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Response to TTT's Misrepresentation of MIM

by United Struggle from Within
February 2013

[Below we have excerpted sections from a letter by a USW comrade sent to Turning the Tide in response to an article published in their January - March 2013 issue. While the comrade does a good job responding to this gross misrepresentation of MIM line, we have added comments in brackets to clarify a few points.]

I was surprised by your latest issue of *Turning the Tide* (TTT). More specifically, Michael Novick's article entitled "PART's Perspective: On Contradiction and the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." Quite a brazen title by the way, as the point of the original essay penned by Mao was to point out the correct way for the Chinese Communist Party to help resolve contradictions among the people, and between the party and the people in light of the incidents in Hungary; as well as a critique of Stalin's shortcomings with that matter and to help forge unity with the masses.

I'll just give you a review of the entire article, in which Mr. Novick attempts to illuminate the prisyn masses with regards to the differences between TTT's political line and that of the MIM camp currently represented by MIM(Prisons), United Struggle from Within (a MIM(Prisons)-led anti-imperialist mass organization for prisyners), the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement and the Leading Light Communist Organization.

To begin with, i hold MIM(Prisons) in very high regard, not just because they hold the correct political line on everything politically meaningful under the sun, but because i owe my own political development to them.

My first point of contention with Mr. Novick's article is when he erroneously makes the statement that MIM's position concerning the labor aristocracy is that it is a permanent labor aristocracy. That is a false statement. MIM has never made the statement that the Amerikan labor aristocracy is a permanent labor aristocracy. Not only is that statement metaphysical

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Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons One-Year Anniversary of Peace Treaty in El Salvador

by MIM(Prisons)

7 March 2013 -- Today marks the 1-year anniversary of a truce between two rival lumpen organizations (LOs) in El Salvador, Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha-13. The truce has its origins inside Salvadoran prisons, where secret meetings were mediated by members of the Church, and facilitated by the Salvadoran government. The result was a shuffling around of LO members to different prisons, and a reduction of the homicide rate in El Salvador from 14 per day to 5.(1)

Background

Without getting too deep into the origins of Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha-13 (MS-13), it is significant to note that they both originated in Los Angeles, California (Barrio 18 in the 1950s-60s, MS-13 in the 1980s). Barrio 18 was originally made up of Mexican nationals but adapted its recruiting base as Latinos of other backgrounds migrated to southern California. MS-13 emerged from refugees of the civil war in El Salvador who had congregated in Los Angeles. In the 1990s, policy changes in the U.S. government led to the deportation of thousands of LO members back to their home countries, where their respective LOs were not yet established. In El Salvador, both groups took off.

The political climate in the 1990s in El Salvador was marked by an end to the civil war in 1992. Not surprisingly, the local conditions contributed to the ease of recruitment for these LOs. One of the Barrio 18 members who participated in the peace talks, Carlos Mojica, told the Christian Science Monitor "the streets were left filled with weapons, orphaned children, conditions of extreme poverty, disintegrated households."(2) These are ripe conditions for the proliferation of

street organizations. When youth have no support and adults have no jobs, they must turn to other means for survival.

Change of Heart

Some cite an incident in June 2011 as a peak in the violence of these two organizations, which was a reality check for many. Barrio 18 has been blamed by the Salvadoran government and many citizens for a bus burning which killed at least 14 people in Mejicanos, San Salvador. This bus burning received media attention worldwide, and was accompanied by a bus shooting the same evening which killed 3 people. All the targets of this violence were reported to be unaffiliated citizens and travelers.

Others cite time and persynal experience as what changed their minds about violence. In the United States, many, if not most, LO members age out into the labor aristocracy or petty-bourgeoisie. But this isn't an option in El Salvador which is not an exploiter country with a bought-off labor aristocracy. Members who would otherwise be aging out of the LO if they were U.S. citizens, instead see an imperative need to change the conditions for themselves and younger generations.(2) MS-13 member Dany Mendez told BBC News "I have lost too many friends and relatives in the violence. We don't want another war because we are thinking about our children."(3)

Of course many activists in the United States, including MIM(Prisons) and signatories of the United Front for Peace in Prisons, see a need to end lumpen-on-lumpen violence in this country. But it's clear that conditions here are much better than in El Salvador in that a significant portion of people can leave their days

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What is *Under Lock & Key*?

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

ULK serves as a forum to develop and promote agitational campaigns led by MIM(Prisons) and USW. Our current battles in the United States are legally permitted. We encourage prisoners to join these battles while explicitly discouraging them from engaging in any violence or illegal acts. MIM(Prisons) and its publications explicitly oppose the use of armed struggle at this time in the imperialist countries (including the United States).

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

What is Imperialism?

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

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

What is MIM(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 and former 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.

Demands Must be Met by July 8

by cipactli of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter
March 2013

Recently the state of California has created what they call the step down program which those of us at Pelican Bay SHU have rejected. The strikes that swept American prisons in 2011 were initially kicked off with the intention of obtaining five demands, and the State has so far failed to grant the five demands. This July it will be two years since the prison population first mobilized around the five demands and yet the State has been making excuse after excuse to go in circles and drag things out while making more promises.

We have reached way deep for what little patience may be left in us as people who have suffered years and in some cases decades under the brutal torture of the State. And yet this patience was taken as weakness as all oppressors take patience or good gestures coming from the oppressed. We have attempted to resolve this issue with the brutal state through dialogue, and through agreements, to no avail. We now understand that like all efforts for dignity and humyn rights it will take struggle!

Everywhere in the world where the people fought oppression it was done through struggle, with selfless acts of sacrifice. The law of dialectics proves that struggle, sacrifice and suffering produces justice, freedom and peace. One relies on the other in a unity of opposites and a perpetual contradiction and it is this contradiction that prisoners today find ourselves in and which created the conditions in which the 2011 strikes were brought to surface.

California, like all imperialist prisons and jails, has relied on brutal treatment in order to control its prisoners. It is living within a capitalist society that creates these prison camps, these concentration camps that capture our people, capture our youth and have us living under an occupied force, colonized not only physically but mentally as well. The fate of our nations within prisons relies on what we do today.

For the past few decades the movement for prisoner rights has been in a semi coma, many have been bought off with petit bourgeois ideology where everyone is looking out to come up and get money, too many seeking escapism in dope or alcohol, too many times do I hear prisoners talking about 'get rich or die trying,' but like dead prez said we need to 'get free or die trying.'

The question is, do we continue to be locked in oppressive conditions or do we finally stand up and demand our dignity? More and more of our youth enter these concentration camps lining up right behind us and walk in sync to the slaughter house known as SHU or hole. So many of our "privileges" have been taken by the state. Many times our loved ones out in society suffer from traveling to see us, paying outrageously for phone calls or goods and yet we sit and accept it. This has gone on far too long. Our patience has run out, we have grown

old, our health is beginning to fail us, our sanity under such cruel and decrepit conditions is at stake and there is no end in sight, no light at the end of the tunnel. So we must make a spark that creates our own light at the end of the tunnel!

We have given the prison until July 8, 2013 to meet all five demands we listed in 2011 and if they are not granted by July 8 then our hunger strike will continue on that day. We will demand to be treated as humyn beings, we will not be tortured any longer.

What we learned from 2011 was the repression that will come from such a non-violent protest and many ideas have since come to the fore. Many lessons were learned since the last strike, lessons that will make us stronger next round. But we call on all those oppressed to use July 8 as your rally cry and to use this historic day to bring attention to your suffering, to your torture and to your oppression. And so we ask all to join us on July 8 as once more we hunger strike in unity for all prisoners, not just in the United States but around the world.

United we can accomplish anything, so long as we act as one. We need to remember that our oppressors act as one when they create harsh laws and throw away the key. They act as one when their sticks are breaking our heads and when we are placed in torture conditions. It doesn't matter their background or nationality, their sticks and boots feel the same on our bodies. So let all prisoners also use this unity in a united front where every dungeon forms their own demands on July 8 to better conditions wherever you're at.

There are still a few months until this date comes, and it is better to have time to get your mind right and be prepared. California has begun to develop peace zones in all prisons and jails where no longer are prisoners at each other, oppressing each other. Instead we are promoting peace and creating peace zones in all facilities. Now, instead of warring on each other, prisoners in California are beginning to find ways to better their living conditions. They are looking to the true oppressor and developing a more revolutionary culture in all prisons, jails and youth facilities. It is only by creating a more revolutionary environment that real change can come from not only our prison conditions but also in our relations with one another behind these prison walls. Let us create these safe zones and look to those who are also held captive as struggling against the same oppressor. ★

Unite thru ULK: Continue to Study and Struggle

by a California prisoner
March 2013

Through the few years I have spent reading *Under Lock & Key (ULK)* it is apparent to me that many people behind these prison walls have come together, either to subscribe to *ULK* or express their opinions and expose conditions within their specific prisons.

Many comrades have expressed a need for sharing education, whether piecemeal or in study groups, and I have always been an advocate of such. But I always viewed other prisoners' lack of interest in holding political discussions as an obstacle for a United Front advancement. That

was my subjective view until it finally dawned on me that there might be lack of interest wherever I was housed, but it was abundant in *ULK*.

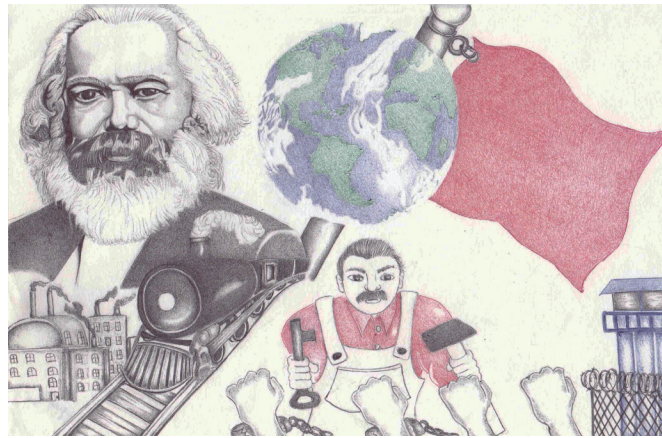
Comrades taking the time to pick up an issue of *ULK* have started educating themselves on the political thoughts of Marxism-

Leninism-Maoism. In acquainting themselves and reading it they are in a process of studying. Furthermore those comrades who take it a step further to write essays, articles on specific topics, and/or express their opinions on other comrades' articles, can open up debates or collaborations for future tasks to be accomplished. By forming a study group within the lines of *ULK* and educating ourselves from grasping what we study, we acquire knowledge.

But our new-found education must be put into practice. We must apply what we have learned to our current conditions.

