



Under Lock & Key

Español
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Gang Validation: Justification for Torture and Social Control

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
November 2014

This *ULK* is focused on gang validation and step down programs in U.S. prisons. Gang validation is used as a justification for locking people in long-term isolation cells, commonly known as control units. Most civilians would say that controlling gang violence is a good thing, and that perspective is exactly what the criminal injustice system is relying on for its gang validation programs. The assumption is that all groups classified as gangs are engaged in criminal activity, and anyone in contact with the gang must be a member.

Let's put aside for now the reality that the U.S. military and police force is the biggest gang in world history. If anyone is organized in criminal activity and terrorism, it's them. That any U.S. government agency claims to be against gang activity without being critical of itself is just a joke.

The entities identified as gangs by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) include correspondence study groups such as the William L. Nolen Mentorship Program. In Texas, *ULK* is cited as a security threat group, despite actually being a newspaper. (see *ULK 10*) The National Gang Crime Research Center recently published a report which included the Maoist Internationalist Movement as a potential threat to prison security. (see p. 15) It is obvious that the gang label is not used for criminal, but instead political, reasons.

Often, validation is based on secret evidence that the prisoner cannot challenge, and can include things like talking to the wrong person in the yard, being in possession of books on history and politics, or even sending someone a birthday card. In some cases validation is based on a prisoner receiving an unsolicited letter mentioning the name of another prisoner, or even just participating in MIM(Prisons) correspondence study groups. A Connecticut writer describes

the difficulty fighting "evidence" about security risk group activity:

"In August I was taken to segregation because a prisoner got caught with 4 pages of Security Risk Group (SRG) paperwork and the pigz try to say one of the 4 pages was in my handwriting. Due to this assumption I was given a class A SRG ticket for recruiting, even though this prisoner signed a statement explaining the paperwork is his. I never gave it to him, and I never wrote it. The crazier thing is the prisoner who got caught with these papers was released back into Phase 3 (back into the block) and I sat in segregation for over a month till I was transferred back to Phase 1 in Walker Correctional Institution."



Once validated, it's very difficult to get out of isolation without giving the administration information (snitching) on others; information that many prisoners don't even have because they aren't actually members of the groups the prison has "validated." In the article "(Un)Due Process of Validation and Step Down Programs" cipactli gets into the politics behind these programs. (see p. 4)

Some people who are validated are members of lumpen organizations (LOs), and the prisons use the "gang" label to make them out as scary and dangerous groups. But lumpen organizations are a natural response to national oppression, and many of these LOs have the potential to lead their members in anti-imperialist organizing. The unity and organization of LOs scares the imperialists and their lackeys. After all, LOs operate outside of the state-approved capitalist economy and serve a lumpen population whose

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USW Solidarity with Palestine,

by MIM(Prisons)
November 2014

In August 2014, in response to I\$rael's renewed attacks on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, United Struggle from Within (USW) drafted and began circulating a petition denouncing the imperialist genocide of the people of Palestine. The petition draws connections to the oppressed nations suffering in the United States, and in particular recognized the support Palestinian prisoners gave to the California hunger strikers. While this round of bombing by I\$rael was over before most could even return their signed petitions, the damage is still being felt and the imperialist occupation of Palestine continues.

"According to the United Nations, 100,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged, leaving 600,000 Palestinians – nearly one in three of Gaza's population – homeless or in urgent need of humanitarian help. Roads, schools and the electricity plant to power water and sewerage systems are in ruins."(1)

In addition, the Cairo agreement to "rebuild" Gaza after I\$rael bombed it to pieces will be managed by none other than I\$rael, who will ensure that all the money goes into the pockets of I\$raeli construction companies.(1) The democratically elected government of Palestine, led by Hamas, will be deprived of any oversight of this process, as they are further isolated with Egypt closing off the border with Gaza to the south.

It is not too late to rally in support of the Palestinian struggle! As of the middle of November, USW comrades have gathered over 100 signatures to this petition in at least seven different prisons. Signatures are still coming in and a number of comrades have reported to still be working on collecting signatures in their latest communications. To get involved, see p. 12 of this issue, or ask for *ULK 40*.

While the numbers may not be overly impressive, to date only 17 of those comrades originally sent the petition have even reported receiving it. One Texas comrade who gathered nine signatures reported doing so despite the prison being on lockdown (no one being able to leave their cells) and the recent cut off of fishing (sending notes between cells by string). In fact one comrade could not get any other signatures due to the risk of political repression as a validated "gang member" in the control unit where he is held. It is no coincidence that many of our most active and politically conscious comrades find themselves in such conditions.(2)

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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. We support nations which choose to delink from the imperialist economy, including the right of the internal semi-colonies to secede from the United States. 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 campaign info.

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.

Amerikan Aid to Africa Really Aids Imperialism

by Indio of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter,
Colorado
September 2014

On 5 August, President Obama announced plans to send \$12 billion in aid to support an electrification program for six sub-Saharan countries in Africa. This is in addition to U.S. firms investing \$14 billion in banking, construction and information technology in Africa.

Are these efforts really about helping the African nations, or is it just to protect the stake certain parties have in the region? I can't help but remind myself of the economic consequences that will befall an already impoverished nation. When it comes to the class divisions, I think this new effort will only push the proletariat into deeper starvation and exploitation. As I've read in *MIM Theory 12*, investment from an imperialist country like the United States usually comes with dire consequences. Funny, not once did I hear the U.S. imperialist president speak of self-determination of all African people. This is either lip service paid to the petty bourgeoisie or

when it's all said and done the "pound of flesh" which the United States will eventually get will come at a greater cost to those held in oppression.

The puppet governments of southern Africa gained a large victory today, but as we all know, no amount of policy or investment will really benefit the most oppressed people. This is true until all peoples' needs are met, not just profit gained for a few. It looks like more economic imperialism to hold the already poor people in bondage with the illusion of expanding the Amerikan dream. Raise! Fight! Stop U.S. imperialism!

The solution should be what can be done to empower and enable the lower class and proletariat into rising up and controlling their own destinies. Only when this is pursued will conditions improve. People from the proletariat need to understand that they have the power to educate and engage in armed struggle to gain their rights. ★

Burkina Faso Replaces One Dictator with Another

by MIM(Prisons)
November 2014

On 31 October, after weeks of mass protests in which state media headquarters were stormed and government buildings were torched, the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, was forced to resign and flee to the Ivory Coast, another French neo-colony. The military seized power under Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Zida, who created a committee which appointed Michel Kafando as transitional president. Elections are to be scheduled within 12 months. Kafando was formerly ambassador to the United Nations for Compaoré, among other high posts he held in the government. This change in leadership is nothing more than a shuffling of the neo-colonial compradors who will continue to serve the imperialists while trying to placate the righteously angry Burkinabe (people of Burkina Faso) masses.

