

MIM Notes



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The Official Newsletter of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM)

Free

Torture can't be reformed *California senate hearings on Security Housing Units*

BOSTONERS RALLY FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

INS threatens Palestinian activist

On September 27 more than a hundred people gathered in Boston's Copley Square to express their solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people—sandwiched between a smaller crowd of reactionary counter-protestors and a few swing dancers. The pro-Palestinian speakers MIM heard took an explicit anti-colonialist line, correctly equating Zionism with colonialism, recounting the theft of Palestinian lands going back to the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip and even further, back to the 1948 “war of independence.”

The counter-protestors were particularly moronic, as most carried signs mocking Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean. Dean is hardly an anti-Zionist. He says the Bush administration's “guiding principles in the Middle East are the right ones,” and his campaign co-chair is former president of a large pro-Israël lobby. True, fellow Democrat John Kerry has criticized Dean for recently saying the United States should be “evenhanded” in the Middle East—a standard pretense Amerikan Presidents and Secretaries of State have adopted for over three decades, by the way—but that says more about the narrow(ing) range of acceptable discourse about Israël than about Dean.(1)

One of the speakers at the rally was



Amer Jubran, co-founder of the New England Committee to Defend Palestine. INS agents arrested Amer on the morning of November 4, 2002—they came to his door accompanied by the FBI while he was in the shower, no less—days after he helped organize a march for Palestinian rights. The INS originally intended to hold him indefinitely, but in the face of international public pressure they released Amer after 17 days internment on a remarkably small bond.

The INS is now pushing to deport Amer based on false allegations of technical violations in his green card status. The political

motivations behind this threat are clear from the timing of his initial arrest and the presence of the FBI—in fact, the FBI attempted to question Amer about his legitimate political activities and explicitly threatened him with indefinite INS detention if he refused to cooperate.(2)

Amer's trial date is set for November 6. MIM and RAIL plan to send a contingent to support him and denounce this dangerous, politically-motivated harassment. Keep an eye on www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bos/bostevents.html for further details.

Notes:

1. Michelle Goldberg, “Howard Dean's Israel problem,” Salon magazine, 23 Sep 2003.
2. www.amerjubrandefense.org/
3. <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bos/bostevents.html>

September 15 MIM and RAIL activists attended the hearings on Security Housing Units (SHU) in California prisons, held in Los Angeles by Senator Romero, Chair of the Select Committee on the California Correctional System. The SHUs are control units by another name, a form of long term solitary confinement that now exists in prisons across the country. Long term isolation has been criticized as a form of torture by many individuals and governments, as well as by the United Nations. There is conclusive evidence that these conditions cause mental and physical deterioration. In this era of “tough on crime” rhetoric, it is unusual for a government official to even question prison programs, and in this context we can hope to effect some improvements in the lives of prisoners.

We attended these hearings with no illusion that the California congress can legislate substantial change in the criminal injustice system. As a part of our campaign against the SHU in California, and control units across the country, we attended the hearings to put forward the perspective that the SHU must be shut down, not just reformed into kinder, gentler torture. We were also looking to hook up with other control unit activists and friends and family members of prisoners to expand our campaign against control units in this state and across the country.

The five California SHUs—Pelican Bay State Prison SHU, Valley State Prison for Women SHU, California State Prison at Corcoran SHU, California Correctional Institution at Tehachapi SHU and Corcoran SATF—are the lynchpin for the California Department of Corrections' (CDC) prison system. Currently housing about 2700 people (about 40 in the wimmin's prison), they are the most brutal prisons in the system and principally target those prisoners who show the most resistance. They are designed to break inmates' spirit. The SHU is a threat which hangs over the head of all CA prisoners. At Pelican Bay prisoners are kept in windowless cells for a minimum of 22 1/2 hours a day. There is no education, no job training, no work, no religious services, or hobby materials. Prisoners are subject to strip searches upon departure from and return to their cell when they have not come in contact with any other individual.

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Letters

Open Letter to Ashcroft

A Black fist salute!

I just got convicted in Texas for a crime my trial demonstrated I was not guilty of. I clearly showed in my habeas that I was only guilty of "simple assault," a misdemeanor, but got convicted for a felony and sentenced to 45 years. ...

Clearly there is no justice for minorities, especially if you are indigent. So this is the last straw: I renounce my citizenship.

They were so gung-ho in going to Iraq with their machine gun for glory's sake, because they thought there were gonna easily kick some Iraqi ass! Now they are whining that they want to come home because of these crazy, suicidal Iraqis that are getting them one by one. Ha ha! Let freedom ring for the Iraqis! Independence day!

And as for Ashcroft: What you gonna do now, you Christian Nazi? Get me for treason? Aiding and abetting the enemy? The hell with your evil, manipulative Patriot Act.

As a last note, there are many defiant oppressed people like me in your gulags, but we will win! Power to the left-wing people and anarchists!

P.S. To comrades out there, submit your letters to MIM in defiance of Ashcroft! Let us rock this country. Renounce your citizenship for this evil New World Order!

—In a Texas gulag, July 2003

MIM responds: We are glad to see you make the connection between the injustice system and the imperialist war in Iraq. Amerika's practice national oppression and exploitation is definitely globally interconnected: that is the system of imperialism. We are also glad to see you renounce your allegiance to the U.S.A.

We do not recommend attempts to formally renounce U.S. citizenship, however, as a form of protest. That is one reason we are not printing this letter with your name (we also don't print prisoner names because we can't verify them or the information they contain ourselves). It is much more important to renounce your allegiance to Amerika in practice, by contributing to the movement against Amerikan imperialism, in support of national liberation for the victims of that imperialism, and for a new society that sheds the oppressive nature of capitalism and the machinations of its states.

We are not at a stage in the struggle in this country where we need people to sacrifice their lives and die for the people—or get disappeared by Ashcroft. We need revolutionaries to stay alive, healthy, and active in the movement.



Did you know?
There are more than 200 back issues of MIM Notes available on the MIM website? Not only can you browse more than 15 years of the newspaper, you can also keep up with the very latest on MIM agitation campaigns, prisoner news, all the latest on the U\$ war, and much more. MIM's website is an indispensable tool for the revolutionary movement. Get involved!
www.etext.org/Politics/MIM

What's New @ MIM's Homepage

Editor, MC206; Production, MC12

MIM Notes

The Official Newsletter of The Maoist Internationalist Movement
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MIM Notes is the bi-weekly newsletter of the Maoist Internationalist Movement. MIM Notes is the official Party voice; more complete statements are published in our journal, *MIM Theory*. Material in *MIM Notes* is the Party's position unless noted. *MIM Notes* accepts submissions and critiques from anyone. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions unless permission is specifically denied by the author; submissions are published anonymously unless authors insist on identification (prisoners are never identified by name). MIM is an underground party that does not publish the names of its comrades in order to avoid the state surveillance and repression that have historically been directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements. MCs, MIM comrades, are members of the Party. The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL) is an anti-imperialist mass organization led by MIM (RCs are RAIL Comrades). MIM's ten-point program is available to anyone who sends in a SASE.

The paper is free to all prisoners, as long as they write to us every 90 days to confirm their subscriptions. There are no individual subscriptions for people outside prison.

People who want to receive newspapers should become sponsors and distributors. Sponsors pay for papers, distributors get them onto the streets, and officers do both distribution and financial support. Annual cost is: 12 copies (Priority Mail), \$120; 25 (Priority Mail), \$150; 50 (Priority Mail), \$280; 100, \$380; 200, \$750; 900 (Express Mail), \$3,840; 900 (8-10 days), \$2,200. To become a sponsor or distributor, send anonymous money orders payable to "MIM." Send to MIM, attn: Camb. branch, PO Box 400559, Cambridge, MA 02140. Or write mim3@mim.org.

Most back issues of MIM Notes are available free on our web site. The web site contains thousands of documents, with ordering information for many more.

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What is MIM?

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is the collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties in the English-speaking imperialist countries and their English-speaking internal semi-colonies, as well as the existing or emerging Maoist Internationalist parties in Belgium, France and Quebec and the existing or emerging Spanish-speaking Maoist Internationalist parties of Aztlan, Puerto Rico and other territories of the U.S. Empire. MIM Notes is the newspaper of MIM. *Notas Rojas* is the newspaper of the Spanish-speaking parties or emerging parties of MIM. MIM upholds the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat. MIM struggles to end the oppression of all groups over other groups: classes, genders, nations. MIM knows this is only possibly by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. Revolution is a reality for North America as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony. MIM differs from other communist parties on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the communist party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in humyn history. (3) As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM has reiterated through materialist analysis, imperialism extracts super-profits from the Third World and in part uses this wealth to buy off whole populations of oppressor nation so-called workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy. These classes are not the principal vehicles to advance Maoism within those countries because their standards of living depend on imperialism. At this time, imperialist super-profits create this situation in the Canada, Quebec, the United States, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Israel, Sweden and Denmark. MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principles and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

"The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should regard it not as dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases, but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution."
- Mao Zedong, Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 208.

MIM interviews “People’s War” magazine

MIM Notes: In your newspaper, “People’s War,” your “Mission statement” uses the word “intercommunal,” but not Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Does the “People’s War” consider itself Marxist-Leninist-Maoist?

People’s War magazine: PW Magazine is a revolutionary mass news organ published by the People’s Community Organization (PCO), a mass organization which organizes around the issues of survival and independence of the oppressed black, brown, red nations dominated by U.S. imperialism in North Amerika. Though communists work within the PCO, the PCO is not Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, but rather anti-imperialist and intercommunalist (internationalist).

The PCO upholds the revolutionary intercommunalism of the BPP [Black Panther Party] under the revolutionary Maoist leadership of Comrade Huey P. Newton and today recognizes the revolutionary leadership of the Ghetto Liberation Political Party. Thus while PW does not claim to be a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Organ, but rather a “revolutionary Hip-Hop Magazine and Intercommunal News Service,” we are definitely friendly to revolutionary M-L-M and genuine Maoist revolutionary Parties around the world and the struggles under their leadership.

MIM Notes: Can you give us some reasoning on the 7 heads pictured on page 18 of the People’s War issue of the summer 2003? Who are they and how do they fit together?

