

MIM Notes



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The Official Newsletter of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM)

Free

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

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Don't have to live like a 'refugee'?

Photo copyright American Red Cross.

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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By HC116, September 12, 2005
From mimnotes.info

The white-controlled media spends more air time talking about the disappearance of a wealthy bourgeois "American beauty" in Aruba than the combined deaths or disappearances of dozens of oppressed-nation people, many proletarian wimmin, near the imperialist united States-Mexico border due to various causes—from heat exposure in Arizona to outright murders. This indifference is not limited to a handful of influential voices in the media but is present among the majority of Euro-Amerikans in the united States. White nationalism pervades the Euro-Amerikan nation and profoundly influences the majority of Euro-Amerikans. Severing ties with this mire of reactionary nationalism—and having clarity about the outlook of the majority of Euro-Amerikans—are necessary to combat, in an effective way, attacks on the exploited and oppressed inside and outside the united States.

From the same news network that brought an almost daily onslaught of barely disguised racist coverage of the disappearance of Natalee Holloway comes a not-so-surprising poll that illustrates what mimnotes.info has previously pointed out about Blacks' and Euro-Amerikans' differing perception of the social disaster triggered by Hurricane Katrina. Even in terms of ideas and perceptions, not just economic and other conditions, it is difficult to speak of a homogenous Amerika or address Black people only as "Americans." Most Black people are u.S. citizens, but there are nationality-based differences within the united States that aren't simply a function of skin privilege.

A CNN/USA Today/Gallup telephone poll released today and conducted on September 8th-11th (Thursday through Saturday) actually shows a variety of differences between Blacks and Euro-Amerikans. To begin with, while the estimated percent of blacks who approve "of the way George W. Bush [one imperialist mouthpiece] is handling his job as president" declined from 15% in August 2005 to 14% in September (8-11), the estimated percent of "non-Hispanic whites" (the common racial category that

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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 amerikan. 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 red 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 fiat 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 Amerikan nation has been the enemy of the international proletariat. We're glad that many individuals have renounced their "white" origins and turned against the oppressor nation, but we know that's a tiny slice of the Amerikan 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 mim3@mim.org, which is on the MIM website at <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/agitation/gatekeeper/andyramirez051005.html>

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MIM Notes

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

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

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

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What is 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.



We must strive to unblock the minds of the people by mobilizing the Party.

**IMPERIALISM
KILLS
MILLIONS**

<http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/rail/impkills.html>

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.

United States waives environmental laws to further militarize border with Mexico

By a correspondent
September 16, 2005
From mimnotes.info

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 could file 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 United States-Mexico border. 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 desert and mountains near less fortified parts of the border as a deterrent. The U.S. Government is planning to station new Border Patrol agents near the less fortified parts of the border, which will not only subject migrants to more pig 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 Ramirez, 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 Mexicano and Latino neighborhoods in San Diego. Demonstrators denounced the Minutemen and other border vigilantes, as well as the terroristic Migra. Demonstrators called for a world without borders, human rights, and Latin American unity, and celebrated Mexican Independence Day. Although the demonstrations were announced in English on the Internet several days ago, those who 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:

1. Seth Hettena, “Bush administration to fortify westernmost stretch of U.S.-Mexico border,” 14 September 2005, <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/state/20050914-1504-wst-borderfence.html>

2. Leslie Berestein, “Feds override laws, give OK to border fence,” 15 September 2005, <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20050915-9999-7m15fence.html>

3. “Stronger border fence could weaken birds,” 15 September 2005, <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/9353281/>

4. “Homeland Security OKs Border Fence,” 15 September 2005, http://www.fox6.com/news/local/story.aspx?content_id=938F124E-8B9A-493A-A7DE-23B5125499DF

5. James Chase, “CMM announces Oct 9, 2005, watch,” 13 August 2005, http://www.californiaminutemen.com/cmm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15

6. “Another Civilian Group Starts Patrolling U.S.-Mexico Border,” 16 September 2005, <http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/4984488/detail.html>



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 understood, 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 people 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.

This news source, mimnotes.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, mimnotes.info was criticized for describing hurricane victims as "refugees." But it has not gone back and removed any instance of "refugee." Mimnotes.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 to describe hurricane victims who are Black, "refugee" is correct in the context of mimnotes.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. Mimnotes.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 nations, which would lessen the impact of future disasters. Euro-Americans' aid to Hurricane Katrina victims so far amounts to tokenism. Mimnotes.info's use of "refugee" does not imply praise for American so-called generosity that hardly makes up for centuries of exploitation and oppression.

