

Under Lock & Key



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Psycho-Sexual Warfare vs. Political Prisoners

by a New York prisoner
May 2008

On May 19th, 2008 I received the book that you sent me, *Schooling the Generations in the Politics of Prison* edited by Chinosole. I really enjoyed this book, especially the section called, "Genocide waged against the Black Nation," which starts on page 174. I totally agree with the theory that psychological warfare is being waged against political prisoners in an effort to get them to comply with brainwashing objectives of the US penal and imperialist system.

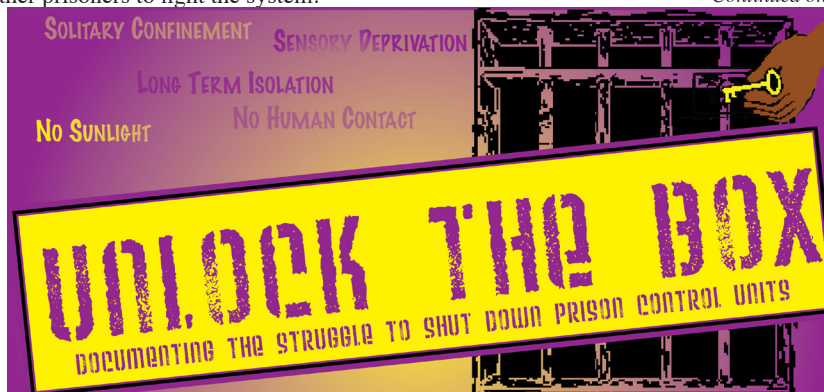
Dr. Edward Schein mentions 24 strategic techniques that prison officials use in order to break and dehumanize political prisoners. However, there is one strategic technique that Dr. Schein fails to mention that I would like to address in full detail: the sexual exploitation and manipulation of young and political prisoners by female staff sexual perpetrators. This technique leads to false disciplinary and criminal charges being filed against political prisoners who pose the greatest threat to the prison's use of oppression and most importantly have the potential to lead other prisoners to fight the system.

Let me briefly explain how this is done. First, prison officials determine which prisoners have the greatest leadership potential and pose the greatest threat to the prison - politically speaking.

Once this is determined, prison officials will try numerous psychological mind-breaking techniques to disrupt and strip the political prisoner of his focus and will, and at the same time dehumanize him by making him subservient.

Once a political prisoner proves to be too strong mentally and once the prison officials techniques fail, prison officials will place these political prisoners in an ambiguous and pressure-filled situation. The high-ranking prison official will order a female staff member to play sexual manipulation games with this political prisoner, while at the same time putting pressure on them to conform and comply with what is desired by the female staff in order to win favor and to have the pressure lifted.

If the political prisoner does not agree to
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Unlock the Box movie previews at StopMax

by MIM(Prisons)
July 2008

MIM(Prisons) interviewed Reel Soldier, who previewed a new film they are working on at the StopMax conference in Philadelphia in May.

MIM(Prisons): What was the purpose of the conference?

Well, the StopMax campaign mission reads, "Our mission is to promote and support a national movement to end the use of solitary confinement and related forms of torture in US prisons." And I think it did a very good job of that with the conference. It brought together an impressive group of organizations and people that have been doing work around the issue of

isolation and prison torture.

MIMP: So your film fit in well with the theme of the conference. Can you tell us a little about the film?

Yeah, it was really good timing for us. The film is called *Unlock the Box*, and it is all about the history of and the struggle against the use of long-term isolation in US prisons. It is very clear about the emergence of control units (and

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XXL, Vibe and others should join censorship lawsuit in Virginia

by a Virginia prisoner
June 2008

I am writing in regards to the constant discrimination we face here at Red Onion State Prison. We are allowed to order magazines, but when they get here we usually receive a notice stating that the publication has been disapproved. This is very discouraging and has caused me to stop subscribing to XXL and I soon will cancel my subscription to Vibe. These two publications seem to be the most targeted. Out of 12 XXL magazines I only received 7 issues. Out of 14 Vibe I have only received 7 issues. I recently had a King disapproved, but that was the first time since I have been subscribed.

It seems that the same two magazines are targeted at an alarming pace and without any help from the outside they are getting away with it. All of them are disapproved for the same reason and that's for promoting gang activities. These people have no understanding of us or our culture and every Black person is automatically linked and labeled as a gang member of some sort.

I have written both magazines for assistance to no avail, I have received absolutely no response. These companies will accept our money, but won't offer any help. This is a slap in the face to incarcerated individuals. I have every copy of my disapproval notices and I am open to sending them to someone out there so you can see the pattern.

p.s. Once I started pressing the issue of them abusing their power by using the gang activity as a reason for disapproving magazines, they started adding other rules along with the gang rule on why they disapproved the magazines.

MIM(Prisons) responds: Yes, please do send us documentation of this censorship as we are working to get a lawsuit filed against the censorship at Red Onion, and all evidence you can provide will help us in this struggle. For that matter, any prisoners who have copies of rejection notices can send them to us and we will post them on our website at <http://www.prisoncensorship.info> as part of our Censorship in Amerikkka Documentation Project.

We have already contacted XXL regarding the censorship of their magazine at Red Onion

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Obama's world tour – international news roundup

by MIM(Prisons)
August 2008

Barack Obama's July international tour gives as much insight into what is not important to Amerika as it tells us about what is important. Looking at where Obama's tour stopped, we can see some big continents skipped: He did not visit Asia, Africa or Latin America. These regions represent the vast majority of oppressed and exploited people in the world. That's not to say Obama only focused on imperialist countries, but his visits to Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan and Palestine underscore the relative importance of the Middle East to imperialism right now.

The missing Third World

It is pretty clear that Americans are not very interested in Third World countries as long as super profits flow back home and there is no perception of significant threat. The American government has done a great job of building up fear around the Middle East and its potential danger to American people. This served to justify several recent battles in the ongoing World War three against the Third World, and maintains our focus on this region.

Asia is currently in the news only for the Olympics and stories about pollution in Beijing. It is interesting that many have taken the opportunity of the Olympics to attack China and its foreign and domestic policies. We at MIM(Prisons) are not fans of the capitalist government in China, but we find their policies no more objectionable than those of the many other imperialist countries that have hosted the Olympics. And as we've discussed in a previous article on Tibet (1), the attacks on China around this topic are regurgitation of white-washed imperialist history. Historical example predicts that the white nationalists condemning China will not rally for an independent New Afrika in response to Chicago's bid for the 2016 Olympics. Yet, New Afrikans were enslaved by Amerika, whereas Tibetans freed themselves from slavery in joining the socialist project of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s. The current mayor of Chicago has overseen numerous slayings of Black residents and many years of torture chambers run in the city's jails, targeting New Afrikans in particular. Mayor Daley's father oversaw the murder and imprisonment of Black Panthers, Vice Lords, Black P. Stone Rangers and other organizations organizing for Black self-determination as mayor of the city in the late 1960s. China would be hard-pressed to outdo the city of Chicago alone in its genocidal national oppression.

Iraq and Afghanistan

All eyes are on Iraq as Americans continue to fight a war that was started under false pretenses but continues as Amerika fights for a strong foothold in the Middle East. Obama continues to advocate a pull out of troops within 16 months if he is elected President. But as we reported in a previous article on the elections(2): Just be-

cause he wants to pull troops out of Iraq doesn't mean Obama is anti-militarist. Obama is clear that he will use the American military to defend the American economy. From his web site: "The excellence of our military is unmatched. But as a result of a misguided war in Iraq, our forces are under pressure as never before. Obama will make the investments we need so that the finest military in the world is best-prepared to meet 21st-century threats." And he wants to expand the imperialist military: "We have learned from Iraq that our military needs more men and women in uniform to reduce the strain on our active force. Obama will increase the size of ground forces, adding 65,000 soldiers to the Army and 27,000 Marines."

Further, Obama has called for US troop redeployment to Afghanistan and into Pakistan. Essentially Obama will free up the resources to move from one invasion to another. Meanwhile, one of Obama's high-profile foreign policy advisors is Zbigniew Brzezinski, who's book detailing plans for continued American hegemony foreshadows the current occupation of Afghanistan to secure access to the Caspian Sea. Brzezinski was a strong backer of the Shah in Iran, and later supported military occupation of the country to maintain stability after the Shah's fall. The American imperialists will disagree on where to invade and who to befriend, but they never disagree on whether to be imperialists or to promote American domination over the rest of the world.