The protests that led to this change in government follow long standing unrest and anger about the exploitation and oppression of the people in Burkina Faso. In recent years there has been much civil protest in the country, especially amongst peasants and miners.

Burkina Faso is a small country located in sub-Saharan West Africa. Originally called the Republic of Upper Volta, the country was established as a French colony in 1960. Captain Thomas Sankara became prime minister in 1983 after a military coup, ironically led by Blaise Compaoré and a group of military leaders who considered themselves revolutionary anti-imperialists. While not an uprising of the people, Sankara's politics were more progressive than previous leaders. Sankara implemented many programs to serve the people including nationalizing land and mineral resources, mass-vac-

inations, infrastructure improvements, the expansion of wimmin's rights, encouragement of domestic agricultural consumption, and anti-desertification projects. He also changed the country's name to Burkina Faso (land of the upright/honest people). To promote self-reliance and end the poverty of dependency so common in African countries, Sankara called for the cancellation of African debts to Western governments. And setting an example for all Burkinabe, Sankara refused wealth and luxuries for himself and fought against corruption and bribery in the government.

Sankara was a revolutionary nationalist. And while we do not oppose those acting in the interests of the people seizing power from the imperialists through a coup, we know that it is the support of the masses and the political education and activism of the people that will ultimately determine the success or failure of a revolutionary movement.

Burkina Faso provides us with a good lesson on the importance of a cultural revolution. After the communists took power in China in 1949, they soon realized that a new bourgeois class was developing. These individuals may have come from proletarian and peasant backgrounds, but the culture that encourages individualism and self-serving advancement did not disappear with the implementation of socialism. And so some people, once they gained positions of power, abused that power. The Chinese communists realized the road from socialism to communism requires political struggle from all the people, vigilant criticism and self-criticism of and by political leaders and the masses, raising the level of political education, and a long-term campaign to build revolutionary culture. This became the Great Proletarian Cultural

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Don't Loot, Organize!

by 1st Crown of Black Order Revolutionary
Organization
October 2014

"We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of New Afrikan people. We believe that the police of the colonial government acts as an occupation force to maintain control and order for the benefit of the colonial government. We believe that the motives are in the best interest of the capitalist class who have businesses and own property in the New Afrikan community. We call for the immediate withdrawal of the occupation police-army from Our communities, and for New Afrikans to establish Our Own security system. We also maintain the right of self-defense against racist police repression and brutality, to bear arms and to organize self-defense groups to preserve the security of the New Afrikan community and Nation." - #7 What We Want - What We Believe, Ten-Point Platform & Program, Black Order Revolutionary Organization

Once again, we see the scene playin' out before our very eyes: killer kkkop slays un-armed New Afrikan teen. The violence of the state is not a coincidence or accident. It is a direct result of Our colonization in this country.

The people are outraged and are asking, "Why did this happen? Why does this continue to happen?" The Black Order Revolutionary Organization (BORO) asks, "How soon before it happens again? And when will we take the necessary steps to ensure that it never happens again?"

The violence of the oppressor never ceases until it is stopped with violent force. Am I advocating or promoting random, unorganized violence and looting? No, I am not. I am simply stating an hystorical fact. Never in the hystory of humynkind has an oppressor ever stopped oppressing until those who were being oppressed stopped them, using structured and protracted violence aimed at replacing the powers that be and totally changing the system before them.

If New Afrikan people and all poor and nationally oppressed people want to see an end to police brutality and murder, then we must be disciplined, conscious and organized. We must demand and fight for complete freedom and total liberation. This starts with first controlling the communities that we live in.

The type of organization that we need is not simply to organize a rally to have a killer kkkop fired and arrested. It is the entire system that must be changed. Violence against and murder of our people is as amerikan as apple pie. It is part of the culture of this society.

Organization means commitment to a long, protracted struggle against this system of oppression. As you have learned from your current experience, change won't happen overnight. It will take time and many mistakes will be made. Some of our own will betray us like they did

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interests are not tied up in that system, unlike the vast majority of U.S. citizens.

Often validation is used to target and isolate politically active prisoners who speak up and fight the criminal injustice system, whether or not they are part of an LO. Fighting against gang validation is an important part of the fight against prison control units and other methods of social control that target politically active prisoners. These comrades are the leaders of the movement against the criminal injustice system behind bars.

The overwhelming response to our call for information on validation for *ULK* suggests that a disproportionate number of readers of anti-imperialist literature are a target for gang validation (and about half of our readers are in some kind of solitary confinement). This issue of *ULK* includes a variety of articles describing the false justifications used for validation, the targeting of activists, and the consequences of isolation and torture for those who are validated.

In this issue many writers describe their experiences with validation programs, and we also talk about ways to fight the validation system. Building unity among lumpen organizations in the United Front for Peace in Prisons, campaigning to shut down prison control units, and fighting the legitimacy of so-called step down programs are all ways we are attacking this problem from many sides. Prisons serve the imperialists as a tool of social control, and as is explained in the "(Un)Due Process of Validation and Step Down Programs" article on this page, control units are a vitally important element of this system. We can use the contradictions inherent in the system which raises the political consciousness of those targeted for repression, and often throws together leaders who can join forces to build a broader movement. After all, the recent series of California hunger strikes were led by prisoners locked up in Pelican Bay's notorious control unit.

The U.S. government won't give up their tools of social control willingly. And in the end the criminal injustice system needs to be thoroughly dismantled, something we can't do until we overthrow the imperialists and replace them

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On "Objective" Reporting

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

...Validation

(Un)Due Process of Validation and Step Down Programs

by cipactli of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter
October 2014

One of the most damaging aspects of U.S. prisons today is the control units. Control units and solitary confinement are the state's biggest guns in their torturous arsenal. Control units are called SHU, SMU, CMU and a variety of other names depending on what state one is in, but they all work to employ torture on the captives held therein.

When we look to the history of the U.S. prison system we find that the oppressed nations held within have always suffered greatly at the hands of Amerikkka. Prisoners in the United States have suffered unpaid labor, lynchings, beatings, floggings and assassinations to name a few. Although much of this still continues – at times more concealed and shrouded than in the past – there are other new methods of national oppression which are employed in this new era of United States domination.

