

RESISTANCE BEHIND BARS

The Struggles of Incarcerated Women

Victoria Law

In 1974, women imprisoned at New York's maximum-security prison at Bedford Hills staged what is known as the August Rebellion. Protesting the brutal beating of a fellow prisoner, the women fought off guards, holding seven of them hostage, and took over sections of the prison.

While many have heard of the 1971 Attica prison uprising, the August Rebellion remains relatively unknown even in activist circles. *Resistance Behind Bars* is determined to challenge and change such oversights. As it examines daily struggles against appalling prison conditions and injustices, *Resistance* documents both collective organizing and individual resistance among women incarcerated in the U.S. Emphasizing women's agency in resisting the conditions of their confinement through forming peer education groups, clandestinely arranging ways for children to visit mothers in distant prisons, and raising public awareness about their lives, *Resistance* seeks to spark further discussion and research into the lives of incarcerated women and galvanize much-needed outside support for their struggles.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Victoria Law is a writer, photographer and mother. After a brief stint as a teenage armed robber, she became involved in prisoner support. In 1996, she helped start Books Through Bars—New York City, a group that sends free books to prisoners nationwide. In 2000, she began concentrating on the needs and actions of women in prison, drawing attention to their issues by writing articles and giving public presentations. Since 2002, she has worked with women incarcerated nationwide to produce *Tenacious: Art and Writings from Women in Prison* and has facilitated having incarcerated women's writings published in larger publications, such as *Clamor* magazine, the website "Women and Prison: A Site for Resistance" and the upcoming anthology *Interrupted Lives*.

ACCOLADES

"Victoria Law's eight years of research and writing, inspired by her unflinching commitment to listen to and support women prisoners, has resulted in an illuminating effort to document the dynamic resistance of incarcerated women in the United States."—Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *Outlaw Woman*

"Written in regular English, rather than academese, this is an impressive work of research and reportage."—Mumia Abu-Jamal, death row political prisoner and author of *Live From Death Row*

"Finally! A passionately and extensively researched book that recognizes the myriad ways in which women resist in prison, and the many particular obstacles that, at many points, hinder them from rebelling."
—Laura Whitehorn, former political prisoner



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