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Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

Announcing:

The



in Prisons

[This statement was drafted by members of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, United Struggle from Within, the East Coast Consolidated Crip Organization, and the Black Order Revolutionary Organization, with input and review from other organizations and individuals working on peace and unity in U.S. prisons. If your organization wishes to join the United Front, you may submit your own statement of unity/support to Under Lock & Key.]

If the last 40 years have proven anything to us, it is that Amerika wants us at war with each other and locked in their prisons. The idea that banging is what we're just born into, as if we have no power over our own lives, is no longer acceptable if we want to survive. For the next generation to repeat what we have been through

would be genocidal. We embrace internationalism because we recognize that most of the people in the world face potentially genocidal conditions under imperialism and that there is strength in numbers. This is a call for peace, unity and understanding amongst the many prison organizations currently in opposition to each other and individual non-gang affiliated comrades alike to take on an approach that utilizes the strength of our numbers in revolutionary struggle.

We have awareness that there's nothing cool about the hardships we as gang members and petty criminals put ourselves, our families, our communities and each other through. If we have to struggle and if we have to sacrifice then it's more logical that we put our strength and resources collectively against one target - the oppressor.

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Organizing the Lumpen is Hard

by USW C-4 of United Struggle from Within
February 2011

Organizing the imprisoned lumpen within the United States is certainly nothing easy. However, speaking technically and from a materialist perspective, it should be relatively easy. As First World lumpen we face much more oppression than our oppressed nation counter parts who have ascended to the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie/labor aristocracy. Therefore, when conducting a proper class analysis within the United States it is the law of contradiction that tells us that those most oppressed in the economic sense by capitalism's contradictions in society will be the scientifically designated revolutionary vehicle. Having no proletariat to speak of within U.S. borders, besides perhaps the migratory workers, the next best thing or class of people resembling a revolutionary vehicle becomes, in our case, the bourgeoisified lumpen.

Therefore, as any good communist should know the heart of social change, the very meat and marrow of it all within U.S. borders rests with the lumpen. And so in knowing all this there is still a question to be begged. Why is it so damn hard?!

The lumpen as a class is the direct product of the capitalist mode of production and has its ideology rooted and embedded in the bourgeois philosophy of "me, myself and I." It is this

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Middle East and North Africa: People's Just Struggles Lead to Cosmetic Changes Without Revolutionary Leadership

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
February 2011

Starting in Tunisia on December 17, and spreading across the region in January and February, the people of north Africa and the Middle East are taking to the streets to fight brutal dictatorships in their respective countries. Taken by surprise by the force and longevity of these protest movements, the various imperialist-backed regimes are working hard to come up with changes that will pacify the people without fundamentally changing the system. At this stage, these just struggles of the people are primarily targeting the figureheads in government, but the real problem lies in the system itself and at this stage we are only seeing some shuffling of the leadership.

Protests are sweeping across the region as the people are emboldened and inspired by the actions and results of those in neighboring countries, even moving further south into other parts of Africa. As this article is being written,

there are reports of uprisings in Bahrain, Libya, Iran, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Djibouti, Syria, Morocco and Jordan. In other parts of Africa, less visible in the media, popular revolts are also happening in Sudan, Gabon and Ethiopia.(1) Protesters are facing violent repression by the governments in most of these countries.

The response in the United States has been strong condemnation of Mubarak and other leaders targeted by protests (among those paying attention). Arabs may falsely look to Americans as friends in their current struggles. But where was this Amerikan "support" for the last thirty years as their country bank-rolled Mubarak with billions of dollars? In reality, their reaction is a sick reminder of what went down in Iraq. The same seething opposition to

Mubarak was aimed at Saddam Hussein, resulting in the deaths of millions of Iraqis and the destruction of one of the most developed Arab countries. Iraq is just one example to demonstrate how Amerikan racism quickly lends itself to popular support for militarism, the savior of post-WWII U.S. global dominance.

Economics of the People's Struggles

There are many differences between these mostly Arabic-speaking countries, but the one common enemy of the people there is the enemy of the people throughout the world: imperialism. The question of real change hinges on whether the exploited countries that are now mobilizing stay within the U.S.-dominated economic structure, or whether they look to each other and turn their back on the exploiter nations. While militarily and politically controlled by the United States, their economic relationship to imperialism is dominated by the European Union who

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What is *Under Lock & Key*?

Under Lock & Key (ULK) is the voice of the anti-imperialist movement within prisons in the United States. Fighting the injustice system is just one part of the anti-imperialist struggle, and it is important that comrades not lose sight of the connections to the larger battle. For this reason, in addition to news about prisons and prison struggles, we also publish more general news and analysis important to the anti-imperialist movement. We welcome support and collaboration from those who are focused only on prison issues, but we also challenge them to see the importance of carrying out their work as part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy.

ULK serves as a forum to develop and promote agitational campaigns led by MIM(Prisons) and USW. 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).

ULK is edited and published by MIM(Prisons) and mostly written and illustrated by USW and other United Front organizations behind bars. ULK comes out every other month, and is free for U.S. prisoners. For people outside of prison, all issues of ULK, plus additional reports from within U.S. prisons, are available on MIM(Prisons)'s website: www.prisoncensorship.info

What is Imperialism?

Imperialism is an economic system that V.I. Lenin defined as "the highest stage of capitalism." It became well pronounced in the early 1900s and is defined by the globalization of capital, the dominance of finance capital and the division of the world into imperialist and exploited nations; the latter Maoists see as the principal contradiction in the world today.

As the economic system that dominates the world, imperialism determines much of the material reality that all inhabitants of planet Earth face today, including war, poverty and environmental destruction. This means that the status quo promoted by imperialist interests is the biggest hindrance to change. As the dominant imperialist power, both financially and militarily, the United States generally serves as the primary target of our attacks as anti-imperialists.

What is the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons?

MIM(Prisons) is a cell of revolutionaries serving the oppressed masses inside U.S. prisons. We uphold the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and work from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat. Our ideology is based in dialectical materialism, which means we work from objective reality to direct change rather than making decisions based on our subjective feelings about things. Defining our organization as a cell means that we are independent of other organizations, but see ourselves as part of a greater Maoist movement within the United States and globally.

Imperialism is the number one enemy of the majority of the world's people; we cannot achieve our goal of ending all oppression without overthrowing imperialism. History has shown that the imperialists will wage war before they will allow an end to oppression. Revolution will become a reality within the United States as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

Since we live within an imperialist country, there is no real proletariat -- the class of economically exploited workers. Yet there is a significant class excluded from the economic relations of production under modern imperialism that we call the lumpen. Within the United States, a massive prison system has developed to manage large populations, primarily from oppressed nations and many of whom come from the lumpen class.

Within U.S. borders, the principal contradiction is between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Our enemies call us racists for pointing out that the white oppressor nation historically exploited and continues to oppress other nations within the United States. But race is a made-up idea to justify oppression through ideas of inferiority. Nation is a concept based in reality that is defined by a group's land, language, economy and culture. Individuals from oppressed nations taking up leadership roles within imperialist America does not negate this analysis. The average conditions of the oppressed nations are still significantly different from the oppressor nation overall.

As revolutionary internationalists, we support the self-determination of all nations and peoples. Today, the U.S. prison system is a major part of the imperialist state used to prevent the self-determination of oppressed nations. It is for this reason that we see prisoners in this country as being at the forefront

of any anti-imperialist and revolutionary movement.

MIM(Prisons) is our shorthand for the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons. Our name stems from the legacy of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM), and their party based in North America that did most of the prisoner support work that is the focus of what we now do. When that party degenerated, the movement turned to a cell-based strategy that we uphold as more correct than a centralized party given our conditions in the United States today. Our focus on prisoner support is not a dividing line question for us. In fact, we believe that there is a dire need for Maoists to do organizing and educational work in many areas in the United States. We hope some people are inspired by our example around prisons and apply it to their own work to create more Maoist cells and broaden the Maoist movement behind enemy lines.

MIM(Prisons) distinguishes ourselves from other groups on the six points below. We consider other organizations actively upholding these points to be fraternal.

1. Communism is our goal. Communism is a society where no group has power over any other group.

2. Dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary. In a dictatorship of the proletariat the formerly exploited majority dictates to the minority (who promoted exploitation) how society is to be run. In the case of imperialist nations, a Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations (JDPON) must play this role where there is no internal proletariat or significant mass base that favors communism.

3. We promote a united front with all who oppose imperialism. The road to the JDPON over the imperialist nations involves uniting all who can be united against imperialism. We cannot fight imperialism and fight others who are engaged in life and death conflicts with imperialism at the same time. Even imperialist nation classes can be allies in the united front under certain conditions.

4. A parasitic class dominates the First World countries. As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM Thought 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 so-called workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy; they are not a vehicle for Maoism. Those who work in the economic interests of the First World labor aristocracy form the mass base for imperialism's tightening death-grip on the Third World.

5. New bourgeoisies will form under socialism. Mao led the charge to expose the bourgeoisie that developed within the communist party in the Soviet Union and the campaign to bombard the headquarters in his own country of China. Those experiences demonstrated the necessity of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class struggle does not end until the state has been abolished and communism is reached.

6. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was the furthest advancement toward communism in history. We uphold the Soviet Union until the death of Stalin in 1953, followed by the People's Republic of China through 1976 as the best examples of modern socialism in practice. The arrest of the "Gang of Four" in China and the rise of Khrushchev in the Soviet Union marked the restoration of capitalism in those countries. Other experiments in developing socialism in the 20th century failed to surpass the Soviet model (ie. Albania), or worse, stayed within the capitalist mode of production, generally due to a failure to break with the Theory of Productive Forces.

What is United Struggle from Within?

United Struggle from Within (USW) is a MIM(Prisons)-led mass organization for U.S. prisoners. USW is explicitly anti-imperialist in leading campaigns on behalf of U.S. prisoners in alliance with national liberation struggles in the United States and around the world. USW won't champion struggles which are not in the interests of the international proletariat. USW will also not choose one nation's struggles over other oppressed nations' struggles. USW should work independently, but under the guidance of MIM(Prisons) to build public opinion and independent institutions of the oppressed in order to obtain state power independent of imperialism. Members don't have to agree with MIM(Prisons)'s cardinal points (see above) but they can't consciously disagree with any of them.

Want more info on the concepts/topics on this page? Ask for it!

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...Announcing the United Front for Peace

Too many of us are already in jail. To engage in reckless behavior that could get us locked up or locked down only helps Amerika control us. Tupac Shakur, who also helped draft a code of principles to unite lumpen organizations, referred to the Thug Life stage of his life and his music as the "high school" phase for ghetto youth. By the time he was locked in prison he was growing and expanding beyond Thug Life, while recognizing it would always be a part of him. He referred to this as his "college" phase, saying that some people never get out of high school. Our comrades often draw parallels between the intellectual growth of college students and prisoners. But prison should not be where certain groups of people must go to learn and grow.

A parallel example is found in the ideology of the Almighty Latin King Queen Nation, which describes its followers passing from the Primitive Stage to the Conservative (or Mummy) Stage to the New King Stage. The Primitive Stage is usually characterized by gang-banging and reckless behavior. The Conservative Stage steps away from previous recklessness, distancing oneself from the whole organization. "The New King recognizes that the time for revolution is at hand... A revolution that will bring freedom to the enslaved, to all Third World People... The New King is the end product of complete awareness, perceiving three hundred and sixty degrees of enlightenment. He strives for world unity. For him, there are no horizons between races, sexes and senseless labels. For him, everything has meaning, human life is placed above materialistic values. He throws himself completely into the battlefield, ready to sacrifice his life for the ones he loves, for the sake of humanization." (*Kingism: Three Stages from The King Manifesto*)

Despite our different paths of evolution over the years, all of our organizations share a common history that arose from the need to defend oneself and one's community in a society that has always kept us as outsiders. It is sad that we must find ourselves in the most horrid of oppressive situations (i.e. control units or death row) before our organizations can begin working together in our common interests. The purpose of this united front is to incorporate that commonality as part of our continued growth. Unity evolves from the inside out. Once we've begun to grow as individuals, our first task is to build unity within our group around the principles of the united front.