There is really little difference between Obama's position and that of the current administration. Bush is now saying clearly that the "terrorists" in Iraq are on the brink of defeat and the Iraqi government and security forces are getting stronger, which would allow "further reductions in our combat forces, as conditions permit." (3) Bush is likely looking for vindication of his policies and a "victory" before the end of his presidency, but the government also recognizes the decreasing popularity of this war with the American people. Earlier in July, Bush announced a plan to send more troops to Afghanistan: "We're going to increase troops by 2009." (4)

Iran

This brings us to Iran - not a stop in Obama's world tour but a topic he discussed several times in public speeches around the world. "A nuclear Iran would be a game-changing situation, not just in the Middle East, but around the world," said Obama. "A nuclear Iran would pose a grave threat, and the world must prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." "It would endanger Israel and the rest of the region, and it could embolden terrorists and spark a dangerous arm race in the Middle East."

Obama is putting forward consistent imperialist rhetoric which sets the stage for an invasion or any other attacks against Iran the imperialists deem necessary. This is partly due to the position of the close American buddy, Israel, a country that considers Iranian nuclear power to be a direct threat. It is ok for Israel, a viciously aggressive country with a bloody history of repression against Palestinians, to have nuclear weapons, but their enemies must not be allowed to develop such tools. Some have speculated that Israel may attack Iran, and if that happens Amerika wants to be positioned to support their ally.

Israel

During his stop in Israel Obama told Israeli President Shimon Peres: "I'm here on this trip to reaffirm the special relationship between Israel and the United States and my abiding commitment to Israel's security and my hope that I can serve as an effective partner, whether as a U.S. senator or as president." Obama has always been consistent in his strong support for this imperialist ally.

Oil

Very related to Middle East policy, with so much attention to gas prices in Amerika, John McCain has seized on this issue as the path to the presidency and is vocally promoting offshore drilling. Of course invading oil-rich countries is one way to gain control of significant

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Three Main Points

MIM(Prisons) differs from other communists on three main questions:

* MIM(Prisons) 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.

* MIM(Prisons) upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in human history.

* 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 Canada, Quebec, the United States, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Israel, Sweden and Denmark.

"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.

Inexcusable behavior by guards in Florida

by a Florida prisoner
July 2008

One time I found pieces of gray rocks in my food (kidney beans and white rice). I showed it to the Correctional Officer. He said "you should have swallowed it and died. You have to eat this shit, not me." These are some of the malicious things they do in a nasty environment like this all the time. I receive mail in from the streets from my family and they hold it in the mailroom for several weeks before they bring it to me. They play a lot of mind games to try to make a person lose control.

When a prisoner has a call-out, the correctional officer will say you refused it, when you were not aware you even had one.

I went to recreation one day July 10, and I witnessed three COs attack a prisoner who was handcuffed behind his back, punching and kicking him until he fell to the ground. Their intentions were to kill him. No cameras were in sight.

At times here I stand at the door for meal-time and the officers refuse to open the food flap for me to eat, meaning they deprive me of something I'm required to have three times a day. That's crazy. There's no excuse for their behavior.

A lot of the prisoners work for the officers, meaning they will write grievances stating other prisoners are getting illegal drugs in the institution. Or they will tell the officer that a prisoner has a knife in his cell. This is the type of foolishness prisoners play against one another on a daily basis. The COs live for the prisoners to combat one another.

MIM(Prisons) adds: This sort of repression is the reality of life in prisons. To fight back against their dirty tactics and pitting of prisoners against each other, comrades behind bars need

to unite against the injustice system. We are working to create real unity and action against the Criminal Injustice System both behind bars and on the streets. It is through this unity that we will win battles against imperialism. Prisoners should work with United Struggle from Within (USW), an anti-imperialist organization of prisoners led by MIM(Prisons), and folks on the streets should reach out to us to get involved.

Using time in control units for the revolution

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
July 2008

As they keep moving me from penitentiary to penitentiary I can't help but realize that the majority of prisoners serving indefinite life and death sentences in control units are Black and Latin brothers who, due to their lack of knowledge, had their rights violated and like myself were railroaded and ambushed by this corrupt injustice system, and eventually thrown into these control units. I consider these human warehouses, where we die a slow agonizing death.

I am one of the very few who has managed to maintain my sanity. And rather than serving this tortured time, I'm having this time serve me by educating myself and as the sun bringing light to all corners of my circumference, waking up all those who have been sleeping in the graveyard of ignorance, to unite and assist in organizing a revolution that will bring an end to the oppression of all groups over other groups, classes, genders and nations.

I agree with those who believe that crime is the bad oppressive things we do to each other. The more people you hurt and oppress, the bigger the criminal you are. So the big criminals in our country are the bourgeoisie – those who are rich while others are poor, those who make profit from other peoples misery, street crime is a very small part of all the crimes committed each day in comparison to unemployment, homelessness, discrimination, bad education and bad health care.

member, high-ranking prison officials will lift the pressure from the political prisoner, thinking that the prisoner has been neutralized and has become subservient to the wills of the administration. Once a political prisoner loses his focus and allows himself to be sexually exploited and manipulated, he dehumanizes himself and basically strips himself of his unique individuality and becomes neutralized, ineffective, psychologically incompetent and easy to control.

This prisoner basically becomes a slave to the female staff member, because the female staff is allowed to act aggressively sexually toward the prisoner. But once the prisoner tries to act aggressively, he will be beaten by the jealous male staff. This game is normally played on younger prisoners, but it is a tactic that works on all prisoners because it's a no-win situation.

MIM adds: In an article entitled, Gender Oppression in u\$ Prisons we quoted a study that

Under Lock and Key

by a Texas prisoner
June 2008

As far as my eyes can see,

Not just the flesh

But our minds are under lock and key.

For hundreds of years

Behind "Justice" as an illusion,

Blindfolded by "Liberty"

2 cause confusion.

Founded by forefathers

who slaughtered our mothers,

Established by "men"

who slayed our brothers,

Our true names covered and denied,

Lashes handed 2 those who tried.

Something needs 2 be done,

2 change history about those who won,

Determination, Dedication,

Revolution in my eyes,

From the roots 2 the crest

Still I rise,

As far as my eyes can see,

Not just the flesh

But our minds are "under lock and key."

found that, "In State and Federal prisons, 65% of inmate victims of staff sexual misconduct and harassment were male, while 58% of staff perpetrators were female".

Maoists have long explained that gender is not about genitalia, but about power and relations between groups in leisure time activities. The Abu Ghraib photos were a clear lesson in this reality. Since then, it has become well established that amerikan bio-wimmin were used as gender oppressors against Arab biomen in prisons in Iraq and elsewhere. The use of sex in political repression within the u\$ described above is another example of this theory in practice. Just as we say that sex cannot be consensual under patriarchy where gender is defined by power, there can be no consent between prisoners and prison staff.

... Sex Warfare

... Continued from page 1

comply with the female staff's sexual advances, then the female staff will create false claims of harassment against the political prisoners, which will result in false disciplinary and maybe criminal charges. If the political prisoner does agree to comply with the female staff's sexual advances, then he risks being set-up and retaliated against by jealous male staff members. This will likely lead to physical assault of the prisoner by male guards, in addition to false disciplinary and criminal charges.

It's a dirty game and this technique by prison officials is typically used against political prisoners who have the greatest potential for awakening and organizing the rest of the prison population.

Often, if the political prisoner chooses to have the sexual relationship with the female staff

Biannual Censorship Report (July 2008)

This is MIM(Prisons) second biannual censorship report, which we expected to be more complete than our first. This has proved true, though there is still much room for improvement. Over 78% of our mail to prisoners over the last 6 months is still of unconfirmed status. This is an almost 10% improvement from last time. We are happy to report that almost 20% of letters we send prisoners and books we sent that we do not publish have been confirmed as received. The number is close to 10% for MIM(Prisons) literature. This lower rate is to be expected for 2 reasons. First, many prisoners remain on our mailing list by only writing in a couple times per year, therefore they do not confirm each issue of Under Lock & Key they receive from us, which is the majority of the MIM-literature we mail.

In addition, MIM literature is targeted for censorship more than letters or books by other authors. The reporting rates we have this time show 6.53% censorship of MIM literature, compared to 4.14% for other literature and 4.82% for letters. This difference might not be significant since we do not have information on most of our mail still, but it agrees with the general trend that we see and expect. The actual percentage of mail that is being censored is obviously much greater than those numbers.

