

Editor's Introduction

Howard Davidson

I was in the midst of unpacking after a move from Toronto to Edmonton. While going through boxes in a somewhat futile attempt to sort files, I came upon a rough draft of the papers which became the Summer 1988 issue of the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, our first. I cannot help but take note of several important changes which have taken place since then. Tonight the third issue is nearing completion and it has become an international forum with a new format and a new section, *Prisoner's Struggles*.

In less than two years we have made the leap from publishing Canadian prisoners' and former prisoners' research on crime and punishment to including articles from the United States. It is particularly appropriate that this should occur now when, for the first time, an article appears which provides a detailed catalogue of the Canadian penal press, along with an analysis of its place in the history of the international penal press.

Our new format comes out of our commitment to finance the journal through subscriptions and sales, since this is the only way to insure the journal's editorial independence. Printing, mailing, and production costs continue to rise, and in part we have responded to the problem by increasing the price of each issue. But we did not want to raise our subscription rates. The solution offered by Brian MacLean, who has taken over the responsibilities of production editor, is the new, larger format. The printing industry works in mysterious ways; it seems the new style will permit us to publish even more articles than before without additional costs.

One last note about funds. We receive many requests for subscriptions to the journal from prisoners who cannot afford the prisoners' rate. We are asking readers who have an income to make a donation that will be used to cover the cost of sending subscriptions to these prisoners. A special notice will be coming out shortly, but we ask you to respond now. Simply send your contribution to the journal and mention that you want the money used for this purpose. Every \$3.50 will provide a one year free subscription to a prisoner.

When it became apparent in late June that publication of this issue would be delayed even longer than originally expected, I wrote to each member of the editorial board encouraging them to attend the fall meeting to discuss concerns that were simply unknown to us in the beginning. In the next issue

of the journal I shall be discussing these concerns at some length so you may respond to them with your recommendations. However, one subject arose which simply cannot wait: the request by various prisoners' groups and prisoners' support groups to publicize organized struggles through the journal. The immediacy of this request is nowhere more evident than in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a political prisoner on death row who has an article published here. Recently, the appeal to have his death sentence over-turned was denied. A campaign has been on-going for some time to demand that the governor stop the execution. I have written Governor Casey making that demand and I personally want to encourage everyone who reads this to do the same. Information on this and other struggles is contained in the new section, *Prisoners' Struggles*.

In closing, I want to thank subscribers for your patience while waiting for this issue. I am confident that you will be amply rewarded by its contents. I also want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Gerry Dunn of Pixel Graphics, who provided the layout for the first two issues, and to Michele Bradley, who is unable to continue on the editorial board. Both have worked hard to get the journal underway. Ken Logan has also resigned, and I thank him for all his efforts. I am pleased to welcome Rick Alexander to the board. Finally, I encourage you to write to us at our new address with your criticisms and recommendations. We are, and will continue to be, open to change.