



Opening the Doors

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNCIL OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES OF ONTARIO

"When thee builds a prison, thee had better build with the thought ever in thy mind that thee and thy children may occupy the cells."

— Elizabeth Fry 1780 - 1845

The Female Refuges Act

From the late nineteenth century until 1958, The Female Refuges Act was part of the network of pervasive control society exerted over women, particularly working-class women, who did not fit the strict standards of conduct for women at that time.

Under the broad committal provisions of the Act, women could be imprisoned in a refuge camp having committed no real offense except for staying out late, or for behaviour that was considered promiscuous.

All refuges operated some type of industry in which the women worked long hours for no pay. The Toronto Elizabeth Fry Society saw the injustices caused by this Act and was primarily responsible for the repeal of the offensive provisions of the Act in 1958.¹

In 1991, Velma Demerson was invited to speak at the Toronto Elizabeth Fry Society Annual General Meeting about her personal experiences with The Female Refuges Act under which she was arrested and put in jail for almost a year for the "offence" of associating with a Chinese man. Although the events took place when Velma was 18 years old, the impact of her treatment at that time has remained with her to the present day. The following is a partial reprint of the transcript of her speech at the AGM in 1991, as well as information that she recently provided about her ongoing search for justice.

It was spring of 1939, World War II would commence in September. Most of my life had been spent with my English mother who had divorced my father in 1928. I was 18 years and 8 months old. My mother had a rooming house on Church Street with a tearoom in the front room where she read teacups for 25 cents each. The excitement which plagued a rooming house on Church Street during the depression jangled my nerves and it was decided I should visit my father.

My father was an established businessman in a New Brunswick city. He had married a woman of his own ethnic background and was highly respected in the Greek community.

I had lived in my father's home when I was 15 years old, working four hours a day after school and on Saturdays as a cashier in his theatre. Later, I worked full-time in his restaurant behind the soda fountain.

While visiting my father I was se-

cretly corresponding with my Chinese boyfriend in Toronto. We had been going around together since I was 17 years old. We agreed when I returned to Toronto I would join him and get married. However, when I arrived he had gambled his money away so we postponed our plans.

On learning I had run off with a Chinese man my father came to Toronto. There was a loud banging at the door when my boyfriend and I were having breakfast. Two policemen came in followed by my father. I was ordered to get dressed and taken to a place where I was put in a barred cage. Shortly, I was taken into a room and interviewed by a woman. She asked if I had ever slept with anyone else. I felt I would have to damage my character to save my boyfriend from any blame. I said, "Yes."

She asked, "How many?" I said, "Two." She asked me their

names and I gave them. Although I wasn't sure, I told her I was pregnant, hoping that would help. I had never told anyone I was pregnant before. Almost immediately I was taken to a courtroom. I stood with my back towards the judge who sat about 10 feet away. We could hear each other distinctly. There were no seats in the courtroom and I didn't see anyone else until a policeman spoke. He was standing half-way down the room on the left-hand side. He related the address where he found me, my boyfriend's name and that he was wearing a bathrobe and I was wearing pajamas. The judge asked me, "Are you pregnant?" I said, "Yes." He asked, "How far along?" I said, "Three months - I'll get married if you'll just let me out of here long enough." The judge said, "Remanded one week for sentence." I was taken in a black van to a jailhouse. I sat and slept on a bench in a barred enclosure and ate greasy stew at a long table with male prisoners. When I returned to court, the judge said, "You are charged with being incorrigible and I sentence you to one year in the Belmont Home.

On arrival at an immense house I was shown my quarters in a 6-bed dormitory. I was also shown the toilets and told which ones to use, and not to use the one for girls with venereal disease. The girls I met were sentenced to two years or to 18 months definite and six months indefinite. They were 14 to 24 years old. Most of the girls worked in the Home's large commercial laundry. My job was dry-mopping the hardwood floors, and folding sheets with another girl as they came ironed out of the mangle. There was no pay, just bed and board.

