

Under Lock & Key



March/April 2010, No. 13

Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

California Ban on MIM Over... Sort of

by MIM(Prisons)
November 2009

A December 13, 2006 memo from then-Director Scott Kernan declared a systemwide ban on all publications from the Maoist Internationalist Movement. The memo misquoted and took out of context statements by MIM to justify the ban. Many comrades soon jumped into action to defend the First Amendment rights of California prisoners and their outside supporters. One comrade took this battle further than anyone else, leading to over 2 years of legal battles that ended in April, 2009.

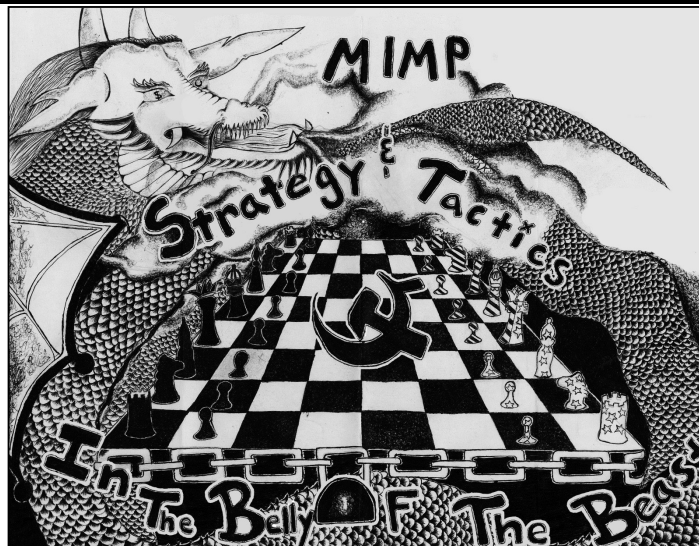
One administrator claimed there were three banned publishers in California Department of Corrections (CDCR): MIM, Penthouse and Playboy. While MIM had received this high honor of a complete ban, others were facing severe censorship by CDCR as well. In April 2007, Prison Legal News (PLN) settled their suit against CDCR's illegal censorship. The settlement was very strategic on the behalf of the PLN legal team in that it included reforms to CDCR mail policy that affected all of us that had been having problems.

As many of our readers probably know, Prison Legal News was founded and is led by jailhouse lawyers. Their consistent work has won them the ability to recruit street lawyers to their battles. Without the leadership of prisoners and former prisoners, defenders of prisoners' rights in the courtroom are few and far between. Yet, litigating from behind the walls is no easy task, as our California comrade can attest:

"The sole reason for my non-opposal of defendants summary judgment is quite simply that I was unable to litigate the case from my current residence here in the hole. I was not able to obtain the required legal materials needed to litigate, materials such as a basic copy of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP), the sufficient or suitable case law required, or even sufficient copies, and typing paper.

"As I am in Ad-Seg, most of the required materials stated above are not in this building's possession, or even on the same yard. We must write to B-yard law library for requested legal texts. This is something no one bothered to inform me of until just a few weeks ago. Furthermore, the whole process of requesting materials is usually hit or miss

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Internationalist Solidarity with Haiti Behind Bars

by a New York prisoner
January 2010

As we embark on 2010 it seems that a tragic disaster has struck the Afrikan people. A few years ago it was hurricane Katrina and now Haiti. I was just building with the brothers on how in 1804 Haiti won its independence, defeating the French imperialists on January 1st. Twelve days later an earthquake rips through Haiti at the magnitude of 7.0. Now, I'm not sure who is to blame, but I have my suspicions. You know, since 2006 there's been a tsunami in South Asia, a hurricane in New Orleans, and now an earthquake in Haiti. All are dark skinned nations! Like I said, I have my suspicions, which I'll get into later.

Sisters and Brothers, we need to come together and focus on **Our** people in Haiti! We, the brothers of a plantation in New York called Clinton [Correctional Facility], got together and we were so moved by the horrible images on the news, newspapers and radio that we are willing to donate clothes, food and money from our accounts to help our Afrikan Haitian mothers, fathers and children.

As New Afrikans, we understand fully our purpose in life and it's to help our people whether they be in the uS, Cuba, Afrika, Brazil, Jamaica, etc. We understand that the American

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Anti-Censorship Lawsuit Strategies Used by a Successful Jailhouse Lawyer

by a Wisconsin prisoner
August 2009

I am glad to share with your readers the successful strategy used in my First Amendment case that could be used by other prisoners in the future. However, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the assistance of well known Legal Activist and Paralegal "MoSo" who actually litigated the case.

He provided me with this information for your article. He indicated that prison officials always rely on the trusted and well used excuse to deny your rights by asserting "security" or as in this case, that the material was "inflammatory".

This derives from the well-known phrase that although you have a First Amendment right to freedom of speech, you cannot shout "Fire!!" in a crowded movie theater. Even the Supreme Court has recognized there are limits of what a person can say, including things such as "Fighting Words". These types of restrictions are amplified in the prison context, of course, and are over exaggerated by prison officials.

Thus, the first thing in litigating such issues is to make sure to continue to remind the court that it is their Constitutional *duty* to review those decisions "independently." This is true despite the assertions put forth by prison officials to support their decisions, and despite the fact that the court owes such decisions some deference. So once you can get the court to step outside of the prison official's mind set, and look at the issue *legally*, then you have passed the first hurdle.

Most of these conservative Republican judges simply read what the prison official says and accept that as being a valid reason to infringe upon a Constitutional Right. However, a judge's job is to "protect" the Constitution, not act as a supervisor authority for the prison or a rubber stamp, nor be a sympathetic ear for something bad prison officials did against you.

Whether the Court is in your own Circuit or an outside Circuit (if you can't find one in yours), try to develop arguments that show that

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No "Class Actions"

by a California prisoner
October 2009

The days of finding relief via the "class action" lawsuit are over. The Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) and countless other rulings have essentially castrated the "class action." The worst part is, under certain protocols, if a class action loses, every person in the "suspect class" is prohibited from filing in the future on similar grounds!

Only a fascist or a moron will file "class actions" because they have been eliminated. The proper methodology is to bury the bastards with litigation from individual litigants. Whatever the issue, rather than "joining forces" officially, we need to coordinate from the periphery. If 20 individuals file relatively similar actions in the same Court, the Court will occasionally attempt to coerce them into becoming a de facto "class." That can be refused by a litigant who wishes to proceed "as a class of one." Failure in this case does not affect other individual litigants. The decision might be harmful, but it cannot completely deflate the opportunity to seek "redress of grievances," as are protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

The only way to fight in a corrupted system is to use those remaining rules that ostensibly still exist and turn them against the persecuting agencies. The only way to win requires seriously thinking outside the box; but doing it with a rationale they're required to accept. If they try and blow smoke up your ass, take it to the next level. To borrow from Churchill's address done at Princeton: "Never give in. Never give in. Never give in..." It doesn't need to be eloquent; it just needs to be.

MIM(Prisons) adds: The PLRA is one way that prisoners are *legally* stripped of their rights as u.s. citizens. During the first wave of

Different Strategies Needed to Stop the Slaughter

by Jalsco
February 2010

A new report from the NATO allies revealed the true story behind drone attacks in Afghanistan. A few months back the man of change, Obama, ordered strikes killing three or four Taliban fighters and one hundred and forty some-odd civilians, among them children and wimmin. What a change for the people of the u.s. and the rest of the world! What a change for the oppression of wimmin in Afghanistan! Change came to the Afghan people in the form of 30,000 more troops to oppress, kill and torture them on their own land.

All this was done under the noses of amerikans without a protest. What happened to all those protesters under the Bush administration? The war against the oppressed has not stopped. Have they given up? That is the exact result when people trying to change an oppressive system do not have the right strategy or understanding of how to go about it.

What the Afghan and Iraqi brothers and sisters are going through is what occurred to the Mexica, Incas, Tainos and the rest of the native

the Prison Movement, class actions were a crucial tool for prisoner activists to fight battles on behalf of all prisoners. The state didn't like that. We wouldn't go as far as this comrade to say that class actions are completely obsolete, but they are now extremely complex and should be brought by a lawyer. Since most of our comrades cannot afford lawyers, class action suits are functionally useless to us.

This comrade is correct that, despite the difficulties we face today, we must keep finding ways to fight legal battles until they take all such rights away. And there are still ways for us to work together and work strategically. ★

people of the land now called the Americas.

The capitalist system must destroy, oppress, kill and exploit in order to sustain itself. That is why the united snakes has two war fronts at the same time. We must not allow the destruction that the Iraqi and Afghan people are facing. We must fight to stop the continuation of oppression and exploitation of the rest of the world.

