

MIM Notes

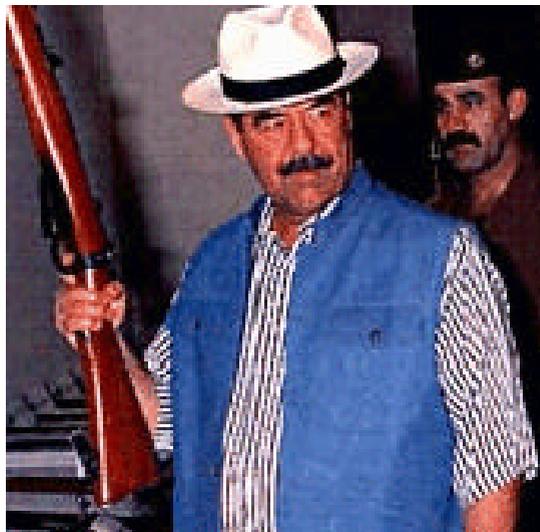


Jan. 1, 2004, N° 294

The Official Newsletter of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM)

Free

George W. Bush or Saddam Hussein Which one is worse for Iraq?



by MC5

December 15, 2003

On December 13, the bourgeois news agencies reported that U.S. troops captured Saddam Hussein, former president of Iraq. The rulers of England, France and Germany all heralded this as “very good news for the people of Iraq,” as Prime Minister Tony Blair of England said.(1)

82% of the Amerikkkan public thought the capture of Saddam Hussein was a “great achievement” according to a CNN/USA Today poll of 664 people.(2) Meanwhile, Brian Knowlton for the New York Times and International Herald Tribune quoted a political science professor who now thinks George W. Bush is “unbeatable” in 2004 elections without major economic and war disaster.(3) So it goes to prove that the formula of killing Third World people is ever-popular in the imperialist country populations.

Although numerous Republican conservatives complained that Democrats hated Bush more than Saddam Hussein(4), in fact, the Democratic Party celebrated Saddam Hussein’s capture. This leaves only hard-line internationalists like us here at MIM asking who is better for Iraqi people, Saddam Hussein or George Bush.

In politics, George Washington warned America not to aggrandize itself at the expense of other nations and he fought against the colonial power England. Those who believe colonialism is not progressive share George Washington’s opinion and thus believe that Saddam Hussein is better for Iraq than George Bush. However, let us leave behind the political generalities and look at the facts underlying those beliefs. The question should be whether George W. Bush is better for Iraq than Saddam Hussein or whether the imperialist countries have propagandized themselves into old-style colonialism.

The first thing we always hear Bush say about his justifications for what he does is that Iraq is not a “free country.” Now supposedly Iraq is free of a “tyrant.” Yet Bush heads a government with more prisoners percentage-wise than Saddam Hussein did. (Amerikka leads the world in prisoners per capita.) What is more, Saddam Hussein released all his

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Iraq a true colony

Inter-imperialist rivalry goes up a notch

by MC5

December 10, 2003

The Pentagon announced that it is cutting Russia, France and Germany out of business in Iraq for failing to support the invasion, the New York Times reported December 10th.(1)

In colonial times, the standard practice was to prevent competitors from doing business in one’s colonies. Since the United States has limited the business in Iraq to a group of its allies such as Poland and Portugal, the resulting group is called a “trade bloc.”

The Pentagon says that only U.S. allies will be allowed to do business there on U.S. contracts—which since the United States is running Iraq—means no new business for France, Germany and Russia. Thus far, Iraq under U.S. dictatorship is honoring old business contracts from before the invasion, including one for Russian taxis.(2)

Republicans in Congress and Democrats running for president lambasted the Bush administration. Senator Kerry from Massachusetts said, “I can’t think of anything dumber.”(3) He and others pointed out the obvious that other selfish bourgeois nations would not join in unity without some scraps of the spoils thrown their way.

The Bush administration move has further infuriated the bourgeois

internationalist faction usually more firmly in control of the government and reveals fissures at the highest level of imperialist strategy. The bourgeois internationalists overwhelmingly in control until Bush Jr. came to power want joint imperialist exploitation of Iraq. They do not like the logic of trade blocs and fantasize about free trade. The current policy is more like that of an Amerikkka-first faction supported by fringe elements like Buchanan or Perot and goes to show that imperialism is two-faced and inherently contradictory. Bush Jr. comes from a bourgeois internationalist family.

It was Lenin in his argument with Kautsky who said that imperialism could never become “super-imperialism,” a united and peaceful imperialism. Quite the contrary, as Lenin said in his book “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism,” the imperialists would periodically redivide the world. What is happening in Iraq is a textbook example.

The fact that Bush would think of going this ancient route is also a disproof of those saying there is no longer a nation-state or there is only just one world empire. Authors Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri wrote a book called *Empire* saying that there is only one world imperialism.

The slap at Europe also occurs at a time when the Euro is trouncing the dollar on the markets. The British pound hit an unheard of \$1.73. MIM reported the reasons for this in July 1 2003 MIM

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Latinos boycott California

December 12, 2003

California Latino activists held a state-wide boycott to protest Governor Schwarzenegger’s December 3 repeal of a bill that would have given so-called illegal immigrants the right to drive. Intended to demonstrate the economic power of Latinos in California, the boycott was a one-day economic strike where Latinos across the state stayed home from work and school and did not buy anything.

One-third of the population in California is Latino and the state’s industries rely on Latino labor, which makes up 45% of the workforce, particularly for the low wage jobs that other people don’t want. Of the Latino nations in California, Mexicans are the overwhelming majority, making up about 80% as of the 2000 census.(1) Consistent with demographics, this strike saw heavy Mexican participation and leadership. It brought out a public demonstration of Mexican nationalism with Mexican flags flying across the state at protests and in the streets.

Schools in heavily Latino districts reported dramatically lower attendance, some businesses shut down in solidarity with the action, and many streets lined with stores were empty of shoppers. The Fresno Bee reported that absences in Fresno County alone cost school districts

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Letters

Prisoner congratulates MIM on bucking imperialist media monopoly

Greetings MIM,

I am in receipt of MIM Notes 288-290, thank you. The newspapers were unexpected, as I have not received MIM Notes in over two years.

After 9-11 the Michigan Department of Corruptions (MDOC) increased its efforts to censor all incoming sources of information, this included categorically banning all MIM-related materials. Prior to that the MDOC wrote mail policies that disallowed books and magazines that were not from the "approved vendor" list. This permitted the MDOC to deny censoring what information we have access to by stating that we are allowed to order books, magazines, newspapers, etc. But I can assure you that the approved vendors do not carry MIM Notes or any other materials critical of the American capitalist-imperialist government and the institutions it has spawned.

MIM has been central in providing information about the world we live in. MIM is the definition of a free press. Even those who do not agree with MIM politics surely must concede to that. The big American Media outlets simply parakeet information disseminated by the government/corporate America. The

White House, State Department, Pentagon and City Hall become our sources of information. News analysts and commentators are often ex-government employees or corporate insiders.

Take for example those the media uses to keep us abreast of what is going on in Iraq: Paul Bremer? It's a joke. I used to think that the News Hour with Jim Lehrer was legitimate, but I have noticed that he never has as a guest or analyst an individual directly affected by the issue of the day. If he does, it is one who was hand-picked. Not once have I seen anyone on the news who was asked to explain what life was like in Iraq during the 13 years of American military aggression against that country. No Iraqis have been invited on television to talk about how the embargo affected their lives: the constant bombing of roads, plants, water works and communication centers, or the burning of crops. The media give these things, among other atrocities, no attention, as if they have not contributed to the destruction of Iraqi society.

I do not want to beat this in the head, but the other day a group of us was discussing how the World Bank subsidized the \$87 billion Bush said was needed to support the troops and finance "rebuilding" in Iraq for the next six to eight months. Even though the news conveyed that information, it failed to explain how the World Bank functions and what this World Bank subsidy means for the Iraqi people. A viewer may possess some information but not enough to process and



Where on the news do we hear about the effects of US sanctions on the Iraqis?

synthesize what has actually taken place.

I would appreciate it if you would keep me on your mailing list. Your paper is an invaluable source of information and insight. MIM has allowed me to view issues from a vantage I otherwise never would have. This in turn has influenced how I have viewed and responded to other issues.

America espouses and acts upon a specific economic-political ideology: capitalism. I actually question if capitalism or imperialism is a proper definition. All major industries are monopolized, and everyone who does business does business at the behest of the monopolies. There is no "Free Market" competition, not competition in the true sense of the word. Robert McChesney, in a paper entitled "Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy" explained that each of the eight largest U.S. media firms has, on average, joint ventures with four of the other seven giants. They also have more ventures with smaller media firms. Beyond joint ventures, there is also overlapping direct ownership of these firms. Seagram, owner of MCA, for example owns 15 percent of Time Warner

and has other media equity holdings in numerous other firms. The Capital Group Companies mutual fund, valued at \$250 billion, is among the very largest shareholder in TCI, News Corporation, Seagram, Time Warner, Viacom, Disney, Westinghouse, and several other smaller media firms.

One last thing. Howard Dean was courting the votes of those who wave the confederate flag. He was criticized for that rather boisterously by Al Sharpton in particular. But the stars and stripes flag represents no better. Everywhere that flag has been raised, including on this continent, it has meant American hegemony, exploitation and oppression. If that flag is raised in Cambodia it cannot help but resonate with memories of terror when the Nixon Administration secretly bombed that country. In Chile it brings up memories of the U.S.'s role in overthrowing Salvador Allende's government. In Puerto Rico it recalls over a hundred years of colonial relations with America. The same emotions and memories the confederate flag stirs up for New Afrikans (Blacks) the American flag does for people all around the world. We missed the opportunity to exploit that. Al Sharpton is a continuation of the conciliatory politics that have tried to legislate reforms in a system that places profit before people and always will. His energy and time are a detriment.

Vita Bila Ya Mashanti
(War Without Terms),
—a Michigan prisoner,
25 November, 2003

MIM responds: You are right about corporate/government domination of the Amerikan media and how that hinders popular understanding of the problems we face today. You are also correct that

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Editor, MC206; Production, MC12

MIM Notes

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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.

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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 anti-war polling continues in Los Angeles

Los Angeles, 13 December 2003 — MIM attended a candlelight vigil in the middle of Hollywood to end the occupation of Iraq. The vigil started just after dark on a well-picked street corner and the crowd's signs and speeches drew attention from people driving into LA from the San Fernando Valley along with tourists and families strolling on the Walk of Fame in the early evening. A few hundred people participated, and passersby stopped throughout the evening to gawk, find out what the crowd was for, or show their support. We handed out 100+ copies of MIM Notes to the crowd, and took a short poll to gauge the crowd's opinion on current U.S. foreign policy.