We will keep reporting these percentages to encourage us to improve our tracking. To do this, prisoners should let us know everything they received since they last wrote each time they contact us. Meanwhile, those receiving the mail should be sure to record this information when it comes in. Last report we only had 3 states that had reported more than 20% of their mail. Partly due to a smaller sampling of mail, we have 16 states that have surpassed the 20% reporting rate.

The table on the right shows that we have lost contact with prisoners in a number of states since updating our mailing list. Anyone with contacts in those states should spread the word about Under Lock & Key and get those states back plugged in.

There are a number of states that we have confirmed censorship in that we did not have last time. There are even more states where we have not yet had any censorship reported where we had before. There isn't enough information to make much of a conclusion except that between the two reports we have now confirmed censorship in more than half of the states in the united States in the last year.

Continued victories in New York and Oregon indicate the importance of the work of those who follow up on the administrative appeals and legal battles. In both of those states there has been regular censorship for years, with particular facilities being bad. They are cases where the state is obliged to follow the law but the local pigs continue to try to censor us. Snake River in Oregon repeatedly censored MIM over the last year, and it was repeatedly overturned by the state. So, getting the state to force its employ-

ees to follow the rules is an effective strategy in fighting censorship.

The newest victory occurred in Wisconsin and was led by someone outside of our circles. In early June, 2008 a federal judge ruled that "Prison inmates have a First Amendment right to read commentary critical of their captors." (1) This is a big victory, because the "threat to security" excuse is most often used in relation to articles where we are criticizing specific incidents that have occurred in the prison system censoring us. The censors stupidly think that by preventing prisoners from having access to legal means of protest that they will somehow create a safer environment for their staff. Clearly, the opposite is true, if the censors have read the countless letters prisoners send to us thanking us for providing them with hope and support. Prisoners should take note of the victories in New York, Oregon and Wisconsin and hit those law books, file those grievances and write the media instead of shanking that guard who's throwing away all your mail.

We have not confirmed any new bans on MIM(Prisons). Last time we reported bans in California, Virginia and Illinois. We update the campaigns in California and Virginia below. We have no new information on Illinois and our contacts there are currently limited, so Illinois comrades should get in touch.

As always, prisoners who are facing censorship problems should let us know and send us any documentation that you have so we can post it on our website. Outside individuals, groups and businesses can report the censorship they're facing right here on our website. If you want to share information about campaigns and lawsuits, contact us.

Active Campaigns

The struggle against the complete ban on MIM literature in California continues. In terms of progress, we have a number of prisoners who are fighting this administratively along with us and doing the necessary legal research. We have heard promising things from the outcome of the Prison Legal News(PLN) lawsuit against the CDCR, but are waiting for more updates from PLN on the agreements they've made. In the meantime, we have gained access to some of our comrades in California again, but censorship is still widespread.

The most recent censorship notices coming from Pelican Bay regarding Under Lock & Key cite a new memo dated 6/13/2008, which MIM(Prisons) has not yet seen. The previous memo merely cited our political line as the justification for censorship, which, of course, is illegal. The latest notices also accuse us of promoting "gang activities."

The campaign in Virginia is also moving along. Many comrades are coming forward with documentation and filing grievances. Mean-

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Censorship Summary by State

complete ban	X
censorship reported	C
censorship w/ some victories	V
no censorship reported	N
no mail	N/A

State	1/1/2008	7/1/2008
Alabama	N	N
Alaska	C	N/A
Arizona	C	N
Arkansas	C	N
California	X	X
Colorado	C	N
Connecticut	C	N
Delaware	N	N/A
Wash DC	N	N
Florida	N	C
Georgia	N	N
Hawaii	N	N/A
Idaho	N	N/A
Illinois	X	X
Indiana	C	N
Iowa	C	N
Kansas	C	N
Kentucky	N	N
Louisiana	C	N
Maine	N	N/A
Maryland	C	N
Mass.	N	N
Michigan	C	N
Minnesota	N	N
Mississippi	N	N
Missouri	C	N
Montana	C	N
Nebraska	N	N/A
Nevada	C	N
New Hamp.	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	N	C
New Mexico	N	N
New York	V	V
N. Carolina	N	C
N. Dakota	N/A	N/A
Ohio	N	N
Oklahoma	C	N
Oregon	V	V
Penn.	C	C
R. Island	N	N/A
S. Carolina	C	N
S. Dakota	N	N/A
Tennessee	N	N
Texas	C	N
Utah	C	N
Vermont	N	N
Virginia	X	X
Washington	V	C
W. Virginia	N	N
Wisconsin	C	V
Wyoming	N/A	N/A

Immortal Technique – The 3rd World drops

by MIM(Prisons)

June 2008

Immortal Technique & DJ Green Lantern

Third World

Viper Records

June 24, 2008

The long awaited third album from Immortal Technique hit stores today. It's not Revolutionary Volume 3, it's not the much hyped Middle Passage, but it's a mix tape with DJ Green Lantern called *Third World*. The title is fitting, as the album takes a pretty consistent perspective of the oppressed of the Third World. Tech's lyrics with samples to complement from DJ Green Lantern, over some banging beats, make this a highly recommended album to check out.

MIM's review of and interview with Immortal Technique received a lot of interest and response from readers of MIM Notes and etext.org in the past. The biggest criticism of Tech's politics has to be the role of the white nation as oppressor vs. ally in the revolution. On his first CD, he declared camaraderie with working class whites as a whole. But a comparison of *Open Your Eyes* off of *Third World* with *The Poverty of Philosophy* off of Vol.1 indicates that his politics have continued to develop in the internationalist direction that was more clearly pronounced on Vol.2. So, we see Tech growing ideologically, as well as musically on this new CD.

MIM(Prisons) mentioned Immortal Technique in a discussion of the principal contradiction, where we were critical of his treatment of Bu\$h and bin Laden as one in the same. This stems from his reliance on conspiracy theories in favor of studying politics on the group level. But *Third World* is much lighter on conspiracy theory, and responds to this critique and the development of the principal contradiction globally by clearly allying with the jihad against u\$

occupation. Tech even calls out all the rappers who used to be down with Allah, for turning silent out of fear.



Philosophically, Tech repeatedly pushes materialism, with lines like:

*Son, remember, when you fight to be free.
You see things how they are,
and not how you like them to be*

He demonstrates the application of this materialism in his revolutionary theory that is based in internationalism and recognizes the principal contradiction between the oppressor and oppressed nations. *Open Your Eyes* is jam-packed with a great analysis political economy with a great hook. The first line sums it up nicely, *We're here because you are there.*

The title track *Third World* is just as good, but more lyrical, staying on the topic of the truly oppressed with lines like: *it makes the hood in amerika look like paradise* and *...700 children died by the end of this song.*

The opening track also speaks some real truth:

*They call us terrorists after they ruined
our countries
Funded right-wing paramilitary monkeys
Tortured a populace,
then blamed the communists
Your lies are too obvious.*

On these tracks, he also alludes to the impending invasion of the imperialist countries by the oppressed who will take back what is theirs. The album is very favorable to the Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations. He also refers to the Reconquista in Hollywood Driveby:

*everybody talking about the south taking
over,
it's true motherfucker, but it's comin' over
the border.*

Many have been critical of Immortal Technique for homophobia and misogyny in his lyrics. Not that he is any worse than your average, on the contrary. But we might expect more from someone who is such a conscious revolutionary. There's nothing too feminist on the *Third World* and some of his comrades utilize some misogynist language. Of course, the whole album is very macho in Tech's typical style, but it is a revolutionary machismo that we could use more of. He does provide some good advice regarding sex and romance, like this verse from *Reverse Pimpology* that undercuts some of the sick tendencies of our romance culture, and goes on to put prisons, police and revolution as a higher priority:

*most people are only players because they
got played and have not let go of that shit
since the 7th grade yeah, you got your heart
broke life sucks doesn't it but you shouldn't
fuck up someone else's life because of it.*

We welcome the return of Immortal Technique with some new music that shows real development. We can highly recommend that comrades pick this album up, after you order your copy of the Unlock the Box DVD.