So far, the only way available to stop the exploitation and oppression of humyn beings by other humyn beings is through the formation of a government with a communist philosophy. This is a government we need to struggle harder to form, because the existence of the people of the world is at risk.

You, who believe in caring for your people, study communism. You, who want to help other people and nations, don't wait until a natural disaster hits as the one in Haiti. Study socialism. You, who consider yourself a revolutionary, don't be half-way revolutionary. Revolutionaries are constant causers or helpers of change. Be that every possible moment of your life.

Let's change the capitalist society into a socialist society, and then the socialist into a communist and beyond as we reach communism. For the better well-being of our children's future, brothers and sisters.

note: World Focus with Daijit Dhaliwal. PBS. February 5, 2010.

MIM(Prisons) adds: Today, reports emerged of a u.s./NATO bombing that claimed to be an attack on Taliban fighters, but it turned out to be a civilian convoy and 33 people were killed. Uncounted tens of thousands of people

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In September 2007, the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons or MIM(Prisons) was formed as an independent Maoist cell. That year, the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) took some security hits and changed its organizing strategy as a result. One of the significant changes relates to cell-based organizing as opposed to having a centralized party. MIM(Prisons) upholds the MIM cardinal questions and uses the overall political line put forth in MIM Notes, MIM Theory and on the former website. We distribute MIM Theory and serve an archive of the old MIM website, which we also use as a regular source for prison-based educational work. The MIM legacy in fighting the criminal injustice system is strong and we carry that legacy forward in our own work.

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(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. 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. MIM(Prisons) and its publications explicitly oppose the use of armed struggle at this time in the imperialist countries (including the United States). We do recognize that his-

tory has demonstrated that armed struggle is a necessary step to bring the oppressed to power to determine their own destinies. Revolution will become a reality within the united States as the military becomes overextended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

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, we 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.

For more information on Maoism, write to us for a copy of "What Is MIM?"

Strategy & Tactics in the Belly of the Beast

by a USW study group
March 2010

Comrades in MIM(Prisons) and United Struggle from Within (USW) have been studying diligently to solidify and advance the line, strategy and tactics of the anti-imperialist prison movement. This issue of *Under Lock & Key* will introduce this discussion, while focusing on strategies utilizing the bourgeois legal system. In the imperialist countries we face a strategic period where our battles are legal ones as we build our organization and infrastructure.

In March 2010, MIM(Prisons) recorded its 1000th incident of censorship in the U.S. prison system. And this is just a small sample of the repression that goes on in the belly of the beast. The strategy behind our legal battles is two pronged: 1) when we win we create more space to do the organizing work that is much needed in the movement, and 2) when we lose we build public opinion about the reality that there are no rights, only power struggles, and what real power looks like. Therefore, if done well, every battle moves us forward.

Organizationally, we stand at a juncture where MIM(Prisons) has established itself with a consistent practice, while upholding the political line developed by the Maoist Internationalist Movement. Meanwhile, our allies stand ready to do more to organize the movement. This includes our comrades in the anti-imperialist prisoner organization, United Struggle from Within, which is led by MIM(Prisons), as well as other lumpen organizations at various levels of political development.

As a result, we are focusing on the need to build an anti-imperialist United Front through our work in the prison movement. We are making a call to all lumpen and prison-based organizations who believe in the need for self-determination of all nations to join us in developing this United Front on the basis of some key principles. MIM(Prisons), USW and others are already hashing out these principles, and we want to make sure that it is as agreeable yet powerful as it can be.

Theoretically, we stand on the legacy of decades of struggle and political line development led by MIM. By studying their work, we are able to leap forward theoretically, as each generation must do by learning from the previous. There are some theoretical questions we will be developing further in future months, both in the pages of *Under Lock & Key* and in larger publications we plan to publish.

We will continue to explore important aspects of strategy for months to come. We begin here with some definitions to help our readers grasp and participate in this discussion.

Definitions

Imperialism: the global economic system that exists today. First World corporations have expanded to the point where they must invest money overseas to continue to grow, so they export their capital to the Third World. These foreign investments in Third World economies, safeguarded by military force, stifle the growth

of the local bourgeois classes. With no national bourgeoisie, or a weak one at best, a national economy is unable to grow. Imperialist investment then ensures its own dominance by paying dirt wages to workers who have no options, and enjoying the freedom to escape local taxes and environmental restrictions.

Anti-Imperialism: the belief that nations have the right to struggle for liberation when faced with oppression by other nations. Opposing imperialism means opposing the system where some nations use their power to exploit other nations' wealth. Imperialism stifles all indigenous economic and political activity. Anti-imperialists work to release local development forces to better meet the needs of the people.

Nation: a group of people on one connected piece of land with a common economy, language, and national psychology.

Principal Contradiction: the highest priority contradiction that communists must focus their energy on for a long period of time - a strategic period. The concept of the principal contradiction comes from dialectical materialism, which says that everything can be divided into two opposing forces. These contradictions are the basis for any changes that thing goes through. Defining the principal contradiction is a crucial step to developing ones political line.

The principal contradiction in the world today is between the imperialist countries and the countries they oppress and exploit. Based on this fact, we say the principal task is to build public opinion against imperialism and to build institutions of the oppressed that are independent of imperialism, in order to seize power from the imperialists.

Anti-Imperialist United Front: the loose alliance of classes and parties that work to undermine imperialist domination. To achieve our principal task, we must unite all who can be united on the side of the oppressed against imperialism. Developing an anti-imperialist united front, is facilitating the growth of the winning side of the principal contradiction in the world today.

Internationalism: ethical belief or scientific approach in which peoples of different nations are held to be or assumed to be equal.

Line: Line is generally a belief, but line can also be a goal. For instance, our belief is that only through communism can we abolish the oppression of groups of people over other people. At the same time it is our goal to abolish the oppression of people over other people.

Strategy: our long-term plans to get to various goals on the way to communism. For every stage in the revolutionary struggle, there is a strategy.

Strategic Confidence: the belief that the proletarian forces will win based on a concrete analysis of society. Our strategic confidence comes from an analysis of the contradictions within

imperialism, which are bringing about its own decay and destruction. As a minority within the united States, the oppressed and progressive forces have a hard time developing strategic confidence when focused narrowly on local events and struggles. Therefore, internationalism is a must for the oppressed nations in the united States to obtain liberation from imperialism, which threatens to further immiserate and oppress a growing segment of society as crisis ensues and fascism knocks on the door.

Tactics: Short-term plans, some of which may be used again and again in slightly different circumstances. Tactics are short term and flexible based on day-to-day changes in the situation.

Rightism: In general, rightists tend to be too conservative. A rightist is someone who tends to make everything a matter of tactics. Rightists don't care about long-term goals or plans.

Ultra-leftism: Ultra-leftists will tend to judge real-world revolutionaries in the light of principles that only Jesus/Moses/Muhammad-type figures could implement. Ultra-leftism thus smacks of religion/idealism. The ultra-left also tends to go to extremes to achieve their objectives.

NOTE: Rightism and Ultra-leftism are both errors WITHIN the revolutionary movement. We are not talking about the "right" and "left" wings of the american government commonly referred to in the bourgeois press.

Proletarian Morality: Proletarian morality is based in the basic concept of doing no wrong in the masses' eyes, but it also goes further than this. It means implementing certain codes of conduct within the party to which all party members must strictly adhere to. This means that we cannot do anything which the masses could see as morally wrong, such as accepting gratuities in exchange for favors, or stealing from the masses. Proletarian morality is not idealist, but recognizes what needs to be done to create a more just world. Pacifists apply an idealist form of morality by saying that violence is never justified. Similarly, anarchists denounce hierarchy and oppression in the hands of the oppressed, even if used as tools to destroy hierarchy and oppression in the bigger picture.

Pragmatism: a philosophy of going forth without theory or line, utilizing wishy washy strategies, and pushing tactics from that thinking. Instead of seeing the whole they see the part. Pragmatists react to a situation, rather than analyze it and address the real problem.

Empiricism: the belief that knowledge is derived from experience through direct observation of phenomena. In contrast, we recognize that 99% of practice is now history and not things that we will experience directly.

Dogmatism: the belief in, or promotion of ideas without basis in fact or without depth. Dogmatists are stubborn, and view things arrogantly and narrow-mindedly.

notes: most of the definitions above came from study and discussion of MIM Theory 5: Diet for a Small Red Planet, available for \$5. ★

Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.

by Wiawimawo
August 2009

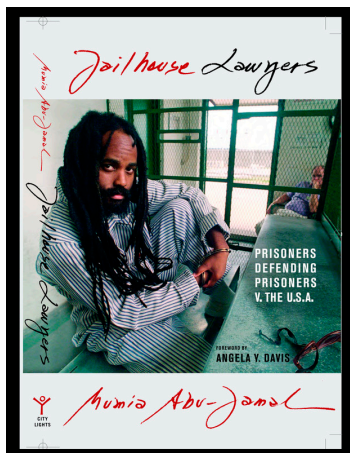
Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.
Mumia Abu-Jamal
City Lights Books, 2009.