When I had been there about six weeks we became alarmed when girls started disappearing. I was among the last batch to be sent to the Mercer Reformatory. The Home was closing down. I was taken to the Mercer with other girls in the

I was ordered to get dressed and taken to a place where I was put in a barred cage. Shortly, I was taken into a room and interviewed by a woman.

back seat of an automobile.

Over the years I have thought that some day I would search for the reason why such a thing could happen. Fifty years later I am able to request my Mercer records under the Freedom of Information Act. Only the Mercer admission register survives.

I learned that I had been sentenced under The Female Refuges Act. Section 15 states: "Any person may bring before a judge any female under the age of 35 years who...is leading an idle and dissolute life."

It further states that: "Any parent or guardian may bring before a judge any female under the age of 21 years who proves unmanageable or incorrigible and the judge may proceed as provided in Section 15."

I found that the official name of the Belmont Home was Toronto Industrial Refuge. The Refuge had been located on Belmont Street since the 19th century.

I found that the date of my transfer did not coincide with the newspaper reports. The newspapers reported the incident three weeks later and there had been opposition after the fact. I found that no notice of the closure of a penal institution had been published in the Provincial or Canada Gazette as required by law. I found there was no Act covering this transfer and it is presumed it was done under The Female Refuges Act.

I found that a neglected girl could enter an industrial or training school without appearing before a magistrate. She could be transferred to an industrial refuge and

again to the Mercer Reformatory. A girl could wind up in a barred cell without having been in court.

The Ontario Female Refuges Act indicates it was taken from the Canada Prisons and Reformatories Act. This Act provides rules for incorrigible offenders. "Refuge" means an institution for young or adult females. In the 19th century, industrial refuges were for girls under 14 years and a house of refuge was a place adult female prisoners could be transferred to from jails operated by men. Other provinces operating under the same federal Act had different names of Acts for incorrigible females slated for industrial refuges.


Churches or their affiliates were given the "privilege" to lock up females. An order-in-council dated May 1917, gave the right to operate industrial refuges to the Toronto Industrial Refuge for Females and to the Good Shepherd Female Refuge in Toronto. The refuges were included in Charitable Institutions under the Department of Welfare. In 1939 there were five in Ontario. They were receiving 10 cents per day per inmate from the province and about three cents from the city.

Section 15 was brought in at the time of the Royal Commission on the Feebleminded and Venereal Disease in 1919. The church, the military, and elitist women requiring cheap domestic help, supported the Commission.

There was intense propaganda that the population was threatened by mental degeneracy. Through the exploitation of female labour, social legislation could be postponed. The



If you would like to get involved with this important cause you may call Velma Demerson at (416) 975-9398. In particular, Velma would be very interested in speaking with any women who may have been sentenced under the Female Refuges Act.

professionals also benefited in their decision-making capacity on feeble-mindedness. A closed court and prison system contributed to the fact that the average person didn't know refuges existed. Yet, thousands of women in Canada worked for years as domestic slaves in reformatories, industrial refuges, and homes for the feeble-minded. 


—by Velma Demerson

Since her speech at the AGM, Velma has written to the Minister of Justice for Canada, the Attorney General of Ontario, the Ombudsman, and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario advising them that she had never been involved in any criminal activity and requesting an apology. Their responses were varied but no apology was ever given. As a last resort, Velma is bringing forth an application to have

the Female Refuges Act declared unconstitutional. A declaration would effectively vindicate her and make it possible to seek compensation for the way that she was treated.

An application to the Superior Court of Justice in Ontario is expected to be heard in approximately three months. The hearing will give her an opportunity to clear her name and obtain justice. As Velma states, "The seizure, stigma and family turmoil that ensues from confining a woman in prison passes down through the generations." At 80 years of age, Velma is anxious to right the wrongs that were perpetrated against her over 60 years ago and to reduce the shame and hurt that time has not erased.

