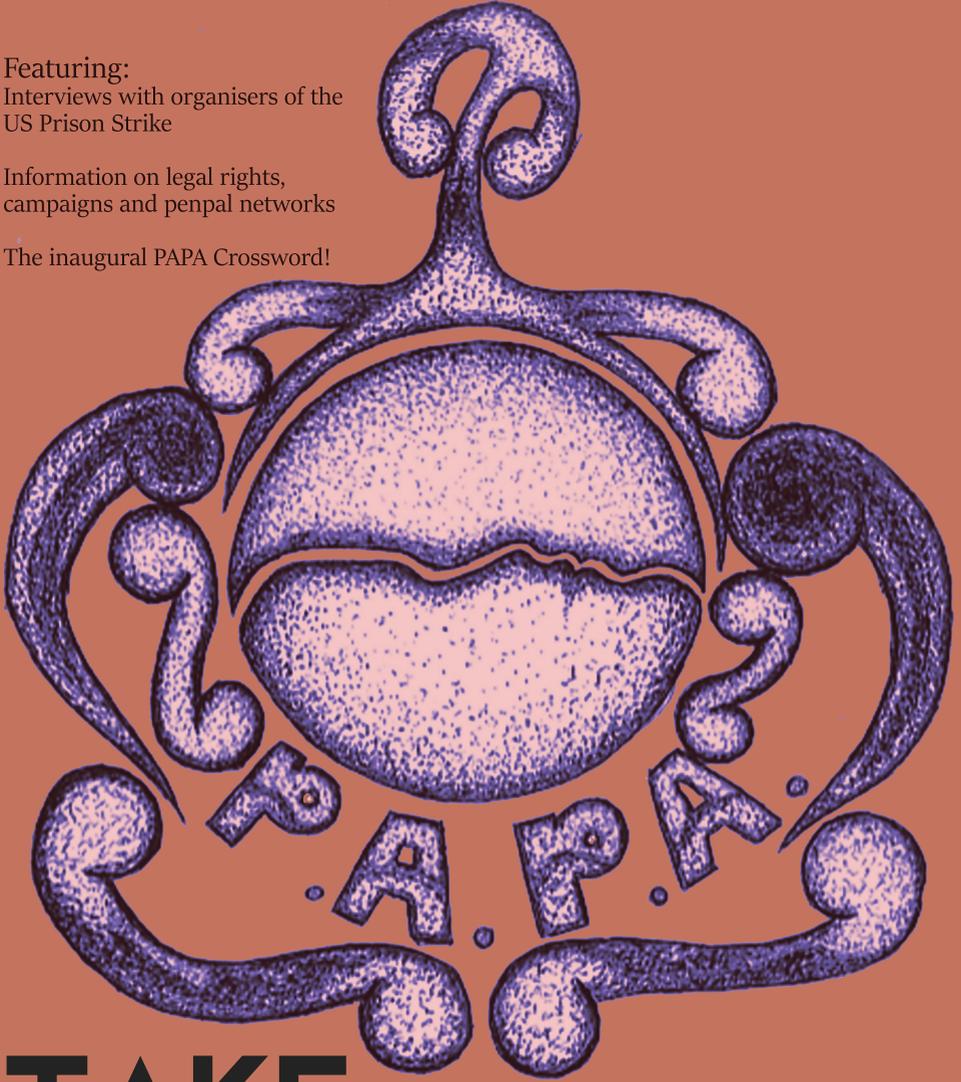


Featuring:
Interviews with organisers of the
US Prison Strike

Information on legal rights,
campaigns and penpal networks

The inaugural PAPA Crossword!



Shari
05/2018

TAKE NO PRISONERS

Issue #1



People Against Prisons Aotearoa



DECRIMINALISE

DRUG USE

**Imprisonment doesn't fix drug addiction
Demand addiction counselling and legalisation of
drug use with People Against Prisons Aotearoa**



People Against Prisons Aotearoa

Quote of the Issue

class I am in it, and while there is a **criminal element** I am of it, and while there is a **soul in prison** I am not free”

- *Eugene V. Debs*

Subscriptions

Take No Prisoners is a free publication of People Against Prisons Aotearoa (PAPA) through the Prisoner Correspondence Network Aotearoa (PCN). To subscribe to this newsletter, request more information about something you read here, or to submit an article, poem, drawing, comic, or other piece that you would like considered for publication in the newsletter, send a letter to:

*TNP, PO Box 5870,
Wellesley Street,
Auckland 1141.*



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Prisoner Correspondence Network

If you would like to apply for a penpal, send your name, PRN, date of birth, address, and an introduction (about yourself) to:

*PCN, PO Box 5870,
Wellesley Street,
Auckland 1141.*

Note: **This is not a dating service.**



ENDING SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

We are campaigning to **end solitary confinement in New Zealand prisons.**

Solitary confinement is where a person is isolated for more than 22 hours a day. It's where you're left alone in your cell for the whole day, with very little to do.

