Poll shows Euro-Amerikans’ indifference toward oppression of Black people

DEBATE OVER ‘REFUGEE’ REFLECTS FIRST WORLD CHAUVINISM

By mimnotesinfo1
September 9, 2005
Reverend Jesse Jackson last night on Fox News repeated his statement that people displaced from their homes and neighborhoods, after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, should be considered American citizens instead of refugees. “They [Howard Dean] raised class and poverty as a fact. Even on dry land, it may have been emphasized here, but I don’t think that’s the major theme. I think the real theme is that those persons called ‘refugees’ in fact were citizens, and the citizens were not well-served.” Sean Hannity accused Jesse Jackson of “bringing up a racial agenda,” to which Jackson (backing away from previous comments made in the past several days) responded by downplaying the importance of race and focusing on how some American citizens were not “well-served.” “I submit to you: American citizens were not well-served in this crisis. It should be a message, perhaps, for future storms. We should learn something from this for all American.” Colin Powell has recently made comments that seem strangely to the “left” of this sentiment, because while Powell has outright denied the relevance of race, at least he said Blacks were disproportionately poor. On the other hand, not only are the implications of this long-standing

Record suicides in California prisons

By a correspondent, September 6, 2005
From mimnotes.info
Prisoners are killing themselves in record numbers in California prisons: 25 prisoners killed themselves in the first seven months of 2005 (January-July), already more than the 26 suicides for all of 2004. As of a month ago, California was on pace for a suicide rate of 22 suicides per 100,000 prisoners. This compares to a country-wide prison suicide rate of 13 deaths per 100,000 prisoners, and 11 deaths per 100,000 in society at large, according to the Associated Press’ source.(1)

Defending themselves, prison officials have tried denying the science behind the numbers. “We don’t believe that the rate in California is higher than the national average.” The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesperson Terry Thornton said that the rate fluctuates, as if the fluctuation were just random. Prison officials have also pointed out (apparently as a defense) that there are more than 400 prisoner suicide attempts each year, but that most are not successful.(1)

There is an ongoing class-action lawsuit on behalf of mentally ill inmates. The Sacramento Bee on August 27th reported: “The state Department of Corrections...”

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Letters
White lies?

MIM, Give me a minute to determine if you are a racist group or a communist vanguard party and then I will see what I can contribute. I received MIM Notes recently and view them askance. I am a communist. I am also a white american. I understand that there is much wrong with this country. I will see if I can excuse your calling me and comrade Marx barbarians simply off of skin color. It seems short sighted of me to write you in this way. I think the exact moment I cracked in my support of MIM was when I read, “Anti-white race consciousness is correct both for those who believe in integrated empires and those who see the national question as principal at this time, including MIM.” (1)

Note, by science we are all but one race: Human. Not the black white yellow brown purple green blue orange, etc. Human!

In struggle,
A Texas Prisoner
July 2005
mim108 responds: We don’t like race consciousness either, in principle. And you’re right about the science. As the article said in the same paragraph, “The fact of race consciousness is not something MIM can flat against and make it go away for the immediate future. So we seek to identify those parts that are progressive.” Given the fact of race consciousness, it would be an ultra-left error — or an error of purism — to reject those who line up on the correct side of defining battles just because they use a logic we don’t want to see in the long run.

As MIM has shown in our own writings and in those we distribute, historically and at present, the white American nation has been the enemy of the international proletariat. We’re glad that many individuals have renounced their “white” origins and returned against the oppressor nation, but we know that’s a tiny slice of the American pie. Anti-white race consciousness isn’t the same as, say, anti-Black race consciousness, because anti-white race consciousness is simply an incomplete rejection of imperialist ideology it correctly identifies the problem, but doesn’t label it correctly — whereas anti-Black race consciousness is part of the imperialist agenda.

P.S. Marx is on the right side of history, as demonstrated by his theory and practice. So his ‘white’ skin color shouldn’t be held against him!

Note: The writer is responding to the article, “Andy Ramirez is a fascist, not just a ‘coconut’: Border vigilantism is about fascism, not just race,” By HC116 and mim5@mim.org, which is on the MIM website at http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/agitation/gatekeeper/andyramirez651005.html

What is Mimnotes.info?

http://mimnotes.info

Mimnotes.info publishes news articles and culture (media, movie, music, video game and other) reviews from the standpoint of the world’s exploited and oppressed under imperialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Inspired by the Maoist Internationalist Movement, mimnotes.info (“MIM notes dot info”) opposes all group oppression, including the oppression of gays and lesbians, wimmin, and youth. The imperialist-patriarchy is full of horrors and misery for the world’s oppressed majority. Mimnotes.info aims to build public opinion for revolutionary change. Nothing short of revolution can end this messed-up system.

Knowing the world and conditions inside the belly of the beast is key. Equip yourself with mimnotes.info and write for mimnotes.info.

What is MIM?

http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/milimkills.html

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 Aztlán, 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 possible 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 human history. (3) As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM has stated 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 Marxism 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.”


MIM Notes is the newspaper of the Maoist Internationalist Movement.

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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.

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For general correspondence, contact:
MIM
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Los Angeles, CA 90029-0670

eMail: <mim@mim.org>
WWW: <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM>
United States waives environmental laws to further militarize border with Mexico

By a correspondent
September 16, 2005
From mimitesinfo

Congress passed the REAL ID Act in May as part of a supplemental appropriations bill that provided more funding for the imperialist reactionary wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. The REAL ID Act explicitly gives the Secretary of Homeland Security the ability to waive any regulation or law (not just environmental and endangered-species laws) in order to build barriers on the border. The barriers specifically include additional fences along the united States-Mexico border in California, but potentially include any barrier deemed necessary to prevent “illegal” border-crossings. The REAL ID Act, giving the Homeland Security Secretary sweeping powers to turn the united States into a bourgeoisified gated community closed off to Latin Americans, also precludes judicial review, meaning among other things that nobody has a lawsuit to interfere with any waiver or even get compensation for damages resulting from a waiver.