As we work to build unity with others, we must remember that rumors are tactics of pigs and snitches. Too many people have a habit of talking shit and creating disunity, as if it's a game. Comrades should know when to speak, where to speak, what to speak, to whom to speak, how to speak and when to keep absolutely silent.

There have been a number of attempts to unite various sets and cliques under one banner for a positive cause. But when such efforts are led by the criminally-minded these causes are only served superficially and the organizations continue to work in the interests of the greed and power of the few.

In the United States we are surrounded by wealth and excess, which breeds a sick love for their system of exploitation. Yet success for much of the oppressed nations is still handed out like winning lotto tickets, whether as a boss on the street or a ball player or other entertainer. And therein, we become oppressors of our own community, nation and the rest of the world. Meanwhile, our oppressed peoples as a whole are not allowed to determine their own destinies as nations.

The easier way out of the ghetto is to become overt oppressors by joining the white man's army. The imperialist wars of aggression are wars against the oppressed nations of the world. We are killed and injured in these wars to help kill and control the oppressed people the world over. To join the military of the oppressor (United States) is to betray and sell out our collective peoples.

We fully recognize that whether we are conscious of it or not, we are already "united" -- in our suffering and our daily repression. We face the same common enemy. We are trapped in the same oppressive conditions. We wear the same prison clothes, we go to the same hellhole box (isolation), we get brutalized by the same racist pigs. We are one people, no matter your hood, set or nationality. We know "we need unity" -- but unity of a different type from the unity we have at present. We want to move from a unity in oppression to unity in serving the people and striving toward national independence.

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United Front for Peace in Prisons – Statement of Principles

March 2011

The basis of any real unity comes from an agreement on certain key ideas. This statement does not grant authority to any party over any other party. We are mutually accountable to each other to uphold these points in order to remain active participants in this united front.

★**PEACE:** WE organize to end the needless conflicts and violence within the U.S. prison environment. The oppressors use divide and conquer strategies so that we fight each other instead of them. We will stand together and defend ourselves from oppression.

★**UNITY:** WE strive to unite with those facing the same struggles as us for our common interests. To maintain unity we have to keep an open line of networking and communication, and ensure we address any situation with true facts. This is needed because of how the pigs utilize tactics such as rumors, snitches and fake communications to divide and keep division among the oppressed. The pigs see the end of their control within our unity.

★**GROWTH:** WE recognize the importance of education and freedom to grow in order to build real unity. We support members within our organization who leave and embrace other political organizations and concepts that are within the anti-imperialist struggle. Everyone should get in where they fit in. Similarly, we recognize the right of comrades to leave our organization if we fail to live up to the principles and purpose of the United Front for Peace in Prisons.

★**INTERNATIONALISM:** WE struggle for the liberation of all oppressed people. While we are often referred to as "minorities" in this country, and we often find those who are in the same boat as us opposing us, our confidence in achieving our mission comes from our unity with all oppressed nations who represent the vast majority globally. We cannot liberate ourselves when participating in the oppression of other nations.

★**INDEPENDENCE:** WE build our own institutions and programs independent of the United States government and all its branches, right down to the local police, because this system does not serve us. By developing independent power through these institutions we do not need to compromise our goals.

How to join the United Front for Peace in Prisons?

★ Study and uphold the five principles of the united front.

★ Send your organization's name and a statement of unity to MIM(Prisons). Your statement can explain what the united front principles mean to your organization, how they relate to your work, why they are important, etc.

★ Develop peace and unity between factions where you are at on the basis of opposing oppression of all prisoners and oppressed people in general.

★ Send reports on your progress to *Under Lock & Key*. Did you develop a peace treaty or protocol that is working? Send it in for others to study. Is your unity based on actions? Send us reports on the organizing you are doing.

★ Keep educating your members. The more educated your members are, the more unity you can develop, and the stronger your organization can become. Unity comes from the inside out. By uniting internally, we can better unite with others as well. Contact MIM(Prisons)'s Free Political Books for Prisoners Program if you need additional materials to educate your members in history, politics and economics.

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backward bourgeois thinking which we must first focus on defeating. Victory on the ideological front should be our first real goal. The more people we win over on the ideological front, the more successful we'll be in accomplishing all other tasks. This is the principal contradiction that needs to be resolved with respect to organizing the lumpen.

ULK as an ideological weapon is a good tool in helping us to win over the prisoner population in a conscious way to not only their own class-based cause, but, more importantly, to that of the truly oppressed and exploited: the international proletariat and peasantry, i.e. the Third World masses.

ULK and now USW, with the direct ideological assistance provided by our Maoist teachers at MIM(Prisons), are currently spreading Maoist thought amongst and throughout the prisoner population. With all this said and being done therefore it should be relatively easier to organize the imprisoned population. So why is it still so damn hard?

The answer once again to the aforementioned and repeatedly asked question is: ideology. Case in point, take the California Department of Corruption for example, the biggest warehouse of people in all of the United States. The imprisoned lumpen within this golden gulag might very well be one of the toughest nuts to crack for USW and so it should serve as a case study for MIM(Prisons).

The CA Dept. of Corruptions is the very focus of many of the internal contradictions of Amerikkkan imperialism peculiarly personified in national oppression and class warfare. For that matter just about any Amerikkkan prison is a perpetrator of these superstructurally demanded operations. Killa'fornia however differs from most other states in the way in which the lumpen organizes itself. It's not merely a matter of organizational differences as compared to other LOs in other states, rather a difference in ideology of each nation-based LO. Perhaps this is why state repression is so intense, as well as carried out over and beyond the call of duty by prison administrators here.

Just as your average Amerikan foot soldier believes that fighting Islamic anti-imperialists is their number one job as "freedom loving Americans," so does your average pig on the street, as well as those working the prisons, believe that the biggest threat to internal security and class interests inside "the homeland" is the lumpen.

While on the California "mainline" it is easy for a USW comrade to bang their head on the ideological brick wall of backward-bourgeois-individualistic thinking when attempting to organize the lumpen for their own interests. Failed attempts to facilitate peace treaties between LOs or failed attempts to organize peaceful protests over real issues doesn't say much about a comrade's effectiveness while working within these conditions. Being that prison is only a microcosm of its given society, and knowing that the

contradictions of the former are only equal or greater, for the most part in the most extreme sense, than that of the latter, deems that that principal contradiction that needs to be resolved in order for us to begin successfully organizing the lumpen is that of ideology. The difficult thing here is to persuade the prisoner population to become class conscious; the rest is relatively easy.

"The correctness or otherwise of the ideological line and political line decides everything. When the party has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns then it can have guns; if it has no political power then it can have political power." - Mao Zedong

What applies to parties can usually be applied to individuals.

Some comrades in USW and MIM(Prisons) might believe that the important thing here when building class consciousness throughout the imprisoned populations is in getting lumpen organizations to adopt a proletarian worldview. If we do this however, all we're really getting is a revisionism of sorts because individuals won't really bother to struggle politically with themselves, they'll just "toll the bell" so to speak. Of course we'll always try to attract as many followers as we can, but only if they're all able and willing to lead.

Some might think that if you remove the barrier of lumpen organizational structure, i.e. the LO itself, that this act in itself will automatically gain us troops to the tenth degree because the lumpen will then be that much more progressive. True, some individuals who either willingly leave their LO or are forcibly removed from their car do indeed become progressive in one way or another. Some delve into mysticism wishing for forgiveness and a better tomorrow, others become class conscious and take up the struggle of ending oppression in all its forms. For the most part however they just keep on doing the same old shit. "Same shit, different day," as they like to say.

Just as we can only build socialism one country at a time, we can only revolutionize the prison population one person at a time; and just as the theory of simultaneous world revolution is an incorrect one, so is it incorrect to think that we can revolutionize whole LOs all at once or anything close to that.

I say all this to make the point that the one organizational barrier for the most part isn't the end all be all when it comes to preventing the prison population's revolutionization process. Some comrades might know what I'm talking about if you're housed in an environment where there are no real prison politics to speak of, that is to say you don't have to worry about another prisoner trying to pressure you to conform to socially accepted and required norms.

A PC yard shows you this when you see people who have left one LO on the mainline only to join another one on a SNY, playing the same games and reconstructing the same old hierarchy and policies that got 'em to a PC yard to

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The Subjection of the Incarcerated

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
February 2011

I read in the September/October 2010 issue an article written by a prisoner in the Pennsylvania structure. He said, "[guys in this jail] are only concerned with BET, sports, 40 cent ice cream tickets and who's sucking whose dick... they don't stand up for shit except count time."

I believe these statements are very correct. Not only for the Pennsylvania structures, but all penal structures throughout the United States. I've read every single article in that issue by many different prisoners throughout these structures. I can relate to every last one of them, and I'm pretty sure that all prisoners within the system can relate to every single article just the same.

These structures differ only so slightly, only by name, location and modeled design, but their inner mechanisms pretty much work the same way. Everyone complains of the disunity and betrayal between their fellow prisoners. Noone wants to stand up against the powerful structure that has the ability to deploy swarms of guards equipped with body armor shields and pepper spray to counter any resistance from its "subjects." Even though we outnumber them, in the end, they still seem to come out on top. They seem unstoppable, victorious, and mighty. Prisoners give these "warriors" seemingly honorable names such as "The Goon Squad", "The Turtles," "The Team," "The Run Down Boys", and "The Squad."

Riots and uprisings are quickly squashed with no positive results, other than more lockdowns, revocation of good time and parole, restrictions on telephones and visitations and all other privileges of the prisoners that were provided by their "structure." I relate and share in the suffering and pains of every one of my comrades.

Behavioral Psychology

But do you know why there is so much disunity between prisoners? Do you understand how the human mind works? Do you understand what I mean by the term "structure?" Do you know how dangerous and manipulative your institutional psychologist or "psych" could really be? Do you know why all modern prisoners must be built and structured into many individual pods? Do you know what your mind frame is being subjected to, by the master psychologists and anthropologists who designed and masterminded the inner workings and mechanics that make these structures work so differently from those of the 70s and 80s?

In the world of psychology, there's a basic and very fundamental term known as "Classical Conditioning." Classical Conditioning means any type of learning through which an organism learns to associate one event or object within

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...Psychology

the environment to which the organism or person responds with another. For example, when we see or smell delicious food we are tempted to eat, or feel hungry. Or when we see a very attractive person, we become sexually aroused, thanks to certain hormones that are being secreted within our bodies.

These natural responses to events or objects in our environment are our Classical Conditioning. It is in our nature to respond in this way to these types of stimuli. (Ivan Pavlov 1849-1936, *Conditioned Reflexes: An investigation of the physiological activity of the cerebral cortex.*) [ULK Editor: Classical Conditioning is actually the replacement of the natural occurring stimulus (like the smell of food) with an unrelated stimulus (like the ringing of a bell). Pavlov famously made dogs salivate with this method by ringing a bell. The idea that anything that triggers a physiological response is "natural" is often used to imply that humans are hard wired to respond this way. On the contrary, most, if not all, of our sexual arousal is triggered by socially conditioned responses (see Operant Conditioning below). A scientific approach would be to overthrow the patriarchy and then see what triggers sexual arousal in humans. Things that trigger sexual arousal under communism and under the patriarchy would be good candidates for "hard wired" responses. Similarly, the smell of certain fast food might make some Americanized humans salivate while making other people nauseous.]

The next most basic and fundamental term in the world of psychology is known as "Operant Conditioning." Operant Conditioning means a type of learning in which the consequences of behavior are manipulated so as to increase or decrease the frequency of an existing response or to shape an entirely new response. For example, in order to be paroled and released back into society, you must respond with good behavior throughout your incarceration. Or, if you break the law, the response of the controlling authorities will be to convict you and then send you to prison.