7 Excerpts from The Female Refuges Act, by Jill Copeland, present member of the Board of Directors Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto

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Entertaining Violence

The shocking murder of students at
Columbine High School in Colorado two years
ago prompted high-profile government
hearings in the United States into the
violence proliferating in the entertainment
industry and its' impact on youth.

In addition, President Clinton requested that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) investigate whether the entertainment industry was deliberately marketing violent products to children. The FTC report was released last September with the answer to that question being an unequivocal "yes". What most people do not know, is that these actions were only the latest in some fifty years of similar initiatives.

In **1952**, the U.S. House of Representatives conducted the first House committee hearings on television violence and its impact on children. Since that time, the hearings and studies have continued on both sides of the border and the results have been damning. UNESCO, the American Medical

Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychological Association, National Institute of Mental Health (U.S.), American Academy of Mental Health, and the U.S. Surgeon General, have all made definitive statements about the

relationship between childhood exposure to visual violent images and later manifestation of real-world aggression and violent criminal acts. Some examples:

2000

Joint Statement on the Impact of Entertainment Violence on Children
issued by the American Academy

Elizabeth Fry Week

May 7 - 13, 2001

This year's Elizabeth Fry week in Canada runs from Monday, May 7 to Sunday, May 13, Mothers' Day. In the past, public events held by Elizabeth Fry Societies have ranged from film screenings to debates, open houses, tree plantings, fundraisers and so forth. Please contact your local Elizabeth Fry Society for information about their events.

of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Medical Association at a Congressional Public Health Summit on entertainment violence. It states "...the conclusion of the public health community, based on over 30 years of research, is that viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behavior, particularly in children. Its effects are measurable and long-lasting."

1997

American Academy of Pediatrics offers this statement of behalf of the children and adolescents of America: "The level of violence to which they are exposed through the media has reached such horrific proportions, health professionals, parents, legislators and educators agree that something has to be done."

1993

American Psychological Association's *Commission on Violence and Youth* states: "There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior."

1984

U.S. Attorney General's *Task Force on Family Violence* states that evidence is overwhelming that TV violence contributes to real-life violence.

While Canadian politicians have not been particularly aggressive over the years in condemning entertainment violence, that began to change in 2000:

- Bloc M.P., Bernard Bigras introduces a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons to reduce television violence through amendments to *The Broadcast Act*, because self-regulation has not been effective. (According to

a 1999 Laval University study, violence on Canadian television has actually increased since the broadcasting industry pledged to decrease it.)

- British Columbia Attorney General Andrew Petter announces the province's intention to institute a classification system for video games, a first in Canada. At a national meeting of justice ministers, he calls for a national strategy to counter child and youth-targeted violence in the media. A federal/territorial/provincial working group on media violence is formed as a result.
- Declaring media violence a threat to children, B. C. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh, Attorney General Petter and Education Minister Penny Priddy launch a provincial strategy to promote safe communities, safe schools and safe media.
- Ontario Attorney General Jim Flaherty attempts to have ultra-violent rap performer, Eminem, barred from entering Canada on the grounds that his lyrics promote violence against women.

While some resist the involvement of government, it is essential for two reasons. First, because the corporations involved are multi-billion dollar international conglomerates (entertainment is the second-largest American export after military hardware) and, second, because the industry has responded to the dire warnings from the medical community by **increasing** the level of violence in their products year after year, for five decades.

They leap on each new advance in technology as a means to intensify the violent experience for the consumer, while gloating about it, actively promoting violence in their advertising material, and marketing violence to youth in contravention of their own rating systems.

For example, a Canadian company that turned the ultra-violent book

The Roman circuses evolved over several hundred years from places of mild entertainment to places where hundreds of thousands of people died, and the reason the circuses became more and more bloody, more and more grotesque was because of the public's demand for more and more violence.