People’s War magazine: We forwarded your second question in regard to the banner printed on page 18 to a GLPP representative. We received this reply:

“Certainly. The Heads pictured are Marcus Garvey, revolutionary African nationalist, anti-imperialist leader and organizer of the largest anti-imperialist movement of the Black nation in the beginning of the 20th century. (Marcus Garvey’s class position was that of the left wing of the national bourgeoisie of the Black nation and with criticisms we recognize the progressive thrust of his Pan-Africanism and its historical role.) Lenin, revolutionary communist and leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution which ushered in the world’s first socialist state. We uphold the Russian Revolution from 1917-1956. Elijah Muhammad, revolutionary African nationalist leader, whose Teachings and anti-integrationist stance contributed to development of a revolutionary consciousness of African working class as later represented by the Malcolm X and the BPP. (Like Garvey, Elijah Muhammad’s class position was that of the left wing of the national

bourgeoisie of the Black nation, and with criticisms we recognize the progressive thrust of his metaphysicism and its historical role.) Mao Zedong, chairman and leader of the CPC [Communist Party of China], leader of great 1949 Chinese socialist revolution (which altered the world’s balance of forces in favor of socialism), opponent of the white nationalist revisionism and Soviet social-imperialism, leader and inspirer of the GPCR [Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution] which was overthrown by the revisionist elements of the CPC in 1976. Malcolm X, revolutionary African nationalist and internationalist, his anti-capitalist pro-socialist, pro-self-defense position in his last years particularly contributed to the founding and development of the BPP. Kwame Nkrumah, African communist leader, revolutionary Pan-Africanist. Unlike forces claiming to uphold Kwame Nkrumah’s line we recognize Kwame Nkrumah as carrying out the historical work of applying the universal truths of the intercommunal working to the concrete problems facing the revolution on the African continent, namely 1.) the need for an independent revolutionary Communist Party to led the revolution in Africa 2.) the need for an all African People’s War under the leadership of this Communist Party 3.) With the political goal

of one unified socialist Africa under the leadership of a revolutionary proletarian dictatorship in alliance with the African peasantry, at the service of the World Proletarian Revolution the establishment of world communism. Last but not least is Huey P. Newton, U.S. African communist leader and revolutionary organizer. Founder and leader of the Black Panther Party, which we uphold and recognize was the most advanced Communist Party in the history of the U.S. The GLPP is a revolutionary Communist Party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism Ingiaye thought and considers itself the political and ideological continuation of the original Black Panther Party under the leadership of HPN [Huey P. Newton].

“These are seven persons, out of many others such as Stalin, W.E.B Dubois, George Jackson, Chairman Gonzalo etc., who we uphold and recognize as positively influencing the revolutionary movement of the oppressed Black Nation under the leadership of the African working class in general and the revolutionary work of the GLPP in particular.”

We send friendly greetings to MIM Notes and are thankful for this interview and look forward to further struggle.

In Solidarity, PW Magazine

MIM takes conservative pundit to task

Let Freedom Ring: Winning the War of Liberty over Liberalism
Sean Hannity
NY: Regan Books, 2002, 338pp.
hb

reviewed by mim3@mim.org,
September 2003

Dear Sean Hannity:

We write to you on behalf of a communist website to say we have read your book *Let Freedom Ring* and would like to interview you. What follows is a series of facts from your book followed by a question for each set of facts.

We are looking for a yes/no answer, as you often push people on your show. After your “yes” or “no,” we will accept any other details you may add and we are happy to put your complete and unedited responses on our website with links to yours. We will accept written answers or .mp3 or some other format.

Question set I: Who is the traitor?

FACT: You called Johnny Walker Lindh a “traitor” who “deserves execution.” (p. 22)

FACT: Lindh had not attacked anyone in the United States and in fact Johnny Spann and the thousands of others went to Afghanistan to attack him. Lindh had been there first and had a right to self-defense.

FACT: You said Clinton did not focus enough on terrorism and you pointed out attacks on embassies, the USS Cole and

let’s not forget the original World Trade Center (1993) bombing.(p. 13, 22)

QUESTION: Knowing all this about terrorist attacks in the 1990s, by May, 2001 Colin Powell had delivered \$124 million in just one year’s aid to Afghanistan where the Taliban ruled. Colin Powell did more for the Taliban than Johnny Walker Lindh ever did, yes or no? Powell “deserves execution” yes or no?

Question set II: More or fewer CIA “human assets”?

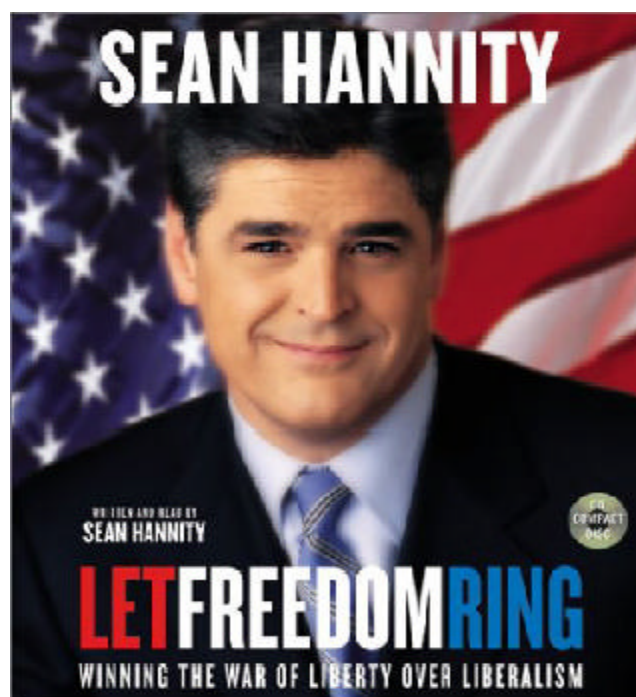
FACT: You echoed Reagan who said Democrats “made it sound as if the chief threat to our liberties was our own intelligence apparatus.”(p. 28)

FACT: You spoke repeatedly for having more human CIA assets instead of just electronic and other mechanical spying. You complained when “roughly 1,000 ‘assets’”(p. 37) were allegedly let go by the CIA for connections to too many murderous activities.

FACT: Osama Bin Laden was a CIA human asset in the 1980s and Saddam Hussein before that.

QUESTION: Do you support a rule that would have cut Osama Bin Laden as a CIA asset, yes or no?

QUESTION: Should someone in the 1980s have complained about CIA human assets in the 1980s to cut training and funding of Osama Bin Laden, yes or no?



Question set III: Illegal immigration

FACT: You say there are 8 million “illegal aliens” and 2 million who overstay their visas for a total of 10 million people in the United States.(p. 54)

FACT: In the next two pages you list crimes involving three people among those 10 million. (p. 55-56)

QUESTION: There would be no Irish or anyone else but the indigenous peoples in the United States if we cut off immigration whenever 3 out of 10 million people committed felony crimes, yes or no?

QUESTION: You published no statistics comparing the crimes of legal U.S. residents and citizens and “illegal aliens”; yet you used the crimes of the “illegal aliens” to

justify kicking them out, so you made an argument involving a double standard, yes or no?

Question set IV: the theory of “peace through strength”

FACT: You repeatedly defended the whole “peace through strength” theory and found \$30 billion for intelligence too small, the weapons budget too small etc.(e.g. p. 70)

FACT: The United States is the strongest country in the world.

FACT: The jumbo jets did not crash in Luxembourg on September 11 2001.

QUESTION: Your theory “peace through strength” was proven bankrupt when terrorists attacked the strongest instead of the weakest countries, yes or no?

As of 6 October 2003 MIM has received no response from Mr. Hannity.

CA senate hearings on Security Housing Units

Continued from page 1...

In California, and across the country, these units principally target oppressed nations. In 1998 the CDC reported that 34% of the population in all CDC institutions was Latino, and 31% was Black. The population of the Security Housing Units (SHUs) is even more disproportionate. 82% of those in SHUs were non-white, and 52% of those in SHUs were Latino. This compares to a California population that was 32% Latino, and 7% Black in 1998. The population appears to be about the same today but exact statistics are not published by the CDC for the public.

A few of us attending the hearings drove down from the Bay Area. Driving through the central valley of California was a stark reminder of the battle ahead of us in California, a state with more than 160,000 people in prison. Virtually every town we passed by or near housed a prison. Visalia, Tehachapi, Avenal, Modesto, Delano, Wasco, Corcoran, Coalinga, Salinas, Soledad, Chowchilla, Lancaster and more, ranging from medium security to the supermax SHUs, the desert of California is home to many of the 33 prisons in the state. And it takes little imagination to understand that jobs in the prisons are a good paying alternative to farming, the only other big industry around. Especially as Governor Davis just gave prison guards a raise that will bring their salaries to \$73,000 per year by 2006.

Outside the hearing at 8am a small crowd gathered to protest the SHU. Led by the Barrio Defense Committee, activists and relatives of prisoners waved signs and chanted demanding the SHUs be shut down. MIM and RAIL joined this protest with complements on our signs designed for our campaign to shut down control units across the country.

At 9am when the hearing began attendees were passed through a metal detector and forced to leave all signs, food and water outside. There were at least six cops outside the main entrance, eight more up front in the large hearing hall guarding the area where the senator and her witnesses were to sit, two or three more around the sides and back of the room against the walls, and an uncounted number more guarding the side entrances to the hall. In a large hall that could seat hundreds about 100 opponents of the SHU gathered along with a small crowd of ten or so CDC administrators mixed with a few more cops seated in the corner with their crowd. The level of security was astonishing and suggested that the state government considers friends and family of prisoners quite dangerous.

Senator Romero questions SHU system

Senator Romero opened the hearing with an overview of the California SHUs, explaining that there are 3 male SHU prisons and 1 for wimmin, together housing close to 3000 people. She

described accurately the conditions in the SHU which include 23 hours/day lockdown in the cell, prisoners getting out only for occasional exercise and showers, and no programming (educational, work or otherwise). One point that the hearings misrepresented was the expansion of the SHU system. Although the number of SHU beds has not officially expanded, the CDC continues to build new "administrative segregation" units inside prisons throughout the state. This is just another name for control units. Many states use this tactic to overcome legal or political challenges to their control units, changing the name and pretending they have implemented a different system. One such unit was opened in Soledad recently.

Romero criticized the CDC for failing to provide her with exact information on the cost per prisoner of incarceration in the SHU and presented the estimates they gave her of \$37,662 per inmate excluding health care, making the point that she believes the actual cost is significantly higher than this. While it is no doubt true that it costs more money to house prisoners in isolation units than in general population, MIM doesn't care about this point. Unless we are talking about putting money into more programming for prisoners, better food and medical care, and better legal services, we don't care if the state is wasting money on expensive cells, wasting money on guards' salaries, or wasting money paying for a recall circus election. Our opposition to the SHU is not based on rallying taxpayers to better use their prison money to build more cheaper cells because this is a losing point of propaganda.

Romero went on to explain that the SHU houses two groups of prisoners, first there are those in for determinate sentences who have supposedly committed violent acts. The second group is those labeled "validated" gang members. The SHU population is split roughly evenly between the two groups. Romero stated "I have some very serious concerns about the validation process...[and the] lack of oversight of the process by which it is determined if a prisoner remains an active gang member or associate." Romero went on to suggest that she would like to see the CDC move to a more "behavioral based criteria" for gang validation rather than using "status" criteria. This is a good criticism of the SHU process, but it focuses on how to better select prisoners for torture rather than addressing the torture itself.

