



March/April 2012, No. 25

Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

Grieve, Grieve, Grieve; Growing Movement for Democracy

by Editor of *Under Lock & Key*
March 2012

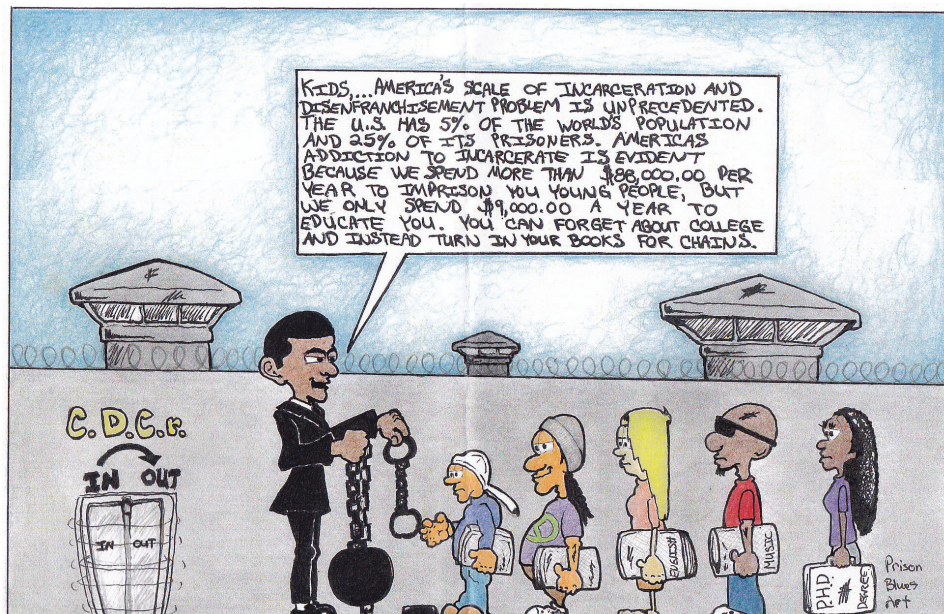
In this issue we are featuring reports from comrades in a number of states who are leading efforts for a campaign to have prisoners' grievances heard and responded to by state officials and employees. This campaign has continued to grow in popularity, with minimal effort by MIM(Prisons), yet many have not yet heard of it and there is much room to expand. For all who remain inspired by the recent efforts of California and Georgia prisoners, but feel your conditions are not so advanced, we suggest you work on the USW-led grievance campaigns to start getting people organized in your area.

The basic actions necessary to advance the grievance campaign are:

1. File grievances on the problems you face where you're at. Get people around you to file grievances. Appeal your grievances to the highest level.
2. If your grievances go unanswered, organize people around you to sign and mail out grievance petitions created by USW, distributed by MIM(Prisons). Send follow-up letters periodically to check on the status of your petition. Send responses to the grievance petition to MIM(Prisons).
3. If your state is not yet covered by the grievance petition, but your grievances are going unanswered, translate the petition to work for your state. This requires looking up citations and policies, and figuring out who would be best to send the petition to.

While getting grievances responded to is essentially an exercise in reformism, we see promise in these efforts because they struggle to give voice to some of the most oppressed. This is a democratic struggle in a part of the United States where the least amount of democracy exists. Amerikans will tell you that's the point, "you do the crime, you do the time." But we disagree. We don't think the U.S. prison system has anything to do with justice or applying objective societal rules to its citizens. The simple fact that about half of all U.S. prisoners are New Afrikan, while only 12% of the U.S. population is, disproves that theory in one fell swoop. In general, the oppressed nations have seen an increase in democracy in the United States, yet for a growing segment of these nations, their rights are lawfully being denied. For those who have committed real crimes against the people and should spend time in prison by proletarian standards,

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U.S. Still #1 in Imprisonment and Criminal Injustice

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
February 2012

In December 2011, the Bureau of Justice Statistics released its annual reports on the correctional population in the United States.(1) The reports cover people under adult correctional supervision in 2010. For the second year in a row, this population declined; the first decline since the number of people in jail and prison began growing in the 1970s.

At the end of December 2010, the total number of people in the correctional system, including probation, parole, prison and jail, was 7,076,200. The prison population in this country dropped .6% from 2009, the first decline since 1972. The number of federal prisoners actually increased by .8% but the state prison population dropped by that same rate. Because there are more state prisoners than federal prisoners, there was a drop overall.

The imprisonment rate for new convictions has been declining since 2007, but this is the first year releases exceeded admissions of prisoners, leading to the small drop in the prison population. But release rates were down 2.9% in 2010, so these numbers don't reflect an increase in releases. In fact, time served by state prison-

ers remained about the same.

These latest numbers may indicate that the prison population has finally reached its peak in Amerika, possibly because of the heavy economic burden of maintaining such a massive criminal injustice infrastructure in this country. But even if the imprisonment rate continues to drop, it will take many years and huge changes before it gets low enough to be comparable to other countries. The U.S. holds over 30% of the world's imprisoned people and has the highest imprisonment rate in the world.(2)

The report gives two possible explanations for the drop in prison population in the United States: "either a decrease in the probability of a prison sentence, given conviction, or a decrease in the number of convictions." Unfortunately, data on these measures are not yet available but either would be a good thing. However, as mentioned above, it is likely these changes are a result of financial requirements, not a shift in politics around imprisonment.

There are some interesting trends by nationality demonstrating a continued commitment to national oppression by the criminal injustice system in Amerika. Blacks and whites both had a drop in imprisonment rates, but the decrease for whites (6.2%) was much bigger than for Blacks (.85%). In recent years migrants have been the fastest growing population in U.S. prisons. While 2010 saw a 7.3% increase in the "Hispanic" imprisonment rate, non-citizens actually saw a slight decrease, probably due to

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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 prisoner 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 legally permitted. 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; Maoists see the latter 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?

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.

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.

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. While our organization focuses on prisoner support, 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 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 (i.e. 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. See page 12 for info on some of the active USW campaigns.

United Front for Peace in Prisons-Statement of Principles

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?

★ Study and uphold the five principles above.

★ 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) if you need additional materials to educate your members in history, politics and economics.

Build the United Front to Address LO Contradictions

by Ras Uhuru
September 2011

This papyrus is to all United Front (UF) lumpen organizations (LOs) who are plenipotentiary strawboss [this refers to chiefs who claim complete authority over their local group]. And some items will have a unique affinity to those who strive and struggle in a Growth and Development pose. And in that case, I will be specific to whom those items are geared towards.

Some serious questions have been presented to *ULK* on matters that will either keep or further dissimulate any form of umoja [unity] among the LOs that have expressed an interest in UF.

Umoja over Dissimulation

[Biographical info removed per security policy. In contrast to those who are "plenipotentiary strawbossing," the author claims deep history in a disciplined structure. We will let h credentials speak through what h has to offer in the form of ideas. - Editor]

In a 9 November 1999 column in the *Final Call* newspaper, my lumpen chief reiterated a previous call for unity and peace among the LOs, specifically in the mid-west. However, in laying out his nationwide peace and unity initiative in book format in 1996, he let it be known that our "vision" for Growth and Development was one for universal unity and peace. Hence, this United Front (UF) project is consistent with my brother's vision.

In the 26 September 2011 letter to United Front members from MIM(Prisons) the proposition set forth was the struggle certain LOs are having in putting their differences to the side. It should be understood that grown women and men have to make tough decisions. Significant among them is the making of personal and collective sacrifices being asked for that don't merely serve you and a few of your homies or comrades. The sacrifice here is for collective LO unity, which will benefit the future of all of our collective kith and kin. This is what it means to become part of a class struggle, the lumpen being a class. In signing on to the UF, you have to join the collective interest.

In *ULK 17* (November/December 2010), UF was defined for all: "United Front is the theory of uniting different groups across class lines for a common goal or interest, while maintaining independence where those groups disagree. The application of united front theory is about recognizing different contradictions in society and utilizing them in the interests of the international proletariat."(p.1 "Building United Front Surrounded by Enemies")

In that same issue of *ULK*, and on the same page, under the title "Lumpen United Front: Its Basis and Development" it stated "The basis for unity among lumpen is *class*. The lumpen are the disenfranchised who derive from the

economically depressed areas -- the Barrios and ghetto projects -- and are for the most part oppressed nations people. The lumpen are known to the oppressor nation as the 'criminal element' which is code word for persyn of color. The lumpen usually come from a lumpen organization that the oppressors call a 'gang,' or survive as some type of parasitic hustler."

In *ULK 22* (September/October 2011) the United Front principles were enunciated and have been reprinted in each issue since.(page 2) The five principles were direct and extremely clear. LOs started writing to be with it. So no LO should be confused as to what is expected of them and what is required of them based upon their own pledges of unity and peace.

Historically Long and Deep-Rooted Feuds

Those who have or are dealing with this issue should do one of three things:

1. They can settle their differences among themselves (the two conflicting/feuding LOs) which should be done as expeditiously as practical.
2. Call upon a congress of six. The congress of six (C-Six or C-Six Session) will be composed by each feuding LO in the conflict picking three LO reps from a neutral LO not involved in the issue, to represent that particular LO's interest. And the other LO in the conflict shall pick three for theirs. That C-Six shall bring a resolution to those LOs' problems and it shall be binding upon both and all its members and factions, based upon umoja, or unity pledge each LO gave upon the second principle of the UF mission and goal statement.
3. If one, two, or more LOs cannot bring resolution to their beefing and feuding employing any of the former two offerings, a UF congress shall be called by any UF LO reps and all LOs who signed on shall bring a resolution to those two LOs' problems. If the resolution is not embraced by the feuding LOs the UF congress should take exclusion measures or other UF fealty measures.

If we are serious about this, these suggestions shouldn't be a problem. I know from personal experience and universal education and training that many of the LOs already have such conflict resolution policies in play in the streets and behind enemy lines of the oppressor's machine. So this is not utopian in nature.

Ideally these C-Six resolutions should first be attempted in-house and regionally before going multi-state and nationally. Let's not be remiss that the opposition to lumpen cohesion is reading our solutions and resolutions. So it is to be expected that that same dynamic will put all kinds of tools in force and effect to break the chain of unity. Among them, their ease at censorship and suppression. That's why it is imperative LOs must be very judicious in how

Internal Unity Should Precede United Front

by a Texas prisoner
March 2012

As an active outstanding member of the Growth & Development struggle down in Texas, I feel it's my duty to speak up on the article "Criticism and Good Communication Helps Us Grow and Develop" by Ras Uhuru in *ULK 24*.

In the vision of our great leader, growth starts on an individual level; to reach the great discovery you got to have self-growth. Once you reach that then as a nation, as a movement, we can develop. That's where the three Ds come in - Dedication, Determination & Discipline. The three Ds in self are three keys to reaching development. Our great leader tells us to let these concepts reside in our hearts & be guiding light for us. Everyone wants to change the world but our honorable chairman tells us revolution starts with self: educate yourself, be dedicated, determined & disciplined, grow as individuals then we can develop as a nation. That's the "Blueprint" and the 21st Century concepts for GD are all based on this.

I wouldn't say we are a revolutionary organization but fo'sho' we are political and struggle and strive for success in everything we do. To the Revolutionary Gangstas, I preach that to you brothers, regardless of all else, always strive & struggle for success. Educate yourself on the new concepts of GD. As for Ras Uhuru, the Growth & Development movement is obviously something you don't have a full understanding of either because the four stages of GD start at Gangster Disciple and end in a Great Discovery. Maybe these brothers in South Carolina have not reached past the first stage of GD. But to be aware is to be alive and so I strongly advocate that all of these brothers from Mr. Uhuru on down to the Revolutionary Gangstas educate themselves about a movement before speaking up on it.