American Psycho into a film, established a promotional web site that sought to turn the serial killer into a hero; people could sign up to receive e-mail from the killer and enter a contest to win his designer suits, while an article on *Psycho* that appeared in *Entertainment Weekly*, included a full-page picture of the killer's blood-splashed face.

Graphic and brutal violence has invaded every aspect of popular culture: comics, fiction, magazines, rock music, movies, home video, video games, television and the Internet. There are some minimal and out-dated legislative measures in place, but as we are swamped by entertainment brutality, clearly what exists is not effective.


Video games, for instance, which use a powerful and potentially mind-altering technology, enjoy almost complete freedom from gov-

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Editor's note:

The case of Bariya Magazu in Nigeria crystallized the interconnectedness of victimization and criminalization for women. This girl, possibly as young as 13 years old, was raped by three men, friends of her father, in a remote village of Zamfara state. These crimes came to light when her pregnancy became apparent. She was sentenced to be flogged, 100 times for having sex outside of marriage and 80 times for "falsely" accusing the perpetrators, all of whom denied the crime. Despite international pleas for a commutation of the sentence, Bariya was publicly flogged 100 times in January and forced to walk home over a great distance. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights in Nigeria had been working through legal channels to help Bariya with an appeal. In a situation not unknown in Canada, there were concerns that Bariya's legal rights under the system of Sharia law were ignored during the investigation and trial and so the sentence was applied illegally.

Ayesha M Imam of BAOBAB has observed: The clear implication of this decision is that men may violate and rape girls and women with impunity in Zamfara, as they will be acquitted by Zamfara courts, so long as they make sure there are no witnesses to their crime. On the other hand, women and girls who are the victims of rape or coercion will have further insult and injury added to their misfortunes. They will be subjected to charges of zina [fornication] and false accusation. This clearly violates women's rights to justice and security, while protecting the men who violate women's rights.

She also observes that Sharia law is applied disproportionately against the poor and uneducated. The following article addresses the imprisonment of women in Yemen, where it is also apparent that, above and beyond debates about the content of Sharia law, the application of the law is problematic. 

Women in Conflict

The situation of women in conflict with the law in Yemen is very different from that in Canada. The principal source of law is Sharia, which is based on the Qu'ran and how it was interpreted by Mohammed. My studies of women's rights in Yemen indicate that women are typically imprisoned for moral offences, often as the victims of rape, incest or other non-consensual sexual behaviour that is seen under Sharia as adultery. For example, an allegation of rape that a woman cannot substantiate with four male witnesses is seen as a confession of her own crime. In prison, women are denied access to basic health care and cannot be released without the permission of a male relative. Children are often incarcerated with their mothers.

Yemen is a Muslim country situated on the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula. Until 1990, Yemen consisted of two countries. North Yemen was a highly traditional country, governed until 1962 by an Imam who was not inclined to maintain any relations with outsiders. South Yemen, on the other hand, was a Marxist country maintaining close ties with eastern bloc countries. The south was more liberal and had a high literacy rate and women were less marginalized. After the collapse of Soviet communism, and the disintegration of the eastern bloc alliance, South Yemen lost almost all of its support from that area. Simultaneously, the north had supported Saddam Hussein in the second Gulf war, which triggered the return of migrant workers in the Gulf states as retribution, causing great social disruption. The two countries, both impoverished, merged in 1990.

Yemeni Society

Yemen is the most economically disadvantaged country in the Arab world. In 1996 the World Bank estimated that 19% of Yemen's population live below the poverty line, almost all of them (80%) in rural areas. The political upheavals of the past ten years have also taken a toll. The cost of living has doubled and many families live in extreme poverty. Health services are scarce and insufficient, maternal and infant death rates are among the highest in the world (70 deaths per 1,000 births), and school facilities have dwindled. The human development index ranks among the lowest. Most people live in small villages. Three quarters of the population (76%) live in communities of fewer than 500 people. In villages, particularly where remittances have been minimal, families live predominantly in extended situations, but nuclear

ct with the Law in Yemen

family units are becoming common in urban areas.

