minimum sentences, and politicians regularly call for more.

Sources articles:

<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v08/n607/a01.html>

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com%2F servlet%2F story%2F RTGAM.20080619.ws entence19%2F BNStory%2F National%2F home&ord=97066859&brand=theglobeandmail &force_login=true

4) PRISONERS LOCKED DOWN PROTESTING SMOKING BAN

July 2008

Prisoners at a Nova Scotia prison spent more than a month in lockdown protesting the new full smoking ban.

A peaceful demonstration by the prisoners at Springhill Institution began on May 26, six days after the smoking ban came into effect.

Prisoners refused to work and attend programs and spent almost all their time locked in their cells.

The prisoners and prison authorities negotiated an end to the lockdown. The smoking ban, meaning prisoners can't smoke at all, is still in effect. It is unclear what, if any, changes were agreed upon in the negotiations.

Sources articles:

<http://www.capebretonpost.com/index.cfm?sid=145093&sc=621>

<http://www.amherstdaily.com/index.cfm?sid=150336&sc=58>

5) COMMUNITY GROUPS CALL FOR AN END TO SMOKING BAN

July 2008

Several community organizations are calling for the smoking ban in federal prisons to be lifted.

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and the Native Women's Association of Canada say that the ban is limiting aboriginal prisoners' access to tobacco for ceremonial and spiritual purposes such as smudging.

Approximately one third of women in federal prisons are Aboriginal.

Tobacco and any instruments used to light tobacco are now considered contraband in the federal prisons.

The groups are also criticizing the Correctional Service of Canada for backtracking on the full smoking ban for guards. They are calling the about-face hypocritical and questioning whether the intent of the ban is really for the worker's health.

In the original plan, guards were not going to be allowed to smoke on prison property. After complaints from guards, the Correctional Service changed the rules so that guards can now smoke in a designated area in the parking lot just outside the fence.

Prisoners are not allowed to smoke at all.

Sources articles:

http://www.elizabethfry.ca/caefs_e.htm

6) ASHLEY SMITH'S DEATH PREVENTABLE SAYS OMBUDSMAN

July 2008

A report by the ombudsman for Canada's prison system says that the death of 19-year-old Ashley Smith was preventable.

Ashley Smith was found unconscious in her segregation cell in the Grand Valley Institution in Ontario late last year.

She died later in hospital of what police described as self-initiated asphyxiation.

Originally incarcerated at age 16 for throwing crab apples at a postal worker, Ashley ended up spending years behind bars after receiving more charges while in prison.

Her entire time in federal prison was spent in solitary confinement.

Howard Sapers, the Correctional Investigator, said Ashley Smith did not receive proper care, treatment and support during her brief period of incarceration in the federal system.

He made more than a dozen recommendations in his report including improvements in responding to medical emergencies and better policies around the use of segregation and the use of force.

Sapers said that what troubles him the most is that he has been calling for many of these changes for years yet there has been little done.

He is again calling on the government and Correctional Service of Canada to take immediate action in order to prevent further deaths behind bars.

Three guards and a supervisor have been charged with criminal negligence causing death in connection with Ashley Smith's death.

Stockwell Day, the Public Safety minister, is refusing to comment on the report, claiming the guards right to a fair trial would be jeopardized.

Opposition critics are outraged, saying his rationale doesn't apply to most of the recommendations, as they are addressing systemic issues in the prison system and not specifics that would affect the trial.

Sources articles:

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/24/smith-report.html>

<http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/newstoday/article/337337---->
<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=c3cd6e94-0a10-4d8a-ac34-f050f649da0b>
http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/newsroom/releases/20080624_e.asp

7) INTERNAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS UNDER FIRE IN ASHLEY SMITH'S CASE

July 2008

Prison authorities are being harshly criticized for their disregard of the internal grievance procedure in the case of Ashley Smith.

Ashley Smith was 19 years old when she was found unconscious in her segregation cell in the Grand Valley Institution in Ontario last year.

She died later in hospital of what police described as self-initiated asphyxiation.

Ashley struggled with mental health issues and spent almost all her time in the adult system in segregation.