It is not so much that "refugee" is preferable to "evacuee," "survivor," and so on. The point here is that people, including Bush and other reactionary leaders, are favoring these alternative terms for the wrong reasons. The underlying issue even with these proposed alternatives to "refugee," not just "American," is essentially Euro-American guilt about the "racial" disparities revealed by Hurricane Katrina

and a desire to make up for them by trying to include Blacks in Americans' sense of entitlement. For predominantly white voices in the media (not to mention prominent imperialists) to make a point of calling hurricane victims "American citizens" is actually a way of legitimizing this sense of entitlement for Euro-Americans and reinforcing part of the ideology that perpetuates the oppression of the Black people and other oppressed-nation peoples in the United States—and the world—and keeps them under the heel of repression.

Almost all of the people who have a problem with "refugee" have no problem with the misleading and assimilative term "African American" or with using "refugee" to describe even internally displaced people in a Third World country. But when it comes to people displaced in (or from) the United States, suddenly the designation is unacceptable. This is First World, particularly U.S. chauvinism, and it reflects the viewpoint of those who rightly or wrongly identify their interests with those of the Euro-American oppressors. Those who favor "American" over "refugee" often imply that Third World people and undocumented (and even documented) migrants in imperialist countries would deserve to be neglected—indeed, that the Hurricane Katrina survivors who are not American citizens deserve to be neglected. Several days ago, the Associated Press reported that thousands of citizens of Latin American countries, some undoubtedly undocumented migrants, were in New Orleans before the hurricane. (6)

"Some consular officials worried that illegal migrants may be avoiding authorities to duck questions about their immigration status, exposing themselves to even greater danger. . . . Consular officials estimated that about 40,000 Mexicans were living in Louisiana, most in New Orleans. That was second only to Honduras, with an estimated 150,000 citizens in the submerged metropolis and surrounding areas." (6)

There are tens of thousands of undocumented migrants in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, many of whom were living in the hurricane disaster areas. And many of these people, since they are not documented at all, much less American citizens, are afraid to approach the government (and undoubtedly the police and military troops as well) for help. E. Eduardo Castillo of the Associated Press reported today:

"Some sneak into shelters at night and then slip out in the morning, praying they won't be noticed. Others avoid government help altogether, preferring to ride out the chaos and destruction alone in a foreign land. . . . For illegal immigrants, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has meant not only living without a home, money or belongings, but also steering clear of the government officials who have flocked to the area, for fear of deportation. . . . Mexican President Vicente Fox appealed to one of the largest illegal populations in the devastated region

with messages in English and Spanish, urging them to seek help from Mexican consulates or U.S. rescue workers. . . . Rumors of deportations are rife, although U.S. officials have suspended for 45 days a requirement that employers check workers' identification. Fox also said the United States has promised not to send people home in the immediate aftermath, although Washington has not confirmed that." (7)

There were many Guatemalan, Honduran, Mexican and Vietnamese migrants in New Orleans before the hurricane. According to Bloomberg, which corroborates the Associated Press report, the United States has claimed "it won't sanction companies that hire workers displaced by Hurricane Katrina who cannot present appropriate documents." (8) The U.S. Government is likely doing this (and supporting the employment of hurricane victims who are citizens) for the pragmatic reason that it doesn't want to deal with a large number of unemployed people, some of whom are already shut out of the formal economy but may stop working in ordinary occupations completely and become declassed lumpen-proletarians.

Migrants, including black African and Caribbean migrants who aren't necessarily part of the Black nation (an internal semi-colony of the United States), are rightfully suspicious of all of the flag-waving, chauvinist talk about Hurricane Katrina survivors' being "hardworking, taxpaying individuals" (as Jackson put it) and "American citizens," and the widespread unwillingness to acknowledge that many Hurricane Katrina victims are not American citizens (in the official sense). Most undocumented migrants do pay taxes, but one can only wonder about the identity of these non-taxpaying, non-working, non-citizen people whom leaders and commentators are alluding to. At a time when some Social Darwinist-leaning reactionaries are blaming Black Hurricane Katrina refugees for allegedly putting themselves in their situation, some have taken the approach of increasing the clout of Blacks by disparaging the least privileged in the United States, which is contradictory because many Black people are among these least privileged even if they are citizens or otherwise documented.