Women in Yemen

Yemeni culture is traditional and places great emphasis on family and tribal structures. The “proper” behaviour of women is central to the honour of the family. Women veil almost completely as a rule, and the societies of men and women are — but for the family — separate. Women function under strict behavioural codes, which dictate, for example, that they not venture out in public unless accompanied by a male family member.

Illiteracy rates are high in Yemen but particularly so for women, especially those who live in the villages. In urban areas, the female literacy rate is 54%, while in rural areas it is 16%. Many girls are not sent to school. Amongst urban girls ages 6 to 15, 78% are enrolled in school while the same is true of only 24% of girls in rural areas. Fathers may not see education as necessary for their daughters. In urban areas, 91% of men supported the idea of girls’ education while the comparable figure for urban areas was 41%.

Women marry young, typically when they are 16 or 17 years old, and have many children. In 1996, women living in urban areas had an average of 6.3 children each. In rural areas, the comparable figure was 8.

Women as Victims of the Law

A woman who is assaulted suffers in two ways. She is, on the one

hand, a crime victim. At the same time, she is denied justice from the institutions concerned, especially if the crime is committed by a family member. In such cases, the victim tends, more often than not, to cover it up and avoid a more severe attack by the perpetrator let alone the problems she is likely to encounter should she report the crime. If the victim is severely assaulted, the assailant or anyone from her family takes the initiative to call a doctor. However, he manoeuvres to hide the cause of the injuries and the identity of the attacker. Doctors often do not dare record the case as premeditated assault. Obviously, the victim becomes vulnerable to further assaults, perhaps of an increasingly serious nature.

When the victim ventures to report the matter to the authorities, they do not give the case due attention, especially when the assault is physical and is committed by a family member. In the absence of laws to protect women from family violence, the police have complete and subjective discretion.

A study I conducted in 1999 on the attitudes of police officers to violence against women reveals that women who attend police stations evoke diverse reactions among police officers. Some officers react passively, believing that a woman who would go to a police station to

report an assault by a family member is not a virtuous woman. “The respectable woman should put up with assault made against her by family members, especially if the assault is done by her husband. Men’s assaults against women are many times the result of women’s bad behaviour,” they asserted. This attitude is psychologically termed as rationalization. That is, the assailant justifies his inhumane attitudes against whomever as being that person’s fault. As expected, police officers fall short of the degree of professionalism in performing their duties and delivering justice to the victims.

Some police officers pretend to show some concern about the women. However, this affected sympathy hides murky intentions toward the woman and invariably she becomes the victim of sexual abuse by the police. Although such cases are rare, the fact remains that they do occur.

Prison Facilities for Women

There are no separate jails for women in Yemen. Women are housed in units in central jails in each of the 17 governorates across the country. In 1998 there were at least 1,000 women in these jails in a country with a population of 17.5 million. More than 80% of the offences that cause admission to prison are sexual crimes such as

Those wishing to learn more about Dr. Mohammed Awadh Baobaid’s research on women’s rights in Yemen can contact Dr. Baobaid at m_baobaid@hotmail.com

adultery or being in the company of men who are not in their families. Many female prisoners must keep their children with them. I have seen children as old as 12 in prison with their mothers. Another important aspect is that women, having reached the end of their sentences, may have to remain in the prison. No woman can be released without written approval of a male family member.

Rights of Women in Conflict with the Law

When a woman violates the law, she is subjected to the same criminal procedures as her male counterpart. However, the problem arises regarding the way these legal procedures are implemented. In reality, the accused or convicted woman's rights are not at all protected. She may be subjected to a long period of interrogation meaning a long stay in the Central Prison. Keeping a defendant woman in contact with convicted prisoners detrimentally affects her reputation and harms her social status in Yemeni society.