You are receiving this newsletter from the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons - MIM(Prisons). In the past year the Maoist Internationalist Movement has taken some security hits and has changed its organizing strategy as a result. One of the significant changes relates to cell-based organizing. In September 2007, MIM spun off the prison ministry into an independent cell. The Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons or MIM(Prisons) upholds the MIM cardinal questions and political line. We distribute MIM Theory and recommend these independent media outlets as well as the MIM web site at etext.org as sources for correct news and theoretical analysis. We carry forward the work of the MIM in the fight against the criminal injustice system.

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is the collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties in the English-speaking imperialist countries and their English-speaking internal semi-colonies, as well as the existing or emerging Maoist Internationalist parties in Belgium, France and

Quebec and the existing or emerging Spanish-speaking Maoist Internationalist parties of Aztlán, Puerto Rico and other territories of the U.S. Empire.

MIM(Prisons) 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.

What is MIM(Prisons)?

MIM(Prisons) struggles to end the oppression of all groups over other groups; classes, genders, nations. MIM(Prisons) knows this is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. Revolution is a reality for the United States as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony. [Note to prisoners and to mailroom

staff -- MIM(Prisons) and its publications explicitly oppose the use of armed struggle at this time in the imperialist countries (including the united states). Our current battles in the united states are legal ones. We encourage prisoners to join these battles while explicitly discouraging them from engaging in any violence or illegal acts.]

Fighting the injustice system is just one part of the anti-imperialist struggle, and it is important that organizers on the outside and prisoners not lose sight of the connections to this larger battle. For this reason, in addition to news about prisons and prison struggles, this web site will also publish more general news articles from both organizers and prisoners, as well as some general theoretical writings from prisoners. We welcome support and collaboration from those who are focused only on the prison struggle, but we also challenge them to see the bigger picture of imperialism and the importance of carrying out their work as a part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy.

Who's talking in code, pig?

by a California prisoner
July 2008

I received your letter today. My Brotha, I did receive your letter in Feb, and I had responded to it, but it was confiscated by the Institutional Gang Investigation Unit (IGI). They claim it was gang related, they claimed New Afrikan Collective is a code word for BGF. Now you know how silly my keepers are.

For the past 18 years IGI/ISU [Institutional Gang Investigations/Investigative Services Unit], have used their gang policies as a tool/tactic to circumvent our free speech right, they are using every means at their disposal to censor my voice.

In April and May they all of a sudden decided that my Muslim name was a fictitious name, so, between April 1st and May 29th they confiscated about sixteen outgoing letters under the fictitious name policy. Enclosed is just an example. I have been using my Muslim name since 1982. This had nothing to do with my Muslim name. IGI/ISU were attempting to censor my voice.

I filed a 1983 civil suit (Free Speech & Religious violations). I also sent to the court as an exhibit photo copies of the front of at least 20 letters I had received between Jan and May 2008 that clearly show my Muslim name on each envelope and they passed through IGI/ISU. So this is clear proof that their actions had nothing to do with my name.

MIM(Prisons) adds: This comrade has been a leader in an effort to build peace among the warring groups within the California prison system. The letter that was held by IGI from reaching MIM(Prisons) was regarding these efforts. The Catch-22 that this comrade, and many of us, find ourselves in is that if he writes honestly about the work he is trying to do then he is labeled a gang member and censored. The pigs do everything they can to prevent a peace process from moving forward in a system that has hundreds of race riots every year that have spilled onto the streets, particularly in Los Angeles County. You would think that it was the pigs jobs to encourage violence so that they can further repress certain groups rather than to put an end to this senseless killing.

One of the charges brought against MIM(Prisons) and many prisoner activists to justify censorship of our communications is that we are writing in code. Yet, our track record speaks for itself. The Maoist movement has continuously and tirelessly worked to put an end to oppression and exploitation. Within the prison movement we have put massive resources into providing hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature to help educate prisoners across the country to provide guidance and hope for a better future.

Meanwhile, it is the pigs who use code words such as "gangs" and "security threat groups" to target the oppressed and any efforts to bring

Black August Resistance – history is a weapon

by a California prisoner
August 2008

August is one of the hottest months in many ways. Many of the great New Afrikan slave rebellions, including Gabriel Prosser's and Nat Turner's were planned for August. It is the month of the birth of the great Pan-Africanist and Black Nationalist leader, Marcus Garvey, and also of our New African freedom fighter Dr. Mutulu Shakur. New Afrikans took to the street in rebellions in Watts CA in August 1965. On August 18, 1971 in Jackson Mississippi, the official residence of the Republic of New Afrika was raided by Mississippi police and FBI agents.

August 1989 marked the 10th anniversary of Black August commemorations. The promotion of a conscious, non-sectarian mass based New Afrikan resistance culture, both inside and outside the prison walls all across the U.S. Empire. Black August originally started among the brothers in the California Penal System to honor three fallen comrades and to promote a Black culture of resistance and revolutionary development.

The first brother, Jonathan Jackson, a 17 year old man child was gunned down August 17, 1970 outside a Marin County California courthouse in an armed attempt to liberate three imprisoned Black Liberation Fighters (James McClain, William Christmans and Ruchell Magee). Ruchell Magee is the sole survivor. George Jackson, Jonathan's older brother and comrade, a great Black revolutionary theoretician and leader was assassinated August 21, 1971 by guards during

a Black prison rebellion at San Quentin. In an unsuccessful effort to cover up the state's pre-planned assassination of comrade George. The third brother, Khatari Gaulden, was victimized by the blatant assassination of capitalist corporate medical politics in prison August 1, 1978.

MIM(Prisons) adds: The original Black August Organizing Committee still commemorates this holiday each year. The group works to maintain the original focus of the commemoration on the ongoing war on oppressed nations in the united States. Over 40 people came together to form the BAOC in 1979 after a united front of New Afrikan prisoners formed in 1978 following Khatari's murder. This year's commemoration featured New Afrikan, Native and Asian cultural acts intermixed with the political presentations with a focus on promoting community.

MIM(Prisons) brought to the attention of the audience that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) considers the celebration a "gang activity." That was how the Institutional Gang Investigation unit justified withholding mail from a comrade to a prisoner that mentioned Black August. They don't try hard to hide the fact that their repression and their so-called war on "gangs" is really about keeping the oppressed in their place. Members of Black August face persecution by the CDCR on the streets as well as in prison.

Meanwhile, a local weekly in Oakland ran a smear piece on Black August following the CDCR line. The article bad mouths Black Panthers George Jackson (falsely accusing him of being a convicted murderer) and Basheer Hameed (who just died this past week).



peace and progress, without sounding like the racist arms of imperialist oppression that they are. If talking in code is a crime, censor the pigs, and let those of us who have solutions to the social problems of drugs abuse, violence, and

national oppression get to working on putting these solutions into practice.

Fighting for a library

by a California prisoner
July 2008

Thank you for sharing the struggle of others bearing much heavier crosses than mine. At this prison I'm trying to establish an Inmate Library Committee - which legally we should already have. The law library is our most powerful tool from within institution walls and the administrative authorities here at this prison have turned our law library into nothing more than a copy room to promote their agenda. The law library here at Mule Creek State Prison does not even have typewriters or provide legal envelopes for purchase or otherwise.

This is my struggle, this is our struggle! The Department of Corrections has coordinated an attack at our ability to be heard by the courts - and the tide is on their side.

USW organizing in Nevada

by a Nevada prisoner
June 2008

I received your recent missive; thank you for the United Struggle from Within (USW - the MIM(Prisons)-led organization of anti-imperialist prisoners) information. I understand you do not have a USW chapter in Nevada. I am not surprised; in fact, I suspected there wasn't, for there is no revolutionary core among the oppressed nationalities. I will assume responsibility of USW leader in Nevada.

There is an extreme lack of literature circulating among Nevada prisoners to begin breaking new ground and give rise to a revolutionary core here. To illustrate my point: the side I'm on, housing over 100 prisoners, has no political material in circulation, except my literature. I'm the only one on my side with political material (and the Wall Street Journal). Because of this, I find that lack of political education - or lack of choice to be politically educated - to be a hindrance to establishing a revolutionary core.

Simply put, we need more literature in circulation.

Generally, Nevada prisoners suffer from the same injustices endured by prisoners at large: education issues, medical, control units, etc. However, we have issues that are unique to us and we must struggle against alongside general issues. I am preparing a platform in harmony with the goals outlined in your letter.