A grievance protesting the harsh conditions of Smith's solitary confinement was submitted one month before her death. That grievance was not looked until one month AFTER her death. Prison rules stipulate that urgent grievances need to be addressed within two weeks.

Some are saying that if the system had addressed her grievance, it may have saved her life.

At the time of her death Smith was alone in a bare cell 23 hours a day.

Kim Pate, executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, an advocacy group for women in prison, visited Ashley regularly.

The last time she saw Ashley, she was wearing only a loose garment called a security gown and was allowed no personal items in her cell.

The two had to speak to one another through the closed cell door.

Kim Pate not only filed a grievance that day, but also spoke to warden at the prison and senior officials in the Correctional Service and told them that she considered the conditions of Ashley's confinement illegal.

Ashley's death has sparked numerous investigations and calls for change, both within the federal system and within the youth system in New Brunswick where she was held for two years.

The Correctional Investigator, Howard Sapers, says his office has long

argued the prisoner grievance process in federal prisons is dysfunctional and ineffective. He says that Ashley Smith's experiences underline and emphasize many of the failings of the process.

Source Articles:

<http://news.therecord.com/News/CanadaWorld/article/384005>

8) HARPER STACKS PAROLE BOARD WITH FORMER COPS, GUARDS

July 2008

The Harper government is filling the National Parole board with former police officers and prison guards.

Almost two thirds of people who are the new appointments to the Parole Board used to be either a cop or prison guard.

This trend is being criticized by opposition MP's and by the John Howard Society. They accuse the government of further extending their get-tough justice ideology into the all parts of the prison system.

Opposition MP's say that this in combination with other measures the government has taken to increase the role of police officers in the criminal justice system indicates the government is in danger of "politicizing" police forces across the country.

Previous to the Harper government there were only a small handful of former police officers and guards appointed.

Parole board appointments are proposed by the Public Safety minister and ratified by cabinet.

The parole board has the authority to grant, deny, or revoke parole for all federal prisoners. They also have jurisdiction over all provincial prisoners except for those in Quebec and Ontario, as they are the only provinces that continue to have their own parole boards.

Source Articles:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080629.wparoleboard0629/BNStory/National/home>

9) ONE THIRD OF KIDS IN CARE END UP IN JAIL

July 2008

New research shows that children in government care are more likely to get charged with a crime than they are to finish high school.

The findings are documented in a report from B.C.'s representative for children and youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.

The research shows that more than one third of kids in care are going to jail, despite the overall decrease in youth in prison in B.C.

And many of these kids are ending up in the adult prison system.

The report suggests that reasons for this stem from abuse the kids experience before going into care as well as mistreatment while in care.

The majority of these young people who end up in jail require intensive support as they struggle mental health issues, learning disabilities, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

The report makes a number of recommendations focused on preventing children from going into care in the first place. These include more accessible medical support for pregnant women, good quality daycare, stable affordable housing, and better job opportunities for parents.

For adolescents already in care, Turpel-Lafond recommends more stable placements, so children are not moved between multiple foster homes.

Source Articles:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=c9aad69a-b034-4c00-a96e-b2ac360ecc7e>

10) NB YOUTH ADVOCATE CALLS JUSTICE BILL "KNEE-JERK REACTION"

July 2008

New Brunswick's Child and Youth Advocate is calling the proposed federal youth justice bill a "knee-jerk reaction".

Bernard Richard says the government is responding to isolated instances of violent youth crime with Bill C-25.

The Bill proposes two changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

It would allow a judge to order a youth to jail before a trial by finding the accused is a danger to the public or has previously broken conditions of release.

It also adds deterrence and denunciation to the principles of sentencing youth.

This deterrence principle contradicts findings from a recent BC study that shows that lengthy prison sentences do not deter youth from committing

crimes. The study instead found that prison was more likely to bring youth deeper into the criminal world.

Richards says that both changes run the risk of sending many more youths to jail, which is exactly the problem the Youth Criminal Justice Act was meant to fix.

The youth incarceration rate in Canada used to be one of the highest in the world. It has steadily declined since the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003.

Bill C-25 has passed second reading in the house and is currently before the Justice and Human Rights committee.