We're opposed to these kinds of super-extended lockdowns. They're especially common in the ARU, in management, the pound and in maxi. We believe that everyone who wants more than two hours out of their cell each day should get it. At the moment, Corrections puts people in solitary more than 12,000 times per year. However, Corrections doesn't even admit that it uses solitary confinement.

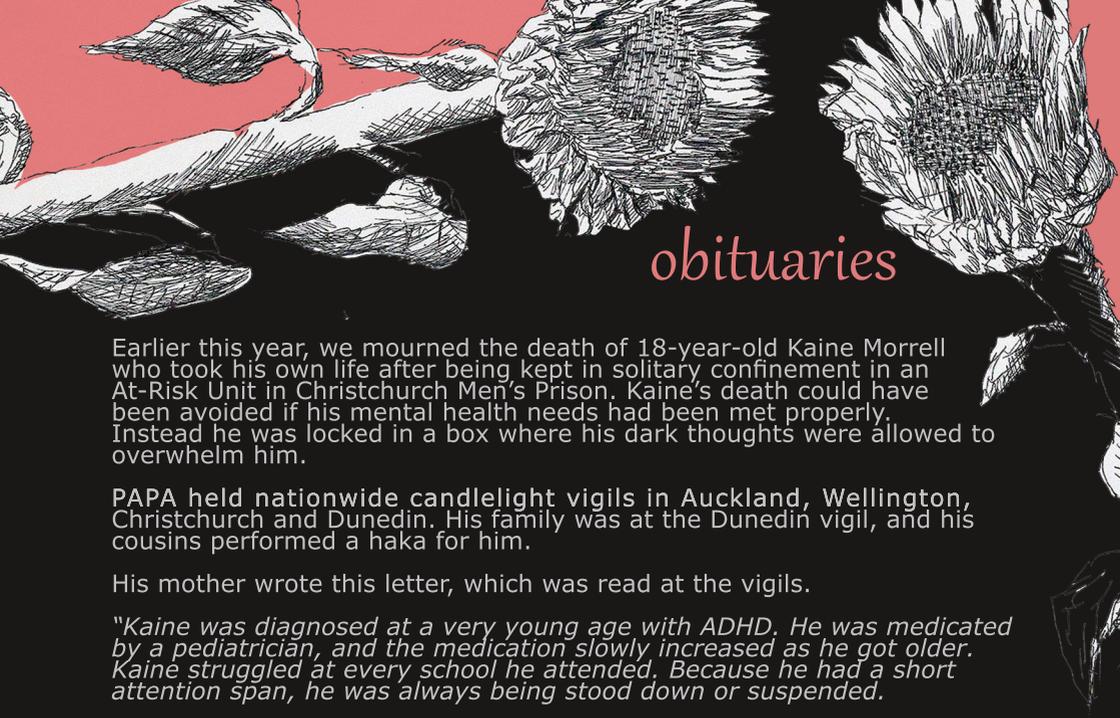
Solitary confinement can have some really negative effects on people's health and well-being. Research shows that after as little as 7 days in solitary, people's brain chemistry can change, causing depression and anxiety.

For this reason, the United Nations considers solitary confinement to be cruel and inhuman, sometimes even torture. We oppose all forms of solitary confinement. However, we don't oppose people being segregated voluntarily for their own safety or if they need a bit of space. We oppose involuntary 22-24 hour lockdown (and extended lockdown generally).

If you have any questions, responses, thoughts, or ideas about our campaign to end solitary confinement, we are happy to answer them.



People Against Prisons Aotearoa



obituaries

Earlier this year, we mourned the death of 18-year-old Kaine Morrell who took his own life after being kept in solitary confinement in an At-Risk Unit in Christchurch Men's Prison. Kaine's death could have been avoided if his mental health needs had been met properly. Instead he was locked in a box where his dark thoughts were allowed to overwhelm him.

PAPA held nationwide candlelight vigils in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. His family was at the Dunedin vigil, and his cousins performed a haka for him.

His mother wrote this letter, which was read at the vigils.