The Growth & Development is FOC - For Our Children, For Our Community, For Our Cause. The new struggle is for education, politics, economics, unity, organization & social development. Get on point brothers and keep ya shields up and your swords sharp, and always seek and share in the vision of our great leader - Free King Larry Hoover!

MIM(Prisons) responds: First, we hope everyone can agree that *Under Lock & Key* is not the place to have internal debates within other organizations. If there are disagreements within a group about what the group should stand for, those debates should happen within those organizations' own independent means of communication. At the same time, we print statements from other organizations to establish where MIM(Prisons) has unity with them, and to struggle where we disagree. This is a key principle to ideological development for all of us.

We printed the article by Ras Uhuru in par-

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...Growth

ticular because we thought it brought up an important concern, which is that we should promote unity whenever it exists. Ras Uhuru's criticism of the Revolutionary Gangstas statement was that it could be read as an implied criticism of Growth & Development, but without any substance. We agreed with Ras Uhuru on this and printed his article in response. Ras Uhuru also felt that the Revolutionary Gangstas should be working for better understanding and unity within their organization as opposed to forming a new organization. This may or may not have been good advice, as this would depend on the conditions these comrades faced on the ground.

As for the position of the responder above, we agree that one must educate oneself first, and that struggling within allows for greater unity with others. This is also true for organizations, which must develop greater internal understanding and unity before they can ever unite with others. (see Ras Uhuru's article on United Front on page 3). While pushing many positive principles that align with the United Front, the author above states clearly that s/he does not see himself as part of a revolutionary organization. This is a good example of what a United Front looks like. There are clear differences between MIM(Prisons) and GD (even if this author's vision is disputed by others). And yet we can agree on the certain key principles that we both think will further the goals of our respective organizations.

It just so happens that "Growth," the third principle of the United Front addresses this point. The United Front principle of "Growth" states in part, "We support members within our organization who leave and embrace other political organizations and concepts that are within the anti-imperialist struggle." So we are not idealistic in promoting unity; we know that sometimes groups will not want to unite with us even if some of their membership does. We know individuals will leave organizations, and sometimes whole organizations will split. But this should be done in a principled way, with clear political explanations and an attempt to maintain good relations as long as we are all still moving in the same general direction as a United Front. ★

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.

Security, Lumpen Organizations and Names in ULK

by cipactli of United Struggle from Within
February 2012

The recent article in *ULK* 23 titled "Hunger Strike Strategy: Tactical Retreat or Advance?" raised some good ideas on how to move forward in the struggle for human rights in American prisons. We need to propose ideas and theory on the situation with the strike movement now more than ever. We need to develop a clear path on how to better strengthen our efforts. This development needs not just California prisoners' attention but all prisoners across the United States to lend their voice to this debate no matter where their cage is at, as oppression can be found in every gulag from sea to shining sea.

When prisoners participate in this discussion, many are able to take from this debate, learn and hopefully add to it in a real way. Some may use the ideas for their own battles or modify other ideas to work in their efforts. In this way *ULK* will serve as a message board or chat room for the captive masses. All this is of course good and healthy for any movement to grow, and I look forward to read up on new theory and add to the mix as well. It is expanding on thought for all and a "win win" for the people.

One of the things that came out of the article "Tactical Retreat or Advance" was calling on certain people or LOs to provoke their participation. Had *ULK* been a strictly internal document that only prisoners read then I would think "yea right on." The problem is that *ULK* is read and heavily scrutinized by prison officials and law enforcement agencies, thus what may mean to be simple criticism becomes a serious breach. In California prisons - and I suspect it is the same everywhere - if prison officials find letters, prison kites, etc., with prisoners' names and affiliations this can be used as "confidential information," "proving" what they will call gang association. This will go into one's file to be used as a point toward validation. We should find ways to criticize our fellow prisoners while protecting their identity; it's not hard to do so.

Someone who may be new to *ULK* may read the naming of names and wonder if this writer is intentionally sabotaging these prisoners' ability to remain on the mainline. "Is s/he trying to get them snatched up?" So we don't want to give mixed messages to people picking up a *ULK* of what we're about.

I know many people who were validated because their last point was someone

else wrote something about them, that they were affiliated with this or that group, and so I was surprised this was allowed to take place.

If there is a "pig question," I think it begs the question of can there be a "pig statement"? What is the damage that can come out of naming prisoners without their knowledge in *ULK*? And should MIM(Prisons) allow it or partake in the same? I don't think so. I remember another article a while back where someone did the same and called out people and identified their LO but I believe it was in NY. I'm not sure how prisons in NY deal with intel such as this but I am certain of how California prisons deal with it and I am sitting in SHU for stuff like that.

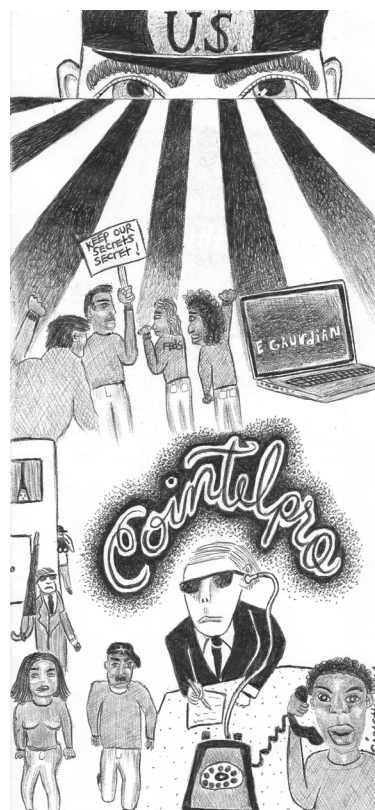
I think MIM(Prisons) has an excellent policy of not putting people's real names in its publications. MIM(Prisons) says rightly it does not do so to protect prisoners from more repression by the state. I believe this should also pertain to prisoners writing about other prisoners as well. The pigs get a lot of intelligence on prisoners from their snitches who help them out; they shouldn't get more help from prison revolutionaries nor revolutionaries out in society.

I think criticism is a good thing for all prisoners and this includes LOs who are a huge part in what occurs in many prisons. Revolutionary prisoners need to develop ways to criticize without doing damage. Writing is not just succumbing to subjectivism no matter how stressful it becomes. I fully understand the frustration that arises when people are right at the ledge and all they need to do is make that leap to freedom and here we are the prison revolutionary nudging and showing the path and yet it moves at a snail's pace and so we put pen to paper to

jump start what seems like a stalled engine. I get this and see where we need to go but still we must remember *ULK* is not an internal cable; it is literally on the world wide web. Let us move forward in our efforts while staying alert in all areas. People's Power!

Editor of Under Lock & Key responds: We thank comrade cipactli for calling out this error in *Under Lock & Key*, and as editor I fully accept the criticism made. While any potential damage in that instance has been done, we are printing this publicly to correct any bad impressions it may have given people and remind all comrades of the importance of these issues. This was an opportunist error on my part that risked pushing away people that we hope to ally with, who never asked to have their names in *ULK*.

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...Contradictions

we are politicking this movement in *ULK*. For this is a medium we cannot afford nor permit to be short-circuited. So we should refrain, if possible, from placing problems on the national stage if it's possible to be resolved in-house or in-state.

Baseless and petty allegations that cannot be judged and weighed across the nation serve no good other than becoming the ham's fodder to rationalize oppressive-suppressive censorship programs. So it's not good to throw this on MIM(Prisons)'s or *ULK*'s door without proof.

Rebuilding Organizations

Now let's move on to the contradictions within. If we aim to be truly successful with this endeavor, all LOs must do some self-analyzing and self-examination. Every formation, like the communities and families we come from, have bad juju in their midsts. And we know this project is not about transforming the economics of LOs (though we hope that the good eventually have such an effect).

I think I can speak for all and say we wish to keep that kind of debatable aspect of the LOs' habits away from what we are striving to do here. For contamination and cross-transference can happen very easily and it's something that quarter hams are greedily waiting for to not only discredit us, but shut the movement down.

Here I will paraphrase Atiba Shanna from the "Vita Wa Watu" and apply his ideas to our LOs: Each LO must emphasize re-building. We must re-orient and re-organize based upon in-house examinations of our LO and based upon what aspects of their mission need to be improved or omitted. Because the self-destruction LOs engaged in in our previous structures, and the reasons for it, wasn't of a mere quantitative nature. That is, the movement and our organizations didn't suffer defeat (the mass incarceration of each LO's members, loss of lives and material and political gains, schisms etc.) and set backs simply because of the state's repression, but

also, primarily, because our "minds" aren't right for a vast majority of LOs and their governing bodies and rank. We are wrong in thinking that we can resolve all our problems by doing counterproductive/counterrevolutionary hustles and resolving all conflicts among ourselves with not only the sword but the hammer and anvil that built sword and spear. Our practice isn't up to par.

And as another of my great teachers taught me: "If one plants an orchard on a chemical dump without first digging it out and replacing it with good soil, it will produce poisonous fruits."

We have two million plus strong, oppressed beings in these county and state psyche incinerators. We have some purchasing power. And we have political power abstractly through the family unit. As field marshal of the struggle, George Jackson stated: "A good deal of this has to do with our ability to communicate to the people on the street. The nature of the function of the piston (system) within the police state has to be continuously explained, elucidated to the people on the street because we can't fight alone in here... We can fight, but if we're isolated, if the state is successful in accomplishing that, the results are usually not constructive in terms of proving our point. We fight and we die, but that's not the point, although it may be admirable from some sort of purely moral point of view. The point is, however, in the face of what we confront, to fight and win. That's the real objective: not just to make statements, no matter how noble, but to destroy that system that oppresses us." (Cages of Steel p. 179)

All scientific knowledge and experiments must *evolve*. Things that may have or were once working for an LO may not cut it in today's world. Conditions are changing. Just look at the amount of power and force being aimed at the LOs.

We cannot stay stuck in the same old "spear over gun" syndrome/mentality that got Shaka Zulu killed. He and others refused to fight with guns at first, but instead insisted on fighting guns (in the enemies' hands) with Zulu specialized

spears in colonial Afrika. Similarly in the dawn of the civil rights movement we saw this approach reintroduced by promoting prayer over protest. Later protest had completed its role, but people still promoted it over "self-defense" and "self-determination" in the late 60s and 70s. Now it's greed over respectable and righteous hustling; the individual over the collective LO; dissimulation over unification.

Most of all the older LOs have some chimeric elements in regards to their political philosophies, and those have evolved to the point where capitalism is the end of all means. Even loyalty has a price tag. The nationalism and anti-establishment fight against oppression is relegated to their lit of old and passing stories of the old homies and history books. With "getting money" the ends of all means, no cohesive political line can be drawn. So we must, under the UF banner, agree to some basic principles that we can unite around.

We have witnessed where and what tribalism (in excess) and wars bring. It permits others to oppress and disrespect us more than any LO I ever knew has done to me and my LO. Yet we don't fight the oppressors with the same zeal and hatred we direct towards each other for lesser disrespect and abuse. Therefore, UF should be the highest priority among the vanguard of each lumpen, and the women and men steering said LOs.

We would be fools to believe that designs are not in play to do away with those who are moving to end oppression. According to a news release a week or so ago, the department of justice claims that the U.S. has 33,000 LOs nationwide with 1.4 million members. It's not known if they are counting those behind concrete and steel or not. Regardless of the truth in the numbers, these figures serve one thing: a notice that they see a problem to be addressed. When you release propaganda or statistics like that, they serve a greater point.

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On Prisons & Prisoners

MIM(Prisons) seeks to build public opinion against Amerika's criminal injustice system, and to eventually replace the bourgeois injustice system with proletarian justice. The bourgeois injustice system imprisons and executes a disproportionately large and growing number of oppressed people while letting the biggest mass murderers -- the imperialists and their lackeys -- roam free. Imperialism is not opposed to murder or theft. It only insists that these crimes be committed in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

All U.S. citizens are criminals -- accomplices and accessories to the crimes of U.S. oppression globally until the day U.S. imperialism is overcome. All U.S. citizens should start from the point of view that they are reforming criminals.

MIM(Prisons) does not advocate that all prisoners go free today; we have a more effective program for fighting crime as was demonstrated in China prior to the restoration of capitalism there in 1976. We say that all prisoners are political prisoners because under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, all imprisonment is substantively political. It is our responsibility to exert revolutionary leadership and conduct political agitation and organization among prisoners -- whose material conditions make them an overwhelmingly revolutionary group. Some prisoners should and will work on self-criticism under a future dictatorship of the proletariat in those cases in which prisoners really did do something wrong by proletarian standards.

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...Security

MIM(Prisons) agrees that it is dangerous practice for *ULK* to include people's LO name and affiliation and we will edit articles in the future to remove this information. While we have never printed people's real names, as cipactli points out, this doesn't matter if the prisoncrats can make the connection between a prisoner and their street name. We don't need to be helping the state with their repression, and feeding them information can have a real impact even when we are printing common knowledge.

This doesn't mean people should stop calling out LOs or writing about them, but *ULK* writers need to be careful to never use a name that can be associated with an individual. We can talk about groups without connecting them to specific names, and we can address lines and practice without naming groups. As we build the United Front for Peace in Prisons this is particularly important: we must build unity, not divisions, amongst the lumpen organizations. ★

Sending a Donation is Contraband

by a California prisoner
October 2011

I wish to apprise you of the recent censored mail to and from your area. As you can probably recall, I promised to send you \$20 off my books in exchange for reading material back in August. Well that month has long been left in our background.

I have attempted to get it processed from the start, yet finally it was blocked for the so-called reason that MIM is banned. I find that hard to believe because when you sent magazines and they were returned, the Sergeant who spoke to me checked into it and specifically told me MIM was not on the banned list. Still, in the documentation they refer to a memo from 2006.

Furthermore, the Trust Officer told me that anything over \$50 has to be approved by Squad in advance. My donation was way below the \$50 mark to go to Squad, yet before responding back to my request, my Counselor forwarded it to Squad. So yes, the Trust Office was just deflecting my question.

In the recent events of hunger strikes I think these pigs are getting petty and they are bringing up their repression tactics by stripping out **all property** from those who participated. Sending you money from my account seems to be out of the question for the time being.

The policies regarding donations is actually simple. As it states in Title 15 Section 3240.1 Donations, "Inmates may with permission of the institution head make voluntary donations from their trust account funds for any approved reason or cause. Permission shall be denied if any of the following exist: (a) There is evidence of coercion. (b) The inmate's trust account balance is less than the amount of the proposed donation. (c) The inmate is mentally incompetent. (d) The proposed amount of the donation is less than one dollar. (e) The reason or cause advocated could jeopardize facility security or the safety of persons."

None of the above pertain to the case at hand. It is an illegal stretch of the policy for this donation to be denied.

MIM(Prisons) Legal Coordinator adds: Recently, there has been much discussion and some legal challenges to the law stating that corporations are people with the rights to free speech in the form of unlimited spending on political causes. Incidents like this beg the question, are prisoners people? Do they have the rights promised to people in U.S. law? The stories printed in *ULK* tend to support the answer as "no."

Regarding the alleged ban on MIM, on July 12, 2011, Appeals Examiner K. J. Allen, an employee who investigates Director's Level Appeals, stated in an appeal decision to a prisoner,

"While Maoist International [sic] Movement publications were previously disallowed based upon the direction of CDCR administration staff, the publications are currently not listed on the Centralized List of Disapproved Publications. Thus, a blanket denial on all such publications is inappropriate, and the institution must process the appellant's mail in accordance with applicable departmental rules/regulations."

"As with all publications, the appellant's mailing must be reviewed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with all departmental regulations. Unless this specific Maoist International Movement publication is considered contraband, as noted within the CCR 3006, the publication shall be issued to the appellant and/or allowed to be ordered and received." (When citing this Director's Level Appeal Decision, it may be helpful to use IAB Case No. 1020001.)

The Director's level is the top of the top within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). A decision made at the Director's level would generally apply to all facilities and all prisoners in the CDCR system. When the author of this article cited the above Director's Level Appeal Decision in defense of his donation to MIM(Prisons), s/he was told to omit it from his grievance because it "belongs to another inmate." How a Director's Level Decision simply re-explaining and re-correcting a CDCR practice can "belong" to only one prisoner is beyond reason.

In *ULK* 24 we put a call out for donations to keep *Under Lock & Key* functioning at its current capacity. When a prisoner is unable to send a donation to MIM(Prisons), the prison administrators are limiting our ability to publish and send out literature, thereby illegally limiting our (and the donating prisoner's) First Amendment right to free speech. When they cite a defunct memorandum to limit donations, it is even more egregious.

At least one person in the CDCR's Director's office made at least one correct decision, at least once. Since then, administrators at facilities across the state have been forced to admit there is no ban on MIM literature. We encourage our comrades to continue grieving and re-grieving the defunct 2006 ban of MIM Distributors up to the top, and take it to court if necessary. To help in this process, we've put together a history of the ban with quotations for specific facilities. We are sending out this Censorship Guide Supplement for California to help prisoners hold administrators to their word. Write in to get it. ★

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a massive increase in deportations. Black men remain the largest sector of the prison population and are imprisoned at a rate almost 7 times white men. ★

Notes:

1. *Prisoners in 2010, Correctional Population in the United States, 2010. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Published December 2011.*

2. *World Prison Population List, Eighth ed. National Institute of Corrections, Published 2009.*

...U.S. is #1

Amerikan Occupiers Still Losing

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)

March 2012

The point of guerrilla war is not to succeed, it's always been just to make the enemy bleed. Depriving the soldiers of the peace of mind that they need.

Bullets are hard to telegraph when they bob and they weave.

The only way a guerrilla war can ever be over, is when the occupation can't afford more soldiers.

Until they have to draft the last of you into the service, and you refuse because you don't see the purpose.

- Immortal Technique, the Martyr

In just over a week, six Amerikan soldiers have been killed by Afghan patriots within the state military that is supposedly working with the U.S. occupation. Nominally triggered by reports of the U.S. military burning copies of the Koran, these killings bring the number of NATO troops killed by their Afghan "allies" to 36 in the last year. This is a significant increase from previous years and some have suggested no other "native ally" of U.S. imperialism has compared. (1) While tiny in comparison to the loss of life by the occupied population, these incidents support the assessment that the United States continues to lose their war on Afghanistan. The deaths of Amerikans, while providing fuel for anti-Afghan propaganda, frightens the Amerikan public away from participating in ground wars. It took a long 9 years to turn Amerikan public opinion towards pulling troops out of Afghanistan, and Afghans are still fighting to get them out. (2)



Afghan protesters stomp out police car in Herat.

There are two incorrect bourgeois narratives underlying the reporting on recent events. One attempts to hide the fact that the nation has faced a brutal occupation for over a decade, as if Afghans are just irrationally responding to the minor incident of the burning of some books. The second narrative is that there is an outside radical religious element, which must be distinguished from the greater Afghan nation that wants to work with Amerikans. This narrative was used against the Taliban for years before the invasion by U.S. troops even began. The truth being (however flimsily) covered by both of these narratives is that the Afghan nation has supported a decade-long war of resistance to the imperialist occupation led by Amerika. A parallel might be drawn to the media's portrayal of

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Who's Leading Lumpen Peace Work?

by USW C-4 of United Struggle from Within
March 2012

"I was born in jail." This was Stokely Carmichael's response to a Swedish reporter in 1967 when asked if he was afraid of being sent to jail for helping to organize the Black nation for national liberation and self-determination.(1) In making this very poignant statement, Stokely Carmichael was putting forward the correct political analysis, referring to the prison-like conditions of the Black nation and other internal semi-colonies of Amerika at the time. It's been 45 years since then and a string of reformist struggles have proceeded. The completion of the civil rights movement, the appointment of the first Black U.S. Supreme Court "Justice," and the election of the first Black president. But have the material conditions of the Black nation truly changed when compared to other First Worlders? According to the Census Bureau

statistics for the year 2006, which show more Blacks and Latinos are living in prison cells than college dorms, they have not.(2)

A new documentary titled "The Violence Interruptors: One Year In a City Grappling with Violence" makes this point ever-so-clear. This documentary centers on an imperialist-funded lumpen organization from the streets of Chicago whose membership is primarily made up of ex-gang members. For the most part they have all done some serious time for some serious crimes, but upon their release made a commitment to themselves and their communities that they would help stop the pointless violence that takes so many lives.

These ex-gang members call themselves "Violence Interruptors," which is a reference to their pacifist tactics. They are funded by the Illinois Department of Corrections, Cook

County Board of Commissioners and the U.S. Department of Justice, among others. They run the Violence Interruptors under the guise of the non-profit organization called Cease Fire. The initial idea of the Violence Interruptors program was proposed and partly funded by Dr. Gary Slutkin, who upon returning to Chicago from a medical tour of Africa saw the dire straits of the oppressed here and drew parallels to the African experience. But the organization's true roots date back to Jeff Fort, whose life centered around his leadership in a Chicago lumpen organization that had one foot in Black nationalism and one in drugs and gang banging.

In federal prison from 1972 to 1976 due to his use of War on Poverty money from the government, Fort took up aspects of Islam and re-branded and restructured the Almighty Black P. Stone Nation when he got out. Along with other leading members, and at times working with the police, he worked to build peace between lumpen organizations and to keep crack out of Chicago. But of course the Amerikan government never likes to see the oppressed come together for the betterment of our people, even if at first they pretend to agree with what we're doing. So they had Fort arrested and sent back to prison on trumped up terrorism charges, where he remains today. Having successfully neutralized Fort and other early leaders, the Stones today remain a largely divided umbrella for many sets of gang bangers across Chicago, the status quo preferred by the state.(3)

Carrying on Fort's legacy, Ameena Mathews, a former gangster and Jeff Fort's daughter, is a Violence Interruptor. Mathews, like other Violence Interruptors, is no stranger to the streets and sees it as her own personal responsibility to stop the violence, even if it means putting her own life at risk. An example of this is caught on film when during an interview for the documentary that's being given inside of her home, a fight breaks out on the street. Recognizing that even a one-on-one situation has the potential to turn deadly, she immediately rushed out to try and bring peace to the quickly-growing crowd. While attempting to calm everyone down, a young man saw a rock hurling at his cousin and sacrificially put himself in the line of fire to protect her. He was hit in the mouth. Afterwards threats are made with the promise of gunplay to come, but Mathews quickly ushers the victim away and tells him that he's the real gangsta because he defended his family and defending their families is what true gangsters do.

Eddie Bocanegra, aka "Bandit," is another Violence Interruptor who did 14 years for murder, but who, during his imprisonment, went thru a period of reflection. He recognized that he not only fucked up his life but that of his family and the family of the person he killed. Now on the streets Bandit admits to having identified pride with his gang but now sees that it was all pointless. Besides being a Violence Interruptor, Bandit also visits schools across Chicago in an attempt to counsel oppressed nation youth who might find themselves in similar situations to the ones he once did.

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... Continued from previous page ...Afghanistan

the prison movement where the outside element is "criminal gangs" and resistance is pinned to issues like wanting TV or better food.

In a recent report on NPR, an official stated that USAID had to hide the fact that they were giving aid to the Afghan people, because no one in the country would be seen with a blanket or food with a U.S. flag on it. This fact is a clear demonstration that either the resistance is the Afghan people, or the "outside radical element" is so prolific as to make distinguishing it from the Afghan people irrelevant. Meanwhile, the funeral of an Afghan air force colonel that killed nine Americans was attended by 1500 mourners last year.(3) Since this article was first drafted another bomb struck near Bagram Air Force Base where the Korans were burned on March 5. On March 8 the Taliban infiltrated Afghan police in Oruzgan and killed nine of them, while six British occupiers were killed during an attack on their vehicle in Helmand province. Our strategic confidence comes from examples like this, where whole countries have united to reject and fight imperialism. Comparing these conditions to those in the United States demonstrates our line on where guerrilla war is possible and not.

"Time works for the guerrilla both in the field -- where it costs the enemy a daily fortune to pursue him -- and in the politico-economic arena."(4) The occupation of Afghanistan is estimated to have cost as much as \$500 billion(5), with sources reporting costs per Amerikan soldier at \$850,000 up to \$1.2 million a year.(6) While almost all of this money goes to U.S. corporations and their employees supplying the soldiers, even bourgeois economists have recognized that militarism is not a sustainable way to prop up a capitalist economy. What they fail to acknowledge is that only a socialist economic system that produces for need, not profit, can eliminate the inherent contradictions in production where circulation of capital must always increase in the interest of profit.

"There is no great novelty in [guerrilla tactics], nor can the Marxist-Leninist camp claim any special credit for it. What is new -- and Mao is the apostle and the long Chinese revolution the first proving ground -- is the application of guerrilla activity, in a conscious and deliberate way, to specific political objectives, without immediate reference to the outcome of battles as such, provided only that the revolutionaries survive."(7)

We are coming out of a period where the universality of Maoism has been dirtied by an association of communism with revisionists and First Worldists. Islam continues to unite the national liberation movement in Afghanistan, while "communism" has an association with foreign invasion. While socialism is necessary to meet the needs of the people of Afghanistan, the movement's ideology so far has kept it isolated from the toxic politics of the First World. This will work in their favor as the people's struggle reaches higher stages.

Here in the United States we must continue to find creative ways to help the Afghans' heroic struggle to whittle away at Amerikan support for occupation. And we must learn from the events in Central Asia about who are our friends and enemies, what is possible where, and what it looks like to take on a long struggle with the confidence that you are on the right side of history.

[In March 2012, a U.S. soldier's rampage killed at least 15 Afghan civilians sleeping in their homes, strengthening global opinion in support of Afghan resistance.(8) - Editor] ★

Notes:

1. Andrew Tilgham. Panetta: Attacks won't affect Afghanistan plan. Navy Times, 1 March 2012. Craig Whitlock. Pentagon says 'fundamental strategy' in Afghanistan is sound. Washington Post, 27 February 2012.
2. Chris Good. When and Why Did Americans Turn Against the War in Afghanistan?. The Atlantic, 22 June 2011.
3. Tom Engelhardt and Nick Tarse. How the U.S. Fanned the Flames in Afghanistan. Huffington Post, 28 February 2012.
4. Robert Taber, The War of the Flea, 1969, p. 29.
5. <http://www.costofwar.com>
6. Larry Shaugnessy. One Soldier, one year: \$850,000 and rising. CNN, 28 February 2012.
7. Taber, p.27.
8. worldnews.msnbc.msn.com

... Continued from previous page ... **Peace Work**

In the film, a delegation from South Africa requested to meet the Violence Interruptors during a recent visit to the United States in order to find out their secret to keeping the peace. Yet, the delegation became critical of one of the Interruptors' policies, which is to never involve the pigs in the community's affairs. The delegation argued that the Interruptors were not "neutral enough." The Interruptors responded that this was the reason that they were so effective within the community, because the community knows they can confide in and trust the Interruptors with their problems without the fear of being sold out. Certainly the masses are correct to think this way. Problems that arise within the community should be dealt with by the community. To bring in the pigs is only to justify the oppression and occupation of the internal semi-colonies and oppressed communities. The potential problem we see with the Interruptors is that the state is happy to fund them as independent mediators for small meaningless violence, but how do the Interruptors deal with community organizations that are not state-funded, and may come into conflict with the state? The Interruptors present themselves as an independent force, but their funding tells us otherwise.

One indication of the Interruptors' reputation with the community occurs when the family of a young murder victim receives word that his funeral is gonna be shot up by gang members looking for their original target. So seemingly effective and revered are the Interruptors that the murder victim's family calls them to provide security instead of the police. At the end of the ceremony, Ameena Mathews gives a fiery speech in which she righteously calls out all the gang members in attendance and struggles with them to "get real" with their lives because that dead body they were all there paying their respects to was certainly real, and "it don't get more real than that!"

While the documentary was being filmed, sections of the Woodlawn neighborhood, an epicenter of violent drama, came into conflict over a plan to militarize Chicago using the National Guard. The plan was developed by politicians with some members of the community. By building a real, independent peace in oppressed communities, we can eliminate the divisions within oppressed communities triggered by the wild behavior of lumpen youth and form a united front to keep the state's occupation out. The section of the community that spoke out against the call for militarization knows that the National Guard will not provide more safety, only more oppression. This shows that just because the state has gotten smarter about how to control its internal semi-colonies does not mean that they no longer see the need for armed force.

Jeff Fort and the Almighty Black P. Stone Nation's peace activism legacy lives on in the new federally-funded Violence Interruptors. Similarly, the once largely popular efforts of the Gangster Disciples to hold peace summits in Chicago has evolved into a project that works closely with the political machine of the state. Amerika has proven unable to solve the prob-

lems that have plagued the ghetto for generations. While Amerika was worried about what the Stones or the GDs might become, they were scared of what the Panthers already were. They drugged and shot Fred Hampton at age 21, while they eventually sent Fort and Larry Hoover to supermax prison cells with very limited contact with the outside world. While Barack Obama has thousands of people murdered across Africa and the Middle East, we see the level of criminality one must have to become a successful Black leader out of Chicago in this country. The imperialist-funded non-profits use pacifism for the oppressed, while painting mass murder for the oppressor nation as "spreading democracy."

Many think that the Violence Interruptors have people power, but in fact they do not, for they wouldn't even exist if they didn't have the blessing of the oppressors. While the short-term goal of the Interruptors is to "stop the violence," the long-term goal of the oppressors in creating the Interruptors is to stop the violence from spilling over onto themselves. They do this by not just co-opting grassroots attempts by the people to overcome their oppression and bring peace to the hood, but by creating organizations such as the Violence Interruptors which in the final analysis are nothing more than sham organizations; it is the bourgeoisie laughing at us.

In the Third World the bourgeoisie forms shadow organization and calls them "communist" in order to split the people and stop them from launching a People's War. In the imperialist countries, like here in the U.S., they either co-opt or infiltrate and wreck those organizations already in existence. While the Panthers were given nothing but the stick, the Stones themselves were easily distracted from the path of the Panthers with the carrot of a little money from the War on Poverty. After destroying any independent mass movements, the imperialists allow and even encourage groups that promote integration or confuse the masses.

While it is true that there is only so much that we can do for the betterment of our class given our current position as oppressed nations within the belly of the beast, we must also recognize the importance of social consciousness on social being and stop letting the circumstances of our imprisonment both in here and on the street dictate to us the confines of our reality. We must come together and build our reality. We must come together and build our own institutions that are there to serve us; institutions of the oppressed. The Black Panthers had this power and we can too. We must learn to reject the bourgeois notion of power, which is only crude power and serves to oppress and exploit. This type of power is currently exhibited by many LOs, both in here and on the streets.

While commending those individuals within the Violence Interruptors who really are trying to do their part to stop the violence, we must also draw a clear line between fighting for self-determination of the oppressed and serving as the friendly face of the imperialist state. We need more allies on the streets doing this work

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Learning from History of Struggles at YTS Chino

by an Oregon prisoner
March 2012

I would like to share an experience with you that I had while doing time in California Youth Authority. In August of 1996 a counselor was killed in YTS (Youth Training School) in Chino, California. She just disappeared one day. Three days later her body was found in the Chino dumping grounds. This has repercussions throughout the whole youth authority, statewide. But it really hit hard right here in YTS. They locked the whole institution down and things didn't completely go back to normal operations for about a year. We were slammed down 24 hours a day. The only thing we came out of our cells for was a racially segregated shower for 3 minutes a day. That's it! The only thing sold on canteen was Ajax to clean our cells. They took away weights, cigarettes, magazine subscriptions, visits, phone calls, school and trade classes, packages, canteen, everything. If you had a TV, radio or shoes you were allowed to keep them, but they were no longer being sold on canteen. Cells got ransacked and a lot of electronics went straight into the trash.

Now, understand that YTS is ages 18-25. No minors are there. This place is known as gladiator school. It's the end of the road before going into CDC (California Department of Corrections). The majority of the vatos go there from the younger Youth Authorities for punishment. And the majority of these youngsters are maxed out till they're 25. So that's a 7 year stretch on top of what they've already done. There's nothing that could stop them from going home besides new charges, and a trip upstate. So most already don't care, and then the system itself took away everything that kept us calm. And they had no intentions of giving anything back. So we kicked it off. And kept kicking it off. It was mostly racial riots, fighting amongst each other, but there were times the pigs would get smashed out, jaws broken, etc.

That's just the way it was, although I now see all our energy should've been focused against the system itself. But what we did worked to our advantage. Through years of struggles and fighting, the puercos could not control us. Outside administration thought the superintendent didn't have what it takes, so they replaced him. The second superintendent wasn't trying to hear any of our demands or compromise either, so we kept doing what we did and eventually he got replaced too. The third superintendent since the killing was a little more understanding and wanted to keep his job. So in an attempt to calm us down he reformed the institution to our benefit.

They started selling TVs, radios and shoes again. We got magazine subscriptions, day-long visits, necklaces, and even packages (which were only twice a year to start with, but it was a start). There were a few things we didn't get back (weights, cigarettes, playboy, tape players,

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Organizing to Target Prisons Financially

by a USW Comrade
February 2012

I extend my greetings to you all and want to make a few observations based upon questions posed by Loco1 in *ULK* 23. It is quite true that we obtained the attention of prisoncrats who have assumed that the continual promotion of division of lumpen organizations will keep us at each others' throats. Prisoncrats have adapted and pursued new oppressive tactics as a result of the intensive scrutiny that the shot across the bow of battleship CDCR caused.

To retreat is not an option, as to do such only further emboldens prisoncrats to erode civil and human rights of California prisoners, actions which will be mimicked across the nation. We must use our collective brains to adapt new tactics. In war many tactics are used. You may be able to sneak up on an enemy once or twice but in due course the opposition will counter with an ambush. So as master Sun Tzu stated in *The Art of War*, "Those who win every battle are not really skillful. Those who render others' armies helpless without fighting are the best of all!" And that's what was done, embarrassing the prisoncrats who were ill prepared to deal with it. It's only a battle in a broader war.

I am nobody's leader or follower. My duties are to help teach independent thought, which will ensure that an individual can and will anticipate the likely reaction of prisoncrats and minimize the effect. Everyone has seen the so-called increase of privileges, some of which are still very elusive, since they mandate a year without a disciplinary, which will never be possible for a true revolutionary or resister to achieve. These privileges also encourage prisoners to lean on their families and friends to help finance their imprisonment and enrich prison profiteers who feed on the golden state's teat.

The original hunger strike strategy clearly impacted prisoncrats. It should provide a plethora of new tactical ideas. Consider that besides the so-called security concerns over prisoners possessing cell phones, the reality is that cell phones cut into prisoncrats' fiscal resources. The prison phone provider gives the CDCR a concession fee. This is why prisoners' phone privileges, canteen, packages and anything that the CDCR receives a concession fee from, are generally not taken. The income from canteen purchases pay the wages of state SEIU employees who are canteen managers II, I, supervisors and workers in addition to profits being diverted from prisoner welfare to custody welfare activities.

We should consider alternative strategies that hit them where it hurts the most: in their pocketbook. Just like one can go without eating for a week or three, people should be able to go without canteen for 3 to 6 months and empty trust accounts, which will result in more expense to the CDCR. There are numerous ways that the CDCR sticks it to prisoners' families and friends. So if, as Loco1 suggests, it is cor-

rect to re-evaluate our actions, it is my opinion that the new strategy should be a fiscal one.

I address this to all prisoners irrespective of your status, as status is given by prisoncrats. Be you general population or sensitive needs, if you choose to allow prisoncrats to manipulate and control you with privileges, you are by proxy their collaborator. As such you cause as much of the problem, rather than a solution.

I also want to point out that tactically and strategically it is never wise to call out numerous lumpen organizations as BORO/LoCo1 did. Such will likely have a negative impact, since those named will have to deal with substantively more scrutiny. So while others may think that *ULK* is a forum to send shout outs, to me the objective is to try to encourage education and the capacity to think independently. The CDCR benefits from dumbed-down prisoners, particularly those who do not have their priorities in order.

Prisoncrats look to pacify all prisoners, particularly the segment that is weakest. So it is on us to try to encourage self-esteem, self-worth, self-sacrifice and self-deprivation, all of which builds character and the ability to endure the picklesuits' plots and conspiracies. The preparation that is most important to any struggle is the will to personally do something to encourage change. I believe that ideas and strategies of the opposition should be examined, and then we can decide on a course of action and systematically pass on the purpose and reasoning, not as leaders to followers but as men and women in concerted struggle.

The fact that there is no real accountability of prisoncrats and their subordinates has again led to the introduction of Assembly Bill 1270 on January 26, 2012 by Assembly Member Tom Ammiano to try to restore media access to prisoners. Taking away media access gave prisoncrats control over what's spoon fed to the public. Independent media access is what made it possible for the pacification privileges introduced in the 60s and 70s, since there was a lot more transparency and prisoncrats were exposed to more accountability. But since the imposition of media restrictions on pre-arranged in-person interviews with prisoners, what takes place in prison tends to be out-of-sight/out-of-mind.

I believe in a United Front, but we must recognize that the composition of that front is varied. I prefer that we always seek to encourage education which brings clarity and understanding to less knowledgeable comrades. I will say, however that ignorance and stupidity is infectious. I guess I could be equated with a silverback, only I do not take to leading. But I am not adverse to the development of consciousness so maybe we should send requests to the education department of all CDCR prisons asking for "The Rise of the Planet of the Apes" that Wiawimawo provided us with a review of in August 2011, as it might help open up some

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Prisoners Tortured in California Petition United Nations

excerpted from an article by Kendra Castaneda
San Francisco BayView
2 March 2012

The men being held in the Pelican Bay State Prison SHU Short Corridor agreed, and the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law has prepared a petition to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Human Rights Council, United Nations General Assembly, with 22 main plaintiffs of different [nationalities] at different California prisons...

Several treaties obligate the U.S. to conform to international standards against torture and inhumane treatment, such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1976 and the United Nations Convention Against Torture.

If the Committee on Arbitrary Detention determines that the treatment of California prisoners may be in violation of international law, they can request an on-site visit and prepare reports calling for changes. Such actions could help to publicize the segregation and isolation of prisoners and may help lead to some improvement in their treatment. Through this petition, the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law will try to get the United Nations to take steps that would benefit all inmates in segregation, not just the individuals named in the petition.

According to Pelican Bay State Prison SHU hunger strike organizers [representing different nationalities], there is another hunger strike looming in the summer of 2012 unless CDCR meets the demands of the prisoners from the last two statewide hunger strikes in full. Although CDCR is currently considering prison gang validation reform, it is still just "talk," and CDCR has been extremely slow at moving to make any real change happen. Men have not been released from the SHU to general population and except for a few very minor concessions, the organizers' five core demands have not been met.

Stated briefly, these are the five core demands:

- 1) End Group Punishment & Administrative Abuse
- 2) Abolish the Debriefing Policy, and Modify Active/Inactive Gang Status Criteria
- 3) Comply with the U.S. Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons 2006 Recommendations Regarding an End to Long-Term Solitary Confinement
- 4) Provide Adequate and Nutritious Food
- 5) Expand and Provide Constructive Programming and Privileges for Indefinite SHU Status Inmates. ★

...Continued from page 8

etc.) and all the juvenile lifers got shot to the big joints.

Furthermore, the amount of time we were slammed down improved. YTS had a policy of locking down the whole institution for two or three months at a time for basically anything bigger than a one-on-one fight (which is almost every incident). So while cats are sitting in their cells pissed off, they figure if they're gonna be slammed down for something they didn't do they might as well get involved and make it worth it. So, just about every incident that happened turned into a riot. The superintendent then changed the policy and only slammed down the unit involved. It still wasn't good enough, because usually not everyone on the unit is involved. Then he changed it so only the races involved are slammed down. Still not good enough. Well, after years of going through this we finally got it to where they only slammed down the people involved and only for three days of racially segregated showers. We then all came out together for day room program for 30 days. After that we were allowed to go back to school, trade, and yard. Not too bad. But it wasn't an easy path. When I got released in 2001 it was still off the hook.

We went from having it all to having nothing overnight. It wasn't the whole prisoner population that killed that counselor; only one person was accused of it. But they retaliated on us as a whole group. So we reacted in a way that seemed justified to us, and it worked. Never once did we try any peaceful protest (food strikes, canteen strikes, phone strikes, etc.). There was no such thing in our eyes. I'm not against a peaceful resolution when dealing with the system, but as Mao said, it's up to us to analyze our own conditions of oppression and react accordingly. The institution pushed us in a corner with no reasonable way out.

I know there's many oppressed prisoners nationwide who feel hopeless, who feel there's no way things can get better. They feel lost and in the dark. Therefore, there comes a time when we must say enough is enough and make the necessary sacrifices to better our own conditions on the necessary level, peaceful or otherwise. It's better to try and fail than to have never tried at all.

MIM(Prisons) responds: It is true that there are times when fighting repression with peaceful protests will lead to nothing more than ongoing repression. This is why revolutionaries know that the only way to achieve ultimate victory over the imperialists is through armed struggle; they will not give up their power without a fight. Even within the criminal injustice system this is true. However, engaging in armed struggle prematurely will only lead to greater oppression and deaths for the oppressed. This is what revolutionaries call focoism: revolutionary violence without the proper support and mass base and often without the correct ideological leadership.

This story about Chino appears to counter our position that we need to build the vanguard

...YTS Chino

... Continued from previous page

minds to revolutionary concepts.

Yes I'm all for a true United Front, where we all (Black, Brown, White, Yellow, Red, Green, Blue or plaid) can stand together to regain our civil and human rights, not confusing privileges with rights. We can positively seek to cease all the senseless grudges that plague the ethnic divisions and LOs. I do not believe in violence just for amusement. My battle is not with prisoners, it's with prisonrats. Any prisoner who sees me as a threat, I deem them an agent of the state. "Think and not hate" is what your commentator in struggle relates.

MIM(Prisons) responds: First we want to agree with the criticism of calling out LO members by name which we already responded to on page 4. But we do not agree with this comrade's abdication of leadership. The movement has a strong need for leaders and pretending that all people are equal in this way gives power over to the imperialists who have no problem seizing leadership. Those who are more advanced, have more education, or more will to struggle, must take up leadership positions in educating and organizing others. We can't afford to have these people step back in the name of equality as that void will be filled by reactionary leaders. The antidote to misleaders is better, more educated leaders as well as a better more educated mass that can judge, choose and reject would-be leaders. Ultimately we are working towards a society, communism, where all people are equal and all can lead, but we must deal with the current reality and uneven development of forces and individuals. USW is an organization for leaders. A vanguard party is the leader of the revolution. And the oppressed people desperately need more leaders. ★

leadership and mass base of support before engaging in armed struggle. The prisoners there successfully won back many privileges that had been taken away by rioting and fighting each other. But we have to look at what they really won. As this writer notes, the privileges taken away were things that used to keep the population calm: TV, radio, canteen, etc. These are pacifying elements, not threats to the criminal injustice system.

Certainly lockdown 24 hours a day is inhumane, and we want our comrades to have access to reading material and visits and phone calls. All these things are essential to raising political consciousness and re-integrating back into society. But did the riots that forced the prisons to throw prisoners a few bones actually gain anything for the fight against the criminal injustice system? Prisoners learned that fighting each other is rewarded. They didn't learn how to fight the pigs. They didn't gain any education about the actual cause of their oppression or how to get free. And as we look at the contradictions between prisoners we also must ask what role privileges play in pacifying sectors of the imprisoned lumpen and turning them against those

...Targeting

Shut 'Em Down

by USW461 of United Struggle from Within
October 2011

Ten years today the towers fell
Since then 150 million children starved to death
Tell us again why the towers fell
Does tragedy count less on child's breath
We stand around as our nation starves nations
Texting, banging and killing each other
Pigs throw us in prison with brainwashing TV stations
Yet we accept this system unquestioningly
Killing each other
Capitalism created gangsterism, open your eyes
Each time we slang or rob a 7-11
The pigs cheer as our mothers cry
God isn't waiting on the clouds in heaven
The pigs created God, too, open your eyes
Hell does exist but it's where the soldiers go
Raping, bombing and Uncle Sam's favorite, genocide
We the people of the prison industrial complex
Pledge to support the world's majority
We anti-Amerikkans and anti-imperialists
Pledge to come together and defeat your authority
We've done it before and we'll do it again
USW comrades grappling line questions
You can pull your triggers on our pseudonyms
But we'll regroup Hydra-headed again and again
Vanguard party brothers and sisters join up
Maoist study cells and progressive literature
Petty individualism down, the collective up
The captors held captive you have my signature
We create socialism then lock the rich up
Feed the hungry and cure the sick children
Who's the bad guy? It's them comrades. Not us. ★

Texas Limits Privileges and Denies Grievances

by a Texas prisoner
December 2011

Due to the budget cuts and Governor Perry refusing the stimulus package, in Texas prisons they've attacked those housed here. They ceased serving prepackaged cartons of milk, and went to powdered milk, and now they have attached a fee of \$100 annual to medical. If you need medical care you will be charged for a toothache, diarrhea, headache, etc. But what's devastating is TDCJ doesn't pay its offenders money. Instead it uses good time which they take away as a punitive measure, causing you to do more time.

Since TDCJ doesn't reward or pay offenders, money needed has to come from gifts via family, friends etc. In other words they're extorting our loved ones, and this will follow those who parole with money to be paid and attached to parole fees.

Upon being released from the Texas system you'll receive a bus ticket to your county of conviction and \$50. Upon reporting to parole you'll receive the second \$50 from which parole fees of \$12, victim fees, educational fees, and restitution fees will be deducted, so you're to reenter society on a very small amount of money.

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...Editor

we think a program of reforming criminals requires accountability on both sides.

Some have pushed for campaigns to give prisoners voting rights as a method to increase prisoners' democratic rights. But we see imperialist elections having little-to-no bearing on the conditions of the oppressed nations. In contrast, we see the grievance campaign as a democratic campaign that we can support because it can actually succeed in giving prisoners more say in their day-to-day conditions.

The grievance campaign to which we are referring was originally sparked by some comrades in California in January 2010. Since then it has spread to Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Texas. The petitions are updated regularly based on feedback we get from those using it. The three states which have been particularly active lately are Texas, North Carolina, and Colorado.

The Colorado campaign kicked off just before recent reforms were enacted in the Colorado system as a result of passive resistance by the prison laborers being used in large-scale industry there. Similarly, Missouri's petition is specific to their conditions of censorship around a relatively new policy banning music with parental advisory ratings.

In this issue, there are two reports out of Texas, showing the varying levels of organization within a state. One comrade in Connally Unit reports of a mass demonstration. (this page) While another comrade has diligently filed the maximum grievances he can for almost two years, he has proved this road to be fruitless by himself. (page 10) But what is the lesson here? Are our efforts worthwhile? We say there are no rights, only power struggles. We already know that the injustice system is going to abuse people; it is made to control certain populations. In order to win in a power struggle, the other side must feel some sort of pressure. Sometimes one grievance to a higher level is enough to apply pressure. But when the higher level is involved in the repression, it's going to take a lot more than one person's grievance. Look at the example of the Scotland lockdown. (page 13) One comrade reported that grievances were being ignored, as has been common in Scotland before the lockdown. But we hear from *ULK* correspondent Wolf that a combination of complaints from prisoners and outside supporters resulted in an improvement in conditions, however small. This is parallel to the petition to End the High Desert State Prison Z-Unit Zoo, which met some success last year.

The lesson isn't that getting a little extra time out of cells, or skull caps, is a great victory. The lesson is in how prisoners and their outside supporters pulled together and exerted their influence on the DOC as a group. At the same time, a North Carolina comrade reports how standing up by oneself can be risky. (page 14)

We think the grievance campaign is a good stepping stone for comrades who say unity and

... Continued from previous page

...YTS Chino

that rebel. This is a question United Struggle from Within is contemplating as we discuss which is the principal contradiction facing the prison movement.

The victory of a few calming privileges at YTS is an example of how little can be accomplished with fascist violence, and how an ultra-left focus on "action" is often just the other side of rightist reformism. Next time the prison takes away privileges there will be no better organization, no greater understanding and no progress towards real change. As a counter example, in Pelican Bay and elsewhere, the recent hunger strike led prisoners to study politics and organizing, and to think more systemically about how to fight the criminal injustice system and what we really want to win. This may not have resulted in many (if any) privileges won for prisoners, but the growing education and unity is a much bigger victory. ★

consciousness is lacking in their area. As we know from reports in *ULK*, the conditions in most prisons across this country are very similar. So the basis for mass organizing should exist even if it requires some hard work to get started. Circulating a grievance petition doesn't require a lot of people to start, and just about everyone can relate to it.

One USW leader involved in the original campaign in California came out to question the effectiveness of the tactic of signing petitions and sending them to state officials and legal observers. (*ULK* 18) S/he proposed moving into lawsuits to get them to pay attention particularly after one CDCR staff member implied they wouldn't address any complaints without a lawsuit. As John Q. Convict points out, there are also connections still to be made between the grievance campaign and media access in states like California to create more accountability for the captors. (page 9) The best tactics will depend on your situation, but the petition is a good place to get started and to test out the waters.

This work is not just a way to bring allies together locally, but is connecting struggles across the country. One Massachusetts comrade was inspired by the efforts of a Florida comrade who was having trouble mobilizing others and wrote in to tell h: "To my Florida comrade, I want to tell you to stay strong." S/he went on to quote Mao, "In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage."

Of course, oppression will always exist under imperialism, because it is a system defined by the oppression of some nations by others. And we cannot hope to use reforms to fix a system that tortures people and then ignores administrative remedies to cover their own asses. (page 13) But we must begin somewhere. And the grievance campaign encompasses many of the little battles that we have all fought just to be able to read what we want, talk to who we want, and have a voice in this society. ★

Peaceful Protest in Connally Yard

by a Texas prisoner
December 2011

On November 14, 2011 in 4 building recreational yard, 20+ prisoners (Brown, Black and white) gathered in an historical moment in the state of Texas. This gathering consisted of different organizations, and was the result of the Connally Unit's continued lack of responsibility:

1. unsanitized trays in the chow hall
2. no cleaning supplies for individual cells
3. lack of nutritious food
4. medical enslavement
5. high commissary prices, etc.

As a result of this peaceful gathering, we were targeted and harassed by the units of "gang intelligence," Ms Gonzalez and 30+ officers, all coming out to the recreational yard and surrounding us as we sat on the ground discussing our reasons for coming together. The unit warden also came out but never asked us any questions as to why we were gathered. I did have a piece of paper stating all the above and more, that Ms. Gonzalez took from me. Ms Gonzalez questioned me as to why this gathering was in place and I simply stated that she needed to read the piece of paper she got from me. But she didn't believe what was on it and stated that we were there because we wanted to start a racial riot. As we sat peacefully with their cameras on us we continued to discuss some of the concerns prisoners had pertaining to the health and well being of every individual. One by one we were stripped and placed back into our cells. The whole building, which consists of 432 prisoners, got locked down for over 24 hours due to our actions and the administration's lack of understanding.

Seeds were scattered that day and the growth of these seeds we shall continue to maintain for a better tomorrow. We have reason to believe that persistence and dedication will soon give us a beautiful "rose within the garden." I hope that those who read this article familiarize themselves with past experiences before trying to engage in the same, from the uprisings in the plantation camps to the more modern times. Together we can move mountains!

MIM(Prisons) responds: This severe repression in the face of peaceful protests for modest demands provides a good example of the importance of building a strong and unified prison movement if we hope to fight the criminal injustice system. To further build this unity we are calling on all lumpen organizations to join the United Front for Peace in Prison. The Statement of Principles of the UF includes this first point of 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." ★

- 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.

FUNDING NEEDED TO FULFILL SUBSCRIPTIONS

In 2011 we had a big increase in subscriptions to *Under Lock & Key*. This is good news for the fight against the criminal injustice system: important news and organizing info is getting into the hands of more and more prisoners. But sending out more copies of *ULK* requires money for printing and postage. We need an additional \$350 per month to keep up with our expenses. Our volunteers provide most of our funding out of their own pockets but we are not keeping up with the expanding costs. We need you to help! Even if you don't have much, send us a few stamps or a small donation whenever you can. Get your people on the outside to send stamps or money. Without your help we can't keep *Under Lock & Key* growing!

CONDUCT SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH SURVEY

As part of our developing research on the lumpen class in the United States, MIM(Prisons) and USW have created a survey to study socio-economic data on U.S. prisoners. If you are interested in potentially administering the survey to prisoners in your area, write in and let us know. If we can't get enough volunteers we may have to cancel the project, so step up to make this project possible.

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. It is also helpful if you ask other prison publications to run free ads for *Under Lock & Key* and MIM(Prisons)'s Free Books for Prisoners Program.

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. 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 - We have the most complete data on control units available published at www.abolishcontrolunits.org. Help keep it updated by writing to MIM(Prisons) at the address on page 1 to get a survey for your state.

WE DEMAND OUR GRIEVANCES ARE ADDRESSED

This campaign is the mail topic of this issue of *ULK*. Comrades in Arizona, California, Colorado, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Texas 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 the above-listed states, write in to get the petition for your state. If your prison's policies allow, 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 and can't make your own.

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

EXPAND STUDY GROUPS

Form a study group in your prison. You can 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 you're interested in, 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 can compile study questions to create a study pack for future groups who want to study the same material. MIM(Prisons) runs Maoist study groups, but an in-persyn group may be better for those whose mail from us is being censored, or to reach people who wouldn't join our group.

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 - Prisoners in Missouri are spreading a petition against the ban and censorship of musical recordings with a parental advisory label, and historical, sociological, political, and religious books. 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 your prison's policies allow it.

California - We are in an ongoing battle with prisons in California that have banned MIM Distributors, citing a defunct memo from 2006. We've recently compiled a Censorship Guide supplement to help those affected tackle this problem, and it has been making an impact. Send us copies of your documentation and grievances you've filed against it.

BECOME A ULK FIELD CORRESPONDENT

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.

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 news and articles with 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.

Resistance is Needed in Response to Repression

by Polo Blue of USW
December 2011

Sometimes I question our capabilities as prisoners. The reason I often muse this question is because of our lack of desired progression as prisoners. What exactly, if anything, are we accomplishing as prisoners?

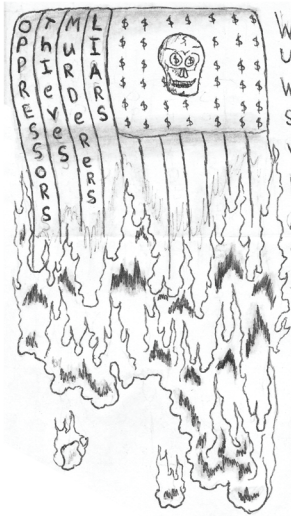
There is not enough growth providing room for accomplishment. Growth is something which leads to conscious awareness -- production. Not production in its synthetic form, or the bourgeois definition of the word. But productive transition of maturing into a person, who at this higher-level of "self," perceptively sensing and clearly seeing a need for core, unified prison objectives.

I do read *Under Lock & Key* whenever an issue slips past Florida Department of Correction's central repression and monitoring stations. It is apparent nationally we are faced with, as prisoners, the same dilemmas throughout the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). One common and predominate problem is widespread proliferation of the PIC's repressive technological and psychological maturation to a degree where it seems to rob prisoners of their inner virtues, their inner capabilities. This is a form of reverse mutation in prisoners' growth, development, and production. A prisoner becomes a product of the environment, in which the state strips him of his capabilities. Consequently this crumbles the bridge to collective perseverance to commit to the struggle.

Currently I'm housed in a control unit. Recently I've been considered by administration as a disciplinary liability. Why? Because where I was previously housed had no functioning heating to adequately keep prisoners warm. Being housed in steel and concrete slab buildings, without insulation, is more a meat freezer than a habitat. It confused me why no one took steps to alter their immediate living conditions. As a leader it became my duty to take the initiative to vocally poll the people and actively seek their collective force. Yet, I was one of a handful (on a three-tier wing) to advocate for our humanity. Because I adamantly pursued my so-called 8th Amendment "right," I found myself being threatened with bodily harm through withholding and poisoning my food, and confronted with physical aggression by the pigs.

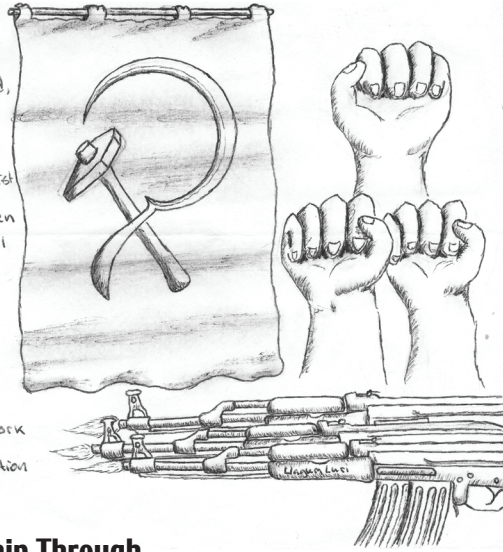
Not only did they issue me several write-ups, which eventually led to me being moved to a more segregated wing, but they also terminated my chances of being downgraded to a lower security status. This prolonged my assignment

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With Education,
Unity, and Hard
Work through Blood,
Sweat, and Tears
We Shall Tear
Down the Capitalist
America and when
one Falls, so shall
the others

Hard Work
Unity
Education



Fighting Censorship Through Litigation Works

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
November 2011

Back in 2008, I was denied a lot of reading material and did not file grievances about any of the instances. During that time, I was stubbornly relying on just physical action to challenge these oppressors. That certainly was not conducive to making my situation better.

Fortunately, I've grown wiser over the years. I now litigate against these tyrants and use the grievance system regularly. Since I began utilizing the pen against them, I am yet to have any material from MIM(Prisons) rejected. Should that change in the future, I will file grievances and subsequent appeals. I will also keep MIM(Prisons) abreast of the results and be willing to take action in the court if there is strong probability of success. This prison recently rejected some issues of a *Turning the Tide* newsletter.

I know they would like to prohibit us from receiving and reading literature that teaches us correct ideology and ways to thwart their oppressive establishment. I will no longer allow them to get away with trying to control my mind by putting unreasonable limits on what I can read.

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Scotland Lockdown Passes One Month Mark

by MIM(Prisons)
February 2012

In early February we received a report from a family member that Scotland Correctional Institution had been on lockdown for over 2 weeks. All the time prisoners were getting out of their cells was 5 minutes to shower with handcuffs. They were not allowed to use the phone to call family, so mail has been the only form of communication.

On February 21 a North Carolina prisoner reports:

I'm on lock down for something that happened on January 19, 2012 which I had noth-

Maryland Abuses Prisoners, Tortures Mental Health Patients

by a Maryland prisoner
December 2011

I'm incarcerated at Maryland's North Branch Correctional Institution (NBCI) in Cumberland, Maryland. I have been getting *Under Lock & Key* for about six months now. I'm writing this for me

and my fellow prisoners; we need help. I have been here at NBCI in the segregation unit for two years now and there is a serious problem here. There is a big ring of corrupt racist white renegade prison guards employed here. These guards are anti-social/racist towards Black prisoners. They provoke, curse, challenge to fight, call them niggers, bitches, etc.

They broke the legs of one of my fellow comrades who I'm close to, and no one did anything to help. These prison guards take our food, recreation, and showers for days at a time. They spray us with pepper spray out of the blue for reasons that are still unknown. I have been a victim of that twice. I have tried to fight back but I'm one lone prisoner. Other prisoners are afraid to back me because they fear losing what little they have: single cells, TVs, etc. They are afraid of having their property sent home, being beaten, and/or thrown in the segregation unit.

The mental health patients housed in the prison who have Axis 1 diagnoses throw feces on other prisoners on the tier and the prison guards feed prisoners while the feces are on the tier. Prison guards abuse these Axis 1 diagnosis mental health patients; they agitate, provoke, mock, and call them stupid and retarded. These corrupt guards also constantly break their chain of command. They are not disciplined for their violations of Maryland Division of Corrections Directives. Even the Request for Administrative Remedy process is corrupt. ★

ing to do with. The prison placed us on an institution-wide lock down for a small gang riot, which was handled and shut down quickly. They still got us locked down, just trying to break our spirits.

They've not given any religious service, no school, no visits, no sick calls. I placed a sick call 2 weeks ago and they still haven't called me in. Grievances are not being addressed. I'm so tired of being oppressed. I want to overcome this oppression and I know it's a struggle.

On February 16 *ULK* correspondent Wolf reported:

Continued on next page...

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...Polo Blue

to this control unit and postponed my release to general population.

On this segregated wing I'm surrounded by a body of prisoners who've allowed the PIC to degenerate them to one of the worst states of mind this milieu could possibly lower a human being. I find appreciation in the phrase "a mind is a terrible thing to waste." Thus I'm left to ponder the capabilities of prisoners.

The leadership shown in California and Georgia has taught us what can be accomplished collectively. These comrades have realized production and collective capabilities. It is time for prisoners (nationally) to realize our true capabilities, and harness the same progressively.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This writer points out a common problem in Amerikan prisons: prisoners are reduced to complacency faced with repression and threats, and many are unwilling to, or unaware of, the need to resist. We need leaders who can use *Under Lock & Key* as an organizing tool to raise awareness, educate and ultimately organize people. It's a slow process, but we can not expect everyone to immediately be with the struggle. We have to remember that there was a time when we ourselves didn't participate. It's our job to share what we've learned and have patience in educating and organizing others, just as our teachers did with us.

This comrade is right that recent organizing in some states gives us a glimpse of what's possible and what we can accomplish if we come together. Part of this is a need for better unity across the conscious groups. For this in particular we call on organizations to join the United Front for Peace in Prisons and get past petty differences so that all conscious and progressive prisoners can come together, united against the criminal injustice system. ★

...Continued from page 10

...Texas

Texas's systems practically operate on what they produce themselves for consumption. Clothing, shoes, food, etc., is all made at the multiple units, sent to central stores and resold to each unit.

TDCJ has the offenders scared. They will stack free world time on any act of violence - any kind of unions or solidarity will be attacked as Security Threat Groups and figureheads will be placed in level III Administrative Segregation. They have sought out to break any sort of groups and unauthorized activities. Since I've been involved in prisoner rights we've lost more than gained: We have lost smoking products, canned goods, beans, meats, fruits, educational classes, GED, college courses, radios with speakers, cable TV, art privileges, and even carton milk. Long hair and facial hair were banned. They hold supposed good time above these bamboozled offenders and make them comply.

Joining Grievance Campaign

by a Colorado prisoner
January 2012

In order to file a §1983 prisoner complaint, one must exhaust the facility grievance procedure on any issues beforehand. The pigs here claim procedural defect, frustrating the exhaustion requirement of the PLRA. Now that the institution has been made aware of my pending §1983 suite, they block the third and final grievance process. I am submitting a revised complaint with denial of access to the court added, and I will keep you informed.

I passed two grievance petitions on down the line. Colorado chain gang is just as messed up as you might think, but I do help those who at least show some heart. I pass all of my info on to other people, to maybe spark some fight. ★

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...Censorship

MIM(Prisons) responds: We don't want to mislead our readers to think that filing grievances will guarantee your rights are respected, as other articles in *ULK* will quickly disprove. But as materialists we should be struggling to learn and utilize the most effective means towards progress. And this correspondent's change from physically challenging COs to utilizing the administrative process is a very common transition for readers of *Under Lock & Key* in this learning process. Progress is not just about using the legal system, it's about organizing for our own needs and building independent institutions of the oppressed.

While MIM(Prisons) continues to discourage violence against COs, and we see this play out in prisoners' behavior, the prison administrators regularly censor *ULK* as a "threat to security." It is clear that they are not concerned about the physical safety of prisoners or staff, but rather the security of their jobs, hazard pay and white power. ★

I recently received a major rule infraction, just because I told the law library trustee to stop throwing my photocopies on the floor. So he filed a LID (life endangerment) on me: he forged a letter and signed my name to it, saying I asked another to beat him up, so I received a major rule infraction for Penal Code 71-02 Organized Crime. I've filed 4 grievances on his department and security staff for sabotaging my legal request and destroying my letters. All were denied.

I wrote to the law library supervisor with no response. I then wrote to the senior warden to no avail. The Office of the Attorney General offered nothing, but they found a dummy letter forged and they promptly protected their SSI (Support Service Inmate).

In Texas you're only allowed to file one grievance a week, and I've been here two years plus. I've filed approximately 94 and all have come back denied - no proof. ★

Tossed in Segregation for Grievance

by a North Carolina prisoner
February 2012

I have spent the last 60 days in the hole for writing an administrative remedy on the superintendent. He turns around and has me placed in segregation and charges me with an offense due to my political activism. I am what they call a trouble maker because I teach others with our knowledge. But that's what I do. I was taught by the old heads to do what I do. ★

Something to Say

by Comrade Dub #1
October 2011

I just wanna address the distress of the oppressed
All flesh who depend on the rest cuz no food is left
Camouflage-dressed in green and black
Warring in Iraq praying that you live to come back
Distraught from Jihad attacks
Can't sleep and not moving
Sounds of gunfire in ya head even when they not shooting
The truth is as thin as foil
Severed the head of Osama to sign a deal and get oil
Propaganda is spoil, I can see the ballistics
How you think gunz got into the hands of the children
I get it
Thinking with the teaching they feed us, defeated
Cuz we don't see hood politics come from politics
Say we all free but free as they want us to be
State prison a new fashion of slavery
Make Obama just a racial distraction
Say he fighting for all
Stop it that awkward like a dog wearing draws
Pause, turn off the TV and open a book
Look and know the truth, be down for the cause
Flow strong like a bear paw, sharp like a bear claw
Quick to sever the head of the united law
And brawl for revolution
Speak the truth that they not producing
Until I achieve the conclusion
The Maoist movement ★

... Continued from previous page

...Scotland CI

Other closed custody facilities went back to regular operation after Prison Emergency Response Teams searched and stayed on each unit for about 2 weeks. But the oppressive Karen Stanback and her assistant Capt. Covington has continued the oppressive conditions at Scotland.

All the guys who participated in the actions that occurred that night are on segregation or were sent to long-term lockup. Still these conditions continue to be enforced on us. Brothers don't realize they're used as pawns in a dirty chess game played by this administration to finally have a reason to bury us alive in these cemeteries. However, Resistance Number 1, aka Wolf has entered the fight against the oppressive imperialistic system of justice and joins MIM. We the Resistance Number 1 realized our fight is hard and difficult, but someone must speak out against the laboratory of injustice here at Scotland CI. ★

Reporte del Colegio de Abogados de la Ciudad de NY: Aislamiento Supermax = Tortura

por Soso de MIM(Prisons)

traducido por un@ prisoner@ en California
Octubre 2011

*"La brutalidad del encarcelamiento Supermax"
Comité en Derechos Humanos Internacionales
del Colegio de Abogados de la Ciudad de NY
Septiembre 2011*

Este reporte se abordó el crecimiento dramático de las facilidades de encarcelamiento "supermax" en los Estados Unidos durante las últimas tres décadas y destaca las condiciones de tortura y violaciones de las leyes domésticas e internacionales. Como una introducción al aislamiento a largo plazo en las prisiones de los Estados Unidos, y un resumen de casos y leyes pertinentes, este reportaje es un recurso excelente.

El reportaje cita cálculos que 80,000 prisioneros "...sufren condiciones de extrema deprivación sensorial por meses o años sin fin, una experiencia agudísimo en lo cual el prisionero se mantiene aislado de cualquier contacto humano." Artículos en Under Lock &

Key regularmente testifican a esta tortura que los prisioneros confrontan en aislamiento de largo plazo. Los autores observan que los cálculos son abiertamente variables y los números totales de gente en Supermax no se conocen. MIM(prisiones) ha dirigido su propio estudio para recopilar estadísticas en prisioneros de unidades de control y estimamos que hay cerca de 110,000 prisioneros en este momento en aislamiento de largo plazo.

Los autores concluyen correctamente sobre estas condiciones tortuosas: "La póliza del encarcelamiento supermax, en la escala en la cual se ha estado aplicando en los Estados Unidos, viola derechos humanos básicos." Aunque MIM(prisiones) haría la pregunta cómo esta póliza estaría bien si la escala fuera menor. Esta advertencia de la "escala" es posible porque los autores fallan en dirigirse al sistema que determina quien se encierra en aislamiento y porque son puestos allí.

Como parte de un resumen de casos legales y leyes pertinentes, el reportaje nota que las cortes han fallado en dirigirse a esta tortura, la cual

los autores consideran una violación de la octava enmienda: "con tal que el prisionero reciba comida y refugio adecuado, la extrema deprivación de sentido que caracteriza supermax en encarcelamiento deberá, bajo las leyes presentes, casi siempre será considerado adentro del límite de tratamiento permisible." Demuestran algunas de las dificultades legales en probar una violación de la octava enmienda, incluye la adición de la carga legal de la Acta de la Ley para la Reforma del Litigio Penitenciario (PLRA) la cual requiere que prisioneros presenten daños físicos antes de someter una acción de daños sufridos en custodia.

Los autores describen cómo el encarcelamiento supermax viola las leyes internacionales basadas en la Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos, La Convención Americana de Derechos Humanos, La Norma Mínima de Reglas para el Tratamiento de Prisioneros de la ONU, El Convenio Internacional de Derechos Civiles y Políticos, y La Convención contra la Tortura, entre otros. Ellos notan que la ley internacional no ha sido un factor para cortes estadounidenses en estos casos y llaman por cambio en este aspecto.

El reportaje concluye con las siguientes recomendaciones:

- 1) Las provisiones en la PLRA estipulando que los prisioneros demandantes no pueden recuperar daños "sin demostrar daño físico primero" debería ser revocado;
- 2) Prisioneros con enfermedades mentales serias nunca deberían de ser sujeto al encarcelamiento supermax;
- 3) Las condiciones de aislamiento extremo y restricción deberían ser impuestos sólo cuando una amenaza extrema y seria a la seguridad de la prisión ha sido establecido, y aun así en dichas circunstancias el encarcelamiento supermax debería ser por el tiempo mínimo posible, y los prisioneros se les debe de proporcionar con el procedimiento debido, y la oportunidad para disputar el encarcelamiento y apelar el encarcelamiento;
- 4) Cualquier forma de vivienda segregada debería de proveer formas de estimulación significativa mental, físico y social;
- 5) Una agrupación nacional debería ser establecida para que reporten de pronto los números de prisioneros siendo detenidos en encarcelamiento supermax en prisiones estatales y federales y sus condiciones de encarcelamiento, y

Continúa en la página siguiente...

El MIM(Prisiones)

El Ministro Maoísta Internacional de Prisiones, MIM(Prisiones), es una célula de revolucionarios que sirve las masas oprimidas adentro de las prisiones de los EEUU.. Mantenemos la ideología comunista revolucionaria del Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoísmo y trabajamos del punto del proletariado del tercer mundo.

El imperialismo es el enemigo número uno de la mayoría de gente del mundo, no podemos obtener nuestra meta de terminar toda opresión sin derribar el imperialismo. La historia nos ha mostrado que el imperialista hará guerra antes de permitir un fin a la opresión.

Como revolucionarios internacionalistas, nos apoyamos la auto-determinación de todas naciones y gente. Hoy, el sistema de prisiones de los EEUU es un parte mayor del estado imperialista siendo usado para prevenir la auto-determinación de las naciones oprimidas. Es por esta razón que vemos a prisioneros en este país como manteniendo la delantera de cualquier movimiento anti-imperialista y revolucionario. Mientras que nuestra organización se enfoca en apoyo al prisionero, creemos que hay una necesidad grave de trabajo para el Maoísta en organizar y educar en muchas áreas en los Estados Unidos. Tenemos la esperanza que alguna gente se inspire por nuestro ejemplo alrededor de prisiones y que lo aplique a su propio trabajo para crear más células maoístas y amplíe el movimiento Maoísta detrás de las líneas del enemigo.

MIM(Prisiones) se distingue de otros grupos en los siguientes seis puntos. Consideramos que las otras organizaciones que activamente mantienen estos puntos ser fraterna.

1. El comunismo es nuestra meta. El comunismo es una sociedad en donde ningún grupo tiene poder sobre cualquier otro grupo.

2. Una dictadura del proletariado es necesario. En una dictadura del proletariado la mayoría explotada anterior dicta a la minoría (el que promovió la explotación) como la sociedad se debe conducir. En el caso de naciones imperialistas, una dictadura junta del proletariado de naciones oprimidas (JDPON) debe hacer este papel en donde no hay proletariado interno o una base significativa de masas que favorece comunismo.

3. Promovemos una frente unida contra todos los que se oponen al imperialismo. El camino al JDPON sobre las naciones imperialista incluye unir todos aquellos que se puedan unir contra el imperialismo. No podemos pelear el imperialismo y pelear otras que están ocupadas en conflictos de vida o muerte con el imperialismo a la misma vez. Aun las clases de una nación imperialista pueden ser aliados en el frente unido bajo ciertas condiciones.

4. Una clase parasítica domina los países del primer mundo. Como Marx, Engels, y Lenin formularon y la idea de MIM ha reiterado a través de análisis materialista, el imperialismo extrae súper-ganancias del Tercer Mundo y en parte usa esta riqueza para comprar poblaciones enteras de supuestos trabajadores. Estos supuestos trabajadores comprados por el imperialismo forman una nueva burguesía pequeña - llamada la aristocracia de labor, ellos no son un vehículo para el Maoísmo. Aquellos que trabajan en los intereses económicos de la aristocracia de labor del primer mundo forman la base de masas para apretar el agarre de la muerte del tercer mundo por el imperialismo

5. Nuevas burguesías se formarán bajo el socialismo. Mao guió la marcha para exponer la burguesía que se desarrolló adentro del partido comunista en la Unión Soviética y la campaña para bombardear los cuarteles generales en su propio país de China. Esas experiencias demostraron la necesidad de revolución continua bajo la dictadura del proletariado. La lucha de clases no se termina hasta que el estado haya sido anulado y el comunismo se haya alcanzado.

6. La Gran Revolución Cultural de Proletariado en China fue el avance más lejano hacia al comunismo en la historia. Mantenemos la Unión Soviética hasta la muerte de Stalin en 1953, seguido por la Republica de la gente de China a través de 1976 como los ejemplos mejores del socialismo moderno en la práctica. El arresto de la "Pandilla de Cuatro" en China y la subida de Khrushchev en la Unión Soviética marcaron la restauración del capitalismo en esos países. Otros experimentos en el desarrollo del socialismo en el siglo 20 fallaron de sobrepasar el modelo Soviético (es decir: Albania) o peor, se quedó adentro del modelo capitalista de producción, generalmente por la falla de romper con la teoría de fuerzas productivas.

¿Quieres leer más en español?

Tenemos algunos libros y revistas revolucionarios. Escríbenos para pedir algunos. En cambio por la literatura gratuita pedimos que nos mandes algo de trabajo. Escríbenos un artículo, forma un grupo de estudio, mándenos algún arte, lo que puedas hacer para contribuir a la lucha revolucionaria.

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Under Lock & Key No. 25, March/April 2012

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proponer legislativa adicional y reformas administrativas.

Como filántropos, decimos aislamiento a largo plazo es tortura y debe ser anulado inmediatamente, y como hemos discutido en otras partes, no estamos de acuerdo con punto 2 como campaña en que justifica el uso de tortura contra los resistentes más fuertes mientras malinterpreta la relación verdadera entre aislamiento de largo plazo y enfermedad mental.

Si implementado, las recomendaciones del comité reduciría ciertamente el número de prisioneros sufriendo en aislamiento de largo plazo, y son por lo tanto recomendaciones progresivas por un Colegio de Abogados que trabaja dentro del sistema de justifica que utiliza el encarcelamiento supermax como una herramienta de control social. Pero este mismo sistema, que ellos han apuntado ha demostrado su voluntad de ignorar la ley y actuar afuera de las normas de decencia común establecido por la octava amienda, seguramente no se puede confiar para determinar "cuando una extrema y seria amenaza a la seguridad de la prisión se ha establecido."

Los autores ignoran el amplio contexto del encarcelamiento supermax y su uso en los Estados Unidos. Como hemos reportado en un artículo en la *historia de unidades de control*: "La verdad detrás de las razones que estas uni-

...Perdidos

dades de control son necesitadas es que son un recurso político, económico y control social de todo una clase de opresos y gente privados de sus derechos. Estos incluyen especialmente africanos, latinos y gente indígena que son una parte desproporcionada en poblaciones de unidades controladas." Prisiones en los Estados Unidos son un suelo de crianza de resistencia contra el sistema que injustificadamente encierra segmentos de su población y las unidades supermax se necesita para controlar aún más la educación y la organización inevitable que se produce entre los que se enfrentan cara a cara con la injusticia criminal del sistema

Mientras que este reporte es útil por las citaciones legales y el estudio de los daños causados por el aislamiento de largo plazo, es importante que lo pongamos en un contexto más amplio del sistema de injusticia criminal y entender que la tortura supermax no se puede reformar dentro este sistema. Esperamos hacer algunos mejoramientos significantes que tendrán un impacto particular en las vidas de nuestras camaradas políticos detrás de rejas que son el blanco de encarcelamiento en estas celdas de aislamiento, y en esa batalla nos unimos con el Colegio de Abogados de la Ciudad de NY y muchas otras que claramente miran la injusticia y inhumanidad del aislamiento supermax.

Prisioneros interesados en una copia de este reporte deben contactar la New York City Bar Association a 42 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036 ★

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...Peace Work

in support of the efforts of MIM(Prisons) and USW in building peace on the inside. Only by building our own institutions of the oppressed will we truly be able to stop the violence that takes so many lives and keeps a substantial portion of oppressed nation youth behind bars.

Notes:

1. *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*, 2011.
2. *Associated Press. More black, Hispanic men in prison cells than dorms. 27 September 2007.*
3. *Natalie Y. Moore and Lance Williams. The Almighty Black P Stone Nation: The Rise, Fall, and Resurgence of an American Gang. Chicago, Lawrence Hill Books: 2011.*

...Continued from page 5

...Contradictions

We know they take our existence very serious, united or not. The question to all LOs is whether we are going to take our existence serious or not, and act. There is a saying attributed to Nat Turner and his struggle that "we can either all hang together for fighting or hang separate as comrades who did nothing." ★

Special Literature Offers
Ask for it when you write us!

Spanish: Old MIM lit en español.

MIM Notes: Old *MIM Notes*, the defunct newspaper of the Maoist Internationalist Movement.