It is also important to point out that the label "gang" is in and of itself a problem. Gangs are loosely defined to identify any group of people those in authority see as a threat. Usually this is any group of oppressed nation people getting together for their betterment, self-defense, education or other activity, not always including illegal activities. MIM has been labeled a "gang" or "security threat group" for our political education

Our opposition to the SHU is not based on rallying taxpayers to better use their prison money to build more cheaper cells...

programs for prisoners. And prisoners are given "gang" classifications for their association with us and other political organizations.

Romero also provided some useful facts, noting that, in response to criticism, the CDC has carried out a self-audit of the SHU validation process. She rightly pointed out that this process is suspect as it involved no independent oversight. Further she noted that there have been 403 paroles directly from the SHU since 2000 with a recidivism rate of 78%. The recidivism rate for inmates in general population in California is 66%. As Romero herself stated "even that normal recidivism rate is extremely abnormal." MIM agrees and we understand that prisons are not about rehabilitation at all, they are an industry and to remain in operation they have an interest in continuing to build their population. There is no effort put into giving prisoners opportunities to live a better life after prison. Romero expressed the concern that community members are not safer because of SHUs if they are leading to more crime when prisoners are released.

Senator Polanco, the former chair of the Joint Committee on Prison Construction and Operations, spoke at the hearing first. He went into further detail on the types of SHU sentences. For a violent act a prisoner receives a determinate SHU sentence of up to 6 years. For being a "validated" gang member or associate a prisoner gets an indeterminate SHU sentence of 6 years up to life with the only way to get out being to parole, snitch or die. He too objected to the lack of behavior based criteria for gang validation.

Under his leadership some programs for reform of the system were developed which he noted had yet to be implemented. He gave praise to the CDC for "progress" but said it has slowed. MIM sees this as just political lip service. There has been virtually no change in the SHU system since Polanco began his investigation. Prisoners can now allegedly get out of the SHU by remaining free of gang activity for six years, but that is a cosmetic change. Putting a prettier face on torture and oppression is far from a goal of MIM's and we are wary that congressional actions like those taken by

Polanco can do more harm than good for the oppressed.

Polanco noted that the CDC had sent people to study the control unit systems in other states, looking for models of how to run things better. His complaint was that none of the examples they had seen were implemented. MIM looks around the country at the control units in other states and does not see a model for the CDC to follow. This is one case where MIM agrees with the CDC Director Alameida; he pointed out that most states are doing the same kinds of things California is doing with control units.

CDC pigs defend torture

In some of the most interesting testimony of the hearing Ed Alameida, Director of the CDC took the stand along with David Tristan his Chief Deputy Director of Field Operations and James Moreno, the chief of the CDC gang unit. Alameida also brought along the warden of Pelican Bay and a few other CDC administrators who did not speak. For Alameida and his men this hearing was a process of justifying their policies so they could get back to work and avoid cuts in funding, but a few useful facts did come out amid their evasions and cautious phrases.

Alameida began his testimony by giving some background stating that prison gangs began in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He vehemently labeled them an organized crime syndicate. More than once he brought up drug and weapons dealing in the prisons. Romero never challenged him on this but MIM wants to point out that these things only happen when someone lets drugs or weapons into the prison. Prisoners do not have any way to do this themselves so CDC employee complicity is a must.

In 1971 Governor Reagan established the gang unit in the California prisons. This timing coinciding with the harsh crackdown on revolutionary movements in the United States and the dramatic skyrocketing of the prison population as the government started rounding up oppressed nationals and herding them off to prison in an attempt to squelch any revolutionary activity.

Alameida's only factual evidence of the efficacy of the current SHU program was his statement that they began in 1971 using a behavioral based system for gang classification, and in 1970 the inmate death rate was 1 per 2400. He said this death rate increased through the 1980s and then they implemented a status based classification system and the death rate fell to 1 per 12,000 in 2001. He claimed this was a success of their current system. California had 27,000 prisoners in 1970 and had 160,000 in 2001. Less than 2% of the prisoners are in the SHU.

MIM can point out a few flaws in this argument. First is the lack of information he provided on the timing of a switch to status based classification. Second is the

Continued on next page...

There is no model for torture

MIM prints this letter from a Connecticut prisoner written several years ago describing the conditions in the control units there to demonstrate that the conditions in these torture units in other states can not serve as a model for improving the California SHUs. Control Units must be abolished in every state, there is no way the criminal injustice system can build a better control unit.

I am a Black revolutionary being held political prisoner in a concentration camp called Garner Correctional Institution in Newtown, Conn. I've been placed in what they call close monitoring (gang units).

I was taken out of population and placed in this gang unit. Not for fighting, not for stabbing another prisoner, or taking of other prisoners' property. But for pictures; pictures I took in another state, not Conn. And because my pictures have a very expressive body language, that makes me a gang member [in the eyes of the state]. The only hand sign in my pictures is the peace sign. That's right! The peace sign. When white people used it at Woodstock, it meant "peace and love." But when young African-Americans use it, it means gangs. Many of my young comrades are

also here for the same thing.

The state of Connecticut's law enforcement along with correctional institutions have declared war on all of Connecticut's urban communities and have said that these low income areas are to be considered gang territories. Let me explain this skillfully designed, corrupt Security Risk Group (SRG) system. SRGs are considered to be gang members who pose a so-called threat to the Connecticut Department of Corrections. Information will be gathered on an individual, whether it's true or not. Most information is provided by institutional snitches and is not accurate. An individual will be given a hearing to inform him that he will be removed from general population and placed in a Close Custody Unit where this individual will be locked up 23 hours a day, whereas in population, he's out most of the day working or in school, learning a vocational skill, taking college classes, or trying to better himself by going to Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

It should be mentioned that once this individual is placed in these concentration camps called Close Custody, none of the

above-mentioned programs are available to said individual. However, he is forced into these group gang programs, and maneuvered into spilling out his feelings as to why he would join an organization (which they call a gang). They are using us; dissecting our minds in these experimental, psychological, genocidal labs; having us give them more information they can use against us. This information is then turned over to the office of the Governor of Connecticut, John Rowland, who will address concerned taxpayers as to why the state needs more money to build high-security prisons. You see, there's big money at stake for local police and correctional departments that target gangs. Law enforcement along with prison systems are using gangs as a means of keeping their financial stability. Connecticut's prison system has become industrial business. Prisons with 1,158 beds are worth \$25 million a year and 350 jobs to the community.

Some officials sent out for color brochures promoting prison economics. And these gang units are one of their most

brilliant. I've been in these units for two years. I have not yet eaten a hot meal. All the meals here at Garner are as cold as the outside. We are served very small portions of food. And this is only to bring the commissary sales up. They overcharge us for generic products. Officers in these units are constantly showing aggressive behavior towards my comrades and me in these units. We are not receiving proper medical attention. Some of the brothers go weeks sick.

Brothers like myself who speak out about this corruption are sent to segregation (the hole) on bogus prison charges. In these units, we are not allowed to talk with one another. We go to recreation with only eight brothers for one hour a day. The program is supposedly for one year. But if a prisoner receives an infraction, he must begin all over. The conditions here at Garner are at times intolerable. My brothers and sisters of MIM, I write to you in the faith that you will support your brothers who are being held political prisoner in these concentration camps called gang units.... Power to the people!

Your brother,

— A Connecticut Prisoner, 27 October 1997

CA senate hearings on Security Housing Units

Continued from previous page...

lack of information about who did the killing: guards or other prisoners. And third is the correlation between the rising death rate of prisoners and the guard brutality against prisoners to the extent that they were setting up fights between inmates, betting on them, and then shooting to kill prisoners as was exposed in Corcoran. After this was exposed the guards were forced to stop this practice. Certainly the drop in guards killing prisoners can't count as a success of the SHU classification system.

Moreno described the process of gang validation in detail. Gang "behavior" according to him, can be a violent act, a tattoo, communication with validated gang members or associates, photographs with gang members or associates, confidential information from debriefs or other sources, letters written to validated gang members, Christmas cards, and other material. Romero questioned him extensively on the non-behavior criteria asking how a Christmas card or conversation in the yard could be evidence of gang membership. Moreno tried to claim that cards and letters always have secret messages that the CDC can't see and so it doesn't matter what the content is. This kind of status based criteria is what has allowed the CDC to put many prisoners in the SHU who have never associated with a "gang" in their lives. It is also conveniently easy to validate prisoners with "confidential" evidence, allowing the CDC staff to

target prisoners who are politically active for SHU isolation.

The CDC staff went on to describe the validation process which includes review of "evidence" by the Institutional Gang Investigator and review by the Validation Review Committee. Prisoners supposedly are given a copy of all evidence against them and have the opportunity to rebut it. Although it sounds rigorous, a number of people testified to the lack of training by the review committee, the divergence of staff interpretation on how to validate gang members, and the reality of the system which rarely shows the prisoners the evidence against them or gives them any chance to challenge it. This translates into prison staff making arbitrary decisions to send people to the SHU without needing any real evidence.

Romero recently visited Pelican Bay prison, a notorious SHU prison in California, and interviewed several prisoners. She said she repeatedly heard stories of prisoners who had joined gangs to avoid being assaulted and she asked "what is the role of [the CDC] in setting up conditions [that require this of prisoners]?" This question correctly looks at the state as the real source of safety problems in the California prison system. Romero went on to say outright "Rehabilitation is absent from the mission of the CDC".

Senator Romero seems to clearly see the contradictions within the criminal injustice system, and she seems to

genuinely want change, but she is caught within the system and so on the one hand she recognizes its failure but at the same time she is calling for cosmetic reform that will do little more than cover up the problems. While MIM hopes to take advantage of this opportunity to push forward some changes that will improve the lives of prisoners in the CDC, we can't expect the dismantling of the SHU programs without significant public protest and organizing.

Witnesses against the SHU

Attorney Don Specter testified against the SHU with a compelling response to the CDC administrators. He noted that by their own testimony there are 40,000 to 60,000 gang members in California prisons. The SHU houses approximately 1500 "validated" gang members. So even with the SHU full there is no chance it is removing the gangs from the general population. The argument that the SHU units are keeping other prisoners safe from gangs is ludicrous.

He noted that the CDC rules on confidential informants are meaningless because they decide that if any part of the information provided by the informant is true the CDC will consider all the information true. And if the informant was considered reliable in the past all his information in the future will be trusted. This invites informants to give false testimony. And this is not to mention those "validated" gang members who were never associated with a gang and have

no real information to provide but who want to "debrief" to get out of the SHU. They have to make up information to get out.

