

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

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March 8 -- International Women's Day

## Some Changes in the Incarceration of Women

To begin with some history: In 1980, there were about 13,000 women total incarcerated in federal and state prisons combined and they made up about 4% of the prison population at that time.

By 2010, this number had increased 646%, compared with an increase of 419% for men during the same period. This meant that, in 2010, there were 112,000 women in state and federal prisons and 205,000 women altogether in prisons and jails. Women now make up 7% to the imprisoned population.

A large part of the increase in the number of incarcerated women is the result of harsher sentencing policies brought about by changes in sentencing laws, particularly those concerning street drug convictions. The proportion of women imprisoned for street drug convictions is more than that for men. In 1986, 12% of women in state prison were doing time for street drug convictions, compared to 8% of men. As of 2009, almost 26% of women in prison were doing time for street drug convictions, compared to just over 17% of men.

In the year 2000, African-American women were incarcerated at a rate six times that of "white" women, and Hispanic women at a rate 1.8 times that of "white" women. About 12,000 women were being held in federal prisons by 2010. For "white" women, almost half of the increase in incarceration comes from an increased number of property crime convictions. Methamphetamine is considered to be disproportionately used by "whites" and Hispanics.

New York state had a decline of 1,002 women incarcerated for street drug convictions from 2000 to 2009. The entire (99.4%) population of women street drug convicted prisoners was made of African American and Hispanics, about 70% of the total of each group. Although there has been several years of a modest decline in state prison populations, the

overall rate of incarceration in the United States remains at *five times the rate in 1970*. There are now fewer African-American women in prison, but growing numbers of "white" women incarcerated.

### ARE YOU ADOPTED?

*[Editors' note: Each adoption is a life changing event for at least two women.]*

Currently, about 5 to 6 million or 2 to 3% of Americans are adopted, but estimates of adoptees involved in the police, court and penal system range from about 10% to as high as 25%. Those involved in this work now recognize that adoption is a traumatic event for everyone involved--and one that can last a lifetime. New work concerning infant brain development has shown that bonding occurs with mothers even before birth--examples include the maternal heartbeat, voice, body sounds, and even emotions.

There was a time when adopted children were encouraged to think of themselves as "chosen." Even then, someone had to choose not to keep them, and that someone was their birth mother. The reasons, though valid to the parent(s), are immaterial to the child. Commonly, an adopted child grows up with a sense of not being part of the "tribe." Not in looks, not in sharing ties to no-longer living relatives--and they may not be considered like other siblings are with living relatives. They are pre-programmed to look like, talk like, act like, and think like people they most often cannot recall ever even meeting.

It doesn't help that there is still a great deal of secrecy surrounding adoption and many are unable to get their adoption papers or original birth certificates. Seeking out and knowing the truth can be very helpful to self-esteem, as are strong attachments to others while growing up and as adults. This is a difficult reality to come to terms with; many do meet the challenge.

## Derechos humanos y el papa Francisco

El portavoz del Vaticano, defendiendo al Papa, extendió su argumento al resto de la Iglesia como si ya no estuviese más que prodada la implicación de la jeraquía católica argentina y vaticana en el ocultamiento de las violaciones a los derechos humanos y la colusión con los crímenes de la dictadura de los 70s.

Las sospechas que recaen sobre el hoy papa Francisco datan de la época en que era superior de la Compañía de Jesús en la Argentine, en 1976. En ese periodo fueron secuestrados dos misioneros jesuitas, Orlando Yorio y Francisco Jalics. Ambos trabajaban en la villa porteña del Bajo Flores y fueron torturados y liberados cinco meses más tarde.

Los dos curas jesuitas fueron Orlando Yorio, ya fallecido, y Francisco Jalics, que reside en Alemania desde 1978. Jalics rompió el silencio por medio de la pagina web de los jesuitas alemanes en el 15 de marzo de 2013. Dice el: "No puedo pronunciarme sobre el papel del padre Bergoglio (ahora el papa Francisco) en aquellos hechos....Estoy reconciliado con los acontecimientos y considero que ha llegado la hora de dar el caso por terminado."

Jalics anota que la Junta Militar mató a unas 30.000 personas en uno o dos años, tanto guerrilleros de izquierda como civiles inocentes. Una abogada dijo después de una audiecia de Bergoglio que "seguramente este Papa no es una gran figura de la defensa de los derechos humanos."

-por el periodico *Pagina/12* de Argentina

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To receive the Newsletter each month, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address)--up to 12 at one time.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests, in order to receive the yearly holiday card/new calendar.

Also, please note that the only address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. We have discovered that some resource lists unfortunately are giving out an incorrect address.

Remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our monthly Newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/coaliton.html> -- This is a GREAT site!

We continue to appreciate and depend on readers' donations of stamps & checks

## Poverty Rate Numbers

In 2011, New Hampshire had the lowest proportion of people living in poverty, with 8.8%, and Mississippi the highest, at 22.6%.

The number of Texans living in poverty rose for a third consecutive year in 2011, adding more than 214,000 people to total 4.6 million people living in poverty there. That is 18.5% of the Texas population, 3% higher than the country as a whole.

For metropolitan areas of the country, the highest and third-highest are in Texas: McAllen-Edinburgh at 37.7% and El Paso at 24.7%.

--*Dallas Morning News*, December 31, 2012

## RESOURCES

"Healing a Broken System" from the Drug Policy Alliance, in November of 2012--an updated and revised edition of its 2009 report.

It states that more than 200,000 veterans are behind bars and one in five current-conflict veterans in VA care are diagnosed with substance abuse disorder. The report calls for alternatives to incarceration, increased access to overdose prevention programs and medication-assisted therapy. And also for medical marijuana and MDMA for PTSD.

"Torture in United States Prisons--Evidence of Human Rights Violations" 2nd edition, Edited by Bonnie Kerness, coordinator, Prison Watch, 93 pages. It includes chapters on Isolation, Communications Management Units, Health & Medical Services and Conditions, Mental Illness, Use of Force and Devices of Torture, Contraband Surveillance Watch, Racism, and Women in Prison.

"Survivors Manual--Survival in Solitary" This is an 88 page manual written by and for people living in control units. This book and the one above are both available from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) at 89 Market Street, 6th floor, Newark NJ 07102.

## **Our Heartfelt Thanks to RESIST!**

In February, the Coalition was once again honored to receive a grant from RESIST, Inc. a national progressive foundation at 259 Elm Street, Somerville MA 02144, 617-623-5110. They asked us to let people know of this work, as a form of outreach to potential donors and applicants.