Source Articles:

<http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/news/article/343675>

http://www.prisonjustice.ca/starkravenarticles/youth_deter_0108.html

11) OUTSPOKEN PRISONER WINS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

July 2008

Peter Collins has won a human rights award for helping educate other prisoners about preventing HIV infection.

Peter Collins is serving a life sentence at the Bath Institution, a medium-security prison near Kingston, Ontario.

He has been outspoken on a number of human rights issues behind bars and has showcased his artwork in several venues outside the prison.

Peter received the honours as part of the 2008 Canadian Award for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, organized by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

He received the award for his work counselling and educating other prisoners about HIV.

Peter's work helped generate initiatives such as a pilot project that set up safer tattoo sites at six prisons. That project was cancelled by the Harper government shortly after it started in 2006.

Peter's fight for harm reduction programs sometimes led to clashes with authorities, but that did not dissuade him from continuing his work.

Prisoners are 20 times more likely to have hepatitis C and 10 times more likely to be infected with HIV than the non-prison population.

Source Articles:

<http://news.aol.ca/article/ot-collins-080617/260011/>
http://www.xtra.ca/public/viewstory.aspx?AFF_TYPE=1&STORY_ID=4937&PUB_TEMPLATE_ID=2
<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/ottawa/story/2008/06/17/ot-collins-080617.html>

12) HEALTH ACTIVISTS DEMAND PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE

July 2008

Health activists are urging the Harper government to immediately implement needle-exchange programs in federal prisons.

They say the rising number of prisoners infected with HIV and other diseases poses a serious threat to public health.

The rates of HIV infection behind bars is 10 times higher than that of the general population. Hepatitis C is 20 times more prevalent on the inside.

Prisoners often resort to makeshift needles made from things like ballpoint pens to inject themselves and pass around to other prisoners.

While federal prisons do offer condoms and bleach for sterilization, they are often hard to access.

Richard Elliot, executive director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network says that these sterilization methods not enough. What is needed, he says, is needle exchange programs.

He points out that eventually prisoners get out of prison and can bring the infectious diseases into the community.

A pilot project that introduced safer tattooing to curb the rising number of prison infections was cancelled in 2006 by federal Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day.

Stockwell Day says that he does not support "facilitating the use of illegal drugs in our prisons system." Adding that, "like all Canadians, inmates must take responsibility for their own health."

Anne Marie DiCenso, executive director of Toronto-based Prisoners HIV/AIDS Support Action Network, says not offering clean needles costs the health system more in the long run.

Several other countries, including Switzerland and Iran, offer needle-exchange programs to prisoners.

Source Articles:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=febb3f3f-8ac1-4f90-ad40-495d06583076>

13) TOUGH-ON-CRIME POLICIES INEFFECTIVE, U.S. SENTENCING EXPERT CONTENDS

May 2008

Canada's tough on crime policies are being criticized by those familiar with the impacts of such policies.

Marc Mauer is the executive director of the US-based Sentencing Project.

He says tough on crime approaches in the United States have produced record levels of incarceration, huge taxpayer costs and racialized prisons.

Many people claim that the streets will be safer with more people locked up. But, as Mauer points out, "If that were the case, then the US should be the safest country in the world, which it is clearly not."

The recently passed Tackling Violent Crime Act here in Canada echoes the punitive approach to crime adopted in the United States back in the 1980s.

The new Act increases mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes and impaired driving. It also requires those convicted of three serious sexual or violent offences to prove why they should not be jailed indefinitely.

The Harper government pushed the bill through even though crime rates in Canada have been falling steadily since the early '90s.

In the United States, three-strike laws and widespread use of mandatory minimum sentences have resulted in a record 2.3 million people behind bars.

And there has been a disproportionate impact on communities of colour. For example, African-Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites.

The war on drugs has helped fuel the incarceration boom in the U.S. The imprisonment rates for drug offences have increased tremendously in the past 25 years.

Mauer noted that at the same time Canada is going down this tough on crime road, many in the US are backing away from similar approaches. They have proven, among other things, to be expensive and ineffective.

Many are also concerned about the impact of these policies on communities and children. A million and a half children now have a parent who's locked up in prison on any given day in the US. In black communities, one out of every 14 children has a parent behind bars.