Specter went into some detail describing the system in Connecticut for dealing with gang members. He described some positive components like the inclusion of programming, not using shackles or restraints and not using isolation after the first 120 days. But MIM knows from our work with CT prisoners that this system is not a model: at the supermax in Northern CI (a control unit) prisoners face harsh conditions, beatings by guards, and frequent censorship including over a year of discarding or returning all mail MIM sent to prisoners there. (Conditions in the CT control units are described well by one prisoner in the sidebar).

Charles Carbone, a lawyer with California Prison Focus, was another invited speaker at the hearing. He provided some good evidence of the lies told by the CDC administrators about the validation process as well as the effects of the SHU on prisoners and their families. He also pointed out the important role of the SHU debriefings in sharing information with pigs on the street and building databases on gang member names, insignias and activities.

Carbone is working on a court case right now challenging the constitutionality of the SHU validation (Castillo vs. Alameida) which is scheduled to go to

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Autobiography sheds more light on SDS, Weather Underground

Fugitive Days
 Bill Ayers
 Penguin Books
 2003

Reviewed by a RAIL Comrade
 and MC206

We can recommend this book as a useful account of a group of Americans who committed national suicide and declared war against U.S. imperialism in the name of oppressed nations everywhere. As an autobiography of a former member and leader of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and later the Weather Underground, this book provides great insights into those movements on the personal level, while providing accurate accounts of the politics behind them. Ayers chooses to focus on the theme of “memory” throughout the book, mostly to make the point that his account is incomplete and biased. Thankfully this perspective did not prevent him from leaving this account for future generations. While the style makes it an easy read, one may find oneself struggling to learn from this history given some of the incomplete accounts.

An example of Ayers thoroughness in dealing with political context is in his discussion of the national question. This question led to the split of SDS. On the one side, the proto-Weatherpeople and others supported national liberation struggles, particularly those being led by the Black Panther Party and the National Liberation Front of Vietnam; on the other, the faction led by the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) declared all nationalism reactionary. Ayers makes the analogy between the oppressor nation interests of French “socialists” and American “socialists” by quoting Ho Chi Minh regarding his efforts to get the French Socialist Party to support national liberation over French chauvinism. The post-World War II “Socialist Party” government refused to recognize Vietnam’s independence and fought a bloody, futile war to retain its colony—with American help.

Ayers tends to present each part of his story with the perspective he had at the time, only implying criticisms of them afterward. One of these criticisms was of the approach taken towards sex within the movement. The idea of “smashing monogamy” as a part of the patriarchy ended up serving the patriarchal interests of men in the groups to have unattached sex with most of the wimmin. Some wimmin recognized that this was the case and that power between genders still existed within the cooperatives and activist communities. This is one reason why MIM promotes asexuality followed by monogamy as the best practices under the patriarchy, monogamy being the best model for relationships under patriarchy,

despite its shortcomings.

Witnessing their orgies, one older womyn who the SDSers stayed with compared her days as a young activist to theirs, making the distinction that they “confuse youth and fun with politics.” Later, Ayers criticizes cultural anarchists, whose idea of activism was opening fire hydrants for kids on hot days and handing out free pastries on the street, for insisting that the revolution must be fun. This is an easy demand to make by those whose lives are not directly threatened by the system. While creativity is an asset to the movement, anarchist-dominated demonstrations often leave more of an effect of a good carnival than a blow against the system. This is an example of where Weather’s internationalism put them far ahead of many of their contemporaries, as well as many of today’s proclaimed revolutionaries in the United States. (1) Weather people were not afraid to make sacrifices.

However, Weather seemed to go too far in fetishizing sacrifice and commitment. Ayers biggest criticism seems to be about the early days of Weatherman. He discusses so-called criticism/self-criticism sessions where every aspect of a members life was analyzed by the others—an example of lifestyle “politics” which MIM has repeatedly criticized. (2) For many years in SDS and in Weather, Ayers describes what he calls “gut checks” between branches where each would try to out do the previous to demonstrate their dedication. These adventurist tendencies leave one unsurprised by the path that Weather chose to take, but they were little more than demonstrations of the insecurities of privileged revolutionaries who can afford to put machismo over the real needs of the struggle. In other words, the Weather Underground took a Christian, moralistic approach to politics instead of a materialist one. They placed “purity” ahead of effectiveness.

In a meeting with Vietnamese comrades in Cuba one Weatherpersyn reported that, “the Vietnamese were only mildly interested in our willingness to die for their cause and much more animated about how we planned to reach our Republican parents, something that didn’t interest us at all.” (p.162) While the heart and commitment of revolutionaries may be what is often romanticized in our culture, when it comes down to it, all that matters is whether or not we are successful.

Success comes from doing what will push the struggle of the oppressed further the fastest, not from doing what is most fun or pleasing to us nor from doing what gets the greatest number of Americans to rally around us. That is why it is unfortunate that Ayers comes to take a

Focoist attacks only led to increased repression and isolation of the movement from the unsympathetic, bought-off American population.

negative attitude toward ideology and political line, ignoring the dialectical relationship between theory and practice (p. 159, see “On Practice” by Mao Tse Tung for more on this topic). While Ayers describes the period of over-bearing criticism within the group as focusing constantly on ‘political line,’ in reality the group consistently had a problem with recognizing the role of line—not surprising, as for them ‘line’ included choice of sexual partners.

SDS started as a broad coalition and splintered as the question of line came to the forefront. We give the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) tendency credit for breaking with PLP over what should be dividing line questions; the progressive role of oppressed-nation nationalism and the U.S. class structure. But as a result they went from a situation where they figured things out in practice (rather than applying line to come up with practice) to a situation where everything you said and how you spent each minute was interpreted as ones political line. Even as Weather moved to it’s next stage, they were unable to make the connection between their analysis that the majority of white Americans were bought off and the inevitable outcome that focoist attacks would only lead to increased repression and isolation of the movement from an unsympathetic population.

Ayers references the Cuban revolution to justify the Weather Underground’s turn to focoism, but goes on to say, “I didn’t doubt it then, but have often wondered since how many thousands of others uttered similar quotable lines only to be obliterated and erased from history the next day or the day after that.” (p.150)

To the credit of the Weather Underground, the situation at the time was much different, and the idea that Amerika was about to crumble didn’t seem so farfetched as it might today. Regardless, we can learn from the example of the Weather Underground, a well organized, revolutionary group with an advanced

political line for its time and place. MIM recognizes the need for a vanguard to put forth the most revolutionary political line. And from the legacy of the Weather Underground we have taken and solidified our understanding of the labor aristocracy within the United States, we have rejected focoism in favor of Third World People’s War, and we have discredited lifestyle politics, giving everyone room to develop as contributors to the revolutionary struggle.

Towards the end of the book, Ayers warns us not to turn our minds over to the group and to stay away from doctrinarism. MIM is not afraid to put a line forward, call it most advanced and try to convince others to accept it. Although some might call that “doctrinarism,” MIM considers it ideological leadership and the only way to build an effective movement. But MIM also recognizes that it is impossible that everyone in the Party (let alone the broader revolutionary movement and its allies) will agree on everything—a reflection of the class struggle. This is why MIM encourages its members to be ideologically self-sufficient and criticize Party leaders taking up counter-revolutionary positions on questions of overwhelming importance—while following the system of majority rule on less important questions. This way the Party can steer between the Scylla of revisionism (as when the Communist Party USA rubber-stamped Earl Browder’s decision to dissolve) and the Charybdis of lifestyle politics and scholasticism.

Forward through Struggle!

Notes:

1. Although the Weather Underground vacillated on this question: after busting LSD-guru Timothy Leary out of prison the Weather Underground released a communiqué praising the liberatory aspects of “feel-good” youth culture.

2. <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/wim/cong/subreform.html>. In particular, while MIM encourages revolutionaries to put politics first in their lives—we like political monomania—we also recognize that such commitment does not guarantee political line. “I wrote more articles than you / passed out more papers than you / donated more money than you / got less sleep than you” is not a political argument and cannot be used to justify an incorrect line. This is why MIM encourages Honorary Comrades—people who agree with MIM’s cardinal principles but are not under the disciplinary rules which govern full comrades’ everyday lives—to participate in its yearly Congress, where the Party’s guiding line is hashed out.

SDS history project gets off the ground

As announced in MIM Notes 287, MIM has started a Students for a Democratic Society history project. We are asking former SDSers to submit testimonials for our archive; we are also working on reviewing relevant SDS books. In this issue we print two of the first submissions to the project: a review of former SDS and Weather Underground member Bill Ayer's autobiography (page 6), and the first installment of a new testimonial from another former SDSer written for MIM's history project (page 7).

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was the pre-eminent student movement organization of U.S. history. Active from the mid-1960s to early 1970s, the problem with the SDS is that its history is increasingly dominated by social-democrats who did not like its increasing radicalization throughout the 1960s.

There is no one history of SDS that MIM is happy with. When MIM predecessors were active in the anti-apartheid movement at Harvard University, the SDS posters were still up in the offices we used. We were able to piece together some of the relics of the movement ourselves, and former SDS organizers worked with us from the very beginning by attending our events and tabling for their causes, but we invite others to help us turn our SDS web page into a complete archive of history and analysis. In this regard, we do not expect all material in this archive to have the hard-edge Maoism of the vast majority of the late SDS. We do not seek to suppress the non-Maoist aspects of the SDS history. If anyone would like to put forward memories of SDS as testimonials for our archive, we welcome them. Obviously we are interested in the questions of sustaining revolutionary commitment and how people thought they were going to preserve unity and their success or failure, but other topics are welcome.

Visit MIM's SDS history page, <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/sds/index.html>.

SDS and RYM II: Reflections and Analysis

Part I

This is the first of several testimonial-commentary documents that I want to offer for MIM's SDS archives. I was active in SDS in its zenith year of 1969; I spent some years as well as a member of one of the SDS-derived RYM II parties. I intend my personal reflections on these years as a contribution to MIM's summing up of what went right and what went wrong during that time of rapid advancement of the revolutionary forces in amerika. But I particularly offer these few articles as an express challenge to former comrades of that time to come forward with their own recollections and interpretations of those historical events as a service that they are uniquely positioned to render to the international proletariat.