One such method employed on prisoners in dungeons within the United Snakes is the use of the control unit. The control unit is a modern-day torture chamber, but it cannot be advertised as a lethal killer of mostly Brown or Black minds because the liberals might even turn their noses up at such a revelation. Instead the public must be told that control units are only used on incorrigibles, savages, foreigners, gang members or the sensationalized terrorists.

Who is Locked in Control Units?

We are up against a sophisticated oppressor nation and the placement of prisoners in control units is wrapped in flowery language. We are told it is for "gang activity" or a "threat to the safety and security of the institution." I am sometimes given a chrono stating I'm "actively engaged in a criminal conspiracy that threatens the institution, staff and other prisoners." This to the untrained mind may sound like justification for torture. Not only is this character assassination not true, but nothing justifies torture, absolutely nothing!

It was only after I began to write articles that

spoke up for prisoners, and began filing appeals and lawsuits on behalf of all prisoners, that I was targeted for placement in the Secure Housing Unit (SHU). In short, when I began to resist state repression was when I was isolated in solitary confinement. I was allowed by the state to commit minor crimes and fight other prisoners, until I started to become politically conscious. I am not alone.

Most who work to advance and organize their nation, speak up on behalf of others, or engage in jailhouse lawyering will end up in a control unit. This is a common practice in colonized society: those who resist and who are politically influential are imprisoned under a colonial oppressor.

Why Does the State Have a Validation Process?

The validation process attempts to lend a legal aura to torture and national oppression by claiming to undergo a fair and unbiased process to validate someone as a "gang affiliate." The fact that the validation process continues to use things as ridiculous as a birthday card, an Aztec drawing, or a book written by George Jackson as evidence of gang activity proves that there is nothing unbiased about it. The court cases which supposedly stopped the prison from using these items show how much of a joke the injustice system is and how much it really is an extension of an oppressive state.

The validation system helps pacify prisoners into thinking that there is a legitimate process they are undergoing to end the torture. That somehow if we are patient and do as we are told that we might get out of the SHU. This of course is ludicrous. We will stay in SHU until our oppressor feels we no longer resist, and we are broken. Sometimes they want to train their agents and attempt to capture all who associate with us out on the mainline, as if we were live bait. But so long as we remain resistant to their oppression, we will not be allowed to freely associate with others. The validation process only works to uphold our national oppression.

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On Prisons & Prisoners

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

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

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

Pennsylvania STG: Acronym for Oppression

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
August 2014

A few years ago, former Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) Director Jeffrey Beard relocated to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Director Beard was known for his tyrannical style of utilizing confinement and isolation for more sadistic than safety purposes, by increasing constantly the number of prisoners placed on the restricted release list (RRL). Once on this list, the only person who can finalize your release back to general population is the Governor of Pennsylvania. Beard, after seeing the practice of the California STG program, informed current PA DOC Director, John Wetzel, of these tactics of oppression, suppression and repression. In the summer of 2012 the Pennsylvania security threat group (STG) unit was started.

In Pennsylvania, a security threat group is any group of persons who continuously ignore the department's administrative rules, i.e. any unauthorized group activity. The word "group" is the concealing factor of the oppressive practices in place in the PA DOC. Members of religious "groups" such as Muslims, Jews, Moors, Nation of Islam, Nation of Gods & Earths, etc., are placed on the list of documented STGs. Members of political "groups" such as the New Afrikan Communists, New Afrikan Independence Movement, Black Liberation Army, etc. are placed on the list of documented STGs.

Of approximately 175 captives brought to the Pennsylvania STG program, 95% (166) are of oppressed nation heritage. Out of this, about 20 were actually told why they were abducted for the program, i.e. why they were labeled STG members, although the reasons were mostly untruthful and unjustifiable. There is no appeal process in place to combat placement in the program. There is no validation/assessment hearing or procedure in place to present your side of the alleged claims or bring forth any evidence or witnesses on your behalf. Those who do attempt to refuse this assignment are placed on RRL. In order to be released from there you have to agree to do the STG program (the same program you refused in the first place!).



The tactics employed here are quite surely the same as any other STG unit. Obstruction of correspondence (incoming and outgoing), no visits (unless earned through advancing in the program), no phone privileges (unless earned through advancing in the program), inadequate legal services and materials (unless earned through advancing in the program), thought police/Orwellian indoctrination and debriefing systems disguised as cognitive restructuring. Those who hold firm the belief this is an injustice are labeled as "in denial and unwilling to give up participation in group activity." Those who express their opinions are titled as "thinking criminally" or using a "gang mentality." The guidelines, procedures and policies governing the programs are restricted to the public. Instead a prisoner supplement handbook is issued to each captive which quite surely differentiates from the restricted policy.

Exercise, food, commissary and restraints are used as an enticement method as well as punishment. For example, you may hear a pig say "if you program, you won't have to wear handcuffs." Or "if you don't complete the assignments you won't be able to order commissary." To increase the allure of these "privileges" they make contrasting practices as hard and un-

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...Step Down

The Step Down Program is More Repression

When we go to committee in California SHUs we are given a form called the "CDCR Advisement of Expectations." This form gives a list of supposed STG behavior which includes among other things "participating in STG group exercise, using gestures, handshakes, possession of artwork with STG symbols." Note that we are not informed what STG symbols are.

We basically cannot socialize with anyone, or we might be accused of STG behavior. We are not told who is validated as part of an STG or given any information about STG behavior. We are simply told we better not associate with STGs or engage in their behavior. The state will decide if we are behaving properly and allowed to proceed in the Step Down Program.

Recent news of a federal class action lawsuit challenging policies and conditions at the Pelican Bay SHU is welcome and something we all should be following. *Ashker et al. v. Governor of California et al., No. C 09-05796* claims that being held for more than ten years in SHU is cruel and unusual punishment and that the validation process is a violation of due process.(1) But here's the kicker: if you have joined the Step Down Program you are not included in this class action. So already we see how the new Step Down Program is serving the state by making it more difficult for prisoners to challenge their conditions.

My behavior is no more incorrect today than it was the first day I was captured and housed in the SHU. The state will not be let off the hook and I refuse to step down from resisting

Fighting STG Label for Notes on Political History

by a Florida prisoner
September 2014

I am housed at Suwannee Correctional Close Management Unit, which is the Florida Department of Corrections' equivalent of the SHU or AdSeg. On 4 August 2014, myself and several other political prisoners on my cell block were targeted for repression during a shakedown which was conducted by the pigs. This shakedown was in retaliation for several grievances/complaints being filed about the corrections officers denying us outdoor yard access and indoor day room activities, including access to the phones.