The most notable researcher of Operant Conditioning is a psychologist by the name of B.F. Skinner. In his book, "Beyond Freedom and Dignity" (1971) Skinner quotes "free will is a myth and a person's behavior is always shaped and controlled by others - parents, teachers, peers, advertising and television." In this book, Skinner argues that societies must systematically shape the behavior of their members for the larger good.

Now that we are familiar with the terms Classical and Operant Conditioning, we will lean more towards the Operant Conditioning within the walls of these structures because Operant Conditioning deals strictly with the manipulation of human behavior.

Operant Conditioning in Prisons

As of right now, I'm confined to solitary con-

finement, in a single cell for 23 hours a day for a total of 570 days. My original time was 90 days for a "shank" or "shaped weapon" that was allegedly found in my cell during a shake down at a time when we were having a lot of stab-bings within our structure. When they brought me down to the hole, they tried to give me a cellmate, but I refused. Due to this refusal, I was issued a ticket, which was then reviewed by a hearing examiner, who gave me an extra 30 days in the hole for "refusing to obey a direct order." Every day, the guards would order me to take a cellmate, but I refused. Within one month I totaled 570 days, and counting.

One must be thinking, why is he putting himself through all of this unnecessary punishment? Why don't he just take a cellmate and get out of the hole?

The truth is, I'm actually avoiding extra punishment, not physically but mentally. The hole is a behavior modification mechanism within the structure that employs a form of deprivation to manipulate human behavior. It is not meant for two human organisms to occupy for any period of time. But due to overcrowding in all of the Pennsylvania's structures, people are being forced to cell up and co-exist with each other under these harsh conditions. A man needs privacy and time to himself in order to cope in the best way he can during this time of extreme deprivation. But instead prisoners within my structure are forced to double cell. Under these conditions cellmates are known to fight with each other for something as minor as using the bathroom at a certain time of night. Whereas in general population if the same two individuals were cellmates an unorthodox or out of timed bathroom break would never have been a problem.

After their fight these same two prisoners are then forced to kiss and make up and endure each other's differences as well as their deprivations. Under these conditions, stress and mental anguish are always present. This type of stress results in bad health and hair loss. It is much healthier to remain in solitary where one doesn't have to deal with the next man's deprivations as well as his own. I see and hear cellmates argue and fight each other every day from where I'm at. A lot of the cellmates do not get along and "pull stunts" to force the commanding shift officer to move them in with someone more suitable.

The manipulation of Operant Conditioning can be so powerful, many prisoners take abuse from their structure's establishment in order that they may make parole and go home to their families. Within my structure, the prisoners are forced to take programs and work jobs that start at 19 cents an hour, otherwise they won't make parole. Would you stay in prison for 10 years, or adjust your behavior and go home within 5 or 4 1/4 on pre-release?

These individuals who are trying to go home, as well as the weak prisoners, are then placed within the same housing unit along with the strong, long term more militant prisoners

- who, by the way happen to be our comrades in the struggle. With these different individuals with different goals in mind, any type of unity or grouping together for one common cause is gonna be difficult.

Whenever the penal system changes a policy that we are in opposition to, only a few will be able to stand up while the majority of these strategically placed so-called convicts will turn their backs and endure the abuse in order to be released from prison or maintain possession of their privileges.

We can't shut down the kitchens, because a majority of the prisoners who are working there are parole mandated. They would rather deal with the abuse and go home. Hunger strikes are iffy. A riot these days will consist of no more than 300 people, which is easily contained as soon as they seal off the individual pods or units and lock the prison structure down. Then they turn us against each other by offering the unfortunate and the "have nots" a radio or television set, in return for spying and telling on their comrades' movements.

One day, a guard burnt one of our comrades for a meal right here in the hole. Only 7 of us held our food trays and refused to return them in protest of the injustice that was carried out. Those that gave their tray back, all of them stated that they didn't want to get a ticket, that they were trying to get out of the hole as soon as possible.

The ones who designed the program structure, the parole structure, the commissary and privilege rights (the "brains") are the college educated psychologists who we will never see. They are the ones who created this form of behavior modification.

Because of this, a division is wedged in between our factions, causing a chain reaction of conflict amongst ourselves. The ones who have a little bit of money, shun and look down upon the one who is broke. Even if the one who doesn't have any money on his books had lived more prosperous in the streets. The young prisoners take our older comrades for granted because they are old. Thus creating a huge intellectual and traditional gap between the two.

Phillip Zimbardo is a psychologist most notable for his work on social roles. A social role, as defined by Zimbardo is a "socially defined behavior considered appropriate for individuals occupying certain positions within a given group." (P.G. Zimbardo, "Pathology of Imprisonment" (1972) 'Society,' 9, 4-8.) The Stanford Prison Experiment is an experiment in which Phillip Zimbardo simulated a prison experience. College students were randomly assigned to be either guards or prisoners. The guards, wearing uniform and carrying small clubs, strictly enforced harsh rules. The prisoners were stripped naked, searched and deloused. Then they were given prison uniforms, assigned numbers, and locked away in small bare cells. The guards quickly adapted to their new role, some even to the point of becoming heartless and sadistic.

Continued on next page...

Criminal Organization, or is Organizing the Crime?

by a Wisconsin prisoner
December 2010

[Below are excerpts from a proposal from a comrade. - ULK Editor]

One of the greatest leaders to teach us how to move lumpen organizations (LOs) to the next level by applied science was the beloved Brotha Malcolm X. While many before him spoke about the issues of self-determination and human rights, his was the most vocal, and his articulation was more relevant to us with street and hood ethos because he was once a pimp, hustler and to some degree, a gangster.

... One of the first things I strive to illuminate to a student is the application of these ideas to the present oppression that lumpen organizations suffer without understanding their legitimate human rights to exist through the Universal Human Rights of Self-Determination. Incorporating the fundamentals of legality and sociology, I posit:

"If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein."

-Robert H. Jackson. *Supreme Court Ruling in West Virginia Dept. of Ed. v. Barnette* (1943).

and,

"History should teach us. . . that in times of high emotional excitement, minority parties and groups which advocate extremely unpopular social or governmental innovations will always be typed as criminal gangs and attempts will always be made to drive them out."

-Associate Justice, *Hugo Black dissent in Barenblatt v. U.S., 360 U.S. 109, At. 159* (1959).

Hugo Black ought to know, as a member of the outlaw and terrorist network KKK before stepping into the justice position.

... Common sense illuminates that if a general continues to go out to battle using the same failed approaches and armory that has proven to be counter-productive because it is not only known, studied and mastered by the opposing forces, but they are the ones who designed it, s/he will fail. S/he must retreat and re-strategize and not only restock, but seek new armory to do battle.

Even before I became an astute student of the Art of Vita or student of Sun Tzu, and was in my street hustling mode, I knew early on that once one of us got caught hustling a particular mode or game, it was time to change strategy. Or to put it more simply, if that dope house got raided, it was time to move to a new locale.

Yet in terms of strategy, a lot of LOs think

we can continue in the same old hustle scheme. Even more harmful is the individual who thinks this way. They don't realize they are helping the forces of hate justify their "collective punishment" of the lumpen as a class.

... It's a betrayal to the struggle for street formations to still be living and accepting this kind of treatment that affects us on the street and in prison. How many generations of our people are in prison from each individual formation? People need to stop accepting this mentality of inferiority, that we are criminals for trying to define our own futures.

MIM(Prisons) responds: The right to organize for self-determination is denied regularly to the oppressed nations in the United States. Following the downfall of the most successful party to represent the Black nation, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the imperialists went about a conscious effort to divide the oppressed along class interests by integrating the petty bourgeoisie and further criminalizing the lumpen. As a result any independent oppressed nation organization today is automatically labeled as criminal, terrorist or a security threat with little resistance from the oppressed nation petty bourgeoisie and, as always, loud support from the white nation.

The failed strategies for self-determination through capitalist business models, legal or illegal, need to be left behind for a righteous collective struggle to be free from oppression. Not only will the lumpen find their own power in reuniting around this struggle, but they will begin to find allies in other groups when they stand up for true self-determination. Self-determination is earned, not guaranteed. ★

... Continued from previous page **...Psychology**

One guard remembered forcing prisoners to clean toilets with their bare hands. And the prisoners began to act debased and subservient. The role playing became too real - so much so that the experiment had to be ended in only 6 days.

That was just an experiment, play acting. But you see once an individual becomes wrapped up in a certain social role how far it can lead. Zimbardo conducted this experiment back in 1972, but we are in the real thing today. Once these guys adapt to certain roles and behaviors, the result is what we see being acted out today.

So, what are we left with? The answer is simple - it's knowledge. My comrades, prison is a mental struggle, it always had been. We must evolve mentally. Study psychology, and get good at it. Study political science, and get good at it. Study anthropology, and get good at it. We must evolve and turn our cells into think tanks. Learn and understand how the penal system structure controls and manipulates human behavior.

Stop taking psychological medication in any form, be it a sleep inducer or antidepressant. For when you are released you will be subjected to

withdrawals whenever deprived which may lead you into narcotic abuse. If you can't sleep, read and learn meditation and breathing exercises, heal yourself. If you're depressed, meditation and inner calmness works wonders on the mind.

When we are able to show and prove that our solution is better, the younger ones will follow and we will grow in numbers in time. For now, my comrades, we are all in the same boat. Let's not be upset with the younger ones or the ignorant who refuse to unite. The manipulators who control these structures have made sure that the consequences will outweigh the rewards by far.

The weight of the structure sits heavy on those who need to get home to their families. The younger ones are easily manipulated, just give them a television and some food, and the jail could burn to the ground for all they care. As long as the power don't shut off.

Prison today is more like a mental hospital. With the number of the mentally ill growing in numbers every year, psych meds dim the intelligence of the individual, making him/her slow as the years go by. Understand what you're really being subjected to within your structure. Learn to adapt and adjust, be independent.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This analysis of prisons using classical psychological tools is useful for revolutionaries because it helps to uncover the methods and goals of those who design and run the Amerikan criminal injustice system. This comrade is right that the system is built to discourage and prevent organizing and unity. It's not that prisoners who are passive are inherently evil, they are just doing what the system is pushing them to do, and resistance is no easy task. Similarly, brutal COs are not just evil individuals. They are playing a role like the students in the experiment. This role cannot be abolished until capitalism itself is abolished.

For our comrades who do stand up against all this, we must know that the struggle is long and difficult. But as this comrade points out, we will grow and unite others as we stick to our message and discipline. For more on MIM(Prisons)'s position on psychology, check out the magazine *MIM Theory* 9 or our article *Mental Health: a Maoist Perspective* from ULK 15. ★

Segregation for Observing Black August Continues

by Amaru of Black Order Revolutionary Organization
March 2011

As suspected, our appeal to the corrupted grievance system was denied. It has been decided that we continue our punishment here in Administrative Segregation (Ad-Seg), all because we 16 Brothers were observing Black August. These pigs can stop a revolutionary but they will never stop a revolution, by the words of Brother Fred Hampton. Black August is a peoples' holiday, so why should I be punished for it? It's a proven fact that this administration used my observation to place and keep me in Ad-Seg. ★

Ex-Capo Joins Peace Agreement

by an Aztlán Reformer
March 2011

I am an ex-Barrio Azteca prison gang capo (leader), now acting on an individual level for any peace movement like yours. Congratulations for taking your valuable time in creating this important movement. I see nothing wrong with it, but may I ask, where are the Aztlán lumpen organizations at? Is this movement only a Black power peace movement? I see no Aztlán reformers acting as contributors. Am I the only Aztlán reformer in your peace movement?

...I honestly think this great movement needs backup accords and contracts that can assure the support of other organizations wherever they call homebase, especially for voting, protest or problem solving, etc.

MIM(Prisons) responds: The United Front for Peace in Prisons is something that has been the undercurrent of letters from comrades and dialogues that MIM(Prisons) has been part of for many years. The formalization under the proposed statement of principles (see page 3) has been in the works for over a year, with a number of participants from different nationalities and lumpen organizations.