Now, revolutionary justice requires me to begin at the end. That's because the end of my SDS/RYM II involvement was political degeneration and many long years of turning my back on the revolutionary struggle. This was an ongoing crime against the peoples of the world oppressed and exploited by the amerikkkan imperialist system which

materially sustained me and which I in turn supported by abandoning the fight against it. So I begin with self-criticism for all those years of degenerate "apolitical" retreat into the warm bowels of empire. And I make this self-criticism in particular to the peoples of those nations that MIM cites as combining in the 60's and 70's to radicalize significant portions of the populace even here in the amerikan dreamland: the Black nation within u\$ borders fighting for liberation, the Vietnamese people in their death struggle to halt extension of u\$ empire, and Chairman Mao and the Chinese people, who were building socialism and fighting revisionism to show the way forward in defeating this monster of imperialism. See, it took not just one or two, but the simultaneous conjuncture of all three of these momentous struggles to raise so many amerikkans so quickly out of the depths of parasitism and to deliver them through the anti-imperialist movement to the doorstep of the planet's actual humyn community. So that's bad enough: that amerikkans in the stupor of their stolen luxury are so slow on the revolutionary uptake that it takes so very much heroic

suffering and dying to move them toward the side of the world's oppressed majority. But, once propelled there by the sacrifices of others, to then dis the whole thing in a hurried scurry back to the rathole of imperial privilege ... well, that's just pouring the blood of the people's struggles directly down the drain. And I and thousands of former SDS'ers and RYM II'ers are guilty of precisely that crime. And any recollective analysis of those more politically advanced times that does not begin with their fact of their criminally degenerative aftermath necessarily starts off as some brand of opportunist cover-up and essential falsification of the main political lessons of those times.

In subsequent articles I will address more of the nuts and bolts of my SDS/RYM II involvement and lessons to be learned there. But for now, just as I have challenged former comrades of the 60's and 70's to come forward with their own recollections and perspectives, I also challenge those same folks to come clean in their particular self-criticism for our eventual collective squandering of the people's revolutionary energies.

What is militarism?



Militarism is war-mongering or the advocacy of war or actual carrying out of war or its preparations.

While true pacifists condemn all violence as equally repugnant, we Maoists do not consider self-defense or the violence of oppressed nations against imperialism to be militarism. Militarism is mostly caused by imperialism at this time. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism—seen in countries like the United States, England and France.

Under capitalism, capitalists often profit from war or its

preparations. Yet, it is the proletariat that does the dying in the wars. The proletariat wants a system in which people do not have self-interest on the side of war—profiteering or war for imperialism.

Militarism is one of the most important reasons to overthrow capitalism. It even infects oppressed nations and causes them to fight each other.

It is important not to let capitalists risk our lives in their ideas about war and peace or the environment. They have already had two world wars admitted by themselves in the last 100 years and they are conducting a third right now against the Third World.

Even a one percent annual chance of nuclear war destruction caused by capitalist aggressiveness or "greed" as the people call it should not be tolerated by the proletariat. After playing Russian Roulette (in which the bullet chamber is different each time and not related at all to the one that came up in previous spins) with 100 chambers and one bullet, the chance of survival is only 60.5% after 50 turns. In other words, a seemingly small one percent annual chance of world war means eventual doom. After 100 years or turns of Russian Roulette, the chances of survival are only 36.6%. After 200 years, survival has only a 13.4% chance.

CA senate hearings on Security Housing Units

trial in December 2003. Through depositions for this case he has learned that the people in charge of validating prisoners have virtually no training, that about 60% of source items are confidential (making challenges by prisoners impossible) and that in many cases debriefs by prisoners just involve naming names, not even recounting actions.

Carbone followed the vein of others testifying by suggesting reforms to the SHU system including changing the classification to behavior based, implement more frequent reviews of prisoner's SHU sentence, offering more programs, and providing greater protections before validation. While MIM does work for reforms within the system as a part of our organizing work to bring down the system, we think it is irresponsible to call for these reforms without pointing out the fundamental flaws in the system. Particularly when the reforms are focused on a how to improve a system that is fundamentally torture.

The final witness against the SHU was a former warden Daniel Vasquez. As an insider he spoke about the validation appeals that prisoners can make if they want to dispute their gang classification. He spoke of one appeal that was returned to the prisoner with a note stating that he needed to do further investigation himself. He pointed out that there is no help for these appeals, no support, and they are dismissed with very little attention by the CDC.

Public comments condemn SHU

After the formal testimony the many audience members were given a chance to speak during public comments although they were restricted to 2 minutes each. Parents, brothers, sisters, in-laws, grandparents, and children of prisoners as well as former prisoners all stood up to speak about the injustice of the SHU. Many family members had a hard time finishing their testimony as they were moved to tears recounting their experiences with the CDC.

Family members testified to visitation processes that made it virtually impossible for them to see their family, keeping them

out for wearing the wrong colors, restricting mothers with more than 2 children from bringing all of the kids at once, having visits denied by the prison after a family member has traveled across the state and confirmed the appointment by phone, the denial of contact visits, and other humiliations and degradations.

The daughter of a prisoner spoke about her attempts to visit her father where they made her change clothing twice and then told her the visit was not scheduled: "I haven't touched my dad in 12 years...when I go visit him I have to go through so much I feel like I'm being punished because of the way I'm being treated." A mother of a prisoner spoke about her attempts to see her son in Pelican Bay. After traveling from Los Angeles all the way to the northern tip of the state, spending \$500 for the trip, she was denied visits because a guard had miscounted the prisoners. She explained that it is not only the prisoners, "families are also violated by this system."

The health problems of many of the prisoners in the SHU were detailed by their family members. Some have serious mental health problems after years of long term isolation. The skin color of SHU prisoners turns yellow after extensive denial of exposure to the sun. Many prisoners have developed serious physical health problems from the confinement, lack of activity and poor medical care.

Given the overwhelming number of SHU prisoners who are Latino in California, it was not surprising that several people who attended the hearing testified in Spanish. One Mexican woman spoke movingly about the injustices imploring the senator to see prisoners as people.

The unfair and random validation process was criticized by many. Family members described bogus evidence used to validate their loved ones including get well cards. One mother of a prisoner spoke about his validation a year ago after which he tried to file an appeal. After he filled out the form wrong, he was told he had lost his chance to appeal. Another person spoke about a man who had been in the SHU for 15 years. After six years he got his validation reviewed but was

denied based on evidence that included a condolence card he sent to a friend whose mother had died and a political letter he had written. Another woman recounted her husband's denied appeal of his SHU status because of his participation in a 1999 peaceful protest where the whole housing unit of many different nationalities united and withheld their dinner trays to protest the treatment they were receiving. Several prison activists also spoke about the men they work with who have been wrongly classified as gang members in retaliation for political organizing.

One mother of a prisoner spoke about her attempts to get books into the SHU for her son. She said the prison was holding books she sent him for college courses, limiting him to ten books per year, discouraging him from using his time for education. She correctly proclaimed "education is a right, not a privilege."

A man who works with a politically active SHU prisoner who was recently assaulted by his cellmate noted that the cellmate had two weapons when he entered the cell, and they were not crude weapons. These weapons had to come from somewhere. Again and again testimony like this pointed to not just a broken system that needs fixing but systematic oppression.

Several people read from the United Nations rebuke of the U.S. prison system in 2000 which included a focus on torture in solitary confinement units in the four California SHU prisons. Even internationally the SHU system in California is recognized as fundamentally wrong.

A RAIL speaker described the work MIM and RAIL is doing with California prisoners and the pattern we see of the CDC putting politically active prisoners in the SHU, pointing out that these are some of the least threatening prisoners, the ones helping others file lawsuits and working for unity among prisoners. The RAIL speaker described MIM's Books for Prisoners program explaining that many of the books and magazines we send to the SHU at Corcoran and Tehachapi are censored, returned not even opened or sent back as a threat to security. This speaker presented Senator Romero with more than 500 petition signatures calling for the SHUs to be shut down, noting that along with the many other we had mailed to her this brought

the total petition signatures submitted to her by MIM to almost 2,500.

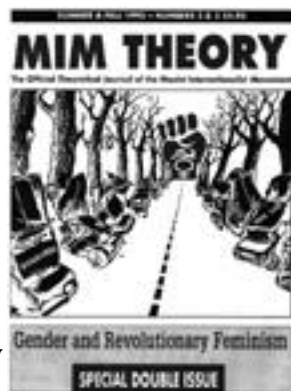
A MIM speaker discussed the failure of the hearings to address the fundamental problem with the SHU which is long term isolation, a form of torture condemned even by the United Nations. This speaker pointed out that comparisons to other torture programs are meaningless because reforms attempting to make torture programs better cannot succeed in changing the fact that these programs are still torture. We should not be talking about better systems for determining who should be put in torture units, we need to talk about how to eliminate these torture units. Putting this in the context of larger society the MIM speaker asked people to consider the problems with the criminal injustice system as a whole and what in the CDC is causing them. The detention ministry for the Archdiocese in Los Angeles sent two men to testify against the conditions in the SHU. One of these men approached the MIM speaker afterwards to say that the testimony about torture had really opened his eyes and influenced what he thought he should focus on in his work around this issue.

Everyone coming out of the hearing was eager to get a copy of MIM Notes and many people asked how they could get in touch with us or get involved in the fight against the control units. Family members we spoke to after were confused and frustrated by the CDC and the SHU classification system, and looking for what they could do to fight it. With the American prison population so large, the number of people in this country with a close friend or relative in prison is steadily growing, particularly among Blacks and Latinos. Feeling the brunt of the repression, oppressed nations make up a reliable base for anti-prison organizing. MIM will continue to reach out to those who recognize the injustice system for what it is, in an effort to focus that knowledge into a broader understanding of the imperialist system and how it can be brought to an end, while building support for our Serve the People programs and campaigns centered around prisoners.

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Go to <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/faq> and get real answers to these and other questions.

MIM Fights SHU repression in California

MIM continues to fight to abolish the Security Housing Units (SHU) in California prisons. Since August we have hit the streets at least once a week to gather petition signatures and educate people about the importance of this battle. The SHU is an isolation program for prisoners, locking them up in small cells 23 to 24 hours a day for years at a time, under conditions that cause many to experience physical and psychiatric problems. Internationally condemned as a form of torture, control units like the SHU exist across the country.

In California thousands of men are locked up in these torture units. They are unable to fight this classification into the SHU because the prisons use secret evidence, and can keep the men there indefinitely. While the department of (in)corrections is pushing to expand these control units into every prison in the state, MIM is active in a campaign to shut them down.

Over the past year we have been gathering petition signatures, protesting, and distributing educational material to shut down the SHU program in California. As a result of pressure from MIM, RAIL, other activist organizations, and many prisoners in the SHU, state Senator Romero agreed to hold public hearings on the abuses that are an inherent part of the SHU [see article this issue]. The department of (in)corrections used these hearings to put a prettier face on the repressive SHU program. But MIM and

other activists were there to demand that the changes to the criminal injustice system be more than just cosmetic.

On the streets MIM and RAIL activists have talked to hundreds of people in Oakland who quickly understood the importance of shutting down the SHUs. Oakland, the original home of the Black Panther Party, is predominantly Black, and most of the people we spoke to had been in prison or had a friend or relative behind bars.

This contrasted with the petition gathering done in the city of San Francisco where most of the white people walk by ignoring us, and a few comment that they think prisons are good and prisoners should be tortured. This demonstrated clearly the national interests at play in Amerika where repression, particularly from the criminal injustice system, is focused on the Black and Latino nations.