"Kaine was diagnosed at a very young age with ADHD. He was medicated by a pediatrician, and the medication slowly increased as he got older. Kaine struggled at every school he attended. Because he had a short attention span, he was always being stood down or suspended.

In 2011-2012, I contacted Child Youth and Family for help. When Kaine was aged 14, he kept getting into trouble with police. A Child Youth and Family (CYFs) meeting was held, as Kaine was charged under the Youth Justice system. The social worker gave us an ultimatum at this meeting - to sign Kaine and his brother over to the ministry, or they would remove all the children from our home.

This was when life for Kaine went downhill. He was placed in and out of CYFs homes until eventually he was placed in Te Puna Wai Youth Justice facility in Christchurch. When Kaine would be released it was sometimes only days before he would be back in custody. Every time he was released he had no support for reintegration, other than family.

By the time he went into prison, family could not ring and ask questions about him as the Privacy Act does not allow this. We still don't know whether or not Kaine was receiving his medication in prison.

We did know that he hated prison. He told us he hated how the rooms are small, like bathrooms. He called his cell his cage. Despite what the papers might say about Kaine, he was not at all violent like he was portrayed. He loved his parents, siblings, and wider family with every inch of his being. The most hurtful thing for him was being sent away so far away from his family, where a phone call every few days was his only contact.

My son was failed by CYFs, failed by the police who always used unnecessary force on him, and failed by the justice system.

Nothing will bring my baby back."

If you would like to share your experiences in solitary confinement to be published anonymously, please write to us at PO Box 5870, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141.

If you're having suicidal thoughts, you can call Lifeline, which is a 24/7 phone counselling service, at 0800 54 33 54.



Interview: Jared Ware

People Against Prisons Aotearoa are part of a worldwide movement of people who want to see prisons entirely replaced. This movement is called prison abolition. We interviewed Jay, a prison abolitionist from America, about the prisoners who were going on strike in hundreds of prisons across the United States of America.

Kia ora Jay, it's nice to talk to you. We really value our international comrades and the work you're doing. The first thing I wanted to do was get you to introduce yourself to our readers. Can you tell us about yourself and the organisations you work with?

Jay: Sure, so my name is Jared Ware or "Jay," I'm a prison abolitionist and a freelance journalist who writes about people in prison, I'm the co-host of the anti-capitalist podcast *Millennials Are Killing Capitalism*, and I'm one of the co-founders of the *Beyond Prisons* podcast.

Could you describe the situation in America's prisons? What are the conditions causing people to strike?

Jay: Prison conditions tend to be pretty horrible in most places around the world I think. In the US, our prison system is really a strong vestige of two things: European settler colonialism (and everything that comes with that), and racial capitalism, most strongly embodied by chattel slavery. People see prison as a necessity, and can't imagine being locked up themselves.

This strike was called due to a violent incident that happened at Lee Correctional Institution in South Carolina, which is named after Robert E. Lee who was a slave owner and confederate. By nearly all accounts prisoners got into a fight, with knives they'd made, and the corrections officers fled to safety, and it took them hours upon hours until they brought a force in to retake the unit so that prisoners could be get medical care. Seven of the prisoners bled to death, and forty prisoners were left there to die. So in response to that, prisoners came together in South Carolina and quickly came up with a strike - something they hadn't felt ready for earlier that year - and they came up with the ten demands.

They're striking against the notion that they aren't human beings. This includes things like solitary confinement - which you can't even do to animals in the US, but you can do for years on end in the US. Conditions include food that wasn't made for human consumption, it includes regular exposure to black mold and other environmental hazards throughout prisons, it includes brown drinking water, which is clearly not potable. Not being paid for their labor, or being paid with pennies.



What are the striking US prisoners demanding?

1. Immediate improvements to the conditions of prisons and prison policie that recognize the humanity of imprisoned men and women.

2. An immediate end to prison slavery. All persons imprisoned in any place of detention under United States jurisdiction must be paid the prevailing wage in their state or territory for their labor.

3. The Prison Litigation Reform Act must be rescinded, allowing imprisoned humans a proper channel to address grievances and violations of their rights.

4. The Truth in Sentencing Act and the Sentencing Reform Act must be rescinded so that imprisoned humans have a possibility of rehabilitation and parole. No human shall be sentenced to Death by Incarceration or serve any sentence without the possibility of parole.

5. An immediate end to the racial overcharging, over-sentencing, and parole denials of Black and brown humans. Black humans shall no longer be denied parole because the victim of the crime was white, which is a particular problem in southern states.

6. An immediate end to racist gang enhancement laws targeting black and brown humans.

7. No imprisoned human shall be denied access to rehabilitation programs at their place of detention because of their label as a violent offender.