Conditions in women's prisons fall below the most basic international standards such as those articulated in a 1993 Human Rights Watch report. The most important of these are the following:

- Women should be given sanitary products for menstrual periods and have the right to daily baths during their monthly period (an important factor in Muslim countries)
- Men and women should have equal access to education and work
- Pregnant women should have regular pre-natal check-ups and they should be provided with an appropriately nutritional diet
- Efforts should be exerted to ensure mother's contact with their children to enable healthy parenting and bonding.

The above-stated requirements are the minimal conditions required for convicted women. They are part and parcel of basic human rights as articulated by Human Rights Watch.

In Yemen, these rights are not apparent. Pregnant women and mothers are most in need of spe-

cial care. They have to be guaranteed appropriate health care and deliveries should be permitted in civic hospitals so that the place of birth to be listed on a birth certificate is not a prison. Mothers should have the right to breast feed their babies and have access to nursery

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MEMBER AGENCY PROGRAMS

Elizabeth Fry Societies operating in Ontario provide a variety of services and programs in their community. For additional information, please contact the Society in your area.

	HAMILTON	KINGSTON	OTTAWA	PETERBOROUGH	PEEL	SIMCOE	SUDBURY	TORONTO
COURTS								
Court worker								
Bail supervision								
Probation/parole counselling								
Community service orders								
LOCAL JAILS AND DETENTION CENTRES								
Visiting								
Counseling/advocacy								
Temporary absence supervision								
Release planning								
Life skills								
VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN								
Visiting/counseling/advocacy								
Temporary absence supervision								
Release planning								
ISABEL McNEIL HOUSE								
Transition and re-intergration								
Library services								
Relapse prevention program								
Lifeline — in-reach program								
Escorts								
GRAND VALLEY INSTITUTION								
Counseling/advocacy								
Temporary absence supervision								
Release planning								
Residential services								
Transition and liaison								
Lifeline — in-reach program								
POST OR NON-INSTITUTIONAL								
Counseling/advocacy								
Residence								
Satellite housing								
Supportive housing								
Substance abuse counseling								
Parole supervision								
Employment training								
Shoplifting counseling								
Incest and/or sexual abuse counseling								
Community re-intergration/education								
YOUNG OFFENDERS								
Counseling								
Residence								
Community service orders								
Crime prevention								
OTHER SERVICES								
Drop in								
Drivers								
Diversion/alternatives								
Dispute resolution								

Information on Women in Conflict with the Law Available on the Internet

Practitioners, prison activists, researchers and policy makers alike are using the Internet to both learn and provide information.



Not only does the web provide easy and free access to government-generated statistics and research reports, but it permits the dissemination of information on causes (such as the **Committee to End the Marion Lockdown** www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~kastor/ or the **Prison Violence Project** www.web.net/~acaa/info-leaflets/03.html) or the injustices in individual cases (such as the **Kemba Smith Justice Page** www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/8899/index.html). It has also given new meaning to the phrase “pen pal” (www.pennpals.org/), giving a link to the street for incarcerated offenders. Families of offenders can also benefit (**Family Corrections Network** www.fcnetwork.org/).

This list of web links is a summary of information on women in conflict with the law (both links and documents) from Canada and several other countries. For live links to these sources, visit www.lfcc.on.ca/womenlinks.html

CANADA

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies
<http://www.elizabethfry.ca/>

Correctional Service of Canada publications about federally-sentenced women
http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/publicsubject_e.shtml#women

Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario
<http://www.web.net/~efryont/>

Alison Cunningham (2000)
Adolescent Female Aggression: Proposal for a Research Agenda
<http://www.lfcc.on.ca/agenda.html>

Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough
<http://www.vari-media.com/elizabethfry/>

Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
<http://www.elizabethfry.com/>