Hurricane Katrina exposed the reality of national division within the United States. Not only does it obscure this division, the "we are all Americans" and rehashed "united we stand" rhetoric in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is a decidedly conservative mobilization of Americans to support the flood refugees and is a rarely even a calculated opportunist attempt to take advantage of post-9/11 rhetoric. Unsurprisingly, the imperialists are co-opting the "Americans, not refugees" rhetoric for imperialist patriotic purposes. This may even have a harmful effect in the short term since the United States has for what appear to be purely ideological reasons rejected Cuba's offer of medical assistance to Hurricane Katrina victims. (9)

Using "refugees" to describe Hurricane Katrina 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 white nationalism, in its myriad forms, persist—and even flare up, as the present wave of reaction against oppressed-nation migrants illustrates. Black Hurricane Katrina survivors are taking part in what will probably turn out to be the largest migration of Black people since World War II (if few return to New Orleans), a change that may give rise to a more intense white nationalism as Blacks relocate to predominantly white cities. The mainstream media's use of "refugee" may indeed be harmful to Black people in this context. However, proposals to substitute "American" for "refugee" reflect all sorts of illusions about the relationship between oppressed-nation people within the United States and the dominant, oppressor Euro-American nation. Hurricane survivors who object to "refugee," not wanting to be treated the same way the callous imperialists treat refugees in the Third World, should work to end the imperialist system that has repeatedly (in New Orleans no less) resulted in the deaths of exploited and oppressed people during so-called natural disasters.

Notes:

1. "Bush joins those opposed to word 'refugees,'" 6 September 2005, <http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/12572851.htm>
2. Christina Ficara, "Debate Erupts Over 'Refugee' Reference," 7 September 2005, <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7000056047>
3. "'Refugee' Label Stings Evacuees' Battered Pride," 8 September 2005, http://www.13wham.com/news/national/story.aspx?content_id=0098E8F3-7049-4F85-AD03-BE3F64310488
4. Don Wycliff, "Refugees, evacuees, victims or survivors?" 8 September 2005, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/c_h_i_0509080032sep08,1,4516170.column?coll=chi-news-col
5. Tina Daunt and Robin Abcarian, "Survivors, Others Take Offense at Word 'Refugees,'" 8 September 2005, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-et-refugee8sep08,1,3231165.story?coll=la-headlines-nation>
6. E. Eduardo Castillo, "Latin America searches for missing after Hurricane Katrina," 3 September 2005, http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/news/columnists/heartland_journal/12552803.htm
7. E. Eduardo Castillo, "Illegal Immigrants Afraid to Get Storm Aid," 9 September 2005, <http://www.timesdaily.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050909/APA/509090597&cachetime=5>
8. "Mexico's Fox Says U.S. to Give Disaster Aid to Illegal Migrants," 9 September 2005, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=1000086&sid=3651A7Zwn4&ref=latin_america
9. Eli Lake, "U.S. Rejects Cuban Aid, 20 Million Barrels of Iranian Oil," 8 September 2005, <http://www.nysun.com/article/19761>
10. Ela Dutt, "Indian American doctors help out Katrina victims," 9 September 2005, <http://www.newkerala.com/news.php?action=fullnews&id=21138>

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

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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. Amerikans have recently seen a white persyn 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 policy.

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 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 disproved of Nagin as blacks. Nagin, who has criticized the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina, has himself been criticized, for allegedly not doing enough to evacuate New Orleans before the hurricane made landfall.

Many Euro-Amerikans who were critical of Nagin appeared to defend President Bu\$h against widespread criticisms that Bu\$h doesn't care about black people. 67% of whites thought Bu\$h does "care about black people," compared with only 21% of blacks who thought that. 72% of blacks thought Bu\$h does not in fact care about black people. Only 26% of whites thought Bu\$h does

not care about black people, which is probably more a criticism of Bu\$h alone than an indictment of white supremacist Amerikkka in general.

Suggesting that many Euro-Amerikans do not view Hurricane Katrina as pertaining to them (except perhaps at the gas pump), only 56% of whites said they had "been following news about Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding in the city of New Orleans" very closely, compared with 71% of blacks.

Most blacks and most whites had felt anger "in response to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath," but whites were less likely to by 16 percentage points. This is probably related to Blacks' having more family and friends from the disaster areas.

Blacks and whites differed on the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina. For example, almost a majority of whites thought that Bu\$h, responding to the hurricane, was "very good" or "good." Majorities of whites thought that Bu\$h and FEMA were "very good" or "good" "in the past few days in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina and NOT what happened immediately after it hit." (The specific question was: "Now thinking about what happened immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit and NOT what has happened in the past few days, how would you rate the way people initially responded to the hurricane—as very good, good, poor, or very poor?")