The impact on children is enormous both in terms of the loss of financial and emotional support and the shame and stigma associated with having a parent in prison.

Source Articles:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/politics/story.html?id=4c4d7eec-daff-4a7e-b53a-057dd7102746&k=85304>

14) REPORTERS FINDING IT HARDER TO GET INSIDE CANADIAN PRISONS

May 2008

Reporters are finding it harder to get inside Canadian prisons.

This is because the Correctional Service of Canada has been re-emphasizing its strict media access guidelines to prison staff across the country.

Prisons can deny access to the media for a variety of reasons.

One reason for denial is if there are concerns that the coverage could re-victimize those who suffered from the prisoner's crimes.

Requests can also be denied if they are deemed "contrary to the objectives of the prisoner's correctional plan."

Reporters must outline why they want to interview a prisoner so the request can be reviewed by the prisoner's case management team.

The policy also requires the prison to consider how a story would affect the safety of people outside its walls.

Some reporters, who have spoken with specific prisoners for years, now have to tell a prison media handler each time the reason why they want an interview.

Prisoner advocates are concerned that this is an imposition on prisoner's right to free speech. There are also concerns about this policy is limiting access and hence increasing the secrecy of what is happening behind the walls.

Source Articles:

<http://www.cjfw.ca/node/691024>

15) LACK OF PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE CONTRIBUTING TO SPREAD OF HIV/HEP C

May 2008

New research into injection drug use shows that Canadian prisons are contributing to the spread HIV and Hepatitis C.

In response to the results, researchers are renewing calls for needle-exchange programs inside prisons.

The research found that up to 15 per cent of incarcerated drug users report injecting heroin and cocaine while behind bars. The majority of these injections were done with used syringes.

Researchers are calling for a "co-ordinated public health response" to address the risk of disease transmission not only to protect prisoners, but also the "home communities" they return to.

They say all the harm reduction efforts on the outside are being compromised by the needle sharing and lack of harm reduction measures behind bars.

Several groups and reports have advocated for prison-based needle exchanges, including the Ontario Medical Association and by a committee of the Correctional Service of Canada itself.

The HIV infection rate among prisoners is 10 times higher than in the general population. Hepatitis C is almost 30 times more prevalent behind bars than in the general population.

According to the Correctional Service of Canada, there are no plans to implement a needle exchange program inside prisons.

Source Articles:

http://www.prisonjustice.ca/starkravenarticles/need_needle_exchange_0508.html

16) TORIES TARGET YOUTH IN TOUGH ON CRIME AGENDA

Aug 2008

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson says he will introduce legislation before the end of the year to increase sentences for youths convicted of serious crimes.

The Conservatives promised in the past election campaign to change the Youth Criminal Justice Act. They want to make it mandatory for anyone over the age of 14 to be sentenced as an adult for convictions such as murder, manslaughter and aggravated sexual assault.

This despite research that shows that sentencing does not work as a deterrent for youth and that the complexities of adolescence are not best

served by treating youth as adults.

Source Articles:

<http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/newstoday/article/384252>

http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5jsNnV_q8GHHFlh8R1wNMoPsTGFgA

http://www.prisonjustice.ca/starkravenarticles/youth_deter_0108.html

17) TORIES LAUNCH PILOT PROJECT TO ELECTRONICALLY TRACK PRISONERS ON PAROLE, STATUTORY RELEASE

Aug 2008

The Tories are launching a pilot project to electronically track people living on parole.

Stockwell Day, the minister of Public Safety, says that the program will target 30 federal “high-risk offenders”. He did not provide details as to how “high risk offender” will be defined.

These prisoners who are living in the community either on Parole or statutory release will be tracked using ankle bracelets and GPS technology.

The program will be launched in Ontario starting in September and could be expanded nationally after the one-year pilot period.

The pilot project alone will cost about \$600,000.

This is the same amount of money that it cost to run the safer tattooing pilot program aimed at reducing HIV and Hepatitis C infections in prison.

That program was cancelled by the Tories almost two years ago despite research showing that safer tattooing reduces rates of infection.