One man in Oakland refused to sign the petition saying that he thought our first task should be to remove Gray Davis from office. The much discussed Davis recall vote has gained the attention of everyone in California. The MIM activist responded that while we are certainly not fans of Davis, we know that he can't be replaced with someone better. The problem is not the individual Governor but the political system. And anyone who wins the race for Governor will have to play along with the political system.

We are working to abolish the system, but while we are at it we fight winnable

battles for reforms that serve two purposes: They improve the living conditions of the oppressed, and they give us the opportunity to educate people about the repression inherent to the system.

While protesting the SHU program MIM and RAIL activists have also begun building our much needed prisoner re-release program in California. Working with hundreds of politically active prisoners in this state we come face to face with the need for services for prisoners once they are released. For many prisoners getting out of prison means facing life with no housing, no resources, and a criminal record to keep them from getting a job. For politically active prisoners these problems get in the way of continuing their activism on the outside.

San Francisco is unusual in having one large program for released prisoners. Independently run, the Delancy Street Foundation has helped thousands of released prisoners since its formation 20 years ago. Refusing any state funding, it follows many correct principles in organizing prisoners to help themselves, become self-reliant, and believing that being a criminal is not inherent in these men and wimmin. But Delancy Street is focused on helping former prisoners be a successful part of the capitalist system, rather than changing that system. MIM sees the need for a program that gives prisoners a new lease on life so that they can be a successful part of the

revolutionary movement to change the capitalist system.

MIM doesn't have a prisoner re-release program yet, but we are working to build one. MIM does not have much money; we are run by volunteers and fund our work from donations. But we know that we can't think small. We need to set up independent institutions of the oppressed that serve the oppressed on a big scale.

On the streets gathering petition signatures to shut down the SHU program we talked to many people about the prisoner re-release program. Former prisoners and family of prisoners were particularly supportive. Several people had ideas about ways we could reach more interested people, offered to pass on the information to people who might help, and one former prisoner volunteered to take more literature back to the hotel where he lived with a number of other former prisoners.

We need people, cash and ideas to get this going. There are many ways people can help with this project: donate money, loan us money, provide the use of space in a building or other resources, or help with the day to day work of getting this program off the ground. We call on our supporters to work with us to set up a prisoner re-release program, to help prisoners get a new lease on life when they get out, and ensure that they stay active and productive revolutionaries on the outside.

Cop Killer, Bush Killer, Unapologetic

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Guerrilla Funk

(www.guerrillafunk.com)

While fellow Bay Area Hip Hop artists the Coup pulled their controversial Sept 2001 release cover of the twin towers blowing up, Paris came out with his post-9/11 response sporting the graphic of a plane flying into the white house. Two years later Sonic Jihad has actually hit the shelves.

Following in the wake of the controversy surrounding Body Count's song "Cop Killer," Paris last made a lot of noise declaring himself a "Bush Killer." A decade later he still stands by that label, rapping about killing pigs including George W. Paris is a product of hip hop days when the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam and Five Percenters were dominant influences, something he points out is sorely missing from Black culture today—a result of it being co-opted by white corporate interests.

Paris is clear about who the real enemy is: pigs on the street and politicians in office. He points out that Amerika neutralizes Black people with the strategy of "put the men in the prisons, turn the

wimmin to whores." But he doesn't pull any punches in putting responsibility on lumpen-turned-bourgeois Blacks for participating in their own destruction. Constantly tearing down studio gangsters who play into the designs of the white-owned record companies who wants to act "like the Black life is all gats and crack pipes." The track "Evil" is a narrative of how to become an oppressor, modeled closely after the history of white oppression of Blacks in Amerika. Here again he talks about the oppressed killing and pimping each other and destroying themselves, making it clear that it is the result of the conditions enforced by the oppressor.

While he certainly takes a macho tough guy attitude when addressing the oppressor, Paris consistently puts forth a positive image of Black wimmin as he does for the community as a whole. "Black wimmin more than asses and breasts, I test any nigger disagreeing." This is one point where he sees life replicating art and the results are not pretty when your art is controlled by people who have committed genocide against your people for centuries.

While Paris dedicates all praise to God

in the liner notes, he isn't waiting around for divine intervention to make things better. The religious tone is not noticeable on much of the album with the exception of the engaging demonic theme of the intro.

Overall, Sonic Jihad is a very positive, revolutionary album. The track "What Would You Do?" was pre-released on the web featuring some good analysis of 9/11. One powerful line on that track is, "But I remember before September how these devils do it, Fuck Guiliani, ask Diallo how he doin?" He goes on to say "fuck peace," presumably in response to pacifists in the emerging anti-war movement following the invasion of Afghanistan and then Iraq. He was saying the same thing during the Gulf War, pointing out that there is no peace for oppressed people until we change the system. He goes on to condemn the U.S. role in 9/11, "You think a couple thousand lives mean shit to killers?.. so I'm a say it for the record/ we the ones that planned it/ ain't no other country took no part or had their hand in it." This is a topic he gets into in great depth in the movie "AfterMath" that he worked on with the Guerrilla News Network. His website

includes links to a lot of other good information including a video on blood diamonds in Sierra Leone, articles on the war and civil liberties in the uS.

So, what would Paris do? Take back hip hop, expose government lies. Not a bad start. But one might expect more from longtime revolutionary figureheads like Paris. There are many thorough accounts of the faults of the current system, the harder task is coming up with real programs that can eliminate those problems. Paris has got a lot of good stuff to say, but his message would benefit from a little more influence from organizations like the Panthers whose emblem he incorporates into his own. The general message one gets from this album of what is to be done is a combination of shooting cops and rebuilding Black culture and identity. Paris never recognizes the need for a serious revolutionary program. That perhaps forgivable, but vital shortcoming aside, we can highly recommend this album.

Censorship battle continues in Attica

Supplemental Letter In Support Of Allowing MIM Notes

Directive #4572/2H(6), makes it abundantly clear that “publications which discuss different political philosophies and those dealing with criticism of governmental and departmental authority are acceptable as reading material.”

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the alternative publication I receive called “MIM NOTES.” It not only represents a different political ideology from that of mainstream America, it also seeks to expose much of the hypocrisy evident in this country (and others) by offering well-researched articles in opposition to the policies and doctrines disseminated by the countries in question. In short, it offers criticism when there is criticism to be had.

That being said, I take strong issue with this facilities media Review committee attempting to unduly censure certain articles within the “MIM NOTES” cited herein. What we have here is a committee whose political views—being in contrast to those expressed in “MIM NOTES”—are unreasonably leading them to extrapolate from the contested articles inferences which are not being expressed by the publisher.

For instance, the MRC states that the first article in question, “What Good Are Petitions?” incites violence as a means to an end. This is patently untrue. What the article in fact addresses is that it seems at times that petitioning the government or other body for a redress of grievances, in the spirit of the constitution, is a futile endeavor. Therefore, alternative ways must be sought to compel the petitioned body to be more responsive to the public concerns. Does this imply that violence is the only recourse left? Of course not. It simply means that a more inclusive government needs to be formed through the political process if petitions are to be more effective. Political change is often incurred when people are apprised of the futility of some of their actions, and instructed how to effect changes in their political system by becoming more directly involved in the political process instead. Not by violence, but by campaigning within an alternative party to have a seat within the government.

This is exactly what the article is expressing. And the biased nature of the MRC is evident in that it is imposing its own set of opinions upon the article.

As for the next article in question, “Inglewood Police Beating: a rite of passage”—again, a liberal and even objective reading of the issue presented in the article reveals that what is being criticized is the attitude of certain law enforcement personnel towards a distinct segment of society (that is, those without a voice in the government) and how that attitude not only manifests itself in a racist manner, but also seems to be condoned by the very officials who are obligated to ensure our safety.

There is no advocating of violence in this article. What the article expresses is that those who are being subjected to degrading treatment should utilize every legal remedy available to them in order to curtail the abuse; and that, ultimately, involves a change in the legal system. A different political philosophy, to say the least, which Dir# 4572 protects as free speech. To say that the article advocates and incites violence is to make a mockery of our right to criticize the legal system in any significant way, as any significant criticism

Under Lock & Key

News from Prisons & Prisoners

can be interpreted as a form of subversion by those whose ideology conforms to that of the current government.

Lastly, an erroneous interpretation of the Directive which prohibits inmate-to-inmate correspondence is being applied by the MRC. The section entitled “Under Lock and Key: News From Prisoners,” is essentially a forum wherein prisoners can vent their frustrations and inform society at large of any maltreatment they might be subjected to. In effect, writing to MIM NOTES is in no way different than writing to any “legitimate” newspaper, except that MIM NOTES gives prisoners greater liberty to express their disenchantment with the legal system or with certain prison policies.

Inmate-to-inmate correspondence does not broadly extend to inmates coming upon and reading other inmates opinions and accounts of their sufferings, especially when there is no clue as to who the printed inmates are (“MIM NOTES” omits names and addresses).

Therefore, since the “News From Prisoners” section is not directed towards any particular inmate, but merely to the society at large, there is no violation of the directive. It is apparent that due to the MRC’S BIAS against this publication, it is overreaching in an attempt to find fault with everything it finds unpalatable, regardless of whether or not the opinions and views expressed are constitutionally protected forms of free speech.

The same can be said for the section entitled “Solitary Used to Punish.” It is an opinion expressed by the author who no doubt wishes to end a practice he views as being overly punitive. It makes no difference what unauthorized group he or she is affiliated with, and surely it doesn’t in anyway shape or form advocate recruitment in his/her organization by simply being the author of an article. I therefore reiterate my contention that the MRC is overreaching in an attempt to find fault with any aspect of “MIM NOTES”.

Wherefore, for the foregoing reasons enunciated succinctly above, I am respectfully requesting that all portions of “MIM NOTES” which were deemed to be unacceptable in the eyes of this facilities MRC be admitted into the facility.

—a New York Prisoner in Attica Correctional Facility, August 2003

MIM adds: We recently declared a victory in Attica after the administration promised to stop censoring our mail across the board without reviewing the contents first. As can be seen by the above letter, they have resumed censorship of MIM Notes. Thanks to this comrade and others work we are currently able to get letters to prisoners in Attica and censorship of our literature now requires reasons from the mail room and allows for petitions from prisoners to have the judgment overruled. This comrade does an excellent job of refuting their faulty reasoning for censoring us, and we encourage others to write to Attica to continue to apply pressure and put an end to all censorship in that facility.

Letters of protest can be addressed to Chairman Edward O’Mara and/or Deputy Superintendent of Programs R. Savage at:

Attica Correctional Facility Box 149 Attica, NY 14011-0149. Please cc: MIM with a copy of your letter. Get in touch with MIM to provide further legal or campaigning support to this effort.