"Every study of Marxism shakes up people and the contradiction between the two world outlooks comes to the fore. Marxism gives hammer blows to the non-proletarian outlook and fuels the ideological force, as in every task, three stages each with its own contradiction, present themselves. At the beginning arises the contradiction between starting the study and not starting it. Starting up already constitutes a 50% advance." - Comrade Gonzalo from Peru.

Although I strongly encourage comrades to study the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, one cannot just narrow on that road. Many other topics/subjects are encouraged as well: legal news, winning 602s (grievances), fighting mail censorship, filing a writ of *habeas corpus*, etc. Any topic that's informative and helpful to our interests is an advanced step in our struggle. ★



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and anti-dialectical but in complete contradiction to the historical process and MIM line. Yes, the so-called Amerikan "worker" is indeed part of the labor aristocracy, and not proletarian as revisionists of varying stripes would contend. The Amerikan "worker" forms a part of the labor aristocracy; a sub-stratum of the petty bourgeoisie. Whenever they addressed this issue MIM continuously made it a point to say that the imperialist country working classes were (and still are) a pro-imperialist labor aristocracy at this time. Furthermore, the concept of the labor aristocracy goes all the way back to Engels when he described to Marx how the English proletariat was becoming more and more bourgeois. Lenin, as well as other Bolsheviks, also formulated on what basis this labor aristocracy was formed, which is of course super-profits stolen from the colonies. It seems to me however that those who continue to negate the existence of a labor aristocracy, and instead dogmatically cling to the hope of an Amerikan proletariat, do so either out of sheer ignorance or, more dangerously, for the purpose of revisionism. To continue to advocate this false thesis in the imperialist countries is to, as a "logical conclusion," advocate for multi-national/class unity in the fashion of Trotsky and his successors, i.e. the erroneous line that leads one to lean on and wait for the white working class to wake up and come to the oppressed nations' rescue.

Novick is also incorrect in his statement that "MIM sees women and prisoners as elements of US society where there is prospect for revolutionary development." Well, half wrong anyway. The MIM never saw, nor does it today see, First World wimmin as elements of U.S. society in which there is any real group oppression to speak of which would provide a prospect for revolution. The MIM recognizes First World wimmin, primarily white wimmin, as gender-privileged. They are not at all part of the revolutionary vehicle precisely because being privileged economically (among other things) makes them gender privileged in relation to Third World wimmin. Or in MIM's own words: "After looking around MIM came to the conclusion that like First World labor, First World women are mainly oppressors, not oppressed people."

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.

We must also disagree with Mr. Novick's assertion that exploitation exists within the First World outside the realm of commodity production in which waged labor "produces" surplus value. Exploitation is defined as producing something and not being paid for the value of what you produce.

[MIM(Prisons) interjects: MIM line has consistently held that the white nation is not economically exploited. Later this line was expanded to assert that there is no exploitation occurring in the United States except within migrant and prisoner populations. To talk about "exploitation" of the planet, as Novick does, is to redefine the term that we use in a Marxist context. He does this in order to falsely imply that we have no concern for ecological destruction, one of many examples where Novick is misleading to dirty our name.]

Since our definitions of "exploitation" are so vastly different, it seems pointless to debate who is even exploited. However, what Novick is attacking is the line that the dominance of service workers in the First World is evidence of an exploitative relationship with the Third World. We say this because if you cut off the First World from the colonies they will not be able to produce for themselves what they need to survive, because they're mostly cops, politicians, paper shufflers, sales clerks, bartenders, etc. The opposing thesis is that Amerikan workers are so much more productive than Third World workers that the small productive sector can easily meet the needs of all Amerikans. This productivity also explains the vastly higher wages paid in this country according to this chauvinist view.]

Mr. Novick is further wrong in his contention that we, i.e. the MIM camp, "assume privilege and oppression are absolute phenomena, unchanging and mutually exclusive." Quite the contrary, as dialectical materialists we certainly know that nothing is absolute (except for the struggle of opposites) or unchanging, as motion itself is an expression of change and particular to the law of development. If such an absurdity of which Novick here speaks of were true then MIM(Prisons) wouldn't be taking the time to help develop the imprisoned lumpen of which the rest of society has long since cast off into the abyss.

We furthermore recognize that there is indeed an obvious intersection in nation and class contradictions within the United States. In a sense this is what MIM(Prisons)'s work is all about; working with the oppressed nation lumpen, in particular so that we may not only build towards liberating our people, but so that we may liberate our class. This will be our contribution to the International Communist Movement and oppressed people of the world. So, contrary to Novick's statements, we do in fact recognize and acknowledge that the interpenetration of opposites is particular to the law of development. However, there is a dialectical process, and as such a process of stages of which phenomena must go thru before change is complete; a lengthy process at that. Mutually exclusive phenomena do not just magically transcend from one stage to another. If only Mr. Novick would take the time to read MIM literature more carefully then he would know this.

The First and the Third World are currently locked in struggle. This struggle is representative of two mutually exclusive classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This is the fundamental contradiction on a world scale. Furthermore, this contradiction has manifested itself into antagonistic form, which has manifested into the principal contradiction on a world scale, which is the oppressor versus the oppressed nations. Now, objectively speaking, what side of this contradiction are we on?

First World "workers" and Third World labor are two exclusive phenomena, not just because the former feeds off the latter, but because both hold two totally different positions with respect to the global relations of production and to the worldwide means of production as well. What Mr. Novick presupposes to explain with his chauvinist use of dialectics is that the First World labor aristocracy and Third World proletariat are essentially the same no matter the imperialist powers and the populations they serve. Mr. Novick says that privilege and oppression exist throughout class society, even among the exploited and oppressed, and that there is no perfectly oppressed class or sector whose hands are clean.

[MIM(Prisons) adds: We should point out that we see the oppressed nation lumpen in the United States as a middle force in that it has interests both opposed to and in support of imperialism. Novick seems to want to define everyone in this way, as potentially supporting or opposing imperialism. But we see the vast majority of Amerikans as clearly on the side of imperialism.]

As our comrade points out, Novick throws around words like "dialectical" and "contradiction," while denying the very essence of a class analysis that is based in dialectical materialism. He asserts that it is absolutist to state that, overall, the labor aristocracy has a material interest in imperialism while the proletariat has interests opposed to it. This is consistent with the idealist view behind the strategy of groups like Anti-Racist Action who go out and confront the most overt racist elements of society. They attack racism, which is a symptom of national oppression that is at

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the core of the imperialist system. They focus on the realm of ideas, rather than making a materialist class analysis and getting at the root of the problem.

At the same time Novick is willing to identify enemy classes in the Third World, as in his discussion of South Africa. It seems he is selective in which classes get the benefit of the doubt.]

In addition to the above, Mr. Novick then uses the argument that there is currently a "class fall" being experienced by many in the United States and Europe, and that U.S. whites with less than a high school education are experiencing the loss of more than five years life expectancy is proof positive that the labor aristocracy is in all actuality going thru the re-proletarianization process. Funny, Trotsky had similar things to say during the Comintern of 1916 in his defense of Western Europe's newly rising labor aristocracy and his racist refusal that the revolutionary ebb was moving to the east. Unfortunate to say that we're not really surprised to hear such nonsense, as the TTT position on inter-communalism is the theory of Trotsky himself.

[MIM(Prisons) adds: *Novick seems to slightly exaggerate a recent study that showed a 5-year decline in life expectancy for white women without a high school diploma, but only a 3-year decline for men in that group. The average decline for all whites without a high school diploma was around 4 years.(2) Certainly a significant and unusual decline. But let's look at this population closer.*

The percentage of "non-hispanic whites" without a high school diploma in 2012 was down to 7.5% according to the U.S. Census. In 1990, unfortunately, the census does not have this category. However, the percent of "whites" without a high school diploma was 21%. This percentage decreased to 12% for "whites" by 2012. This "whites" category includes many Latinos, who skew these numbers. We don't know if the paper in question addresses this issue because it is not available to read in the public domain. But any way you cut it, the white population without a high school diploma has shrunk quite a bit since 1990. That is no doubt partially due to that group being disproportionately elderly, as the older someone is the less education whites got when they were young.

As this group shrinks, it becomes more concentrated among the elderly and the very disadvantaged. It does not surprise us that the least educated 7.5% of white Americans face conditions that lead them to have declining life spans. The United States is a very individualistic society, leading to such great disparities that even in the richest country in the modern world there are whole populations that suffer great disadvantages. And as the article reporting on this study points out, there are epidemics of drug abuse and unhealthy eating in the United States that are correlated to low educational achievement.

The question is, are these 7.5% of white Americans a potentially revolutionary population? Others have tested this hypothesis, and the evidence seems to point to no. There is much more evidence that poor whites are

the mass base for fascism. That's not to say that 7.5% or even 15% of whites couldn't support anti-imperialism. It's just not going to be that 7.5% that Novick refers to as evidence that whites are experiencing a "class fall" in the United States.]

Again, what Mr. Novick keeps willingly blinding himself to here is that there is a qualitative difference between the First World and the Third, not just in wage differentials, but living standards and government services, all of which are representative of real life material interests which chain the supposed First World "proletariat" to the imperialist fatherland. This is why a dialectical outlook, as well as a concrete class analysis, is of crucial importance to the revolutionary movement. Only by maintaining the first and conducting the second will we be able to discern real friend from real foe, something Novick and company are apparently unable to do and so have aligned with both nation and class enemies to the internal semi-colonies and Third World proletariat and peasantry.

The next paragraph in question is just so utterly ridiculous that I was initially taken slightly aback when reading it. Seriously, "MIM isolates prisons from the social contradictions they enforce"?! Please, Mr. Novick or any other associate of TTT, if you're gonna go into the "differences" between the MIM camp and yourselves, do us all a favor and inform yourselves properly on that which you seek to criticize. It's just so hard for me to believe that someone as politically educated as Mr. Novick professes to be (or should be, rather) is going about spewing straight up lies.

The Maoist Internationalist Movement and its spin-off organization have long since held that the massive Amerikkkan prisyn system largely developed as a form of social control to maintain in check the superfluous lumpen populations of the Black, Brown and First Nations following the failed national liberation struggles of the 60s and 70s. What Novick is saying is nothing but BS! MIM(Prisons) is the only organization in the United States that is actively working to politically develop the oppressed nation lumpen so that we may become the subjective motivating force for the liberation and self-determination of the oppressed internal semi-colonies that are New Afrika, Aztlán, Boriqua and the various First Nations that are corralled onto the reservations! They, and they alone, have been doing this for many years now. And where, pray tell, has the rest of the American left been in the middle of all this? As Mao taught us, there must be a constant leadership with the masses in an endless spiral of perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge and revolutionary practice, so on and so forth. Or simply put, "from the masses to the masses."