Source Articles:

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com%2Fservlet%2Fstory%2FLAC.20080811.CRIME11%2FTPStory%2FNational&ord=134865023&brand=theglobeandmail&force_login=true

<http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/media/nr/2008/nr20080811-eng.aspx>

http://www.prisonjustice.ca/starkravenarticles/tattoo_cancel_1206.html

18) TORIES SHOW LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF PRISON LIFE WITH MANDATORY WORK PLAN

Aug 2008

Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day says the Tories want to make it mandatory for prisoners to work during their incarceration.

Minister Day says he also wants to see people in training programs, including apprenticeship programs.

Prisoner advocacy groups say that most prisoners are interested in working, to keep busy and engaged inside and to make money. Prisoners complain that there is a lack of opportunity to learn skills that get will get them well-paid, regular work on the outside.

Many of the programs that taught people trades in the prison have been cut in the past two decades.

Many of the current programs involve low skill manual labour and do not teach men or women marketable job skills. One of the few options for women in the local prison is taking a short course to learn construction flagging or to work as a telemarketer.

The John Howard society has accused the Tories of political opportunism with this and other tough on crime announcements.

Source Articles:

<http://www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/story.html?id=730465>

19) VETO BY TORIES IN PRISONER TRANSFER REBUKED BY COURTS

Aug 2008

A Federal Court Justice has ordered Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day to reconsider his decision on a prisoner transfer.

Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day blocked 25-year-old Arend Getkate's request to serve out the rest of his sentence in Canada.

Getkate is originally from Belleville, Ontario and has served five years of a 30-year sentence in a Georgia prison for child molestation.

Getkate's request was approved by prison authorities in Canada and the US. But Minister Day vetoed the transfer arguing Getkate's presence in Canada would threaten the security of Canadians.

Federal Court Justice Michael Kelen called Day's argument "wholly unreasonable".

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=36b791b8-d1d8-4778-8dee-f4403a204551>

20) COURT TO REVIEW TORIES NEW STANCE ON DEATH PENALTY

Aug 2008

One of the Federal Government's most controversial policy changes will be put on trial later this month.

The Federal Court of Canada has scheduled a two-day judicial review of Canada's new policy on the death penalty.

Last October, Prime Minister Stephen Harper cancelled a long-standing policy where officials automatically sought clemency for Canadian prisoners on death row in other countries.

Harper's decision specifically referred to Ronald Smith – an Alberta man on death-row in Montana. Smith was convicted of killing two men in the early 1980's.

Harper told MP's Canadian officials had been ordered to halt all efforts to save Smith's life. He said seeking clemency for a double-killer was sending the "wrong signal" to Canadians at a time when his Conservative government was pushing a law-and-order agenda targeting violent crime.

A legal team representing Ronald Smith will argue against government lawyers in Toronto starting September 29th.

Source:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=b6938a36-e7cb-4e01-8fed-988a64722f74>

http://www.prisonjustice.ca/starkravenarticles/torie_cap_punish_0108.html

21) CANCELLATION OF MOTHER-BABY PROGRAM CRITICIZED BY GOVT CHILD ADVOCATE

Aug 2008

BC's child and youth advocate says she's disappointed BC Corrections has cancelled its mother and baby program.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond says babies separated from their mothers will suffer more than if they spend time in jail together.

BC Corrections quietly cancelled a program allowing women serving time to give birth to babies and keep them while in prison.

Corrections spokesperson Lisa Lapointe says the program at Alouette

Correctional Centre for Women was cancelled because they couldn't guarantee the safety of the babies.

Turpel-Lafond says she reviewed the program and found there was no risk to the babies.

She says the mother and baby bonding is extremely important. It's necessary for the health of the babies and it gives moms a reason to reform.

Turpel-Lafond says wrecking the family unit will only perpetuate criminal behavior from the parents and the children.

Source:

http://www.ctvbc.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20080820/BC_Child_Watchdog_Children_080820/20080820/?hub=BritishColumbiaHome

22) PRISON WARDEN DISMISSED FROM ACCW

July 2008

Stark Raven has learned BC Corrections fired the former warden of Alouette Correctional Centre for Women.

Brenda Tole worked for BC Corrections for 36 years. Her last post was Warden of the provincial jail for women in Maple Ridge.