During the shakedown the pigs read some notes I had written down from studying politics, history, and communism. These notes contained some commentary that wasn't very patriotic or friendly toward the Amerikan imperialist regime. When the pigs ordered me to explain the notes I told them that "I like to take notes on politics and current events," and "I like to keep tabs on what's going on in the outside world." The sergeant then held up one of the notes re-

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oppression. The Step Down Program continues the same oppression that the validation process started: it attempts to justify what the state is doing to the oppressed nations.

What will End the Step Down Program?

The Step Down Program is not only similar to the validation process, but here in California many prisons are still using both methods, so we need to end them both.

From the beginning I saw the need to struggle for closing the SHU. From the first hunger strike I knew that if we don't close the SHU altogether, the state will just have us fighting the same problem under new names. This will never accomplish our goal. We need to keep all justifications for the use of solitary confinement in our scope. No matter why someone is held in solitary confinement, it is always torture and it should always be opposed.

At the same time we have made improvements in many prisoners' lives and some have gotten out of SHU, and I am happy for this. However validation and Step Down Programs will keep us locked in the SHUs until we can make resistance to oppression a hip and common thing. When collective actions occur more often than once every ten years, and peaceful protests are as frequent as spring cleaning, then maybe we will finally end validation/step down programs. ★

Note:

1. To receive updates on the class action lawsuit write to: Pelican Bay Class Action
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
201 Redwood Shores Parkway
Redwood Shores, CA 94065-1134

Prisoners from Atlanta Arbitrarily Labeled Gang Members

by a Georgia prisoner
September 2014

For the past 19 months I have been locked down in solitary confinement, all because of a gang validation. In February 2013, I was taken from my cell and locked down in the hole, for nothing. I haven't broken any rules of the prison or given them any reason to punish me. Without a hearing or a proper investigation I was thrown in the hole and labeled "Goodfellas" (G.F.). They put a label on me and several others, and we are "guilty by association." No matter if you are G.F. or not, Smith State Prison will label you G.F. if you are from Atlanta. And the Goodfellas are the only group of people in this prison on lockdown.

Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) started this new program called the "tier program." From my understanding it was designed to treat us as individuals instead of as a group. It's supposedly a 9-month program, and when you complete the program you are supposed to get out of the hole. But that only applies to those who are not validated Goodfellas. If you are validated G.F. then you are stuck in the hole even after you complete the 9 months.

I have the Standard Operating Procedures of the administrative segregation Tier 2, and it states that Tier 2 program is not a punishment measure. Why do I feel that I'm being punished for no reason? All my privileges have been taken away. I can't go to the store for the same things as general population. I can't order a CD player, radio, books, magazines, etc. By being in the hole I have no access to a TV so I'm lost on what's going on in da outside world.

MIM(Prisons) adds: This system of labeling people as members of an organization based on where they are from is well documented in California as well, and we know it's going on in other states. A correspondent from Vermont explains how the STG label is used to target oppressed nationals from out of state:

"Here in Vermont they are quick to call you security threat group (STG) if you're from out of state and got arrested in Vermont. There were 5 guys from New Jersey that got put in Foxtrot (SHU) because they were believed to be gang affiliated just because they were Black and Latino and charged with drug trafficking. It is also guaranteed if you have tattoos that look gang related you're getting an STG write up and doing hole time until the pigs are done with their 'investigation.'"

While this practice purports to address regional disputes that may turn dangerous behind bars, it actually forces people who may not have identified with a lumpen organization to become affiliated for self-defense. It does help promote one goal of the prisons: to fuel disputes between prisoners and expand gang validations to justify locking up more people in long-term isolation, just like this writer explains is happening in Georgia where people labeled Goodfellas aren't let out of the hole in violation of the prison's own rules. We have reports that some G.F.s have

been held in isolation for many years.

Another Georgia writer described the problem of false validations and the dire consequences:

"I'm a Georgia prisoner and I've been validated since I have been incarcerated. I did not say nor did I deny my associating with the Blood gang. I know due to my affiliation I have been denied my chance at parole, plus I have received extra time. I do not say if I am or ain't a gang member. But before I could deny or admit to the situation I was guilty before I was innocent. A lot of prisoners in Georgia DOC who are not affiliated have

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...Florida ferring to "sovereignty" and said "so you're a sovereign citizen?" To which I replied, "No, I'm just a normal human being." Then he told me to explain why I had notes on weapons. I told him how I was in the U.S. army and developed a fascination for firearms, and he responded by saying, "so now you're a domestic terrorist?" I then told him that the average Amerikan citizen is more likely to be terrorized by their own local law enforcement than by so-called "terrorists."

Myself and three other prisoners were placed in confinement after the shakedown and we were charged with the disciplinary infraction of "Possession of Gang Related Paraphernalia." They tried to validate me as a member of a Security Threat Group (STG) on the basis that in the notes I made a reference to "Popular Sovereignty" and that therefore I was in possession of documents related to the sovereign association, which the imperialist bureaucrats view as an STG because sovereign citizens are not compelled to abide by U.S. laws.

When I went to my disciplinary hearing I told these pigs that the so-called evidence they have against me (the "gang paraphernalia") is merely a bunch of notes I copied from social studies. I explained that "Popular Sovereignty" is (supposed) to be one of the five basic principles of Amerikan government and that anyone who claims to be a patriotic Amerikan citizen should at least know this.

MIM Theory Magazines Available

Want to go deeper into study? We have a surplus of these issues of *MIM Theory*. Send in a contribution for *ULK* to get free issues of the magazines below (see p. 12 for more info on how to contribute).

Issue 2/3: Revolutionary Feminism
Issue 4: Spiral Trajectory (Communist History)
Issue 5: Diet for a Small Red Planet (Strategy)
Issue 6: Stalin
Issue 9: Psychology
Issue 10: Labor Aristocracy
Issue 12: Environment and Revolution
Issue 14: United Front

been validated because of their association with others. People are getting killed because the DOC thinks they are members of an organization that they are not. When are people going to do the right thing and stop assuming and instead use facts."