Tips for prisoner legal battles

I am writing concerning the new study group that will be offered in the future. I am currently participating in MIM study group of MIM Theory 11 [for California and Washington prisoners]. I have found much enrichment in my participation in this study group and I look forward to participating in study group 5. I am sending \$15 dollars with this letter to cover the cost of my involvement and to donate to the enlightenment of others who cannot afford the money or stamps. I hope that my donation helps in this regard.

I am very concerned with the censorship that was reported in other places. The US supreme court has outlined prisoners right to this mail in two cases: *Procunier v. Martinez*, 416 US 396, 94 S. CT 1800, (1974) and *Turner v. Safley*, 482 U.S. 78 (especially read pages 89 & 90), (1987). In California, the Calif Code of Regulations, Title 15 §3135, 3137, (especially see 3137(f) (3)) and 3147. These u.s. supreme court cases make it clear that there is no valid penological reason to deny any prisoner in united snakes this type of literature or MIM Notes. Corruption at CSATF and Tehachapi can make it difficult to file grievances in California, but with persistence prisoners should prevail.

I have found that MIM Notes and the study group literature are great tools for enlightening prisoners. Although I am engaged in helping prisoners here with their legal cases, any type of research that I can help with I shall make a concerned effort to help. I wholeheartedly believe that prisoners need to educate themselves and learn how to overcome the oppression in these prisons. Also, in California, prison Law Office helps prisoners with basic information on lawsuits, habeas corpus, and some other legal information. The address is: Prison Law Office, General Delivery, San Quentin, CA 94964-0001.

—a California prisoner, September 2003

Testimony from Corcoran

Corcoran State Prison is located in Kings County in Central California. It is designed as a SHU (Security Housing Unit). SHUs are for convicts who have violated serious rule violations, or prison gang members.

There are specific time limits on how long the CDC may hold a convict in a SHU unit for rule violations. For example, I’m serving an 18 month SHU for “battery on staff.” The average stay in the SHU is 24 months.

SHU units are devoid of most privileges, you have no access to the phone, no contact visits. By law you are allowed 10 hours a week of yard time. However, in my building, I only get about 3 hours every 2 weeks. The CDC is

also mandated by law to provide library service to SHU inmates. But here it’s a joke. There is a cart of about 20 dated romance novels. You may have one book every two weeks. You may have only a minimum of personal property. You are not allowed any personal clothes, your photos are limited to 10.

You are allowed a TV or a radio if you have one. You are also allowed a \$45 a month canteen draw where you can buy cosmetic and food items. Indigent convicts are supplied with soap, toothpowder and little else. You may receive books from the outside, if you are fortunate enough to have someone send some.

You are restricted to your cell 24 hours a day. The cells themselves are made of solid concrete. Two slabs side by side, a toilet/sink is at the front of the cell. A small frosted window sits in the back. You have no direct access to the lights. Bright lights are on from 6:00am until 10:00 pm. Then the lights are dimmed all other hours.

You receive 3 meals a day. Breakfast, a bag lunch and dinner. All combined you receive about 2000 calories a day. The food is not very good, and the portions are very small. Just enough to keep you alive.

The cops are mostly mean spirited and petty. That is true in most other prisons. I personally try to avoid any interaction with them. The staff here at Corcoran were involved in criminal and civil litigation in the late 90s.

They were accused of arranging fights amongst prisoners and gambling on the outcome. They were also accused of murder. By shooting two convicts to death. The involved staff were acquitted at jury trial on the criminal charges and the CDC settled the civil suit for \$600,000. \$600,000 for a human life.

There are 3 SHU units in California. Pelican Bay, Tehachapi and here at Corcoran. I have been to all 3 and Corcoran is by far the worst. By American standards, this is probably one of the worst prisons in the country as far as living conditions go.

— a Corcoran prisoner, August 2003

I was glad to hear about your work to try and abolish control and SHU units. As a person who has spent many years in these type of units, I know first hand that they serve no purpose, other than punishing prisoners severely. The CDC covers themselves by saying that prisoners conduct that endangers the safety of others or the security of the institution shall be housed in a SHU. Of course this makes sense in the abstract. However, the criteria is not that rigorous. The disciplinary process for offenses that warrant SHU terms is a joke. The hearings are set on a “preponderance of evidence” standard. These hearings are a kangaroo court system, and you can only appeal to the same staff that has already decided you are guilty.

Moreover, the CDC decides for themselves which prisoners are a threat to the “safety and security” of the institution. This term is a cover-all term and is not defined. They use this term “safety and security of the institution,” any time they wish to deny any privilege or right that a prisoner has by law. The CCR Title 15 allows the CDC to nullify any legislation, simply by coining this term.

The worst case scenario is when the CDC gives prisoners indeterminate SHU terms for being a so-called prison gang member. Once the CDC decides you are a prison gang member, the only way you can be released from a SHU unit is by “debriefing.” which in

turn makes that person an informant. In the prison society informants are despised second only to child molesters. So in all, if the CDC terms you a prison gang member, for you to be released from the SHU you must risk your life by informing on other prisoners. To say nothing of your integrity, or the fact that you may not even have any information to de-brief.

Further, the criteria for being a gang member is far too easily met. Things like "confidential information." Any inmate could tell staff that a prisoner is a gang member and that will be used against that prisoner. Or "association." For example if I decided to play a game of chess with validated gang member, I would then be deemed a gang member. This is clearly a method the CDC uses to remove any prisoner they feel is a threat.

Again...these units are designed strictly for punishment. Total sensory deprivation. Furthermore, the rules change in prison society for prisoners in these units. All prisoners must follow two sets of rules. One outlined by the CDC, and secondly, and more important, are rules set out by other prisoners. These units condition prisoners to become more violent, and less forgiving than normal. When a person is incarcerated, they take an evolutionary step backwards. A more war like and less tolerant, almost animal society, and these are people who may have violent tendencies to begin with.

For the most part, the units make prisoners worse. So what purpose do they serve? And for the benefit of whom? I cannot see a prisoner that would be able to interact with people in society at any normal level after being exposed to long term SHU housing. When a person becomes powerless over their own life, that person only has two choices. One, submit and two, act out. Most people will not submit, so they act out. Either choice does no one any good. Not the prison administration, and certainly not the prisoner. Common sense would dictate not to kick an already violent dog.

— a second Corcoran prisoner, September 2003

Washington State criminal injustice priorities are wrong

Confined to a max custody Intensive Management Unit (IMU) prison cell 24 hours of the day, combating the symptoms and effects of sensory deprivation, long periods of isolation, illusions, hallucinations, paranoia, difficulty with concentration and memory, I wonder if the way I am viewing events taking place at this time are with a clean clear sense of perception.

With Washington State's current economic and employment crisis, revenue forecasters said that Washington will face a budget short

fall of at least \$2 billion this coming budget cycle.(1) It is ironic that this state's bureaucrats would lay off teachers, reduce pay, cut classes, or even close schools when the average cost of incarceration per inmate is between \$22,000 to \$24,000 per year with cost per prison cell construction at \$54,000. Washington State currently has a prison population of more than 15,000 inmates, and the DOC also has 15,304 registered sex offenders (statistics of 2001) that are not incarcerated.(1)

This state has more registered sex offenders than it does incarcerated prisoners. With the recent media attention on this state's dilemma of what to do with civil committed sex offenders the DOC and DSHS is billing the state of Washington up to \$800,000 per prisoner per year to house, treat and maintain 24 hour supervision of non-treatable offenders.

My question is, should we lose any of our pedagogical education professionals, or precious students who are our future generation, our senior citizens who can't afford the high cost of prescription drugs, some who travel all the way to Canada to find affordable prices? Should any of our schools or social programs suffer? There is a Iroquois teaching: "We are walking upon the face of those yet to come."

In a report by the Justice Policy Institute (JPI) "Cell blocks or class rooms?" there is a state by state analysis of corrections and higher education spending. JPI shows the fiscal impact of nation's overuse of prisons as a solution to social problems.(2)

Between 1985 and 2000 the nationwide increase in state spending on corrections was nearly double that of the increase to higher education (\$20 billion versus \$10.7 billion). The spending on higher education by states was 24% compared with 166% for corrections. In Washington between 1985 and 2000 state spending on corrections grew by 138% while state spending on higher education grew by only 13%, a spending difference of 125% for a population of just 15,000 prisoners.(3) The cost of one prisoner a year of \$24,000 could increase the salary of six teachers by \$2,000 each or the salary of one teacher for a year. That sum alone could fund academic educational programs for students. The state of California spends \$7,000 each year on every child but spends \$27,000 each year on every inmate.

Every election year the politicians sing the same old song "tougher on crime and better funding for education." The state legislature has to start a process of immediate criminal justice reform, changing, creating laws, and repealing existing ones such as the persistent prison misbehavior RCW 9.94.070, a frivolous law passed in Aug 1, 1995. An inmate of a state corrections institution commits the crime of persistent prison misbehavior if the inmate knowingly commits as serious infraction that

does not constitute a class A or class B felony after losing all potential earned early release time credit; this law serves no penological objective nor does it deter misbehavior and it does not apply to all prisoners.

Legislature officials should really take a look into the mirror as to the severity of economic, employment, educational, and social situations we are facing due to the budget crisis and government mismanagement.

There is also the recent tragic event of the murder suicide of Tacoma police chief, David Brayn, and his wife, due to Domestic Violence issues and the subsequent on-going investigation. It is shocking to find out that this officer of the law should never have been in law enforcement, but due to this state's infestation of nepotism in all branches of law enforcement agencies, he was hired, progressed and promoted through the ranks to chief of police after being evaluated by departmental psychologists as not fit to be a public servant.

What's ironic is this officer was charged with rape, but the charges and allegations were swept under the rug, overlooked. One has to wonder, while he held the office of Chief of Tacoma, how many criminal acts he allowed by officers under his charge and supervision? His wife has made numerous charges of abuse and domestic violence only to have them ignored by the good 'old boy network. The law states that anyone convicted of a domestic violence charge are prohibited to even carry firearms. There are hundreds of law enforcement employees that fit this criteria. As Mumia Abu Jamal says "they may be sworn to protect the people but they are paid to protect the established."

Notes: 1. Prison Legal News, May., 2003, Vol 14, No5 2. www.justicepolicy.org 3. Justice Matters, 2002 Vol4, no2

— a Washington prisoner, June 2003

Money and corruption in Oregon prisons

The Oregon educational and psychological evaluations are based on standard outdated pre 1960s format series that determines your placement in the adult education classes or classes in which one can obtain a GED. The majority of inmates do not possess a high school education, thus society condemns them to a substandard lifestyle which encourages abnormal behavior in these individuals offering them nothing more than another free trip to prison. However, this does not mean they are not smart, most are very intelligent, it's just that their energies are focused in the wrong direction.