Tole has told us that she was dismissed by BC Corrections in June of last year. She believes it has to do with her and BC Corrections diverging views on how the jail should be run.

Tole supported progressive programming at the jail such as the mother and baby program. Since Tole was dismissed, many therapeutic and educational programs at the Alouette Correctional Centre for Women have been cancelled.

23) TORIES CONTINUE WITH VICTIMS RIGHTS AGENDA WITH FOCUS ON VICTIM SURCHARGE

Aug 2008

Federal prisoners may have to share their wages with victims, according to the department of Justice.

Rob Moore is the parliamentary secretary to Justice Minister Rob Nicholson. He says the government is considering this plan after it was proposed by federal victims ombudsman Steve Sullivan.

Sullivan told the ministry that victims programs in several provinces are floundering. He says it's because judges are not collecting a mandatory victim surcharge when they sentence people.

People are required to pay 15 percent of their fine or fifty to one-hundred dollars if they're sentenced to jail. This money goes towards victim services. But judges have been waiving the fee based on their assessment of the person's ability to pay it.

Sullivan urged the Justice ministry to make the surcharge automatic. Or, to dock the pay of federal prisoners up to one-hundred dollars. Prisoners earn a maximum of \$6.90 per day.

The office for a Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime was created by the Conservative government in 2007 and Steve Sullivan was appointed to the post of victim's ombudsman.

Before he was ombudsman, Mr. Sullivan was the Executive Director and the President of Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) for more than a decade. The CRCVC is an organization that does "advocacy for victims and survivors of violent crime in Canada".

They are sponsored by the Canadian Police Association and tend to support a more punitive approach to violence and harm, that falls in line with the Tories tough on crime agenda.

For example CRCVC supports legislation such as Bill C-484, the "Unborn Victims of Crime Act" and Bill C-2, the tough on crime omnibus bill, officially known as the "Tackling Violent Crime Act".

More on:

*Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime: <http://www.crcvc.ca/en/>

*Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime
<http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/index.html>

Source Article:

<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/news/story.html?id=6f5a8c79-f07a-4c1c-a838-ac5f41438f63>

24) TORIES PRE-ELECTION HYPE TARGETS DRUGS IN PRISON WITH MORE SURVEILLANCE

Aug 2008

The Tories are ramping up their tough on crime announcements in advance of the looming fall federal election.

Most recently, the Minister of Public Safety, Stockwell Day announced that

the government is spending \$120 million on increased surveillance measures to tackle the issue of drugs in prison.

The plan involves a number of security-based initiatives.

Security around prisons will be beefed up and there will be a focus on intelligence gathering inside and outside the prison walls.

This "intelligence gathering" will be done by some of the 165 new special security officers and administrators that they plan to hire over the next five years.

The number of drug-sniffing dogs in the prisons will be tripled and more x-ray machines and ion scanners installed.

The ion scanning procedure looks for drug residue and it is highly controversial. It has been continually criticized for finding false positives and denying innocent people entry for visits.

Even the guards and prison administrators acknowledge that their detecting machines can pick up traces of narcotics on people who have never handled or done drugs. The traces come from things such as paper money in circulation, which sometimes is used to snort cocaine.

The government also plans on creating a national database to track visitors to prisons.

Overall, this will mean a stricter visiting policy.

Craig Jones, executive director of the John Howard Society, says this policy will make it harder for prisoners to stay in touch with families, increasing the level of tension inside prisons.

This announcement comes as part of the federal prison review panel recommendations.

The prison review panel consisted of small group of people handpicked by the Tories.

They spent only 6 months reviewing the system and had a focus on guards and right-wing victims rights ideology.

The review panel was headed by Rob Sampson, who was involved in starting Canada's first private prison during Mike Harris' government in Ontario.

Stockwell Day argues that these measures will help make it easier for prisoners to come out of prison clean.

Community groups are criticizing this decision saying the war on drugs control approach has not worked outside nor inside the prison.

They say that it is more productive to support prisoners with harm reduction, detox and treatment, community support and show them the respect that the system expects them to show to others.

They also argue that the prison environment itself contributes to many people using drugs to survive the dehumanizing conditions they experience while inside.