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 residents' being "trapped in the city after it flooded." 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?").

Importantly, 60% of blacks thought "one reason the federal government was slow in rescuing these people was because many of them were black," compared with 12% of whites. Most tellingly, this is not because the majority of whites thought that poverty was the reason. Only 21% of 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, 81% 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. The majority of Euro-Amerikans 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 response/relief efforts. This is misleading because we know that pre-existing segregation and poverty due to racism and national oppression have contributed to the demographics of hurricane survivors and victims.

Still, it is clear that Hurricane Katrina has revealed a political division between Blacks and Euro-Amerikans, and that there is a basis for change even though the Euro-Amerikan oppressor nation is the dominant nation in the united States. United with other oppressed-nation people inside and outside the united States, 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 persyns unable or unwilling to get aid from a government—and a country—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:

1. "Reaction to Katrina split on racial lines," 13 September 2005, <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/US/09/12/katrina.race.poll/>

2. Susan Page and Maria Puente, "Poll shows racial divide on storm response," 12 August 2005, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-09-12-katrina-poll_x.htm?POE=NEWSVA

3. "USA TODAY/CNN GALLUP POLL," 12 September 2005, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/polls/2005-09-12-poll-blacks.htm>

4. "Two-In-Three Critical Of Bush's Relief Efforts: Huge Racial Divide Over Katrina and Its Consequences," 8 September 2005, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=255>

"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."

5. "Louisiana says Katrina death toll now 423," 13 September 2005, <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N13592973.htm>

6. Brian Skoloff, "Ethnic news organizations find a new angle on the Katrina story," 13 September 2005, <http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/mld/myrtlebeachonline/12631228.htm>

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

What's New @ MIM's Homepage

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 zombies. 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 spokeswoman '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 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 harsh 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 5 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:

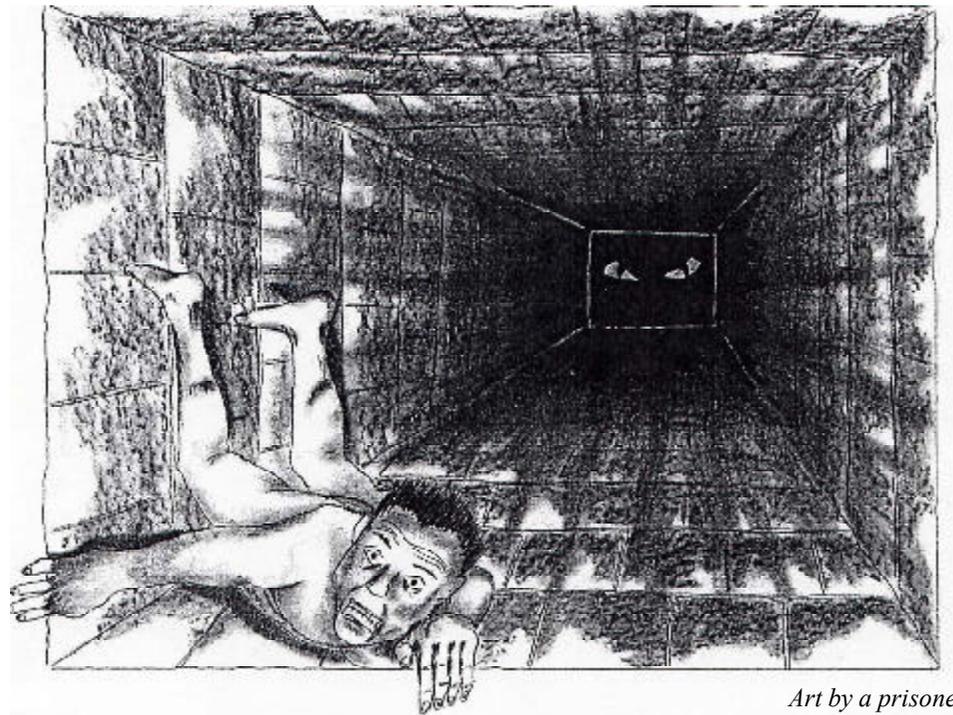
1. Don Thompson (Associated Press), "Prison System criticized over rate of suicides," 7 August 2005, http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050807/news_1n7suicides.html

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>

"Prison officials suggested California may send more of its mentally ill criminals to prison than other states that divert them to hospitals or other treatment. They also noted there typically are more than 400 inmate suicide attempts each year, but relatively few are completed."