Now, the U.S. Government is using the REAL ID Act to go forward with fortifying the westernmost few miles of the border. (1) Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on Tuesday, September 13, signed an environmental waiver to go forward with plans to fortify the stretch of the border, which would require clearing acres of land and, at the risk of eroding soil near an estuary, filling in a large canyon. There is already a barrier on the segment of the border to be fortified, but the united States wants to extend the existing wide triple fence all the way to the ocean and install hi-tech surveillance equipment. Environmentalists and notably the California (State) Coastal Commission have been objecting to the U.S. Government’s plans since the proposed construction could damage part of the wetland Tijuana Estuary. Another consequence is that family and friends will no longer be able to meet at the fence separating San Diego and Tijuana.

Reactionaries masquerading as environmentalists have claimed that the movement of undocumented migrants across the border and further into the united States destroys the environment. The U.S. Border Patrol has even claimed that ending “illegal” border-crossings would prevent wetlands destruction by stopping foot traffic. (3) Those calling for the border to be fortified in San Diego have given the lie to this phony pretense of environmentalism by supporting the possible destruction of wetlands for the sake of “national security,” instead of letting migrants have a way to cross in existing urbanized areas and making it unnecessary to destroy wetlands and endangered species preserves.

Phony environmentalists say migrants harm the environment, but Americans are the biggest producers of trash and waste and the biggest polluters per capita by several different measures. To top it off, it appears no lesson has been learned from the federal government’s response to Hurricane Katrina. The government continues to focus on imaginary terrorist threats, in this case at the border, instead of preparing for natural disasters and preventing real environmental destruction in the united States and the world generally.

The proposed fortification of the border will cost tens of millions of dollars — just to fortify a stretch of a few miles. The Associated Press reports: “[Border Patrol Chief David] Aguilar said the Border Patrol may move to fortify the border in other areas, although both he and Chertoff said the administration had no plans to wall off the entire 2,000-mile Southwest border with Mexico.” Rather than build an expensive triple fence all along the southern border, the united States (as the U.S. Border Patrol has openly admitted) relies on the deadly repression, but also increase coyotes’ fees and force more migrants to travel without a coyote. Migrants’ deaths, even just looking at those inside the united States, are already at an all-time high due to Operation Gatekeeper and its effect on pressurizing migrants into the desert and mountains east of San Diego.

The border vigilante organization Friends of the Border Patrol was set to begin patrols in Border Field State Park today, near the segment of the border to be fortified, and the organization’s chairperson, Andy Ramírez, has announced that the “operation” will last indefinitely. Jim Chase’s California Minutemen, which completed a border vigilantism event in July, plans to begin another so-called border watch in October, as does Chris Simcox’s Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, known as the “original Minutemen.”

Demonstrations against border vigilantes happened throughout San Diego today, the eve of the reported official start of Friends of the Border Patrol’s border vigilantism project in San Ysidro (San Diego) and Calexico. For example, the Raza Rights Coalition this evening led demonstrations in multiple locations in the Barrio Logan and Sherman Heights Mexican and Latino neighborhoods in San Diego. Demonstrators denounced the Minutemen and other border vigilantes, as well as the terrorist Mira Demonstarators called for a world without borders, humyn rights, and Latin American unity, and celebrated Mexican Independence Day. Although the demonstrations were announced in English on the Internet several days ago, no one turned out for the demonstrations were predominantly Latin Americans and Latinos, and some white youth.

Some may chalk such demonstration turnouts up to inadequate organizing of Euro-Americans, but these turnouts do reflect the social base of righteous opposition to the anti-migrant movement; the larger emerging fascism targets oppressed-nation people, particularly undocumented migrant proletarians — not the majority of the Euro-American oppressor nation. Some white so-called leftists “oppose” the Minutemen, but then turn around and support the Border Patrol pigs. For that matter, some will undoubtedly criticize Chertoff for using the REAL ID Act to run over environmental laws, only to support intensifying the repression of migrants in the interior of the united States. All of this points to the need to struggle against fascism by building a large mass movement that steadfastly opposes all forms of white nationalism and chauvinism while at the same time pitting environmentalists against fascists.

Notes:

Thank you, Homeland Security! This photo from the DHS website was captioned “Customs and Border Patrol Supports Relief Effort: CBP officers search an apartment building room by room in downtown New Orleans.”
DEBATE OVER ‘REFUGEE’ REFLECTS FIRST WORLD CHAUVINISM

From 1...

disproportionality for Black national oppression rarely underlined, Powell neglects to point out that poor Blacks in New Orleans were more likely to evacuate than poverty-status Euro-Americans.

While not going so far as to call the use of “refugee” racist, President Bush has also said that the displaced people are Americans, rather than refugees. “The people we’re talking about are not refugees, they are Americans.”(1) Many people, including Hurricane Katrina survivors, have similarly objected to the use of “refugee,” often saying that more should have been done, or should be done, to rescue and otherwise aid the displaced by Hurricane Katrina, because they are “Americans.” It would appear that the survivors’ just being human isn’t motivating enough for those who have resources to help the victims.

Minnotes.info, minnotes.info, is among those news sources that have described certain Hurricane Katrina victims as “refugees.” Soon after publishing articles covering the social disaster unleashed by Hurricane Katrina, more than a week ago, minnotes.info was contacted for a description of hurricane victims as “refugees.” But it has not gone back and removed any instance of “refugee.” Minnotes.info has no problem with taking responsibility for using “refugee”—or continuing to use this term occasionally in reference to some of the people affected by Hurricane Katrina. Even used for describing hurricane victims who are Black, “refugee” is correct in the context of minnotes.info’s position that the impact of Hurricane Katrina is shaped by national oppression, and that the hurricane victims have tried to escape this impact. Minnotes.info has called for not only aid to victims of so-called natural disasters in imperialist countries and the Third World, but also reparations to oppressed people within the United States and the Caribbean. The mainstream media’s use of “refugee” to describe hurricane victims does not necessarily lead to progressive national consciousness. The public has long seen the consequences of national oppression within the United States, but racism and reactionaries who were co-opted to “reflect American Greatness” have not necessarily understood, Powell

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Poll shows Euro-Amerikans’ indifference toward oppression of Black people

From 1...

most closely approximates Euro-Amerikans) who approve of Bu$h increased from 49% in August to 51% in September. Fully 54%, a majority, of whites in September had a “favorable” opinion of conservative U.S. Supreme Court nominee John Roberts, compared with 14% of blacks. As these numbers illustrate in a limited way, many Black people are sharply opposed to the white nation’s choices for this country’s leaders, who are actually the white nation’s representatives. This is the case even though the alternatives are still in the imperialist camp. Americans have recently seen a white person on Comedy Central’s DL (hosted by D. L. Hughley) criticize Bu$h’s response to Hurricane Katrina, call for Bu$h’s impeachment and removal, and call herself an “angry black woman”—all against the backdrop of a huge portrait of pro-death penalty Howard Dean, who has no basic disagreement with the present administration’s militarist policies.

The CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll also shows that, on September 8th-11th, Blacks and whites had similar approval ratings of recently resigned FEMA Director Michael Brown. However, blacks who had heard of Homeland Security Director Michael Chertoff were more likely than whites to have an unfavorable opinion of Chertoff. Among those who had heard of Chertoff, whom some have seen as more to blame than Brown for the inadequate federal response to the hurricane, about 45% of blacks had an unfavorable opinion of Chertoff, compared with about 38% of whites. That’s with the people who had never heard of Chertoff removed from the picture.

Among those who had heard of Black New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, one of the most prominent figures in media coverage of Hurricane Katrina, about 43% of whites had an unfavorable opinion of Ray Nagin, compared with 20% of blacks. In general, 38% of whites had an unfavorable opinion of Nagin, compared with 17% of blacks. So, twice as many whites disapproved of Nagin as blacks. That’s with the people who had never heard of Chertoff removed from the picture.

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Many whites didn’t have an unfavorable opinion of just New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin. Whites were more likely than blacks to blame Nagin or even New Orleans residents themselves (instead of Bu$h for the most part) being “trapped in the rising floodwater.” In fact, whites (27%) were about 2.5 times more likely than blacks (11%) to blame New Orleans residents. The poll didn’t ask respondents to give a reason. (“Who do you think deserves the most blame for the fact that many New Orleans residents were trapped in the city after it flooded?”)

Whites (50%) were more than three times more likely than blacks to view so-called looters as mostly criminals (“Now thinking about the looters in New Orleans who entered stores and took things in the first few days after the hurricane, which comes closer to your view?”). Contrarily, most whites thought “one reason the federal government was slow in rescuing these people was because many of them were poor” compared with 63% of blacks. Whites do not seem to be much more aware of poverty than “race” after Hurricane Katrina, and if they are, it may be because they deny that Black people are oppressed. Some, including prominent imperialists and white-worker chauvinists masquerading as leftists and even “socialists,” have been trying to downplay the importance of Black national oppression by exaggerating poverty as a factor (and even then often neglecting to point out that Blacks are disproportionately poor). Reflecting the social basis of the anti-war movement and continuing a trend of Blacks’ opposing the Iraq War more strongly than Euro-Amerikans, the poll found 38% of blacks, according to the same CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll, responded “yes” to the question: “In view of the developments since we first sent our troops to Iraq, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq, or not?” Only 49% of whites responded “yes” to this question. So, twice as many African Americans do not even pragmatically view sending u.s. troops to Iraq as a “mistake,” much less oppose the Iraq War out of a progressive principle.

Notably, none of the CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll questions address whether race or poverty shaped the impact of Hurricane Katrina, not just in terms of the speed of relief efforts. An earlier Pew Research Center for the People and the Press telephone poll also does not address the relevance of nationality, or even poverty, other than in terms of disaster Black people are capable of building a powerful revolutionary movement that will end the imperialist system and all forms of imperialist exploitation and oppression. Nothing short of revolution will end the imperialist system that is fundamentally to blame for how the hurricane devastation went down in its impact on Black people. The effects of the social disaster unleashed by Hurricane Katrina continue to profoundly impact thousands of Black people and Latin Americans, many of whom are undocumented persons unable or unwilling to get aid from a government that has repressed them and been so hostile to them.

And the full devastation continues to be revealed. Reuters reports: “The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals on Tuesday said the state’s confirmed death toll as a direct result of Hurricane Katrina was 423, up from 279 the day before.”(5)

Notes:
5. “The disaster has had a far more significant personal impact on blacks than whites. African Americans are nearly twice as likely as whites (43% vs. 22%) to say they have a close friend or relative who was directly affected. African Americans are also much more likely than whites to report feeling depressed and angry because of what’s happened in areas affected by the hurricane.”
Record suicides in California prisons

From p. 1...

and Rehabilitation this month missed a
deadline imposed by a federal judge to
implement a policy calling for corrections
officers to administer CPR to inmates
who have attempted suicide and to track
inmates’ history of suicidal behavior, said
attorneys who represent mentally ill
inmates in a 15-year-old class action
lawsuit. (2)

The California prison guard union is
apparently holding up plans to train prison
staff in CPR to give prisoners immediate
life support. Thomas Nolan, an attorney
for the mentally ill inmates, said Deputy
Attorney General Lisa Tillman told him
that she wasn’t “sure whether
negotiations had begun with the
correctional officers’ union regarding
CPR.” The Sacramento Bee cites a
projected California prison system suicide
rate for 2005 of 27.2 suicides per 100,000
inmates. The Sacramento Bee attributes
this figure to a Special Master who reports
to the judge in the class-action suit.

“A report of the special master filed in
April in Sacramento federal court says
that 74.2 percent of the 36 suicides in the
state prison system in 2003 ‘involved
some measure of inadequate treatment
or intervention.’” (2)

Mental illness is considered a security
concern in California prisons. This means
that prisoners considered mentally ill are
put in higher-security prisons where they
are locked in their cells for most of the
day, and have even fewer privileges. The
conditions in California high-security
prisons are bad enough to cause even the
most levelheaded prisoners to become
unbalanced. The effects on prisoners
labeled mentally ill are even more
dangerous. Further, when prisoners
attempt suicide, the standard practice is
to stand by and wait for medical people
to arrive, rather than provide immediate
life support.

MIM received a report from one
prisoner locked up in Pelican Bay State
Prison in August 2005. He wrote: “I’ve
seen too many fellow prisoners fall victim,
or better yet fall prey to these so called
‘psychiatrists’ here and in other
institutions. You have perfectly healthy
men in here running around like damn
demons. They keep them so heavily
medicated that it takes all their ability
to even do the simplest of things.”