It should be remembered that development is never even. Certain regions, organizations and nationalities may be quicker to develop in political consciousness. If you don't see your voice being represented, shout out like this comrade did.

MIM(Prisons) has always been an internationalist organization (it's in our name). So you won't find any favoritism here of one nation's development over another. We've had contacts from every major lumpen organization write in in support of something like what has been developed. But for the most part those organizations are very decentralized, and our contacts are isolated individuals. This United Front is one common expression of those isolated individuals, including the writer above, from various regions, groups and oppressed nationalities.

But the United Front is not a governing body. We believe it is up to comrades on the ground to draw up any necessary accords and contracts to develop real peace on a mass level. Conditions will vary, and agreements will too as a result. The United Front will be a forum to share those experiences and successes, to help and encourage others. It will also be a place to struggle with our potential allies who have not yet joined in these efforts.

But this is just the beginning. We are finally ready to take this to the masses, where the ultimate form and the level of participation will be determined in practice. Our task now is to popularize the principles across the U.S. prison population, and eventually, the whole lumpen class. ★

Call for More Gender Struggles in USW Work

by Queen Boudicca of United Struggle from Within
January 2011

In making a determination of what organizing strategy and tactical approach will be most effective in achieving the revolutionary goals of a political vanguard, we must first conduct a dialectical analysis of our strategic objectives. Thus, we begin our examination with an overall look at our political line. What are our general positions and our main objectives? Which of these should be given priority? What tactics will best advance the struggle for liberation, justice, and equality?

In the United States, the most oppressed groups are prisoners, First Nations, and sexual minorities/wimmin. Therefore, it is these specific groups to which I give priority and focus here. [We have excluded the author's analysis of First Nations to focus this article. - Editor] How can we better organize these groups? What tactics have worked in the past?

The Congress Report 2010 by MIM(Prisons) makes no mention of wimmin or LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender, Queer) prisoners, or of issues and projects specifically affecting these groups.(1) As a transgender revolutionary feminist prisoner, and a USW comrade, I feel that the absence or exclusion of these oppressed groups from the discussion is of significant concern. Whenever MIM(Prisons) is confronted on the issue of gender, it merely refers to the old back issue of *MIM Theory 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism*. But what is being done now, today, in regards to gender oppression and the advancement of revolutionary feminism within the ranks of MIM(Prisons)?

The concept of principal contradiction comes from dialectical materialism, which says that everything can be divided into opposing forces.(2) The revolutionary feminist struggle against patriarchy is by no means secondary to the principal contradiction in the world today between imperialist countries and the oppressed nations they exploit. Sartre has observed that: "if the feminist struggle maintained its ties with the class struggle, it could shake a society in a way that would completely overturn it."(3)

The struggle for gender equality also includes transgender wimmin and other sexual minorities. The situation of transgender prisoners, particularly, is so vexing to prison administrators that the National Commission on Correctional Health Care has drafted a position statement titled "Transgender Health Care in Correctional Settings," which reads in part: "when determined to be medically necessary for a particular inmate, hormone therapy should be initiated and sex-reassignment surgery considered on a case-by-case basis."(4)

Transgender females, especially in prison, are often discriminated against and sexually abused in much the same way as biological wimmin, but far worse. Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA) has introduced a much needed

piece of legislation, the Prison Abuse Remedies Act (PARA), which would end the widespread impunity enjoyed by prison officials when inmates are raped on their watch. It would change the worst parts of the PLRA, which makes it virtually impossible for prison rape survivors to seek redress in court.(5) Attorney General Eric Holder and Justice Department officials are dragging their feet on implementation of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission's recommended "Standards for the Prevention, Detection, Response, and Monitoring of Sexual Abuse in Detention," the deadline for which passed in June 2010.(6) In the meantime, more than 100,000 adults and youth continue to be sexually abused each year while imprisoned. (7)

In failing to discuss these issues, MIM(Prisons) has missed a great opportunity to revolutionize these oppressed groups and link their struggle to the overall anti-imperialist movement. This is a strategic and tactical mistake on our part, in my humble opinion.

Wimmin and the LGBTQ community are oppressed groups and potential revolutionary classes nearly on par with oppressed nations, particularly within the criminal "justice" system, and MIM(Prisons) must raise their level of importance on the list of priorities at least to the level of national liberation struggles and prisoners' struggle. This is in line with the Maoist theory of United Front and the expansion of the anti-imperialist struggle among lumpen organizations, as well as internationalist solidarity. Wimmin and Queers of the world, Unite!

Notes:

1. *Under Lock & Key*, September/October 2010, No. 16 (San Francisco: MIM Distributors, 2010)
2. See "Strategy and Tactics in the Belly of the Beast," *ULK* 13
3. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Simone de Beauvoir Interviews Sartre," *Life/Situations: Essays written and spoken*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) p93-108.
4. See "Should State pay for convicts sex change?" *T.I.P. Journal*, Vol 10, no1, Spring 2010 (Wheat Ridge, CO: Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc., 2010), p3.
5. Lisa Stannow, "JDI Applauds Proposed Reforms," *T.I.P. Journal*, vol 10, no1, Spring 2010 (Wheat Ridge, CO: Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc., 2010), p.5.
6. *Action Update*, April 2010, *Just Detention International*, www.just-detention.org
7. *Ibid*.

PTT of MIM(Prisons) responds: In a discussion of what the principal contradiction is in the world today, and what role feminism plays in that contradiction, let's first clearly define what a "principal contradiction" is:

"There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions." - Mao, "On Contradiction"

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...Middle East

was responsible for 50% of trade for countries in the southern Mediterranean region in 1998. A mere 3% of their trade was with each other that year.(2) In 2009, these percentages had not changed, despite the lofty promises of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area to develop trade between Arab countries.(3) Tunisia, where the first spark was lit, had 78% of its exports and 72% of its imports with the European Union. Compare these numbers to the ASEAN and MERCOSUR regional trade groups, also made up of predominantly Third World countries, which had about 25% of their trade with each other.(4)

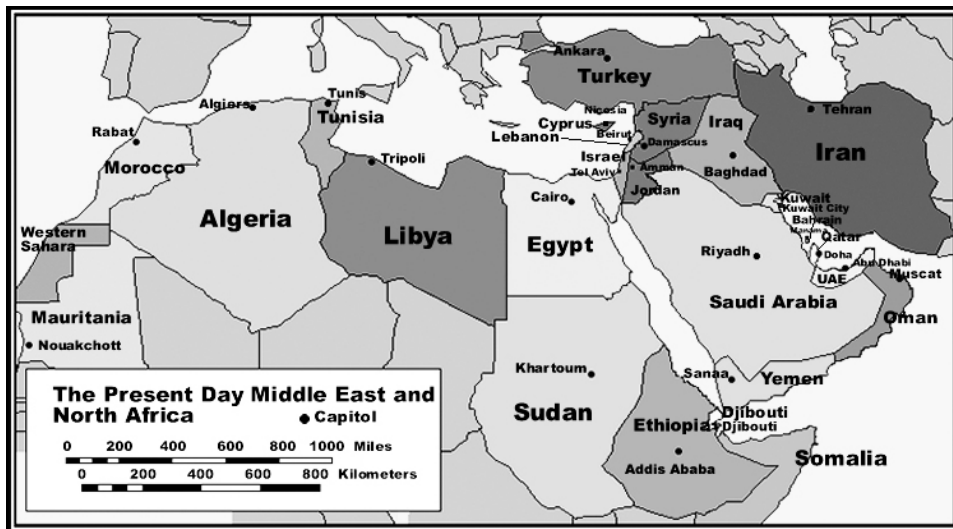
The problem with Europe dominating trade in the region is that trade between imperialist and exploited countries is inherently exploitative. Part of this is because the north African countries mostly produce agricultural goods and textiles, which they trade for manufactured goods from Europe. The former are more susceptible to manipulations in commodities markets that, of course, are controlled by the imperialist finance capitalists. The latter are priced high enough to pay European wages, resulting in a transfer of surplus value from the north African nations to the European workers.

In order to develop industries for the European market, these countries have been forced to accept Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the various world banking systems (World Bank, International Monetary Fund). This has further tied the governments to imperialist interests over the years, as SAPs have many strings attached. The loans themselves, which are larger in this region than for the average Third World country(5), serve to transfer vast amounts of wealth from the debtor nations to the lender nations in the form of interest payments.

Countries in the Middle East and north Africa generally have greater relative wealth compared with Third World countries in the rest of Africa, Asia and Latin America. As a result the people in these countries enjoy higher levels of education, better health and fewer people living in poverty.(6) General trends since WWII are a growing middle class with an emigrant population that expanded and benefited from European reconstruction up to the 1980s. Since then immigration restrictions have increased in the European countries, particularly connected to "security" concerns after 9/11. The north African countries relate to the European Union similar to how Mexico does to the United States, but Mexico remains more economically independent by comparison.

Some governments in the region have been able to use their oil revenues as a carrot to slow proletarian unity. Yet, extreme international debt, increasing unemployment with decreasing migration opportunities and the overall levels of poverty indicate that these countries are part of the global proletariat.

The recent economic crisis demonstrates the tenuous hold the governments of the Middle East and north African countries had on their people. Because imperialism is a global system with money, raw material and consumer goods produced and exchanged on a global market, economic crises happen on a global scale. The economic crisis of the past few years has affected the economy of this region with rising cost of living and increased unemployment rates. In particular, food prices have reached unprecedented highs in the past few months.(7) One might think this would help the large agricultural sectors in these countries. However, food prices affect the Third World disproportionately because of the portion of their income spent on food and the form their food is consumed in. On top of this, all of these countries have come to import much of their cereal staples as their economies have been structured to produce for European consumption.



While estimates of unemployment in any country can range from under 10% up to 40% and even higher, all sources agree that both unemployment and poverty have been on the rise in the past two years, and we suspect longer.

In Egypt about two-thirds of the population is under age 30 and more than 85% of these youth are unemployed. About 40% of Egypt's population lives on less than \$2 a day.(8) The middle class in these countries, who enjoy some economic advantages, are sliding into poverty. This group is particularly large in Tunisia and Egypt compared to many other countries in the region.(9) In Egypt the middle class increased from 10% to 30% of the population in the second half of the 20th century, with half of those people being "upper" middle class.(10) This class has been closely linked to the rise of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) encouraged by the European-led Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. They know that it is possible for them to have a better standard of living and enjoy more political freedom without a complete overthrow of the capitalist system. And so we saw many of the leaders and participants in the recent protests demand better conditions for themselves, but generally leave out the demands of the proletariat.

In fact, some middle class leaders, like Wael Ghonim (an Egyptian Google employee who was a vocal leader in the fight against Mubarak), called for striking workers to go back to work now that Mubarak has stepped down, effectively opposing the demands and struggles of the Egyptian proletariat. Without the leadership of the proletariat, who have never had significant benefits from imperialism, these protests end up representing middle class demands to shuffle the capitalist deck and put another imperialist-lackey government in place. The result might be a slight improvement in middle class conditions but the proletariat ends up right back where they started. In Tunisia and Egypt, where the uprisings started, the leadership and many of the activists were from the educated middle class youth.(11)

Revolutions or Unrest?

To belittle the just struggles of people around the world, typical imperialist media is referring to the recent uprisings as "unrest," as if the people just need to be calmed down to bring things back to normal. On the other side, many protesters and their supporters are calling these movements revolutions. For communists, the label "revolution" is used to describe movements fighting for fundamental change in the economic structure. In the world today, that means fighting to overthrow imperialism and for the establishment of socialism so that we can implement a system where

the people control the means of production, to serve humyn need.

The global system of imperialism puts the nations of the Middle East and north Africa on the side of the oppressed. These nations have comprador leaders running their governments, who get rich by working for imperialist masters. Yet these struggles are very focused on the governments in power in each country without making these broader connections. Until the people make a break with imperialist control, changes in local governments won't lead to their liberation.