Many prison activists focus their ire on the 14th Amendment, which proclaims slavery to be legal for the convicted felon. While we support economic struggles of u.s. prisoners, we do not see this law as deserving particular focus in the struggle to end the injustice system. A law that might better be a strategic focus for anti-imperialists and other progressive forces is the Prisoner Litigation Reform Act (PLRA), passed much more recently, in 1996, by then-President Bill Clinton.

The PLRA has significantly hampered the ability of prisoners to combat the injustices they face on a daily basis, effectively delegating them as second class citizens in the eyes of the courts. In what he says is the first book on the subject, Mumia Abu-Jamal's *Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.* accurately places the PLRA in historical context as modern day Black Codes, keeping the oppressed in their place.

In August 2009, a spokesman for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabili-

tation went so far as to cite the PLRA in claiming that federal orders to decrease the prison population by 40,000 people in California to relieve the current tortuous conditions are illegal.



Mumia reinforces how much the state fears legal struggle by citing an interesting study that showed jailhouse lawyers to be the most punished population in u.s. prisons; followed by Blacks, the mentally ill, gang members and political prisoners (in that order). Though we often stress the repression of oppressed nations, politically active and other organized prisoners, we have seen over and over people being punished for filing complaints and lawsuits against their abusers. The Illinois Supermax, Tamms, brags of holding the most litigious prisoners in the state.

Mumia opens *Jailhouse Lawyers* with a story that paints the clear picture that there are no rights, only power struggles. While being interviewed by Mumia, Delbert Africa describes prisoners spending all their time reading law books, fighting their own cases, and then going literally crazy when they lose. Why? "They go crazy becuz, Mu, they really believe in the System, and this System always betray those that believe in it! That's what drive them out they minds, they can't handle that."

Mumia minces no words, and is clear that getting a fair hearing by the imperialist system

is a joke, particularly for the oppressed nations. For the most part he condemns street lawyers for their failure to effectively defend prisoners and soon-to-be prisoners.

In the conclusion, Mumia points out that jailhouse lawyers can also help prop up the system by providing the illusion of justice to the outside and as a pressure release for those on the inside. As a result, things like the PLRA, and rules forbidding prisoners to help each other serve to heighten the contradiction between the oppressed and the state within the u.s. prison system.

He goes on to quote former political prisoner Ed Mead about the need for organizing to go beyond the very limited scope of legal work. That is why MIM(Prisons) is working to build legal campaigns and a new Serve the People program run by jailhouse lawyers within the context of our greater organizing work. In fact, the right to organize in itself is a legal battle that our movement has been and will continue to be heavily involved in. As Mead says, "It used to be against the law for workers to combine, to organize, to unionize, and workers just went ahead and did it. And that's how they won their rights. And that's the same with prisoners."

Overall, *Jailhouse Lawyers* is well-researched and an easy read, exemplifying Mumia's journalistic skills. MIM(Prisons) recommends this book, particularly for the analysis of the law provided by Mumia with thorough historical examples. Such an analysis is crucial for anyone who wants to effectively battle the injustice system on its terms. ★

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...CA Ban

in the sense that sometimes we receive our materials, sometimes we don't. Since I'm in the hole, I had to request photocopies of the FRCP. However, due to 'copyright concerns' I did not get it."

In addition to being denied needed legal materials, this comrade was denied an appeal for a lawyer to be appointed to their case. This was particularly relevant in this case where s/he was being denied access to the materials in question because they were deemed a risk to security.

For a year and a half following PLN's victory, supporters of MIM Distributors argued that the ban on MIM mail was not in compliance with the settlement. Finally, in October 2008 the CDCR released their new "Centralized List of Disapproved Publications," a product of the settlement. MIM Distributors is not on this list, and is therefore no longer legally banned in California. It is against CDCR policy for individual prisons to institute bans that are not on this centralized list.

While the final date for additions to the Centralized List was May 1 (and it is updated annually), we have not seen the new list for 2009. Experience seems to indicate that we are still not on it, since those who continue to ban

our mail cite outdated documents. Prisons that continue to return mail from MIM(Prisons) unopened are High Desert and the supermax prison, Pelican Bay. Blanket bans seem to require more stringent review by the courts. Therefore, it may be more strategic for the state to avoid blanket bans in the future, thus making lawsuits like the California prisoner's more difficult to carry out.

The good news is most prisons in California no longer have a blanket ban on MIM (those that do are in violation of court orders). This may have more to do with incompetence of the CDCR staff than a strategic approach. But it also means that the censors must now justify their censorship based on the California Code of Regulations, and appeals cannot be rejected out of hand.

For a while, the prisoner who filed suit was the only persyn in h prison who was able to receive *Under Lock & Key*. We assumed this was to undermine h censorship claims. Yet, after the ban on MIM was officially canceled in October, all of a sudden *ULK* was also censored to this comrade. When one of our legal supporters wrote to inquire as to why, the Warden cited the overturned ban on MIM. This was as late as March 2009, and the same thing happened in other California prisons. It was not until 6

months after the new list was released that prison administrators acknowledged that MIM Distributors was no longer banned. We have been assured that proper training of mailroom staff has been conducted in a number of California prisons regarding the new banned list. Still, this alleged "incompetence" has led to over 2 years of no contact with many prisoners across California, and added up to uncounted costs in lost and returned mail and printed materials.

Meanwhile, *MIM Theory 8: Anarchist Ideal & Communist Revolution* was deemed such a threat that the court would not allow the plaintiff to view the magazine alone in h cell to prepare h case. The CDCR legal team even attempted to seal MIM literature from the public because it allegedly posed such a threat to security. In their motion to have the documents sealed, the CDCR also refers to MIM's "anonymity" as a threat to security. It is not clear to us how identities of those working with MIM are relevant to the security of prisons run by CDCR, but we do see anonymity as justified given the history of harassment and intimidation by CDCR's Investigation Unit and the CCPOA of citizens outside of prison. MIM(Prisons) takes these threats very seriously.

On June 29, 2009, the US District Court
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the Court had ruled against whatever it is the prison officials did. A lot of prisoners make the mistake of thinking the more cases you cite for a proposition, the stronger your argument is and the court will be impressed. What I have learned is stick to one or two cases that are *factually the same* and continually argue from those cases, showing such excuses are either not valid, with no connection to the "concern," or are exaggerated to such a concern.

In convincing a court such excuses are not valid or are an exaggeration, I used the "comparison" technique. There is well-known case law which holds that if you can show other prisons of the same security allow certain things, even publications, when another bans it, the concern put forth by that prison has been shown to be either invalid or exaggerated. So in the case cited as *Lorenzo Johnson v. Rick Raemisch, et al.*, Case No. 07-CV-309-bbc. (W.D. Wis.), we got affidavits from other prisons showing the publication was allowed in those institutions and yet was banned from mine. [note: MIM(Prisons) can often provide documentation of where certain items have been allowed if needed.]

In addition, in discovery, I requested what *specific material the defendants deemed objectionable*. Then when arguing in the briefs, proved that all that same information alleged to be inflammatory was in fact available to inmates from other sources allowed in the prison, such as on the computer, news paper articles, or even in prior *published* court decisions.

And lastly, what I would like to import to other prisoners attempting to litigate any First Amendment claims is the fact that most publications are denied based on prison officials' conclusions that such publications create a risk to security because they are either inflammatory, or contain gang symbols or racist materials. So one should make sure to read and cite the Supreme Court's decision in *Procunier v. Martinez*, 416 U.S. 396 (1976). Another case I would recommend to read is *Bressman v. Farrier* 825 F. Supp. 231 (N.D. Iowa. 1993). These are just good cases to keep in your ammo belt.

I hope this information helps others. I believe Judge Crabb's decision in *Johnson*, supra, could also be helpful if cited, as it was finally a principled decision based purely on law and showing that a true judge's Constitutional responsibility is to *uphold* the Constitution, no matter who's right and wrong. The judge is supposed to be "impartial." Justice for all!!! ★

Oscar Grant

**1 year
anniversary
movement
analysis by
MIM(Prisons)**

Ask for it!



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 humyn 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.

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issued a summary judgment dismissing the claims against CDCR. In the summary judgment the court recognizes our comrade's exposure of the CDCR for misquoting *MIM Theory* 8, using ellipses as Scott Kernan did in the 2006 memo. Still, the court deferred to the biased judgments of the prison officials, citing *Overton v. Bazzetta*, 539 U.S. 126, 132 (2003).