This prisoner went on to talk about the
article criticizing the prisons for such a
high suicide rate: “According to the
department’s spokesperson ‘They [California Department of Corrections]
don’t know what’s causing it.’ Ha Ha Ha,
it’s not that they don’t know what’s
causing such high suicide rates. It’s that
they don’t care. Besides, they would have
to be crazy to say they know what the
problem is, because they would have to
don’t shut down all their damn torture chambers
and fire all those goddamn quacks they
have running around here.

“Anybody who even remotely
questions my claims, I ask them to come
visit the so-called Psychiatric Housing
Unit (PSU) here in Pelican Bay. Or as a
matter of fact, just visit any ad-seg. As a
mentally disturbed prisoner you have one of
two choices. Number one, continue to
be heavily sedated, and eventually lose
whatever sense you have left. Or number
two, unfortunately do what so many
others have done to try to escape their
dreadful and unbearable realities (suicide).
I know this may sound somewhat harsh
to certain individuals, but this is reality for
us.

“I believe it was Mao who said ‘to
change reality one has to live in it.’ So for
me to sugar coat anything that has to do
with our oppressive conditions in here, I
feel would be a deep injustice to us.”

This high suicide rate in the adult prison
is paralleled by the problem in the youth
prisons (“juvenile detention” facilities),
also well-known for their cruel conditions.
The latest suicide, on August 31, was at
Chad prison near Stockton, California.
Youth at this facility were on lockdown,
stuck in their cells for a week prior to this
suicide. This came just a day after six
Chad prison employees, who were fired
after being videotaped beating two youth,
were given their jobs back. (3) September
is the anniversary of the death of another
Youth at Chad, his cause of death was
“unknown.” The director of the California
Youth Authority (CYA) ordered the Chad
facility to stop accepting new youths and
is considering closing the facility.

MIM Notes regularly prints articles by
prisoners describing the horrible conditions
behind bars, including in the mental health
units. With recent reports about
deteriorating conditions in California
prisons, and with the administration
revoking even the smallest of privileges,
it is not a surprise to us that the suicide
rate is increasing.

Notes:
1. Don Thompson (Associated Press),
“Prison System criticized over rate of
www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050807/news_1suicides.html
2. Don Thompson (Associated Press),
“State’s prison suicide rate prompts call
for changes,” 8 August 2005 (04:53:13
AM PDT), http://www.modbee.com/
local/story/11052705p-11810715c.html
3. Denny Walsh, “Prison officials’
effort on suicides criticized,” 27 August
2005, http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/c a lifornia/story/13479019p-
14319790c.html
4. Mark Gladstone, “Teen found
dead in youth prison,” San Jose Mercury

What is militarism?

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

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

Under capitalism, capitalists often
profit from war or its preparations.
Yet, it is the proletariat that does
the dying in the wars. The proletariat
wants a system in which people do not
have self-interest on the side of war-
profiteering or war for imperialism.
Militarism is one of the most
important reasons to overthrow
capitalism. It even infects oppressed
countries and causes them to fight each
other.

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

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

By MIM

On September 6th, the California legislature became the first in the United States to approve a bill allowing same-sex marriage.(1) The next day, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s press secretary stated that the Governor would veto the bill.(2) Both these stories made headlines across the world. However, the ensuing protests by marriage equality supporters in San Francisco, Sacramento, and undoubtedly elsewhere in California, did not make the papers. Anyone reading San Francisco’s leading newspaper on Friday, September 9, 2005, would be hard-pressed to find any information on the same-sex marriage saga that was filling the pages of news media a few days earlier. This is yet another example of the mainstream media’s reactionary viewpoint, which makes progressive independent news outlets essential.

Hurricane Katrina is currently the primary story in the country-wide news scene, and rightly so. Yet, the widespread international media attention paid to California’s “gender-neutral marriage” bill (AB 849) was not due to preemption by another story. Instead, every indication is that the press heard the Governor’s veto announcement as an “end to discussion” signal, and ignored the fact that it was a catalyst for protests and outrage by many queer rights activists. This is especially troubling considering that the Governor’s excuse for his impending veto does not make much sense, even to conservatives who oppose gay marriage.(3) Clearly, it is the mainstream media’s political agenda, and not the merits of his argument, that made his veto announcement weighty enough to stifle any objections. This would not happen in a society led by Maoist principles, which embrace scientific thinking and materialist analysis and reject edicts, dogma, and sloganeering.

Of course, a dictatorship of the proletariat would not allow the population to vote to restrict civil rights, including on questions such as whether one group of people should be treated as inferior and denied access to marriage. Here we see another example of the mainstream media’s reactionary viewpoint, which makes progressive independent news outlets essential.

As with equal rights for women, equality for queers within America is definitely progressive regardless of the majority that voted for Proposition 22, opposing marriage equality. Discrimination against any group of people runs counter to the communist goal of ending oppression of all people. At the same time, American queers, as U.S. citizens, are privileged compared with the majority of queers in the world. Those who most need gay marriage are migrants who will be deported if they can’t marry their partners. For others, gay marriage may provide more financial stability or access to family rights, but it is not a life and death issue. The compañerismo among people have made to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s is accurate in queers and Blacks are both oppressed, and these oppressions must be ended. But the civil rights movement galvanized the Black nation in the face of opposition to education, housing and jobs (among other things) literally was life and death for Blacks. Those battles were fought with the blood and sweat of fallen Black comrades, ultimately frightening the Euro-American nation’s government into giving in to some of the people’s demands.

The particular struggle for marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples enjoys no such strength, even among openly gay couples. This is easily explained by class and nation privilege. Marriage will offer few additional gains, many of them political and not material. The merits of his argument, that made his veto announcement weighty enough to stifle any objections. This would not happen in a society led by Maoist principles, which embrace scientific thinking and materialist analysis and reject edicts, dogma, and sloganeering.

Aside from immigration, the two major privileges of marriage mentioned by gay rights activists are rights to children in the marriage, and family access to hospitals and health care. In addition, those couples with only one partner working would get some tax benefits. These rights of marriage amount to greater access to living out the Amerikan dream: family wealth ultimately gained from the backs of Third World people, and shared ownership of children.