It is unfortunate that Oregon's penal system does not provide for their advancement and training needed to make them productive citizens because of budget shortfall, declining revenues from a 7.5% unemployment rate

coupled with the mismanagement of public funds entrusted to them. This prison system has a budget deficit of \$21 million. The state campaigned like hell to entice voters to vote for a tax increase by using scare tactics such as having to close prisons and have to release 'dangerous prisoners' back into the general public. Luckily John Q. Public did not believe this hype and the measure was defeated. What was amazing was how government officials managed to find the \$21 million hidden somewhere in the fiscal budget. It's funny how you never ever see our elected officials eliminate or reduce wages for any government position. It seems that this is the time they select to introduce an increase in their own salaries.

DOC's training programs for the staff leave a lot to be desired. Many would fail any standard psychological evaluation. Guards are not thoroughly screened during the hiring process and many have untreated emotional issues, others are rejects from society, but the majority are uneducated country boys who, once in a position of power and authority, treat inmates disrespectfully at the same time demanding respect themselves. They are taught to ridicule, belittle, and intimidate inmates into behaviors not in their character in the hopes that they will overreact and say something out of hand so that they can be sent to disciplinary segregation.

They encourage inmates of different racial backgrounds to have negative interactions so that they can invoke gang status charges against them in order to stigmatize them for the remainder of the incarceration. The whole system is predicated in the belief that we can get away with anything and any charges brought against us will be squashed by higher-ups. What could an inmate possibly do. If he files charges against a guard by the time an inmate goes through the tangle of the grievance process and legal requirements, the inmate's sentence has either expired or he has been released.

With DOC, an inmate who initiates charges against any guard, the institution, or DOC they are immediately transferred to another institution so that the inmate has to re-file all of his paper work in the new county he has been transferred, not to mention having to pay the filing fees again. Attached and associated with this is the harassment he is subjected to during this process.

— an OR prisoner, March 2003

Degrees not Strikes

So quick to condemn,
Making choices in spite
Opportunity for degrees should
Replace that of strikes,
Education replaces the ignorance
Of crime,
Basic logic even for the
Simple mind,
Yet where are the opportunities
For the incarcerated today?
Rather replaced with strikes
Affecting every life in some way,
The abduction of education
Makes me say yikes! ...my
Message is
Degrees not strikes

— a CA prisoner, May 2003

Facts on US imprisonment

The facts about imprisonment in the United States are that the United States has been the world's leading prison-state per capita for the last 25 years, with a brief exception during Boris Yeltsin's declaration of a state of emergency.(1)

That means that while Reagan was talking about a Soviet "evil empire" he was the head of a state that imprisoned more people per capita. In supposedly "hard-line" Bulgaria of the Soviet bloc of the 1980s, the imprisonment rate was less than half that of the United States.(2,3)

To find a comparison with U.S. imprisonment of Black people, there is no statistic in any country that compares including apartheid South Africa of the era before Mandela was president. The last situation remotely comparable to the situation today was under Stalin during war time. The majority of prisoners are non-violent offenders(4) and the U.S. Government now holds about a half million more prisoners than China; even though China is four times our population.(5)

The rednecks tell MIM that we live in a "free country." They live in an Orwellian 1984 situation where freedom is imprisonment.

Notes: 1. Marc Mauer, "Americans Behind Bars: The International Use of Incarceration 1993," The Prison Sentencing Project, 918 F. St. NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20004 (202) 628-0871 Reference: SRI: R8965-2, 1994

2. Ibid., 1992 report.

3. United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report 1994,:" Oxford University Press, p. 186.

4. Figure of 51.2 percent for state prisoners there for non-violent offenses. Abstract of the United States 1993, p. 211.

5. Atlantic Monthly December, 1998.





Adolfo Olaechea arrestado en España: el chivo expiatorio de lacayos estadounidenses en el Perú

Artículo revisado, 18 de julio de 2003.

Traducido por Células de Estudio para la Liberación de Aztlán y América Latina.

Según los periódicos peruanos y la publicación de Yahoo!, el Europe Press, Adolfo Olaechea fue arrestado por las autoridades españolas el 4 de julio de 2003. No disponemos de detalles confiables pero, según varias fuentes, Adolfo Olaechea estaba de viaje de negocios en España.

El embajador peruano solicitó una extradición de Adolfo Olaechea al Perú denominando a éste un “terrorista” y sosteniendo Olaechea había tenido lazos con el Partido Comunista del Perú y la guerra civil peruana desde el año 1980, a pesar de que la guerra civil peruana comenzó años después de la salida de Olaechea del Perú.

El título del artículo que aparece en Yahoo! dice: “El terrorista peruano Adolfo Olaechea...” De modo que la histeria gringa en torno al “terrorismo” tiene resonancia en todo el mundo- algo común entre la popular retórica “antiterrorista” propagada por gobernantes que buscan encubrir cualquier tipo de oportunismo y fechoría.

Adolfo Olaechea lleva casi 40 años fuera del Perú. Ha sido residente permanente de Inglaterra durante los últimos 25 años. Según una entrevista realizada por El Comercio, Olaechea no formaba parte del Partido Comunista del Perú. Tenía un documento emitido por la Embajada peruana que le permitía viajar dentro del Perú, por lo tanto, Olaechea no tenía problemas con viajes a Perú durante dos semanas. La pregunta es ¿a qué se debe la acusación reciente de “terrorismo”, si los gringos no están moviendo los hilos de los títeres? Como señala la entrevista de El Comercio, las personas que han acusado a Olaechea en el pasado hoy en día están presos por acusación de tráfico de drogas, soborno y asesinato en masa. El jefe del servicio de inteligencia V. Montesinos, quien ocupó el cargo durante la presidencia de Fujimori, se encuentra encarcelado.

A la luz del reciente descontento con el fallido régimen peruano, los resultados de la encuesta sobre la popularidad de Toledo quien había obtenido su educación en la Universidad de Stanford, y el descontento global con el patrocinador de Toledo, los EE. UU., no nos sorprende el amplio alcance de

la búsqueda de chivos expiatorios, aunque los detalles de tales noticias siempre son muy raros. Mientras el pueblo peruano organiza marchas en contra del desempleo y se preguntan por qué Toledo no lleva a cabo sus promesas electorales, resulta fácil hacer demagogia y distraer a la gente con la aserción de que la guerra civil peruana originó en Londres.

En su publicación, Caretas afirma que Adolfo Olaechea “propaga a favor del Sendero Luminoso”. Burlándose de las denuncias que Olaechea hizo en contra del régimen peruano desde Londres, Caretas lo llama un trabajador cultural que debería ser castigado aunque Olaechea no fuera “un líder histórico” del Sendero Luminoso.

Les sugerimos a escritores tipo Caretas que en vez de buscar respuestas fáciles como la caza de refugiados en Londres, amplíen su información, por ejemplo, con una reseña de las condiciones en el campo para entender a qué se debe el origen de la lucha armada. Si un gobierno no sabe aguantar ciertos discursos o artículos escritos desde Londres, a este gobierno le tocará caer tarde o temprano; cuanto más pronto se reconozca este hecho y se abandone a este tipo de gobierno débil, menos sangre será derramada.

Uno de los pasos tomados por Olaechea en Inglaterra antes de su arresto fue el intento de asegurar el apoyo de los Tories en contra de la guerra con Irak. Olaechea instigó a

Inglaterra a que “salvara nuestra democracia”- una posición afín a la opinión inglesa, según la cual en un país que tiene sus propios recursos petrolíferos, la mayoría de la gente no estaba a favor de la guerra, sino que fue obligada a brindar su respaldo a favor de la misma por Bush y su títere Blair.

Mao dijo una vez que un ataque del enemigo es un honor y un hecho positivo. En el caso de Adolfo Olaechea, el honor de haber sido convertido en un chivo expiatorio es extraño pero significativo. ¿Es posible que el régimen peruano tenga tanto pánico a los escritos y los discursos de Olaechea que decida correr el riesgo de aparentar desesperado en público?

Surge la pregunta de qué tan eficaz es el motor de la justicia. Aún está por verse si lo que está pasando es un resto del despotismo anterior de Fujimori, ahora que existe una orden internacional de arresto en contra del mismo. La imagen que se crea en torno a Perú es la imagen de una “república bananera” caprichosa y arbitraria. Según la entrevista de El Comercio, en una ocasión Perú le otorga a Olaechea una entrada para su luna de miel por dos semanas. En otra ocasión se ordena un arresto de Fujimori/Montesinos por cargos de corrupción, tráfico de drogas y asesinatos en masa. Encima de esto, el Perú parece actuar según órdenes que tal vez hayan sido emitidas por Fujimori.

El MIM espera obtener más detalles sobre esta rara historia.

¿Que es el MIM?

El Movimiento Internacionalista Maoísta (MIM) es un partido revolucionario comunista que ejerce el Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoísmo. El MIM es una organización internacionalista que trabaja desde el punto de vista del proletariado del Tercer Mundo; es por esto que sus miembros no son americanos sino ciudadanos del mundo.

El MIM lucha para acabar con la opresión de todos los grupos sobre cualquier otro, naciones por naciones, clases por clases, y géneros por géneros. La revolución es una realidad para los Estados Unidos mientras su ejército continúa extendiéndose en su esfuerzo por asegurar la hegemonía mundial.

El MIM difiere de otros partidos en tres puntos básicos: (1) El MIM sostiene que después que el proletariado conquiste el poder estatal, existiera aún el potencial para una restauración de tipo capitalista, bajo la dirección de una burguesía nueva dentro del mismo partido comunista. En el caso de la Unión Soviética, la burguesía se apoderó del gobierno después de la muerte de Stalin, en 1953; y en China después de la muerte de Mao y del derrocamiento de la llamada “banda de los cuatro” en 1976. (2) El MIM sostiene que la Revolución Cultural en China es la fase más avanzada a la que llegó el comunismo en la historia. (3) El MIM afirma que la clase trabajadora blanca de los EE.UU. es primordialmente, una élite trabajadora no revolucionaria en el presente. Es por esto que no es el principal vehículo para avanzar el Maoísmo en este país.

El MIM acepta como miembro a cualquier individuo que esté de acuerdo con estos tres puntos básicos, y que acepte al centralismo democrático, el método de gobierno por la mayoría en lo que se refiere a cuestiones de línea del partido. El MIM es un partido clandestino que no publica los nombres de sus miembros para evitar la represión estatal dirigida históricamente contra los movimientos revolucionarios comunistas, y anti-imperialistas. Si Ud. desea una suscripción para cualquiera de nuestros periódicos o libros teóricos, en español o en inglés, por favor mandar dinero en efectivo o un cheque al nombre de MIM a esta dirección:

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