Another outright lie presented by Novick is his statement that MIM's view obscures class and colonial contradictions in the U.S. Likewise, Novick's statement that U.S. society is turning into a carceral state is itself misleading in more than one way. Ironically enough, this sweet one-liner itself obscures class and colonial contradictions by making it sound as if we're all in this

together (read, white, Black, Brown etc. "working class" unite!) Trust us, for those of us from barrios and ghettos of Amerika, the prisyn-like methods of daily life are nothing new. Furthermore, they don't represent any "new stage in the basic colonial nature of the state and society" but are instead a part of the foundational building blocks of Amerika and the white settler-state that has made its home here; they are essential to the imperialists and we resent the fact that Mr. Novick wants us to believe that the white settler is somehow now on the receiving end of this oppression.

As if all this wasn't enough, Novick once again shows us his Trotskyist colors when he criticizes "cross-class" alliances, in particular the United Front method of organization. You know, the same method that brought us such victories as the defeat of fascism in WWII and the liberation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Leave it to the Trotskyists to damn to hell all unholy alliances not deemed morally pure enough for their pie in the sky ideals. Furthermore, Novick makes it appear as if the struggle in South Africa was a People's War waged for national liberation, somehow influenced by MIM. The disaster in South Africa had nothing to do with a communist-vanguard-led United Front, but rather, everything to do with its lack thereof.

[MIM(Prisons) adds: *As we wrote in ULK 30: Ironically, MIM was on the front line of the movement in the U.S. in the 1980s supporting the revolutionary forces in South Africa that opposed the neo-colonial solution.]*

Please refrain from making such false remarks about MIM, cause they ain't gone nowhere but to the belly of the beast from where they'll help destroy Amerikan imperialism.

Long Live the Legacies of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao! Long Live MIM!

MIM(Prisons) concludes: Of the sections we left out, there were some accusations that would not be principled to make in a public forum like ULK. But we must agree with the USW comrade that Novick deliberately misrepresented MIM line in this article in order to attack our movement. MIM has never feared criticism, and that has not changed. If Novick had actually addressed something that we wrote or published, rather than these straw men and lies, then we could all learn from such an exchange. Instead Novick has muddied the water. And that does not serve the anti-imperialist movement, whatever your political line.

Continued on next page...

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!

...Continued from previous page ...TTT Response

Years ago we lamented the inability of many of our readers to distinguish our line from those of other "radical" and even reformist organizations of all sorts. This is knowledge that the masses must have at some level before we can build a strong movement. We're glad to hear that someone wrote to *Turning the Tide* to ask how they differ from MIM, but as we can see, that is not always the most fruitful approach. Comrades should be studying literature from various sources, especially sources that they think sound good to them. You should compare and contrast these sources to better understand their differences. MIM(Prisons) is very clear what our dividing line points are, but most groups aren't so clear. And they can often be deceptive. If you want our perspective on a certain organization, go ahead and ask. We do have reviews of a number of them. One thing that the original MIM published and promoted widely was a pamphlet entitled, "What's Your Line?" which identified the various political lines in the communist movement and what groups fell into what categories. To expand that project to the prison movement and the contemporary organizations that exist today would be a great step in expanding everyone's understanding of politics and where they stand. So we encourage comrades to send in their reviews and struggles like this that they have with other groups so that we can expand these resources in the future. ★

Notes:

1. *Turning the Tide*, Jan -Mar 2013, Vol 26 No.1
2. Sabrina Tavernise. *Life Span Shrink for Least-Educated Whites in the U.S.* *New York Times*, 20 September 2012.

Fighting Abuse in Texas

by a Texas prisoner

28 January 2013 - Greetings and respects to you all and my fellow comrades who are enduring the struggle. Keep your heads held high always. They can lock us up physically, but can't lock our hearts, minds and souls away.

I was not able to keep in contact because of these white oppressors. My last issue of *ULK* was denied due to what the oppressor calls advocating hunger strikes.

I am a Texas prisoner housed in a high security unit, Lewis Unit, in Administrative Segregation. Since 10 January 2013 we have been fed minimal rations of food and it continues to get worse. For example, today we were fed 2 small corn dogs and 5 prunes. It was a breaking point. Some fellow comrades and I have initiated a hunger strike due to the feeding and continual physical abuse of prisoners while handcuffed or during use of forces.

The unity in Texas prisons is almost non-existent. Most prisoners let the racist pigs treat them like animals. Only a few of us are willing to stand up. We cannot get change with five or six comrades, but we will fight to the death of us to get what we rightfully are supposed to have. On behalf of prisoners in the United States and

Utah Maximum Security Demands Basic Privileges

by a Utah prisoner
January 2013

Revolutionary greetings to all who stand in opposition to the oppression being inflicted upon the people! I'm writing to you from within the depths of the Utah state prison where it's business as usual for these oppressive devils. Here in the housing unit known as Uinta One, the vents are pumping out cold air and there's nothing much that can be done, because if we go off and buck on the cops we will only gain a 48 hour strip cell. The situation is sickening, but only one of many!

I was placed in Uinta One at the beginning of December with no explanation other than that I was "under investigation." I was already housed in maximum security gang housing under "Severe Threat Group" (STG) classification. I've been put under numerous investigations before this one and it usually involves my cell being tossed and all property being searched or seized, along with mail and phone calls being monitored. But now they choose to start the investigation by taking all my stuff and shipping me to the hole where it took over 35 days before I could even order a bar of soap or deodorant from commissary.

This has been done to many other prisoners who are housed in the so-called STG program. Most of the prisoners whose scheduled release from STG maximum security is close, or past due, do not get moved to less restrictive housing, and the ones who are at the forefront of fighting this injustice are often subject to more harassment, or in certain cases moved to "deeper" parts of the hole, aka Uinta One.

Most recently the prisoners of Uinta Two, both STG and non-STG, have been petitioning to change the privilege level system to one that treats all maximum security prisoners equally. They are demanding that we all be allowed to get 3 visits a month, unlimited phone calls while on recreation (out of cell time, which is

abroad, I greatly appreciate your dedication to the struggle.

MIM(Prisons) comments: Hunger strikes are one of the few options available to prisoners fighting abuse and harmful conditions. But this form of protest comes with the risk of physical harm to the protesters, and is often handled with force by the prison administration. While prisoners must determine what is appropriate for their conditions, we encourage everyone to put in the time to educate and organize others. Unity may be non-existent in your prison today, but that should make clear what one of your key tasks is. We must educate others while organizing for demands that will unite them around a common cause. Ultimately we want to unite the oppressed in the struggle against imperialism, but we can start by helping them to see the source of their day-to-day oppression in the criminal injustice system. ★

one hour and 15 minutes every other day) and to be allowed the same spending limit on commissary. These privileges are provided to prisoners who are in maximum security but not classified as STG. What is the difference between a maximum security prisoner who is STG and one who's not? Nothing other than how the oppressors have decided to classify us. Some members of LOs are considered STG and others are not, yet we live together in the STG unit regardless of a prisoner's STG status, as long as our LOs are believed to get along with each other.

Prisoners' first amendment rights are clearly violated by the STG policy and program here. They punish us by locking us in maximum security where we only recreate one cell at a time for an hour and 15 minutes every other day. We are often given STG classification for tattoos or suspected gang affiliation without ever even having any write ups (disciplinary convictions) in this prison.

The oppression is real and thick here at the Utah State Prison, but we are fighting back.

I hope that all of the prisoners who are showing unity can continue to enlighten each other and others to the need for a united struggle! I know we have our differences, but we all are similarly oppressed. Stand tall, stand strong.

MIM(Prisons) adds: "Threat Group" classification is used by prisons across the country to target oppressed nation prisoners, specifically those who are politically active and organizing others to stand up for their rights. The classification system is arbitrary and allows use of things like holiday cards, or legal help, as evidence of association. Further, in many states the evidence is kept secret so prisoners can't fight false classification. This status often gets prisoners locked in isolation units, where conditions like those described above eat away at physical and mental health. This is part of the systematic oppression of the criminal injustice system, serving imperialism by keeping the lumpen in check. As this prisoner wrote, unity is key to our fight against this system. ★

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.

Chris Dorner Demonstrates Contradictions Between Amerika and Oppressed Nations

by cipactli of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter
March 2013

Recently an ex-LAPD officer, Chris Dorner, was in the news for killing cops and their family members, and then eventually himself in the resulting manhunt. This is a classic case of the chickens coming home to roost. When this story broke, many of us prisoners were not surprised about this activity. The state has for generations unleashed pig brutality on the internal semi-colonies (brown, black and red peoples); it is a way of life. What is surprising is for this to be unleashed on the state by one of its own.

Dorner was fired by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 2009 in retaliation for reporting police brutality including incidents of unwarranted abuse on innocent Latino and Black people in Los Angeles. This speaking up against pig brutality was crossing the line, and threatened the pig culture that permeates the states institutions. Poor people are looked at as the enemy by the state. It's not only one's skin color, although skin and thus nation continues to be a driving force for oppression. But state terrorism does not happen in Bel Air or other wealthy or "middle class" communities. These terrorist acts are carried out in poor communities.

When the manhunt was launched for Dorner, people were told that if they had a truck they should "stay home." (1) This is sending the message that the state is seeking to attack any truck on the road, and this is not a big exaggeration. One only need ask Emma Hernandez, the 71-year-old Chicana who was shot with her daughter while they were driving a truck delivering newspapers. (2) I didn't know what was more surprising: the fact that the pigs turned a truck into swiss cheese with wimmin in it with no provocation, or the fact that the corporate news media was slow to mention it. The Spanish language outlet Univision mentioned it while other English stations took days to cover it. When they did they grudgingly mentioned "a shooting" and a day later "two wimmin were shot." The media once more failed to criticize the state terror that we experience. This shooting was treated as critically as a fender bender.

What transpired with Dorner points to a contradiction within the United States where some of the oppressed are allowed to eat from master's table and given crumbs like jobs, rank in its military, and positions in the political body that ultimately serve the oppressor nation. These crumbs come at the expense of oppressing other oppressed people. This dilemma hits people with different results. Some in the military come to this realization while in the Third World and react by either committing suicide, attacking the state like Dorner did, or simply continuing to oppress other people. The media, which is the state's mouthpiece, says how "dangerous" Dorner is, but who is he a danger to? With his training he could have easily attacked people on the street but he stated he is bringing a war on the LAPD in an online manifesto, so the only danger he would pose is to the state. Putting the

state on the defensive benefits those oppressed by Amerikkka.