We need to build a United Front for Peace in Prisons so "gang violence" loses its effect as a rallying point for more control units. Whether or not you are actually a part of a lumpen organization, if you are put in a unit with others you can use this opportunity to promote peace and unity. Together we can fight to shut down control units, and build a movement that can defeat the imperialist system that needs prisons and long-term isolation units for social control. ★

I used this argument to beat this charge and I also presented my own evidence as a defense – part of a social studies assignment on Amerikan government from FDOC's very own educational department which explains (what is supposed to be) the Five Basic Principles of Amerikan Government; 1) Federal System, 2) Popular Sovereignty, 3) Separation of Powers, 4) Checks and Balances, and 5) Limited Government. In real life these "principles" hold no valuable meaning, just as the U.S. constitution is merely a piece of paper.

It seems evident that anyone making an attempt to educate themselves is viewed as a threat by the imperialist bureaucrats and anyone who is against oppression and imperialism is a "domestic terrorist." As revolutionaries, it is imperative that we educate ourselves and our fellow comrades and expose the true terrorists for who they really are: the terrorists in pig clothing, masquerading as those who "protect and serve" and provide "care, custody and control."

MIM(Prisons) adds: We hope others will take this comrade's example to fight false validation attempts made against them and stay active in political work and study. For those not yet involved in political study, write to us to join our next introductory study group. ★

...Continued from page 4

...Validation

with a government serving the interests of the world's oppressed. But as a part of the work to build towards communist revolution we battle today to shut down prison control units and end the targeting of prison activists and all oppressed nations. ★

...Continued from previous page **...Pennsylvania**

comfortable as possible. They feed you next to nothing to increase hunger and craving for commissary. They make all movements restrained to add to the discomfort. This is all done in hopes of breaking your spirit or to make you "give in to the inevitable," to quote a pig.

These are only a few of the ever-changing, ever-occurring issues here for myself and the comrades. There is a resistance to struggle not only for our liberties but for those who would come after us as an example of unity, komradery and solidarity in struggle. ★

Pigs Orchestrate Race Riots to Fill Control Units

by a California prisoner
September 2014

Things have been pretty rough here at Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP). A prisonrat-orchestrated racial riot has put me in administrative segregation since July. KVSP's "A" yard (the only general population, non-honor yard) has been, more or less, on a constant lock-down since the beginning of the year. This lock-down is due to racial tensions that have been exacerbated by the prison's state-sponsored security threat group, also known as the goon squad, or simply the gooners.

The best way for the prison oligarchy to remain in power and thwart any organizing or political dissent is to keep us all fighting amongst ourselves. Of course this is nothing new for many of us, but for some reason we all find ourselves locked down time and again, pointing fingers (and unfortunately, knives) at one another instead of using our minds of reason to see that clearly this whole war/mess has been instigated by the very pigs that always have the most to gain. It's extremely frustrating to sit here watching the same pattern of senseless fighting and rioting occur while the pigs laugh, crack jokes, and generally play us against each other for their sick jollies and political agenda.

This madness on "A" yard at KVSP and elsewhere in the state is definitely part of a much bigger political agenda. One of the results of the 2013 protests in California is that, slowly but surely, a lot of those guys have been returning to the main lines after spending ten, fifteen, or twenty years back there in the SHU. Well, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) can't just let those beds remain empty so we've been seeing the gooners dropping fallacious gang validation packets on people for all kinds of erroneous reasons. And the best way to "prove" gang conspiracy or activity is to run us all into these stupid racial riots. The fucked up thing about it is that it's working. Every time we all go out to the yard and fight each other is another victory for the pigs, and another bus load of "gang members" heading to the SHU torture units and thus, the very "evidence" CDCR points to as justification in keeping those control units open and full.

This white vs. Black violence needs to stop for the benefit and health of both our people. Let's stop and remember that it should always be blue vs. green! It's time for peace on these yards. Don't forget who the real enemy is.

MIM(Prisons) adds: This comrade's call for peace on the yards underscores the importance of the United Front for Peace in Prisons. We need organizations to come together behind bars to stop the pigs and the imperialist system in general. A United Front is comprised of groups with different views and goals, that have a common enemy. It doesn't require everyone to agree

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New Tennessee CUs Modeled After Georgia Torture

by a Tennessee prisoner
September 2014

I am a POW in the state of Tennessee and in these narratives I am providing exposure about this wicked prison system and Derrick Shofield, who came from Georgia. This dude is constantly applying new rules, with the latest being called tier management – something straight outta Georgia prison system. Of late all of Tennessee prisons are run like Georgia. This is the same Shofield who was instrumental in causing the largest sit down in the state of Georgia. On an I-team investigation on channel 4, Nashville, TN, it was reported that Shofield ordered two former wardens in West Tennessee to alter incident reports on assaults on staff.

As I write they are building security threat group management units at Riverbend Maximum security plantation in Nashville, Tennessee. This is the big sister of tier management. Both are part of the larger policy agenda regarding U.S. prisons. One of the standards that the federal government sets in order for the state to receive construction subsidies is to mandate the building of supermax units, security threat group units, such as the ones at Riverbend: steel and stone sensory deprivation cells.

In Georgia they have this tier 2 program of gang control for long-term lockdown. This same situation is being played out in Tennessee. The prisoners in Tennessee should take a page from Georgia, sit down and do nothing in silent protest. It's some wicked shit going on in Tennessee, it has to be said that for all the men and women trapped in the wretched crime and punishment morass, especially in the Tennessee

Beware of Gang Intelligence

by a New York prisoner
October 2014

In New York what you call "gang validation" is called "gang intelligence" and every prison has at least one sergeant who works on it full time.

The biggest gang intelligence tool is the phones – New York State prisons record 100% of phone calls on digital hard drives. Obviously, there are not enough ears to listen to 80,000+ prisoners all the time, so they just sample, or review a particular prisoner's calls. Or they may review calls to a certain phone number by multiple different prisoners. And the authorities are very careful. They rarely make direct use of recorded calls to nail minor offenders. I know about the extent of the monitoring because I double-bunked with a guy whose ex-

system, we have to determine our fate. We got the power.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This comrade gets at the truth of prison control units, and in fact the broader prison system in general: it is a system built for social control. Prisons in general house the oppressed nation lumpen in disproportionate numbers, and for those who speak out, organize or otherwise challenge the system from behind bars, there are long-term isolation cells for even further control. These control units are torture and we must demand they be shut down. Part of this battle is documenting their existence, a project that we need help with from anyone who can complete our control unit survey. (see p. 15)

We offer the example of prisons in China while it was still Communist-led and Mao was alive, in stark contrast to the American criminal injustice system. In China prisoners participated in education classes with others where they studied politics and discussed the nature of their crimes and why their actions were harmful to the people. Prisoners were allowed to participate in productive activities of work and learned cooperative practices. Many who went into prison for actions like theft or even spying, came out dedicated to serving the people and grateful for a second chance. The example of Adelle and Allyn Rickett, two Americans who worked as spies for the United States until their imprisonment, wrote an inspiring book detailing these progressive practices and what they learned from years in prison in China. This book is titled Prisoners of Liberation and we distribute it through our Free Books for Prisoners Program. You can trade political work for free study materials, see page 12 or write in to find out more. ★

girlfriend's new boyfriend was beaten up very badly. My bunky was questioned harshly and almost charged based on calls going back two years. Another man, who I worked with, a defrocked politician, got six months in the box, when "they" had it in for him, based on year-old recorded conversations.