Forty-seven people participated in our quick poll over about an hour and a quarter. We based our questions on those suggested in MIM Notes 271,(1) with slight modifications to account for the fact

that those questions were written before the invasion of Iraq. Answering percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent and may not add up to 100. A mild skew comes from the fact that for several respondents English was not a first language and they answered "I don't know" to some questions out of concern that they were not understanding the question adequately.

1. Using your own definition of terrorism, would you call the U.S. government a terrorist organization? Yes: 79% (37 people); No: 17% (8 people); I don't know: 2% (1 persyn). The response to this question in LA was similar to that in Boston back in December.(2) Even though we had narrowed this question since our last poll, several people hesitated in their responses before answering yes, saying the question was too broad. These people said that they

might call George Bush or the Department of Defense terrorist but not the government as a whole, or that they think the U.S. is engaged in terrorist activities right now but is not inherently terrorist. We asked these people to give their opinion of the government as a whole, considering its current actions and those of the past few months.

We might break this question down in the future to reflect this range of opinion, if we had more time or more pollsters. But as we said in December, even with imperfect or "vague" questions it is a useful exercise to obtain a general idea about the anti-war movement. MIM would also say it is a useful exercise for those in the anti-war movement to think about Amerika or the U.S. government as a whole. When asked to do this, anti-war Americans apparently see their country the way the rest of the world does.

2. On a scale of 1 (extreme disapproval) to 7 (extreme approval), how would you rate your opinion of the U.S. handling of the Iraq situation? The average answer was 1.1, with 1 (extreme disapproval) getting 85% (40 people); 2 getting 4% (2 people); 3.5 getting 2% (1 persyn); and 5 also getting 2% (1 persyn). Some people answered "negative 1," "negative 1000," or "it sucks." The concentration of answers on this question was pretty predictable, given that the crowd had gathered to protest U.S. actions in Iraq. We would probably not repeat this question for such a crowd. People at an anti-occupation rally have pretty much answered this question just by showing up.

A couple of those who answered more favorably about the U.S. actions expected that MIM would not want to include them

Matrix Revolutions Round II



Neo learned from his enemy sufficiently to bring about revolution. This point is something often not stressed enough in our own class struggles. Learning from the enemy is not spying.

reviewed by mim3@mim.org

It's been long enough since the movie came out that this review will contain many spoilers. I will start with my pre-movie predictions.

Obviously I was wrong that Morpheus would die. However, we did avoid a totally happy ending and in this respect, I am happy not to have to trash the movie completely.

As our first review of this movie pointed out, even though 99% of humyns live in bondage (hooked up to the matrix), the revolution does not seem to involve them. They are an afterthought brought in at the very end of the movie to tie together some loose ends.

This movie is to such an extent a movie about heroes that the climax is a borrowed Greek myth about the gods. Neo, but only Neo evolves in order to save the humyns. His is a lonely and strong sacrifice when he goes alone without his love. I at least wondered whether he really had it in him.

The death imagery of the climax includes Buddhist energy pattern beliefs and Buddhist/Muslim beliefs about boundaries beyond which wimmin cannot pass. All this is to say that this is not a fully modern work of art by any stretch of the imagination. It seems to delight in borrowing and challenging the audience to uncover the theft covered up in sci-fi forms.

There is not that much fiction out there in the world that shows a whole class of people liberating itself. Marx criticized the art of heroes as "idealist." Hence, with its emphasis on heroic individuals, we

cannot say that the "Matrix" is fully materialist—though we have spent much energy defending the "Matrix" against its even more idealist fans and critics.

The process that Neo went through though is roughly dialectical, for one persyn. With the exception of my Morpheus prediction I'd say my others were correct.

"The new agent character, Agent Smith who appears independent in part II will play an important role, because he is a software-machine construction with a difference. He will play some kind of mediating role, vanguard role in machine-to-people relations.

"I predict that he will end up facilitating some kind of new peace between humyns and machines. However, this peace will be path-breaking, troubled and troubling, but make a good satisfying end to the movie."

Agent Smith turned out to be the kink in the order that restored order and caused its evolution. Without him, there could be no peace between humyns and machines.

I also said, "I will predict that Neo in particular has some learning to do to deal with the machines, a dialectical progression and there may be some negotiation with the machines, but the people will get substantially what they want."

In fact, what Neo does is become a new species with a central role in the Matrix/machine-world. He has learned

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Video Exposes Imperialism in the Philippines

San Francisco, December 12

The Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (CHRP) hosted an event to show a new movie entitled "Ang Kaaway" (The Enemy). The movie did not provide any new information to MIM, but it is an excellent historical account with an internationalist perspective.

The movie begins with the redeployment of U.S. troops in the Philippines with the announcement of the 'War on Terrorism.' A spokesperson from CHRP pointed out the ramifications of the troops' presence in both direct military involvement and the effects on the daily lives of communities. He cited a 600% increase in prostitution of wimmin and children since the troops returned. Meanwhile, the Filipino people face an average of two murders a day by the U.S.-puppet state.

A mass movement of Filipinos forced the United States to close its military bases in the Philippines at the beginning of the 1990s. The Filipino people prevented the return of U.S. troops throughout the decade, despite the wishes of the U.S.-puppet state. But current President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo approved the Visiting Forces Agreement (1), which gives U.S. troops and ships access to the country. This agreement violates the Filipino constitution and is clearly opposed by the Filipino people. She also invited U.S. troops to participate in military operations (another constitutional violation, but consistent with the toadying nature of the Manila government).

Both the movie and the CHRP speaker did an excellent job of putting the Filipino struggle in the context of the history of revolutionary struggles and the current state of national liberation movements occurring throughout the world. The film faltered some when discussing conditions in the imperialist countries, however.

The film claimed that "free trade" capitalism isn't even in the interest of people in the imperialist countries. While implying

that Americans have it a little better this statement ignored the economic realities within imperialist countries, namely, that the majority there benefits from the exploitation of the Third World. Furthermore, in the context of imperialist countries, this statement plays the internationalist "free trade" wing of the bourgeoisie against the protectionist wing. As we note in the article on the colonization of Iraq (page one of this issue), these two contradictory tendencies are inherent in imperialism. The alternative to "free trade" in the imperialist-country context is a chauvinist movement like that of Buchanan. (In the oppressed-nation context, trade protections can be progressive, because the national bourgeoisie still plays a progressive role.)

Following the movie MIM was invited to give a solidarity statement along with comrades from the Korean, Asian Pacific Islander and Costa Rican struggles. In our statement a comrade pointed out that while the system isn't in anyone's interest in the long run, we have the choice in Amerika to sit back and enjoy the superprofits stolen from Filipino slaves and others like them all around the world. Or we have the choice to take our reactions to atrocities like those in the movie and use them to fuel our struggles to overthrow imperialism. We also expressed solidarity with all national liberation struggles, giving special recognition to the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has provided the ideological leadership for a struggle that has been at the forefront in the fight against imperialism. The Filipino people have proven that it is possible to stop U.S. militarism and it is only a matter of time and struggle until they are able to rid their country of it forever.

Notes: MIM coverage of VFA: www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/cal/vfa.html; www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/mn/mn252/vfaphilippines.html; www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/fil/phil169.html.

Letters

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Amerika does not operate as a “free” market — and it doesn’t bring a free market to the countries it colonizes and neocolonizes. However, that doesn’t mean Amerika is not capitalist, or that there is no freedom here at all. Capitalism has small swings back and forth between more and less economic freedom, even as it moves in the general direction of more domination and less overall freedom — especially in the form of monopolization, as you suggest.

Capitalism has never lived up to its own mythology of freedom, from the very first time the bourgeois ideologues declared that individual workers “freely” chose their employers and agreed to work for the wages offered. For Marxists, capitalism is defined not simply by the existence of markets for trade, but also by the domination of privately-owned capital in the production process and the exploitation of labor for profit. For that system to be dynamic, a certain amount of market freedom is necessary. When markets are completely dominated by monopolies, capitalism loses its dynamism and eventually risks implosion — that’s the good news.

‘I hate to be associated with cops and judges’

Dear MIM,

I would like to give my thanks and praise to J Sakai for the work “Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat.” I am white and of Irish descent. I have always felt strong ties and compassion for my ancestral homeland of Ireland. I acknowledge the fact that my ancestors in Amerika were probably slavemasters, and were definitely oppressors of African and Indian peoples. I can’t deny my past, but I can learn from it and make an attempt to educate my fellow Irish-

Iraq

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Notes: “The dollar is especially subject to a total collapse.”

Although the New York Times and Democrats are talking about how radically different Bush Jr. is, we would not be surprised to see Bush Jr. cave in on this point rather quickly. It may be a diplomatic gambit at best. Nonetheless, in a bourgeois world it is hopeless to think that organizations such as the United Nations can ever really bring peace. These divisions that we see in Iraq have a life of their own in the me-first kernel of capitalism.

Notes:

1. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/10/international/middleeast/10DIPL.html?hp>

2. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/3290873.stm>

3. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51059-2003Dec9.html>

Amerikans about our true history: not the fake history U.S. schools teach, but the true history that J Sakai and other have made me aware of.

So my fellow Irishmen I say this: reject any loyalty to the U.S. This isn’t our land. Our land is back in Ireland. The British scum have also captured our homeland.

I would love to know why so many Irish people in Amerika are cops, D.A.s and judges. I hate to be associated with that aspect of my nationality. Associate me with the “Patricio Corps” if you associate me with anybody! During the invasion of 1848, the “Patricio Corps” defected to the Mexican forces and took up arms against the U.S. empire. That was only one of the gems of knowledge that J Sakai made me aware of.

I encourage all Irish prisoners to learn more about MIM and what they stand for. If you know an inmate in your prison that is of Irish descent, please pass my letter along to him and let him read it. Recognize and realize that all whites aren’t pro-U.S., and that there is a small number of us that actually have revolutionary potentials and beliefs. The majority of the Euro- Amerikan “left” are at best reactionaries, whose only goal is reform within the U.S. empire. [...]

Keep the revolution alive, maintain your composure and hold your heads up comrades!

—A Pennsylvania prisoner, October 2003

MIM responds: J. Sakai and MIM put forward similar answers to the question of why many immigrant groups who were oppressed in Europe became part of the oppressor Amerikan nation, becoming “cops, DAs and judges”—to say nothing of Governors and Presidents! MIM summed up its position in its review of Noel Ignatiev’s *How the Irish Became White*.

“This historical reality of the predominantly lower-middle class Irish who made it to North America reinforces the thesis of the difficulty of maintaining a proletariat where there is a larger mass of workers influencing them towards assimilation. It is difficult for a pocket of exploited workers to maintain its identity and uniqueness as a class. When the Irish arrived they were indeed proletarian, but as they looked around they saw adequate examples of why they should conform to the white ethnicity” (1).