The comrade responded by writing,

"I am extremely disheartened by the aforementioned facts. Disheartened, not defeated, yet I see no positive outcome to the civil matter."

"... Once again I am extremely and hopefully apologetic. It was not my intention to have done all this work for the past 3 years just to have it all come to a crashing halt in the period of three months. I have let not just myself and the movement down, but the people as well."

"Not all is bad though. This was certainly a learning experience and I definitely learned a lot for a 7th grade drop-out. I have been inspired to take a paralegal course, after which I will be of better use to MIM and the people."

For this comrade in California, it is certainly natural to feel disheartened, and it is good to hear that you are not defeated. In the imperialist countries, the task of the revolutionary movement is to carry out long legal battles. Mao said this in 1975, and it is still true today. This means that many of us will have to spend long hours learning and applying bourgeois law, while recognizing that the law has class character and is not designed to serve the oppressed. In addition, "legal work" does not just mean in the court room. An important aspect for keeping our work focused and sane is to carry it out as part of a larger movement. This comrade didn't have a victory in court, but his efforts were simultaneous to petitioning of the CDCR, to public education around censorship, to other prisoners filing appeals, and to PLN's own lawsuit. We will face many failures along the way, but these failures become easy to accept when we study and understand the weaknesses of imperialism as a system, and see our strategic role in contributing to ending all systems of oppression.

We commend this comrade's drive to continue legal studies. The more effective each of us become in our work the easier it is for all of us to succeed. Becoming more effective requires studying others' experiences, learning from them and developing strategies as a movement.

In a more recent letter our jailhouse lawyer wrote,

"Some key points I've learned from all of this is that you definitely have to be committed when engaging the oppressors and their legal system. You always have to keep in mind that you are facing seasoned veterans with all the tools and obstacles of the state at their beck and call. It's never going to be easy, just less difficult at times. Long periods of research and study are also essential with these legal battles long before you decide to actually bring your case into the courtroom. You can also never let yourself be discouraged because discouragement is key to the oppressor's victories which in turn establishes precedent making it that much more difficult for us to succeed."

Prison Legal News and the lawyers supporting their work are the exception to the rule. Most of the time it is prisoners, sometimes with little to no formal education, as this comrade can attest to, who must fight these battles in a maze of complicated language and jargon, where you are starting out at a huge disadvantage. That is why it is important to keep in mind what we are dealing with. The U.S. state is an imperialist state. The court is not a just and benevolent god. Mumia introduces his new book *Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.* (see review on previous page) discussing prisoners who have gone mad after years of learning and applying the law only to lose their just cases, or to have them thrown out before even getting a trial. Such outcomes are to be expected for the oppressed under imperialism and this is an important lesson to learn.

To our readers in California, it is more important than ever that you write in to tell us what mail you are receiving from us so that we can build on this struggle. ★

Inspired by Mao, fighting legal battles

by a California prisoner
January 2010

I was rereading *ULK* issue 10 when I came across the article "Mao's Combat Liberalism very relevant in PA prisons." The prisoner was referring to *ULK* issue 5, November 2008. From the article by the prisoner, I can honestly say I sympathize with him, for myself and a few others here at Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility (RJDCF) in San Diego, California have been dealing with a lot of the same type of shit.

Here at RJDCF Administrative Segregation, where I have been for almost 18 months because some other prisoner said I tried to extort him out of commissary items (which I did not do at all), I have seen exactly how a good portion constantly back down from fighting the rampant corruption and oppression by the pigs because at the time it's not affecting them. But once it does, they scream it's unfair and demand unity.

To me, these people are just like the pigs themselves. Out only for their damn self. It's pathetic.

I, for the past 16 months have been fighting tooth and nail against all forms of pig corruption and oppression. Even though I am what is called SNY (Sensitive Needs Yard) a.k.a. Protective Custody, I fight for the rights of all prisoners, be they SNY or mainline actives. I've done quite a few appeals as well as filed a few court claims. I do this even though it comes back to haunt me in the form of retaliation from the pigs in authority. But to quote a famous movie, "frankly my dear, I just don't give a damn."

There's not a whole lot more they can do to punish me or make my life miserable. How could they? I'm in Ad-Seg for 18 months for non-disciplinary issues as it was soon found out that I did not extort anything from anyone, yet they are keeping me here 18 months for "enemy concerns." I've been awaiting a non-adverse transfer for most of the time, about 16 months. The most corrupt pigs keep on going like they're nearly invincible: they issue me short portions of food, tamper with food and mail, and try to shut me up with bullshit. They constantly try to make other prisoners hate me. But I have been the one with the last laugh so far. The prisoners know I fight for them. They ignore the pigs and show support for me even if they all don't fight on their own. I have won nearly all my appeals, and have the courts looking into these issues. I will not bow down to these sadomasochistic pigs and their oppression. While difficult to fight, they won't hinder me.

These pigs do such a great job of keeping us all at each others' throats. Yet there are some of us, regardless of custody status, SNY, mainline, race, religion, crimes, etc, who just care about giving back, just as much, if not more, than we get.

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Call for unity against CO violence

by a California prisoner
February 2010

When I first came in to the CDC, a guard's job was simple: unlock us in the morning so we can function and lock us up at night. The rest was living simple and every once in a while someone would get stabbed or jumped, but the violence ratio was 10 times lower 25 years ago. But now times have changed. For example, a few weeks ago, a prisoner was being yelled at by 2 corrections officers. As the non-English-speaking prisoner was sitting on the bench, trying to understand what they were saying (they wanted to know his name), without any cause or reason, the 2 COs started spraying him with large canister sprayers of pepper spray, soaking his entire body, and then started beating him with little telescopic-like batons with a lead ball on the tip (very painful). Afterward, he was kicked while he was lying on the ground, and placed in handcuffs and escorted to a vertical coffin-like holding cage. I stood at my cell window and observed this, among many other incidents.

When I was in Salinas Valley, housing unit number 5 (also known as "the dirty nickel"), the COs would yell racial slurs, profanity, and anything disrespectful towards the prisoners over the intercom. When I was there I counted 115 acts of violence against prisoners by COs and on one occasion I observed a CO tell one prisoner to assault another prisoner or he would tear up his cell. The prisoner complied out of fear of reprisal.

I am writing this to educate you and hopefully many others of the mistreatment and abuse of the COs, currently named the "Green Wall" due to the fact that all of the correctional officers wear green uniforms. The main gist of the Green Wall is to keep total control over the prisoners by encouraging them to maintain violence and animosities with each other. The Green Wall will use any and all tactics to maintain that control. Sometimes a prisoner may try to stand up for what is right, but no one will join him or support his cause because the majority of prisoners are in constant fear of getting property (photos of family) torn, damaged or destroyed.

My hopes are for everyone to be on notice. Be vigilant, be aware, and let's stop being entertainment for the Green Wall. Let's start figuring out a way all the prisoners can come together. The mainline GPs [General Population] are outnumbered by the SNYs 3 to 1 because the GPs are inventing new reasons to attack their fellow brethren and make them run to the SNY (Sensitive Needs Yards). All I'm asking is that all come together and repair and change what the Green Wall has caused. All it takes is that one voice to get it started! ★

Abolish Control Units research

One legal struggle MIM(Prisons) works on is to abolish Control Units because they are used as a tool of political repression to alienate and torture anyone who works for change from within prisons. One way we work on this battle is by collecting data on the number of Control Units that exist, and where, and publishing it on the website <http://abolishcontrolunits.org>.

Control units may vary from prison to prison but they can be generally described as: Permanently designated prisons, or cells in prisons, that lock prisoners 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 help us keep this data updated by writing to the address below to get a survey for your state.

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

Security in the prison movement

by MIM(Prisons)
March 2010

In a system where the threat of torture by long-term isolation and other forms of repression constantly hangs above the heads of those who hold political views different from their captors, security is a vital question. Of course, the threat is different when working outside anonymously with MIM(Prisons) than working inside, face-to-face. Repression inside prisons is much more imminent than it is for our comrades on the streets. In prison, conditions are different and freedoms are limited, leaving comrades with much different tactics to choose from.

Strategically, however, the question of security behind bars is more the same than it is different from on the streets. Semi-underground organizing is an example of a universal strategy for operating behind enemy lines. The practice of semi-underground organizing recognizes that just because you didn't break any laws doesn't mean you will not face repression for your actions or beliefs, and there is more cost than benefit of putting all your cards on the table. On the organizational scale, semi-underground can be applied by layering your organization with different levels of openness. This makes it harder for the pigs to pinpoint leaders and isolate an organization.