From snippets of phone conversations I've overheard while making my own calls, nearly all prisoners are lulled into complacency and extreme carelessness by the authorities letting little transgressions slip by while they wait for the really useful information.

In New York, men identified as gang affiliates go to the most miserable prisons which have the fewest educational and remedial programs (nearly zero). Young, generally terrified, totally uneducated men get no help. Recidivism is good for job security.

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...Palestine

This campaign to support the people of Palestine is significant in that it is the first USW-initiated campaign around an issue not related to the immediate conditions of prisoners themselves since MIM(Prisons) has been around. The campaign was launched without a lot of preparation, and despite the inherent limitations imposed on those in prison, we got good participation. As one California comrade recently reported, the petition was a tool for outreach that led to many political dialogues and lessons learned that will contribute to the building of the anti-imperialist movement in U.S. prisons. Their efforts to collect signatures reached beyond just those who signed the petition. (see ULK 40)

The need for these types of agitational campaigns is one of the lessons that we can take away from this experience. The barriers among much of the prison population to supporting the Palestinians' right to survival are built on a combination of American patriotism, misinformation and apathy. However, to sum up the reports we have received, we'd say that fear of repression is the number one barrier being faced, which is a problem USW faces with all its campaigns. One comrade reported setbacks due to fears around hysteria surrounding the Islamic State.

A number of comrades reported not being able to get any signatures yet, and one wrote from California:

"My focus thus far has been on the socially conscious Muslim prisoners, whom I guessed would be the most willing out of everyone to sign the petition. But I'm starting to see more and more that the overwhelming majority in Amerikkka just ain't willing to take a stand against these racist imperialist idiots in no way shape or form. Not one of the Muslims, out of the around 25 prisoners I approached, would sign the thing. The excuses ranged from, 'We need to worry about fixing 'home' first...' to just flat out 'The Jews have too much control in this country for me to sign some paper and get on their shit list.' ... so far everybody but me has been too scared to sign it."

A few weeks later this comrade submitted his petition with 25 signatures. This fear of signing is a common problem in prisons where all mail is read and punishment for activism can be severe. A comrade in Colorado wrote:

"I read the last issue of ULK and I want to say that the U.S. policy against Palestine has long been underrepresented and ignored. Amerikkka is telling the people of Gaza and Lebanon that it will allow Israel to murder and justify it in the name of 'peace.' I feel that the greatest threat to world peace is the U.S. foreign policy. As prisoners we all should

stand with the people of Gaza and their right to self-defense and self-determination. Progress is being made here as far as the petition goes. Many are in solidarity against amerikkkan imperialism as it stands with Israel yet many are afraid to sign."

One letter from Virginia described the difficulty promoting internationalism:

"I have been having trouble convincing prisoners here to sign the Palestine USW petition. The fear of institutional retaliation keeps a majority of them from involving themselves in any type of radical struggles or demonstrations. Compounding the problem is the fact they cannot grasp the concept of 'internationalism.' The dominant question was, 'what do the Palestinians have to do with me?' I tried as hard as I could to convince them that all struggles against imperialism abroad are a reflection of the non-ruling class struggles here in the Empire. So please do not construe the lack of signatures as an indicator of my lack of organizing

skills."

This question of what the Palestinian struggle has to do with me is a manifestation of the relative wealth and privilege of Americans as a whole. In reality the Palestinian struggle is counter to the material interests of the petty bourgeois majority in the United States which enjoys a supply of cheap gas ensured by American military presence in the Middle East. Like the struggle of oppressed people around the world, the Palestinian people's fight for national liberation threatens American imperialism and its ability to control and exploit the labor of Third World peoples. Any successful revolt against American imperialism and its allies/puppets (such as Israel) will destabilize that power and may inspire others.

But when building public opinion with the lumpen in prison we can at least draw some connections to national oppression within U.S. borders and the national oppression of Palestinians. One researcher has claimed that Palestinians are the most imprisoned people in the world, based on the percentage who have been in prison (the United States is still #1 in the number of prisoners it holds at one time). New Afrikans and the original inhabitants on North America are potential rivals for this title. In both places, the dominant nation, with the weapons and wealth, is denying the oppressed nations independence and self-determination. And the cause of the Palestinian people is allied with the cause of oppressed nations everywhere in the world; the common enemy is imperialism.

Another personsyn wrote about some more re-

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...New York

Another method is to record the information on the outside of mail. I happen to know Green Haven Correctional Facility was doing that big time, probably related to Muslim prisoners. Authorities look for multiple prisoners written from or writing to the same address. Same game with phone numbers. It's not likely ten guys have the same wife or grandma.

Regarding the petitions advertised on page 12 of ULK, please be very careful. Petitions from prisoners are completely illegal in New York. A clear constitutional violation which has, unfortunately, been allowed by every level of New York and federal courts. Please find another word, at least, and please don't encourage more than one signature on any piece of paper, or multiple letters mailed together. Anything considered a petition in New York is a quick bus ride to a six-month box stay.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This comrade correctly points out the many difficulties prisoners face with secure communications and general security of self-preservation. As we've written in the past, secure communications are a critical part of self-defense at this stage in the struggle. (see ULK 31) Everyone needs to be conscious of the many ways the imperialist state can monitor our work and communications. The American public knows that all its communications are being monitored now, and prisoners should be under no illusion about theirs.

Along those lines, comrades in New York should take heed of this warning about petitions. At the same time, we should not be scared into complacency. Petitioning the government is a basic right guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, which reads, "the right of the people... to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." So while we should be strategic about using petitions in conditions where they have been used as an excuse for political repression, we must fight these battles for basic civil rights for the imprisoned population in this country. MIM(Prisons) will work with comrades in New York to push this battle further. ★

actionary responses to his attempts to collect signatures.

