

[After a number of inmate suicides in New York City jails, in August, 1971 Board of Corrections Chief William vanden Heuval called for hearings to investigate the causes of the suicides. The Women's Bail Fund issued the following press release in response to those hearings. For further information write The Women's Bail Fund, Box 637, Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003.]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE: WOMEN'S BAIL FUND

AUGUST 31, 1971

The Women's Bail Fund goes on record today as being determined to expose the sham of an inquiry into so-called "suicides" in New York City's prisons. Men and women are dying in the city's jails--yes, but they are not suicides. They are the victims of murder. The prison system itself is a murderer.

--to force addicts to wait 2 or 3 days before they are given treatment is murder.

--not to provide adequate medical care to inmates is murder.

--to separate prisoners from their families is murder.

--to put people in solitary confinement is murder.

--to be poor and non-white and be judged by a middle-class white court system is murder.

--to force women to live in isolation in the new women's jail on Rikers is murder.

Society's failure to provide people with basic necessities is murder.

--drug addiction is murder.

--inadequate and inaccessible health care is murder.

--punitive welfare laws which break up families are murder.

--forcing people to live in ghettos is murder.

--being poor and non-white in a white racist society is murder.

THESE DEATHS ARE NOT SUICIDES; THEY ARE GENOCIDE.