Another strategic question is, how do we deal with potential infiltrators who join our ranks in order to gather information and create disruption, or bad-jacket the organization? Many comrades have provided suggestions for how to address this issue. There is a bourgeois approach to security and there is a proletarian approach. The difference between the two is still generally applicable even in different organizing conditions, and is discussed below.

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... continued from page 1

...Haiti

Red Cross takes out a percentage from the money donated and we really don't want that type of middle man pilfering from our donations. So we ask if you can have an outside agency that's willing to come to this plantation and others throughout New York to pick up the items of clothing, food and an address that we can write to send our funds and condolences. We are talking with the Superintendent and hopefully by the time you respond we should be ready to go. We really do hope you can help us help those in need.

Bloods and Crips, I ask that we take a minute to understand that we as a people just lost close to 50,000 men, women and children in less than 24 hours! That number unfortunately will rise in this catastrophic event. Please, please, please stop the tribalism and join forces and help our people! At this rate we'll be extinct in no time!

MIM(Prisons) responds: It was not long ago that the united States went into Haiti and kidnapped President Aristide, who has been in exile ever since. As the Haitian people call for his help in their time of need, 5 digits worth of u.\$. troops march into their country, controlling everything and allowing little aid to get through. The history of u.\$. "aid" to Haiti is well-documented and clearly not in the interests of the Haitian people.(1)

Many more than 50,000 have died and many more will. As this writer goes on to point out, this does not happen to europeans or amerikans. He draws parallels to the ethnic cleansing that took place in New Orleans and Southeast Asia following hurricanes and tsunamis. Later in this comrade's letter, s/he speaks of a theory that imperialists caused the earthquake in January based on information about Project Seal by Thomas Leech. Leaders including Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela, have made references to similar accusations.

While we don't think we can say conclusively that the imperialists caused the earthquake, we can say that they caused the disaster. Comrades have done a more thorough job of explaining the economic and political history

behind this (see notes below), and we still find it more useful to talk about these solid facts that demonstrate the systematic undermining of Haitian sovereignty and security.

As was widely reported in March, of the over \$1 billion the u.\$. is spending in Haiti, only one cent of each dollar went to the Haitian puppet government. Instead of a centralized effort by Haitians to rebuild their country, most money going to so-called "aid" work went to thousands of different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Meanwhile 40% of the money is going to the u.\$. military, which is acting as an occupying force. This validates our assertions to this comrade in January about where donations are likely to go.

Real solidarity means supporting the self-determination of Haitians. If you want an organization that claims to send all its money directly to Haiti, you could donate to the Bush/Clinton fund. (It may end up being sent in the form of occupation troops though.) The real standard of where to send aid should be where the Haitian people are building their own institutions. Years ago the united States crushed programs that were developing Haitian medical personnel, and now amerikans want to pretend to be their saviors.(2) While we do not endorse any particular funds at this time, we have compiled some information on groups that may be able to get donations into the right hands.

While there are some groups out there who are more worthy of donations, a strategy that does not attack the imperialist policies exposed in the articles below cannot prevent these disasters from recurring across the Third World.(3)

Long Live International Solidarity!

notes (write to us to get these articles):

- (1) "Beware of Amerikkans bearing gifts: Haiti and Africa" by Monkey Smashes Heaven
- (2) This article also gives good background and contemporary information: "Earthquake in Haiti: Under Aristide, Haitians were prepared for disaster" by Minister of Information JR
- (3) "Earthquake Strikes Haiti; Imperialism is a Disaster" by the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement (Denver) ★

FREE POLITICAL BOOKS

Under Lock & Key is free to all prisoners and is mailed out to those who write to us every 6 months. MIM(Prisons) also runs a books for prisoners program through which we mail prisoners political theory and history books and magazines in exchange for political work. Prisoners requesting books need to tell us what work you want to do, or just send in the articles, artwork, poetry, report on a study group you formed, etc. For many prisoners, the easiest way to start is by writing about what is going on at your prison.

Our books for prisoners program relies on donations of books and money. We buy books when we have money to do so, but unfortunately the demand far exceeds the supply. The areas most in demand are dictionaries and writings by Mao and Lenin. If you have any contacts on the outside who can donate to our program, or who can hook us up with dictionaries, Mao or Lenin, or other political books, please tell them to contact us at the address on page 1. When requesting books it is best to ask for general topic areas and let us send you whatever we have on hand.

Prisoner driven to suicide

by an Illinois prisoner
January 2010

February 1, 2K10 I will start my suicide hunger strike. I am tired of being transferred, regardless of my psych/schizophrenic suicidal bipolar background. I have NO family or relatives, NO one. Besides, I am sure I am ready to go. The Assistant Warden Dirk Deuce and Warden Mrs. Nedra Chandler were informed of my suicide strike on January 4, 2K10. I also notified the court of claims of my plight/demise here, and that I am planning to kill myself.

I have nothing to lose or gain. My death is for my own dignity, respect, and love. My sacrifice is in my best interest. The reason for my suicide strike is because it is not likely I will ever have a cellie here or anywhere else. Moving me from one place to another will stop as of this letter. From here until I die, I will control my last months of 2K10. I see death as a good thing for me.

Trying to talk me out of this is futile or useless. I am taking my own life because it is in my best interest. Not only have I had many dreams where I take my own life happily, I feel as though I am going out/leaving with a degree of power and respect. Also I know for a fact that I will leave this year. The only way to keep me alive is to force food and water into my body. I do not want anything or miss anything.

I am sorry I will no longer be around to help MIM(Prisons). I love MIM(Prisons). MIM, I love your newsletters. I do not want to go off talking about the newsletter but I believe this is the best newsletter I ever got. I have received many educational books and theory from MIM(Prisons). I loved the poetry. I never liked poetry before. I love your Spanish network news. I am self-educated, through MIM's help. I am sorry I must leave you and everyone. It is in my best interest.

If these people do not transfer me to building 38 before February 1, 2K10 then it is too late. I will not go back on my word. Feb. 2K10 is me all the way. I hope they do not try to force food and water down my throat; I will resist. They have until the end of January to make a move or else. Please forget me if this is my last letter because I will not be in my right mind.

I love and respect all of my MIM brothers and sisters. But most of all I love myself, even though I will take my own life.

MIM(Prisons) Responds: We received your letter about your planned suicide hunger strike. We hope you are still with it enough to read this letter, and are willing to hear us out. We are not blind or numb to the horrible, tortuous effects of the imperialist injustice system, and we understand that there are endless reasons why someone could be driven to suicide. This is especially true if you are trapped inside the belly of the beast, in one of the cruelest manifestation of capitalism, inside of a u.\$. prison.

Continued on page 12...

On the Importance of Political Line

by MIM(Prisons)
February 2010

A California comrade who has long thought we should do an issue criticizing the rcp=u\$ writes:

"I disagree with MIM however on one fine point in the article where you state that 'many still see the rcp=u\$a as representing Maoism because their populist politics gives them a greater public face in many areas (inside u\$ prisons is one exception to this).' Do you mean to imply that the rcp doesn't hold much sway in u\$ prisyns because the masses here know better? If this is the case then I would say no, they do appear to at the very least to have some kind of foothold in CA prisyns."

"I've noticed more people are familiar with the rcp's rag, but not many. Some even spew their distractionist rhetoric. Of course I debate them but there's only so much that can be said to those who already believe avakian to be the 'great man of hystory.'"

"Since the upcoming ULK will be centered on strategies & tactics, the exposing of the rcp's counterrevolutionary activities might be able to play some kind of role. They must be beat back to the hole from which they came from! I hypothesize that the rcp is siphoning off many potential revolutionaries from inside the prisyns. Might this be MIM's assessment as well? The deadly rcp strategy of substituting eclecticism for dialectics is, I believe, at the heart of their strength and success. Would you agree?"

...Continued from page 2 **...Correct Strategy**

have been killed in Afghanistan since the u.\$ occupation began in 2001.

This comrade applies the concepts of line, strategy and tactics to an international issue well in this article. We also commend h for writing an article on international news, and encourage others to follow this example, making connections between the prison struggle and the struggle of oppressed people around the world.