"I attempt to discuss issues raised by MIM, but I'm completely lacking in knowledge. For example, prisoners here state that the Palestinians deserve the bombing because Hamas fired rockets into Israel. They say the land of Israel is not occupied by foreigners – that it belongs to Jews. They (prisoners here – a large number) say that there has never been a nation called 'Palestine' and that the people who today label themselves 'Palestinians' are simply Arabs mostly from the Trans Jordan area. So what is the correct response?"

These positions raise the important question of how we define a nation. Stalin gave us guidance on this point, describing a nation as a group of people with a common language, culture, ter-

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STG Validations to Justify Reopening of Tamms Supermax

by an Illinois prisoner
October 2014

The good old boys are upset about the closing of Tamms Supermax in Illinois a few years ago. Rather than let Tamms sit unoccupied, Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) officials have devised a plan to put pressure on the legislature to open up the 500-bed hell hole again.

Suddenly they claim we have a major gang problem here in Illinois. IDOC officials are rounding up all the Latinos who they can claim are a part of a security threat group (STG) and sticking them in administrative detention (A.D.).

Some guys haven't caught so much as a disciplinary ticket in years and were quietly toiling away in the kitchen or some other form of servitude. Next thing they know they're on a bus and sent to A.D. Some guys, after serving their segregation time for disciplinary tickets, found themselves in Phase 1 of A.D.

The common thread that binds these guys together seems to be that they are alleged members of an STG. It doesn't take much to validate someone as an active member these days. Most guys were members as kids, and their record preceded them to the joint. Some were identified by gang tattoos. And of course there is always that elusive confidential informant (CI), and only the gang intel officers seem to know for certain if the CI even exists. Personally I believe the correctional officers (COs) make up the CIs because the COs know that all they have to do is say the CI's identity is being withheld for the safety and security of the institution, and no one can or will inquire further.

These brothers sit with no recourse in the courts, stuck in limbo waiting in administrative segregation for some sadist to stop using them as a means to obtain a bigger piece of the tax dollar pie so they can re-open Tamms Supermax, and give themselves a pay raise for a job well done while they are at it.

MIM(Prisons) adds: Tamms opened in 1998. As 2008 approached many who opposed the torture chambers in Illinois formed the Tamms Year Ten campaign to bring attention to it and get it shut down. By January 2013, the unit was completely closed. This campaign was one of a handful demonstrating that the closing of control units is a winnable campaign under imperialism.

That said, almost as soon as Tamms was closed we are getting reports of increasing use of control units in Illinois again. This is why our Shut Down the Control Units campaign uses a specific definition of long-term isolation rather than just counting the prisons officially labeled as "supermaxes" as many bourgeois press do. The above example of pushing false gang validations for more or higher security prisons should not surprise us because prisons are a tool of social control for the imperialists, and that

social control includes long-term isolation cells for anyone who challenges the system. The oppressed must organize to build power to change this.

This situation also provides a good example of how we know prisons are not run for profit. The government regularly uses funds to open control unit prisons, which are more expensive to run than lower security prisons. In 1999, *MIM Notes* reported "Tamms' budget works out to well over \$34,000 per year to control each prisoner, not including the \$73 million the state reports spending on building the dungeon. Tamms' cost per prisoner is more than three times the \$11,006 estimated cost of living for a University of Illinois student at the Urbana-Champaign campus." The employees (COs and other staff) make out with nice high salaries (totaling \$17 million at Tamms when it first opened), but these salaries, and everything else in the prison, is funded by the government, with prisoner labor offsetting some of the costs. The imperialists don't mind spending money to sustain their system of social control. It's money they got from the exploitation of workers in the Third World, and they will spend it freely to maintain their way of life and position of power. ★

Note: MIM, Tamms Supermax latest in decades of prison struggle, September 1999.

STG Accusations Target Freedom Fighter in Ohio

by an Ohio prisoner
November 2014

Due to another prisoner's actions who I correspond with regularly, I am being accused of ordering a hit on a prisoner "In an effort to further my position and recruiting purposes in security threat group (STG) activity." In fighting my supermax placement, I was able to get them to admit that the letter they are using as evidence was written in code. So they have no way of understanding what is really talked about in this letter. I went to the extreme of giving them some STG codes to show them that no hit was made on anyone's life and that they are making this out to be something that it isn't. This led to me being given another conduct report for possession of STG related material.

I started using the grievance process to help fight my case instead of going the way of my past and becoming aggressive. This led to more harassment including cell searches in which conduct reports and grievances that I filled came up missing, making it seem as if I am making all this shit up!

I have been threatened with supermax placement since the day I got off this bus. Last year I was given 3 months in segregation over an incident where I was defending myself against another prisoner who attempted to stab me, and he was given less than a month. I was told that this was due to the fact that I had to have done something to provoke this individual! It's crazy. I used to read about other prisoners complaining

Victory in Unity, Leavenworth

by a Federal prisoner
October 2014

At this point Leavenworth Detention Center has no gang validation or step down program. Actually it seems that the administration does very little to address gang violence. This is a detention facility housing mainly pre-trial prisoners but it seems more like a war zone. No effort is made to separate rival gang members or to place people in a safe environment. For example it is common for the pigs to house a white supremacist with a Muslim.

They pit us against each other and sit back and enjoy the show. We must look beyond the tip of our noses and begin to see the bigger picture. United we stand, divided we fall.

Recently we had a major victory! The food here is substandard at best but the meatloaf in particular is undercooked and rancid. White, Black and Latino all stood together and refused to accept trays and refused to lockdown until we were fed. The pigs brought in tear gas canisters to try to intimidate us but we simply refused to go to sleep without food. Finally we were brought sack lunches and they took meatloaf off the menu. If we stick together and stand up for what's right peacefully anything is possible.

MIM(Prisons) adds: This writer reminds us that prisons can play lumpen organizations both ways. On the one side we oppose the validation of people as gang members because this is used to punish and isolate and it is used to target activists and leaders. On the other side we oppose prisons throwing rival organizations together to try to create conflict and violence, which is further used as justification to isolate and lockdown whoever is perceived as a leader, activist or troublemaker. None of these actions are for the purpose of promoting safety or security of the prison population.