Further, we have heard much from both organizers and the press about social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) as a tool of the revolution. These tools are celebrated as a replacement for leadership. It is true that the internet is a useful tool for sharing information and organizing, and decentralization makes it harder to repress a movement. But the lack of ideological unity leads to the lowest common denominator, and very few real demands from the people. No doubt "Mubarak out" is not all the Egyptian people can rally around, but without centralized leadership it is hard for the people to come together to generate other demands.

Egypt provides a good example of why we would not call these protest movements revolutions. The Egyptian people forced President Mubarak out of the country, but accepted his replacement with the Supreme Council of the Military - essentially one military dictatorship was replaced by another. One of the key members of this Council is Sueliman, the CIA point man in the country and head of the Egyptian general intelligence service. He ran secret prisons for the United States and personally participated in the torturing of those prisoners.

In *State and Revolution* Lenin wrote that the revolution must set a goal "not of improving the state machine, but of smashing and destroying it." The protests and peoples' struggles in the Middle East and Africa reinforce the importance of this message as we see the sacrifice of life in so many countries resulting in only cosmetic changes in governments.

What is the United States interest?

The United States is the biggest imperialist power in the world today; it controls the largest number and most wealth-producing territories in the world. Just as the economic crises of imperialism affect the rest of the world, political uprisings around the world affect the United States. The capitalist corporations who have factories and investments in this region have a strong financial interest in stability and a government

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... Continued from previous page ... **Middle East** that will allow them to continue to exploit the resources and labor. And with capitalism's constant need to expand, any shrinking of the imperialist sphere of influence will help trigger future crises faster.

The Amerikan military interest in this region relies on having some strong puppet governments as allies to defend the interests of Amerikan imperialism and hold off the independent aspirations of the regional capitalists. This includes managing the planet's largest oil reserves, which is important for U.S. control of the European Union, and defending their #1 lackey - Israel.

Tunisia is a long-standing ally of the United States, cooperating with Amerikan "anti-terrorism" to maintain Amerikan imperialist power in the region. Other imperialist powers also have a strong interest in the dictatorships in Tunisia including France whose government shipped tear gas grenades to Tunis on January 12 to help Ben Ali fight the protesters.(12)

Egypt has been second only to Israel in receiving U.S. aid since 1979, at about \$2 billion a year. The majority of this money, about \$1.3 billion a year, goes to the Egyptian military.(13) Further, the United States trains the Egyptian military each year in combined military exercises and deployments of U.S. troops to Egypt.(14) So for Amerika, the Supreme Council of the Military taking power in Egypt is a perfectly acceptable "change." To shore up the new regime and its relationship with the United States, Secretary of State Clinton announced on February 18 that the United States would give \$150 million in aid to Egypt to help with economic problems and "ensure an orderly, democratic transition." In exchange, the Council has already pledged to uphold the 1979 peace accords with Israel. Prior to 1979, much of the Arab world was engaged in long periods of wars with the settler state.

United States aid to countries in this region is centered around Israel. The countries closest geographically to Israel are the biggest recipients of Amerikan money, a good way to keep control of the area surrounding the biggest Amerikan ally. In addition to Egypt and Israel, Jordan (\$843 million) and Lebanon (\$238 million) received sizable economic and military aid packages in 2010.(15) Compared to these numbers, "aid" to the rest of the region is significantly smaller with notable recipients including Yemen (\$67M), Morocco (\$35M), Bahrain (\$21M) and Tunisia (\$19M). The United States gives "aid" in exchange for economic, military and political influence.

Is Wisconsin the Amerikan Tunisia?

The global economic crisis clearly affects imperialist countries like the United States just like it does other countries of the world, but we don't see the people in this country rising up to take over Washington, DC and demanding a change in government. Having a harder time finding work after college has much less dire consequences for Amerikans.

Some people are drawing comparisons between the widespread protests by labor unions in Wisconsin and the events in Tunisia and Egypt. These events

do give us a good basis for comparison to underscore the differences between imperialist countries and the Third World. Amerikan wealth is so much greater than the rest of the world (U.S. GDP per capita = \$46,436); even compared to oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia (GDP = \$24,200). GDP does not account for the distribution of wealth, but in the United States the median household income in 2008 was \$52,029. This number is not inflated by the extreme wealth of a few individuals, it represents the middle point in income for households in this country.

On the surface, unemployment statistics for the United States appear similar to some numbers for countries in the Middle East and north Africa. In 2008, 13.2% of the population was unemployed in the United States based on the latest census data. (16) However, with income levels so much higher in Amerika, unemployment doesn't mean an immediate

plunge into poverty and starvation, especially for youth with Amerikan parents.

Similarly, U.S. poverty statistics appear quite high, comparable to rates in the Middle East and north Africa, at 14.3% in 2009. But this poverty rate uses chauvinistic standards of poverty for Amerikans. The U.S. census bureau puts the poverty level of a single individual with no dependents at \$11,161.(17) Much higher than the statistics that look at the portion of the population living at \$2 or \$1.25 per day (adjusted for differences in purchasing power). Wisconsin public teachers, for instance, average salaries of about \$48k per year.

The Leading Light Communist Organization produced some clear economic comparisons between Egypt and the United States: "The bottom 90% of income earners in Egypt make only half as much (roughly \$5,000 USD annually) as the bottom 10% of income earners in the U.S. (roughly \$10,000), per capita distribution. Depending on the figures used, an egalitarian distribution of the global social product is anywhere between \$6,000 and \$11,000 per capita annually. This does not even account for other inequalities between an exploiter country and an exploited country, such as infrastructure, housing, productive forces, quality and diversity of consumer goods, etc."(18)

In the United States it is possible for the elite to enjoy their millionaire lifestyles while the majority of the workers are kept in relative luxury with salaries that exceed the value of their labor. Even Amerikan workers who are unemployed and struggling to pay bills are not rallying for an end to the economic system of capitalism. Amerikan protesters are just demanding more corporate taxes and less CEO bonuses. In other words they want a bigger piece of the imperialist pie: money that comes at the expense of the Third World workers. These same Amerikan workers rally behind their government in wars of aggression around the world, overwhelmingly supporting the fight against the Al-Qaeda boogeyman in Arab clothing.

Down with Amerikanism, Long Live Pan-Arabism

Whether in Madison or Cairo, signs implying that Wisconsin is the Tunisia of north Amerika are examples of what we call "false internationalism" on both sides of the divide between rich and poor nations. Combating false internationalism, which is inherent in any pro-Amerikanism in the Third World, is part of the fight against revisionism in general.

That mass mobilizations in the Arab world represent a reawakening of pan-Arabism is both clear and promising for the anti-imperialist struggle. Even non-Arab groups in north Africa that have felt marginalized will benefit from the greater internationalist consciousness and inherent anti-imperialism with an Arabic-speaking world united against First World exploitation and interference.

Of course, Palestine also stands to benefit from these movements. The colonial dominance of Palestine has long been a lightning rod issue for the Arab world, that only the U.S. puppet regimes (particularly in Egypt) have been able to repress.

Everyone wants to know what's next. While the media can create hype about the "successful revolutions" in Tunisia and Egypt, this is just the beginning if there is to be any real change. Regional unity needs to lead to more economic cooperation and self-sufficiency and to unlink the economies of the Arab countries from U.S. and European imperialism. Without that, the wealth continues to flow out of the region to the First World.

As Frantz Fanon discussed extensively in writing about colonial Algeria, the spontaneous violence of the masses must be transformed into an organized, conscious, national violence to rid the colony of the colonizer. Unfortunately, his vision was not realized in the revolutionary upsurge that he lived through in north Africa and neo-colonialism became the rule across the continent. Today, the masses know that imperialism in Brown/Black face is no better. As fast as the protests spread, they must continue to spread to the masses of the Arab world before we will see an independent and self-determined people. ★

Notes:

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4. Amin, p. 105
5. Amin, p. 106
6. see World Bank, World Health Organization and CIA statistics
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8. Slate, *Protesting on an Empty Stomach: How the Egyptian economy is fueling unrest in Egypt*, January 31, 2011.
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13. Christian Science Monitor, *US aid to Egypt: What does it buy?*, February 15, 2011.
14. U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Egypt*, November 10, 2010.
15. CNN, *U.S. aid bill for North Africa and Middle East*, January 31, 2011.
16. U.S. Census Bureau, *State and Country QuickFacts*.
17. National Poverty Center, *2009 Poverty Statistics (from census data)*.
18. Leading Light Communist Organization, *Egyptian masses and Amerikkkan asses: An honest comparison*, February 9, 2011.

Class Hatred

by USW C-4 of United Struggle from Within
January 2011

Class hatred's what i'm spewing,
because class hatred's what they're doing
"The beginning of all wisdom,"
that's what Lenin said
The beginning of the end,
that's what i say.

Take a look around and realize your role
Take a look around and put the shit on hold
Become the vehicle of expression
and make your weight felt
Too much practical knowledge to practically ignore.

Fuck a cop in killa Cali!
Is that all you saying?
Fuck that!
Our histories got much more weight than that!

Power to the People!
And all that good shit
Fair distribution & fuck the land sent!
From each according to his abilities,
to each according to his needs
For a world without oppression,
this is what we should strive for,
this is what we need
This is what we should fight for,
not against each other.

Putting it down on the underground,
above ground
United in a Movement,
a United Front.

Black & Brown, and white too,
if you're progressive,
for that matter, Black & Brown
if you're progressive.

Because we can never go nowhere
if we don't get together
United in a front;
hence progressive. ★

REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

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Word! Ask about it, U-N-I-T-Y?

by a South Carolina prisoner
March 2011

The mentality of tyranny
is a war of psychology via technology,
technically diversified
con-fused like a tie-dye'd
brain is stained with illusion and lies
dispel, rebel, and defy the pail;
head like a bucket, it's time to chuck it
life on the line - F...K it!

You have an obligation
time to stop duckin', time to start buckin'
Revolution is bubblin'

Peroxide da line Oxygenate ya mind
We have been deprived all of our lives
given enough scraps to barely survive
I'm feelin a vibe of Free ya mind
its in vogue don't be so shallow
and the rest will follow
led by the dialectical materialist kind

Now lets begin - power up
equip to it and stick
like Bruce Lee Roy's chop sockie flick
a sho' nuff revolutionary kick
Word, it's a U-N-I-T-Y hit! ★

Tears of Blood

by an Arizona prisoner
December 2010

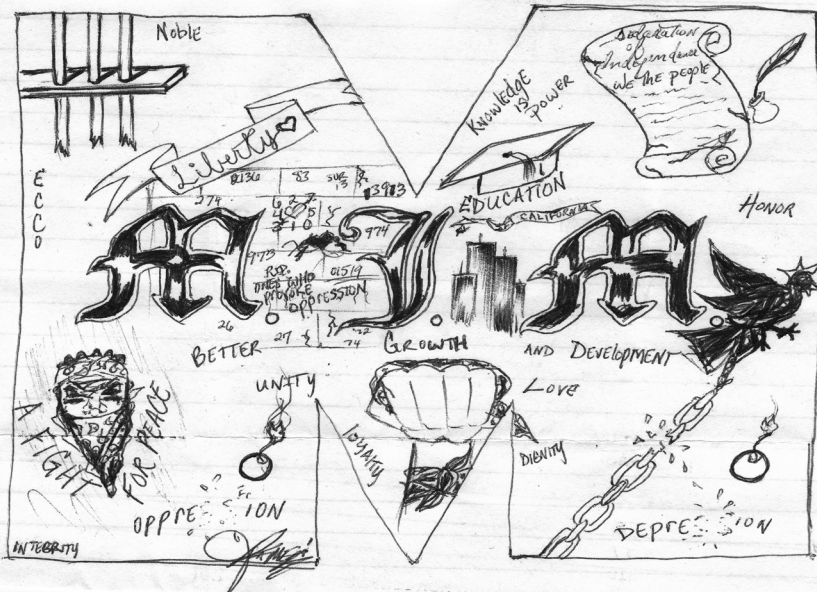
My heart cries the tears of blood
As it feels for my ancestors' pain and anguish
Our culture and territory was compromised
By plague-infested, greed-inspired pigs
Oppressed by racism and a foreign religion
Our ancestors watched as our culture was burned
But the culture could never be burned from our blood
So while my heart cries tears of blood
It beats pride and honor inherited from my ancestors ★