This letter-writer also raises the possibility that empathy with the home country can turn immigrants’ sympathies against U.S. imperialism. This is certainly the case for immigrants from oppressed nations—including the counties in northern Ireland still under British occupation, with U.S. complicity. At its best, this oppressed-nation nationalism is also internationalist. For example, early Irish nationalist Daniel O’Connell said he “didn’t want any support for Irish nationalism that was not against slavery” (1).

Notes:

1. <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bookstore/books/whitenation/ignatiev.html>. You can also purchase *How the Irish Became White* through this website.

How can MIM support the death penalty?

I am not trying to criticize MIM’s views, I am only trying to understand MIM’s supported view of the death penalty, according to the Selected Works of Mao Tsetung. I am against any form of execution to any race or gender. I do not believe humans can submit judgment of any guilty/nonguilty prisoner’s life, whether or not he/she harmed, violated, or destroyed another human life/lives. To judge the final verdict, based on man-made laws, of any human’s existence here upon Mother Earth and destroying the Almighty’s perfect creation, is placing oneself on an equal platform as the Almighty. One is a murderer as much as the prisoner in every sense by the ways of judging his/her life under or by this unrighteous death penalty law.

What is righteous and equally punishable in a judicial branch of the social government is enforcing the life sentence as the maximum punishment of law. Sentencing a guilty prisoner of such acts as intentional murder, multiple rapes, child molestation, to a lifetime of confinement without parole is reasonable punishment because the sentence strips that prisoner’s rights to live among society forever.

—A Texas Prisoner, November 2003

MIM responds: We oppose the death penalty as practiced by the bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialist state—just as we oppose their injustice system and their wars generally. We share this opposition with you and many others, including other religious people, with whom we also have fundamental disagreements. There are many ways we can work together to challenge this system in spite of our disagreements.

You raise the question of execution as a philosophical one, outside of the specific context of an existing state power. Can one humyn judge another? In the society humynity is capable of creating, we think that is not only possible, but necessary. Can humyns put themselves on the same level as god? Certainly, since god does not exist outside of the ideas people created.

The idea that there are some things ordained by god that humyns cannot understand is fundamentally conservative, and we oppose it. The bourgeoisie opposed it back in the 18th and early 19th centuries, when it was still a progressive force, fighting for power against feudalism and monarchy. Now that it has state power and is threatened by the oppressed masses questioning its rule, the bourgeoisie not only tolerates but actively promotes all kinds of obscuratinist garbage.

MIM is not philosophically opposed to violence. Arguments about violence must come with evidence of their comparative effectiveness in the real world or be guilty of siding with the violence of the status quo. Typically middle-class critics of Maoism with humyn-rights illusions cannot name any place concretely



The oppressed must meet the violence of the oppressors with violence as a matter of self-defense.

speaking where humyn-rights exist and where those guilty of needing extensive self-defense can go. Show the peasants of Peru a genuine humyn-rights zone and they will gladly walk in and abandon Maoism. Alternatively, MIM says the oppressed must meet the violence of the oppressors with violence as a matter of self-defense. We can point to the successes of the Chinese and Russian revolutions in extending life expectancy, expanding literacy etc. as proof that our approach works.

We consider prisons generally and the death penalty in particular to be political tools, in the same sense that war is a continuation of politics by other means. The bourgeoisie knows this too, despite its rhetoric about “universal human rights.” That’s why Amerika’s prisoners—especially those on death row—are disproportionately from oppressed nations; that’s why politically active prisoners are more likely to end up in solitary confinement. We will fight tooth and nail against those who insist they have a “right” to profit by denying the oppressed basic survival rights. If this means we sentence some of these people to death, so be it.

On a related note, we recognize state power—including the responsibility to judge and punish criminals—must be handled with the utmost accountability. As Mao said, people’s heads are not like leeks; they cannot grow back again once they are chopped off. That’s why we think Party members who make deadly mistakes should themselves face the death penalty.(1) The Party is no place for corruption, careerism or laziness where the livelihood of the masses is concerned.

Notes:

1. See our “Theses on the vanguard party in the transition to communism,” <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/wim/cong/thesesonvanguard2002.html>.

Economic sim game cuts both ways

“Tropico” still way better than average shoot-’em-up

Tropico: Mucho Macho Edition (2002)

Pop Tart Software

Tropico is a make-believe island in the Caribbean and the game starts in 1949. Although it is just a tad simplified compared with other computer strategy games coming out at this time, it still has enough variety and complexity to play for months straight without reduplicating games. Even though the game claims to have communist options and focuses heavily on Cuba, the main character is a classical authoritarian dictator with a groveling advisor side-kick.

The advantage of the “authoritarian” personality is that since the object of the game is to take care of one’s subjects and not be ousted from power it forces the player into thinking about the island overall and that is important to anyone’s scientific development. Although the game is titled “Mucho Macho,” it also has a “teen” rating from the ESRB. It does not appear to have any pornography. From parents’ perspective, this game has a number of other advantages. One stems from the trend in strategy games to think of many different game goals instead of the usual take-over-the-place-by-force-and-kill-all-the-enemies, possibly all accomplished with a single joy-stick. At root “Tropico” is really a real-estate developers’ game and among other modes it is possible to play it in “sandbox” mode just to see how all the buildings and plants look.

The player has a choice of characters to serve as “El Presidente” of the island-nation and Che Guevara is the first one offered. Ordinary characters in the game acting as subjects of Presidente’s rule have Latin American or Russian names such as Andropov, Putin and Gorbachev. There are also “humorous” names such as “Badenov” (Bad-enough) and “Bigot” attached to a Black character.

The reviewer played the game in “open-ended” mode as Che. The other players possible included a league of bourgeois dictators from history. MIM regards Che as a revolutionary anti-imperialist martyr, not a Leninist. While Che adopted Mao’s military thinking and he tried to bring socialist economic strategies to Cuba he did not break free from Soviet revisionism while Castro sided with Khrushchev against Mao. He left the island without developing the economic struggle against revisionism sufficiently and embarked on military adventures unconnected to a sense of economic reality as he himself admitted in the Congo.(1) (On the plus side, he knew he was killing imperialist occupier troops in that adventure.)

The game scenario chosen by the reviewer started with a 47% difficulty rating, but in addition to the game’s rules, the reviewer used self-imposed rules to

make the game more difficult. The self-imposed rules were 1) total atheism, no churches, popes or cathedral building 2) no prisons or dungeons 3) open immigration and no “love it or leave it” policy. One dungeon option claims to serve as a thought-reform institute if the prisoner survives three years. Again, with a serious topic at hand, the game reduces everything to a joke about authoritarianism.

While people are starving and unemployed throughout the Caribbean, there are people politically demanding churches on a regular basis. The religious were the most coup- and rebellion-inclined people in the reviewer’s game.

With Che as the island’s leader, politics does play a role. Che receives a 50% bonus in radio propaganda effectiveness. This makes the island population less likely to vote out or overthrow Che. There are also protests in the game.

Most of the rest of the game is accurate in terms of Brezhnev era pseudo-communism, which is really state-capitalism with a social-democratic facade. For example, there is no question of how the workplace is organized. The “Presidente” has the choice to build skylights in factories to appease workers, but there is not much more in terms of relations between workers and rulers or bosses inside factories.

Another Brezhnev era truism is worked into the simulation. It may be possible to start the game out in such a way that foreign aid is not crucial, but the reviewer suspects that most players will end up depending on U.S. or Russian aid to keep the budget in the black in the initial few years.

MIM does not doubt that this sardonic simulation game has summed up approximately the experiences of millions of people with phony communism. For many, communism as socialist-leadership principle means social security, free education and free health care and not much more.

Ironically, in “Tropico” when college education is free and students receive two-thirds the normal salary and everyone receives double food rations, there is still a shortage of students and the vast majority of people choose to remain uneducated to the point of not completing high school. With electricity plants and TV stations to run, this is very frustrating for the economy and “Presidente.” The only way to encourage people to go to college is to widen the pay gap between those jobs requiring college education and those that do not. As the saying goes, otherwise, people “do not know what they are missing.”

This touches on a crucial question for the economics of socialism. At first, it may seem that “Tropico” is just absurdly wrong, but in fact, there is a contradiction between “red and expert” as the Chinese Maoists said. When the understanding of

“red” is “yeah, I’m for free college, food subsidies, social security and free health care,” then the reason we communists want the people to avail themselves of educational opportunities is missing. The solution to parasitism of the rich is not the smaller but more widespread parasitism of the poor. Advance involves synthesis, and some of the traits that capitalists say they have are indeed necessary for advance. By themselves demands for free health care and education are merely social-democratic, not communist.

In fact, in the World War II era, Stalin in the USSR had to do exactly what the reviewer had to do: widen the pay gap between educated technicians and ordinary workers to get the economy going fast enough to defeat Hitler. We Maoists only question whether Stalin did enough political mass mobilization to reduce the extent to which wage gaps had to be widened. Subsequently, Stalin had to fight off coup attempts and various kinds of discontent, just as one would in “Tropico.”

In “Tropico” when the people overthrow “Presidente” we do not see what the next course they adopt turns out to be. We know what the demands of the people are throughout the game, but we never see how anyone proposes concretely to address them. In this sense there is something missing from “Tropico.” “Tropico” claims that political mobilization helps to maintain the rulers in power and nothing else. That’s what museums, radio stations and TV are for in the game. For this reason, free-market cynics say that we Maoists do not actually accomplish anything with our political campaigns: only money can accomplish anything economic. In contrast, we believe that most economic lessons are learned in practice. If it takes a political campaign to break old economic patterns and allow something to be learned in practice, then that political campaign has its success through its effect on the economy.

The view that politics is only about individual power-holding is the sterile Liberal-anarchist view. This game is perfect toward that end except that the player has to be the “Presidente” to play. In contrast, we Maoists hold that it does matter who and what class hold power. All class societies have power struggles. That’s not new. How those power struggles affect society at large is the only interesting question.

On the subject of economics, “Tropico” is really about making the right real estate choices if one aims at economic development to begin with. As a communist, one has the power to set wages and fire individual workers but not to force individual workers into individual plants or even show them that they exist. The best one can do is run profitable luxury goods businesses to subsidize the

many items necessary for propaganda or the people’s economic benefit such as hospitals, schools and some forms of subsidized entertainment. The better job one does in placing and operating luxury good enterprises for exports, the more money is available for the people’s benefits in this game—a point that may well be true of transitional stages called “socialism” and as pointed out more indirectly in Trevor Chan’s game titled “Capitalism.”

The focus on profits in luxury industries sounds very state-capitalist. True, within “Tropico” enterprises are not competing with each other and there are no bureaucratic factions of Presidente’s government competing to implement things different ways. At the same time, the wage rate is really set by the rest of the capitalist Caribbean, because workers who believe wages are too low simply leave the country. So there is an element of competition and points out the limited extent to which a small country can escape the larger world’s economic orbit, which in 1949 was assuredly capitalist.