It is also kind of ironic all these resources are being used on this, when most prisoners are prescribed high doses of strong anti-psychotic and psychiatric pharmaceutical drugs on the inside.

This focus on visitors and security also doesn't address the fact that drugs are often brought in by guards.

The BC prison guard union is praising this announcement.

The changes will be instituted at all federal maximum and medium-security prisons.

Source Articles:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080829.wprison-drugs0829/BNStory/National/homev>

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/08/29/prisons-drugs.html>

http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20080829/BC_prison_drugs_080829/20080829?hub=Canada

http://www.prisonjustice.ca/starkravenarticles/prison_panel_1207.html

25) AUSTRALIA ENDS AUTOMATIC JAILING OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

Aug 2008

Australia's Labour government is ending the controversial practice of putting all asylum seekers in detention camps in various Pacific Ocean islands.

The government announced last month that detention will now be a last resort and no children will ever be held in such camps.

The automatic detention policy was adopted by the country's former Conservative government after 9/11. It called for everyone seeking asylum in Australia — including children of claimants — to be detained in the island camps.

One camp will be retained on the Australian territory of Christmas Island, near Indonesia.

However, camps built on Nauru and in remote parts of the Australian Outback will be shut.

Human rights groups have applauded the Labour government's decision.

At times, detainees who had spent years in the camps launched widespread protests.

Some even stitched their lips closed to symbolize their predicament.

Source Article:

<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2008/07/29/australia-detention-camps-asylum.html>

26) FOUR IRAQI'S SUE U.S. OVER TORTURE AT ABU GHRAIB

July 2008

Four Iraqi men are suing US military contractors for torturing them at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad.

The men, who were all released without charge, have brought separate lawsuits before the US courts.

One of the men says he was beaten, threatened with dogs and given electric shocks during four years at the prison.

CACI International, one of two companies named in the lawsuits, dismisses the accusations as "baseless".

US Military personnel have already been tried on criminal charges and imprisoned for abuses at Abu Ghraib. No civilian contractors have been tried.

Thousands of US civilians are working for private military companies in Iraq. Many of them are in very sensitive roles such as in intelligence gathering and in combat.

Source Article:

<http://sumoud.tao.ca/?q=node/view/1038>

27) U.S SUPREME COURT RULES LETHAL INJECTION CONSTITUTIONAL

May 2008

The US Supreme Court has ruled that Kentucky's lethal injection procedures for execution are constitutional.

Many states have now resumed executions after they were on hold for nearly 8 months while awaiting the Court's decision.

The court disagreed with the argument that lethal injection constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

The lethal injection procedure uses three drugs to sedate, paralyze and kill people. Similar methods are used in more than 30 states.

The argument against the three-drug protocol is that if the initial anesthetic does not take hold, the other two drugs can cause excruciating pain. One of those drugs, a paralytic, would render the prisoner unable to express any discomfort.

The ruling does though, leave open subsequent challenges to lethal injection practices if a state refused to adopt an alternative method that significantly reduced the risk of severe pain.

The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty says that the ruling sidesteps the critical issues surrounding the death penalty debate.

They say that the Court did not address basic issues of fairness, bias, ineffective lawyers or innocent people being convicted and sentenced to death.

During the 8 months when there were no executions in the US there were several major developments in relation to the death penalty.

Four more people were exonerated and freed from death row after evidence of their innocence emerged.

New Jersey abolished the death penalty, while Nebraska was left with no effective death penalty after its Supreme Court ruled the electric chair unconstitutional. Nebraska was the only state with the electric chair as its sole means of execution.

The American Bar Association also recently called for a nationwide moratorium on executions.

Source Articles:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/us-supreme-court-rules-lethal-injections-constitutional-20080418>

http://www.ajc.com/news/content/news/stories/2008/04/16/lethalinj.html?cxntnid=bn_2008-04-16_10_21_id138_e

<http://www.ncadp.org/news.cfm?articleID=212>

28) 1200 PEOPLE EXECUTED WORLDWIDE IN 2007

May 2008

Worldwide, at least 1,200 people were executed in 2007.

Many more were killed by the state, in secret, in countries including China, Mongolia and Viet Nam.