Black is Where the Heart is At

by a Texas prisoner
January 2011

Black-on-Black crime,
I see it all the time,
Why come brothers hurting each other,
instead of loving one another?;
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.
Black-on-Black violence,
I see it steadily destroying us,
Why come Black people keep killing each other,
instead of helping and protecting one another?;
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.
Black people betraying themselves and each other,
Always disrespecting, lying, stealing and cheating
one another,
Why come brothers can't work it out?
Psychological warfare, mind control and genocide is
what
I'm really talking about;
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.
Brothers not wanting peace and reconciliation,
Only helping the enemy (racism, capitalism, and im-
perialism) to oppress the Black Nation;
Black love, Black reconciliation and Black redemption
is what we work for and need,
Brothers and sisters join in and defeat our enemies.
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.
Black people wake up to what's really going on,
don't be deceived by the integrationist song;
In a white capitalist democracy,
A Black minority will never be accepted or treated
equal by a white majority.
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.
Black unity, Black pride and Black power is what our
ancestors loudly proclaimed,
Let us uphold this legacy and proclaim today the
same darn thing;
This is what we owe our ancestors, future genera-
tions, ourselves and each other.
True commitment to the Black liberation struggle will
allow us to do nothing other;
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.
Divided we fall, together we stand,
Black power and Black nationalism is our true call
and demand;
And keep world liberation as our primary goal.
Let those present convey the message to those who
are absent,
_____ Every Black person ain't Black,
_____ Black is where the heart is at.

Black people, rise and unite! ★



Jasiri X, Choose a Side

by PTT of MIM(Prisons)
March 2011

Jasiri X is a hip hop artist from Pittsburgh who raps the news over some dope beats produced by The Grand Architect Paradise Gray of X Clan. The two release these tracks as videos on youtube.com in a series titled "This Week with Jasiri X." Jasiri X is popular in activist circles, frequently performing and speaking at benefits and rallies. We've been bobbing our heads to his tracks since the release of *OG3 - Oscar Grant Tribute* in January 2009, but in light of his most recent release, *Amerikan Workers vs. Multi-Billionaires*, we decided to take a closer look.

OG3 tells the story of the murder of Oscar Grant and the rebellions following his murder, from the points of view of Oscar Grant and the protesters. Although the facts aren't 100% correct in *OG3*, it is a good example of the many tracks Jasiri X has released about police brutality and aggression against Black people in Amerika. A track titled *Free the Jena 6* was one of the first that got peoples' attention, and he continues to shout out victims of police execution and violence by name.

When working on an international piece, Jasiri X correctly draws connections between police brutality here and imperial aggression against Third World peoples around the world. He recently released a track about the uprisings in Egypt with M-1 of Dead Prez, titled *We All Shall Be Free!*

Despite his revolutionary lean, Jasiri X still holds on to his Amerikanism on several issues, which comes up big time in *Amerikan Workers vs. Multi-Billionaires*. The video for this song was shot inside the capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin, against a backdrop of labor aristocrats raising a stink to keep their "fair share" of the imperialist pie. The title implies that a line is being drawn between Amerikan "workers" and the capitalist multi-billionaires with this union busting legislation. However, as outlined in several articles and books(1) Amerikan "workers" are actually fundamentally allied with the imperialist, capitalist class on an international level. It is only because of the pillage of resources and lives in the Third World that the government employees in Wisconsin even have health care in the first place. Defending this "right" to health care is essentially the same thing as supporting Amerikan wars, which Jasiri X says he is against. History has shown that the multi-billionaires won't give up theirs without a fight.

"When did the American worker become the enemy?"

Why is wanting a living wage such a penalty?"
- Jasiri X from *"Amerikan Workers vs. Multi-Billionaires"*

The Amerikan "worker," or labor aristocrat, is the enemy of the majority of the world's people because their lives are subsidized by the economic exploitation of the Third World. Third World peoples' sweat, blood, and lives are wast-



Jasiri X sides with the labor aristocracy in Wisconsin.

ed to pay for the Amerikan "worker's" pensions and health care. This is because most of the "work" that Amerikans do does not generate value; we have a service-based economy. The only reason our society has such a disproportionately high "living wage" (as if those who make less die) is because we are comfortable swinging our weight around in imperialist wars of aggression to extract wealth from the Third World. Jasiri X seems to be opposed to this extraction of wealth, but does not make the connection that Amerikan "workers" are directly benefiting from it, and not just the multi-billionaires.

Jasiri X seems to adhere to an anti-racist model of social change. Besides being supported by an incorrect analysis of history, it also has him defending Obama as a Black man, rather than attacking him as the chosen leader of the largest and most aggressive imperialist country in the world. Jasiri X correctly pins Obama as an ally of the Amerikan people; their key to a comfortable lifestyle and fat retirement plan. But as an ally of the oppressed, Jasiri X should accept that Obama, and the labor aristocracy, are enemies of the majority of the world's people, and leave patriotism behind. Agitating for the betterment of people in Haiti, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, etc. as Jasiri X does through some of his raps, while at the same time defending Obama and the Amerikan "worker," is a recipe for stagnation. If we want to end oppression the world over, we need to have a clear idea of who are our friends and who are our enemies. ★

Notes:

1. for example, *Amerikans: Oppressing for a Living; Settlers: Mythology of a White Proletariat* by J. Sakai; *MIM Theory issues 1 and 10*.

Demand Access to the Massachusetts Secret Policy

by a Massachusetts prisoner
March 2011

I want to illuminate my thoughts regarding a "secret" Massachusetts DOC policy that this state utilizes to hold us for long stretches in solitary settings. We are frequently charged with violating a secret regulation (103 DOC 514), yet we have no access, nor does the public, to view this secret policy. The DOC expects us to abide by a regulation that we are not allowed to read.

103 CMR 430 seeks to ensure fairness in the prison disciplinary system by clearly defining and providing transparent notice of the procedures by which disciplinary issues are handled. If the goal of 103 CMR 430 is to promote order in the Massachusetts prison system and affect positive change in prisoner behavior, the applicable regulations, and standards, must be clear and readily available to the prisoners who are held accountable for transgressing these behavioral benchmarks. If they are not, the result on the prison population will be confusion, not conformity. Prisoners cannot change their behavior to abide by a set of regulations they are not allowed to view. We are owed due process under the 14th Amendment, but due process is not being afforded to us.

In *Wolff v. McDonnell*, 418 US 539 (1974), the Supreme Court held that advanced written notice of regulations a prisoner is allegedly violating is one of the minimum requirements of procedural due process. Furthermore, a common person could only guess at what does or doesn't constitute engaging in STG activity. Charging us continuously with STG-related offenses while denying us access to definitions of STG or STG activity conflicts with the purpose of 103 CMR 430, and the due process clause of the 14th Amendment. We must stand up and demand that the Massachusetts DOC reveal this secret policy! ★

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.

- UNITED STRUGGLE FROM WITHIN -

Under Lock & Key is the main organizing tool of United Struggle from Within (USW). This page details some of the active campaigns that USW is involved in. Those who want to push the revolutionary struggle forward from behind bars should get involved in USW by working on these campaigns, or initiating their own.

SHUT DOWN CONTROL UNITS

Control units 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 control units and publishing it on the website www.abolishcontrolunits.org.

Control units can be generally described as: Permanently designated prisons, or cells in prisons, that lock prisoners in solitary 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.

Research - Help keep data on control units updated by writing to MIM(Prisons) at the address on page 1 to get a survey for your state.

Spread *Unlock the Box* DVD - Let your contacts on the outside know about this fresh 2 hour documentary on long-term isolation cells. Send them to the website www.abolishcontrolunits.org/movie

WE DEMAND OUR GRIEVANCES ARE ADDRESSED

Comrades in California, Texas and Oklahoma have developed petitions against the corrupt grievance process in their state. If you are experiencing problems with your grievance process, you should join this campaign.

Sign and Mail Petitions - If you are in California, Texas, or Oklahoma, write in to get the petition for your state. If you can, donate stamps or envelopes to your comrades inside to send out the petition. Be sure you ask us for extra copies if you plan to distribute the petition.

Spread This Campaign - If your state is not currently covered by the grievance campaign, but you are experiencing similar issues, volunteer to make the petition work for your state.

END THE Z-UNIT ZOO

Comrades in Z-Unit (Administrative Segregation at High Desert State Prison in California) have started a campaign to end cruel and unusual punishment there. Recently this petition, and the grievance petition, have drawn attention from the Inspector General (see page 13). If you're in Z-Unit, write in to get this petition, spread it around, and help participants inside with envelopes and stamps if you can.

FIGHT CENSORSHIP

Everyone should be sure to send MIM(Prisons) copies of your censorship documents for denied issues of *Under Lock & Key* and other mail from MIM Distributors.

Missouri - On 1 February 2010 the Director of Adult Institutions signed a new censorship policy, instituting a blanket ban on all musical recordings which carry a parental advisory label. For a number of years now they have been arbitrarily denying any books or literature of a historical, social, political or religious nature that they don't agree with." - a Missouri comrade. Prisoners in Missouri are spreading a petition against the ban and censorship, write in to get it! Like with all petitions, try to make your own copies, share them, and help others out with envelopes and stamps if you can.

Red Onion State Prison - Recently *Prison Legal News* and *The Final Call* have had success using the legal system to fight censorship of their publications at Red Onion State Prison in Virginia. Red Onion gives the same treatment to *Under Lock & Key* as these other newsletters. Comrades affected should get in touch with us.

California - We are in an ongoing battle with prisons in California that have banned MIM Distributors, citing a defunct memo from 2006. Send us copies of your documentation and grievances you've filed against it.

SPREAD UNDER LOCK & KEY

The most basic task someone can do for USW is get people to subscribe to *Under Lock & Key*. If you know someone who likes this newsletter, have them write to get their own subscription. People are moved all the time in prison and it's better to get in contact when our address is available, than to lose it in a move. You can also ask other prison publications to run free ads for *Under Lock & Key* and MIM(Prisons)'s Free Books for Prisoners Program.

EXPAND STUDY GROUPS

Form a study group in your prison. Start by discussing this issue of *Under Lock & Key*. Choose what to study next based on what stumps you in this issue. If you want help from MIM(Prisons), it is best to come up with a general topic and we can suggest reading material and maybe a study pack. We can also help get the reading materials through to your comrades. As you study, you should compile study questions to create a study pack for future groups who want to study the same material. MIM(Prisons) runs a Maoist study group, but an in-persyn group may be better for those whose mail from us is being censored.

BECOME A ULK FIELD CORRESPONDENT

A future issue of *Under Lock & Key* is going to be focused on education. If you learned to read as an adult, or have taught others, write an article about that experience for this issue. What worked? What tools were necessary? How could USW start a literacy program?

The first thing we tell comrades in prison to do when they ask how they can help is to write about conditions where they're at. If you've written us a letter, then you have all the skills you need to become a *ULK* Field Correspondent.

Many prisoners write about the horrible things happening to them with the mindset that once the outside world finds out, their problems will be over and the perpetrators punished. This expectation is a myth, but it is still important to report on conditions through *ULK*.

Due to space restrictions, many of the reports we get don't make it into *ULK*. Instead they are available on our website, which serves as an archive tracking the behavior of prison staff over years. This is part of our scientific method, collecting empirical data in the field. When you complain about some pig throwing your mail in the trash and people don't listen because they think it was probably just an accident, we have documentation of hundreds of "accidents" by the same staff, proving that it was no accident at all. Your reports back up others' reports.