Denial of mail and legal rights in New Mexico

by a New Mexico prisoner
July 2008

This facility here is one of the most over controlled I've been in. You can receive no books, magazines, newspapers or periodicals from the outside. There is no educational material available. There is no mail allowed that has

xeroxes, printed by ink jet, internet copies, pictures downloaded from the internet, laser-printer photographs, newspaper or magazine clippings, postcards, envelopes with XOXO, S.W.A.K. (sealed with a kiss) or write back soon, perfume smell or lipstick markings.

There is no access to a law library or legal materials here. I have had legal mail opened not in my presence and have even had legal mail taken because it contained information about how to fight the system using a case law about the constitutional rights of prisoners from the Center for Constitutional Rights - a law firm out of New York. It also contained a book called "The Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook". When the contents were seen, the envelope was resealed and sent back.

I have saved and documented everything. I have written up a civil rights complaint against the jail, Aramark (a prison industry complex member) and 3 officers, but I am unable to file because they refuse to let me make the required copies or get a 6 month copy of my trust account which is required to file In Forma Papuperis.

Also I was helping and advising several other prisoners on how to file suit. I had them file grievances to exhaust the administrative remedies as required by the prison litigation reform act. The administration has caught on to what I'm doing and has refused to answer any of the grievances that match the three issues I am trying to take to court. They refuse to answer them because without proof of exhausting the administrative remedies process, we can not take issues to court.

Challenging SMU policies in the courts

by a South Carolina prisoner
July 2008

I am known as the litigating terrorist. I have filed many actions challenging South Carolina Department of Corrections. What they are doing now is totally in violation of the constitution.

Two years ago they implemented a policy that Special Management Unit (SMU) prisoners can not receive newspapers, books or magazines. This includes legal and religious materials. The religious materials can get slid in through the chaplain but legal is dead. In mid 2003 they stopped ordering legal books so we SMU prisoners have no way to obtain up to date law materials, being mindful that the law is forever changing.

Just May 1st of this year they changed the policy so an indigent prisoner can only write to lawyers, courts, judges, legal aid organizations if they represent you in a pending case or you have a pending case in that court. And prisoners must show proof of the case. They won't allow us to make copies of their policies because we use it against them too much.

In SMU we get an hour recreation. I am a level one prisoner so I get my rec with leg irons on, belly chain with a crotch chain and a black box. I have so much iron on I can't sit down without pain. Your rec can easily be taken away. They pass out brooms, dust pans, mops, etc. to clean cells once a week on Saturday or Sunday. This past Thursday an officer took my rec because I had legal work on my floor but he said I needed to sweep my floor. The officer did it because I wrote him up for stealing pornographic drawings from me. He took the drawings and claimed he turned them in to the contraband office. The contraband office does not have the original drawings, the officer took them home. He may lose his job.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We see a theme in this issue of Under Lock and Key of many prisoners being denied access to literature and especially to legal research materials. This is a systematic attempt to stop prisoners from educating themselves and from fighting against the illegal repression that is a daily reality in America's prisons. We do not have the resources to offer law books to our comrades behind bars, but this is a battle well worth fighting. It is a part of the censorship fight, but also a question of access to law libraries that should exist in every prison. We invite our readers to think about ways to take this on as a winnable battle, both in the courts and in the streets. Write to us with your ideas for how to ensure everyone has access to their legal rights.

SHU time for MIM lit

by a Virginia prisoner
July 2008

I'm writing regarding the 7/24/2008 rejection notice concerning my MIM publications. The claim for such action: "Inappropriate material for the correctional environment." There was no explanation in how my publications were classified as inappropriate. I didn't receive the notice until four days later, 7/28/08, so that I wouldn't have an opportunity to protest and appeal the rejection of my publications.

As of this moment, I've filed my informal complaint concerning the matter. Once I've received a response, the next step is laying the foundation for 42 U.S.C § 1983. The actions of this Hitler-style concentration camp are unacceptable!

Comrade, I've been locked down in the SHU since February 24, 2008, following the first rejection of my MIM publications on false allegations of organizing a riot! The length the Americans will go to silence the voice of an eminent revolution is unbelievable. The time is coming, they can't stop the unstoppable comrade!

[MIM(Prisons) also filed an administrative appeal to this censorship, and posted it, along with the censorship notification on our website. We encourage others to write in to support this comrade and protest the baseless censorship, using our letters as a model.]

Barack Obama and oppressed nation labor aristocracy

by a New York prisoner
June 2008

Now that Barack Obama has secured the democratic nomination for President of the United States, it's important that we educate our oppressed nation youth that he is being controlled by the same forces that control George Bush, which is multinational corporations, political lobbying groups and international patriarchal capital.

It is apparent that Barack Obama will be the next President of the United States, considering the country's excitement about him and the nation's unwillingness to separate John McCain from George Bush.

This is the biggest turning point in U.S. history, because Barack Obama has the potential of transforming the oppressed nation in this country into a labor aristocracy at the expense of the Third World. This will strengthen the U.S. imperialist system and weaken the revolution in a sense because as more and more Blacks and Latinos gain oppressor nation benefits, these oppressed nations will be less willing to fight for the international proletariat. This will ultimately transform immigrants into the number one revolutionary group in this country and the group most willing to fight for the international proletariat.

Even though Blacks and Latinos represent the majority of those imprisoned in jail and prison today, I truly believe that the criminal injustice system as well as the police will drastically increase their campaign to lock up more immigrants, and eventually immigrants will become the majority of those imprisoned in border states.

As a matter of fact, we're seeing this trend unfold as we speak. Immigrants are the fastest growing segment of the state and federal prison system. [Most statistics on imprisonment do not break out migrants from "Hispanics" in general, making this difficult to verify but there is growing evidence that this is true(1). There has been a significant surge in construction of federal detention facilities along the border following

increasingly draconian immigration laws and policies in recent years. Meanwhile, the general prison population has continued to rise, but some state systems have begun to cut back. We welcome further input and research on this subject.] U.S. prisoners are currently the second largest revolutionary group in this country. A very important, and some including myself would argue this is the biggest turning point in U.S. history and world history, and we must put a proper perspective on this crucial time in history. It is apparent that we are headed towards 8 years of Barack Obama as U.S. President and I have a feeling that the next 8 years (2008- 2016) will be the most important time in U.S. and world history, even more so than the 1960s.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We're not certain that Obama will be the next president but we think this prisoner offers some useful commentary about oppressed nations within U.S. borders joining the labor aristocracy. MIM has been saying for years that the oppressed nations are a part of the labor aristocracy, so we do not agree it would take Obama as president to cause this transformation. The reality of life in Amerika is that all citizens benefit from the economy of this imperialist country and this includes the internal oppressed nations. So the class interests of oppressed internal nations already lie with imperialism (see MIM Theory 1 and MIM Theory 10 for more detailed economic and political analysis of classes within U.S. borders).

We see internal oppressed nations as potentially revolutionary because of their national interests. But we agree with this prisoner's general point that the U.S. government could push forward the national conditions of internal oppressed nations to elevate their national interests to align them with imperialism. U.S. history has many examples of oppressed nations joining the oppressor nation, but those groups were whites from various other countries, like the Irish (see *Settlers: the Mythology of the White Proletariat*, by Sakai).

Notes: Women in Prison Project, Immigration and Criminal Justice System Fact Sheet. Fernandes, Deepa. Targeted Seven Stories Press, 2007.

On Prisons & Prisoners

MIM(Prisons) 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(Prisons) 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.

Unlock the Box research

Thanks to those who have responded to our survey already. The information was used in the film *Unlock the Box* to expose the rapid spread of this torture technique across the US (which is out on DVD this month). But we are still collecting data to improve and update our stats, if you haven't responded already.

Control units may vary from prison to prison but they can be generally characterized as: 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.

Please make a list of all the Control Units that you know of using the definition above.

For each one indicate:

The Address/Location.
Have you been in this CU?
About how many people are in it?
Is the whole prison a control unit, or only certain units? if so, which units and how big are they?
What is the national/racial make up of the population in the CU? ie. what percent is Black, Latino, white, etc.? What reasons are given for putting people in the CU?
When did this unit first open?
Has it been expanded since it first opened? If so, when and how many prisoners were added?
Is the state planning to open any new control units that you know of?
Is there anything else you think we should know about the control units in your state?