2. Denny Walsh, "Prison officials' effort on suicides criticized," 27 August 2005, <http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/california/story/13479019p-14319790c.html>

3. Mark Gladstone, "Teen found dead in youth prison," San Jose Mercury News, 6 September 2005, http://www.mercurynews.com/ml/d/mercurynews/news/local/states/california/northern_california/12542183.htm



Art by a prisoner.

MIM Notes features many original pieces of artwork by prisoners across the country. We are currently working to raise money for a prisoners' revolutionary art show. Prisoners have responded with many drawings and poems. Now we need supporters of prisoners' struggles to step forward with funding and gallery space. Contact rail@mim.org.



What is militarism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 front-page news on the two previous days. 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 sudden drop in 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 Governor's political authority, 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 an inherent flaw in the kind of democracy that exists under imperialism. The majority can pass laws that are unfair to the minority (and the minority that comprises the U.S. population can pass laws that are unfair to the majority of the world). Public opinion increasingly supports equality for transgendered people, lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. Yet, there are some groups that will never win popular support in Amerika or receive justice under imperialism, as their oppression is a necessary part of the system: prisoners, migrants, Amerika's internal colonies, and most of all, the

international proletariat.

As with equal rights for women, equality for queers within Amerika 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, Amerikan 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 comparison many people have made to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s is accurate in that queers and Blacks are both oppressed, and these oppressions must be ended. But the civil rights movement galvanized the Black nation because the lack of access 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-Amerikan 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 financial, to those already benefiting from Amerikan imperialism. And marriage is not among the most urgent battles that gay people in Amerika's internal semi-colonies need to fight. Although there are many queer/SGL prisoners, marriage inequality is more a reflection of the problems they face than a cause of them. Marriage inequality is also not the main thing impacting even Euro-Amerikan queer youth who are suicidal.

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 Amerikans 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 Amerika are those on the streets selling themselves to survive, often youth — and access to legal marriage is not going to help them in most 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 imperialist-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 Amerika 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:

1. Lynda Gledhill, "Gay marriage up to governor now Landmark legislation clears Assembly by narrowest of margins on second try," 7 September 2005, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/09/07/MNGFGEJIR41.DTL&type=gaylesbian>

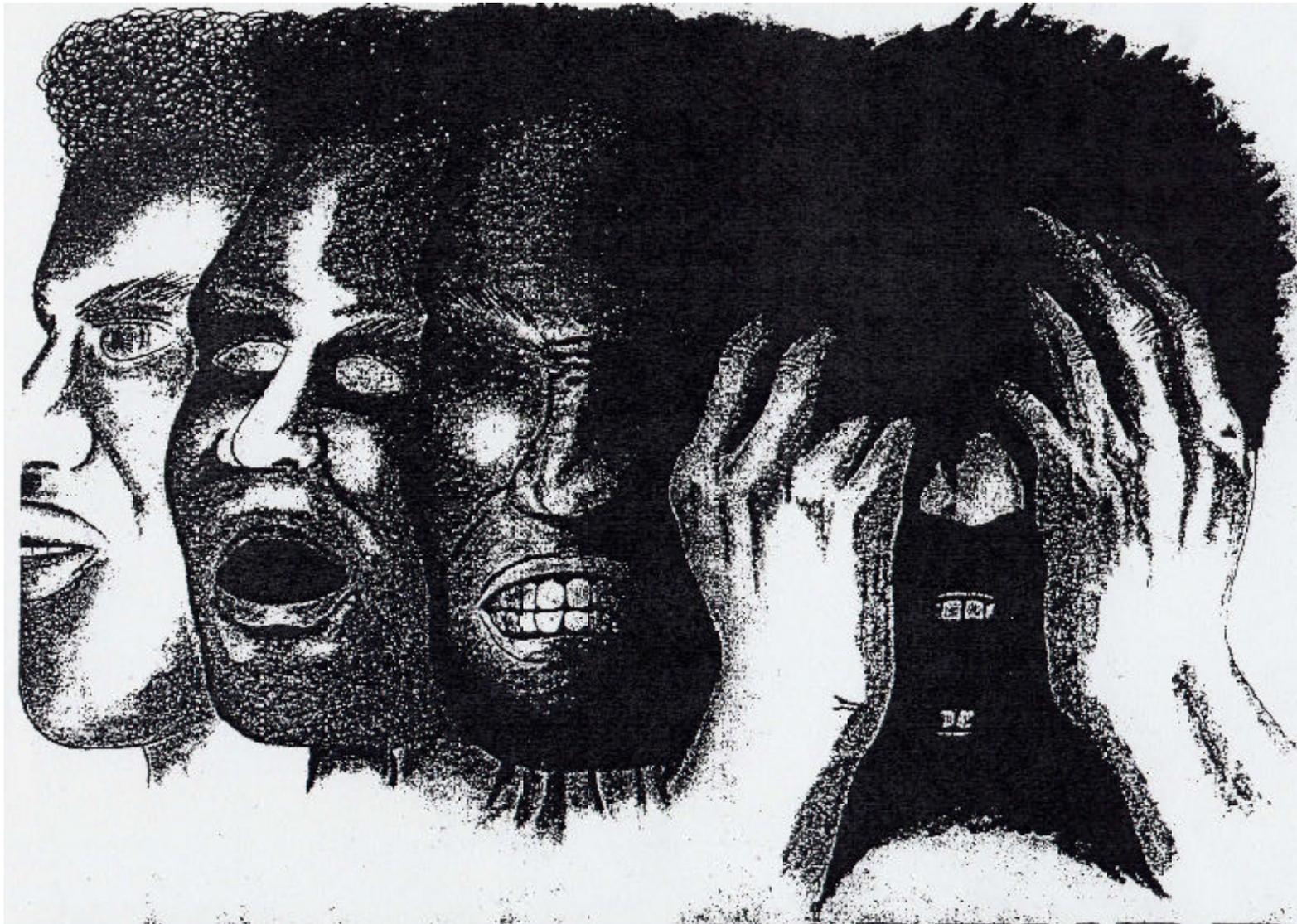
2. Bob Egelko, "Governor's hands were tied in gay marriage veto / NEWS ANALYSIS: Opponents of bill say it contradicts ballot measure passed in 2000," 8 September 2005, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/09/08/MNGFHEJUHUI.DTL&type=gaylesbian>