One thing we would add in regards to line is a deeper analysis of the protesters and other amerikans who claim to oppose the occupation of Afghanistan. For those who are serious, we must push a more radical agenda and a studying of Maoism and communism as the writer does. But what holds back most amerikans is that they don't have a life or death interest in opposing imperialism. On the contrary, amerikans benefit from imperialism, so condemnations of war often come in the form of moralistic verbal protests, with little power or force to back it up. That said, our strategy must be adapted to this situation and we must focus on organizing the minority within u.\$ borders that can be organized against imperialism. We must organize that minority around anti-imperialist demands that serve them and move them to committed struggle, and we must connect that to the struggles of the international proletariat, which are the foundation of communist revolution. We will explore these ideas more in our upcoming newsletters focused on strategy and tactics. ★

A Missouri comrade also responded:

"I wanted to briefly respond to something that comrade Wiawimawo said in the article 'Revisiting RCP Revisionism' in ULK 12. The comrade said many of the readers of ULK are not grappling with the questions facing Maoism today. And those that cannot distinguish Maoism from right opportunism of groups like the rcp=u\$a have not yet grasped it."

"I am not refuting what this comrade said, I just want to say that a lot of the readers lack the information and some have never been involved in revolutionary activity. We would hope that comrades would become inspired from reading ULK to go on to study harder and learn faster. But again, there is a lack of authentic material. I have quite a bit of material and none from the rcp=u\$a, so even I can't really argue against their line when I haven't read shit they've wrote. I haven't seen a Revolutionary Worker or Worker's World in years. The same for the Burning Spear."

"At the same time, it is on us to teach those who will listen and I believe that ULK is doing a tremendous job and the Book to Prisoners Program is also a great resource."

In the last couple years MIM(Prisons) has stepped in to re-establish the prevalence of Maoist literature available to the prison movement. This came after years of inconsistency as the Maoist Internationalist Party - Amerika degenerated. The need for this literature is clear from this discussion. So supporters who can provide money or other resources to expand this work should reach out to us.

We agree with our CA comrade about the importance of combating revisionism as part of building a strong movement. While the author of that article was lamenting the need to spend time on such work, it would be idealist to expect otherwise. However, as our MO comrade points

out, most of our readers are not familiar with the rcp=u\$a anyway. To focus an issue of our newsletter on them would give undo attention to the topic. An issue reviewing many different political lines would be more useful, as most readers will find lines that they have come across.

We do not believe that the prison masses know better than to follow the rcp=u\$a, that is why we thought it important to print that review. We do believe that MIM has had much more influence on the prison movement, despite its weak points. So MIM Thought is more likely to be identified with Maoism inside prisons than on the streets in the united \$tates where rcp=u\$a will be.

And yes, we agree that rcp=u\$a eclecticism serves its popularity. Even among prisoners, the hard line of MIM loses us many friends. But we aren't looking for friends, we're looking for real allies who will stand strong for the revolutionary road.

The point made by Wiawimawo was not to say that you must understand the difference between MIM(Prisons) and rcp=u\$a in particular, but rather that you must understand why the MIM line is correct in general. If you don't you will fall for the eclecticism of rcp=u\$a or any other snake oil salesman that comes along.

Certainly, rcp=u\$a is recruiting people who might have otherwise worked with the Maoist movement. That could be said about a number of groups out there. But we aren't too worried about that. We are confident in our political line, which makes us strong. Other groups will come and go, or if they have state funding they will stay and stagnate. But only the correct ideological line can build a new prison movement that has real power. ★

HEY YOU! CONTRIBUTE TO ULK

There is power in artistic formats that is more gripping than an article. People listen to songs over and over again or put some artwork on a wall and look at it for years. We always need new original art for the pages of ULK and for occasional public showings/ fundraisers. Read articles in ULK to get topic ideas, or request MIM(Prisons)'s guide to anti-imperialist art.

For our more politically astute writers, we need to develop and popularize our theory and analysis. When comrades in MIM(Prisons) write articles we ask ourselves if the article would be printed in other publications and if so, what purpose it is serving in our own? If we aren't pushing the revolutionary line forward than we are not part of the vanguard. If we are saying the same things as the liberals or revisionists than we should just work with them, and pool our resources. Remaining an independent Maoist vanguard means upholding the line among the masses and pushing the line forward in our writing and other practices. Below are the upcoming issue topics with deadlines for submissions of articles and artwork. The earlier you submit, the more time we have to send you feedback.

Organizing Strategy & Tactics - As primarily prison-based organizations, MIM(Prisons), USW and many of our allies face particular conditions and target a specific population. Factors that affect our organizing include the fact that most of our comrades are behind bars, living among the oppressor in the belly of the beast, and living in the late stage of imperialism as crisis heightens. What are strategies vs. tactics? Which ones are going to push forward the struggle fastest for liberation, justice and equality? How can we improve ULK as a tool for organizing?

DEADLINE: We will be continuing to focus on these questions in coming issues.

Spanish Editor Needed - We are looking for someone to edit articles that comrades translate from English into Spanish, checking for accuracy in translation, grammar, and punctuation. You must have great written English and Spanish skills. Please get with us if you are interested.

Petition for proper handling of grievances

by a California prisoner
January 2010

I have sent MIM(Prisons) a letter of grievance for use by CDCR prisoners. Its purpose is to petition the Director of Corrections to investigate the purposeful failure of the 602 procedure [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation grievance process] within California State Prison - Los Angeles County. This is something somebody put together for the general population here on C-yard. It is our intention to flood the Director's office with these petitions in hopes that it will shed some light onto the illegal acts in which these pigs are willing participants. We are being forced to file these petitions due to the unfortunate fact that the vast majority of our 602s are not being filed or properly heard.

The idea is to distribute this petition to all CDCR facilities and to have as many people sign and mail the petition to the Director's office as possible. Once all parties receive their responses concerning the petition, all responses along with contradictory paperwork should be sent to the Prison Law Office (which is specific to CA), the Office of Internal Affairs, etc. Our goal is to expose CDCR, its administration, and facilities as tools of repression and the lengths that they will go to to cover their crimes.

If correctly done, this action can be one which quite possibly hundreds or thousands of prisoners will have the opportunity to make their voices heard and their wrongs known. It will be very hard for the Civil Rights Division of the Dept. of Justice and other agencies to ignore us. At worst, if we still fail, then we will at least have further proven that this "justice" system is not for us but against us.

My hope in sending this to MIM(Prisons)'s legal aid clinic is that you will redistribute this petition to those working with MIM and explain the concept to our comrades struggling from within so that we may all work together as one in a concerted effort to expose and hopefully create favorable conditions for the masses concerned in whatever they may be struggling for.

I think that what I'm proposing here with the coordinated form of "legal attack" is of course a good use of MIM's legal aid clinic time and it would benefit all prisoners, not in just California.

In order for the rest of the prisoner population held in different prisons to correctly use this petition, they will of course need to change the name of the facility to that of their own. They will also have to look up their own "Departmental Operational Manual" citations in order to be in compliance. Someone will also have to take the lead for everyone in their facility, individual yard, etc.

MIM(Prisons) Adds: Our ability to fairly have our grievances handled is directly related to preventing arbitrary repression for people who stand up for their rights or attempt to do something positive. Spreading revolutionary literature, including *ULK*, is a huge part of MIM(Prisons)'s organizing work. We support this petition in light of our anti-censorship work and anti-repression work in general.

This is an issue that should be spread to wherever it is relevant. Prisoners outside of California facing similar problems may be able to re-write the petition using their state's citation and policy numbers. A comrade in Texas has already translated the petition for use in the TDCJ system. You will also need to research which administrators the petition should be sent to in your state. Write to us if you want to work on this campaign in California, Texas, or elsewhere! ★



... continued from page 6

...Inspired

As I said, I'm SNY. I see active mainline prisoners fighting themselves. This is contributing to their own oppression and making the pig's job even easier. The mainline looks down on SNY prisoners like they are all baby rapers and killers. Yet there's more unity on the SNY side of the fence. We put bullshit prisoner politics behind us. To me, it's the mature thing to do.

The prisoners do pigs favors by fighting each other. And the ones who don't fight each other kiss the pigs' asses to get favors such as dope, cellphones, and other shit. But when something happens, these same collaborating prisoners demand unity that they themselves don't show. I used to be similar, but I've changed. Now I even help those people because this is still fighting the right fight. I know a few who would do the same, but they are very few.

Prison would be a much better place if more people stopped oppressing themselves and each other on top of what the pigs do. We must put the bullshit aside for once in our lives. Leave behind the racism, mainline/SNY hatred, the selfish attitudes, the "it's all me" mentality. We need to all grow the fuck up.

Unite and fight oppression, fight the pigs, fight for your true rights. If you don't, you're only slaves, puppets, whores. I'm not advocating violence against the pigs. I prefer you do it by educating yourselves

properly, not with the bullshit these authorities want you to learn. True history, true politics, true reality, they exist.

We were taught in American schools that communism is a terrible way of life. When people bash it who were communist, it's because only a few of them, usually exiles or people who would've been punished, fled from responsibility and put it down. Yet I've met a lot of others who have nothing but good to say about it. People will never truly be 100% happy. Not everyone. Most can be just fine.