8. State prisons must be funded specifically to offer more drug rehabilitation services.

9. Prisoner education grants must be reinstated in all US states and territories.

10. The voting rights of all confined citizens serving prison sentences, pretrial detainees, and so-called "ex-felons" must be counted. Representation is demanded. All voices count!



Interview with Jared Ware cont.

So prisoners have been on strike since August 21. How is the strike progressing? Have any demands started being met?

Jay: In the US it's tough for a strike like this to actually force the meeting of demands, what happens is prisons do not allow the media access to prisoners, so any access to prisoners tends to happen "outside of the system," through unauthorized means. And then prison administrators lie through their teeth and say that nothing is going on, when it is quite obvious that the strike is happening in prisons in about 1/3 of the states. The people in the US are starting to really awaken to the inhumane realities prisoners face.

Success in this case has to be measured in the prisoners ability to disrupt the outside's perception of the prison, to disrupt the idea that the prison is necessary and humane and the proper way in which things are dealt with. There is a strong fascistic reaction happening in a couple states, where the people who run prisons are pushing through new policies whereby all written communication going into prisons would be scanned and catalogued, and where books would be basically eliminated in the prisons. And this must be fought vigorously, so that immediately is the next phase for me.

Couldn't other strategies fix these problems? Why have prisoners decided that striking is the best option?

Jay: As Angela Davis says, in some form, the history of prisons is a history of reform. Prison reform has only produced astronomically bigger prisons from the 1970's onward. So there is no reason to believe that prison reform holds the ticket toward smaller prisons, or the elimination of them. Now is a time for more bold action and the building of a movement capable of really beginning to dismantle this system.

We all know that COs don't like prisoners who make trouble. How has outside help like Jailhouse Lawyers Speak protected prisoners?

Jay: What we do on the outside, is when someone is discovered to be participating in a prison strike and they're facing some form of retaliation, we make as much noise as possible and we make sure that the public lets that prison know in the most uncertain terms that we will not tolerate the abuse of these prisoners who are just standing up for human rights. It is an imperfect approach and it does not prevent all the violence against people who are striking by any stretch. But it also exposes the actions of the state, and shows their viciousness. Which is important in galvanizing more people on the outside as well.



And now that the strike has been started, who is keeping things running?

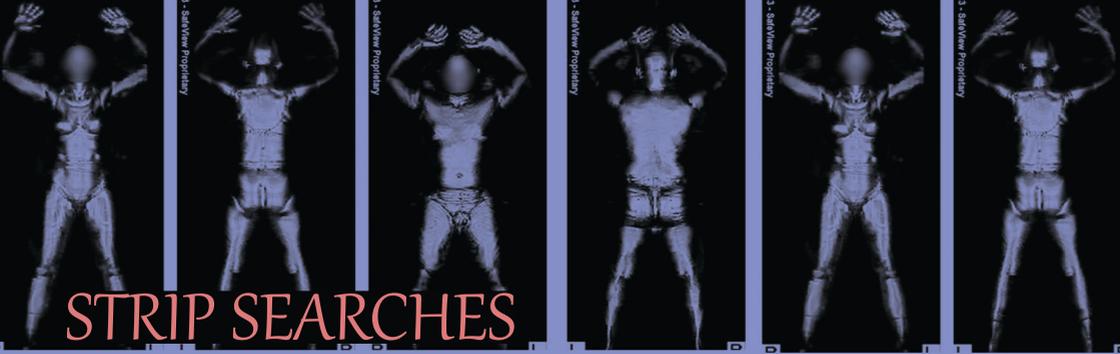
Jay: Well, the important thing to understand about this strike is that it was more of a multi-tactic protest than like a standard work strike. This is partly due to the timeline on which the strike was called - four months is not a lot of time to plan something like this in a country with over 6,125 places of incarceration thousands of miles apart. But it is also in response to the repression of past work strikes and the fact that there are about 1.5 million detained people within the US who don't have jobs. The ones who do have jobs are often given slightly better conditions that they don't want to sacrifice. So this makes a pure work strike very difficult tactically. So a lot of this strike has been prisoners refusing to work, but also prisoners participating in hunger strikes, some sit-ins or civil disobedience, and then a lot of boycotting of the profiteers within prisons of which there are many in the US.

Why is it important to communicate the demands of the striking prisoners to the public?