3. Mary Ellen Peterson, "Conservatives Lash Out At Arnold Over Gay Marriage," 12 September 2005, <http://www.365gay.com/newscon05/09/091205arnold.htm>



Action hero Schwarzenegger lags behind cartoon bufoon Homer Simpson in his support for gay marriage.

Unlock the Box



Art by a prisoner

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 Committee, 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 backedpedaled: "We did not want to create a confrontation."(1)

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 inherited 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' bills. Beyond 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 Amerikan — 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. Amerika-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 Amerikan 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 Amerikan-led occupation government further undermines the rhetoric that Amerika invaded Iraq to restore its 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 allying 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 Amerikan military. Ever hear the phrase, "fox 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 Amerikan 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:

1. Washington Post, 11 September 2005, A15.

2. 9 September 2005.

3. The Observer (UK), 15 September 2005, 20.

4. The Independent (UK), 10 September 2005, 27.

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 behind bars.

Just a few weeks prior, 53-year-old prisoner Stanley "Tookie" Williams received a Presidential award for exemplifying the "outstanding character of America."

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 avaricious 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 Amerikan courts.]

Notes:

Patrick O'Driscoll, "Witchita Braces for media flood when hearing begins for 'BTK' suspect," USA Today, 15 April 2005, 4A.

Pat Harvey, "KCAL 9 News at 10" (BTK sentencing), 19 August 2005.

Ron Harris, "Gangster a Nobel Prize Nominee," San Diego Union Tribune, 19 November 2000, B9.

Barbara Becnel, KPFK 90.7 FM Pacifica Radio, interview on "Uprising" with host Sonali Kolhatker, 31 May 2005.

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.

Peaceful Protest/Hunger Strike

by an OR comrade August 2005

In the spirit of resistance and in continuation of the seventy man prison uprising at EOCI last month, the news of prison gang unity has spread like wildfire! We are currently locked down in the hole, because of the Oregon Department of Corruptions excessive unjust abuses and brutality. After the EOCI rebellion, the warden and administrators performed an emergency transfer of the most likely leaders of the rebellion. Well that's how I got here at SRCI! And as our struggles continue, so do our battles.