The death of police officers who have been killed in the line of duty, like the U.S. military, has been on the rise in recent years. In 2009 there were 122 pigs killed in the line of duty, in 2010 there were 154, and 163 for 2011. (3) Like the enlisted military, Amerikan police are compelled to oppress Third World peoples, often people who look just like them. This has resulted in not only resistance from those being oppressed but also in mental trauma for the oppressor in what has been referred to as "post traumatic stress disorder." This trauma, regardless of what it's called, is brought on by one coming to the realization that killing innocents for Amerikan empire is a horrible thing; so horrible that it often results in violence either unleashed on the state, on oneself or one's family, or on the public.

Pig violence inflicts terror on the barrios and ghettos in the United States in its most crude forms, which then works to traumatize the people, particularly our youth. We are so immune to violence that we often consume the oppression inflicted on us and mirror this oppression on others, just as many of those abused as children go on to abuse others. It is a process that mimics behavior one was taught.

We are beginning to understand that violence affects us more than we know. More than merely teaching us violent behavior, we are now learning that violence affects us biologically as well. A study recently found that children exposed to violence are prone to disease about 7 to 10 years earlier. According to this study "that early childhood adversity imprints itself in our chromosomes." (4)

Growing up in neighborhoods where an activity like walking the dog in the evening is met with being thrown against the wall by a pig, or a child riding her/his bike after school is met with being questioned, photographed and having a field card filled out which locks you into a gang database, affects our youth in ways we are only now learning about. National oppression is not simply occupying our land or killing us on the streets. There are many more diabolical ways in which this genocide is inflicted besides bullets.

The stress that our youth are now facing by the pig terror comes in many forms. One journalist for example said he interviewed a 22-year-old from Queens, NY who has already been "stopped and frisked" 70 times. (5) Think of how this must affect our youth when living one's childhood revolves around being approached, harassed and hunted by gun-toting pigs who you know have a license to kill you at any time. But the streets are not the only place where our youth are hunted by the pigs. In "operation crew cut" the NYPD doubled officers in an attempt to combat "gangs" via social media. This can be seen as an attempt to bait our youth online to discuss illegal acts or to pry info out of youth which may implicate others, trolling the internet in search of more brown and Black

skins that they cannot get from the streets.

But wanton murder by the pigs is still alive and well; the lead raincloud continues to hang over our heads in streets across the United States. In 2011 54 people were killed by the LAPD. (6) This is the same police department that Dorner rose up on. This national oppression is supported by the highest levels of the Amerikan government. When the NYPD officer who killed Sean Bell back in 2008 was acquitted, Obama, who was a candidate for president at the time, issued a statement to the public to "respect the verdict." This is not a matter of a couple of pigs acting up here and there; it's national oppression.

The social reality of the oppressed is much different than what is perceived from those who are not oppressed in the United States. Our interaction with the pigs is violent and traumatic. It is common for homes to be raided by "mistake" and often these raids result in an occupant being murdered or injured physically, but almost always occupants are injured psychologically. The author Michelle Alexander gets at this a little when she writes: "In countless situations in which police could easily have arrested someone or conducted a search without a military-style raid, police blast into people's homes, typically in the middle of the night, throwing grenades, shouting, and pointing guns and rifles at anyone inside, often including young children." (8)

I would add to this that pig raids are much more than this for children. Anyone who has ever experienced a pig raid, especially through the eyes of a child, can understand what I mean. Personally I remember as a child when the pigs raided my home. Seeing our home stormed guns a-blazing, and having a gun pointed at me, watching my family be cuffed and beaten by these predators. It's not a matter of the pigs going in a house doing their "job." It is a much more brutal reality for most people facing national oppression.

The oppressed nations people here in the United States have come to see our social conditions as normal, but this is only because we have been oppressed since birth. We grew up with our land occupied, and we have never seen anything else but living under an imperialist society. Mao once said: "In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class." (9)

This cuts right to the bone of the matter and dispels the revisionist outlook of picking and choosing oppression to suit their agenda. What

Continued on next page..

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.

Obama's Rhetoric in State of the Union

by a comrade of United Struggle from Within
February 2013

The president, commander-in-chief of the greatest empire on earth, the U\$A, gave the yearly "state of the union" on February 12, 2013, as required by the U\$. constitution.

Funny thing is that while I sit in prison and know first hand that what he says is crap, I couldn't help laughing at the contradictions in his speech. Let's start off with this: "...kept the promises we made." Well, let's go to the obvious and talk how the U\$. broke most, actually all, of its treaties with the First Nations. They promised them a specific amount of land and agreed to leave them alone. But then the U\$. took more land thereby shrinking the "Reservations."

The pre\$ident said this is the "greatest nation on earth." Third World nations and oppressed nations within the U\$. know this is BS. This nation was founded on genocide and continues its tradition of destruction and death with wars in the Middle East. Keep an eye out for the United States's next deployment of aggression and occupation on other nations or, as they say "humanitarian missions."

Obama talked about "Peoples' government." As a settler nation, this Euro-Amerikan population has no legitimacy to rule, govern or even be on this continent. This is not a government for all people, but a select few who rule over the rest, while buying off most Amerikans to complicity (i.e. the labor aristocracy).

Obama spoke about "respect[ing] the fundamental rights of people." If the United States had an ounce of respect for rights they wouldn't have the largest percentage of its population in prison of any country in the world; 2.3 million locked away, most Latino and Black. Singling out certain nationalities for imprisonment is not respect, but oppression. If the United States respected fundamental rights of people why did it invade Iraq? No proof of weapons of mass destruction were found. Why does it sanction torture? Why is the white nation in Amerika better off than the oppressed nations, not to mention Third World nations?

Finally Obama talked about "fundamental rights of democracy [and] the right to vote." He never mentioned anything about prisoners and how they can't vote. This is a clear example of a deliberate policy of outcasting certain people.

Obama's speech offers lip service to the ideas of equality and representative government, possibly tricking the colonized into thinking there is some hope of making this democracy work for them. But Amerika remains an imperialist nation whose wealth is built on the exploitation of the Third World peoples. Those who sweat and die to supply the cushy lives of Amerikan citizens do not get a vote in this "democracy."★

Education in Texas, a Scandalous Affair

by USW88 of United Struggle from Within
March 2013

Every ill-conceived notion and manipulative scheme to sabotage the success of the lumpen under class is embodied within the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

For the past 3 months a common front page headline article in the *El Paso Times* has been associated with a cheating scandal involving El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) "trustees" and various school officials and administrators. In truth, this scandal and scam has been marinating for years, not months. There is concrete evidence which shows TEA was aware that something was not right in El Paso but for whatever reason whether it be cronyism, nepotism, or a hidden political agenda, the scandal was kept quiet.

However, when the Department of Education and the Department of Injustice, represented by the FBI, got involved, a shocking scheme was revealed. EPISD educators and administrators were trying to game the federal accountability system by "disappearing" certain students who did not perform well academically and didn't score well on certain standardized tests. In some cases, EPISD administrators not only kicked poor performing students out of school, they did not offer them an alternative. Further, it was discovered that these crooked "trustees" would sic ICE agents on the predominantly Latino children, not just kicking them out of school, but deporting them out of the country! This ensured that they would not be around to tell it!

I mentioned that there might be a hidden political agenda at work here and there is. In 2011, during the Texas state legislative session, Texas lawmakers decided to cut \$5.8 billion dollars from the public school budget. These budget cuts placed many school districts that serve minorities in dire straits; they just did not have the financial resources to teach the children or pay quality teachers. During this time Governor Rick Perry was eyeing a bid for the Republican Presidential nomination and in his best imperialist oppressor moment, he refused to accept any federal government stimulus money or allow Texas independent school districts to compete for money in a new initiative called Race to the Top. Perry outright lied to the media and said Texas educators don't need any federal money to educate children in Texas. The Federal government changed requirements and regulations for Race to the Top funds and allowed independent school districts to apply themselves for federal money instead of relying on racist, crooked-ass politicians like Governor Perry to represent them. As a result of the rule change, Texas led all states in the United States in applications for federal money geared toward education. Looks like old redneck Rick is out of touch with what his constituents really want and need. Or is he?

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...Dorner

Mao is saying is everything is stamped with a class brand. Some will say art does not or should not be political but art will, like all other phenomena, have a class character to it and thus will serve one class or the other. This concept also applies to national oppression: if a nation is oppressed in any given society, all ideas -- and thus actions -- are stamped with the brand of national oppression. Pig terror is a form of national oppression we face in the United States and actions taken by Dorner are a result of the contradictions that occur when those from the oppressed nations grapple internally with what the state is having them do to other oppressed people.

On February 13, Dorner's last stand took place, where he was surrounded in a mountain cabin in Big Bear, California. He shot it out, taking down another pig before he was finally killed. This was an unprecedented event of an ex-cop declaring war on the state. But matter is in constant motion and contradictions arise constantly. The fact that people are products of matter tells us that there will continue to be contradictory struggles like this in the future. Historical materialism tells us that the oppressed will continue to resist in many ways. Even those who are lured or bought off by imperialism will many times break with the oppressor and instead serve the ruling class a taste of its own medicine. ★

Notes:

1. NPR "Democracy Now" 2-11-13
2. *Noticias, Univision*, 2-10-13
3. *National law enforcement officers memorial fund* (2012)
4. Liz Szabo "Violence 'ages' children's DNA", *USA Today*, 4-24-12
5. *PBS "Moyers & Company"* 10-20-12.
6. *Liberation news*, 7-9-12.
7. *San Francisco Bay View*, Volume 37, Number 11, Nov 2012, "Look who's punishing violent cops now!" by William Trew West.
8. Michelle Alexander "The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness" pg 75.
9. Mao Zedong, "On practice" (July 1937), *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pg 296

While Governor Rick Perry is fully aware of the lumpen's need for a quality education, it is not his intent to provide quality education for the lumpen under class. Better education would derail Texas's pathway-to-prison strategy. Do you really believe that Black and Latino men and wimmin have the market cornered on criminal behavior? Comrades, so many times it is our social and economic conditions that lead us to the penitentiary. MIM theorists have been telling us this for years!

In 1793 political scholar William Godwin criticized the whole idea of a national education system. He states in his inquiry concerning political justice that: "the project of a national education ought uniformly to be discouraged on account of its obvious alliance with national government. Government will not fail to employ it (education) to strengthen its hand and perpetuate its institutions...Their view as instigator of a system of education will not fail to be analogous to their views in their political capacity..."

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Confusion About Snitching Means Pig Gets Away with Murder

by a California prisoner

February 2013

The pigs have been up to the same old stuff around here. Three days ago they shot and killed one of the brown brothers with the mini 14 assault rifle, the same rifle type the media and congress has been trying to ban. Two guys were attacking another guy and they were on him and wouldn't stop. So the pig stopped it with the assault rifle. The official report is that the victim had a stabbing instrument in his hand. But the men who were closest to the incident said they saw no weapon.