We communists often point out that the world has enough food to feed everyone, but it is not properly distributed. In taking over a small place like Tropico, that generalization is not really relevant. When U.S. imperialism falls, we may be able to carry out that distribution, but when communists seize power in Cuba for instance, the solution to world hunger is not necessarily on the political agenda of Cuba by itself.

A limited number of people may choose to live as farmers in crude conditions, but “Tropico” does not really allow one to play strictly for internal economic development. Goods production will end up transported for export whether the “Presidente” wants it or not. If there is a shortage of ports by the player’s design, goods for export will pile up at the port, unused by the local population. On the other hand, in the real world we would be silly to advise a small nation to depend on internal economic development alone if export is possible without giving imperialists control of the economy.

There is no Maoist option in this game, but it still can teach players some things. It’s not our favorite game, and has a mixed political message, but compared with other games out there, it’s definitely way above average. Instead of that army simulation or fighter-plane simulation game, buy someone “Tropico” instead.

Notes

1. See our review of Che’s African Diaries, <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bookstore/books/africa/checongo.html>

SHU protesters join Sacramento demonstration

A December 12 demonstration at the California Department of Corrections (CDC) in Sacramento (called for by the Barrio Defense Committee, a community organization in San Jose) drew attention to the Security Housing Units in (SHUs) California prisons. SHUs are torture cells where many Latino prisoners are locked up in solitary confinement for indefinite sentences. These SHU sentences are imposed on supposed gang members, but the criteria for gang member validation makes all Latinos likely suspects. Talking to someone in the prison yard, having a tattoo, and even signing a get-well card are all marks against a prisoner. Prisonrats target politically active prisoners for this supposed validation to get them out of the yard so that they can't educate and influence other prisoners.

A leader of the Barrio Defense Committee explained, "From the [Senate SHU] hearings of September 15, 2003, it looks like it costs \$60,000 to \$70,000 to maintain one person in the SHU, which is millions of dollars wasted. Steve Castillo has been in the SHU for 8 years because he is a jailhouse lawyer. Hugo Pinell has been in the SHU for countless years because of his political beliefs! John Martinez was sent to the SHU for

questioning the brutality in Corcoran! Francisco Cesar Villa is in the SHU for asking for the right size of shoes! And Jose Luis Avina and Eddie Bustamante are in the SHU for participating in the 1999 New Folsom Prison hunger strike. So ultimately, it comes down to organizing in the streets to make the fundamental changes to shut down the SHUs for a victory."

The protest in front of the CDC marched to the state house to join the Latino boycott demonstration (see page one article). The boycotters in front of the state house eagerly signed a petition circulated by MIM to shut down the SHU and several spoke of relatives (or their own experience) locked up in these units.

A small group of activists proceeded inside to present a letter demanding the SHU be shut down to Senator Gloria Romero, chair of the Senate Select Committee on the California Correctional System. Romero held hearings a few months ago to investigate the Security Housing Units (see MN 289) but activists had heard no follow up from her since then.

Romero was not in the office but her consultant on the committee, Rocky Rushing, agreed to speak with the

activists. He explained that the CDC had met with the committee just last week to report on "progress" towards solving the problems raised at the hearings. Bottom line: the CDC was not going to change anything. The CDC agreed to make a few cosmetic adjustments to their gang validation process which will allow prisoners to respond to the evidence. Most of the evidence is secret, and the CDC did not agree to do anything with prisoner's responses, so this is meaningless. The CDC also agreed to add some programs in the SHU. But these too are meaningless, focusing on education about gangs and anger management, so that the CDC can pretend the SHU is really doing something about "gangs" in California prisons, rather than providing much needed libraries, education, and recreation.

The activists questioned Senator Romero's assistant about follow up (that the Senator had promised) on all the concerns raised by friends and family at the recent public hearing. He said they told the CDC to address all concerns raised and supplied the CDC with a transcript of the hearing to do so. And he went on to say that the CDC claimed they had already addressed all these concerns!

Needless to say, SHU organizers have not heard of the CDC following up with a single attendee at that hearing, where close to a hundred people testified about the horrors of the SHU.

Perhaps most revealing was the assistant's statement that they hoped to organize another meeting with the CDC and people concerned about the SHU so that when the CDC refuses to change those people at the table can feel like they were included. MIM takes this to mean that at least Senator Romero's assistant does not believe the Government has any power over the California Department of Corrections. They can call meetings, but they cannot force change. This is no surprise as the CDC huge budget is still unaffected even after big budget cuts and extensive negotiating between the branches of the California government to arrive at a balanced budget.

MIM knows that real change to the criminal injustice system won't come from a Senate Committee. But we continue to appeal to all possible avenues as we fight for reforms to improve the lives of our brothers and sisters behind bars while we educate and build for the complete overthrow of the imperialist system.

MIM and the Barrio Defense Committee are calling for a state-wide planning meeting of all organizations and individuals interested in joining the fight to shut down the Security Housing Units in California's prisons. We propose to hold this meeting Saturday, Feb 7, 2004 at 12:00 Noon at the Centro Aztlan in San Jose. If you are interested in attending this meeting please contact us at mim124@mim.org for more information.

Latinos boycott California

Continued from page 1...

about \$500,000. It is hard to quantify the economic impact to stores, but across the state, judging from absences in public schools, participation in the boycott appeared extensive. Several businesses interviewed by mainstream media reported shutting down their stores because they recognize the importance of (cheap) immigrant labor to their profits. The economic loss from a one-day closure, even during holiday shopping, is nothing compared to the loss they would face if they lost their workers. This decision was no doubt also fueled by pragmatism for some companies who knew most of their workers planned to honor the boycott and skip work.

Demonstrations were held across the state by groups of Latinos. A few non-Latinos joined in solidarity. In heavily Latino towns like Fresno and Santa Rosa hundreds of protesters took to the streets. In front of the state house in Sacramento several hundred protestors braved the rain to join the fight. The boisterous crowd got much support from passing cars honking at the signs calling for driver licenses and equal rights for Latino immigrants.

Called for by the Mexican American

Political Association, based in Los Angeles, the boycott gained no union support. On such short notice, it is possible organizers did not seek union endorsements. But it is no surprise to MIM that unions were not even represented at the demonstrations which were dominated by Mexican immigrants. The Amerikan unions have a long history of opposing immigrant labor and organizing for the rights of white workers to the exclusion of oppressed nations. The Amerikan unions are strongly behind closed borders and fear jobs being lost to immigrants or being lost to other countries. This is because those unions are safeguarding the high standard of living enjoyed by citizens in this country at the expense of the people in Third World countries. Third World workers are exploited by Amerikan corporations which then bring the profits home and share them with Amerikan workers in the form of higher wages and benefits. Illegal immigrants within Amerikan borders face the same exploitation.

Notes:

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Brief, "The Hispanic Population".

Missed Mao Zedong's Birthday? (December 26th)?

Don't worry, you can buy your favorite revolutionary some deep theory or rebellious culture any time of the year!

Order some of Mao's writings through MIM's website:
<http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/wim/maoworks.html>

Other books, as well as music and movies are reviewed and available at our website!

Books (various regions and countries, the environment, gender, capitalism & communism, the USSR, China etc.):
<http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bookstore/books/>

Music (punk, heavy metal, pop, hip hop etc.):
<http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bookstore/index.html#M>

Movies (100s of reviews, from Battleship Potemkin to The Matrix Trilogy): <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/movies/>

Video games (mostly strategy games):
<http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bookstore/vgames/>

Clay Aiken's silly love songs

Measure of Man (2003)

BMG

reviewed by MC5, November 2003

For those readers lucky enough not to be bombarded by the Amerikan FOX channel's press releases, Clay Aiken was runner up in a popular televised singing competition. His album is also a big hit. We review him here because of this popularity.

Upon first listening to this album one could think that if only the words changed a little, Clay Aiken would be another Christian rock effort. The music tries to be uplifting and innocent relative to pornopop. There are no lyrics to any religious effect: they are all silly love songs.

When one opens the CD album jacket suspicions are confirmed. The jacket starts out "Thank you, God the Alpha" and ends "and again, Jesus Christ, the Omega, for giving me gifts far beyond what I deserve, and allowing me to do what I truly enjoy doing. my life is in your hands."

This is predictable because there is such a thing as a science of political matters which include religion and social attitudes. The music is 1980s. One will hear Cher belting out a ballad without the benefit of being an early female rock star. "Journey" is another sound one might think of. This sort of music has received a level of acceptance in the soft to medium rock category.

The point is that the music is a music of a contentment and even when discussing a girlfriend's depression or disappointment, the song is upbeat and supportive. Though Clay Aiken is 24, his hairstyle is boyish and we imagine he has

some following among teenage girls. He came to fame through that unusual method of winning a TV amateur contest on "American Idol." Looking even more boyish than on the CD, an interview for Fox News(1) says that the last concert he went to was James Taylor, another singer of contentment. As MIM has pointed out, one need not be a capitalist or even a petty-bourgeois to be content with the existing patriarchy--romance culture--especially if one is young and considered attractive.

Upbeat, innocent and content music points disproportionately to Amerikan Christians. Jesus Christ himself was a revolutionary, but today Christianity is a culture of contentment. Evanescence tries to walk that line between Christian contentment and conservatism on the one hand and edgy music on the other hand and found it does not work. The band's vocalist Amy Lee is now trying to move her band over to her real audience. At the moment, we do not know how well that is going to work going forward.

Despite his own upbeat and straight music, Clay Aiken was the product of a failed marriage and a father that called him a "mistake."(2) People like Clay Aiken are exactly the proof that Christianity does not provide solutions to real problems. Amerikkans are much more devout in their Christianity than Europeans, but Amerikkans still have the huge and growing problem of disappearing fathers. Preaching obviously has not worked and in this strange world with so many children of broken families, the Amerikkans are not ready to go on to communal or even more socialized child rearing. There are still lots of doubts about leaving children with daycare, so



Amerikkans are stuck in their conservative thoughts unable to move forward but also unable to sustain the family their Christian preachers tell them about--having the worst of both worlds in doubts about socialism and inability to do things the old way. These preachers are only prolonging the agony of transition to what has to come through revolution.

Clay Aiken calls himself a "nerd" and his former job was taking care of autistic children. We don't find anything intellectual in the album. The least silly of the songs on the album is "Measure of a Man." It could be taken as a criticism of heterosexual wimmin as they exist in the imperialist countries today or anywhere that money is the reason for attraction:

*If one day you discover him/
Broken down he's lost everything/
No cars, no fancy clothes to make*

him who he's not/

The woman at his side is all that he has got/

Why do you ask him move to heaven and earth/

To prove his love has worth?

The references to cars and fancy clothes could be taken to mean that Clay Aiken is asking wimmin why they care so much whether a petty-bourgeois becomes a little higher in class standing. MIM pushes this question further and asks whether desire is really a construction of capitalism, since we know that capitalism intertwines sex and money even more than previous class societies. This is something about people today that will not disappear with criticism of lifestyles. It will require the armed criticism of revolution.