Send your answers to:

ATTN: Unlock the Box Survey
MIM(Prisons)
PO Box 40799
San Francisco, CA 94140

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while, one comrade has agreed to take it to court as part of a case against the COINTELPRO tactics being used against New Afrikans in the state. We have offered to help raise the necessary \$350 filing fee for this lawsuit. Checks, or preferably anonymous money orders, can be made out to "MIM Distributors" and sent to our San Francisco address.

As we reported, any literature deemed "Black" is being censored in Virginia. We have begun documenting censorship of magazines like *XXL* and *King* on our website and are encouraging these distributors to join us in this struggle. It's not just the voice of the proletariat that is being targeted by this racism, the Black bourgeois press is also suffering. Many comrades have already written *XXL* for support, and we encourage others to do the same.

The developing class action suit in New York continues as well. In response to the Shukur and Mitchell lawsuits the state did replace rule 105.12 with rules 105.13 and 105.14 regarding unauthorized organizations. The new rules offer potential benefits and potential problems. An analysis of this is forthcoming.

notes: (1) *Associated Press*. 5 June 2008.

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...Obama

stores of oil and bring down gas prices, but since that seems to be costing more Amerikan lives and money than the Amerikan people are willing to tolerate, environmental destruction to get at more oil is a reasonable backup strategy for the imperialists.

A poll from the Public Policy Institute of California reported that by the end of July Californian's had shifted their opinions, with a slim majority now supporting offshore drilling. California would be one of the main sites where costal waters would be opened to drilling by the McCain proposal. Historically public opinion has shifted with the price of gas - as prices go up, support for drilling goes up. This is typical Amerikan me-firstism, which leaves room for environmental protection, national self-determination, and other policies that are good for the majority of the world's people only if it doesn't impact their pocketbooks.

McCain's new support for offshore drilling has certainly gained him some donations from the oil industry. But a 2007 study from the Department of Energy suggested that new offshore leases will not lead to production of oil until 2020 and would not impact prices until 2030. (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/otheranalysis/onr.html>) McCain has claimed offshore drilling could provide economic relief within months, which contradicts these studies by his own government. There is no doubt that oil drilling is bad for the environment. But the Amerikan government is uninterested in adopting far sighted policies that might protect against environmental destruction by developing energy sources. Until the Amerikan public really feels the impact of environmental destruction (in their pocketbooks or in their health) it is unlikely the government will be motivated to act.

As MIM wrote back in 1996: "The root cause of environmental problems is capitalism, the private ownership of the means of production by a relative handful of people. This essence of capitalism is one reason why capitalism creates environmental problems: while the majority of the world's people have a material interest in maintaining a healthy planet, the small capitalist ruling class is not accountable to this majority, except in the indirect sense that the ruling class seeks to co-opt the demands of the majority in order to maintain the capitalist system. A second reason why capitalism creates environmental problems is that although the world's resources are controlled by a relative handful of people, planning is not centralized under capitalism. Instead, production is anarchic; it is centered around making profits, not around meeting basic human needs in the short or long runs. Much of what is produced by the capitalist system is unnecessary and wasteful, and the system is not fundamentally capable of incorporating long-term human survival as a need. Finally, the capitalist system does not distribute resources equitably. Under capitalism, many people do not have adequate resources for survival. Many environmental problems stem from this root problem..... The capitalist system of production for profit creates a number of environmental problems

Some Ammo for China v. Bush

by MIM(Prisons)
August 2008

"We speak out for a free press, freedom of assembly and labor rights, not to antagonize China's leaders, but because trusting its people with greater freedom is the only way for China to develop its full potential." - U.S. President George W. Bush (1)

Last week MIM(Prisons) released our bi-annual censorship report (see page 4), which cites documented incidents of censorship of our literature in more than half of the states in the united States of amerikkka. That's just the documented incidents of one organization with a tiny distribution.

which are often understood and discussed in isolation from their root causes. Key among these is pollution of air, water and land. Pollution, like all else under capitalism, is unequally distributed. On a world scale, waste from the imperialist countries is dumped in the neocolonies." (MIM Theory 12: <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/mt/mt12capenv.html>)

European stops

Obama was received like a rock star in Berlin and was generally very popular among European leaders in his tour of that region. This just provides further evidence that Obama is a good imperialist, who works well with his imperialist allies. Being loved by other imperialist country populations may be considered good credentials by some voting Amerikans, but for anti-imperialists it is just further proof of an enemy of the people.

We have already lamented the readiness of many youth and oppressed people to join the Obama bandwagon because of his identity. Some closer to MIM(Prisons) are still suggesting that Obama represents progress for our movement and that everything reported in this article is just for show to get elected. This analysis acknowledges one important reality, while ignoring another. It recognizes that amerikans would not vote for someone who is working in the interests of the oppressed, and therefore such a persyn would have to put on a show to get elected. The mistake these people make is putting identity above a of mountain facts. We have seen serious revolutionaries degenerate into bourgeois politics, so don't think dark skin and a little time in the projects in Chicago means someone is a friend. The bourgeois theory of history upholds the idea that individuals make history, the proletarian theory looks to social forces on the group level to explain history and predict future developments. The president of the united States is only one persyn. Obama comes with a whole package of people, and they're all the standard imperialists, voted in by the same old amerikan oppressor nation.

More interesting than the theory that Obama is a progressive in imperialist clothing is the theory that he could be the nail in the coffin of the Black Nation as an oppressed internal semicolony (see previous page). We would expect the bourgeois internationalists to have to pull

Comrades in our movement have been yelled at, kicked out, ticketed, physically attacked, arrested and many are currently sitting in isolation cells for the crime of trying to speak about or distribute literature expressing our ideas. For prisoners in isolation, it's usually just a matter of possessing said literature.

If China changes its policy of not publicly criticizing the internal affairs of other countries, documentation of the extensive censorship we face is provided right here on our website for their use.

Let there be no mistake, freedom of speech in a class system is a bourgeois myth.

notes: (1) *Washington Post*. August 7, 2008.

the rest of white amerika into full integration, but we'd also expect this to require a healthy push from the oppressed themselves.

notes: (1) *White Nationalism still reaching out to Tibet*. ULK3. <http://www.prisoncensorship.info/news/all/US/145/>

(2) *Election Roundup...* ULK3. <http://www.prisoncensorship.info/news/all/US/118/>

(3) *New York Times*, Aug 1, 2008.

(4) *Yahoo News*, July 2, 2008

Bad food, no visits, and locked down in California

by a California prisoner
May 2008

I am currently at Calipatria State Prison however I must say it does not matter what prison you are in because all of them are corrupted the same way. I'm sure you know the things they have already taken from us, which started in 96-97 by taking away weight lifting and family visits for lifers. Then eventually they took pornography, tobacco, the yard privileges were shortened, canned food and personal packages as well, we're not even allowed personal jeans. Then they even changed our prison state issue clothing to cheaper and more ridiculous uniforms.

The food value is absolutely disgusting and even if it's an ok meal it has no flavor since they don't use salt or even offer single salt packets like they used to. The portions are absolutely a minor's portion that will not fulfill a grown man. Not many of us have people or family members to send us money for store so we rely on state food which leaves us hungry after 5pm. The menus they pass out may sound good but it's a scheme to show people out there we are eating good. They say certain calories are all we need to survive, however to be hungry: isn't that cruel and unusual punishment, especially since we are supposed to be living in a civilized country. They say it's a free country but whether you're a prisoner or not, there are no rights because every right we have the system seems to have a loophole around it. The latest violation against us now is they are rigging the plumbing system to flush only 2 times every 5 minutes.

Another issue that is really hurting the prisoners is for them to be housed in special housing units - an all day lockdown with a few hours a week out of your cell. You can be put in the SHU because of a picture or ethnic belief if you are Mexican and have art of your ancestors and forefathers in your cell the prison considers that gang activity. Right now I'm in an administrative housing unit and for us to actually get our yard it has to be less than 108 degrees outside or yard is canceled. We are sent to cages which only give room for you and your cellie, which is basically what the dogs go through when they are put in a pound. Most of us in here always wait much longer than what we were supposed to be here for, it's just so they can keep these new ASUs open. I've been waiting to be put in general population since January, but they say no room.

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large-scale incarceration in general) as a form of political repression. If you look at the history of penitentiaries and more severe forms of isolation, it was largely determined to be a failed experiment over a century ago. But with the effective end of Jim Crow and other overt forms of white power, and the national liberation struggles that emerged from that struggle, prisons and isolation become an important tool for controlling the oppressed populations within uS borders.