Even Mao himself admitted to mistakes. If people learn from them that's great. It shows maturity and responsibility. If not, they are fools, it's that simple.

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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.

The Mission

by a California prisoner
February 2010

You ain't a soldier!
You's a poser!
What you soldiering for?
Fame and glory?
That story's getting old.
What's that man really talking bout?
Spouting consequences to stupid nonsense.
He's only kidding,
while you're doing his bidding.
So what's he really talking bout?
What's his politics about?
Fame and glory?
That same story!?
Homey please!
Tell you what?
Pick up those books,
and get a hook.
Ain't nobody talking about revolution,
except the Maoist Internationalist Movement,
and the United Soldiers from Within,
because the Movement move men,
to bigger better things.
The mission?
Prisyn liberation from within.

Strugglin

by Loco1
March 2010

This is track 2 off my album Rhythm & Rebellion: Hell Bound. It's a two disc album with twenty four songs on each album. Hell Bound is disk two. Disk one is titled Heaven Sent. This item is registered with my idea of a Revolutionary Copyrights program for all them thieving ass capitalists looking to come up off the products of the struggle.

Hook:

Every day of the year gone by with us not getting paid (We Strugglin)
Every day that we got a young brotha on the block servin rocks (We Strugglin)
Every day that we livin on a land thatz own'd by the man (We Strugglin)
We got to stand up and stop feeling sorry for ourselves.
Instead've going against our own we should be extendin help.
Every day that we not doing right by each other as a whole (We Strugglin)

Verse 1:

For the sake of Blackness and ghetto mankind
Young whawdy bout to spill that revolutional wine.
I know
Masta gone hate it
but
who the fuck cares.
I'm bout to shine the light on all the governmental affairs.
Starting with modern day slavery.
Disabling me.
Constantly mislabeling me.
They wanna destable me
But I ain't gone let that happen cause I'm just too damn stable you see.
Growth and development is the motto and the plan.
But just sittin around and talkin ain't gone help us advance.
Educate yourself
Practice unity and organize
Let your actions speak for they self to make the people recognize.

repeat the hook**Verse 2:**

Part two
Social control done been exposed
So now we move along to agriculture and house codes.
To rule the land you gotta rule the financial income
To rule the income you gotta keep the poor folkz dumb
Give them shitty schools,
Keep them syruped up and spliffed out
Throw a couple of colors in and keep them all flipped out
Don't let them buy their own land

Think About the World

by a North Carolina prisoner
February 2010

Do you ever seem to think about the world and its ways,
or an incisive definition of the new world slave?
Where we now receive the privilege of making incentive wage,
for those 400 years, how will you ever be paid?
Yet I know it's a major achievement, to have a half black President,
Why don't you look into your heart, then tell me what it truly represents
A house nigger for change, don't that sound so familiar,
That approved a gun law, cause they been letting whites kill us!
Knowing we kill each other more, going to prison seems like our hobby,
white people can kill ten at a time, and just blame it on the economy!
Actually it's often more, when you know who administer kids
And the simple mathematics subtract, only 1/4 of our race!
Yet we're the ones who get criticized, labeled 3/4 of a man
3/4 of my all unbearable, for any oppressor to stand.
Why can't you seem to open your eyes, within your college or your gang,
Why you be putting platinum and diamonds, on the master invisible chains!
Wake up you ignorant nigger, take this fire to the brain,
Politics would never allow "Black Obama," to promise or change
3/4 of anything...

I am an American

by an Arizona prisoner
January 2010

I am an
American,
but not as they say.
America's
Christopher Columbus day
America,
independence day
Evil as they do
do as they say
America's
the devil himself
has his own holiday
America,
this is independence
"assimilate"
I am an
American,
but not as they say.

Dear Pig

by a Utah prisoner
February 2010

Everything you are
is everything I hate
Everything you love
is everything I ain't
I want to live
you are already dead
I struggle to achieve revolution
Divesting knowledge like you do bread
The day your obese heart stops
and all you know ceases to exist
I'll still be sweating truth
Your daughter my wife, you not missed
Keep me here for years
but know the longer I stay
my mind's building the future
how it'll be one day
Understand I'm a man now
not that weak confused child
What pain you caused me growing up
will return, boomerang, anything but mild
For now I sit
starved, rattling my chains
but I'm stronger for this
You weaken by the day!

RAPS &

RHYMES OF

REVOLUTIONARY



Make them all buy from us.
Don't let them start their own companies
Make them all work for us
Man what the fuck!!!
Let's all kick up some dust
The KKK been standing strong but they ain't fuckin with us
If we just open our eyes
And just get rid of the pride
The poor folkz a be the giant that's been needed to rise.

repeat the hook

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...Security

A key issue that is being raised in California is, why work with prisoners who are on Special Needs Yards (SNY)? This is a good question since a lot of potential comrades, as well as comrades already in the struggle, have contempt for individuals who collaborate with the state. It is important that we understand that not everyone on SNY is there because they debriefed or snitched. Some people are on SNY because they are victimized on mainline, or don't want to participate in the typical bullshit that comes with mainline for whatever reason. So not everyone on SNY is there because of piggish behavior, but the rest of this article is a discussion of those comrades who *are*.

MIM(Prisons) is a prison ministry that seeks to organize and educate prisoners not just to see the inhumane conditions that they find themselves in, but also to see the bigger picture of imperialism. When you read what MIM has put out regarding our security practices then one should be able to gain a perspective as to why MIM(Prisons) operates the way it does. What good would it do for MIM(Prisons) to only work with people based on the fact that they haven't snitched *yet*? Everyone is a possible cop or agent working for the imperialists. In fact, in this country, someone is more likely to be a cop or spy than to be a revolutionary of some sort. Even within the communist movement itself there exists a capitalist arm in the form of cops, agents, snitches, and collaborators with the imperialists.

We see this as a line struggle. Anyone can pretend to be USW inside, just like anyone can pretend to represent MIM(Prisons), or Maoism. If they uphold the line set forth by the vanguard organization and/or movement, then they're out there working to advance the struggle. If they are upholding a bourgeois line, and people cling to it, then the people didn't understand the vanguard line in the first place. We should work with a comrade because they have the correct line, not because they are on mainline.

Why should they be barred from being a communist if they have snitched in the past? Why should anyone not have the right to see the liberation of their people, nation, the oppressed? What matters most is what one does after they have discovered themselves as a communist revolutionary. It's not just the lumpen who are reforming criminals, they mostly did small-time stuff. All amerikans are reforming criminals who have robbed from and victimized the majority of the world. If we are recruiting in the united States, we are attempting to reform criminals into communists, and this is the revolutionizing of humyns that must take place in conjunction with the revolutionizing of the economy and all the institutions that serve it.

The other side of this is that even if one is a cop, gathering info, there's really not that much they will find if information is given out on an as-needed basis. When the movement is organized into isolated cells, they may be able to take down one or two people, but the struggle goes on. In the meantime, the cop had to put in

a lot of genuine work in order to get the little information they got. Particularly where communists are the minority, the cop ends up doing more work for us than against us. This structure is part of what being a semi-underground organization means.

Of course, the fact that the state has taken the time to infiltrate and try to eliminate a group says a lot about the group's politics. As Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, we put forth revolutionary science, or dialectical materialism. A concrete historical analysis shows that it is not WE but THEY, the imperialists, who are on the wrong side of history. They will lose eventually. Our struggle is a protracted (scientific) one, to put forth the correct line, so even if MIM(Prisons) goes down there will still be others with the tools to continue forward.

With regards to the prison movement, it's understandable that these criticisms arise due to the fact that SHU placement falls on those who organize for better or for worse. So why does MIM(Prisons) support prisoners who walk away from their lumpen organizations? The lumpen class, by definition, is a parasitic class. Both the lumpen and the imperialists are capitalists whose material wealth comes from others' work. One has the power to exploit by making the laws, while the other makes money outside the law in an underground economy with a law unto itself. Saying, "I understand the LOs need work, but why work with those who walk away?" is just like the bourgeoisie saying "I know we need work, but why give opportunities to prisoners or criminals to help out, they broke our law?" Just like people who walked away and are now on SNY, they too broke the law.

Divide and conquer is a tactic used by the administration to bring down revolutionary groups and to keep revolutionary groups from forming. Evidence suggests that LOs are purposefully put up against each other in order to bring each other down. This basically means that if you're in an LO that's victimizing other oppressed people, then you are unwittingly an agent of the state's oppressive apparatus. Even if you say "fuck the k9s" or "fuck the administration," your actions are counter-revolutionary.