Of course they did the routine investigation and sent out some COs to ask if anybody saw anything. And of course no one wanted to talk. The pigs have brainwashed so many of us that we believe if we report on the pigs' wrongdoing then that makes you a snitch. A lot of guys are afraid to write a grievance for fear of being labeled. The bad thing is the pigs have their compradors in place to push this point.

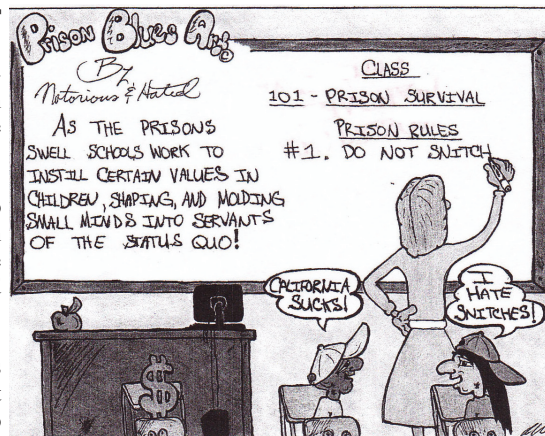
Some guys here on a facility organized a food strike to protest the fact the kitchen has a mice/rodent problem. It was only one building. There was no communication that it was going to take place. They did it and got some people's attention. Inspectors came out and looked at the kitchen and gave the kitchen workers a pep talk

and told them they needed to tell the population that the problem was being taken care of. All they did was put some mouse traps down and nothing else.

Hopefully the population continues to stand up for themselves. If this is a sign of change I hope it continues because the pigs got nervous when those guys refused to eat.

MIM(Prisons) adds: The righteousness of opposing "snitching" is in the idea that you don't go running to the oppressor to deal with problems among the oppressed people. In other words, don't snitch to the oppressor on the oppressed. There is no such thing as snitching *on* the oppressor. To report abuse of the pigs, you are not bringing the oppressor into a conflict among the oppressed; the oppressor already *is* the source of the conflict. And if the oppressed don't have the means to resolve that conflict, then it may be tactically correct to turn to other oppressors to resolve that conflict.

It is true that the prison administration gets nervous when prisoners organize. The more we can unite around common goals, the more power we will have. If the oppressed stay quiet and disunited, there is no counterbalance to the abuse that prisoners face. ★



Protest Breaks Out in NC

by a North Carolina prisoner

February 2013

On December 3, 2012 a small peaceful demonstration started. Here on supermax, prisoners refused to go inside their cells because they were tired of being oppressed. The pigs oppress us by not giving what's needed, and intimidating prisoners. It started when a prisoner put his hands out to be cuffed. As soon as his hands came out of the small port door these cowardly pigs pulled his arm out of the trap and tried to break his arm. Luckily he had the strength to pull his arm away from the 4 pigs. After all was done the prisoners went back in their cells.

This is why the pigs think they can run us over with their oppressive ways and tactics. We as a group need to stand up and put these pigs in their place. These pigs know they got fellow pigs that have their backs, snitch ass prisoners I call rats, also the prisoners who are all about material things that these wanna-be hustler pigs can provide. These same prisoners are being oppressed with Security Threat Group (Gang Task Force) loss of jobs and privileges. But they don't want to unite. They'd rather use the pigs to get at a fellow prisoner. Slowly these prisoners are becoming part of the oppressor. All that I can say about these prisoners is "it's time to quit trying to be super gangsta and be a man. If you wanna ride, ride on these oppressive pigs. These pigs are the ones disrespecting you as a man with your neck under his boot."

MIM(Prisons) responds: Outbreaks of spontaneous protest like this one are a start to raising prisoners' consciousness about the need for unity against the criminal injustice system. This unity won't come overnight; we need to build it through education and discussion. Those who have been taught that they can benefit by snitching or turning their backs or hustling can be won over to the revolutionary cause, but we must put in the time to educate them. Sharing *Under Lock & Key*, starting study groups, talking to people, are all essential day-to-day organizing activities if we are going to build unity. Often we hear complaints about lack of unity, or lack of revolutionary consciousness. And we know this is a big problem in the prisons, but this is why our principal task right now is education. Incidents like this show us that the material interest is there, and we must build on that. ★

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...Education

We have taken a quantum leap here. We are not just talking about the flawed system of mis-education in El Paso or Texas as a whole. I am telling you that there is a serious flaw in the national education system in the United States and this should be enough to convince a comrade to study Maoism seriously.

But I'm not done with redneck Rick yet. I want to reveal a couple more facts about what he has got cooking in Texas. Comrades, with a prison system that is overflowing with Blacks and Latinos, what particular slot is redneck Rick trying to get the poor lumpen underclass to fill? Moreover, what particular slot is this pig's poor education system trying to get them to accept?

Recently, 600 independent school districts in Texas took the State government to court stating they were not being given adequate funding to educate children, and that this neglect by the State amounted to a serious violation of the U.S. Constitution. The court ruled in favor of the school districts! Furthermore, it was found that Texas's inability to provide adequate funding for schools was unconstitutional.

Governor Rick Perry has recently been making trips to California attempting to lure businesses to Texas citing Texas's low tax rates and easy-going regulations for large corporations. Nevertheless, Perry ignores the cries of the lumpen for adequate funding for education. His actions speak volumes: "My allegiance is to the imperialist corporations, I could care less about educating the lumpen under class, they might

wake up to my real agenda!" I suspect these are the thoughts of Governor Perry.

Today, February 22, 2013, activists from Houston, TX prepare to travel to Austin, Texas, the state capitol, in order to lobby and protest in reference to the \$5.8 billion that was cut from education in 2011. The battle cry for the lumpen in Texas seems to be "If you don't fight for what you want you deserve what you get!" As the great James Brown would say "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud!" ★

Notes:

1. EPISD School Board Scandal, December through January 2013 - *The El Paso Times*, 2012.
2. Excerpt from Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, 1793.
3. Connect the Dots Radio Program Hosted by Minister Robert Muhammad KPFT, 90.1 FM, February 20, 2013. Interview with BaBa Fanah.
4. KPFT, NPR local news, Houston TX, February 5, 2013.

MIM(Prisons) responds: As we reported in an article in *ULK 30* on national oppression in education, on average, Black and Latino high school seniors perform math and read at the same level as 13-year-old white students. Money available for school districts with a majority of the students from oppressed nations is far less than what is available for white school districts, and segregation is on the rise again in American schools. So we are not surprised to see this story about Texas denying money and education to oppressed nation children. The court decisions in these cases have gone back and forth, and we can't count on them to rectify the problem.

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Self-Defense and Secure Communications

by MIM(Prisons)
February 2013

The digital age is slowly reaching behind prison walls. So much so that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation recently began implementing cell phone blocking technology around its prisons. MIM(Prisons) regularly receives emails from comrades behind bars via state-run email systems for prisoners. While we have long promoted careful study and practice around the use of computers for revolutionary work, we have generally felt this material had little immediate relevance for our comrades behind bars. This is changing.

While pointing to resources for further study and giving pointers on what the risks of using computers and cell phones are, we have historically veered away from recommending certain technology. This was partly due to a desire to prevent the state from building a profile of the technologies that we rely on, and partly because there are organizations more focused on these questions that will have more up-to-date and in-depth information to offer. While the latter is still true, there are a few technologies that are so standard that we see little risk in mentioning them by name.

Another thing we want to touch on here is imposing higher standards for our electronic communications from other revolutionary organizations. Recent communications we've received have reinforced to us the need for diligence in having secure communication networks. So let us begin with some basic principles.

Assuming that we have a practical interest in

developing communications with another revolutionary organization, there are three political questions that we must ask about the organization: 1) what is their political line? 2) what practice can we see to prove they are consistent in implementing that political line? 3) can we confirm that we are talking to someone that represents the organization? Once we decide to communicate with an organization we must then be concerned with who knows that we are communicating and who knows what we are saying to each other.

On our website we have our public email address, a form to submit anonymous messages, and our public GPG key to encrypt messages to us. Our website has been online for over 5 years and has material dating back that far demonstrating our work and our political line. We believe this is a good model that would allow another group to confirm who we are and communicate with us securely and anonymously via the internet.

The downside to the public email address is that it is easily targeted for monitoring, allowing the state to know who is contacting us. This is why we have the anonymous form and why we tell people to email us from addresses that are not linked to them personally. For prisoners, one may think that one's mail is monitored anyway, so emailing is no greater risk than sending a letter. However, there is an increased risk in that digital communications provide for permanent documentation of who you communicate with and what you say, allowing for easy data mining of that information later. This is possible with snail mail, but it requires more effort by the state and is not done consistently; at least for most people. Emailing is convenient, and is a fine way for prisoners to contact us, but be aware of the increased ease of surveillance. If you are using non-state-sponsored technology, then you should consider using the tools we mention below if you have access to them.

For other revolutionary organizations, if our only communication is via anonymous email then we need a way to confirm who you are. Having an established website with your public email address and public GPG key on it and then using that GPG key to encrypt all email is a way to do this. GNU Privacy Guard (GPG) encryption should be used for all communications. Not only does it prevent a snooper from reading intercepted messages, it allows the receiver to confirm the identity of the sender if they have a trusted GPG key from that party. Email addresses are easy to spoof, while it is practically impossible to spoof GPG signatures.

One of the documents we link to on this subject is titled Surveillance Self-Defense. We think this is an appropriate title, and we need comrades to think beyond fists and guns when they think about "security" and "self-defense." Even if you don't use computers or cell phones at all, then you must have a basic understanding of the risks to come to that decision (unless you are in prison and have no choice in the matter). While martial arts are great in many ways, we do not

see hand-to-hand combat as a decisive aspect of the struggle at this time. And since we have assessed our strategic stage to be one where armed struggle would be a fatal mistake, we do not require or promote weapons training. We do require regular study, review and practice of anti-surveillance technology of our members. And we hold those we relate to to similar standards. The worse your security practice, the more risk you are to us, and the less we will interact with you. Simple as that.

While being effective in self-defense requires further study than this document, we want to give some simplified recommendations here to get people started:

1. When you carry a cellphone it is easy for the state to know where you are and to electronically record sound and even video of your surroundings, even if your phone is off
2. Encrypt your data, if possible encrypt your whole drive including your operating system; there are different tools to do this effectively, but TrueCrypt is a popular cross-platform tool
3. When connecting to a website or your email

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Movie Review: Zero Dark Thirty

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
March 2013

Zero Dark Thirty, 2012

This movie claims to chronicle the decade-long hunt for Osama bin Laden after the September 2001 attack, culminating in his death in May 2011. This is a hollywood film, so we can't expect an accurate documentary. But that doesn't really matter since the movie will represent what Americans think of when they picture the CIA's work in the Middle East. And what they get is a propaganda film glorifying American torture of prisoners, and depicting Pakistani people as violent and generally pretty stupid. From start to finish there is nothing of value in this movie, and a lot of harmful and misleading propaganda. The main message that revolutionaries should take from it revolves around government information gathering. From tracking phones to networks of people watching and following individuals, the government has extensive and sophisticated techniques at their disposal, and even the most cautious will have a very hard time avoiding even a small amount of government surveillance.