Forum on Corrections Research
Special Issue, Vol 11, No. 3, 1999
<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/v11n3/indexe.shtml>

Societe Elizabeth Fry du Quebec
<http://www.elizabethfry.qc.ca/fran/index.htm>

AUSTRALIA

Patricia Weiser Easteal (1992)
Women and Crime: Imprisonment Issues
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi35.html>

Legislative Council of New South Wales, Committee on Increases in Prisoner Population
Increase in Prisoner Population Interim Report: Issues Related to Women (July, 2000)
<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/PHWeb.nsf/Committee?OpenFrameSet>
(202 page report available in .pdf format)

UNITED KINGDOM

Diane Caddle and Debbie Crisp (1997)
Home Office Research Findings No. 38: Mothers in Prison

find a link to a .pdf file at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/publf.htm>

Carol Hedderman and Loraine Gelsthorpe, eds. (1997)

Home Office Research Study 170: Understanding the Sentencing of Women
London: Research and Statistics Directorate, Home Office

find a link to a .pdf file at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/publf.htm>

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (1997)
Women in Prison: A Thematic Review
<http://www.penlex.org.uk/pages/ciwom01.html#contents>

Home Office (1999)
Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 1999

find a link to a .pdf file at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/publf.htm>

NETHERLANDS

Elizabeth Fry: The Rise of Caring Power
<http://www.elizabethfry.net/>

UNITED STATES

American Bar Association, Juvenile Justice Center
Resources for Girls in the Juvenile Justice System
<http://www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/linkgirls.html>

Amnesty International (1999)
"Not Part of my Sentence": Violations of the Human Rights of Women in Custody
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/rightsforall/women/>

Amnesty International (1999)
The Findings of a Visit to Valley State Prison for Women, California
<http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/1999/AMR/25105399.htm>

Kimberly J. Budnick and Ellen Shields-Fletcher (1998)
What About Girls?
<http://www.ncjrs.org/jjfact.htm#fs-9884>

Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999)
Women Offenders
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/wo.htm>

Bureau of Justice Statistics (1994)
Women in Prison
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/ascii/wopris.txt>

California Coalition for Women Prisoners

<http://www.prisonactivist.org/ccwp/>

Catherine Conly (1998)
The Women's Prison Association: Supporting Women Offenders and Their Families
<http://www.ncjrs.org/corrdocs.htm#172858>

Florida Department of Corrections (1999)
Status Report on Female Offenders
<http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/Females/status/index.html>

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
Listen to Girls: a systemic approach to reducing and reversing the involvement of girls in the juvenile justice system
<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/listen2.html>

Human Rights Watch (1998)
Nowhere to Hide: Retaliation Against Women in Michigan State Prisons
<http://www.hrw.org/reports98/women/>

Merry Morash, Timothy S. Bynum, and Barbara A. Koons (1998)
Women Offenders: Programming Needs and Promising Approaches
<http://www.ncjrs.org/corrdocs.htm#171668>

Minnesota Association of Community Corrections
Female Offenders (links, books, journals, research, training)
<http://www.maccac.org/women.htm>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1999)
Special Issue of "Juvenile Justice" (vol. 4, no. 1)
<http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjjournal1099/contents.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1999)
Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming: An Inventory of Best Practices
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/principles/contents.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998)
Juvenile Female Offenders: A Status of the States Report
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/gender/contents.html>

Eileen Poe-Yamagata and Jeffrey A. Butts (1996)
Female Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System
<http://www.ncjrs.org/jjgen.htm#femof>

Prison Activist Resource Center,
Women and Prison Links
<http://www.prisonactivist.org/women/>

*—by Alison Cunningham,
Director of Research,
Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System,
London Family Court Clinic*

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ernment regulation. Virtual reality looms on the horizon with no legislation in place to prevent a parent from strapping a five-year-old into a violent arcade game and leaving him there to have his brain permanently re-wired. While both British Columbia and Ontario are in the process of introducing age-based classification systems for video games, these are not operational yet and the legislation will unquestionably face legal challenges from the gaming industry.