In a real world example, when the Abu Ghraib scandal broke, the star of the original photos was Charles Grainer. When MIM searched through their *ULK* archives, they found that years before a prisoner in Pennsylvania reported that Grainer, who was a prison guard at SCI Greene prior to Abu Ghraib, was abusing people, calling them niggers, etc. Today that comrade is outside of prison documenting the reports of abuse from current prisoners, and leading campaigns to hold the DOC responsible for its regular abusive behavior. Being a *ULK* Field Correspondent lays the groundwork for more of this kind of research and agitational work. These reports provide a resource for non-prisoners to learn more about what's going on in the criminal injustice system and to rally support for our struggles.

When reporting on conditions, details are good, but keep it short. Not only does someone have to type all these articles, but remember that it is not your one report that's gonna make a difference, it is the accumulation of reporting from across the country and the connections we make between those struggles. So leave room for others to tell their stories, which strengthens your own.

For the print version of *ULK*, we look for material with more theoretical and anti-imperialist content. We also want to feature articles that show how to organize against these conditions, and not just document them. MIM(Prisons) offers resources and opportunities to help you develop as a writer, including a Writing Guide and, for those who complete some of our study courses and become regular contributors to *ULK*, a *ULK* Writing Group. So get started today!

Grievances: Fight for Our Rights

by a Washington prisoner
February 2011

I entered Washington DOC less than a year ago, but in that time I've experienced and witnessed first hand the "Department of Corruption." We have rights bestowed upon us by our forefathers through the constitution of the united states of america, so why is it we are belittled to such a point that we aren't treated like men, or for that matter prisoners, but animals in a cage?

The COs and Sgts don't care about our rights, they only come here to receive a paycheck. They cuss at us, disrespect us and use excessive force. In turn we file a grievance or grievances on said officers and actions and these "grievance coordinators" throw out our claims. Or if they do respond we get responses like "rewrite" or "not enough info," something just to shake us up and to detour us from what happened. This works to their advantage because most prisoners are too lazy and they just throw in the towel!

Persistence, organization, education and unity as a "whole body" is the key to gaining the upper hand against these punks. We need to rise up, unite and take matters into our own hands because it's apparent that the facilities and the states they're in are stuck on power and control over the individual prisoner. It's us coming together and standing for our rights, fighting the system to be recognized and treated as people and not animals.

I believe wholeheartedly that a neutral outside company or corporation dealing solely with grievances and our claims is the only way that we as prisoners will be treated fairly and with justice. Until that happens we will continue to be treated like animals and file grievances that most likely won't be read and therefore will be forgotten and thrown out, especially if it's in the staff member's best interest.

Is this fair, just or even legal? No it's not, but until we stand up to these people and put our proverbial foot down, things will continue as they are and I guarantee it will only get worse with time.

Comrades, it's about time something was done about these injustices! Until next time, keep on fighting the good fight and one day things will change. Strive for communism!

MIM(Prisons) responds: This is an important issue to organize around. Not only is it something we can unite all prisoners around, it can also be the spark to begin developing independent power. Only a prison population that studies, struggles and works together can protect themselves from abuses by an oppressive captor.

Comrades in United Struggle from Within have already initiated a grievance campaign in many states. Join this coordinated fight to demand our grievances be addressed. Write to us for letters and petitions you can use in your own states. ★

Battle at HDSP Gains Official Attention

by a California prisoner
January 2011

On 19 January 2011 High Desert State Prison (HDSP) was visited by administrators from the headquarters of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) in Sacramento, as well as the inspector general. These administrators finally listened to the many complaints from prisoners and outside advocacy groups and started an investigation into the corrupt policies and actions in place here at HDSP. In this struggle, MIM(Prisons) was instrumental in sending us petitions to submit regarding the appeals process.

This investigation had two parts. It was carried out by several administrators and started in the morning and continued into the early evening. Several prisoners were interviewed, some once, while others twice. I was one of those who was interviewed twice, first by a Correctional Counselor II from headquarters. We discussed the appeals process here at HDSP. During this interview we mostly talked about how our appeals are continuously screened out, denied, lost or simply ignored. The interviewer asked meaningful and intelligent questions and took detailed notes, and he appeared surprised by the lack of meaningful access to the appeals process. This interview only lasted between 10 and 15 minutes.

Later that same day, at around 5:45 p.m., I was again taken from my cell for an interview. This time it was with a captain from headquarters (Sacramento) and the inspector general. During this interview I was told that they, Sacramento CDCR Headquarters, were doing these interviews due to the pressure and complaints coming into Sacramento from prisoners, advocacy groups, and prisoners' families. They said they were simply conducting fact-finding interviews. This interview was more in-depth than the morning interview. We discussed a wide range of topics during the interview from the mass validations of the northern Hispanics on 4 August 2009, the poor conditions here in Z-unit (administrative segregation), to the many violations of our constitutional rights. Again the in-

terviewers asked many valid questions and took notes, giving the appearance of taking things seriously. I did not buy into the act.

During this meeting they showed me copies of petitions I had mailed out which included the MIM(Prisons) grievance petition. I don't know if this is going to make any difference because I think (and hopefully I'm wrong) this was only a smoke and mirror show to attempt to pacify those of us who are fighting against these corrupt and unjust policies. But only time will tell how big a victory this truly was, because it was a victory!

I seriously doubt anything comes of this so-called investigation that is a significant improvement to the quality of life for us here in the zoo (Z-Unit). The reason I think this is the day after the Sacramento officials left HDSP, staff on Z-Unit started their retaliation. They cut our food portions almost in half, and the law library was denied to those of us who are Priority Library Users and have court deadlines. So I expect things will go back to normal in a week or two. It's the same every time anyone visits up here. One of the Sgts did say that they are totally redesigning the entire appeals process and we did get beanies (to protect us from the cold on the yard).

However this is not enough, we cannot afford to be satisfied with this token gesture of a beanie and some promises. No, we must continue to fight and put the pressure on HDSP until we are given all of our rights as well as everything we are entitled to by law and common human decency.

MIM(Prisons) adds: Contact us for more information about the campaign to end the Z-Unit Zoo, and the grievance campaign which is active in multiple states. If there are problems with the grievance system where you're at, spread it to yours! ★

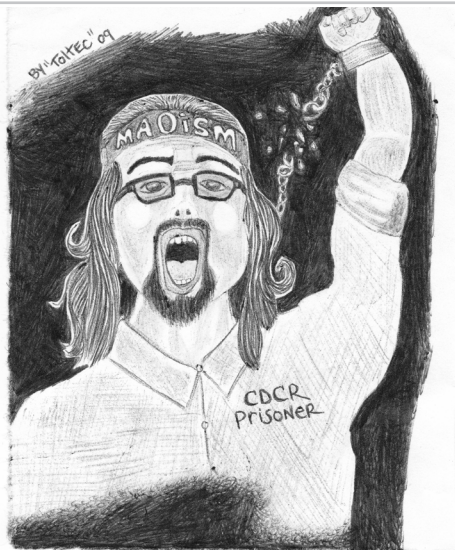
...Continued from page 7

...Gender

Ending oppression is our goal. The struggle towards this goal in our current society is our "complex thing." It has many contradictions which are interacting with each other throughout the course of its development (we say gender, class and nation are the main three). Determining which contradiction is principal in the world today gives us a guide for how to organize and what issues to organize around. We determine which is the principal contradiction using a materialist (based in material reality) analysis of history. The principal contradiction is principal (and not secondary) because of the way its development will impact the development of other contradictions. We do not choose it, it is shown to us in history.

Establishing a principal contradiction is *not* a matter of deciding which struggles most affect us on a personal or subjective basis. The principal contradiction is the one we need to focus on because history has shown that it will bring the best results. As sympathizers with all oppressed

Continued on next page..



Purism Divides the Struggle

by a Nevada prisoner
December 2010

I am writing this in response to the California prisoner who wrote the article *Lumpen Loyalty Dividing the Struggle*. What divides a struggle is divisiveness. In the context of his commune he missed several points, among which are: (1) being an informant does not render the struggle against a mutual enemy moot, (2) in the context of numbers, (i.e. strength) it is largely irrelevant whether someone is a rat or not, and (3) the known rat criteria - "known" based on what? What exactly are the circumstances and/or conditions under which one told?

Just because one is SNY, PC, PS or whatever does not mean they are rats, disloyal or even unreliable. This approach is the equivalent of saying that everyone in prison is not only a criminal, but guilty of exactly what the state has convicted them of. No self-respecting prisoner, convict or revolutionary would undermine their own ideological base by entertaining such an idea.

The state manipulates purists by slinging labels and rumors. They send hard working, devoted soldiers and revolutionaries to protective custody as a tactic to discredit them and undermine the struggle. The state knows that the purists will readily turn on their own kind and, by extension, the cause, by using emotionally charged propaganda to incite divisiveness, it is one of the most frequently used weapons by our mutual enemy.

I have no love for the enemy - rats included - but if you are a soldier devoted to a cause, then you must be able to exploit the enemy's weaknesses and turn their strengths against them. An informant is only as good and useful as the information he's given... or gets hold of.

I have more than 30 years in prison and I have many years of political, legal and social struggles behind and before me. Purism has one fatal flaw - it is not in a black and white world where it can be put into action. And ideology is only as good as its applicability to the conditions it purposes to address.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This letter is referencing a debate that has been going on in the pages of *Under Lock & Key* for several issues now, over whether or not people on SNY or PC can be part of the revolutionary movement. MIM(Prisons) stands firmly with this comrade and against the purists who will trust the label of the prisonrats. ★

... Continued from previous page

...Gender

peoples in the world, including wimmin and LGBTQ people, we hope to reach communism as fast as possible to minimize humyn suffering. But based on our study and analysis, we say that nation, and not gender, is the principal contradiction at this time in history, and we need to

organize to push the national contradiction forward.

For example, and contrary to what Queen Boudicca claims, oppressed nations are far more oppressed by the criminal injustice system than biological wimmin. In 2009, men were 14 times more likely to go to state or federal prison than wimmin, while Black men were 6.5% more likely than white men.⁽¹⁾ The gender gap is bigger than the national gap, but in favor of oppressing biological men. To argue that bio-wimmin are more oppressed you're gonna have to base your argument somewhere else.

Our comrade does present here examples of the unique oppression faced by wimmin and LGBTQ prisoners in the United States. Yet, the form of solutions proposed are reformist at best and at worst the demands of the gender privileged. We must not focus on these examples of oppression in isolation as a replacement for a scientific analysis of how development of the gender contradiction will affect other contradictions (namely nation) and our overall goals, as Queen Boudicca does.

Historically laws against rape have expanded, not combatted, gender privilege. Similarly the development of leisure time related medicine has largely benefited the gender privileged at the expense of the oppressed. The use of drugs related to depression and mood is a means of adapting to an oppressive system, or being forced to submit as is more clear in the prison environment. That said, we would encourage comrades to utilize antidepressants as a last resort if they are unable to put in work without them. The initiation of hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery could play similar roles as psychological aids to cope in an oppressive world. But when we are considering strategic battles on behalf of the oppressed, shutting down control units, for example, will have a much bigger influence on mental health while also developing the anti-imperialist struggle for prisoners as a group.

Under capitalism and imperialism, it is impossible for us to determine whether hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery are objectively medically necessary for all time or just useful as a crutch for people who are justifiably maladjusted to an imperialistic world. Sex has long been defined socially and not biologically for the humyn species. Under communism, when gender oppression is eradicated, and gender ceases to exist, will people still want to change their biology? These are questions we cannot answer until we get there. For now we encourage everyone who has a poor self-image and an unsatisfactory sex life to recognize these as products of capitalism and join the struggle toward world liberation.