The plot focuses almost exclusively on a CIA agent, "Maya," who devoted her career to finding clues to Osama bin Laden's whereabouts. Early in the film there are a lot of graphic scenes of prisoners being tortured to get information, including waterboarding, beatings, cages, and food and sleep deprivation. Maya is bothered by the torture initially, but quickly adapts and joins in the interrogations. The movie is very pro-torture, showing critical information coming from every single tortured prisoner, ignoring the fact that so many prisoners held in American detention facilities after 9/11 were never charged, committed no crimes, and had no information.

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Iding the U.S. Lumpen Starts with Understanding FW Petty Bourgeoisie

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
March 2013

MIM(Prisons) is working on a book about the lumpen in the internal semi-colonies of the United States. The first chapter, which we are circulating in draft form for peer review, focuses on identifying the lumpen and calculating the size of this group within U.S. borders. Part of this identification first requires that we understand the definition of the lumpen as distinct from other classes.

The proletariat is the class exploited by the bourgeoisie, receiving less than the value of their labor, and basically with nothing to lose but their chains. Marxists include in the proletariat many unemployed people who constitute a reserve army of workers, available to replace proletarian workers if they become too slow, get sick, organize strikes, or otherwise displease the bourgeoisie. These unemployed help to keep wages low, and while temporarily unemployed, are still a part of the working class in the long term. The lumpenproletariat is the class of people that is permanently unemployed.

In a recent article, Nikolai Brown got into the calculation of how we define the proletariat in the United States. Brown calculated the total value of labor by dividing the number of working hours by the total value produced:

"In 2011, the global GDP was \$69,110,000,000,000. The total population was estimated mid-year to be 7,021,836,029. Let us assume that half of people regularly work. In this case, each worker produces about \$20,000 per year. This would be the value of labor. Furthermore, if we assume each worker works 40 hours a week for 50 weeks a year, the value of labor is \$10 an hour."(1)

Expanding the Debate over the Political Prisoner Label

by a comrade of SAMAEL
December 2012

I'm responding to *ULK* 29, "Less Complaints, More Agitation and Perspective." While most of the position is on point, I believe that important considerations were left out by both this comrade and MIM(Prisons)'s response.

I agree with the broad definition of political prisoners as announced in *MIM Theory 11: Amerikan prisons on Trial* (article "Political Prisoners Revisited") precisely because courts are maintained as a tool of political oppression and inseparable from political oppression. Thus the political component is inseparable from those who become further oppressed by imprisonment. The hierarchy of society, cops, courts and state is one of a functioning cadre in this country.

I also understand the distinctions this comrade makes between inmates, convicts and the rest -- an inmate is the prison version of the "sleeping masses," but whether or not these people recognize their oppression does not deter-

This is very relevant at a time when President Obama is promoting a raise in the federal minimum wage to \$9/hour. Brown went on to emphasize the position of the majority of workers in the world: "As it stands, estimates of the global median income float between \$1,250 and \$1,700/year, \$8,750- \$8,300/year less than the estimated value of labor."

In a response to this article from Servethe People, we find an important addition to these calculations:

"Bear in mind that not all of production can be distributed as personal income: much of it goes to the means of production, infrastructure, public works, waste, and other ends. If even half of production (probably a considerable overestimate) is available for distribution as personal income, then the value of labor, by the above calculation, is only \$5 per hour. Even the minimum 'wage' in the imperialist countries is greater than that, so every last First World 'worker' is a parasite."

The point about distributing value produced is true whether we are talking about capitalism or socialism. The difference is not that the worker gets all the value they produce in their pocket, but that all the value they produce goes to serve the collective interests and not private profit.

MIM(Prisons) agrees with this calculation, and it informs our determination of who falls into the First World lumpen. We can see from this calculation that there is virtually no proletariat in the United States. Our goal is to separate out the very small proletariat and the large group of petty bourgeoisie people from the lumpen class.★

Note: "Calculating the Value of Labor Power," February 19, 2013

mine whether they are oppressed. And we can't forget that distinctions such as inmate, convict, POW, PPOW, PP, PS, GP are meaningless outside of the prison context, rendering these issues inapplicable to society.

In terms of the bigger fight for prison revolutionaries, these labels are also somewhat moot outside of a strategic context as well; everyone will get the benefits brought about by revolutionary action or they will simply be "washed away when the dam breaks."

What was missed is part of a larger problem (largely analytical). Whether one is or is not a political prisoner speaks directly to the conditions which led to one becoming a member of their class (under the broad definition), but not the class perception and what it means, nor what to do as a member of that class. The political conditions of our confinement being a given, our focus, especially insofar as making revolution is concerned, should not be on whether or not one is a political prisoner, but rather if one, as a prisoner, is political (i.e. moved to political

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...Security

you can be identified by your IP address; the best way to hide this is through The Onion Router via the Tor Browser Bundle, the TAILS operating system or Orbot for Android cell phones

4. As discussed above use GPG to encrypt messages and confirm who messages are from

Of course, prisoners using state-owned computers will not have the option to use any of these technologies, so it is mostly just a question of using email or snail mail. But if you are looking forward to a release date and hope to keep in touch with MIM(Prisons) then it would be worth learning more about these technologies and tactics to protect yourself.

How we approach self-defense is very much informed by our political line. Our line leads us to focus more on the First Amendment than the Second. But ultimately there are no rights, only power struggles. Currently, we do not have the ability to defend the movement militarily, but we do have the ability to defend it with a well-informed electronic self-defense strategy. And just as computer technology, and the internet in particular, was a victory for free speech, it has played a role in leveling the battlefield to the point that the imperialists recognize computer warfare as a material vulnerability to their hegemony. The Obama administration has gone so far as to call journalist Julian Assange a "terrorist" after WikiLeaks published documents that the United States did not want the world to see. (1) As the means of production advance, we must learn to utilize the emerging technologies for both offense and defense in the interests of the international proletariat. ★

Note: CNN, 20 February 2013, White House warns of dangers posed by WikiLeaks, LulzSec, other 'hacktivists'

Debating Trans Rights

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
December 2012

The sentiment expressed in the Men Against Sexism review in *ULK* 29 that we should not be fighting for sex reassignment surgery or hormone replacement therapy, is exactly the type of infighting that cuts comrades off from each other. How can a man be against sexism, yet support the oppressor's sexist stance on hormones? This is exactly why resistance is so watered down in Amerikkka. All the so-called resisters make a hobby of petty posturing and holier-than-thou attitudes which is nothing more than sugar-coated (and thinly at that) bourgeois ego games. The sad part is the gay crowd was at one point the outsider like us trans people are now but they are playing pass the shit-stick. How pathetic.

MIM(Prisons) responds: In the article this prisoner criticizes, we wrote that we do not fight for sex reassignment surgery in the same way we don't fight for gay marriage, because both amount to further privileges for people already benefiting from imperialism. We could equate

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- 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.

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 and it's better to get in contact when our address is available than to lose your one contact who got it. 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.

FUNDING NEEDED TO FULFILL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Each copy of ULK costs about \$1 to print and mail. Even if you don't have much, send us a few stamps whenever you can. Get your people on the outside to send stamps as well. If you can donate regularly, sign up to be a ULK Sustainer. We'll send you reminders when your pledge is due, and give you first priority for literature requests. Just tell us how much you can donate per issue of ULK. You can pay at each issue, or all up front.

IMPORTANT: We can no longer accept checks or money orders made out to "MIM Distributors." Becoming a ULK Sustainer is the best option for those who can only donate by check or money order. When it is time to send in your pledge by check, we will send you instructions on how to do that.

END SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

The California Council and MIM(Prisons) have draft our recommended demands for prisoners to adopt related to the July 8 California statewide action to protest solitary confinement and promote peace (see opposite page). Prisoners in other states are encouraged to draft demands for their prison's administrators and wardens, and participate in the action where they're at.

DAY OF PEACE AND SOLIDARITY

In remembrance of the Attica uprising of 1971, start organizing now with people in your facility for the 2nd annual day of peace and solidarity on September 9, 2013. From midnight to midnight, prisoners are encouraged to fast and spend the entire day networking and organizing for long-term peace between prisoners, based on the principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons (see page 2).

UPDATE CONTROL UNITS STATISTICS

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. Much of this data came directly from prisoners themselves. Help keep it updated by writing to MIM(Prisons) at the address on page 1 to get a survey for your state.

NEVADA PETITION FOR ADEQUATE FOOD

SAMAEL launched this campaign to address the inadequate, contaminated and sometimes non-existent food being served to prisoners in Nevada. Write in to get a copy of this petition (for NV comrades only).

WE DEMAND OUR GRIEVANCES ARE ADDRESSED

If you are experiencing any problems with your grievance process, such as delays or unanswered grievances, you should join this campaign. Petitions are available for Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Oklahoma, and Texas. Write in to get the petition for your state. If your prison's policies allow, donate stamps or envelopes to your comrades inside to mail out the petition. If you can't make your own

copies, then tell us why and we can send you extras. Remember, you need to send them out to the administrators and politicians listed yourself. MIM(Prisons) doesn't have the resources to mail out your petitions for you.

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. To start, you can just discuss this issue of *Under Lock & Key*. Choose what to study next based on what concepts stump 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 the mail to your comrades if needed.

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. If you already have an ongoing study group, send in periodic reports about what you've been studying and struggling over.

FIGHT CENSORSHIP

Everyone should send MIM(Prisons) copies of your censorship documents for denied issues of *Under Lock & Key* and other mail from MIM Distributors. Also, always file grievances and appeals for your censored mail.

BECOME A ULK FIELD CORRESPONDENT

If you've written us a letter, then you have all the skills you need to become a *ULK* Field Correspondent. When reporting on conditions, details are good, but keep it short. Not only does someone have to type your article, 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 people have organized 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.