For MIM, these “rights” of marriage should be given to queer couples because withholding them represents discrimination against a group of people. Gaining equal access to marriage for all would be progress in the fight against gender oppression. But for the sake of encouraging conscious opposition to this system that causes misery for billions of the world’s people, we have to be clear that Americans as a whole, both men and wimmin, gay and straight, are gender privileged. Even gay couples are benefiting from the gender oppression of others. For example, reproductive technology is tested on Third World people to benefit men and wimmin in the First World, and Third World wimmin migrants are being used as surrogate mothers. The queers who are among the most gender-oppressed in America are those on the streets selling themselves to survive, often youth — and access to legal marriage is not going to help them in new cases.

Some people argue that marriage is an oppressive institution of the patriarchy and not something that we should fight to expand. MIM sympathizes with this argument — it is similar to our point that gays should not fight for the right to join the imperialist military. But unlike the military propping up imperialism, we don’t see marriage in itself as a prop for the patriarchy today. On the contrary, we see monogamy as the least oppressive form of sexual relationships under imperialism, and if we can use marriage to reinforce monogamy without reinforcing the oppression of children or wimmin, we will. Tearing down marriage under the imperialis-patriarchy will not get us any closer to ending the patriarchy, it will just lead to more manipulation of wimmin by their male partners. And getting married is not uniquely harmful (unlike the military). Sexual relations under the patriarchy are inherently coercive because of all the inequality between people.

Ultimately, marriage is an institution of imperialism that exists to allow greater material privileges to people following the conventional roles approved by the patriarchy. But that doesn’t mean communists can’t use marriage for our own purposes under the patriarchy. Unlike idealists, communists are realistic about using all tools available to us in the battle against imperialism. So, we get jobs within capitalism to earn money to use for the revolution. For those engaged in sexual relations, marriage is just a tool to ensure greater stability. And the access to material privileges should not be denied to same-sex couples, even if we recognize that these privileges are only available because of the wealth of America that is built off the exploitation of the majority of the world’s people.

MIM applauds those who are working to lift the ban on same-sex marriage in California and other states, and we invite them to join us in fighting the system that makes such discrimination possible.

Notes:

Action hero
Schwarzenegger lags behind
cartoon buffoon
Homer Simpson
in his support for gay marriage.
Unlock the Box

An Organizing Conference to
Shut Down Prison Control Units

Unlock the Box is a product of many years of struggle to shut down the Security Housing Units in California. During this time, the United Front to Abolish the SHU was created as a forum to coordinate the actions of everyone involved in this campaign. Since its creation, the United Front has continued to expand in membership and in the number of people we reach with our message. This conference is a step in the process of building more unity with groups all over the country and the world who are engaged in the struggle to end this torture.

The goals of Unlock the Box include increasing communication between groups over a wider geographic area, coming up with plans of action that we can agree to work on as a whole to help strengthen those connections and strengthening our cause thru mass participation. The event will be a combination of presenters with vast experience in this struggle and working groups to come up with plans of action, with performances and food in between. As the date approaches we will be contacting everyone with a more specific schedule and plan. Until then, we welcome your input, help and donations to make that happen.

Saturday, October 8, 2005
9:30 am - 6 pm Cell Space
2050 Bryant Street (near 18th street)
San Francisco, CA

The United Front to Abolish the SHU includes: Maoist Internationalist Movement, Barrio Defense Committe, Justice for Palestinians, Chicano Mexicano Prison Project, Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League, African People’s Socialist Party, Committee on Raza Rights, California Prison Focus, African People’s Solidarity Committee and other concerned individuals

Other Endorsers of Unlock the Box include: Break The Chains prisoner-solidarity organization (Eugene, Oregon USA), Idriss Stelley Foundation, DeBug (the online magazine of the South Bay), Proyecto Common Touch, Campaign for Justice for Rudy Cardenas, Justice Action (Australia), Black August Organizing Committee, Families to Amend Three Strikes (FACTS)- San Jose, Books Not Bars, South Bay Committee in Solidarity with Cuba
Amerikan, Iraqi troops face off over pay dispute

By a correspondent
September 15, 2005
From mimnotes.info

The US military wrote another shining chapter in the history of the new independent Iraq when it prevented Iraqi government troops from reopening the Baghdad International Airport on September 9, after the British firm providing security closed it in a dispute over back pay. “The issue is related to Iraq’s sovereignty, and nobody has the right to close the airport,” said acting Transportation Minister Esmat Amer. But when Iraqi troops reached the roadblocks US troops had set up on the road to the airport, they turned back, and Amer backpedaled: “We did not want to create a confrontation.”

The US occupation government hired London-based Global Strategies Group to provide security at the airport last year; when the United States gave nominal sovereignty to Iraq last June, the Iraqi government took over the security contract. Global says the Iraqi government was six months behind in payments. The Transportation Minister in turn says the government has been trying to renegotiate the $4.5 million-per-month contract since January. When the interim cabinet heard of the airport closure, it authorized Iraqi troops to take over the airport.

The Associated Press called Baghdad International Airport “[Iraq’s] only reliable link to the outside world.”(2) The Washington Post reports that “insurgents,” “bandits” and “numerous armed men of murky affiliation” (perhaps a reference to government thugs) make the roads out of Iraq “gravely dangerous for Iraqis and almost impossible for foreigners.”

“Disappointed travelers, including a doctor who needed to send a sick 5-year-old to India for surgery, besieged travel agents.”(1) (As if it wasn’t bad enough that a decade of sanctions and two years of war had ravaged the Iraqi medical system to the point where patients have to be sent out of the country for reliable treatment, now war profiteers have closed off that option, too.)

Global reopened the airport on September 11.(3)

This goes to show that despite rhetoric proclaiming a sovereign, independent and democratic Iraq, the United States is more interested in making sure Iraq pays foreign contractors than in upholding this particular incident with Global Strategies, the United States wants to prevent the Iraqi government from setting the precedent that it can seize important government functions (economic, infrastructural, military, etc.) from foreign contractors — many of them American — and stiff them in the process.