So it gets into some history. We also have some factual information on what control units are, including new research some comrades have put together on the number and extent of long-term isolation. We think we have the best numbers out there right now, and they're a lot higher than the usual 25,000 that people have been citing for some years. We're seeing upwards of 100,000 people in long-term isolation. But this research is ongoing because it is so hard to get complete statistics, and a number of groups at the conference are collaborating to share this information. The plan is to publish the stats on www.abolishcontrolunits.org soon, where you can also get information on the movie and how to order the DVD.

MIMP: What led you to create this film? What do you hope to accomplish with it?

The film came out of work that some of us were doing with the United Front to Abolish the SHU, which was a collection of organizations in California working together to build the campaign there. After doing a conference in 2005 by the same name, some of our public work died out and some of us changed focus for various reasons. But it seemed like a good time to sum up and document what had been years of work in California, and we knew of others, including MIM, who were carrying out similar campaigns across the country. In addition, we had felt we had put enough energy into petitioning the legislature to shut down the SHU, and that our window of influence there had closed with little success. We did have success in reaching the public and bringing light to an issue that is very hidden from the public eye though. And the movie was an idea to continue public opinion work in another format.

MIMP: What did people at the conference think of the film? Did you get any useful feedback to help shape the final version?

The response was great. I have to give props to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) for bringing together so many people who were so involved in this issue. The audience couldn't have been more catered to the movie. Unfortunately, we only had a rough draft done at that point, but people still felt it was very moving and on point. I was actually even a little surprised, because the film gives a pretty radical analysis of the international connections with the war on terror, the war on gangs, and the role of the amerikan oppressor nation in supporting this torture. And yet, everyone that responded seemed to really like the message and the con-

tent of the movie.

As far as feedback, the main thing was probably the suggestions of things that we should add to the film. And with all the great resources at the conference we were able to gather a lot of material to incorporate some of those suggestions. We don't claim to have a comprehensive coverage of the struggle everywhere, but we've got a lot of good examples, and a lot of information packed in to this movie. We got one suggestion to add more personal stories to win people over on that level, which we have done. Our preview focused on some of the more theoretical material that we wanted to get across for that forum. And a couple of us that have been involved in the film production itself used the opportunity to look at the technical aspects and overall flow in a little more critical light. Just having an audience in the room with you allows you to say, "man, this part is too long" or "that visual just looks cheesy" when just a day ago you're sitting in front of the computer and you can't imagine cutting anything out or changing something.

Unlock the Box DVD

MIM Distributors is doing a second mailing of Unlock the Box DVDs in December. To get a copy send your donation (\$20 suggested, \$5 minimum) to MIM Distributors PO Box 40799 SF, CA 94140 with your address for delivery. Orders should be received before December 1, 2008.

Prisoners, help us get out the word on this important subject and let your contacts on the outside know about this DVD.

Reel Soldier Productions is also looking for distributors to sell the DVD in the future. Interested parties should contact MIM(Prisons)

MIMP: What were the key accomplishments of the conference?

Well, for us it was a huge accomplishment to get a preview of our movie on the screen. If it wasn't for this conference who knows where this project would be now. It really pushed us to get something on disc. I mean I was literally compressing the movie and burning it to disc for the first time less than 24 hours before our presentation. So we got to expose people to the film and we got lots of pre-orders for the DVD. This is important, because at this point we don't have a distributor so we're just going to do one big mass mailing when it comes out in September. So people need to send in their orders now to get one.

But the conference as a whole really seemed to solidify for the first time, what many of us have been striving for for years, a national campaign to oppose control units. The AFSC has

stepped up to play the role of providing infrastructure to promote continued communication and collaboration between different parties working around this campaign.

So, it seems like the campaign has reached a critical mass of a sort. And it may be good timing in regards to how many states are re-evaluating their tough-on-crime laws and prison-building crazes.

MIMP: How will attendees be working to carry the struggle forward?

That's a good question. People were really enthusiastic about working together. But we will see how that plays out. Sharing information is always good, so that should help all of us if that continues effectively. But, as we learned with the United Front to Abolish the SHU, it is sometimes hard to bring a lot of organizations together when politics are very different. We had some experiences where it seemed that sectarianism seemed to prevent groups who were nominally working on the same issues from joining the United Front, or causing them to leave. And it's clear that some groups have different approaches stemming from their different politics. Which shouldn't necessarily be a problem, since a United Front has room for many different political lines and strategies.

There is a question of whether some strategies or political interests within the movement are somewhat antagonistic though. For example, there is a strong focus on getting the mentally ill out of SHU, which in our analysis usually plays into the states goal of using the SHU as a tool of political repression. This has become the standard because it works. But by works, I mean that they can get the laws passed, but it doesn't necessarily translate into less people being in SHU, just different populations - generally populations that are or potentially would pose political challenges to the white power structure. So this could be a net setback.

Some state campaigns have been successful in actually getting the numbers in SHU decreased legislatively. In contrast, court challenges to the SHU as a whole have been ineffective, only having limited successes in regards to specific conditions or to the mentally ill.

New legislative campaigns are well under way in places like Arizona and Illinois, and likely to spread. Others were more focused on the need to organizing prisoners, street organizations and the oppressed nations in general. Hopefully these two major focuses can complement each other as the campaign advances.

MIMP: How can people who are interested in this struggle get involved with the film or the United Front?

Well, this movie has been largely inspired by the work MIM and now MIM(Prisons) has been doing. And our analysis in the film is along those lines. Which puts us more in the camp of

continued on next page...

Gang validation of the politically active

by a California prisoner
July 2008

A revolutionary abrazo given and sent to all, from the depths of the gallows of chain link fences and barbed wire that has met the consumption in the harvest of plantation Amerikkka. Deprived of our livelihood and recruited in this Industrial Army. We have removed the yoke of oppression creating a commune that refuses to bow to the dictates of this prison industrial complex. Our single cell of multicultural backgrounds has fought against the system since birth. Victims to the judicial demagogue, comprehending that the blind lady of justice is only weighing our pockets.

Because of our political beliefs (that always get misconstrued) we've landed in these deprivation units, for our individual cases as men, we the people, are now prisoners of war. We are labeled and branded from the many scattered sheep entwined in hives of "rehabilitation". We have been singled or rather targeted by networks of a controlled government that uses force to impose rules against our race from above, suppressing individual initiatives in the interest of maximizing these control units, to meet their economic consumption that exploits our people.

Those of us who do not prostrate before CDCR economic, political, and militant demands, can be branded associates to prison gangs. These aggressive policies will not be the means of our demise. I am a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist and I will not subside my resistance to this Abu-Grahibization (torture). But, on the

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focusing on the organizing of prisoners and by extension street organizations. In fact, I've been talking to a number of comrades in this process about a second film that focuses on the lumpen on the street. But i think one of the lessons you can take from the movie is that control units are a response to a powerful movement of the oppressed, that included a strong prison movement. By prison movement, I mean prisoners organizing on the inside. We don't really see anything like that today, though the possibility exists.

So people on the inside need to make that happen. We need strong cadre organizations with a real analysis and political line to back up these more reformist oriented campaigns that some of the outside organizations are focusing on. And since the nature of prisons and control units is to prevent that from happening, we need people on the outside to provide the infrastructure to help make that happen. I'd point to MIM(Prisons) political books to prisoners program and study programs as important to developing cadre level comrades behind bars. As the movie points out in the conclusion, this is what we need to put an end to the pointless violence that is going on in there right now and to create a system that serves the people. And of course, we've got to work to keep people out of the SHU.

contrary, I will attack the social injustices that commonly validate our people. CDCR has openly declared its intention to aggress and colonize our people by rapid and violent assimilation.

Ideologically, CDCR validates [as gang members] groups cast as enemies by the states hegemonic myth or by the need to isolate people who can be portrayed as the embodiment of absolute evil. CDCR has also campaigned to control the mindset of our people to impose a solution to tough on crime legislation by forcing gang validation as a means to deliberately destroy our culture, which systematically liquidates all of our characteristics of our national society.

In closing, the battle has only begun. The proletariat will mobilize in mass demonstration in words with a singe of revolutionary fervor. Our social being has led to our consciousness, we serve as the vanguard for and of the oppressed. So, it is our obligation to help awaken the nucleus of all our peoples, in seeing that we've all been validated in classes and singled out by this fascist plutocracy.