MIM anti-war polling continues in Los Angeles

Continued from page 3...

in the poll because of their opinions. The truth is that we do these polls to find out what people think. We don't shy away from the truth--in fact, MIM stands out from self-proclaimed "Communist" parties because we acknowledge the majority of Amerikans oppose Communism (and not just because they've been "brainwashed" by anti-Communist propaganda). We stand by the oppressed internationally, even though that puts us in the minority inside the United States.

3. If France, Israel, England and Canada were the countries partnering with the u.\$ in the occupation, would you support the occupation in Iraq? Yes: 4% (2 people); No: 89% (42 people); I don't know: 4% (2 people). A plurality of people answered this question "No," adding "I want the UN," or "the UN would have to be involved for me to support [the occupation]."

A respondent from France explained that his position would not change if his

country were involved in the occupation, because Jacques Chirac's government does not have a programmatic objection to imperialist war, it just has interests in Iraq that were disrupted by the Amerikan invasion and occupation.

For its own part, MIM does not go in for the UN = internationalism line. We have already seen the UN lend its name to a military action when really the U.\$ is in charge, as happened in Korea and the first Iraq war, for example.

We would not recommend repeating this question at an anti-occupation event without specifying it a bit. For others polling on the same question, we would recommend making this question multiple choice rather than a simple yes/no, to incorporate the line that says UN support or some diversity of nations makes for a truly internationalist action.

It's obvious from these survey results that the respondents are self-selected for

opposition to the occupation of Iraq and do not reflect the opinion of Amerikans generally--especially those Amerikans who live outside of the cosmopolitan cities on the two coasts. What's less clear is if these protestors have broken with the left wing of the Democratic Party, which would be happy with an Amerikan occupation of Iraq, as long as it is under U.N. auspices.

There are limits to the depth of a poll taken at a rally, so these questions might not be what we would ask if we had a big operation calling people at dinnertime and surveying 2,000 respondents. But as we said in MIM Notes 271, we believe there is value in learning even in a limited way what the anti-war movement thinks, especially as we collect answers from more parts of the country than just Los Angeles and Boston. Major population centers still not surveyed are the South and Midwest. For those wanting to take

their own polls, we would suggest asking the following questions:

1. Using your own definition of terrorism, would you call the U.\$ government a terrorist organization?

2. I'm going to list two sets of countries that were asked to participate in the Iraq action; I want to know if any of them participating in the Iraq occupation would win your support for the occupation? a. France, Germany and Canada? Yes/No/Don't know b. the UN? Yes/No/Don't know

Notes:

1. "MIM conducts a poll of its own at Boston demo," MIM Notes 271, p. 5.

2. Answers to the question "Using your own definition of terrorism, do you believe the United States is terrorist?" are in the MN271 article. Read the article on MIM's website: <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/mn/>

George W. Bush or Saddam Hussein Which one is worse for Iraq?

Continued from page 1...

prisoners in 2002 except for spies for Israel and the United States.(5) Within the United States, Texas had the highest imprisonment rate of all states when Bush was governor.(6)

Those propagandized but ignorant will then say that Saddam Hussein imprisoned people for acts of speech while the United States supposedly does not. This is a horribly ignorant view. First of all, the United States has more prisoners, and in no capitalist country do the rulers fail to make up an excuse for imprisoning their political opponents. In the social-fascist People's Republic of China, they do not say, "you are in prison for dissident speech." They say you are disturbing the peace, disrupting public order or inciting national hatreds. It's the same everywhere in the bourgeois republics.

Those countries with more prisoners, and especially those with longer

sentences as in the United States, should be suspected of having more political prisoners. People with scientific integrity will look at the figures first and then ask the rulers to prove their point otherwise. The burden of proof should be on them.

Despite the claims of "patriotism" by the Bush-supporters, the only alternative view possible given the facts is that the Amerikkkan people deserve the world's highest imprisonment rate, because the rulers are so spotlessly clean and would not be imprisoning people for political reasons of an Amerikkkan variety. Mostly what the Amerikkkan rulers do (and British ones too since they lead Europe excluding Russia in imprisonment) is evade the question and spout propaganda.

The next problem for the Amerikkkan nationalist fools who believe the rhetoric about "freedom" is that Amerikkkan occupation forces in Iraq have been shooting and killing people at

demonstrations. They have also prevented a free press from forming, going to the point of militarily attacking media that attempt independence in Iraq.(7)

In fact, the whole war on Iraq is organized killing of political opponents. According to Prime Minister Tony Blair's inflated estimate referring mostly to people suppressed or sacrificed during the long 1980s war with Iran and the uprising supported and then backstabbed by Bush Sr. after the 1991 war, Saddam Hussein killed 400,000 Iraqis.(8) In 24 years, that's 16,667 people per year and 46 people per day—again mostly people killed in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, the war during which Donald Rumsfeld flew to Saddam Hussein to say he agreed with it.(9) Between the uprising that Bush Sr. backstabbed (10) and the Iran-Iraq war that Reagan and Rumsfeld supported, George W. Bush's party and family are

on record agreeing with the causes that led to the vast majority of deaths under Saddam Hussein. That's not to mention that Saddam Hussein got his start killing communists with advice and money from the CIA (11) that Bush Sr. eventually headed.

Even if Bush-supporters agreed with most of Saddam Hussein's killing, it's still possible they would have done slightly less, so let's break down the killing done by the United States now in Iraq. According to figures from the Baghdad morgue, the invasion of Iraq has nearly tripled the mortality rate and led to more than 18 more deaths per day in Baghdad alone compared with before.(12) However, Baghdad is one fifth the population of Iraq, so in fact, we can extrapolate that the u.\$ occupation is costing (since April when the fighting Bush planned ended) about 90 deaths per day. That is almost

Continued on next page...



How they rate: *Bush vs. Hussein*



**George
W. Bush**



**Saddam
Hussein**

Iraqis killed by Saddam Hussein per day vs. Bush occupation (2003)	90	46
Number of juvenile convicts executed in the 1990s ²	6 (USA as a whole)	0
Percent of parliament that is female (2001) ³	13.3%	7.6%
Economic growth rate annually in Texas (1999-2000) and Iraq (1999) ⁴	2.9%	18%

Notes for the table:

1. While Bush was governor of Texas, Texas had the highest imprisonment rate in the United States, which is the country with the highest imprisonment rate in the world. <http://www.cnn.com/2000/US/09/28/incarceration.study.ap/>

2. Source for execution of juvenile offenders: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/>

ENGACT500021998?open&of=ENG-IRQ Texas executed 12 of 20 juveniles executed in the United States in two decades. <http://www.commondreams.org/news2002/0826-02.htm> Out of 80 on death row in the United States, 51 are people of color.

3. Source on females in parliament http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_series_results.asp?rowId=660 In

Texas, there have only been a total of 86 female legislators between 1923 and 1999. There were 6000 men. Nancy Baker Jones, Capitol Women. If someone had invaded Texas to speed up the progress of women there, we would have supported that, but maybe Texans should have a little more sympathy for the Iraqi situation.

4. 18% figure from: <http://www.economist.com/countries/Iraq/>

[profile.cfm?folder=Profile%20DEconomic%20Data](http://www.bea.gov/bea/ARTICLES/2002/06june/0602gsp.pdf) Saddam Hussein also posted figures averaging 13% economic growth from 1995-1999. 2.9% figure from: <http://216.239.37.104/search?q=cache:ATv7DXts5aoJ:www.bea.gov/bea/ARTICLES/2002/06june/0602gsp.pdf+%22GDP+growth%22+%22by+state%22+%2BTexas+%2B1999+%2B2000&hl=en&ie=UTF-8>

Continued from previous page...

exactly double the number of deaths per day that Blair is accusing Saddam Hussein of as ruler of Iraq. However, the data we use would actually be much firmer than the data which groups like Amnesty International try to document in patches but never tally to the 400,000 figure Blair uses. In other words, there are other estimates of the civilian deaths in Iraq,(13) but there is a lot more wildness in Blair's estimate.

Thanks to the economic sanctions of Bush Sr., Clinton and Bush Jr., there is also the matter that even before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the United States was killing Iraqis without Saddam Hussein's assistance. Indeed, no one denies that Saddam Hussein sought actively to build business and black market ties that undermined the U.S. economic stranglehold on Iraq. According to the United Nations statistical agencies, the U.S. & British sanctions on Iraq caused millions of Iraqi children to go malnourished. Referring to 500,000 deaths, Secretary of State Madelaine Albright put it this way to Lesley Stahl: "I think that is a very hard choice, but the price, we think, the price is worth it."(14)

We sympathize with people globally who in essence aspire to a world government that would not allow a Saddam Hussein. We proletarian internationalists believe such a world government can come about to the benefit of the world's people. However, people hoping for a more peaceful world government of the future should not allow Bush & Blair to sucker them into domination by a handful of powerful nations now. Allowing some sort of international action to replace Saddam Hussein is a case in point. Peace through extermination is the illusion of fascism and it will never work.

Notes:

1. <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/iraq/story/0,12956,1106957,00.html>

2. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/polls/tables/live/2003-12-14-saddam.htm>

3. "Capture to Give Bush a Big Lift Analysts Say," <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/14/international/middleeast/14CND-POLI.html?hp>

4. <http://www.jeff-swanson.com/archive/2003/10/05/001734.html> ;

<http://www.opinionjournal.com/best/?id=110004430> ;

5. <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/10/20/iraq.amnesty/>

6. <http://www.cnn.com/2000/US/09/28/incarceration.study.ap/7>. http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Articles7/Fisk_US-Censorship.htm ;http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Articles8/Fisk_Iraq-Censorship.htm. A newspaper closely linked to British military intelligence has reported it all. There is no dispute of fact: "Two months after 'liberating' Iraq, the Anglo-US authorities have decided to control the new, free press." www.independent.co.uk

8. <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2003/s1010066.htm>

9. President Ronald Reagan sent Rumsfeld to meet with Saddam Hussein



Donald Rumsfeld (the U.S. Secretary of Defense in 2003) shaking hands with President Saddam Hussein, December 20, 1983.

in December, 1983.<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,866942,00.html> ; The CIA simultaneously arranged to send cluster bombs to Saddam Hussein to use against Iran. The U.S. Government documents concerning this fact are here:<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/press.htm>

10. After initially giving the green light, Bush Sr. decided that there would be too much chaos if the 1991 Gulf War led to Saddam Hussein's defeat in an Iraqi civil war. Bush Sr. ordered that the insurgents not have access to their weapons and in effect, Bush Sr. sealed their deadly fate. Bush Jr. supported those in Bush Sr. cabinet who believed they should have attacked Saddam Hussein at the time.