Ironically, US support for Global’s monetary claims comes amidst complaints at home that private contractors are gouging the US government. Corruption and war profiteering have been hidden in plain sight since the beginning of the latest Iraq war: from favoritism when awarding contracts to self-serving security experts who argue for particular projects and then make sure their friends get the jobs. Amerikas-firsters have made much of the corruption in the United Nations’ oil-for-food program, yet have little to say about the corruption that riddles the American occupation of Iraq or the new interim government. The latter probably dwarfs the former. Security accounts for 22% of reconstruction costs, according to US officials; some of the around 20,000 foreign security contractors in Iraq are paid $1,350 per day.(4)

The fact that the current government has been saddled with debts and obligations from the American-led occupation government further undermines the rhetoric that Amerika invaded Iraq to restore sovereignty.

There are lessons here both for Third World politicians and First Worlders who honestly support the right of nations to self-determination. Those Third World leaders who think they can overthrow the local, corrupt ruling clique by aligning with the imperialists should think twice. The imperialists turn against their Third World puppets for their own reasons, which have more to do with maintaining and extending their power than improving the lives of Third World peoples. Further, the careers of their puppets (and the new puppets who replace the old puppets) tend to be short: witness Saddam Hussein himself, who went from being Amerika’s number one buddy in the Persian Gulf in the 80s to its number one enemy in the 90s. Similarly, First Worlders should not be fooled by hired hacks who argue that the way to liberate Third World people from their local fascists is to send in the American military. Ever hear the phrase, “fool guarding the henhouse?” The local thugs serve at the pleasure of the imperialists. Sending the Marines will not change anything fundamental; only the faces will change. And as violence continues in Iraq (140 Iraqis died yesterday, September 15, according to American press reports), Amerikans have the gratification of knowing that their sons and daughters are dying in the desert playing the important role of loyal soldiers in a gangster turf war over a protection racket.

Notes:
2. 9 September 2005.

Pushing for equality on death row

By a California prisoner, August 2005

On August 19, 2005, 59-year-old Kansas native Dennis L. Rader, self-dubbed “the BTK Killer,” who admitted to viciously killing 10 children, men, women and children over a terrorizing span of 30 years, was sentenced to 175 years in prison.


The irony is that Williams, the co-founder of the infamous Crips street gang, sits on California’s death row for the murders of four people in 1979. His trial had all of the offensive elements of racism and prosecutorial misconduct throughout. Williams vehemently maintains his innocence.

In contrast, Rader had an indisputable string of damning evidence against him, including DNA and his remorseless courtroom confessions that endured for two days.

In Williams’ case there were anonymous fingerprints and a bloody boot print that couldn’t be assigned to him. Critics of the case also cried foul when a jailhouse informant, facing the death penalty himself, was used to testify against Williams.

Williams is a 2001 Noble Peace Prize nominee. He was elected for the honorable award in recognition of his 10 anti-gang children’s books, and his worldwide “Internet Project for Peace,” which diverts kids from the suicidal life of gangsterism.

His last appeal is scheduled in the U.S. Supreme Court this coming fall. Should that appeal fail, he would be appointed to die by lethal injection within 90 days thereafter.

We must question the silent insinuation here, that life in prison is sufficient for an avenging white serial killer, while our most profoundly redeemed is slated for death. Save Tookie internationally (www.tookie.com) by calling the Office of the Governor at 916-445-2841 or e-mail him at governor@governor.ca.gov. [MIM adds: Tookie’s case is a good example of why MIM advocates an immediate end to the imperialist death penalty. The criminal injustice system has proven time and again its inability to provide a fair trial, or anything resembling justice, particularly for oppressed nations forced into American courts.] Notes:

2. 9 September 2005.

Notes:

What questions do YOU have?

Wasn’t Mao a butcher? Why do you spell it “Amerika”? Shouldn’t you try non-violence first? What is internationalism? Isn’t hating white people reverse racism? Why don’t you leftists work together? Why don’t you tone it down? What is a cardinal principle? What is your program? What is necessary to join MIM? What concrete actions can I take? How do I write articles for MIM? What is your copyright policy?

Go to http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/faq and get real answers to these and other questions.
Under Lock & Key
News from Prisons & Prisoners

Internal Affairs
Department of Correction
390 NE 2nd Street
PO Box 70
Ontario, OR 97914

Department of Correction
2575 Center Street NE
Salem, OR 97301-4667

It's all about punishment in MO

I'm writing to receive your free newsletter and journals. Right now I'm doing a year in the hole and can not receive books unless related to my case pending which occurred while I was in school and suddenly kicked out because of no proof of my being a gang member. -a Missouri prisoner, 23 August, 2005

MIM asks: And this fulfills the "corrections" and rehabilitation" mission how?

Michigan's STG label means no work for you

I would like to donate money, but inside of these walls I have to hustle to gain what little paper and envelopes I get off the yard. In this state's correctional system, if you're labeled a gang member they exclude you from obtaining a job of any kind. They say you're allowed to attend school. But twice, if not more, I've been in school and suddenly kicked out because of no proof of my being a gang member, except me being a gang member. -a Michigan prisoner, 27 June, 2005

Michigan prisoners beat back political censorship

I'm pleased to report that I've received MIM Notes regularly and without any disruption or interference. The last package I received consisted of April, May and June issues. This is the result of numerous grievances and hearing requests on rejected mail that have been pursued by myself and others that have reacted, being thrown out to the streets. I've received MIM Notes regularly and without any statistical interference. With much respect and admiration for your work for you - a prisoner in Pelican Bay, California, 2 August, 2005

MIM adds: Prisoners everywhere need to know that political and unauthorized censorship is unconstitutional, according to the U.S. Supreme Court. We need you to help us fight for the right to speak revolutionary politics in the U.S. prisons. Learn the prison mail regulations before your mail is censored, know how to use the grievance system. Most importantly, let us know when they hold the mail we send you.

Soledad prisoner held beyond term

I am currently housed in the Central Training Facility, C.T. F. Soledad State Prison. I have been in the state prison system for exactly 3 years, 8 months, and 7 days. My commitment term was 3 years, 8 months. I was due for parole in April 2005 but I have a case pending which occurred while incarcerated. I have been in Administrative Segregation for 5 months. I have not heard any word from the county courthouse, nor has any C.O., counselor, or any other badge informed me of what is going on, where I am going or when. All the jailhouse lawyers are adamant that I should have been released to the streets of Monterey County as of 6 days ago. I am making no progress with my argument for several reasons. We are housed in one-man cells with two inmates. We are all the "perks" of a S.H.U. one hour in yard, showers every two days, shining handcuffs and shackles with a courteous candy check upon exiting our cells. If you can't tell, I am being sarcastic! These are very belittling rituals. I don't know how I would have reacted, being thrown out to the streets. I've dragged this letter on long enough, let me go on...