SURVEY ON VALIDATION & CENSORSHIP IN CALIFORNIA

This survey questionnaire is for the purpose of making a qualitative assessment of the CDCR's mail policies and practices in relation to prisoners and our families' First Amendment constitutional right to send and receive mail and our 14th Amendment constitutional right to be provided with adequate notice of the reasons for our mail being stopped or disallowed. The data gathered from this survey will be utilized as material evidence in an ongoing case aimed at obtaining a permanent injunction in court. The injunction would enjoin CDCR's Prison Intelligence Unit (PIU) and Institutional Gang Investigators (IGI) from arbitrarily accusing prisoners, our families and law abiding citizens of the free community of promoting gang activity via the mail that prisoners are sending to and receiving from our families and members of the free community. A permanent injunction will only be granted upon a showing of irreparable harm and when the constitutional violation is proven to be of a systemic nature. California prisoners, write to:

Legal Services for Prisoners With Children
c/o Attorney Carol Strickman
Re: First Amendment Campaign
1540 Market St., Suite 490
San Francisco, CA 94102

Setting Goals in California

by MIM(Prisons)
March 2013

In 2011, the organizing in California made connections to the plight of prisoners across the country and even globally. As cipactli discusses in his recent article on page 3, the demands from the Pelican Bay prisoners have not been met and a new phase of that battle has begun.

The example set by those who went on food strike in California was like Rosa Parks refusing to sit in the back of the bus. They weren't the first to do it, and they didn't single-handedly change the system, or even significantly reform it. But they did serve as a prime example that continues to inspire those struggling for basic human rights behind bars. Since 2011, MIM(Prisons) has been in dialogue with USW leaders in Pelican Bay and across the state about those historic events, and how we can push that struggle forward.

One change that has been proposed by comrades in Pelican Bay this time around is that prisoners develop their own demands locally and hold the CDCR/state to the demands that they think are most pressing. While, ideally we would all unite around one set of demands, we agree with this tactic at this stage. There were many who came out to propose changes to the five core demands for many different reasons. So this approach allows those who had critiques to put their ideas into action.

In practice this means each prison could have their own demands focused on conditions specific to their location, building unity within the prisoner population at that facility. We caution people though that the broader our unity behind core demands the more pressure we can put on the criminal injustice system to make change. As much as possible, prisoners should try to come together around common demands within each prison.

MIM(Prisons) is working to unite United Struggle from Within (USW) in CA around some goals that are strategic for the anti-imperialist prison movement. These are goals that could be won within the realm of bourgeois democracy and will strengthen our cause and more long-term goals.

Please note that neither USW nor the state-wide councils are able to operate on the basis of democratic centralism through postal mail. So while this draft incorporates the ideas of the California Council of USW, it is principally authored by MIM(Prisons) and does not/will not necessarily represent a consensus among council members or USW in general. However, the two principal points are points that MIM(Prisons) has long held to be strategically important in expanding the ability of the oppressed to reach the medium-term goals of organizing for self-determination. So we do not believe that they will be very controversial within our circles. We do hope they will push the limits of what is possible more than what has been proposed so far.

If there are already demands in place where you are, we'd encourage you to push for an inclusion of and more focus on these goals. If not, you may still need to adjust the document below to meet your local conditions for various reasons. But we should all be able to agree on what the major issues are here, and the more we can speak as a united voice with a united mission, the more successful we can be. There is very little in here that is specific to California, so comrades in other states can also use this as a model.

Here are our demands:

1. An end to torture of all prisoners, including an end to the use of Security Housing Units (SHU) as long-term isolation prisons.

Basic human needs are centered around 1) healthy food and water, 2) fresh air and exercise, 3) clothes and shelter from the elements and 4) social interactions and community with other humans. It is the SHU's failure to provide for these basic needs that have led people around the world to condemn long-term isolation as torture. Therefore we demand that the following minimum standards be met for all prisoners:

- a. no prisoner should be held in Security Housing Units for longer than 30 days. Rehouse all prisoners currently in SHU to mainline facilities.
- b. interaction with other prisoners every day
- c. time spent outdoors with space and basic equipment for exercise every day
- d. healthy food and clean water every day
- e. proper clothing and climate control
- f. an end to the use of and threat of violence by staff against prisoners who have not made any physical threat to staff
- g. access to phone calls and contact visits with family at least once a week
- h. timely and proper health care
- i. ability to engage in productive activities, including correspondence courses and hobby crafts
- j. a meaningful way to grieve any abuses or denial of the above following basic rights

2. Freedom of association.

As social beings, people in prison will always develop relationships with other prisoners. We believe positive and productive relationships should be encouraged. Currently the CDCR makes it a crime punishable by torture (SHU) to affiliate with certain individuals or organizations. This is contrary to the judiciary's interpretation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We demand that prisoners of the state of California only be punished for violating the law, and that there be:

- a. no punishment based on what books one reads or has in their possession
- b. no punishment for jailhouse lawyering for oneself or for others, for filing grievances or for any challenges to conditions of confinement through legal means
- c. no punishment for what outside organiza-

- tions one belongs to or corresponds with
- d. no punishment for communicating with other prisoners if not breaking the law
- e. no punishment for tattoos
- f. no punishment for what individuals of the same race/nation/organizational affiliation do unless you as an individual were involved in violating a rule or the law, i.e. no group punishment
- g. no punishment for affiliation with a gang, security threat group, or other organization - in other words a complete end to the gang validation system that punishes people (currently puts people in the SHU for an indeterminate amount of time) based on their affiliation and/or ideology without having broken any rules or laws

The above goals are very similar to the original five core demands. However, you'll notice that they boil down to two main points, an end to torture of prisoners and freedom of association. Until both of these goals are fully achieved, the struggle continues.

Over the coming months, comrades behind bars need to focus on setting goals, setting deadlines, strategizing, studying and networking. The comrades in Pelican Bay are sticking to similar tactics used in the 2011 action. But there are other ways to demonstrate for our goals in a peaceful way that is long-lasting and can have great impact, just like Rosa Parks. One comrade last year suggested campaigns that affect the prison staff directly and financially, and there may be other tactics to consider. As the comrades in California have stressed, networking to break down divisions between prisoners must be a focus by implementing the peace protocol across the state. And as USW leaders have reiterated, study is instrumental in raising the consciousness of participants and allies to provide for a stronger base as the struggle advances.

We've heard from comrades in Washington, New Jersey and South Carolina who are organizing their own actions for July 8 or modeled around that struggle. Comrades in North Carolina and Texas have launched peaceful protests of their own in just the last couple months. As we address local conditions and petition institutions at the state level, we build unity around the common demands of the imprisoned lumpen class across the United States. ★

Texas Lawsuits Dismissed, Keep Filing Lawsuits

by a Texas prisoner
March 2013

Since my earlier letter I have now come across many prisoners who are existing members. It is encouraging to know that other prisoners want a revolution recharge to Texas's prison environment. In my past years of confinement, in the units I have been assigned to, not many prisoners saw the need for revolutionary prison reform. On this unit, I am coming across more prisoners who are seeing the need and attempting through civil litigation to see this reform come about.

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...TX Lawsuits

Texas still wants to deny prisoners the right to have the government redress our grievances for violations of our constitutional rights. The right of a prisoner to petition the government exists in theory only, but not in practice.

The poorer and less educated prisoners have to face a two-front battle just to get into court. As an indigent prisoner I have to fight access to courts officials just to get the legal correspondence supplies that I need to litigate my claims. After I get them into court I have to battle court authorities and judges just to keep them in.

When I write to judges of my treatment by officials I face retribution by other prison officials. Judges and court authorities want to deny my right to exercise my claims in court under proper due process and equal protection rights. If I had funds, family or friends who could help me out with legal correspondence supplies, then the prison officials would not be able to place me in a figurative full-body straitjacket.

It is so bad that many prisoners' claims being filed in court are being stolen right out of court by magistrate judges, dismissing lawsuits on which they do not have the right to render

a final judgement. When prisoners appeal it, they send it to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. District court judges' judgements are nothing more than a court directed verdict. The rendered judgements do not fit the evidence filed in court in complaints, evidence and exhibits.

Prisoners in Texas have filed so many individual lawsuits that Texas does not want any more to be filed because, whether a lawsuit succeeds or fails, it leaves an electronic paper trail. Texas prison officials are scared that the feds will step in and take their prison system away. This to me is an encouraging sign.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We agree with this comrade that lawsuits are an important part of our current strategy to fight the criminal justice system. But this will never bring about revolutionary change, because the legal system is a part of the criminal injustice system as a whole, as this comrade's experience demonstrates. The imperialists will never relinquish control of this critical part of their internal system of national oppression through legal battles. We can use their system against them to an extent, and even win some key battles in the legal arena, but we will do that as a part of the broader struggle which must build for independent revolutionary change. ★

After one solid year, the truce has withstood everyone's doubts and has not been broken. If the government is not going to step up to help prevent the violence, then the LOs will have to organize to do it themselves. One of the principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons is Independence, which is just as important in El Salvador where the United States has dominated politics and the economy. We see today where U.S. intervention has gotten them thus far. MS-13 and Barrio 18 members know what their communities need better than U.S. investors do, and they should be supported in their efforts to change. It is our strong suspicion that those looking to change the conditions in which they live in any substantive way will eventually find that an end to capitalism itself is the order of the day.

One such organization which is supporting the peace treaty in El Salvador is Homies Unidos, which has chapters in Los Angeles and El Salvador. Alex Sanchez is the director of Homies Unidos in LA, and in recent history has been targeted by the FBI for harassment and detainment.(7) The bogus charges were finally dropped last month after restricting his ability to work for years. We tried to get in touch with Homies Unidos to gather more information on the real effects of the peace treaty on the ground, and what more is needed to maintain and advance the peace, but unfortunately we have not heard back. ★

Notes:

1. *In Sight Crime*, 23 November 2012 "Next Phase of Salvador Gang Truce: Peace Zones."
2. *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 October 2012 "Can a gang truce in El Salvador open the door to lasting peace?"
3. *BBC News*, 21 November 2012 "El Salvador gang truce: Can MS-13 and 18th Street keep the peace?"
4. *Voices from El Salvador*, 22 June 2012 "El Sal-

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...Political Pris.

action). If we must distinguish between members of the same class (i.e. prisoners), and to a certain extent we must in order to accurately assess conditions on the ground, then let it be a functional distinction which advances the revolution as a whole.

Subcategories of class must be used in such a way that it produces knowledge, not conjecture. Even an "inmate" can be turned to use. Further, people change and there's no way to know the moment of awakening of political consciousness in others without objective observation. By assigning static labels and categories, we limit our objectivity.

I wholeheartedly agree with this comrade: there are many tactics which can be tailored to circumstance but the labor of these tactics is necessarily dispersed to many people of differing skill sets and levels of political awareness; some are dupes, others are not, some are soldiers, others are tacticians and printers.