For the record, Snake River Correctional Facility is notorious for murdering prisoners who resist their abusers & oppressors. So instead of going at them armed and violently (as @ EOCI) we are UNITED once again. All major prison gangs and races!! In a peaceful 1000 man plus phone strike/hunger strike on general population and of course us soldiers in captivity in the Disciplinary Segregation Unit (the hole). Unfortunately we are unable to communicate with our comrades in the Oregon SHU (IMU-control units), but we feel their struggles!! We all've heard rumors that they are igniting sparks of resistance as well. Never before have so many prison gangs come together for a United Front to defend our rights against the DOC's unfair control and oppression. Those supporting our United Front to defend our humyn rights and freedoms here in the Disciplinary Segregation Unit with me are The Southsiders, European Kindred, The West Siders, BROOD, New Afrikans, CRIPS, BLOODS, Kumi Nation, Aztec [list continues, but letter is cut off]

Enclosed is the SRCI prison newsletter that has sparked our flames of resistance. It seems the Department of Corrections feels they have a right to decide and control who we call and how many times, how often and only a selected amount of people! In a secret plot, it seems, to gather as much information about our loved ones and family members and friends. This is a violation of our families and friends rights. We will not stand idly by and watch the department of corruptions pry into our families lives through their documentation of addresses and phone information.

In our peaceful protest hunger strike we are staggering their system!! Many prisoners are getting out of the hole early due to overcrowding (holding prisoners for nothing) and because of this prisoners are not being subjected to nonsense disciplinary sanctions. Because the holes are too full, they can't take no one to the hole — us prisoners are STARVING! To stand in unity despite of political views in this unity we want change!

We need as much support from you people on the outside!! WE must be heard. We are starving!! Enclosed is a list of participants and comrades from the United Struggle Within. Much love to the ARM Mister Toltecatl. All listed have refused their food, going on over 7 days [this letter was mailed August 31, 2005]. When will the corruption cease? Will these pigs continue to laugh in our faces and watch us starve to death?

We will end our hunger strike when the DOC changes their corrupt agendas.

Please complain to:

Snake River Correctional Institution
Jean Hill, Superintendent
Mark Nooth, Asst. Supt., General Services
Judy Gilmore, Asst. Supt., Program Services
Steve Franke, Asst. Supt., Security
777 Stanton Blvd Ontario, OR 97914-0595
INFO:(541) 881-5000 FAX: (541) 881-5460

Under Lock & Key

News from Prisons & Prisoners

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

Department of Corrections
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 they're magazines or newspapers.

— 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 problem on my behalf, 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 statist 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 resulted in this prison's administration's tacit agreement to discontinue interfering with our political mail, regardless of content. For myself, I was willing to see to it that Bibles, Qu'rans and the Declaration of Independence were kept out if I could not get my mail uncensored. They blinked and we won this round!

—R7 in the Michigan prisons
2 August, 2005

MIM adds: Prisoners everywhere need to know that politically-motivated 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 also get all the "perks" of a S.H.U.: one hour in the yard, showers every two days, shining handcuffs and shackles with a courteous cavity 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 a broad 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 opinionize them would truly keep me awake—so that this burdening 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 prisons' Security Housing Unit (the SHU), which is an old typical isolation unit. It's a unique and stark environment or physical limits, visual sterileness and sensory 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 which is 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 moroseness 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 on several grievances 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 and because of his bruised ego I was gunned down after a "slow-speed" chase from Golt to Lodi (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

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.

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.

As for the appeal forms, known as 602, it accomplishes very little for inmates here. And it's regularly used as means by staff to deny you things inmates here have coming as state issue. An inmate will be openly ridiculed being told if one does not like it, 602 it!

Appeal forms in this facility are lost, misplaced or simply put through long stall tactics to discourage the use of it. It's then used to cause mental anguish to the inmate population.

As an inmate who has been here since this institution opened its door for intake, I can tell you instead of it getting better throughout these years, it's gotten worse.

The food is tasteless and isn't enough to fill the stomach of a child portion-wise let alone an adult in here. The blankets go through many months without exchange, and inmates have no choice but to use it to stay warm.

And our exercise yard is always being canceled for the smallest of reasons during regular program; it's pretty much an on-going oppression in Salinas Valley State Prison.

At this time we are under a state of emergency, a complete program shut down, from what staff tells us one inmate attacked two correctional officers with a weapon. And even though that inmate was removed and sent to another institution we have been on lock down since July 14, 2005 pending completion of investigation. And as an inmate who has been here long enough to know can tell you, this administration will prolong the return to regular program.

One man's desperate actions will result in an entire inmate population punished unfairly in months to come.