There is a thorough analysis of how the gender struggle impacts our struggle for communism, and it is contained in the 208 page magazine titled *MIM Theory 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism*. While not new, it has a more updated assessment than Sartre, specifically in regards to the gender aristocracy. Queen

Boudicca claims to have read and to uphold *MT 2/3*, but misses a main point that the struggles of First World wimmin generally lead to more national oppression here and throughout the world. Examples include the lynching of Black men as a trade for more gender privilege for white wimmin; the forced drug testing on Third World wimmin directly leading to an increase in the availability of birth control for First World wimmin; and the failed pseudo-feminist movement which has had no positive impact on the gender struggle for the majority of wimmin. It is true that we recommend *MIM Theory 2/3* as the best starting point for why nation trumps gender as the principal contradiction. (Also see *ULK 1* on how Black men are more gender oppressed than white wimmin and *ULK 6*, the Gender issue, covering gay marriage, porn, sexual abuse and how prisons destroy families.)

Although nation is the principal contradiction in the world today, it still may be possible to organize wimmin and LGBTQ prisoners under the MIM umbrella against their own material interests as Amerikans. If Queen Boudicca is subjectively inspired to organize wimmin and LGBTQ prisoners specifically, then we would encourage h to organize these populations around MIM line. As a revolutionary feminist organization, MIM(Prisons) aims to end gender oppression as part of our struggle for communism, but there are many roles to play at this stage that we do not fulfill. ★

1. West, Heather; Sabol, William (December 2010). "Prisoners in 2009". Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Murders at Kklinton

by a New York prisoner
January 2011

I am just checking in with current cowardly acts perpetrated by cowardly Kklinton (Clinton Correctional Facility in New York). The murder of Mr. Leonard Strickland last October 3rd 2010 in upper F Block has now been termed "death by natural causes" by Channel 5 news media in Vermont. (see *ULK 17*)

More recently, corrupt klansmen under disguise of law abiding civil servants jumped on a 5'6" 147lbs man. And get this, one of the cowards, CO Barnaby, is also one of the murderers of Mr. Strickland. The others involved in this particular incident of brutal assault are COs L. Bezio whose family members are numerous here in Kklinton and CO B. LeClair whose family members are also employees of facilities here in northern New York, including Kklinton.

The behavior of these corrupt officials is very onerous, especially when their superior acting Deputy Superintendent, Captain of Security Facticeau makes statements such as "this is a dictatorship, not a democracy," a statement that is relayed amongst all employees giving them the green light to violate even the prisoners' minimum standards.

Maybe one of these days the lumpen will unite as one and focus on our real enemies? ★

Edificando Fronteras Unidas, rodeado por el enemigo: caso estudiado de la caída del mercado domiciliario en EU

por Wiawimawo de MIM(Prisons)
traducido por un@ prisoner@ en Texas
November 2010

Fronteras Unidas es la teoría de unir grupos diferentes por líneas de clase para un objetivo común y interés, mientras manteniendo la independencia cuando estos grupos no están de acuerdo. La aplicación de la teoría de la frontera unida es como el reconocer de las diferentes contradicciones en la sociedad y utilizarlas en el interés del proletariado internacional. La primera frontera unida es la Frontera Unida del Anti-imperialista, la cual está formada por la mayoría de las personas quienes intereses materiales se basan en el fracaso del imperialismo. Esta es una frontera unida estratégica basada en la principal contradicción.

En este artículo hablaremos de un par de asuntos contemporáneos en los E.U. y analizaremos su potencial para el trabajo de la frontera unida. Veremos que muchos de los conflictos grandes en un país del Primer Mundo están entre las clases enemigas, pero eso no quiere decir que siempre vamos a sentarnos en el banquillo. Algunas formas de las Fronteras Unidas son tácticas y requieren una acción inmediata basada en conocimiento a fondo. Para navegar exitosamente la potencial de las Fronteras Unidas en el Primer Mundo que sirve a los intereses del Tercer Mundo proletariado, debemos tener un análisis correcto de nuestras condiciones. La primera sección de este artículo se proporciona un fondo rápida de hacernos comenzar.

La Tierra, Vivienda y la Nación de Colonos

Un argumento contra la tesis trabajo del aristocrática es que las corporaciones no tienen el interés en sacrificar sus ganancias para pagar más a los trabajadores de países del Primer Mundo, y no hay una conspiración corporativa para hacer cumplir esta conducta. Esto se basa en la teoría de mercado libre capitalista, o solo por leer los primeros capítulos de El Capital por Marx y aplicándolos como un modelo de realidad específico en todos lugares por todo el mundo. Como una clase, los capitalistas depende en la aristocracia del trabajo no sólo políticamente sino económicamente como los consumidores y engranajes de su sistema de pirámide de crecimiento de capital financiero. Y hay un lugar, al menos, donde los imperialistas EU pueden ejercer su voluntad como una clase social (mucho más estos días) - se llama el gobierno EU. La promoción de propiedades domésticas por los federales es uno de los mayores ejemplos del imperialistas conscientemente construyendo una aristocracia del trabajo en el corazón del imperio.

La propiedad doméstica en la América ha sido un elemento básico de la riqueza de América desde que los colonos le robaron la tierra de la Primeras Naciones y construyeron sus hogares en ella. El valor neto de las familias americanas comparado con las primera nación y los

descendientes de esclavos en los EU es una herencia de esta forma primitiva de acumulación. Mientras la propiedad de la tierra entre los invasores europeos los más tempranos era 100% (este es porque vinieron a las Américas), por la Guerra de Independencia de 1776, la propiedad de la tierra era todavía a 70% para la nación euro-americana.(1) Arghiri Emmanuel señaló que los salarios americanos fueron capaces de permanecer tan altos en el periodo temprano del desarrollo capitalista, aunque la propiedad de la tierra cesó de ser universal, porque la abundancia de tierra "gratis" - robada de las Primeras Naciones presentaba un plan alternativa para los colonos europeos.(2) Esta primitiva acumulación a través del genocidio fue la base de la riqueza que las trabajadoras aristocráticas americanas disfrutaron mientras la industrialización transformó más de los colonos a trabajadores asalariados.

Siguiendo la lucha inter-imperialista de WWI, los EU han llegado a ser el poder imperialista dominante. La afluencia de riqueza que vino con esto permitió la integración de la parte de inmigrantes del sur y del este de Europa a la nación blanca conducía a la Gran Depresión. (1) Desde 1900 hasta 1950 el promedio de la propiedad doméstica en los EU era casi un 45%, con los precios lo más bajo en la cinturón negro del sur y el más alto en los estados del Norte que eran dominados por Europeos.(3) Después de la recuperación económica que comenzó después de WWII, los EU se embarcó en la sub-urbanización de América con incentivos numerosos del gobierno federal para traer la propiedad doméstica encima del 60% de nuevo.

Desde 1960, la propiedades domésticas se mantenido encima del 60% para los ciudadanos de los EU en su conjunto.(4) Esta tasa fue superior al 70% de los estadounidenses blancos en los últimos años, pero el censo no cuenta con estadísticas comparables por la raza que se remonta muy lejos. La tasa de propiedad de la vivienda

por los negros y los latinos es poco menos del 50%, a pesar de la opresión nacional ha asegurado que actualmente se enfrentan la ejecución hipotecaria en forma desproporcionada.

Las teorías de Emmanuel en el "Cambio Desigual" demuestran que como los salarios significativamente más altos de las personas del primer mundo en realidad transfieren las riquezas desde el Tercer Mundo a los países imperialistas, reforzando sus ventajas económicas. Del mismo modo, la nación opresora tiene la equidad, y es capaz de aumentar la riqueza de una manera que las semi-colonias internas no son capaces de hacer a pesar de acceso a empleos de nivel explotador. Todo esto encaja con la tendencia general del capitalismo, que es la acumulación de capital. Cuanto más se tiene, más se tiende a obtener.

La Caída del Mercado Domiciliario en US

El ala izquierda del nacionalismo blanco (si se describan anarquistas, socialistas, Maoístas o democráticos) ha estado diciendo que el incremento en la reposición de domicilios es una indicación de las contradicciones aumentadas entre el proletariado americano y el capitalismo. Estas personas defienden la tierra robada que ha sido la base de riquezas para los colonos de América y la esquema pirámide moderna de propiedad doméstica que es la base del sueño Americano hoy.

No solo han perdido millones de gente su domicilio por reposición en años recientes, sino los traficantes del miedo señalan que en el "mercado hipotecario de alto riesgo resultó en la desaparición de 13 trillones de dólares en la riqueza domiciliario americano entre el medio-año de 2007 y marzo 2009...en el promedio, el domiciliario estadounidense ha perdido un cuarto de su riqueza en ese periodo."(5) Tantas alarmistas ignoran que estadounidenses ganaron 10 millones de dólares desde 2006 a 2007 llegar a un nivel alto más alto, y que el valor neto de los ciudadanos del país ha generalmente ha amentado a tasas incrementando desde WWII.

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El MIM(Prisiones)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Under Lock & Key No. 19, March/April 2011

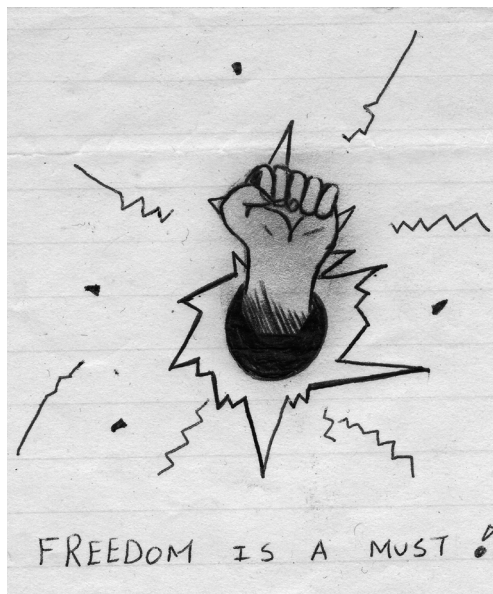
On "Objective" Reporting

Under Lock & Key relies on our comrades behind bars to report on conditions and events inside prisons. We track the history and reliability of our writers and, when possible, we double check facts in the articles. But there will always be some facts we cannot verify before printing. Our readers are encouraged to let us know if they have information that contradicts what they see in *Under Lock & Key*. Yet, recognize that no matter how much the bourgeoisie tries to pretend, reporting is never completely objective or devoid of political content. MIM(Prisons) will always report from the perspective of the international proletariat and on the issues that best serve their interests.

...Continued from page 3

...United Front

We cannot wish peace into reality when conditions do not allow for it. When people's needs aren't met, there can be no peace. Despite its vast wealth, the system of imperialism chooses profit over meeting humyn needs for the world's majority. Even here in the richest country in the world there are groups that suffer from the drive for profit. We must build independent institutions to combat the problems plaguing the op-



pressed populations. This is our unity in action.

We acknowledge that the greater the unity politically and ideologically, the greater our movement becomes in combating national oppression, class oppression, racism and gender oppression. Those who recognize this reality have come together to sign these principles for a united front to demonstrate our agreement on these issues. We are the voiceless and we have a right and a duty to be heard. ★

...Continued from page 4 ...Organizing is Hard
begin with.

It's almost as if the prison population must be shocked out of their zombie like state of existence before they can exhibit some type of real progressiveness. Feeling this way can surely discourage some comrades from doing the necessary work which the USW has been tasked with. Unfortunately we are forced to work with what capitalism has bequeathed us.

The battle to push people towards scientific-socialism is a most ruthless war waged by the class-conscious and is fought against not only backward individuals but against an entire network of ideas (superstructure). This is exactly why the Chinese Communists had themselves a "Cultural Revolution," because they knew full well that organizing the prison population in this or that direction would never be enough. You have to teach the prison population not only what has to be done but why it needs to be done. For this we must all bear responsibilities! ★

Special Literature Offers

Spanish: If you can read Spanish, or know someone that does, let us know to receive Maoist lit en español.

MIM Notes: Write us to get a package of old *MIM Notes*, the defunct newspaper of the Maoist Internationalist Movement.