My partner discreetly passed me three issues of "MIM Notes." I was very intrigued by your publications, articles, and opinions. I too am a very opinionated young man, with an outspoken view of life, both inside and outside prison. I am young to the system but not to his lifestyle. I've come to realize there are other ways to accomplish situations I may come across. I am ready to take action. If you would please send me my own issues of "MIM Notes," I would greatly appreciate that. I would love to broaden my horizon, and reading about the real problems of the prison system and being able to optimize them would truly keep me awake, so that this burdensome system does not hypnotize me into believing that this is the only way to conform our comrades!

With much respect and admiration for your strength and courage to put pressure on this cruel system... - a prisoner in California, May 2005

California SHU stark environment

I am currently housed "indefinitely" in this prison's Security Housing Unit (the SHU), which is an old typical isolation unit. It's a stark and stark environment or physical, mental, emotional and psychological deprivation. I live in a 8-by-12 "windowless" cell nearly around the clock. There are no jobs, programs or human contact of any kind. Once a day, my remote controlled cell door slowly grinds open allowing 60 minutes alone in a near-by walled in courtyard in which nothing more but a larger cell than the one I already live in.

Despite my pejorative surroundings I try to remain myself as much as possible, that is positive, optimistic, energetic, creative and productive, even if it is in my own way. My days which can slip into perennial monosensory if I'm not vigilant, are spent reading, writing, drawing, or whatever I find that would keep me busy. Well with this been said, I'm sure you get the picture and know how your support would be of much help... - a prisoner in Pelican Bay, California, August 2005

Disabled prisoners get no services

I am currently waiting on a response from Sacramento regarding grievance 5777. I've submitted pertaining to the lack of adequate medical means for incarcerated handicapped persons as per the A.D.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act) Bill passed some ten years ago. Being a paraplegic I am in need of physical therapy and yet receive none. If I am denied at the Sacramento level then I will have no choice but litigation. I will keep the movement abreast of my struggle in full once this last act unfolds.

I was paralyzed by the same police who are sworn to serve and protect the public. I was shot over ten times by at least three different officers armed with AR-15's and .40 caliber glocks. The reason for this shooting started when I disarmed an officer who was trying to harass and arrest me. I was viewed as armed and dangerous but if I was truly dangerous I would've done away with the officer that I disarmed. I didn't because of his bruised ego I was gunned down after a "slow-speed" chase from Golt to Lodii (two small towns in northern California). - a prisoner in Salinas Valley State Prison, July 05

Appeals ignored, lost and denied

As a prisoner of 17 years now, I have been to many prisons in California and Salinas...
Valley State Prison is by far the worst institution to do time at. Inmates here have no rights and our oppressors enjoy tormenting the population through mind games and trying to strip us of our humanity through the conditions we have to live under and then using any excuse to justify their actions.

For the appeal forms, known as 602, it accommodates very little. Inmates here have been those who have been in the hospital for a month. I just came down from Salinas Valley State Prison and every time I come here I get put in ad-seg for lies they (the racist pigs) make up by saying I'm a threat to the prison establishment and myself “that’s crazy” why would I want to hurt myself?

I’m going to court for something they claim I did here back in 2002! And since I’ve been here, I’ve witnessed unnecessary, unjustified pass out from the pigs, and intimidations and setups by the pigs. You can’t even write a 602 on them due to fear and threats and intimidation. They beat on inmates and we get charged for it. - getting long SHU terms and court cases.

I’ve been a victim of their abuse since 1998. I did almost 2 years because of their abuse and trying to protect myself from being killed by these pigs and their gang “the green wall” I have seen inmates lose their appeals after they have been victims of setups by these pigs. I’ve seen first hand inmates getting beat in the head and face by the hilly club and kicked, stomped, as if this was the 50s - 60s all over again, and when the inmates stand up and say enough is enough they turn it into something it’s not. We need help in here to get the word out to the people.

California prisoner, August 2005

Medical care worsening in California

By the way according to a memo recently passed over the “feds” have taken over the health care for us, and so far it has only gotten worse! We’re having to wait a lot longer to see a rude and disrespectful doctor who hates to even look at us. The individuals who are on chronic care for whatever serious illness they have, have been taken off or only seen every six months or so.

Medication is starting to be an issue around here. People have to actually jump the hoops just for some damn aspirin. If we are taking a shower or using the restroom and don’t come out immediately when called for the sick call line, we are automatically taken off the list. No type of warning is given to us or anything. Of course we all understand this is just another one of those tactics to try and discourage us from trying to get any type of health care.

California prisoner, August 2005

Third strike for exchanging clothes without a receipt

I am a political prisoner. I didn’t kill eleven year old Polly Klass but I may as well have been the killer as it is because of her murder that I’m serving 28 to life for exchanging a pair of pants for 2 pair of shorts and matching shirts in a department store without a receipt. I’ve been incarcerated for this since May 1995. As a third striker, I receive no “good time” or work time credits. A rapist, child molester, or murderer are eligible for 15 to 50% off.

In 2004 citizens against violent crime placed a measure on the ballot “prop 66” which would have rectified California’s faulty and unjust 3-strikes law (as it stands, 2 strikes and a ball in the dirt) and made the law a bit more fair for individuals like me. The measure was leading 64% for and 29% against 2 weeks prior to the election. When out comes Arnold with a slew of ads telling the public that if prop 66 passes 26,000 rapists, child molesters, and murderers will go free.

First of all, I’ve never been arrested or convicted of rape, murder, or child molestation. There are roughly 4,000 non-violent-non-serious 3rd strikers in California prisons. The measure would have only given them some much-needed relief. There would’ve been no relief or release for murderers, child molesters, or rapists.

- California prisoner, August 2005

Being punished for being “Indian”

As usual the government is trying to make us forget who we are. They always seem to forget that it was them who gave us our rights and considered us red people equal to them. But like always the system uses their rules when they see fit. I am of the Luiseño nation who refuses to comply with CDC’s grooming standards and as a result I have been on what CDC calls C-status which means all my privileges have taken away. It has been 20 months and I remain strong. CDC has taken away my freedom but they will never take away who I am or dictate how I should practice my culture!