Jay: I actually think one of the most important lessons of this strike is that conveying the demands to the public is one of the most important things you can do. Prisoners know that many of their demands couldn't be met by those who run the prisons even if they wanted to meet them, which they generally don't. But the demands have to be met by legislative bodies within the US, and although the legislative bodies generally just respond to the whims of the ruling class, there is a growing class consciousness of the working class in the US within the last 10 years I'd say. I personally don't know that it is ready to deliver the type of pressure to push legislative wins yet, or to really shift the political economy in some revolutionary sense in the US yet, but there is undoubtedly a growing movement with potential to really change things in years to come if it continues to build momentum and political strength and to fight off the fascistic assaults of the ruling class, which are becoming much more obvious in nature, particularly under Trump.

Do you have any parting words of advice?

Jay: I think one of the most important next phases of this movement is a turn toward an internationalist politics. We live in a world where settlers, and capitalists/imperialists dictate almost everything, so the people who are imprisoned globally are really facing very much the same denial of humanity by a system which only seeks to exploit them. They are so often there because they refused to be exploited in the ways that these systems dictate. That doesn't mean that they always possess a revolutionary ideology or praxis, but it does mean that they possess a revolutionary potential. And in a world where the dominant political and economic systems are pushing humanity towards extinction, there is an urgency to actualize that potential.



STRIP SEARCHES

Strip searches are a degrading form of state approved sexual assault. Outside the prison, a strip search would be considered a violation of human rights. So why is this a routine practice in New Zealand prisons?

99.5% of all strip searches which took place in 2014-2015 were unsuccessful in finding contraband. When they do find contraband items, most of them are not weapons and don't hurt anyone. Clearly, strip searches are not an effective way to reduce harm in the prison.

It's recognised all over the world that strip searches are violent and harmful. The United Nations has argued that it hurts prisoners' privacy and dignity, and that it sometimes even qualifies as torture. Even the Department of Corrections has admitted before that strip searches hurt people's dignity.

There have been several important lawsuits about strip searches. This year, a case about Paremoremo prison went to the high court. The staff strip searched 209 prisoners, but they fought back, claiming it was illegal. The strip searches occurred after an attack which resulted in a prison guard going to hospital.

Media reports stated that the prisoners were drinking homebrew and attacked guards with handmade weapons. The prisoners responsible argued there was no proof either of them were concealing contraband and so, legally, there were no grounds for them to be strip searched. Nothing was found on those prisoners at all, and very little was found from any of the 209 searches overall.

Corrections state that a prisoner may be strip searched at any time with 'reasonable cause'. But they never explain what actually counts as 'reasonable cause', meaning they can do it whenever they want. The Corrections Act 2004 also allows Corrections to punish prisoners if they refuse to be strip searched.

Remember that you are a human and you do have rights. With or without "reasonable cause", there is no evidence to show that the use of strip searches help either prisoners or staff. Corrections needs to be accountable to the fact that they are assaulting people for no good reason.



YOUR VOTING RIGHTS

The fight for prisoners' voting rights has been taken to the Supreme Court by jailhouse lawyer Arthur Taylor and other prisoners.

Throughout New Zealand's history, prisoners' right to vote has been constantly given and then taken away. The only time that all prisoners were able to vote, no strings attached, was two years in the 1970s. Since 2010, all sentenced prisoners have been banned from voting.

Having your say in politics is a basic human right. It is cruel and pointless to take it away from anyone. Prisoners are affected by the decisions of the government just as much as anyone else. People who supported the ban did so because they think voting is a privilege that prisoners have "lost". We think that being elected to government, and having the power to create laws that affect people, is a privilege. It's unacceptable and unfair that the government has the power to decide how to run the prisons, and the people who have to live in them don't get any say at all.

We're also aware that when half the prison population is Māori, this ban is a way to silence the political voices of Māori. In New Zealand, it's Māori who have been the most hurt by colonisation, racism, and government policy. It's important to protect their rights, because history shows that they are the first to be taken away.

The members of parliament are primarily non-Māori. They have been extended the privilege of living in Aotearoa, and now make laws for this land. We're excited to see the outcome of Mr. Taylor's case and hope that voting rights will be restored to all prisoners, to all people who live here and who are subject to the government's laws.



Send us your art via the PCN to get it featured!

Designed by
HAKABOY
2017

PAPA Crossword



Across

3. Author of 'Das Kapital'
6. Political party that fought for black rights
8. Te Reo for 'discussion'
9. Notoriously coined the term 'Superpredators'
10. Justice is -

Down

1. Released by N.W.A in 1988
2. All Cops Are -
4. Political power grows out of the barrel of a -
5. All you fascists bound to -
7. Ideology opposed to the state