But, there's a market for it

One justification often put forward in defense of entertainment violence is that there is a market for it; there is an appetite for violence. That is unquestionably true. We should never underestimate the appetite for pain and suffering that exists in the human heart. However, the fact that the appetite for violence exists in human beings is not a reason to feed it — it's a reason to take efforts to counteract it. In the foreword to *Television Violence: Fraying our Social Fabric*, a report issued in 1993 by the Canadian government's Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, it was noted that the Roman circuses evolved over several hundred years from places of

mild entertainment to places where hundreds of thousands of people died, and the reason the circuses became more and more bloody, more and more grotesque was because of the public's demand for more and more violence. There is definitely a market for it.

With the introduction of tv "reality" specials like *When Animals Attack* and the distribution of "death" videos (*Inhumanities, Faces of Death*) which string together scenes of actual people dying, we have **devolved** to the Roman circus stage where people can sit in the comfort of their own homes and watch real people really suffer and die for their entertainment. The tide of violence must be turned.

What can I do?

What you can do is inform yourself about the research and then get together with people in your community who can help change the situation; politicians, the local police service, religious institutions, unions, service groups, school boards, etc. Additional research and resources for action are available on my web site at

<http://www.fradical.com> 

— by Valerie Smith, Executive Assistant,
Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario



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| Thunder Bay Transition House (Emerging) | C/O Faye Peterson
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(807) 345-0450 |

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these
web sites!

Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario: www.web.net/~efryont/
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies: www.elizabethfry.ca

schools with competent staff.

The good intentions of the legal system in Yemen are not enough to meet the visible discrepancy in women's prisons. These prisons hardly meet the basic needs of women, let alone other daily living and health requirements. Certainly, this negatively affects both their physical and mental health. Therefore, it seems urgent to create some specific rules that safeguard the rights of incarcerated women in Yemen. Prisons should be provided with funds and qualified doctors to ensure the health care of women and look after their personal needs.


Prisons in their present conditions are not at all suitable as reforming institutions aimed at rehabilitating the convicted women and prepar-



Let us know...

From time to time, we find that the best way to reach people not familiar with our work, is to exchange our mailing list with like-minded non-profit organizations, and we strictly limit the use they can make of our mailing lists. However, you have the right not to have your name and address exchanged. If you wish, we will delete your name from these exchanges. Simply write, telephone or e-mail us and request the change.

ing them to be reintegrated into society after release. Some women prisoners have finished their sentences. However, they dare not leave prison before getting assurances from their families not to be assaulted again, especially those convicted of so-called immoral

practices. This is the most flagrant violation of human rights that necessitates an immediate legal and practical action by authorities in Yemen. 

— by Mohammed Awadh Baobaid, Ph.D.
Formerly an Assistant Professor at the Sana'a University in Yemen

COUNCIL OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES OF ONTARIO

The Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario is the collective voice of the Elizabeth Fry Societies in Ontario. The Council is comprised of nine autonomous member agencies located in Barrie (Simcoe County), Brampton (Peel and Halton), Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sudbury, Toronto and Kitchener (Kitchener-Waterloo). An Elizabeth Fry Society is developing in Thunder Bay.

Opening the Doors is published by the Council and circulated to the Council's supporters, member agencies, and interested community groups. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors or editors, and are not necessarily those of the Council or its members.

We welcome your inquiries, comments and suggestions.

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MANDATE & PURPOSE

The Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario promotes the fair and equal treatment of women in conflict with the law by:

- Providing services for women involved in the criminal justice and correctional systems
- Assisting and supporting member societies to develop and maintain high quality programs and services to women in conflict with the law, appropriate to women's needs
- Working for penal reform
- Promoting public awareness and understanding of the needs of women in conflict with the law and the need for change in the criminal justice system as it affects women



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