A serious revolutionary will not determine to not work with someone who's never had revolutionary politics or training just because when that person was in a LO they engaged in the debriefing process. A "revolutionary" that snitches is very different from someone who is put between a rock and a hard place of working with one of two organizations that are both engaged in anti-people activity. Plus, you never know who could be dropping kites on you. Just because someone exposes themselves to you doesn't mean they're the only threat on the mainline.

For the LOs to put an end to snitching among their membership, they will have to stop engaging in activities that might cause someone with love for their people to break ranks. When your practice does not coincide with the line

you put out, discipline will fail, no matter how brutal it might be. The vanguard cannot water down its politics just to let everyone know we're cool. Watering down politics is engaging in opportunism and will ultimately destroy the vanguard.

Another suggestion that has come up is that we look at people's histories, where they've been locked up and why they were sent there, as part of our intelligence gathering. This amounts to trusting the lumpen as long as the imperialists (or their petty-bourgeois bureaucrats) can vouch for them. This is a backwards and dangerous approach to security. The bourgeois approach to security is based on intelligence gathering and psychologizing individuals, while the proletariat must look to political line and consistent practice.

notes:

see MIM's 2005 Congress: Resolutions on Cell Organization for more discussion of the cell structure, why personal histories are irrelevant and security theory in general. ★

Radio Silence

by Cain

January 2010

The only strategy left for us revolutionaries to use who are still hemmed up within these U.S. luxury concentration camps is 'silence.' A worldwide tactic for naval warfare is 'radio silence' especially amongst submarines. When radio silence is initiated, the entire submarine goes silent. Thus the enemy doesn't know where this submarine is at, what its commander is planning next, etc. What do you suppose would happen if every prisoner incarcerated within every prison in Amerikkka stopped talking and refused to talk all at once and at the same time?

There's a hustler's story that I will use as an analogy in this situation. There was once two pimps just hanging out watching their ladies of the night work the strip. As a couple of their ladies walked by them joking and laughing out loud, one pimp turned to the other and said to him, "You hear that? That's music to my ears." The other pimp asked him, "Why's that?" The pimp answered, "Because as long as them hos are laughing and joking they're blind to what their lives really consist of." In a prison guard's case, an inmate's laughter, joking and constant talking is music to their ears.

Let us as revolutionary peoples go on a talking strike. This will for sure shake up the system. Silence makes people uncomfortable. It is psychological warfare. Psychologists employ this tactic when with their patients, as interrogators do with people they're questioning. How many people would still be free if they had just adhered to their Miranda rights, "you have the right to remain silent"? Even the good book of proverbs says "In the multitude of words is foolishness."

MIM(Prisons) responds: This comrade brings up an interesting tactic that has been used before. What makes it superior to some other

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...Suicide

We are not writing to tell you that you're exaggerating your despair, or that you shouldn't kill yourself because of some mystical reason like "sin." We are writing to remind you that your life is very valuable to the struggle to stop the same exact cruelties that have led you to this decision. We encourage you to become more involved in revolutionary struggle instead of suicide.

With this letter we have sent you an article from *MIM Theory 9: Psychology and Imperialism* entitled "Disavowing Suicide: Testimonial of a Woman Revolutionary." Her life experience may be somewhat different from yours, but her ability to turn her life into something useful for liberation and revolution is the same.

On page 41 of the article the author writes, "I remembered the Sartre quote in which he says that if you are not working on behalf of the oppressed, you are accomplice to their oppression." I think this quote is significant because it shows the political character of suicide. You wrote that you need to kill yourself to maintain some dignity and respect, but we would argue that you are just holding your life to bourgeois standards that aren't useful to stopping oppression. By proletarian standards, to truly have a life (or death) that maintains dignity and respect, one would have to devote their life to revolutionary struggle and the liberation of the oppressed. For someone like yourself, who supports the struggle against all forms of oppression, to remove your life as a resource from this world is to work in favor of the oppressors. You are helping the same oppressors you are trying to get away from with this hunger strike!

In your letter you wrote that you enjoyed the poetry on the pages of *Under Lock & Key*. This experience might be a good subject to write poetry about. Maybe you would like to write poetry for us?

I sent you a poetry guide with this letter which will get you more of an idea of what we look for in poems for *ULK*.

note: Also see "Losing Battles," *MIM Theory 5: Diet for a Small Red Planet*, p.51. As Huey Newton said, there is Revolutionary Suicide and Reactionary Suicide. Most revolutionaries in the First World are suicidal to some degree in that they reject safety and security in favor of fighting for justice. ★

Ra'd Lives On in Our Struggle

by MIM(Prisons)
March 2010

Thanks to those who continue to pass us information on what happened to Amare "Ra'd" Selton, as well as the many words of condolence. Though it is hard for us to say anything conclusive on what took place last September when he died in Attica, it has become more evident that the DOCS was ultimately behind what happened (see *ULK 12* for more info). As our comrade explains below, there is a constant struggle for many between staying alive to struggle and staying sane under extreme repression. For more on this topic read "Prisoner driven to suicide" in this issue.

To learn from Ra'd's sacrifice is to study strategy, and how to be effective in organizing for justice. As materialists, we also recognize that winnable battles are not always in the cards. Sometimes there is no question of whether we can win, only a question of whether we struggle or not before we lose. In such cases, our strategy must center on making these losses serve as examples to inspire and to expose. Ra'd continues to inspire those who knew him.

A New York prisoner writes:

I am writing to inform you and my comrades of the death of my mentor Amare "Ra'd" Selton. May Allah bless his soul. ... Ra'd was my boy, he's who a person with nothing would always look up to. Ra'd would embrace anybody who was struggling. Ra'd would pick anybody up who was down. If Ra'd saw another prisoner being assaulted by a police officer he'd help out any way he could. Ra'd was a good brother, may Allah be with him. Rest in Peacefulness, hold your head Ra'd!

A second New York prisoner writes:

I was in SHU with Amare back in 2003. He is a true rebel with a cause! May he rest in power! He was never the suicidal type, he was a warrior, a freedom fighter and he had 25 to Life, so he sought freedom by all means, even death.

I had hours to build with him and he always expressed his Muslim theory and stance against imperialism and white supremacy, which coincides with his murder, which I know was done by the pigs! He was a threat, that's why they isolated him in SHU for long, extended periods of time.

I met him and automatically connected with him because he has a passion to resist oppression and police brutality. So to know he got murdered by these pigs really was heart-wrenching. The pigs get away with it like they do when the pigs in the street shoot an unarmed Black or Brown brother/sister; it becomes justifiable homicide! This cannot continue to happen without some type of organized resistance. One cannot talk non-violent or peaceful resolutions with those sadistic pigs because they don't respect it. To be honest, I don't want to die in prison, I'm more worthwhile on the streets organizing, but there's only so much I can endure in this hell hole. I'm not reactionary, but we must demand our respect by any means! ★

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...Silence

sorts of strikes is that it is harder for the pigs to charge someone with some kind of rule violation for not talking. Of course, Malcolm X spent weeks in the hole for refusing to say his number when he first got to prison. And ultimately they often have the power to punish at will, regardless of the rules.

However, generic calls such as these have limited application. We print this as a discussion of possible tactics, but we cannot just throw ideas out on the wind and hope they catch on. We can never execute an effective strike without on-the-ground organizing. Only as part of an organization can we impose limits on those who wish to oppress us, as this comrade acknowledges.

One last criticism, this proposal is not very clear of its scope of application. To promote silence as a strategy would be suicidal for our movement, because our biggest battle is to spread information and organization. Now, thinking before we speak is a whole other story. A true revolutionary must speak and act in ways that fit in with the overall strategy for creating change. A childish culture of talking shit is a product of the lack of education and consciousness among the oppressed. So, to promote a code of conduct that involves only saying things that fit within our political goals, and knowing what to say when and to whom can only come after a thorough education of the population. There is much work for those isolated revolutionaries out there to do before attempting any type of strike or mass action. ★

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...Inspired

Our mistakes are many. We've been quick to accept a certain way of life. Look where that's gotten us. Our rehabilitation in prison is a joke. We're not rehabilitated, we're segregated. And we've allowed it by accepting it's the real way. It's not people. Wake up. Look between the lines. We're miserable because we allow it.

Unite. Put bullshit back in the garbage. Educate yourselves. Stand on your own 2 feet and fight the real fight.

MIM(Prisons) adds: The prison movement of the late '60s and early '70s was strong because of the unity in action around issues that affected all prisoners. We need to implement such a strategy, and not just focus on self as this comrade reiterates. It is up to leaders to step forward and lead this effort. This comrade acknowledges that they used to be narrow-minded in their approach but changed. The more leaders who step up, the more people will change and see unity in action as a reality. ★

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