- California prisoner, August 2005

Struggle live on under lockdown

This is your comrade reporting from the torture chamber. I am sending back the petition to shut the SHU down. I had to bypass a few inmates because they probably would have snitched and had the CDC lackeys (guards) run up in my cell. Potential revolutionaries are being watched hard by the prison command and then using any excuse to justify their actions. They beat on inmates and we have been victims of setups by these pigs. I’ve seen first hand inmates getting beat in the head and face by the hilly club and kicked, stomped, as if this was the 50s - 60s all over again, and when the inmates stand up and say enough is enough they turn it into something it’s not. We need help in here to get the word out to the people.

California prisoner, August 2005

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

Notes:
2. Ibid., 1992 report.
4. Figure of 51.2 percent for state prisoners there for non-violent offenses. Abstract of the United States 1993, p. 211.

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, 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 prisoners 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 harm.

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-Lease on Life Program: This program provides support for our comrades who have recently been 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?
Shite in a top hat is still shite: “The Aristocrats”

By a correspondent
September 15, 2005
From mimnotes.info

“The Aristocrats”
Directed by Paul Provenza
ThinkFilm Inc.
Unrated / UK:18
2005
http://www.thearistocrats.com/

The comic documentary “The Aristocrats” is a good example of how the Liberal slogans “art for art’s sake” and “free speech” serve as covers for pornography and the oppression of children and winmin. You may appreciate the craft behind the jokes in the film — you may even laugh at some of the film’s vulgarity(1) — but that does not excuse the fact that two-thirds of “The Aristocrats” is pornography — and not just lurid sex tales, but detailed descriptions of sexualized violence against animals, children, and winmin.

The idea behind “The Aristocrats” is relatively harmless. Penn Jillette and Paul Provenza filmed dozens of professional comedians telling the same joke. This provides some insight into comedy as a technical craft, but mostly it gives the predominate male comics a platform to compete for the title of most obscene. There is nothing about the joke that requires obscenity; it simply depends on the discrepancy between a shabby vaudevillian skit and a snobby title (alternately “The Aristocrats” or “The Sophisticates”). But it says something about these comics (or the filmmakers’ expectations of their audience) that most versions of the joke go well beyond the “mere” scatological into the criminal — including tales of child rape.

A majority of comics interviewed understand that in the name of a good joke a serious line has been crossed. One explains that anybody who actually performed the acts described in the joke should be thrown in prison. Sara Silverman turns the joke around, ridiculing those who find the idea of child rape funny.

“The Aristocrats” received good reviews. Many praised it as a brave defense of “free speech,” much as Penn Jillette did in his open letter to audiences. (“The Aristocrats”) is political because it’s not political at all. The Aristocrats take for granted that they can say anything they want [do they ever]. Fighting for freedom is a losing battle. Taking liberty is what real Americans do. [It’s] patriotic. (2) Comics in the film briefly compete for the title of most obscene. Penn Jillette and Paul Provenza defend the “free speech” much as Penn Jillette and Paul Provenza defended the “free speech” for racist jokes.

WBAL laughs off charges of racism in Katrina response

By MIM
September 14, 2005
BALTIMORE — Authorities have not collected all the bodies of dead people from Hurricane Katrina yet, but the Baltimore AM radio 1090 outlet for reactionary talking head Rush Limbaugh is already laughing at charges of racism. When a Black man called in about the discussion of race and Katrina during the Bruce Elliott host time slot, the talk show host started laughing and kept laughing.

Bruce Elliott says on his WBAL Web page: “I view myself as a conservative who welcomes opposing viewpoints.” The Bruce Elliott Show gives listeners a space for reasoned discussion, seasoned with some hilarity along the way.”(1) We at MIM fail to see what is funny about the charge that WBAL only hires Blacks to have radio programs or roles in radio programs when they agree with Rush Limbaugh, Elliott, etc. If Elliott wants to make jokes about Katrina he can just like other professional comedians already have, but talking about race and Katrina as a joke should be out-of-bounds.

When his Black caller put his opinion into the poll that showed it was not a few individuals like activist and writer Randall Robinson slamming Amerikan handling of Katrina, WBAL’s talk show host said that the majority of Blacks were outside the mainstream of the Republican and Democratic parties. What he left out is that the “mainstream” of both those parties is white.

The caller and WBAL were referring to polls such as the recent Washington Post-ABC News telephone poll (conducted on September 8th-11th), which showed that 77 percent of Blacks thought the handling of Katrina was proof of racial inequality while more than 7 out of 10 whites disagreed.(2)

Elliott had said he could not see any reason why FEMA head Michael Brown lost his official responsibilities in connection to Katrina. “I can’t figure it out.” WBAL’s talking head spokesperson for dumb Euro-Americans everywhere said September 14th in his nighttime slot.

In fact, he seemed to blame Homeland Security Director Chertoff for removing Brown two days after George W. Bush said Brown was doing a good job.

After discussing Brown’s departure, WBAL responded to calls. According to WBAL, the massive Katrina charity efforts affirm prove that America is not racist. (In a September 14th article going around on the Internet, conservative Linda Chavez claims that “Americans have donated nearly $1 billion in private aid.” Even with this high figure, that’s about 57 per cent in the civilian labor force and about 3.2 per cent in the general population.)

Next, referring to CBS reports that the federal disaster agency FEMA hired 4,000 firefighters for one month to handle Katrina, including people needing rescues and fires that needed to be put out, WBAL’s talk show host played up how they had received diversity classes when they should have been rescuing people. At the same time, WBAL made a point of not criticizing FEMA for making use of only 800 firefighters. FEMA claimed it could not handle having more than that working, while at the same time the federal government did find fit to land more than double that number of troops before the firefighters. There was nothing but diversity classes to take for those firefighters because FEMA limited the number of people working in New Orleans to 800.

Why FEMA restricted firefighters to 800 people, why there were so few rescues the first few days after the storm left the Gulf Coast — these are some questions that need answering. The polls showing the opposite responses of Blacks and whites demonstrate why Blacks need their own nation-state or a state such as the joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the oppressed nations. Whether it was ineptitude and state or national callousness of the oppressor, Black people should not have to wonder in the first place.

Notes: