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Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

## Improving USW to Accommodate Emerging Prison Movement

by MIM(Prisons)  
July 2012

As we convene our third congress, we approach our five year anniversary as an organization. While members of MIM(Prisons) -- and even more so USW -- have been in the prison movement for longer, we find this an opportune milestone to reflect back on where the prison movement is at and how it has developed.

In 2011 a series of hunger strikes in California made a great impact countrywide. Many activists, from crypto-trots to anarchists to reformists, rallied around this movement and continue to focus on prison work as a result. While our predecessors in MIM saw the importance of the prison movement decades ago, their foresight is proving more true today as we begin to reach a critical mass of activity. It is now a hot issue within the left wing of white nationalism, which is significant because whites are not affected by the system extensively enough to call it a true material interest.

This gradual development has been the result of two things: agitation around the facts of the U.S. injustice system on the outside, and prisoner organizing on the inside, both of which MIM and USW have been diligently working on for decades. In the last year and a half, prisoner organizing came to a head with the Georgia strike and the California hunger strikes, which were both coordinated on a statewide level. While getting some mainstream and international attention, these events rang particularly loud among the imprisoned, with a series of similar actions still developing across the country (recently in Virginia, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, the federal supermax ADX, Limon in Colorado and a follow-up hunger strike in Georgia).

Meanwhile, the agitational side of things came to a bit of a head with the release of the book *The New Jim Crow* last year. This book has continued to get lots of play from many different sectors of the political spectrum. And while in most cases those promoting the book are amenable to the lackluster conclusions, the organization of these facts into a book stand for themselves. It requires a very biased viewpoint to read this book and then turn around and deny the national oppression faced by the internal semi-colonies through the U.S. injustice system. Therefore we think the overall effect of this book will be both progressive and significant, despite its limitations.

It is for these reasons that we see this as a  
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## The Myth of the "Prison Industrial Complex"

by MIM(Prisons)  
July 2012

Many people are caught up in the line that millions are enslaved in this country, and that the main motivating factor behind the prison boom of recent decades is to put prisoners to work to make money for corporations or the government. MIM(Prisons) has clearly shown that U.S. prisons are not primarily (or even significantly) used to exploit labor, and that they are a great cost financially to the imperialists, not a source of profit.(1)

*"Indeed, at peak use around 2002, fewer*

*than 5,000 inmates were employed by private firms, amounting to one-quarter of one per cent of the carceral population. As for the roughly 8% of convicts who toil for state and federal industries under lock, they are 'employed' at a loss to correctional authorities in spite of massive subsidies, guaranteed sales to a captive market of public administrations, and exceedingly low wages (averaging well under a dollar an hour)."(2)*

Instead, we argue that there is a system of population control (including all the elements of the international definition of genocide) that utilizes methods of torture on mostly New Afrikan and Latino men, with a hugely disproportionate representation of First Nation men as well, across this country on a daily basis. As the new prison movement grows and gains attention in the mainstream, it is of utmost importance that we maintain the focus on this truth and not let the white nationalists define what is ultimately a struggle of the oppressed nations.

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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](http://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.



## Call for Solidarity Demonstration September 9

by SAMAEŁ  
July 2012

SAMAEŁ is calling on all prisoners to engage in a solidarity demonstration on Sunday September 9, 2012. We are requesting all prisoners (who are able) to embark on a solidarity fast and work stoppage from midnight September 8 to midnight September 9 in a show of solidarity by:

- Fasting for the period above cited unless a medical need necessitates eating.
- Refrain from working for our captors (or slow work to minimal output) for the period above cited.
- Engage only in anti-oppressor, networking and solidarity actions for the period.
- Cease all prisoner-on-prisoner hostilities regardless of set, race, custody, gender, religion or other division.
- Show respect for our mutual bondage and suffering as well as the sacrifices of all revolutionary brothers and sisters.

This is timed to coincide with the anniversary of the Attica uprising and is intended to draw attention to our devolving treatment and escalating abuse of prisoners by the state.

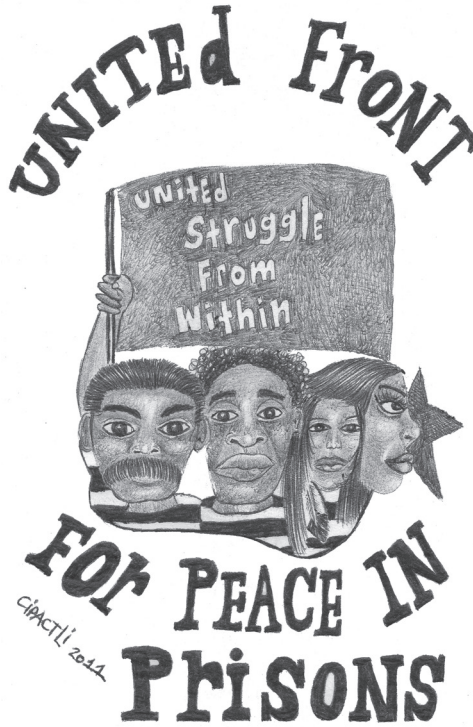
We welcome all prisoners, confined or not, to show support by participating or speaking out.

We do not expect our brothers and sisters to incur casualties or harm - we do want to send a message, not to them only, but to each other. This is an us thing - a true united front. Just one day, just one voice!

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** We support this call from a group participating in the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP) for a day of peaceful unity and protest, and will work with local organizing cells to coordinate this demo. This is an opportunity for the UFPP to build on the principle of Peace (see opposite page).

This 24 hour action will require a little sacrifice by prisoners, but should incur no harm, and should lead to a reduction in violence as all prisoner-on-prisoner hostilities cease for the day. We can build greater awareness of the oppression against which we fight, and build the unity that is necessary for that battle, by organizing groups and individuals to participate. Comrades organizing around the solidarity demo are encouraged to send their plans or reports to *ULK*. Note that copy for the next issue will be due the week of the demonstration, so send your reports in on September 10 to make the deadline.

From Georgia to California, from Virginia to Illinois, all across the United States, let's show that the prisoner struggle is one common struggle. ★



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moment to seize. When we started five years ago we had the great fortune of building on the legacy and existing prisoner support programs of MIM. The ideological foundation that MIM gave us allowed us to focus our energies on more practical questions of launching a new prison publication, building support programs for comrades that are released, developing correspondence political study programs, and launching a new website that features the most comprehensive information on censorship, mail rules, and abuses in prisons across this country.

With our infrastructure built and steadily running, we need to look at ways to take advantage of the relative consciousness of prisoners right now and the relative attention the U.S. population has on the prison system. We have always said that without prisoners organized there is no prison movement, so we see that as the principal prong of attack. Thus, we are taking steps to improve the structure of United Struggle from Within (USW), the mass organization for prisoners that was founded by MIM and is now led by MIM(Prisons). Building on suggestions from some leaders in USW, we have enacted a plan to form councils in states where there are multiple active USW cells. Below we further explain an organizational structure for our movement, so comrades know where they fit in and how they should be relating to others.

As we saw during the California strikes, censorship increases, as do other repressive measures, when organization expands. So as we step up our efforts, we can expect the state to step up theirs. We will need more support than ever from volunteers on the outside to do legal and agitational work to keep the state faithful to their own laws and regulations.

As big as those challenges are, the internal  
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...**"PIC"**

To analyze why the term "prison industrial complex" ("PIC") is inaccurate and misleading, let's look at some common slogans of the social democrats, who dominate the white nationalist left. First let's address the slogan "Welfare not Warfare." This slogan is a false dichotomy, where the sloganeer lacks an understanding of imperialism and militarism. It is no coincidence that the biggest "welfare states" in the world today are imperialist countries. Imperialism brings home more profits by going to war to steal resources, discipline labor, and force economic policies and business contracts on other nations. And militarism is the cultural and political product of that fact. The "military industrial complex" was created when private industry teamed up with the U.S. government to meet their mutual interests as imperialists. Industry got the contracts from the government, with guaranteed profits built in, and the government got the weapons they needed to keep money flowing into the United States by oppressing other nations. This concentration of wealth produces the high wages and advanced infrastructure that the American people benefit from, not to mention the tax money that is made available for welfare programs. So it is ignorant for activists to claim that they are being impoverished by the imperialists' wars as is implied by the false dichotomy of welfare vs. warfare.

Another slogan of the social democrats which speaks to why they are so eager to condemn the "PIC" is "Schools not Jails." This slogan highlights that there is only so much tax money in a state available to fund either schools, jails, or something else. There is a limited amount of money because extracting more taxes would increase class conflict between the state and the labor aristocracy. This battle is real, and it is a battle between different public service unions of the labor aristocracy. The "Schools not Jails" slogan is the rallying cry of one side of that battle among the labor aristocrats.

Unlike militarism, there is not an imperialist profit interest behind favoring jails over schools. This is precisely why the concept of a "PIC" is a fantasy. While the U.S. economy would likely collapse without the spending that goes into weapons-related industries, Loic Wacquant points out that the soft drink industry in the United States is almost twice as big as prison industries, and prison industries are a mere 0.5% of the gross domestic product.(2) Compared to the military industrial complex, which is 10% of U.S. GDP, the prison system is obviously not a "complex" combining state and private interests that cannot be dismantled without dire consequences to imperialism.(3) And of course, even those pushing the "PIC" line must admit that over 95% of prisons in this country are publicly owned and run.(4)

Federal agencies using the prison system to control social elements that they see as a threat to imperialism is the motivating factor for the injustice system, not an imperialist drive for profits. Yet the system is largely decentralized and built on the interests of the majority of Americans at the local level, and not just the  
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challenges will be even greater hurdles for us to jump in the coming years. The recent large mobilizations have begun to reveal what these challenges will be. And there is much work to be done to identify, analyze and work to resolve the contradictions within the prisoner population that allows for the current conditions where the state dictates how these vast populations of oppressed people interact with each other and live out their lives.

The prison movement that arose before the great prison boom that began in the 1980s was a product of the national liberation struggles occurring at the time. Today, the prison population is ten times as big, while the political leadership on the outside is scarce. The prison masses must guard against the great number of misleaders out there opportunistically grabbing on to the issue of the day to promote political goals that do not serve the oppressed people of the world. Prisoners may need to step up to play the leading role this time around, which will require looking inward. We must not only learn from the past, but also build independent education programs to develop the skills of comrades today to conduct their own analysis of the conditions that they face. On top of that we must promote and develop an internationalist worldview, to find answers and alliances in the oppressed nations around the world, and remove the blinders that keep us only focused on Amerika. There is no liberation to be found in Amerikanism. That Amerikans have created a prison system that dwarfs all others in humyn history is just one example of why.

So it is with cautious optimism that we approved the resolution below at our recent congress. We think this plan addresses proposals submitted by some USW leaders, and hope you all will work with us to make this an effective structure.

## Congress Resolution on USW Structure

MIM(Prisons) is initiating the creation of statewide councils within United Struggle from

...USW

Within (USW), the anti-imperialist mass organization for prisoners. A council will be sanctioned when two or more cells exist within a state that are recognized as active and abiding by the standards of USW. MIM(Prisons) will facilitate these councils, where the focus is on practical organizing around the needs of the imprisoned lumpen in that state. As the U.S. prison system is primarily organized by state, the councils will serve to develop and address the specific needs and conditions within each state.

In the case where cells have identities other than "USW" we do not require them to use that name. For example, the Black Order Revolutionary Organization, which self-identifies as a "New Afrikan revolutionary movement," may be invited to participate in a USW statewide council. While USW itself does not favor the struggles of any oppressed nation over another, as a movement we recognize the usefulness and importance of nation-specific organizing. In the prison environment there may be lines that cannot be crossed in current conditions which limit the membership of a group. As long as these cells exhibit true internationalism and anti-imperialism they may possess dual membership in USW by joining a statewide council.

With this proposal we are expanding the structure of our movement (see diagram page 1). We recognize two main pillars to the ideological leadership of our movement at this time. One being the MIM(Prisons) cell, and the other being the *Under Lock & Key* writers group, which is made up of USW members and led by and facilitated by MIM(Prisons). The statewide councils should look to these two groups for ideological guidance in their organizing work, mainly through the pages of *Under Lock & Key*. In contrast, the councils' main function will be in practical work directly serving the interests of the imprisoned lumpen. They will serve to coordinate the organizing work of scattered USW cells in a more unified way across the state.

MIM(Prisons) will be initiating the California Council immediately, with others to follow as conditions allow. ★

## 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.

## Prisons Create New Tools to Validate, Prisoners Seek New Methods of Protest

by John Q. Convict of USW  
July 2012

Recently I received notice of change to regulations number 12-03, publication date 25 May 2012, effective date 10 May 2012, that is said to affect sections 3000, 3375 and 3375.6. It states the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) seeks to establish requirements for an automated needs assessment tool to be used to place prisoners in programs that would aid their re-entry to society and reduce their chances of reoffending by identifying the criminogenic needs of offenders.

The presentation appears to be harmless, but it is not harmless for those ignorant enough to boast about their gang involvement, family criminality, and other sensitive factors that will become readily available and quickly cross-referenced and correlated with information contained in intelligence files. In addition, the information gained from the compass core assessment official record can be used as an "administrative determinate" under 15 CCR 3375.2(b)(11) in addition to 3375.3 (9)(4)(A) & (B) which is the foundation not only for validation but for intelligence analysts.

Issuing a list of demands to prisoncrats telling them what their validation process should be is ludicrous. Cats are quick to want to make demands without any leverage, though prisoners no matter where they are confined, have economic leverage that they are not willing to exercise because cookies are of more immediate import.

Since the 1880s the concept of boycotting, or organizing to engage in a concerted refusal to have dealings with prison/jail stores or commissaries, has been a very powerful tool. In California it deprives the CDCR of a source of revenue. It also affects the bottom line of prison profiteers, whose profits are guaranteed by what amounts to cash transactions for hundreds of millions in profits and revenues, courtesy of prisoners who lack the will to sacrifice luxuries for a while in order to exercise necessary economic leverage, to compel some administrative change.

Prisoners in California should remember that canteen goods originally were purchased at wholesale prices and then marked up 10% and the proceeds over the costs and expenses went into the prisoner welfare fund to finance many programs and activities that benefited prisoners. This changed with the rise of Pete Wilson, the governor who used prisoner welfare funds to help finance a re-election bid which opened the flood gates for all sorts of misuse of the foundational purpose of the prisoner welfare fund.

The validation process is a means of control and manipulation that I have noted that some

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labor unions and small businesses that benefit directly from spending on prisons. We would likely not have the imprisonment rates that we have today without pressure from the so-called "middle class."

Some in the white nationalist left at times appear to dissent from other Americans on the need for more prisons and more cops. But the root of both sides' line is the belief that the majority of Americans are exploited by the system, while the greedy corporations benefit. With this line, it is easy to accept that prisons are about profit, just like everything else, and the prison boom can be blamed on the corporations' greed.



In reality the prison boom is directly related to the demands of the Amerikan people for "tough on crime" politicians. Americans have forced the criminal injustice system to become the tool of white hysteria. The imperialists have made great strides in integrating the internal semi-colonies financially, yet the white nation demands that these populations be controlled and excluded from their national heritage. There are many examples of the government trying to shut down prisons and other cost-saving measures that would have shrunk the prison system, where labor unions fought them tooth and nail. (1) It is this continued legacy of national oppression, exposed in great detail in the book *The New Jim Crow*, that is covered up by the term "prison industrial complex." The cover-up continues no matter how much these pseudo-Marxists lament the great injustices suffered by Black and Brown people at the hands of the "PIC."

This unfortunate term has been popularized in the Amerikan left by a number of pseudo-Marxist theorists who are behind some of the popular prison activist groups on the outside. By explicitly rejecting this term, we are drawing a clear line between us and the organizations these activists are behind, many of whom we've worked with in one way or another. For the most part, the organizations themselves do not claim any Marxist influence or even a particular class analysis, but the leaders of these groups are very aware of where they disagree with MIM Thought. It is important that the masses are aware of this disagreement as well.

It is for these reasons that MIM(Prisons) passed the following policy at our 2012 congress:

... "PIC"

## Too Dismissive of Rebellions

by an Oregon prisoner  
June 2012

In *ULK* 25 you printed an article of mine about prisoner struggles in the Youth Training School (YTS) in Chino, California. I'd like to comment on your response.

The main points in your response criticize our efforts to better our own conditions. And that's MIM(Prisons)'s common ideology as I've noticed from the material of yours I've read. MIM(Prisons) is quick to condemn and downplay rebellious actions as premature, saying the rebels ain't "ready" and lack unity of the masses to obtain success. But I don't believe that's always the proper analysis of the rebellions you speak against. Ultimate victory is obtained through *action*, by taking chances. Is it proper revolutionary conduct to sit on the sidelines and cheerlead, even in the midst of war? That makes me think of the Muslim Brotherhood. They failed to participate in the revolt that happened in Egypt, but they were quick to celebrate the victory, they were quick to want to enforce their ideologies in the new government. True revolutionaries must, at some point, get their hands dirty.

To constantly speak against taking action, for lack of proper political education (or for whatever reasons), is to tell Rosa Parks she should've just moved to the back of the bus. It's the same as telling indigenous peoples they're ignorant for fighting back against the oppressors to preserve their way of life, or to tell the rebel fighters in the African and Arab countries to lay down their arms because MIM(Prisons) doesn't feel those citizens are ready. But as we've seen, many oppressive governments have been toppled successfully. When Fidel and Raul Castro, Che, etc, invaded Cuba they did it with only 82 men. But they only had 22 left after the first ambush. They lacked the loyalty of the masses, took a chance, and succeeded!

In the situation at YTS I admit we were young and lacked the proper political educa-

*The term "Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)" will not generally be used in Under Lock & Key because the term conflicts with MIM(Prisons)'s line on the economic and national make up of the U.S. prison system. It will only be printed in a context where the meaning of the term is stated by the author, and either criticized by them or by us. ★*

Notes:

1. MIM(Prisons) on U.S. Prison Economy. *ULK* 8, May 2009.
2. Wacquant, Loic. 2010. *Prisoner reentry as myth and ceremony*. Berkeley, CA.
3. Endres, Mike. *Reflections on the Military/Industrial Complex*, 4 August 2010. While direct military spending was \$850 billion in 2010, this article puts the total near \$1.4 trillion when discretionary spending is accounted for. That year the U.S. GDP was \$14.4 trillion (see note 2).
4. Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press: Berkeley, 2007. p. 21.
5. Thanks to the Michigan prisoner who proposed this new line.

tion, and as I've said, I now see all our energy should've been focused on the system itself. But our technique was a success according to our young, uneducated ideologies at the time. Our goal wasn't to try to change the whole California Youth Authority system itself, but to reform YTS, to make our living conditions better, to get things back that had been taken from us. The power was in our hands, the hands of the people. Administration clearly saw that and eventually relented to our demands. The administration's intent was to pacify us, but in my article I never said anything about being pacified. The "few bones" thrown to us did nothing to calm us down. And in the process we learned something of value: we learned an art of war against the system, and how to organize, even if you do choose to call it focoism. Experience in war, even if that battle is lost (ours wasn't), is intrinsically valuable for the preparations of future battles against the oppressors. "Talk," verbal education, can only go so far. Experience is the ultimate teacher. And it's my experience at YTS that has now made me hungry for revolutionary education. I now study politics and try to get my priorities in order to help clean up the hypocrisy of the injustice system. I doubt I'm the only one that's been motivated as a result of my experiences. So wouldn't you call that a victory?!

Any patriot whose ever lost a battle will tell you he's learned something of more value than just how to shed blood.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We appreciate this writer's commitment to struggle with us over this issue after reading our response to his article in *Under Lock & Key*. This is a good example of unity-struggle-unity. We must fearlessly tackle our ideological disagreements and questions while working together for change. Theories can only truly be tested in practice, and so in this way we agree that experience is the ultimate teacher.

This is a debate over the lessons of experience, not one of "talk" vs. experience as this writer represents. The article we printed talked about the YTS Chino prisoners who engaged in "race riots" where nations fought nations because they were being punished already for violence. The prisoncrats eventually saw the wisdom of resolving the situation by improving conditions rather than increasing repression. Certainly all of the youth involved in these struggles learned some valuable lessons. Most important is the lesson about the arbitrary nature of punishment meted out by the criminal injustice system. But we look to the practice of prisoners across the country and see that violence among prisoners generally leads to more violence and repression by the prison pigs, not the administration giving in to demands.

If we really want to learn from practice we must look at more than just one situation and draw scientific conclusions from history. It is likely that more than one individual prayed for change to the conditions in YTS Chino during this time, but we don't conclude that praying to god results in improvements in prisons just from

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# Institutionalized Mind: The Breaking Process

by a Federal prisoner  
July 2012

In prison one comes face to face with the harshest reality. A prisoner is at the mercy of his captors. Once confined the breaking process begins with the strip search -- the intrusive search and viewing of one's body parts by complete strangers - over and over again. To refuse brings one response: assault and abuse. Physical assault at the hands of the prison guards (pigs) becomes a regular ritual.

The pigs will feed you a bag lunch consisting of bologna and cheese, three times a day, seven days a week, or a loaf and raw cabbage. The "Nutra Loaf" supposedly has all the nourishment a body needs baked into a loaf of bread.

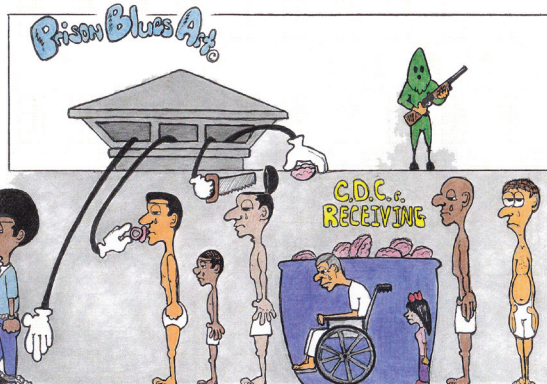
The pigs will delay or destroy incoming and outgoing mail. There are men and women who go months without hearing from family and friends, as the pigs want you to believe no one loves you. Visits and phone privileges are denied as a discipline, for years at a time.

Then prisoners are placed in solitary confinement, in control units given various names. In these units prisoners are locked down in the cells 23 hours a day. This is even done to pretrial detainees not yet convicted of crimes. In the summer, heat is pushed through the vents, and in winter ice cold air is pushed in. Men are kept in ambulatory restraints (handcuffed, with waist chain and black-box, and shackles) or "four pointed" (handcuffed and shackled to a bed or restraint chair) for days at a time.

There are "cell extractions" where pigs suit-up in riot gear in five-man teams (allegedly a man for each body extremity). These attacks are justified by reports concocted and written by staff to cover their ass. In fact, United States Penitentiary Lewisburg (USP Lewisburg), where the newly formulated Special Management Unit is instituted, has more cell extractions and men placed in restraints than any facility in the federal Bureau of Prisons, including ADX which supposedly confines the most dangerous prisoners in the country.

These abuses in American prisons are real and it's all designed to de-humanize the prisoners and destroy their sense of self-worth, self-respect, dignity and morals.

Often I ask young pigs "is there a difference between a man and an inmate?" The majority say yes, but when I ask the difference they cannot explain it. Others have come back later and said no, but their initial response is a "learned one." For example, new staff (pigs) are taught at training facilities (at Glencoe for federal officers, local places for state officials) to not eat prisoner food, and to not drink prisoner water. They are indoctrinated psychologically to view prisoners as sub-human, a separate species, in the same manner as the U.S. Constitution



counted Black people as three-fifths human. In the year 2011, USP Lewisburg had on display in the institution toy figurines: a gorilla complete with orange pants, a broken handcuff attached to one wrist, and a toy white man in the costume of superman. This is how they view themselves and us.

But I will not delve too deeply into the racist mentality inside America's prisons; that is a well-known and accepted fact. There are many tortures perpetuated in America's prisons, from those stated above to sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, to brutality and killings. These acts are well known and rarely is anything done.

Instead, the judicial system turns the proverbial blind eye. There are over a thousand cited juridical cases of prisoner lawsuits dismissed as frivolous, or on some contrived technicality, e.g. failure to exhaust administrative remedies/ the institutional grievance process, even when that "grievance process" affords no capacity for redress. See *Prison Litigation Reform Act*, 42 USC 1997; 28 USC 1915(g), *Woodford v. Ngo*, 126 S. Ct. 2378 (2006), *Booth v. Churner*, 532 U.S. 731 (2001).

In federal civil rights cases, the U.S. Attorney (and Department of Justice) for the district where the prison is located "represents" the prison staff at the tax payers' expense. In state 42 U.S.C. §1983 civil rights cases it is the state attorney general who represents prison staff, again at tax payer expense. Prisoners are rarely given an attorney to prosecute their civil actions.

Emboldened by success at having prisoner lawsuits dismissed, prison staff have become more abusive and more blatant. This abuse and torture has had the desired effect, and many prisoners stop reporting staff abuse and just accept it. Thus happens the moral decay of the prison population. Men and women who were social pariahs, when free, for economic reasons, become scavengers, who lack morals, integrity and principles. Human beings are confined and allow the conditions of that confinement to make them into predatory beasts. Whether you are incarcerated for murder, robbery, drug dealing, extortion, or burglary, these crimes have a rational basis, often poverty-bred crime.

In America's prisons, what morals and integrity are left in the prisoner are slowly eroded

away. Those who never used alcohol become drunks on prison-made wine and white lightning; those who never used drugs become heroin addicts with self-made needles; psychotropic medication-babies; gunners-flashing and masturbating in front of prison staff; men raping weaker men.

Prisoners are not doing time, the time is doing them. Mentally, prisoners are being dumbed down. It used to be when the youth entered prison they received a book from elder prisoners and a knife from their comrades for protection from the other prisoners and the pigs. Now the youth sit in front of the idiot box (TV) tuned in to BET and MTV.

The majority of prisoners pled guilty and got more time than they deserved, yet few ever even

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**...YTS Chino**

this one experience. Similarly we can't take this one situation as evidence that violence among the people will lead the oppressors to lessen oppression when this is contradicted in the vast majority of prisons.

MIM(Prisons) does walk a line between supporting just struggles of the oppressed wherever they break out, and drawing lessons from the struggles while trying to push them to ever more advanced and successful levels. While we struggle against focoism, we have a bigger problem of inaction due to fear among the prison masses. So we recognize the positive aspects of immature rebellions that serve as breeding grounds for more advanced comrades and strategies. When these struggles present just demands we will support them but we should not blindly cheerlead for every outbreak of rebellion.

The case of Cuba is a good historical example where we would defend their just struggle against imperialist aggression while pointing out that their revolution ended up dependent on Soviet imperialism and this hindered their ability to develop socialism and advance further in the interests of the Cuban people. This is a scientific analysis of history that must be undertaken so that we can learn from successes and failures. Many times in many countries people take up armed struggle without Maoist leadership and people's support. We resolutely support these struggles when they oppose imperialism, but we don't want to mislead people by suggesting that this is the best path to follow for other struggles.

This comrade's development of political awareness out of his experience at YTS Chino is a victory for the oppressed. But to sum up that history overall as a victory would imply that random violence among the oppressed wins victories from the oppressor. What makes it useful to retell these histories is to say here's what was righteous, and here's what was backwards or immature in our approach, to apply those lessons to our future struggles and share them with those who find themselves in similar situations today so that they can do better than we did. ★



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### ...Institutionalization

look inside the law library; they cannot read or write, yet do not go to school. They simply play the yard all day, until they find themselves in the SHU for a stabbing over being drunk, fighting over a "punk" or some minor offense perceived as disrespect.

Prisoners have lost the identity of who their enemy is and is not. Do other prisoners lock you in at night, deny you visits and phone calls, throw your mail in the garbage, tell you to strip naked, squat, cough and spread 'em?

All these groups, formed for this fight against "oppression" or claiming to be pushing an agenda of growth and development, and representing truth, justice, etc., are only oppressing themselves. On every yard in the country more people stab others within their LO, and the pigs lock us all down at the end of the night. Where is the comradeship amongst yourselves in particular, and prisoners in general? Where are the George Jacksons of today, Mumia Abu Jamals, Geronimo Pratts, Huey P. Newtons, Albizu Campos, Lolita Lebrons of today? How can you be a man or a "G" and sit confined every day without ever trying to liberate yourself? Is that gangsta, to sit idle chasing dope for the rest of your years in the womb of oppression?

I commend and salute the brothers and soldiers of Georgia State Prisons that in 2010 had a six-facility work stoppage to protest deplorable prison conditions. Every year, there should be a whole month where prisons across America simply refuse work; working for under a dollar for your captors is a crime against yourself. Every time a prisoner is beaten, collectively, without discussion or plan, everyone should simply refuse to work.

In all prisons, and the federal system in particular, there needs to be a moratorium on prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. This needs to go on with each "gang," and I say "gang" because you do not act like freedom fighters, revolutionaries or movements.

"No people to whom liberty is given can hold it as firmly, and wear it as grandly as those who wrench their liberty from the iron hand of the tyrant." - Frederick Douglas

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** In June of 2010 we had someone write to us about the degrading conditions in Georgia prisons, while lamenting how sorry and submissive the prisoners in Georgia were. Six months later thousands of prisoners in at least 6 prisons launched a coordinated strike just as the comrade above describes. Eighteen months after that, a hunger strike has passed the one month mark after expanding to multiple GA prisons as well. So, while everything about the breaking process this comrade describes above is true, its hold is not permanent on the minds of the oppressed.

It is already traditional that the month of August be used to honor those who came before us, and SAMAEL has answered this comrade's

...Continued from page 4

### ...New Tools

general population prisoners and sensitive needs yard (SNY/PC) prisoners embrace as a sort of badge of honor, only to belatedly find out the effects. In *ULK 26* an Oregon prisoner points to the most significant problems with the divisive nature in the development of LOs who are in competition with each other.

It's common for me to hear cats hollering that they are Blood this, Blood that. Crip this or Crip that, Norteño, Southsider, Bulldog, skin head, nazi, etc., trying to tout some bogus gangsta facade that ordinarily would land them on Corcoran SHU 4B and validated. These boastful cats are easily co-opted and manipulated. Their delusions of grandeur provide Institutional Gang Investigations (IGI) with a wealth of intelligence via their eyes and ears on the tier.

A perfect example is the Corcoran prisoner's statement about cats in ASU I (Administrative Segregation) laying down in fear of IGI retaliation for exercising their right to file an appeal! Typically conversations over the tier are recorded when IGI doesn't have a reliable agent to make note of what he sees and/or hears. As to the idea of not taking a cellie as a form of protest, the typical response is privileges taken for 90-180 days and 60-90 days of early release credits are taken. Cats who are addicted to sports programs or television or canteen will cave in every time because they lack the will to sacrifice luxuries for the cause.

I try to examine all aspects of the criminal injustice system to see what tactics we can utilize in our struggle effectively, even if I have to employ them alone. I sacrifice luxuries already so I know it's possible and a little something for all to consider.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This comrade raises a good topic of discussion: it's important we evaluate the tactics that will be effective in fighting prison repression. There are a limited number of protest options available to prisoners, and some will be more effective than others. Whichever tactics are best may vary by prison or state, but the fundamental task of building unity for the struggle remains the same across the entire criminal injustice system. Comrades in California continue to strategize on the best ways to build on the recent prisoner rights activism there. Join United Struggle from Within and work with other anti-imperialist prisoners so that we aren't stuck employing tactics on our own, but rather in a united front across facilities, organizations and nationalities. ★

call for a countrywide fast and work stoppage on September 9 (see page 3), though only for 24 hours. We encourage comrades to use the month of August to do education work around the history of the prison movement. Get in touch with MIM(Prisons) if you need additional study materials. We hope this comrade will follow through on his own suggestions and organize where he is at for a day of solidarity with others in the United Front for Peace in Prisons on September 9. ★

## July 2012 Censorship Report

by the Legal Coordinator of MIM(Prisons)  
July 2012

### Overview

This past year MIM(Prisons) was fortunate enough to be working with a volunteer with legal expertise on our anti-censorship campaign. This volunteer's insight and knowledge helped us send in many more letters to administrators, and with more depth and research than ever before. But sending out more complaints to prison officials means we are getting back a comparable amount of bullshit responses from them. Through this process we've learned just how important it is to be selective with who we write letters on, because sending one form letter protesting a single censorship incident easily escalates into a major research project.

One of the most common bullshit responses we receive from prison administrators is that whatever article of mail we sent was "never received via USPS." Unfortunately in these cases, the only option we have is to resend the item via Certified Mail or with Delivery Confirmation. At least this way the mailroom staff can't just throw the mail in the trash. But we won't know if your mail actually made it into your hands unless you tell us.

Each July we report how much mail is unreported as received or censored for the past year. Consistently for the past few years, about 75% of the mail is unconfirmed at the time of the report. Gradually, as more people tell us what they received, and respond to Unconfirmed Mail Forms (UMFs), the amount of unreported mail drops. Our current rate of unreported mail for the 2010-2011 reporting year is down to 60%, an all-time low! We attribute this to our widespread use of UMFs, and subscribers' diligence in responding to them. But don't wait until you get a UMF to report mail you received! Every UMF we send is money we could have spent sending you actual literature, so you should tell us what you've gotten since the last time you wrote every time.

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### 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.

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...Censor

## Appeals are Viable Tactic

Appealing censorship and filing grievances can lead to small but significant victories. In Arizona, Pennsylvania, California and Colorado, some mail from MIM Distributors which was originally denied, was allowed to be received by prisoners after appeal. Of course not all appeals will be granted, and we don't expect to ever be completely free of censorship from the state. But we encourage everyone to at least attempt to appeal all censorship of mail from MIM(Prisons). Send us copies of your documents and we can upload them to our website [www.prisoncensorship.info](http://www.prisoncensorship.info).

## Future Struggles

Do we even need to say it? If you know the words, then sing along: **California** is still banning literature from MIM Distributors! Up to the present, administrators and staff in CDCR amazingly are still citing the 2006 ban of MIM literature, which was overturned in 2007! In another attempt to remedy this problem, we have compiled a supplement to our Censorship Guide which is specific to the California ban. If a 2006 memo is cited as a reason why you can't get mail from us, tell us and we'll send you the supplement.

Mailroom staff in **Michigan** are eager to protect the "freedom" of white supremacists, as this subscriber reports:

*"Please know that I was able to obtain a hearing yesterday on the administration's rejection of MIM Theory 13, even though MDOC policy doesn't require one to be held due to it already being on the Restricted Publications List (RPL). The hearing officer gave two reasons for upholding the rejection: 1) It was on the RPL; 2) It was racist because there was an article against white supremacists. I found reason number 2 rather illuminating. . . I asked which article she was referring to and, quickly scanning the table of contents, asked her, "Is it the book review criticizing Adolph Hitler's Mein Kampf?" In any event, she could not point out a single reason for the rejection let alone relate it to a serious penological concern. I flipped through it and pointed out many reasons why it should be let in and, of course, one of them was that it is against white supremacy or racial supremacy of any type."*

Last year we reported that we were contacted by the ACLU in **Nebraska** because they had been contacted by one of our subscribers regarding the ban of literature from us. They wrote at least one letter to the Warden at Tecumseh State Correctional Institution. This letter was important because it forced the Director Robert P. Houson of Nebraska Department of Correctional Services to admit that "there is no outright ban on MIM's publications at TSCI at this time and such a ban never existed in the past." Unfortunately it appears that the legal intern who favored us has left the organization, and their new legal intern isn't being as generous with their legal expertise and sway. We encour-

	complete state-wide ban -	X	
	censorship reported -	C	
	censorship with victories -	V	
	no censorship reported -	N	
	no mail	N/A	
State	7/1/2010	7/1/2011	7/1/2012
Alabama	C	C	C
Alaska	N	N	C
Arizona	C	C	V
Arkansas	C	C	N
California	V	V	V
Colorado	N	C	V
Connecticut	N	N	C
Delaware	N/A	N/A	N/A
D.C.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Federal	V	V	C
Florida	C	V	C
Georgia	N	N	C
Hawaii	N/A	N/A	N/A
Idaho	C	C	N
Illinois	V	C	C
Indiana	C	C	N
Iowa	N	N	N
Kansas	N	C	C
Kentucky	N/A	N	N
Louisiana	C	N	N
Maine	N/A	N	N
Maryland	N	C	N
Massachusetts	C	C	N
Michigan	C		C
Minnesota	N	N	C
Mississippi	N	N	X
Missouri	V	V	V
Montana	C	C	C
Nebraska	C	C	C
Nevada	C	N	C
New Hampshire	N	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	N	N	C
New Mexico	C	V	C
New York	V	C	C
North Carolina	V	V	V
North Dakota	N/A	N	C
Ohio	C	N	C
Oklahoma	N	N	C
Oregon	C	N	C
Pennsylvania	C	V	V
Rhode Island	N/A	N	N
South Carolina	C	C	C
South Dakota	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	N	C	C
Texas	V	V	C
Utah	V	C	C
Vermont	N/A	N/A	N
Virginia	C	C	C
Washington	C	N	C
West Virginia	N	C	N
Wisconsin	C	C	C
Wyoming	C	N/A	N

age prisoners to contact the ACLU and other support organizations to help them fill a role that MIM(Prisons) can't.

Last year we reported that **Arizona** was holding the position that publishers have no appeal rights if their materials are censored. In January 2012, thanks to the assistance of our legal volunteer, we were able to send Director Charles L. Ryan a letter detailing exactly the legality behind our claim to appeal rights. In June we received a letter from Assistant Attorney General Pamela J. Linnins, responding to a different letter from us in May. She has yet to respond directly to our letter from January.

*"It appears that the Department and MIM Distributors must agree to disagree. The Department stands by its position and belief that you do not have a right to notice when in-*

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## Prisoners Study for Early Release in Brazil

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)  
July 2012

Brazil has instituted a program in its federal prisons to allow prisoners to earn an earlier release by reading certain books and writing reports on them. In a country with a maximum prison sentence of 30 years, they recognize the need to reform people who will be released some day. The program is interesting for us because it's hard to imagine Americans accepting such a program, in a country where there is no consideration for what people will do with themselves after a long prison term with no access to educational programs, and prisoners who do achieve higher education get no consideration in parole hearings.

This reform in Brazil seems to be quite limited. Only certain prisoners will be approved to participate, there is a limit to 48 days reduction in your sentence each year, and the list of books is to be determined by the state. Meanwhile, the standards applied for judging the book reports will include grammar, hand-writing and correct punctuation. Which begs the question of what are the prisoners supposed to be learning exactly? Writing skills are useful to succeed in the real world, but being able to use commas correctly is hardly a sign of reform.

In socialist China, before Mao Zedong's death, all prisoners participated in study and it was integral to every prisoner's release. Rather than judging peoples' handwriting, prison workers assessed prisoners' ability to understand why what they did was wrong, and to reform their ways. The Chinese prison system was an anomaly in the history of prisons in its approach to actually reforming people to live lives that did not harm other humyn beings through self-reflection and political study. This type of system will be needed to rehabilitate pro-capitalist Americans under the joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the oppressed nations. It is very different from the approaches of isolation and brute force that Americans currently use on the oppressed nations.

While it would be a miracle to have in the United States today, the Brazil program demonstrates the great limitations of bourgeois reforms of the current system. The books are to be literature, philosophy and science that are recognized as valuable to the bourgeois culture. And the standards for judging the prisoners will be mostly about rote learning. The politics that are behind such a program will determine its outcome. Without a truly socialist state as existed in China during Mao's leadership, we can never have a prison system truly focused on reforming people. ★

Notes:

1. Husna Haq. *The Christian Science Monitor*, 26 June 2012.

2. for a story from Amerikan political prisoners in socialist China, check out *Prisoners of Liberation* by Allyn and Adele Rickett, available from MIM(Prisons) for \$5.



## Palestinian Prisoners Still Striking Too

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)  
July 2012

When the 2011 food strike was peaking in California, MIM(Prisons) had mentioned similar tactics being used by Palestinians in Israeli prisons. And just as the struggle in U.S. prisons continues, so has the struggle of the Palestinians. A mass hunger strike lasted 28 days this spring, with some leaders having gone as long as 77 days without food, until an agreement was made on May 15.

"The written agreement contained five main provisions:

- The prisoners would end their hunger strike following the signing of the agreement;
- There will be an end to the use of long-term isolation of prisoners for "security" reasons, and the 19 prisoners will be moved out of isolation within 72 hours;
- Family visits for first-degree relatives to prisoners from the Gaza Strip and for families from the West Bank who have been denied visit based on vague "security reasons" will be reinstated within one month;
- The Israeli intelligence agency guarantees that there will be a committee formed to facilitate meetings between the IPS and prisoners in order to improve their daily conditions;
- There will be no new administrative detention orders or renewals of administrative detention orders for the 308 Palestinians currently in administrative detention, unless the secret files, upon which administrative detention is based, contains "very serious" information." (1)

While the concessions were a bit more gratifying than those that stopped the strike in California, Palestinians still have to ensure that Israeli actions followed their words, just as prisoners have been struggling to do in California. And sure enough the Israelis have not followed through, as leading hunger strikers have had their "administrative detentions" (which means indefinite imprisonment without charge or conviction) renewed. As of July 10, Mahmoud Sarak was the first to be released from administrative detention, after a three month fast. Others continue their fasts, including Akram Rikhawi (90 days), Samer Al Barq (50 days) and Hassan Safadi (20 days).

MIM(Prisons) says that U.S. prisons are just as illegitimate in their imprisonment of New Afrikan, First Nation, Boricua and Chicano peoples as Israel is in imprisoning the occupied Palestinians. The extreme use of imprisonment practiced by the settler states is connected to the importance that the settlers themselves put on the political goals of that imprisonment. Someone isn't put in long-term isolation because they're a kleptomaniac or a rapist, but they are put in long-term isolation because they represent and support the struggle of their people to be free of settler control. ★

Notes:  
1. Ali Abunimah. Details emerge of Israeli concessions that ended historic Palestinian mass hunger strike. The Electronic Intifada, 15 May 2012.  
2. Maureen Clare Murphy. Life of Akram Rikhawi, father of 8, in grave danger after 85 days of hunger strike. The Electronic Intifada, 5 July 2012.

## US Imperialism and Regional Reactionaries Line up with First Worldist 'Revolutionaries' Against Syria

by Nick Brown of anti-imperialism.com  
June 2012

[The 'Third Wayers' that are criticized in this article are part of what MIM(Prisons) refers to as the left wing of white nationalism. - Editor]

Over the past year, US-led imperialism and its junior partners in the region have waged a relentless proxy war against the Syrian Republic. Under the guise of a popular revolt, reactionaries have armed and trained rebel groups to carry out attacks against Syria's state and civilian population.

One of imperialism's most surprising allies in its assault against the Syrian people have been various 'revolutionaries' in the First World. Typically First Worldist and hence reactionary in their own right, such nominal 'radicals' from core-economy countries have championed the slogan 'No to Assad. No to foreign intervention' and have been labeled 'Third Wayers' by their international critics. Various 'Marxists' fall under this 'Third Wayer' category in respect to Syria, including the so-called Maoists of *A World to Win News Service*.

Imperialism's attacks on Syria are not simply a drive to unseat the national government led by Bashar al-Assad. Rather, the successful removal of Baathists from power in Syria will have serious and widely-felt impacts for the people of the Middle East. US imperialism and its allies are hoping to remove Assad so they can wield greater power against Iran, Palestine, and Lebanon.

Regardless of recent policies implemented by Assad in Syria which favored the west, the strategic relation between the west and the Assad-led Syrian government has now changed. As noted by Mao Zedong, when imperialism wages a war of aggression against the people of a particular country, patriotic struggles on the part of those under attack become internationalist in character. Furthermore, it is the task of communists to situate themselves through struggle as the leadership of resistance to imperialism, the vanguard amongst various patriotic forces, and

not as the backdoor allies to imperialism.

The conflict in Syria has international implications. Either imperialism will prevail in establishing a proxy government to serve its long-term interests in the region, or various forces will line up and prevail in their resistance to imperialist assaults on their sovereignty. Marxists and genuine revolutionaries should be the most vigorous, fervent, and committed to the cause of Syrian self-determination and liberation. Only through fully participating and leading a successful struggle against the imperialist-sponsored aggression can communists secure favorable internal, regional and international conditions for the further development of proletarian revolutionary struggle in Syria.

First Worldists can often act in a limited progressive manner so long as they consistently oppose their own imperialists' aggression against Third World peoples. Unfortunately, so-called Maoists like *A World to Win* and their Trotskyist brethren such as the 'International Marxist Tendency' can't be said to share this basic anti-imperialist commitment. While posing as a reliable opposition to imperialism in their own respective countries, they rhetorically assault the Assad-led government in what can only objectively be described as a form of backhanded support for capital in the region.

For communism to be a legitimate force for liberation into the 21st century, it must also be a leading force in the defense of peoples against imperialism. It is the task of genuine communism to not only defend the self-determination of peoples against imperialism, but to also prove itself in struggle as a leading force representing the broad interests of people globally. The tendency represented by fake Marxists like the self-avowed Maoists of *A World to Win* and the openly Trotskyist International Marxist Tendency, amongst other First Worldist backdoor allies of imperialism, must be exposed and dispensed with by contemporary communism. ★

Write in for notes to this article.

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...Censor

*mates are denied access, regardless of its permanence, to your publications. However, as a courtesy to you and pursuant to your request, the Department will begin providing notice to you, MIM Distributors, when inmates are denied an issue of your publications."*

At Red Onion State Prison in **Virginia**, multiple lawsuits reached settlement in the last few years challenging their illegal censorship of literature, namely from *Prison Legal News* and *The Final Call*. We were hoping that these settlements would have had an impact on our own literature, but we appear to still be banned at Red Onion. The amount of literature we know was censored is the same for the past 2 report-

ing years, but the amount of mail we know was received is about a third as much this reporting year compared to 2010-2011. This could be from delay inherent to mail correspondence, or it could be due to more censorship. It is unclear which is true at this time.

Other states with significantly large censorship proportions were: **South Carolina** and **Florida**. It is significant that wherever we have a growing population of active subscribers, repression of our literature increases. We hope comrades and subscribers everywhere will take up this important battle to protect freedom to share knowledge. If you're in a state listed above, you should especially get on board! ★

## Trayvon Martin National Oppression Debate

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)  
June 2012

In a letter from a long-time reader of *Under Lock & Key* we received an interesting criticism of the general political movement around the shooting of unarmed Black youth, Trayvon Martin. While he did not criticize MIM(Prisons) directly, some of the comments apply to the article by cipactli on Trayvon Martin printed in *ULK 26*, which he had not yet seen when he sent the letter. One of the main points of criticism is based on Zimmerman being half Latino -- a point that cipactli's article does not address. Our article in *ULK 26* identifies Zimmerman with white supremacists. This is a correct categorization of his actions which manifest the results of a lifetime of racist education, but there is a more subtle point to be made about race and national oppression when these crimes are oppressed nation on oppressed nation.

There are some fundamental points on which we disagree with in this reader's critique. S/he writes that "it's long past time for us all to stop speaking in the terms of the racist color codes used to identify human beings like any other commodity in order to facilitate marketing and manipulation." We see the national contradiction as alive and strong within the imperialist United States, and it is certainly possible for one oppressed nation to participate in the oppression of another. In fact, it is possible for individual Blacks to rise to positions of power within the imperialist state and help repress the Black Nation as a whole. Barack Obama is an obvious example of this. Those comprador individuals from oppressed nations who want power and wealth, even at the expense of their nation, do not provide evidence that we can move beyond the national contradiction which is what drives attitudes and practices of racism.

As we explained in *ULK 26*, the national contradiction is still principal in Amerika today. While not called out in the letter, underlying our disagreement on nation is a disagreement on class: MIM(Prisons) sees clearly that the vast majority of Amerikan citizens are not part of the proletariat. Their material benefits from imperialism have put them squarely within the exploiter class.

Every persyn in this country sees the stereotypes of Black youth as hoodlums, dangerous and destined for prison. Zimmerman is no different. And so it is a result of national oppression that unarmed Black youth can be killed by cops and vigilantes while the imperialist state does nothing. Studies have shown that Americans (of all nationalities), when asked to identify or imagine a drug criminal, overwhelmingly picture a Black person. This is statistically inaccurate: they should be picturing a white youth. (See our review of *The New Jim Crow* in *ULK 24* for more on this topic).

The state would prefer that oppressed nation youth kill each other, as this is a more efficient

approach for the state and it helps reinforce the stereotypes about the dangerous youth who must be locked away. By hesitating to pursue Zimmerman for the death of Martin the state is treating him more as a white man than a Latino.

This reader criticizes the many people who have come out to demand "Justice for Trayvon" but didn't step up when Oscar Grant was murdered by police officer Johnnes Mehserle. "A cold-blooded execution that met all the elements required to convict Mehserle of premeditated murder beyond a shadow of a doubt! A murder for which he only served one year! Where's the hue and cry for Mehserle's blood!" This is a fine argument, but one which again underscores the national oppression in Amerika which leads to racist stereotypes of Blacks (and other nationalities) that results in racial profiling and police brutality targeting these groups.(1)

The reader concludes with some good points about the criminal injustice system: "After being railroaded into prison for a crime the police committed, I've learned that nearly a third of my fellow prisoners are innocent, with another third convicted by unlawful police and prosecutorial tactics. All of you out there are just one arrest away from the horror show that is justice in America. You don't have to do anything, except be in the wrong place at the wrong time and, then, even white privilege won't save your ass!" But the reality is, if you are in the wrong place at the wrong time and you are Black you are significantly more likely to get thrown in prison or killed. A recent report by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement cited at least 110 Black people killed by Amerikan cops and security in the first half of 2012.(2) This is in a country where the FBI reports around 400 police killings each year, total!(3) Just as Blacks are about half the prison population in a country where they make up 12% of the population, they appear to also be about half the police killings. So in fact white privilege is alive and well. It doesn't work for everyone, the injustice system rounds up plenty of whites, but disproportionately Blacks, Latinos and First Nations are victims. This is a statistical truth that is not disproved by individual incidents that are exceptions to the rule. Statistics and thinking at the group level are important requirements for a scientific analysis of society, which in turn is necessary to transform our reality. ★

Notes:

1. *Police Brutality in America*, 14 July 2010. *Dissident Voice*.
2. *Report on Black People Executed without Trial by Police, Security Guards and Self-Appointed Law Enforcers January 1 – June 30, 2012*. *Malcolm X Grassroots Movement*.
3. Kevin Johnson. *FBI: Justifiable homicides at highest in more than a decade*, 15 October 2008. *USA Today*.

### Spanish Translators Needed!

We need volunteers who can read and write well in both English and Spanish to translate for *Under Lock & Key*. A fast growing segment of the U.S. prison population is Spanish-speaking migrants, and we would like to reach out to them as much as possible. Write in to put in work!

## Ohio State Penitentiary Hunger Strike Ends

by a New Jersey prisoner  
June 2012

9 May 2012, Youngstown, Ohio -- Ohio State Penitentiary (OSP) hunger strike ends. After long negotiations with Warden David Bobby on May 7, the hunger striking prisoners at OSP began eating again. Two of the men held out through May 8, unsatisfied with the agreement. The warden met with them separately and they agreed to come off the strike. Warden Bobby reported that "by lunch time today, everyone was eating." This was confirmed by two prisoner sources.

At this point details of the agreement are unclear, but sources say that the hunger strikers are satisfied and feel they achieved results. One source described the demands and the warden's response as "reasonable." Without going into detail, the main concerns were in regards to commissary cost, state pay rates, phone cost, length of stay, and harsh penalties for petty conduct reports. The warden said that he discussed "many issues" at the meeting with strike representatives, "many things beyond the main demands," but he would not share any of the details.

The strikers are resting and recovering, but have mailed detailed information to outside supporters at Redbird Prison Abolition, which will be released to the public as soon as possible. The warden admitted that one of the hunger strikers was transferred to disciplinary segregation for unrelated rule infractions, but stated that there were no reprisals or punishments for participating. One prisoner source agrees with this statement.

The hunger strike began on April 30 and was timed to align with May Day protests outside.

**MIM(prisons) adds:** This hunger strike demanded many reforms related to conditions in the prison. As with hunger strikes from California to Palestine, the prison administration made promises to get the prisoners to end the strike. At least one prisoner resumed the hunger strike on June 4 after the warden failed to follow through on his promises.(1)

Hunger strikes are becoming an increasingly popular tactic in the struggle against the criminal injustice system. Prisoners are forced into a position where there is very little they can do to fight for their rights. The legal system refuses to respond, grievances are ignored or destroyed, and on the streets there is more support for "getting tough on crime" than for prisoners' rights. And so prisoners feel their only choice is to put their lives in danger by refusing to eat.

MIM(Prisons) supports outbreaks of organizing and struggle against the criminal injustice system, and we urge prisoner activists to take seriously the need for study and organization before taking action. Not everyone will be

*Continued on next page..*



**Who Are We?**

by a North Carolina prisoner

Who are we...  
 Peasants from the slums/  
 The ghettos, the streets  
 Where we love drug lords & hate bums/  
 Drug up & get numb/  
 Party to hide our embarrassment  
 Trying to live lavishly/  
 As the tears stream down  
 From momz face she's treated savagely/  
 But still we're lost & brainwashed  
 I can afford a ounce of weed/  
 But can't buy the baby shoes when in need/  
 I can slang dope to fend for the kids/  
 But can't teach them some respect  
 Cause the slave pen is where I live/  
 Who are we...  
 Some thugs & gangstas/  
 Or fakes & wankstas/  
 Oblivious & ignorant  
 Cold-hearted & impenitent/  
 Broken-hearted & belligerent  
 But intelligent & benevolent/  
 But we only show the malevolence...why?/  
 Cause where we from weakness only leads to  
 violence/  
 Funerals, head shots/  
 Dead homes & dead cops/  
 Who are we...  
 Lovers & haters, givers & takers/  
 My mind says it's time  
 To change who we are/  
 From the only things being important is money,  
 clothes & cars/  
 To cherishing our women instead of sluts, hoes &  
 broads/  
 To being brothers instead of niggas/  
 To pullin good mass-movements instead of pulling  
 triggas/  
 Selling dope is so old, only makes you hot instead  
 of cold/  
 With ice, don't sell your soul cause it's a hellava  
 price/  
 Revolution is the only solution/  
 The only resolution/  
 Fight for what's right/  
 Fight for your life/  
 A soldier, warrior, survivor/  
 A man, a woman, a sister, a brother, a rider?/  
 Who are you... ★

... Continued from previous page

...Ohio

a communist, but we can all advance our theory and practice through study and discussion. And we need good organizing theory to make the best use of unity and actions.

A good place to start is the United Front for Peace Statement of Principles on page 2. Struggle with us if you disagree with any of them, and if you agree, come together with prisoners across the country to build our unity and struggle. ★

Note: June 4 2012. Statement from OSP Hunger Striker. Redbird Prison Abolition

**More Orgs Labeled "Security Threat" for Raising Consciousness**by a Texas prisoner  
June 2012

Recently I was informed that my nación is now considered a Security Threat Group (STG) here in the state of Texas. Not because we are doing anything that's criminal, but because the system knows that we have the potential to make change possible for all, which they see as a direct threat to their institution. For years we have been around, but now they see more and more of us getting tuned in to our doctrine, becoming aware of the de-humanization of the system. So it seems that they want to slap us with this label. Recently in an article published in *ULK* there was a fellow Black Panther, who is here with me, informing you all that the Gang Intelligence staff have also classified them as an STG in the state of Texas.

All I can say to those manitos and manitas doing time representing [these groups]: there is nothing new under the sun! Keep underground not because we have a sense of guilt, but because by watching and studying history we made ourselves a threat and now the system is ready and waiting to take us out just like it does with so many others. The war on STG is real and the tracking mechanism they use is serious, inside and out.

**New Prisoners Isolated as Security Threat in Texas**by a Texas prisoner  
July 2012

The control units here were designed for prisoners the state couldn't control physically. Later it became a place for those it couldn't control mentally as well. Example: I was placed in Administrative Segregation immediately upon my arrival in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) because of tattoos. These were used to confirm me as a member of a Security Threat Group (STG). I don't deny I am a member of [an organization]. However TDCJ made it a rule violation to be a member of any STG. All members are placed in isolation, no matter if they participated in clashes or not. I was never given a chance in population nor is any other confirmed member of any STG. We are all judged on the actions of others who are/were incarcerated.

If an organization will give over a list of its ranking structure and work with the state, then the label of STG may be removed. Prisoners can return to population if they participate in GRAD (Gang Renouncement and Disassociation.) Yes, it's a program and they attempt to reprogram the individual. It's straight up brain washing.

All organizations (or gangs as they call them) were in population somewhere. Only by their own actions should they be segregated, admitted to the Special Management Unit, or ADX.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** Across the country prisoners are placed in isolation based on labels the

Trucha! Always be aware and make the right decisions. Remember, just because you are in general population doesn't mean that the future is going to be the same. This goes for all the lumpen class. Prepare yourselves for that ripple effect because the war on so-called STGs is going to get much more repressive.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** This comrade is right that the prisons throw around the "security threat" label as an excuse to lock down conscious prisoners organizing against the system. We get many letters talking about this happening in states across the U.S. In addition, the "security threat" label is used to keep *Under Lock & Key* out of many prisons. This censorship is so common that every issue of *ULK* finds many copies returned to us, in some cases banned from entire facilities.

This prisoner gives good advice to be very careful about what information we reveal. We don't need more good comrades locked up in segregation just for their lumpen organization affiliation. Don't make it easy for the pigs. Don't give them any information. ★

**More News about Missouri Please**by a Missouri prisoner  
June 2012

I have some concerns about articles that are from California prisons. Aren't these same things going on in Missouri prisons as well? There are Trayvons happening everyday in Missouri, but no one talks about it. In Missouri prisons you can't even come together for a strike or anything else because if you do you will be put in SHU.

All I am asking my brothers and sisters of MIM(Prisons) is to please take a look at these Missouri prisons.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We appreciate this comrade's desire to see more in *Under Lock & Key* about what's going on in prisons in h state. But this is really a call to h, and others who feel their state is underrepresented in *ULK*, to send us articles. We rely on our readers for news. Become a correspondent and send regular articles about what's going on in your prison and you will see more news about your state in *ULK*. See page 12 to get started. ★

prison imposes on them. Often this has to do with who the prison administration thinks they associate with, and nothing to do with the prisoners' behavior as described above. Either way, these isolation cells are torture, causing many to become both physically and mentally sick. MIM(Prisons) is keeping one of the most comprehensive counts of control units as a part of our campaign to abolish control units (see page 12). To help collect statistics for your state write to us for the control unit survey. ★

# - 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.

## **DAY OF SOLIDARITY AND PEACE - SEPTEMBER 9**

We call on all USW leaders to promote the principles of the United Front (page 2) and the call by SAMAEI (page 3) during the month of August to build solidarity for September 9. If you can let us know your plans for September 9 beforehand, we will use them to publicize on the outside through flyers, websites and radio. Reports on September 9 actions received before September 15 will appear in the next issue of *ULK*.

## **FUNDING NEEDED TO FULFILL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Recently a prisoner rights newsletter reported receiving \$421 in donations from prisoners in 6 months, with only 150 readers. *ULK* has many more readers, but receives much less in donations. If you like this newsletter, we need you to help! Even if you don't have much, send us a few stamps 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! **IMPORTANT:** We can no longer accept checks or money orders. If you can't send stamps, let us know and we can work it out.

## **CONDUCT RESEARCH SURVEY**

As part of our developing research on the lumpen class in the United States, MIM(Prisons) and USW are working to administer a survey to study socio-economic data on U.S. prisoners. If you are interested in 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. We have only gotten a few responses from those who have volunteered so far, but for any conclusions from the data to be useful, we need a lot of it to analyze. Write in to volunteer!