Finally, I believe a common mistake we all make as revolutionaries is to become solipsistic. We forget that not everyone wants change or revolution, some are satisfied with their condition. In prison or out, this distinguishes one as counter-revolutionary. This distinction is functional and applies to society without getting bogged down in specific labels. It is part of the equation we must, as revolutionaries, deal with, but in the end, revolution depends on maximizing our resources, exploiting the weaknesses of our enemy and most important, unification of the people. ★

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...Zero Dark Thirty

Throughout the film there are constant digs against Obama's ban on torture as a method of extracting information in 2009. Ironically, in the movie the CIA still found Osama bin Laden, using no torture after the ban. But we're left understanding that it would have been much easier if the CIA still had free reign with prisoners.

Although *Zero Dark Thirty* portrays Obama as soft on terror and a hindrance to the CIA's work, we should not be fooled into thinking that the U.S. government has really ended the use of torture. While we have no clear information about what goes on in interrogation cells in other countries, we know that right here in U.S. prisons, torture is used daily. And this domestic torture is usually not even focused on getting information, it's either sadistic entertainment for prison staff or punishment for political organizing. In one example of this, a USW comrade who wrote about Amerikan prison control units died shortly after his article was printed, under suspicious circumstances in Attica Correctional Facility.

Banning certain interrogation techniques, even if that ban is actually enforced in the Third World, is just an attempt to put makeup on the hideous face of imperialism. Even if no Amerikan citizen ever practices torture on Third World peoples (something we know isn't true),

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...El Salvador

of wylin' out in their past and move on to join the oppressor classes. The material conditions which lead to movement of the lumpen class in the United States is explored in our forthcoming book. How much these differences in material conditions affects the movement in this country toward peace between lumpen organizations will be determined by those of us working for this peace.

Moving Forward

The peace agreement between MS-13 and Barrio 18 has not been touted as an end to the violence forever, but instead is framed as "a break in the violence so the various stakeholders can work out long-term solutions." (4) Since the beginning, the peacemakers have been calling on the Salvadoran government to generate jobs and work with former and current LO members on developing skills that will help them make a living without relying on violence.

Last month, a program was initiated by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in partnership with Salvadoran businesses and non-governmental organizations, in a purported effort to prevent youth from joining LOs in the first place. They claim this program has nothing to do with the truce, and have no intention of helping people who have already chosen or been forced to join a lumpen organization.(5) Considering the long history of U.S. neocolonialism in Central America, it is not surprising that USAID is putting their 2 cents in. Time will tell the long-term effects of this \$42 million investment, but we can safely assume it will amount to manipulation of the Salvadoran people by the United States government.(6)

La Falta de Educación está limitando la Vanguardia

por un@ prisoner@ en Texas
traducido por un@ prisoner@ en Texas
Mayo 2011

Saludos y respetos!

He Recibido su propuesta para promover la paz entre las masas inferiores. Está en circulación.

Mi crítica es que, al menos aquí en Tejas, hay muchos chavalones que no tienen conocimiento alguno de cómo manejar relaciones sociales. El nivel de comprensión de estos jóvenes es muy bajo. El apoyo y respaldo [de ULK] ha amparado nuestra lucha, pero aún el problema persiste en que el promedio de los presos en mi bloque tienen 20 años de edad. Debido a recortes presupuestarios, nuestras oportunidades de educación son cada día menos. Todas nuestras solicitudes para programación educativa en el bloque han sido negadas. Y aún dicen que no calificamos para ningún tipo de programa educativo, debido a nuestro estatus civil y contradicciones en la política administrativa.

Estos chavalones no pueden ni leer ni escribir ni hacer simple matemáticas. ¿Cómo es que van a entender las obras de Marx, de Mao y del Che? Estoy pidiendo su apoyo para realizar un curso básico que le ayudaría a nuestros jóvenes desarrollar su conciencia social.

Yo soporto y respaldo completamente sus propuestas de paz. Pero, el plan de Tookie es demasiado básico. ¿Cuáles la esencia de este plan? Estos menos necesitan aprender a leer y a escribir y a desarrollar su capacidad para resolver problemas antes de entrar a la arena política.

MIM(Prisiones) responde: ¿Qué clase de sistema opresivo le quita la oportunidad de educación a aquellos en los rangos menores? El sistema está creado con el propósito de perpetuar el estado inferior de las clases marginales en la nación. Esto demuestra la importancia de MIM(Prisiones) en la lucha por programas educativos para nuestro pueblo. Necesitamos donaciones, mecanógrafos y otros recursos para seguir ampliando este importante labor.

El MIM(Prisiones)

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

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

Como revolucionarios internacionalistas, nos apoyamos la auto-determinación de todas naciones y gente. Hoy, el sistema de prisiones de los EEUU es un parte mayor del estado imperialista siendo usado para prevenir la auto-determinación de las naciones oprimidas. Es por esta razón que vemos a prisioneros en este país como manteniendo la delantera de cualquier movimiento anti-imperialista y revolucionario. Mientras que nuestra organización se enfoca en apoyo al prisionero, creemos que hay una necesidad grave de trabajo para el Maoísta en organizar y educar en muchas áreas en los Estados Unidos. Tenemos la esperanza que alguna gente se inspire por nuestro ejemplo alrededor de prisiones y que lo aplique a su propio trabajo para crear más células maoísta 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 oprimidas (JDPON) debe hacer este papel en donde no hay proletariado interno o una base significativa de masas que favorece comunismo.

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

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

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

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

Como se destaca en edición 20 de ULK hemos ampliado nuestros cursos de estudios preliminares y actualmente estamos desarrollando un glosario revolucionario, ambos con el fin de educar a los ignorantes. Sin embargo, todavía necesitamos más clases de recuperación. Estamos investigando esta cuestión y le agradeceríamos sus opiniones para corroborar este tipo de trabajo. Estamos de acuerdo que uno solo no se puede enseñar a leer y a escribir a través del correo. Es por eso que nuestra vanguardia debe luchar para realizar este tipo de programación educativa desde adentro. La educación es un requisito importante para la creación de una Frente Único hacia la paz. ★

...Continued from previous page ...El Salvador

vador Marks 100 Days of the Gang Truce and 2nd Anniversary of the Mejicanos Bus Burning"

5. *Voices from El Salvador, 15 February 2012 "USAID and SolucionES to Invest \$42 Million in Gang Prevention Programs."*

6. *Nkrumah, Kwame, Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism, International Publishers, 1966, Introduction.*

7. See ULK 9 for our article on Alex Sanchez's arrest.

Reader Survey

Complete this reader survey and receive a free back issue of *Under Lock & Key* or other anti-imperialist pamphlet. We are trying to get a better picture of who reads *ULK* and what they find useful. We have also been doing research on the imprisoned lumpen class in general. By filling out this survey you can help us with both. We also have a more extensive economic survey that you can use to collect anonymous data about the people in your prison to help with our research. Just indicate below if you would like to become a survey proctor and help with this research. *If you already responded to this survey, please do not fill it out again. Instead, see p.12 for how to get free lit.*

1. How old are you? _____ years
2. Is this your first time in prison? YES or NO
3. How many years have you spent in prison total so far (incl. juvenile facilities)? _____ yrs.
4. What is the highest grade of education you've completed? (number for grade, or level for college, i.e. AA, BS, certificate, etc.) _____
5. Outside of prison, how many total years did you work at legal jobs that earned money? _____ years
6. Are you a U.S. citizen? YES or NO
7. What is your nationality (or "race")? _____
8. How long left on your current sentence? _____
9. What is your current housing/security status? (GP, SHU, etc.) _____
10. What is the best part of ULK? _____
11. What would you like more of in ULK? _____
12. Would you like to administer a more extended survey to those around you to help with our economic research? YES or NO
13. Other suggestions: _____

Return completed survey to: MIM(Prisons) Reader Survey, PO Box 40799 SF, CA 94140

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ATTENTION PRISONERS:

You must write to us every 6 months to stay on our mailing list.
Tell us what mail you got since the last time you wrote so we can track and fight censorship.

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Under Lock & Key No. 31, March/April 2013

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...Education

While the differences in funding between schools based on national composition is damning, this is just a symptom of the problem. The campaign to increase school funding is dominated by the petty bourgeois labor unions who utilize oppressed nation children in their campaign for higher pay. As this prisoner points out, the schools will still be run by the government and deliver the education they want. This will not address the needs of the oppressed or create anti-imperialist change. We need to use the school situation as a tool to educate youth about national oppression and the need to join the fight against imperialism. Just as we run independent study programs for prisoners across the United States, the youth need independent education programs that teach them what they need to know to create a better world. ★

...Continued from page 14

...Zero Dark Thirty

the fact is that the United States prefers to pay proxies to carry out its dirty work anyway. Torture, military actions, rape, theft, etc., can all be done at a safe distance by paying neo-colonial armies and groups to work on behalf of the Amerikan government.

Whether actions are carried out by Navy SEALs, CIA agents, or proxy armies and individuals, Amerikan imperialism is working hard

The "Slave Mentality"

by AR-15 of United Struggle from Within

I refuse to lay down,
in my struggle against the oppressor.
Anti-imperialist efforts,
settling for nothing lesser.
Striving together with my brotherz and sisterz
Utilizing knowledge, wisdom and understanding.
"We're fighting for world peace!"
Is what my comrades past and present is demanding.
Anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist,
fuck it! I'll be devoted
to fighting against that old slave mentality
that my older peers seem to keep holding.
We rise together and never fall.
Nor stumble in sudden speech.
So to the brotherz and sisterz down in this struggle
Without initiative and motivation you'll forever remain
stuck with
your slave mentality!
Join this United Front for Peace!

to keep the majority of the world's people under control and available for exploitation. The death of bin Laden is portrayed as a big victory in *Zero Dark Thirty*, but for the majority of the world's people this was just one more example of Amerikan militarism, a system that works against the material interests of most people in the world. ★

Notes: *Counter Punch*, January 26, 2009.

...Continued from page 11

...Trans Rights

these struggles with the fight to get more women in executive positions in companies, or the fight to get a Black man in the white house. They represent steps forward in equality for Blacks, wimmin, gays and trans people in reaping imperialist spoils of war and furthering gender oppression on Third World peoples. These struggles do not help advance the fight against imperialism, to liberate the Third World peoples. It is also important to note that we shouldn't oppose something just because the oppressor favors it, like this contributor suggests.

Most trans people in the Third World don't have the privilege of even thinking about hormone replacement therapy, and Third World gays certainly are not pre-occupied with their right to marriage. These people are focused on day-to-day survival, getting enough to eat, and avoiding getting raped or killed by Amerikan-backed militias. We mislead people when we focus on battles that distribute the imperialist privileges more equally among the already privileged labor aristocracy. We must focus on the real enemy of the majority of the world's people, an enemy that won't stop exploiting and killing through the ballot box. Gay and trans people in Third World countries deserve all of our attention and energy, to help ensure their survival and ultimate liberation. ★