More than 25 000 people are estimated to be on death row across the world.

Almost 90 per cent of all known executions took place in five countries: China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the USA.

Amnesty International has been able to confirm at least 470 executions by China – the highest overall figure. However, the organization has said that the true figure for China is undoubtedly much higher.

China classifies the death penalty as a state secret.

Amnesty International is calling for the veil of secrecy surrounding the death penalty to be lifted.

2007 was also the year where there was good news about the death penalty. The United Nations General Assembly voted to end the use of the death penalty.

Source Article:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/secrecy-surrounds-death-penalty-20080415>

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How to Podcast Stark Raven

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WHAT IS A PODCAST?

A podcast is a way of delivering a file to your computer automatically. The file is in mp3 file format, a compressed audio format. It allows you to then listen to the audio on your computer or put it on your mp3 player and listen to it on the go. This means you can listen to Stark Raven interviews at your convenience.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DOWNLOADING A PODCAST AND SUBSCRIBING TO A PODCAST?

When you download a single podcast episode, that one file gets saved onto your computer or MP3 player. It is then up to you to play it, delete it or download another. When you subscribe to a podcast, the latest podcast episode is saved to your computer or MP3 player. Every time a new podcast episode of the program becomes available your podcasting software (Itunes, Ipodder etc) will automatically download it to your computer or MP3 player.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE THE STARK RAVEN PODCAST:

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Under the Advanced menu, select Subscribe To Podcast...
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Itunes is a program you can use to listen to audio files.
You can download Itunes for free from:
<http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>

Another podcast receiver is Ipodder. Download for free from:
<http://ipodder.sourceforge.net/download/index.php>

Juice is free, open source software for both Mac and PC. It's designed to manage podcasts and has a built-in directory with thousands of listed podcast feeds. <http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/index.php>

Once downloaded, the files can be played on your computers media player (Itunes, winamp, realplayer, windows media player etc)

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**More Info on the Stark Raven Media Collective**  
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The Stark Raven Media Collective takes a closer look at prisons and criminalization.

Stark Raven produces a radio program three times a month featuring in-depth interviews, news and analysis on issues related to prisons and criminalization, both locally and from around the world.

The radio program has been on the air for 20 years.

Topics we cover include: Canadian prison conditions, detention & the war on terror, alternatives to prison, criminalization of migration & poverty,

privatization, security certificates, government policy, political prisoners, policing, the death penalty, the personal & political impacts of incarceration, prisoner's writings.

The collective's other activities include organizing community events and maintaining <http://www.prisonjustice.ca> - an online resource centre on Canadian prison issues.

Feel free to contact us if you have a story that you think we should cover on the show or have any feedback. Stark Raven is always seeking new volunteers and contributors for help with interviews, news research, musical contributions, web work and more.

The Stark Raven Media Collective is made up of volunteers:
Emily Aspinwall, Tiffany Chong, Louise Croft, Marge Lam

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Vancouver, BC. Coast Salish Territory. V6A 4J1

LIVE RADIO:

Mon 7-8pm, (1st-3rd Monday, Pacific Time. Vancouver Co-op Radio)
*102.7 FM in Vancouver
*<http://www.coopradio.org>
*Satellite: Starchoice #845
*Various cable frequencies around BC

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Join our monthly email digest, featuring links to audio & show podcast, recent news and upcoming show highlights. To join, email us!

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Support Stark Raven: Become a Member of Co-op Radio  
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Support broadcast space for programs such as Stark Raven. Become a Member of Co-op Radio and help keep independent media alive!

Vancouver Co-operative Radio, CFRO, 102.7FM is a non-commercial, co-operatively-owned, listener-supported, community radio station. Located in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Co-op Radio strives to provide a space for under-represented and marginalized communities. Support Stark Raven as we cut through the mainstream crime sensationalism

with in-depth interviews, news and analysis on the role of prisons in our society and consequences of criminalizing affected communities.

Memberships start at \$25/year. For more details on becoming a member of Co-op Radio check out: <http://www.coopradio.org/member/index.html> or just email us at Stark Raven, starkraven (at) prisonjustice (dot) ca, and we can hook you up as a member.