## **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 or plugs 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 at [www.abolishcontrolunits.org](http://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**

Comrades in Montana (NEW!), Oregon (NEW!), Nevada (NEW!), 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. Also, petitions for all states have recently been reformatted, so if you have an original you make copies from, write in to get an updated version.

**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.

Try to make your own copies of the petitions. If you can't, then tell us why and we can send you extras.

**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. If you already have an ongoing study group, send in periodic reports about what you've been studying and struggling over. To start, you can discuss 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 should 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.

**California** - We are in an ongoing battle with prisons in California that have banned MIM Distributors, citing a defunct memo from 2006. We've compiled a Censorship Guide supplement to help those affected tackle this problem. 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.



## Appeals to Sacramento Politicians Lead to Improvements at KVSP

by a California prisoner  
June 2012

I'm reporting from Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP). I've been engaged in the last 16 months educating our comrades to the increasingly aggressive tactics California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has taken in the course of systematically depriving us of every human and civil right a prisoner is supposed to retain. I've also been attempting to strengthen communication and, aside from a select few, have been met with complacency and apathy.

We few have organized effective communication with one another and have used creative strategies to combat certain conditions we've been experiencing. At first, utilizing the 602 grievance process was only met with rejections, so we took our well written 602s (grievances) that used the Department Operations Manual (DOM), California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 15, California penal code, and U.S. law and bypassed the lower level institutional coordinators and submitted copies to:

- Governor Brown, State Capitol, Ste. 1173 Sacramento, CA 95814
- CDCR Secretary Matthew Cate, 1515 S. St., Ste. 330, Sacramento, CA 95811
- CA Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, Capitol Bldg, Rm 4005, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Inmate Appeals Branch, Chief CDCR, PO Box 942883, Sacramento, CA 94283-0001

And other relevant heads of department and politicians. The outcome has led to a spotlight shining down on KVSP administrative staff with official reprimands and supplemental memorandums and addendum. Warden M.D. Biter has been reprimanded to the effect of: stop superseding the DOM, CCR and other applicable state and federal law and to honor the CDCR 22 written request process that was formulated

after the 2011 hunger strikes, and 602 grievance process. I've only been told this and cannot provide documentation, but it comes from reliable sources within administrative staff who are against the institution head's policies.

Ever since these reprimands have supposedly taken place, there has been a notable change in everything. Our 602s are being accepted for review, 22 forms are being answered within time limits, program has resumed on modified procedure, and our food is adequately proportioned. We've had no cases of staff misconduct, threats of any kind, or adverse retaliatory actions from administration, from January through today's date of 5 June 2012.

I've created a private law library of essential regulatory content and political value which has been utilized and facilitated by interested prisoners and we are accumulating knowledge.

These are still initial stages and our struggle needs lots of work, but even minor accomplishments are boosting morale. I encourage everyone to take the steps we've taken and stay strong and diligent. Keep records, daily logs, and file immediate complaints of misconduct.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** This prisoner is setting a good example of how to push forward the legal struggle for basic rights. And this article provides some good advice for California prisoners working on the grievance campaign demanding that grievances be addressed. Improving conditions within which prisoners live and organize is an important step in the struggle against the criminal injustice system. We know these reforms will only bring short term relief, as the system itself serves the interests of the ruling imperialists and so substantive change will not come until we overthrow imperialism. But these battles are important for both education and the successes they bring. ★

## Prisoners Take Over Adams Correctional Center in Protest of Conditions

by MIM(Prisons)  
June 2012

On May 20 prisoners at the privately run Adams County Correctional Center in Natchez, Mississippi, rose up in protest of the violence, abuse and neglect at this prison for non-citizens incarcerated for re-entering the United States after deportation and for other charges. Prisoners took control of the facility for over eight hours before SWAT teams took back the prison using pepper spray grenades and tear gas bombs among other weapons.

The prison administration is claiming the violence was a result of prisoner-on-prisoner conflicts but one prisoner involved in the struggle called a Jackson TV station and clearly articulated that the riot was due to mistreatment of prisoners: "They always beat us and hit us. We just pay them back... We're trying to get better food, medical, programs, clothes, and we're trying to get some respect from the officers and lieutenants." The prisoner confirmed his identity by sending photos from inside the prison.(1)

In recent years the U.S. has almost hit 400,000 deportations a year, the majority Latino nationals. Pre-deportation Detention Centers are the site of widespread abuse as the prison guards are accountable to no one and the prisoners are among the least valued people in Amerika by those in charge.

As we reported in a 2009 article "National Oppression as Migrant Detention," migrants are the fastest growing prison population and they face significant abuse behind bars: "The American Civil Liberties Union says that the conditions in which these civil detainees are held are often as bad as or worse than those faced by people imprisoned with criminal convictions. These detention centers are described as 'woefully unregulated.' The 'requirements' that they do have about how to treat people have no legal obligation, reducing them essentially to suggestions." So it should be no surprise that these prisoners in Mississippi are fighting back.

The economic motivations of the private company that runs Adams County CC, Correc-

## Retaliatory Transfer Results in Organization at New Prison

by a Nevada prisoner  
June 2012

Recently I was transferred to High Desert State Prison in obvious retaliation for my legal and political activities. The state fostered the misguided notion that by transferring me they would undermine or silence the struggle at one prison and silence me upon arrival at the other. This has proven an incorrect analysis.

Upon arriving in what is openly hostile territory it became apparent that the possibility of unifying the population existed due to the commonality of complaints. The result is that not only has the population become unified ideologically (i.e. the need for action) but they have actually mobilized toward that end. Some of the common issues include:

- Absence of regular medical attention
- Denial/refusal of medication and mental health care for mentally ill prisoners
- Physical and sexual abusive behavior by the pigs
- Starvation-size portions of food
- Inadequate law library access
- Denial of access to religious accommodations
- Forced housing creating hostile, dangerous, and potentially lethal results

Thus far we have made progress on the medical issues and, to a lesser extent, the food. The pigs are suddenly not so aggressive as well. But we're fed children's portions -- maybe. Some have, with just a little effort, taken up the struggle with the knowledge that it is a protracted struggle, but by working together and refusing to accept degradation we can cause change and we can make our lot more humane and ultimately more just.

I still have my parole problems, but if they insist on keeping me caged, then I shall make myself a cost-ineffective exhibit and I will make this zoo as oppression-resistant as I can. ★

tional Corporation of America, is directly counter to the human rights of prisoners. Again from the 2009 MIM(Prisons) article: "The Correctional Corporation of America, a private prison management company who controls half of the detention facilities run by private companies, spent \$3 million lobbying politicians in 2004. They want stricter immigration laws so they can have access to more prisoners, which will bring them more money. In turn, ICE is able to pay 26% less per day to house prisoners in a private versus state-run facility. This is possible because of the lack of public as well as governmental oversight at private facilities, where they reduce costs by getting rid of everything that would help prisoners, including necessary-to-life medical care. One reason state governments shied away from private prisons for their own citizens was the scandals that they quickly became associated with. In the year 1998-99, Wackenhut's private prisons in New Mexico had a death rate

*Continued on next page..*

## Revolution is a Legacy

by a Texas prisoner

The thoughts & rage for liberation that belonged  
to my forefathers  
Run through my veins & pump through my heart  
which gets me farther  
I knew within my heart even though I live here this  
place is not my home  
This culture isn't my culture, the religion is even  
false  
You misinformed us about the slave trade  
I've read it all in your history books  
You never once mentioned my people jumping  
ship & committing suicide  
rather than be made slave & took,  
Blind is the ways of most of my present people  
who think  
we belong & should get along here.  
Awaken the giant of liberation & face our oppressors  
with no fear  
Dear forefathers thank you for the legacy that  
flows through my veins  
I raise my fist for struggle & liberation  
Power to the people who died for the same ★

## Movie Review:

### Snow White and the Huntsman

by PTT of MIM(Prisons)  
June 2012

*Snow White and the Huntsman* is a more in-depth, live-action take on the Disney classic. A variety of themes are explored in this film that were glossed over or undeveloped in the animated version, but the basic plot remains the same.

The story begins with Snow White as a small girl. Her mother falls ill and dies. Shortly thereafter the widower king is drawn into battle with a "dark and mysterious" army. The army is defeated and a prisoner, a beautiful womyn, is rescued. The king marries the prisoner the very next day, and she quickly is revealed to be an evil witch. The new queen kills the king, locks Snow White in a tower, and destroys the entire kingdom. How Snow White survived her decade of solitary confinement was not addressed in the film, but would have been interesting for us to analyze and likely criticize.

The queen was under a spell that kept her the fairest in the land, so long as she sucks the youth and beauty out of young wimmin to constantly replenish her powers. This beauty enables her to manipulate people who are distracted by her good looks, and to cast spells of her own. The spell can only be broken by "fairest blood," and as Snow White comes of age in her prison tower, she becomes a threat to the queen's powers. The magic mirror on the wall instructs the queen to eat Snow White's heart so that she will become immortal.

The queen's brother goes to retrieve Snow White for a meeting with the queen. Of course Snow White escapes, and through a course of events leads a revolution to take back the kingdom from the evil queen. It is Snow White's "purity" and "innocence" (as well as a blessing

## Hunger Strike Kicks Off in Illinois

by an Illinois prisoner  
June 2012

Illinois has followed in the steps of California and Virginia. On June 3, 2012 twenty-three political prisoners went on hunger strike together in protest of various administrative issues at Pontiac Correctional Center. On the same day I.A. interrogated all of the strikers in an attempt to frame the strike as "gang activity."

Pontiac Correctional Center exists in Illinois for the sole purpose of isolating prisoners from each other and the world. The vast majority of prisoners here are in segregation. As part of the administration's oppression against us we are beaten, unfed, given inadequate law libraries, isolated, and much more. All of this is being protested by the strikers. From Palestine to California and Virginia to Illinois the revolution against tyranny and despair, extortion and exploitation, oppression and capitalism is growing stronger. In the name of revolution, solidarity, and struggle.

[We have not received, nor seen any updates on this strike before going to press. - ULK Editor] ★

from a forest creature straight out of *Princess Mononoke*) that give her magical powers to overcome the queen's spells and tricks. A classic Jesus story, complete with a resurrection.