- a California prisoner, August 2005

SVSP Correction Officers corrupt

I'm currently doing 17 years here at one of the foulest prisons in California, known as Salinas Valley State Prison. Where even COs don't stay here to work long. This prison has the biggest CO turn over rates out of all California State Prisons, corrupt cops train new cops in corrupt ways.

Last year 8 COs were arrested for a prison yard gang called the green wall, which is still active in this prison. And when an inmate files a 602 he is reprimed on or thrown in the hole or criticized for filing. Even when we are off lockdown we don't get what we got coming.

COs make more money than any other California peace officer and seem to not even know how to run a program for us and would rather sit on their asses and provoke us to do

things and start tensions. And COs drop kites [fake notes] to say something is going to go down just to lock it down. The feds need to step in to oversee this place because it's crap here.

- a California prisoner, August 2005

Prisoners beaten and then punished for protesting

I'm writing to MIM from Ad-seg at New Folsom State Prison. I have been in the hole for about 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 force 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 getting 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 and hit in the head and face by the billy 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.

- a California prisoner, August 2005

Medical care worsening in California

By the way according to a memo recently passed out 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 practically jump through 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.

- a 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 at 100% 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 68% 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 rightful relief. There would've been no relief or release for murderers, child molesters, or rapists.

- a 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 Luiseno nation who refuses to comply with CDC 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!

- a 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 due to a number of assaults on guards across the state. Isolation is already locked down but now instead of 23 hours it's 24 hours, no canteen, no law library, just extra security on us. All the inmates in here are wearing beards now because of no shaving.

I still was able to get these names for the petition because the struggle is very much alive in me.

- a California prisoner, August 2005

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-Lease 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?

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.

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 wimmin. 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 wimmin.

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 predominately 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 vaudeville skit and its 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 murder and necrophilia.

A minority 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. [I]t’s patriotic.”(2) Comics in the film briefly discuss the rebellious role comedy can play “speaking truth to power” and so forth.

While in principle the latter point is valid(3), there is nothing daring or progressive about graphic tales of child rape told for the enjoyment of telling them. The Aristocrats do not represent a repressed minority view bursting into the open through laughter; they represent sordid mainstream pornography from the



oppressor’s point of view. The mantra that sexuality in Amerika must be “de-repressed” is partly clever marketing by pornographers and partly a component of patriarchal sexuality — people get off on the idea that they are breaking some taboo.(4)

The centerpiece of “The Aristocrats” is Gilbert Godfrey’s version of the joke at a celebrity roast of Hugh Hefner, a few weeks after September 11. Godfrey started his set with some jokes about the World Trade Center. The audience booed him. He then switched to an improvised version of “The Aristocrats” and brought down the house. Jillette and Provenza argue (without irony) that Godfrey’s act symbolized a turning point in Amerika’s response to September 11, that the supposed Amerikan ideals of irreverence and democracy had won out in response to terror, blah blah blah. This moment is indeed symbolic, though of something else. Rather than deal with anything close to political reality, Amerikans once again retreated into self-indulgence and pornography, at the same time patting themselves on the back for their allegedly high-minded ideals and “liberated” mores.

Notes:

1. “Subjectivism is the philosophical approach putting the individual’s opinions first and foremost, regardless of scientific truth or the possibility that the individual might learn and change. People who oppose subjectivism realize that their own persynal feelings may come from dishonorable sources. People can scientifically recognize that they like something that is not good for society or the future. For example, millions of parents like smoking, but they know that it is no good for their children. These smoking parents have conquered subjectivism.” “Subjectivism,” <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/bookstore/music/subjectivism.html>

2. <http://www.thearistocrats.com/>

3. See MIM’s (non-professional attempt at a) humor page: <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/art/humor/index.html>.

4. “Men have eroticized the idea that their sexuality has been denied, but their sexuality has been nothing but expressed and expressed and expressed.” Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 144. See also MIM Theory no. 2/3.

5. “The Aristocrats (2005),” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0436078/>

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 pointed to the poll that showed it was not a few individuals like activist and writer Randall Robinson slamming Amerikkkan 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 63% 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 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 afoot prove that Amerika 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 \$7 per persyn in the civilian labor force and about \$3 per persyn 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 or class and national callousness of the oppressor, Black people should not have to wonder in the first place.

Notes:

1. “The Bruce Elliott Show,” <http://wbal.com/shows/elliott/>

2. Richard Morin, “Bush Approval Rating at All-Time Low,” 12 September 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/12/AR2005091201158.html>