11. Milan Rai & Noam Chomsky, War Plan Iraq: Ten Reasons against War on Iraq (London: Verso, 2002), p. 97.

12. <http://www.iraqbodycount.net/ibc23sep03.htm> These figures could be interpreted as deaths caused by Bush beyond the deaths caused by Saddam Hussein, because earlier mortality figures could be seen as Saddam Hussein's responsibility, while later ones are Bush's. In this article, what we do instead is give Bush the benefit of the doubt and a conservative method by only counting the

deaths as deaths beyond what is natural for Iraqis just as we are using the 46 figure as deaths beyond what is natural for Iraqis in Saddam Hussein's case.

13. <http://www.commondreams.org/views03/1114-02.htm> ; One thing to be careful about in the 14Nov2003 Boston Globe article by Derrick Z. Jackson is that those estimates refer to deaths of Iraqis in less than a full year. To compare deaths with Saddam Hussein, we have to use the same unit of time, as in per day or per year. See also, <http://www.antiwar.com/ewens/casualties.html#iraqi> The UN also expected high casualties, not necessarily from the immediate fighting but from the U.S. occupation:http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2636835.stm PBS reported thousands dead in fighting: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/baghdad_04-06-03.html

14. These infamous explanations of the U.S. Secretary of State on why half a million children dead is less important than keeping up U.S. sanctions have been discussed many places, but the most thorough discussion I have seen is here:<http://www.fff.org/comment/com0311c.asp>

See also, <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/rail/impkills.html#iraq>

Joe Strummer & the Mescaleros "Streetcore" (2003) Hellcat Records

Don't buy this album expecting to hear long-lost Clash tracks. It's the last album Joe Strummer was working on when he died of a heart attack at 50. "Streetcore" received many favorable reviews, but this reviewer disagrees. When bands have a hard time, they should take a rest. We should not sing "Streetcore"'s glory simply because the lead singer was once a great punk star.

It's called "world music" and includes Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" as a cover. "Get Down Moses" also has a reggae drift. However, most of "Streetcore" is folk music, with songs done on acoustic guitar such as "Long Shadow."

The vocals are classic Joe Strummer, perhaps even better than during the Clash

when in this reviewer's opinion the vocals were too cutesy. The vocals are definitive, dominating and mature.

Lyricaly, there is politics in this album but toned down from the Clash days. It seems that both musically and lyricaly, the Clash was not able to sustain itself and only went further downhill after the breakup. In fact, the lyrics point to Strummer's being tied up with Christianity and even talk about soul-saving in "Silver and Gold."

"All in a Day" rocks the most like the Clash did. "Arms Aloft" also rocks, but the mention of "banners of Stalingrad" in "Ramshackle Day Parade" is in the midst of unreal imagery and moments of truth that make it difficult to put any one message across. Stick with the original Clash albums and forget the nostalgia.

Note: <http://cyberpros.net/music/reviews/s/strummerjoe-streetcore.shtml>

MATRIX: Continued from page 3...

from his enemy sufficiently to bring about revolution.

This point is something often not stressed enough in our own class struggles. Learning from the enemy is not spying. For a dialectical progression to occur today, the proletariat must learn enough from the capitalist class generally to be able to surpass it. Condemnation or difference of opinion is not enough. At MIM we often find ourselves cutting down those alleged to be in our movement urging complacency where Marx urged an all-conquering attitude toward all the sciences—every facet of our world. On the plus side, at least a few individuals in the "Matrix" have this attitude. We do not agree that the future of revolution is through the Buddhist transcendence of one individual who then helps the rest of the humyn species in his afterlife, but we respect the utterly scientific approach that Neo and his comrades who trained him used to get to that point.

One last point we would make is that the introduction of programs that love their children and Agent Smith who can break boundaries among men, machines and software touches on the science-fiction method of representing internationalism. In "Solaris" we saw the same question—if a life form is not exactly humyn, does it make any difference? In both Solaris and the "Matrix" we saw non-humyn life-forms that can speak humyn languages and leave us often thinking they are superior or at least superior in some ways.

At the same time, while this movie took up ancient forms of idealism, it does not take up post-modern relativism, contrary to what many critics and fans are saying. We have no sense from the movie that Agent Smith is the moral equivalent of other life forms. For some reason, in this movie, we audience-goers rather do not like Agent Smith—probably out of bias toward our own species. We would also say that whether the directors intended it or not, this is the crucial aspect in which the "Matrix" contradicted Buddhism and landed somewhere closer to Marxist materialism. A truly Buddhist movie in our opinion—though many Buddhists might deny it—would involve no sense of antipathy toward Agent Smith, and no attachment to the humyn beings as a group or as individuals. While Buddhists may like many aspects of the climax of "Revolutions," we take this opportunity to draw a contrast with the Buddhists. We Marxists say that people have impact on their afterlives through their species. For this reason it is not wrong to have an attachment to the species-group. It is only wrong to be guilty of the egoism that blocks one's ongoing presence in the species-group. No one has proved any of the Buddhists' assertions about energy patterns or enlightened individuals assisting us from their afterlives/future lives. We do know that the species thus far has continued after the death of its individuals. There is no need for a Greek-style departure of the individual to the gods. Impact on the species after death is for real.

Join the fight against the injustice system

While we fight to end the criminal injustice system MIM engages in reformist battles to improve the lives of prisoners. Below are some of the campaigns we are currently waging, and ways people behind the bars and on the outside can get involved. More info can be found on our prison web site: <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/agitation/prisons>

Stop Censorship in Prison: Prisons frequently censor books, newspapers and magazines coming from MIM's books for prisoners program. We need help from lawyers, paralegals and jailhouse lawyers to fight this censorship.

Books for Prisoners: This program focuses on political education of prisoners. Send donations of books and money for our Books for Prisoners program.

End the Three Strikes laws: This campaign is actively fighting the repressive California laws, but similar laws exist in other states. Write to us to request a petition to collect signatures. Send articles and information on three strike laws.

Shut Down the Control Units: Across the country there are a growing number of prison control units. These are permanently designated prisons or cells in prisons that lock prisoners up in solitary or small group confinement for 22 or more hours a day with no congregate dining, exercise or other services, and virtually no programs for prisoners. Prisoners are placed in control units for extended periods of time. These units cause both mental and physical problems for prisoners.

Write to us to request a petition to collect signatures. Get your organization to sign the statement demanding control units be shut down. Send us information about where there are control units in your state. Include the names of the prisons as well as the number of control unit beds/cells in each prison if that is known. Send us anti-control unit artwork.

MIM's Re-Release on Life Program: This program provides support for our comrades who have been recently released from the prison system, to help them meet their basic needs and also continue with their revolutionary organizing on the outside. We need funds, housing, and job resources. We also need prisoner's input on the following survey questions:

1. What are the biggest challenges you face being released from prison?
2. How can these problems be addressed?
3. What are the important elements of a successful release program?

Under Lock & Key

News from Prisons & Prisoners

Slave labor: Amerika's still got it

This prison industrial complex, which is traded on the stock market, offers maximum profits at the expense of the exploited prison proletariat. This proletariat forms "an incoherent mass" of workers that is for the most part unaware of the ramifications of the prison labor system. Prisoner workers do not realize that without their labor the prison system would be coerced to pay higher wages to laborers from the streets, which would reduce the profits of prison industry. The prison proletariat must utilize this critical conceptual truth to his/her advantage. Those involved in the Attica rebellion realized this, when they demanded to receive the standard minimum wage for their labor. The prison insurrection was annihilated for being so impudent.

As Karl Marx stated in *The Communist Manifesto*: "The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers."

— an Illinois prisoner, January, 2003

MIM responds: Extraction of labor from prisoners is part of Amerika's gross hypocrisy, which sanctions prison slavery within u.s. borders, yet for years blocked China's World Trade Organization membership on the excuse that that country employed forced prisoner labor. Prisoner labor is more about social control than it is about making money for the prison system. Amerikan prisons are not yet a profitable industry, though private companies are allowed to expand their profits when they hook up with the state in a proto-fascist arrangement to exploit prisoners. Trade in corrections corporation shares on the stock market can be profitable, but that is betting on the future of the industry and those profits are not dependent on the prison system making money.

Comrade proposes "Freedom Brothers" program

There's got to be a better way to help inmates once they are finally set free from prison, but the plan has to start in the prison before that inmate is set free. That inmate should attend a program called Prerelease in New York State. Prerelease is a program that is supposed to educate a prisoner about where to go to take care of mostly all of his needs as an ex-prisoner and prerelease at times does have good information to teach but as soon as the gate opens mostly everything that was taught in prerelease normally goes up in smoke or is quickly forgotten. Sadly that's the inmates first big mistake.

For this letter I am going to forget about attending prerelease for a moment and just think of an inmate just being set free. It sounds like madness to me, but it's happening across the country daily. Puff, you've just been set free with \$40.00 that NYS gives each person leaving its prison system. How long will that money last and how are you going to

get more? Money is a big problem for mostly all who leave prison. Money seems to be everybody's problem, but it is even more of a problem for anyone who leaves prison. For some, they have family members who will help out with some funds but for that ex-con with no family member to lend a hand, in his or her mind it's been sad that he or she will do whatever they have to do in order to survive, or in other words "make money," and most likely it is those inmates who will return first. ... Most inmates do not solve the problem mainly because they don't have anyone to turn to ask for help and for that reason I am recommending my proposal of a new program, I would call it "Freedom Brothers."

Freedom Brothers are NOT parole officers or someone who will lock you up if you fail. Freedom Brothers is like a "Big Brother" whose job will start the same day you are released and he will spend 8 hours a day (or more) with you until you are up and on your feet. A Freedom Brother's job is to push you to help to get on your feet and to help you with any kind of social problem. I strongly feel that everyone leaving prison should be given a Freedom Brother. Everyone on Welfare should be given a Freedom Brother. People who are in shelters, even the homeless need Freedom Brothers.

My idea will help create jobs, both for the person on the street and for the person leaving prison. Again, being a Freedom Brother is a job and can even be implemented as a volunteer service. I strongly feel that if this program is implemented it would help to prevent people from going to jail. I've since spoken to several inmates about my idea and they've all said that they like my idea and they would be willing to try my idea if ever implemented.

—A New York Prisoner, December 2003

MIM responds: This comrade's proposal for Freedom Brothers recognizes the need for a partnership with someone who is not there to punish you but to help you. This is the type of program MIM is trying to build. And to follow such a model we believe we must do this outside of the state, as we cannot trust a government that locks away hundreds of thousands of oppressed people on petty charges to work in the interests of oppressed people.

Without the resources of the state, this program will need other financial sources and so it may not play the role of providing jobs as this comrade suggests. But the important thing is that we will be able to design a program that will serve the people. We must be creative in finding resources and funding to keep such a program going.

As is pointed out in this letter, money is the biggest problem facing a lot of newly released people. To solve this problem we are working on developing employment opportunities for comrades as soon as they are released. Another idea we are throwing out to our supporters who have a stable income in society is to Adopt a Releasee. As part of our Release on Life Program we are seeking out people who would be willing to share their abundant incomes with a releasee who in return will dedicate his/her time to revolutionary organizing. Our readers who

can easily support multiple people on their incomes, but don't have time to engage in day-to-day organizing work themselves should contact us about this opportunity.

As we build our resources for prisoners to get support financially we will be able to provide better personal and political help that would be gained from a Freedom Brothers program. The program will perpetuate itself as releasee's become Freedom Brothers for the next batch of prisoners to be released.

MIM Program makes the rounds in Arizona Soldiers of the struggle,

First & foremost I'd like to thank you for responding as quickly as you did. Unfortunately, the hands of oppression removed me, an outspoken revolutionary, from general population to bunk with two others in a room really designed for two. It takes more than what they have to break me down though, so I continue to press on. One pro was that I was able to circulate and make copies of MIM's program, "What we Want; What we Believe," so you should receive mail from others interested in revolution.

I am most definitely interested in receiving MIM Notes and being a part of the Books for

MIM on Prisons & Prisoners

MIM seeks to build public opinion against Amerika's criminal injustice system, and to eventually replace the bourgeois injustice system with proletarian justice. The bourgeois injustice system imprisons and executes a disproportionately large and growing number of oppressed people while letting the biggest mass murderers — the imperialists and their lackeys — roam free. Imperialism is not opposed to murder or theft, it only insists that these crimes be committed in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

"All U.S. citizens are criminals—accomplices and accessories to the crimes of U.S. oppression globally until the day U.S. imperialism is overcome. All U.S. citizens should start from the point of view that they are reforming criminals."

MIM does not advocate that all prisoners go free today; we have a more effective program for fighting crime as was demonstrated in China prior to the restoration of capitalism there in 1976. We say that all prisoners are political prisoners because under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, all imprisonment is substantively political. It is our responsibility to exert revolutionary leadership and conduct political agitation and organization among prisoners — whose material conditions make them an overwhelmingly revolutionary group. Some prisoners should and will work on self-criticism under a future dictatorship of the proletariat in those cases in which prisoners really did do something wrong by proletarian standards.

Prisoners program. Any contributions that I can make to your organization, let me know. I am more than willing to participate in writing for all MIM publications, as well as anything else I can do to be of service. Currently my funds have been depleted since I no longer slave, but I should be able to contribute monetarily in the coming months. Any literature that you can send in regards to the struggle for freedom, and literature on Stalin, Marx, or Lenin would be greatly appreciated. I would also like more info on Mao. Until then, I salute you and continue to support your efforts to get people free. Uhuru Sasa! Freedom Now!

Loyalty and respect,

— an Arizona prisoner, November 2003

KS prisoner weighs in on SHUs

The practice of using solitary confinement was condemned by the United States Supreme Court in 1890 on psychiatric grounds. The Court called solitary confinement cruel and unusual punishment and noted that prisoners so confined were prone to becoming “violently insane.” In 1913 the use of confined housing units was officially abolished. Today, the law gives prison officials discretion as to whether to place prisoners in SHU, SuperMax or administrative segregation facilities, in conditions similar to those the Supreme Court declared inhumane more than 100 years ago.

Prisoners in these conditions are held in a cell alone a minimum of 23 hours a day, and are allowed to shower only three times per week. Doctors and human rights activists point out that solitary conditions in prison can cause problems as mild as memory loss and as severe as hallucinations, delusions and mental illness. (1) Because of this danger, prison officials are supposed to meet certain standards when placing a prisoner in solitary. They must:

* establish in writing the reason for placing a prisoner in the SHU or administrative segregation and provide the prisoner with a segregation report; * initiate an administrative investigation into the alleged rule violation used as justification for placing the prisoner in confinement; and * allow the prisoner a chance to defend his/herself against the accusations against him/her.

If this process reveals that the prisoner has done nothing wrong, s/he must be released back into the prison population or transferred to general population in another facility.

In the state of Kansas, many prisoners are subject to a policy of institutional lynching. KAR 44-14-306 prohibits the use of administrative segregation as punishment. Prisoners are placed on administrative segregation without the due process of the disciplinary procedure. KAR 44-13-201(4)(c)

specifically dictates that any violations of prison rules are to be handled within the inmate disciplinary procedure. When prison officials bypass the administrative procedures, accuse prisoners of wrongdoing and place them in an SHU on administrative segregation, they make the SHU into a house of punishment. In doing so, the prison administrators are violating state and federal law.

Because of the prison administration’s failure to comply with administrative regulations, prisoners are daily being placed in SHU/supermax conditions on administrative segregation for months or years at a time. The majority of prisoners being held on administrative segregation here in Kansas have not been afforded the due process of disciplinary procedure. These prisoners are living in the harshest conditions without having had the chance to respond to the charges that form the rationale for putting them in this brutal level of confinement. This is having a profound psychological effect on prisoners in Kansas.

Dr. Stuart Grassian is a Harvard professor and a national expert on the psychopathological effects of the SHU and solitary confinement. In 1979, Dr. Grassian did a study on prisoners confined to special supermax units and coined the term “SHU Syndrome.” Its symptoms are depression, increased paranoia, agitation, manic activity, delusions, florid psychotic illness and suicide. Because the prison administrators across the country are so loosely using the SHUs to place inmates on administrative segregation, they have created psychopathological problems in many prisoners. For those who already had mental illness before being placed in the SHU, the sickness deepens and makes the prisoners profoundly dangerous during long months or years in the isolation of the SHU on administrative segregation.

These prisoners will be released back into our communities. Dr. Grassian put it best when he stated: “these people are time bombs waiting to explode in a community.” The Kansas Department of Corrections has sworn to do the job of helping to make the communities of Kansas safer places to live.

The actions of the Kansas prison administrators are deliberately malicious, and it is up to us and the rest of society to hold the KDOC and the rest of the prison systems responsible for their injustices. We have to force them to fulfill their duty to care for prisoners by at least following their own laws and regulations and ceasing the institutional lynching.

Notes: <http://www.cnn.com/US/9801/09/solitary.confinement/>

MIM responds: The conditions of the SHU are abhorrent because they torture human beings to the point of psychological breakdown. If a society can be judged by how

it treats its prisoners, then American society can look proudly in the mirror and acknowledge its barbarity. Any hardships that prisoners visit on the outside world after and as a result of their time in the SHU are merely chickens coming home to roost. The tragedy of former SHU prisoners being released back into society is that prisoners so treated have little chance of coping successfully with the world outside prison. The imperialist politicians do not much care about prisoners being released from the brutality of SHU conditions onto the streets, because as is so often true, the brunt of the SHU’s damage will fall on the oppressed communities, already suffering from semi-colonialism.

To get involved in MIM’s campaign to shut down control unit prisons contact us or check out our web site: <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/agitation/prisons>

Virginia prisoners call for investigation

I want to address my fellow prisoners to remind them that when we were sentenced by the courts, beatings, abuse and degradation were not included in the sentences. And even though we are prisoners we are not animals but humans that deserve to be treated as such.

Wallens Ridge State Prison has only been open for four years or so, and in that time it has killed 3 prisoners. It’s a shame to see how much corruption and abuse my fellow prisoners are willing to put up with.

I want to encourage my fellow prisoners in WRSP to have some sense of unity. Almost everyone talks the talk, but is not willing to walk the walk. Stop trying to cut each other’s throats over a pack of cigarettes and lend a hand to the struggle we as a whole are facing.

Albert Moskowitz from the U.S. Department of Criminal Justice / Criminal Section has requested that the FBI conduct a preliminary investigation into one of our fellow prisoners being beaten, but this came only after four prisoners wrote to him to report the incident. If four letters can bring the FBI here, what will 400 do? Let’s get together and get this corrupt administration out of here. You don’t even have to use a stamp to write this guy.

Write: Albert N. Moskowitz Section Chief / Criminal Section Civil Rights Division 950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Washington DC 20530

El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido! (The People United Will Never Be Defeated!)

—A Virginia Prisoner, December 2003

Michigan brands Latinos as STGs

The problems here in the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) are endemic to a failing system. The fight for the human rights of the Latino/Indigenous

prisoners here in the MDOC is far from over. The system refuses to recognize any Indigenous tribe from any Spanish speaking country as being Indigenous peoples, or the descendants of Indigenous peoples of this hemisphere. They have gone so far as to criminalize our native spirituality and culture.

Latinos who have reclaimed our Indigenous birthright are being labeled gang members and placed on Security Threat Group (STG) status. These blatantly racist measures include: labeling such cultural terms as “Viva la Raza,” “Aztlán,” and “La Lucha” as gang terminology, placing prisoners in high and maximum security prisons, denying parole, restricting family visits, and many other non-rehabilitative measures.

Even such obviously Indigenous tribes as the Azteca, Maya, Taino, and Inca are categorized as STGs and stigmatized as gangs. Therefore, any MDOC prisoner of so-called Latino heritage is a gang member according to the MDOC. What’s more, any such prisoner caught showing an interest in his/her heritage, or caught with books, magazines or internet material pertaining to his/her Indigenous heritage is placed on STG status. Such is the case with two of my comrades.

Both of these Chicano prisoners were placed on STG status for studying the ways of their Mexican ancestors, and teaching those same ways to younger Chicano prisoners. It is because of the work of brothers like these, who have a true heart for the people, that the gangbanging and infighting between Latinos here in prison has come fully to a halt. We now stand united as “a people.” Because of the work of brothers like these we also stand united with out “Northern Brothers” (the tribes from what is now the so-called “USA”), and we take a step closer to Tecumseh’s vision.

A clear message needs to be sent to the MDOC prison administration. This racist categorizing of Indigenous Tribes as gangs, the oppression of Indigenous Prisoners for practicing their native spiritual ways will not be tolerated! Not now, not ever!

I must ask for your help. I am asking that you join the struggle to force the MDOC to: 1) remove our Chicano comrades from STG status; 2) recognize all Indigenous Tribes of Central and South America as being the Indigenous peoples of these lands, with Native American spiritual beliefs; 3) issue a public apology for classifying Taino, Mexica/Aztec, Maya, and Inca prisoners as STG members for practicing their traditional spiritual ways; 4) remove the names Boricua, Taino, Mexica/Aztec, Maya and Inca from the list of STG labels, and various phrases in Spanish such as “Aztlán,” “Viva la Raza,” “La Causa,” and “La Lucha” as STG terminology.

Please send your letters of outrage to the MDOC Director: Director Patricia Caruso 206 E. Michigan Ave Grandview Plaza P.O. Box 30003 Lansing, MI 48909

You can also send email from www.michigan.gov/corrections/ or call Director Overton at 517-373-0720.

Divide and conquer is one of their most ugly stratagems, and we cannot allow it to continue. So I make the call once again to bring the system to its knees with a fist full of stamps!

—a Michigan prisoner, June 2003

MIM adds: Send us a copy of your letter or email to Director Caruso and we will print it here in Under Lock & Key.

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.



La inmigración: Se distinguen la aristocracia obrera y la burguesía internacionalista

Por el MIM

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

La diferencia de opinión sobre la cuestión de la inmigración entre un yanqui común y corriente y una "élite" o el círculo de poder, supera el nivel del año 1998, según una encuesta publicada el día 17 de diciembre. El presidente Bush ha puesto en práctica los reglamentos migratorios más salvajes sobre sus vecinos, México y Canadá, y ha causado molestia a los conservadores del occidente canadiense con las tarifas sobre la madera. Sin embargo, menos del 30% de los yanquis apoyan a Bush sobre sólo dos asuntos: los cambios en el clima y la inmigración. La corriente del chovinismo nacionalista que comenzó el 11 de septiembre alimenta la opinión injusta con respecto a la inmigración.

La encuesta fortalece la tesis del MIM que la aristocracia obrera está más opuesta al internacionalismo que la misma burguesía imperialista. Lenin explicó extensamente que la psicología de esta clase sostiene que apenas han logrado sus privilegios y por lo tanto son más feroces en protegerlos.

Sólo el 14% de la élite norteamericana, de "los líderes de la opinión," están de acuerdo con la posición popular según la cual se debe reducir la inmigración. El 60% del público norteamericano sostiene que la política del gobierno debe ser reducir la inmigración oficial. Y todo esto es a pesar de la retórica del "país de los inmigrantes" y de que aun la ciudad de Nueva York se adorna con la "Estatua de la Libertad." Está bien claro que los yanquis no creen en el derecho de poder viajar abiertamente y gracias a la estupidez electoral de la aristocracia obrera, el promedio de encarcelamiento en EE.UU. es el más alto en todo el mundo.

"Según la encuesta, el 70% del público norteamericano opina que reducir la inmigración ilegal es 'una meta muy importante de la política internacional de EE.UU.', mientras sólo el 22% de la élite sostiene la misma posición." (1) Esta es la razón de la victoria de Pat Buchanan sobre Bush en las elecciones preliminares de Nuevo Hampshire en 1992. En 1992, año de recesión, tanto Perot como Buchanan lanzaron sus programas con el lema "Yanquis Primero."

La propuesta aceptada casi por todos los tal llamados yanquis "marxistas" es una ilusión que postula la existencia de un proletariado explotado que propaga el internacionalismo de este lado de la frontera. Al contrario, lo que debe quedar bien claro es que el pueblo yanqui carece del internacionalismo más que la clase con el poder estatal y que de esta manera es aún más reaccionario. No basta el chantaje de la clase dominante: la aristocracia obrera es consciente de su lucha para lograr una lucrativa división de superganancias. La aristocracia obrera no es nada indiferente hacia el tema de superganancias, y no está a punto de despojarse de una supuesta conciencia engañosa para reemplazarla con un internacionalismo revolucionario. Los intereses de la aristocracia obrera son fáciles

de identificar y ésta los persigue diligentemente, de lo cual resulta la enorme diferencia entre su posición sobre la inmigración y la posición de la clase dominante.

El pueblo yanqui no aguanta a los verdaderos representantes de la burguesía internacionalista como los Rockefeller, Jimmy Carter y Bush el mayor. El iniciar pláticas sobre el desempleo y el empeoramiento de los salarios (¡menos beneficios!) con la aristocracia obrera la llevaría a tomar el lado de Buchanan. No entender esto iguala a no entender la situación contemporánea ni la teoría leninista de la aristocracia obrera. Salvo los inmigrantes y la población de habla hispana, no hay campo para discutir lo del proletariado dentro de las fronteras de EE.UU. Esto sólo tiene como resultado que se molesten y se encierren más los chovinistas.

Entender la realidad en los países imperialistas con una población burguesa implica luchar para forjar una alianza con el lumpenproletariado y con la pequeña ala izquierdista de la burguesía internacionalista. La prensa imperialista no ignora del todo este asunto como cuando ridiculiza las protestas en contra del Fondo Monetario Internacional dirigidas por los "nenes anarquistas con fondos de inversión" quienes poseen recursos suficientes para viajar de una manifestación a otra. En los años 60 y 70, la prensa dijo lo mismo con respeto a los miembros del grupo "Weather Underground" quienes eran poderosos millonarios y abogados.

La sección de la burguesía internacionalista que posee una visión de largo plazo

no se encuentra en el poder. Esta sección ha salido en Seattle y en otras protestas a nivel mundial pero aún es muy pequeña. El ala izquierdista de la burguesía internacionalista es comparable a lo que Lenin, Stalin y Mao llamaban "burguesía nacional," una clase que podía unirse a la revolución en los países semif feudales. Por lo tanto, el ala izquierdista de la burguesía internacionalista es una amiga del proletariado. Aunque aún sobreviven, tanto la burguesía nacional como el ala izquierdista de la burguesía internacionalista están en peligro de extinción. Debemos entender que estos grupos tienen intereses distintos a los del imperialismo.

No es nuestro deber oponernos a tipos como Bush, Blair, Carter y Clinton con demandas nacionalistas en contra del Tratado de Libre Comercio (TLC) o la inmigración. Nuestro deber es demostrar que la única forma de lograr la paz y la prosperidad es nuestra estrategia para conseguir un salario mínimo mundial, un cuerpo para la protección universal del medio ambiente y, por consecuencia, una lucha de clases mundial.

Aunque el Centro para Estudios Migratorios ha llevado a cabo las encuestas, aún carece de una teoría: "No está muy claro porque hay ideas tan distintas sobre la inmigración entre los líderes del país y el público." También se distingue la opinión del yanqui común y corriente de la de los

líderes sobre la protección del empleo para los yanquis y la competición económica con otros países. Esta diferencia indica firmemente que una de las principales razones por la cual los yanquis se preocupan por la inmigración es el temor que tienen a la competición por el empleo.

El tremendo espacio entre los imperialistas internacionalistas y la aristocracia obrera ha rendido una serie de situaciones políticas hipócritas. Mientras la aristocracia obrera se aprovecha de los negocios de los empresarios en el Tercer Mundo, a los empresarios tercermundistas que buscan hacer negocios en los países imperialistas se les echa de aviones porque tienen pinta de "terroristas." También se organizan movimientos antiinmigrantes al estilo Le Pen en Francia y Buchanan en EE.UU.

No debemos alegar que los tratados de comercio e inmigración y los convenios representan únicamente la conciencia burguesa embucando la falsa conciencia sobre el proletariado de los países imperialistas. Debemos defender estos tratados y promover su lógica.

El gobierno de Los Países Bajos le permitió entrar a José María Sison y firmó tratados y convenios garantizándole ciertos derechos. Los camaradas filipinos lo entienden muy bien, hacen hincapié en dichos tratados y convenios, los defienden y no permiten que el gobierno Holandés los anule. Los camaradas filipinos serían culpables de promover una conciencia falsa si sólo se la pasaran discutiendo tratados y los derechos humanos de los europeos y al mismo tiempo fuese verdad que existe algún proletariado europeo a punto de lanzarse a la revolución internacionalista. Pero las cosas no son así y todavía no se alcanza este nivel de ventaja política y, por consecuencia, lo correcto es apoyar tratados internacionales en contra de la aristocracia obrera.

Muchos de los tratados, convenios y leyes no prohíben que la aristocracia obrera europea organice protestas en contra de los inmigrantes. Así lo dijo un típico aristócrata obrero en el grupo de Usenet soc.culture.filipino: "Pobre JoMa Sison. Se queja al gobierno holandés para que le restauren los beneficios estatales. Se queja porque sólo recibe una miserable asignación de 201.93 euros y porque el gobierno no paga por su hogar. Discúlpenme pero mis impuestos pagan por todo esto. Si tienes alguna molestia lárgate a las Filipinas y averigua cuánto te dan allá. Nos acusa de ser un gobierno policíaco. Sí, qué lástima. ¿Si te encuentras tan infeliz en los Países Bajos entonces qué haces aquí?" Le informamos a este imbécil que gracias a la presión política de tipos como él los Países Bajos prohíben que Sison consiga empleo. Y al mismo tiempo le acusan de no pagar impuestos.

JoMa Sison y otros comunistas están de acuerdo con la idea de firmar un tratado para que los imperialistas saquen sus empresarios de las Filipinas. Pero la aristocracia obrera lo quiere de los dos modos. Por un lado, quiere tratados que le permiten comprar ropa de

marca GAP fabricada por empresarios que visitan y llevan a cabo negocios en el Tercer Mundo y, por el otro lado, prohíbe que las personas del Tercer Mundo visiten los países imperialistas para hacer negocios.

Estos aristócratas primero deberían chocar con su propio gobierno sobre los tratados y convenios que éste ha firmado antes de lanzar su agresión contra los inmigrantes. Si la aristocracia obrera logra que su gobierno y las empresas internacionales salgan del Tercer Mundo, la gente del Tercer Mundo no tendrá razón para venir a los países imperialistas. Es raro que un pueblo busque salir de su país de origen; sólo lo hace bajo circunstancias desastrosas causadas por los imperialistas. No vale quejarse cuando el Tercer Mundo busca visitar y vivir en los países imperialistas ya que el imperialismo se ha adueñado de sus tierras.

Los marxistas falsos que nos critican buscan pretextos para torcer los resultados de la encuesta y demostrar que los "obreros" se encuentran en peores condiciones que los imperialistas. Como no identifican la contradicción entre la aristocracia obrera y los imperialistas no logran utilizarla correctamente. No distinguen entre diversos intereses de clase.

La miopía de la aristocracia obrera tiene como resultado guerras entre naciones sobre ciertos temas de la economía doméstica. Esta miopía encontró su máxima expresión en la postura de Adolfo Hitler sobre la inmigración y el comercio internacional. Por su parte, la burguesía internacionalista cuenta sólo consigo misma y por lo tanto su opinión sobre la inmigración no es muy popular. La estrecha base social para su tipo de internacionalismo resulta en que los países imperialistas oscilen entre el facismo y la democracia liberal.

Está bien claro que los imperialistas se aprovechan del comercio internacional y de la subversión en el Tercer Mundo mientras que la aristocracia saca beneficios al punto de venta pero siente que se ponen en peligro sus empleos. Sólo el internacionalismo proletario es capaz de conseguir que teoría de la cooperación internacional económica se haga realidad. Cuando el MIM llegue al poder nos aseguraremos de que el pueblo entienda y descubra los beneficios del comercio y la cooperación económica en general.

La posición de la aristocracia obrera según la cual el mundo no saca beneficios del libre comercio, el mercado obrero y la resultante cooperación, es equivocada. Su posición es cobarde e ignorante. Precisamente son los imperialistas los que no pueden llevar a cabo el "libre comercio" y la "libertad de movimiento" porque ofrecen los derechos más básicos a una pequeña élite. Sólo la línea del MIM puede resolver esta contradicción.

Notas: (1) <http://www.cis.org/circle.html>