When the evil queen first took power, the subjects initially tried to resist her rule. They were defeated each time, and eventually everyone gave up, broke into sects, turned alcoholic, and warred with each other just trying to stay alive. An oracle dwarf identified Snow White as having a "destiny." It was only the power of this destined leader that could bring everyone together and overcome the evil queen.

The take-home lessons from *Snow White* are defeatist. "Find a good leader and follow them." "People's struggle isn't winnable." "There's nothing you can do to challenge the all-powerful status quo." These are typical messages to be expected from a mainstream Amerikkkan movie.

The only theme that was remotely interesting was the queen's views on gender and beauty. She has been a victim of beauty for twenty lifetimes and has built up a lot of resentment toward men. This resentment comes up in her murder of the king, because she is distrustful of men, who will just throw her out when she ages. In a later scene, she is assessing two male prisoners who have just been captured, and one is young and handsome. Before killing him with her own fingers, she gives a monologue about how he would have been her ruin, but instead she will be his ruin. This is a good critique of the fetishization of youth and beauty and its contribution to a variety of mental health challenges people in our society must face. Had the queen not been valued by men only for her beauty, she may have been a more benevolent dictator, at

*Continued on page 16...*

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...Adams

55 times that of the national average for prisons. The migrant population's lack of voice allows these corporations to get away with their cost-cutting abusive conditions when contracted by ICE. This is another good example of how capitalism values profit over humyn life."

The distinction between legal and illegal residents of the United States is a clear example of the enforcement of imperialist wealth and poverty using borders. Those who happen to be born on the north side of the artificial border to Mexico have access to many resources and opportunities, and most of those born on the south side live in poverty with very limited opportunities. The United States can't let migrants through the border because that would open up jobs to all who want to compete, rather than keeping them for the well off labor aristocracy. Instead the imperialists set up corporations to suck the wealth out of Latin American countries, devastate their economies with loan programs and puppet governments, and benefit from the cheap labor that results.

Prisons are just one aspect of the imperialist oppression of undocumented migrants. We support the prisoners in Mississippi and across the country who are fighting back against inhumane conditions. We need more reporting directly from the prisoners involved in these protests: help us spread the word by sending your stories to *Under Lock & Key* and request MIM lit in Spanish to spread our message. ★

*Note: Natchez Democrat, May 21, 2012.*

## Georgia Hunger Strike Passes One Month Mark

by MIM(Prisons)  
July 2012

In December 2010, prisoners across the state of Georgia went on strike to protest conditions. Rather than address the prisoners' concerns of abusive conditions, the state responded with repressive force, beating prisoners to the point where at least one prisoner went into a coma. Since then, 37 prisoners have spent the last 18 months in solitary confinement, a form of torture, in response to their political activities. On 11 June 2012, some of those prisoners began a hunger strike in response to the continued attempts to repress them. More recently, prisoners in other facilities in Georgia have joined the hunger strike. On 15 July it is reported that at least nine New Afrikan men are still refusing to eat.

MIM(Prisons) stands in solidarity with these comrades that are combating the abuse faced by Georgia prisoners, being beaten and thrown in solitary confinement. State employees have told these comrades that they are going to die of hunger under their watch. Oppressed people inside and outside prison need to come together to defend themselves from these state sanctioned murders and abuse. ★

*Note: Blackagendareport.com*



# Acuérdense de Attica y lo que necesitamos hoy

por MIM(Prisons)

traducido por un@ prisoner@ en California  
September 2011

Desde el 9 al 13 de septiembre 2011, marcamos el 40 aniversario de la rebelión de Attica. Fueron 1200 presos que actuaron como una sola fuerza, se organizaron y colectivamente ocuparon la correccional de Attica en el estado de Nueva York. El motín resultó en lo que un comisionario del estado describió como "el encuentro más sangriento entre estadounidenses desde la guerra civil [...] con excepción de la masacre de los indios nativos en el siglo diecinueve".

En 1991, MIM escribió un suplemento especial para conmemorar el 20 aniversario, que documenta el evento histórico y su legado. Este mismo año presos en Nueva York, Nueva Jersey y Maryland boicotearon todos los programas del 12 de septiembre para "rendir homenaje a los mártires y guerreros que sufrieron, y quienes siguen sufriendo, bajo la represión del sistema penal de los Estados Unidos".

Las demandas de los presos de Attica en 1971 incluyeron cosas como el derecho de los presos de Nueva York a mantener una vida política sin temor de intimidaciones y represalias, el fin de censuras del correo personal y de los medios de prensa, la exigencia por más oportunidades de educación y trabajo de salario mínimo, y la liberación de presos sin condiciones de libertad. Además de estas demandas rectas, los presos emparentaron su lucha con aquella del pueblo del Tercer Mundo. La Historia condena la reforma de correccionales de MC11:

*"Los presos de Attica en el año 1971 no estaban pidiendo el tipo de reforma que liberales ahora, y entonces, están ansiosos por implementar para hacerse sentir mejor. Los presos de Attica reconocieron el sistema de justicia criminal como una arma poderosa en el arsenal de la clase capitalista y querían voltear esa arma contra sus opresores".*

*"Hemos descubierto...la frustración de intentar de negociar con un sistema político empeñado en el genocidio", escribieron los presos de Attica en una declaración que fue pasada por contrabando durante la semana después del masacre.*

## El MIM(Prisiones)

El Ministro Maoísta Internacional de Prisiones, MIM(Prisiones), es una célula de revolucionarios que sirve las masas opresadas dentro 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 una parte mayor del estado imperialista siendo usado para prevenir la auto-determinación de las naciones opresadas. 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 fraternal.

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 opresadas (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.

*"Se están cometiendo asesinatos no sólo en Vietnam, sino también en Bangladesh, África y Sudamérica. ¿Y qué no es cierto que nuestra declaración de independencia nos otorga el derecho de anular un gobierno que opresa a su pueblo y crear un gobierno nuevo? ¡Pues, nosotros aquí en Attica como todos los revolucionarios de toda la nación estamos ejerciendo ese derecho! El tiempo es ahora para que todas las personas del Tercero Mundo reconozcan el verdadero opresor y lo expongan al resto del mundo!" (1)*

En el artículo principal de las notas suplementarias de MIM, un preso menciona que Attica marcó un surgimiento fuerte en el movimiento por los derechos de los presos durante los primeros años de los años 70. En el último año hemos visto huelgas en los estados de Georgia y California donde miles de presos han participado en varias prisiones. Pero aún así parece que el movimiento todavía tiene que escalar aún más alto para poder llegar al mismo punto álgido de nuestra lucha que alcanzamos en aquellos días.

Mirando hacia atrás a Attica y las rebeliones antepasadas, podemos ver el principio y el final del periodo en el cual la contradicción entre los presos y el estado estaba a la vanguardia. La lucha durante este periodo trajo un poco de progreso para los presos en la forma de derechos temporales, concesiones y el apoyo del mundo libre para los cautivos. Pero aún más importante, miramos organizaciones colectivas juntarse en masa, uniendo a presos por su sufrimiento y abuso común por todo el alrededor del sistema de prisiones en los Estados Unidos. Esta unidad y lucha logró empujar al estado hacia atrás. Pero al mismo tiempo, también provocó que el estado desarrollara un plan para los reclusorios de aislamiento permanente y también pólizas que empojan drogas sicotrópicas a los presos mientras nuestros programas están nuevamente suspendidos, reafirmando la futilidad de la reforma de prisiones. Incluso en estos días cuando el estado se enfrenta a una resistencia significativa, se presenta en forma de demandas en los tribunales y huelgas de hambre donde se controla todo medio de comunicación y negociación muy firmemente. Todavía estamos en la etapa de jugar sus juegos con sus reglas y sus condiciones.

Hace solamente dos años, el 17 de septiembre 2009, que nuestro camarada Amare (Ra'd) Selton de "United Struggle from Within" se murió en Attica. Selton era un contribuidor regular de "Under Lock & Key" y también participaba en grupos de estudio de MIM, y con

*Continúa en la página siguiente...*

## ¿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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Tell us what mail you've gotten since the last time you wrote so we can track and fight censorship.

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Under Lock & Key No. 27, July/August 2012

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...Snow White

least to the handsome young men who cross her path.

*Snow White* doesn't get my recommendation. We don't need any more encouragement in our society to drink our sorrows about the status quo away, waiting for our own Snow White. And it's unnecessary to wait, because your Snow White is you! ★

TURN ON THE A/C  
Summertime in DOC



### Under Lock & Key not enough?

If one ULK every 2 months isn't enough political education for you, join a Maoist study cell through MIM(Prisons)! The intro study group is split into 2 levels and studies articles written by MIM(Prisons); a pamphlet on the basics of MIM(Prisons)'s political line; and Mao Zedong's "On Contradiction," which introduces us to the philosophy of dialectical materialism (how we study history).

The whole study course costs \$5 (do not send a check or MO). You can trade work for study if you can't pay. Participants must be able to receive the study materials via mail and respond to each assignment on time. Write in today to sign up for the next group.

Or start your own political study group in your prison. You don't need any fancy books or special knowledge to do this. Start by studying and discussing the content of this issue of ULK. Write to us and let us know what questions came up and we'll get you some more reading materials to help answer those questions.

**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.

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...Español

frecuencia tenía confrontaciones con los guardias de la prisión. No sabemos las exactas circunstancias de su muerte, pero MIM(Prisons) mantiene al estado de Nueva York responsable. Él es uno de muchos compañeros que han desaparecido después de ser enviado a Attica en los últimos años, demostrando el legado de represión que no ha disminuido.

En las notas de MIM, MC67 entrevistó a Akil Aljundi, uno de los hermanos de Attica que presentó una demanda, que finalmente ganó, contra el estado de Nueva York tras el asesinato de 32 de sus camaradas y 10 rehenes, y tras el embrutecimiento y negación de asistencia médica a cientos de otros.

MC67 concluye preguntándose cuales son las lecciones que se pueden extraer de la sublevación de Attica, a la que Aljundi responde: "Nunca confíen en el estado. Siempre estén preparados para lo peor. Sean firmes con sus demandas. Sean claros con sus objetivos. Pero también sepan que el estado puede ser malicioso". ★