MIM(Prisons) replies: We have long been reporting on the use of gang membership as an excuse to lock politically active prisoners in control units. Many prisoners who have never had any involvement with organizations are labeled based on their nationality, or who they talk to in the yard. Those who are part of organizations commonly called "gangs" need to work with their groups to join the fight against systematic lockdown. As this comrade calls out, all organizations and individuals need to turn their focus to the fight against the criminal injustice system.

As far as getting involved with the film, we just need to get it out there at this point. Check out the website to order a DVD. And any indie distributors or online stores out there should email the contact there if they are interested in making this thing generally available in the future. If you're on the outside and interested in joining this campaign a good first step would be hosting a showing of this film in your area. You can usually get a free space at the library or local college or church. We will probably post some promo materials online at some point for people to use. And if you are gonna do a showing send them an email and they will promote it on the website, we've actually already had a few groups host other showings of the preview we put out.

I mean, I assume anyone who's reading this is gonna be hip to MIM(Prisons), so that's where I'd look for specific info on campaigns that need your support. And there are a lot of other groups out there working on this issue you might support as well. But I'd encourage people to think seriously about what the best strategy is to actually achieve our goals (and before that you might need to define what your goals are). That is what we are striving for constantly, and I hope this film helps us all consolidate our thoughts around that question.



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to see if they are interested in working with us in a lawsuit. We encourage everyone to continue to write to XXL to encourage them to defend their right to communicate with prisoners in Virginia. As media that is deemed "Black," XXL, Vibe, Under Lock & Key and many others are being censored as "gang material." But while XXL and Vibe gets in 50% of the time, we are not aware of an issue of Under Lock & Key successfully reaching a prisoner in Red Onion since it became its own publication last year, even though prisoners have documents stating that their subscriptions to ULK are approved. We welcome all who are facing the racist blockade at Red Onion to contact us to join us in this struggle.

Brutality in Florida prison

by a Florida prisoner
June 2008

On June 3 I was pulled out of the cell I'm assigned to. I was removed by correctional staff Sergeants Mason, Rivera and Covey. I was handcuffed with leg irons on, helpless. They placed me in the shower. Out of the camera view they beat me and kicked me until I fell out. They tried to kill me. This was a very dangerous incident that took place with me. A lot of outrageous and awful things take place in here and it needs to be exposed. After they attacked me they placed me back in the cell. It looked like a hurricane hit the cell. They took all my personal things.

The correctional staff instigate conflict amongst they prisoners. They will get the prisoners to fight one another. The correctional officers are very capricious; you don't know what move they will make next.

The correctional staff try to discourage all the prisoners from coming out of the cells for showers, shaves, haircuts, etc, things we're required to have. They tell us they will place a knife or drugs in the cells if we leave.

No mejora la asistencia medica en prisiones de California

por un prisionero en California
June 2008

Acabo de leer Under Lock and Key y era tocante a la asistencia médica en prisiones de California. Estoy mandando una copia de un articulo escrito en el Sacramento Bee por Don Thompson de la Associated Press. El artículo explica que el reporte escribió por el Recibidor Federal Robert Sillew enseña que hay muy poco cambio en la asistencia medica en prisiones de California, a partir de Marzo 2008. El Sr. J. Clark Kelso es el nuevo Recibidor Federal.

Yo ha estado preso por 11.5 años por resistir arresto. Me dieron una sentencia de vida bajo la "Three Straikes Law" de California. Desde que yo estado preso yo ha conocido personalmente tres prisioneros que han muerto de insuficiencia del hígado. Cada hombre me dijo que no recibió cuidado apropiado del servicio medical. El CDCR necesita más doctores calificados y más prisiones de la salud mental y prisiones de la salud, por lo general, pero hasta que el problema del sobrepasamiento de la población (173,000 prisioneros) es resuelta, prisioneros van a continuar de morir. Necesitamos que nos vean como seres humanos, no como ganado.

Condiciones del SHU en Upstate Correctional Facility

by a California prisoner
June 2008

Yo he estado varias veces en Upstate Correctional Facility en una unidad controlada llamada SHU, y es una unidad especial de doble cama por celda.

Hay entre 800 y 900 presos aquí. Adentro 90% del institución es SHU, los demas son presos barranderos que cocinan y que sirven la comida en los platos y también hacen lavandería. La celda de doble cama es grande porque hay campo para dos y hay una ducha en la celda para bañarse y una jaula atras para hacer ejercicios. Basicamente nunca sale de la celda, solo si tienes visita al hospital, o cuando eres suelto

El MIM(Prisiones)

El MIM(Prisiones) profesa la revolucionaria ideología comunista del marxismo-leninismo-maoísmo y constituye una organización internacionalista que trabaja desde el punto de vista del proletariado del Tercer Mundo.

El MIM(Prisiones) lucha para acabar con la opresión de cualquier grupo por parte de otros grupos, clases, géneros o naciones. El MIM(Prisiones) está consciente de que la única manera de llevar a cabo dicho propósito es mediante una consolidación de la opinión pública a favor de la conquista del poder a través una lucha armada.

En el caso de EE.UU., la revolución irá convirtiéndose en realidad en la medida en que el gobierno amplíe el alcance de las fuerzas militares en un intento de mantener la hegemonía mundial.

El MIM(Prisiones) ha fundado una organización antiimperialista de prisioneros, Lucha Unida desde Adentro (USW), encabezada por el MIM(Prisiones); el propósito de ésta es organizar a gente antiimperialista dentro del sistema carcelario. Nuestros camaradas de la USW escriben artículos delineando condiciones de sus cárceles, distribuyen el Bajo Cerradura y Llave dentro de las cárceles, organizan grupos de estudio y, por lo general, asumen cierto grado de liderazgo práctico en cuanto a la educación sobre las cárceles como un aspecto del imperialismo estadounidense por medio de recursos puramente legales.

Nosotros proporcionamos herramientas para llevar a cabo la educación de los prisioneros y la gente afuera de las cárceles sobre la opresión de los prisioneros.

Si Ud. escribe en español o si les gustaría traducir artículos escritos en inglés al español, Ud. puede ayudarnos con la publicación de las futuras ediciones de Bajo Cerradura y Llave. Este proyecto ayuda a divulgar el pensamiento marxista-leninista-maoísta entre los pueblos de habla hispana, y sobre todo, las semicolonias internas de EE.UU. Si Ud. es bilingüe de habla inglesa e hispana, avísenos aunque no quiera ayudarnos. Si quiere entregar artículos en español, hágalo (de todas maneras nos ayudaría recibir sus cartas en inglés, si es que Ud. sabe escribir en inglés).

del SHU.

La nacionalidad aquí es de 50% Negro y 50% Latino. Hay numerosas reglas y violaciones puestas en el SHU. Por ejemplo asalto a una policía o un preso, pandillero de carcel, un examen sucio de orina, uso de droga, posesión de arma y todas estas son un ticket de 3 tiras. Cualquier otra cosa baja como 1 or 2 billete no te llevan al SHU. El billete 3 tira es considerado una ofensa seria.

Esta unidad es la más grande en NYS y fue abierto por el año 1999. Los SHU en NYS han sido expandidos al abrir unos más chicos que detienen 200 presos. Son de doble cama y fueron hechos detras de prisiones de mediana seguridad por todo el estado. Muchos están vacíos y es un desperdicio de dinero para los que pagan impuestos.

Yo no he escuchado ni leído que quieran o hagan planes de abrir más SHU en NY. Yo espero que no. Necesitamos escuelas, programas sociales, no unidades de control que no son ocupadas.

Estas unidades de control son muy peligrosas y dañinas para la mente de los presos que son débiles mental. Unos pierden control y son auto-destructivos. Han habido instancias donde compañeros de celda han atacado y casi matado a su compañero de celda y también los han atacado. Te ponen en una celda con cualquiera persona que nunca has conocido en tu vida y uno no sabe que intenciones mentales el tenga. Es sobrevivencia para el más fuerte.

Te dan de comer muy poco para comida y los presos pierden mucho peso. Las visitas son detrás de alambre y te separa de tus visitantes para que no hay contacto real con ellos. Ponen restricciones de comida y agua a unos presos. Nos censuran las revistas, y los libros, y violan nuestro derecho de recibir periódicos que no presentan riesgo alguno para la institución. Estas unidades de control hubien de ser cerradas completamente porque no reducen violencia en las cárceles y es una pérdida de dinero y daña mucho a la mente de uno.

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