It is good to hear about people coming together in spite of the pigs attempts to foment conflict. Winning one change in food is a small battle, but it gives people the chance to see what is possible through unity, and hopefully will lead to greater unity in the future. Those conscious comrades in Leavenworth should take this opportunity to spread political education, and try to unite all against the criminal injustice system. If everyone is on the yard together, this is a good opportunity to start study classes. Write to MIM(Prisons) for help getting a study group started in your prison. ★

of this kind of treatment and I'm ashamed to say that I used to doubt them and think that there had to be more to the story until I found myself facing the same set of circumstances.

Though I am a member of the United Blood Nation (UBN), I am not a gang member. To many that is hard to understand, but to explain it quickly, I feel that gang members rep colors and are more focused on ignorance. I am not

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A Scientific Definition of Rape and Why the Gender Aristocracy is Important

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)
November 2014

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) needs more activists focused on gender. MIM had a rich history in work around gender. Today a gender-focused MIM cell could do a lot to advance the struggle in the First World. For the majority of people in the richest countries, class is not an issue that will gain us much traction. But these leisure societies, dominated by gender oppressors, are concerned with the realm of leisure time where there are battles to be fought. Yet almost no one is drawing hard lines in the gender struggle today. Even some who give lip service to the need to divide the oppressor nations maintain a class reductionist line that prevents them from taking up revolutionary positions on gender.

Importance of the Gender Aristocracy

MIM sketched out the gender hierarchy as shown in the diagram below, with biological males above biological females, but with the whole First World far above the whole Third World. The line between men (gender oppressors) and wimmin (gender oppressed) is between Third World biological males (bio-males) and Third World bio-females. In this simplified model, the Third World is majority wimmin and the whole world is majority men.(1)

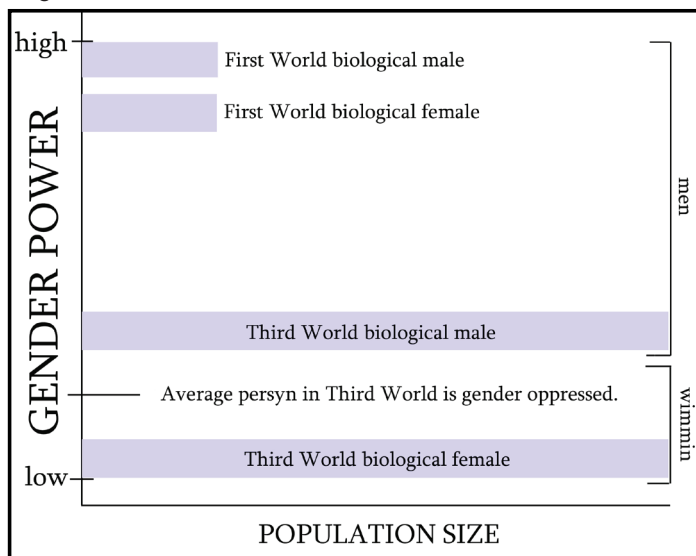
Near the top we see a small portion of the bio-females in the world are men of relatively high gender privilege. The term gender aristocracy was coined to account for this group of people who are often viewed as part of the gender oppressed, but are actually allied with the patriarchy.

MIM line distinguishes class and gender as class being defined by the relations of production and distribution, and gender defined as relations during leisure time. Largely due to their class position, the petty bourgeoisie, which makes up the vast majority in the First World, have a lot of leisure time and our culture in the United States is therefore very leisure oriented. Many of the things that are prominent and important in the lives of the gender aristocracy are not so for the majority of the world.

While MIM got a lot of push back on the labor aristocracy line, this came mostly from the dogmatic white nationalist left. The average Amerikan didn't get upset until MIM criticized their video games and explained how all sex is rape. These are things that are very important to the lives and pleasure of the imperialist country petty bourgeoisie. Knowing this is helpful in our agitational work. Our principal task overall is to create public opinion and independent institutions of the oppressed to seize power. In the First World, dominated by the oppressor nations and oppressor gender, this requires dividing the

oppressor in an effort to break off allies. Even if we can't recruit whole segments of the oppressor groups, dividing them over issues of importance to the proletariat is a useful strategy.

While we say First World people are men in the gender hierarchy, unlike economic exploitation, anyone can be the target of gender oppression. Even First World bio-males are raped or killed for reasons related to gender and leisure time. This does not make them of the oppressed gender, but it does make such extreme forms of gender oppression a reality in the lives of the First World. In addition, the exploiter classes can benefit from the labor of others without ever having to use force themselves to extract that value, yet gender relations are something we all experience. As a result, even in the First World some people come to see the negative aspects of the patriarchy, with or without first-hand experience of extreme gender oppression, because of the very personal and alienating emotional experiences they have.



A small minority in the First World will join the proletarian forces due to their own experiences with gender oppression. So it is important for there to be an alternative to the pro-patriarchy Liberalism of the gender aristocracy as a way to split off sections of the gender-obsessed leisure class. Below we take on one example of the gender aristocracy line in an effort to reassert an alternative.

"All Sex is Rape" Needs a Comeback

We are using an article posted by the Leading Light Communist Organization (LLCO) as an example below.(2) Where LLCO actually engages the theory of whether all sex is rape under the patriarchy, we get a typical critique:

"Setting the bar for what counts as consent impossibly high obliterates the distinction between, for example, a wife initiating sex on her husband's birthday and the case of a masked man with a knife at a girl's throat forcing sex. To set the bar so high is completely at odds

with what most people think, including rape victims themselves. Most victims themselves intuitively recognize the difference between consensual sex and rape."(3)

This is completely backwards. We do not have a problem of the masses confusing a womyn being compelled to have sex with a man because the patriarchal society tells her that is her duty on his birthday, and a womyn being compelled to have sex with a man because he is holding a knife to her throat and threatening to kill her. Rather, we have a problem of people not understanding that we need a revolutionary overthrow of patriarchy and a subsequent upheaval and reeducation of current humyn relations in order to end rape in both cases.

Furthermore, it is Liberalism to rely on the subjective "i'll know it when i see it" argument to define rape. This is exactly what MIM argued against when developing their line on gender. When an Amerikan judge hears a case of rape charged against a New Afrikan male by a white

female, we can accurately predict the outcome of the judge's "intuition." When the roles are reversed, so is the verdict. And we only pick that as an easy example; we don't have to involve nation at all. It is quite common for Amerikan females to admit to themselves that they had been raped, months or years after the incident. What it takes is a social process, where rape is defined in a way that matches her experience. This social definition changes through time and space. And those who recognize this tend to gravitate towards the MIM line on rape.

The gender aristocracy is very concerned with distinguishing between rape and good sex, because good sex is the premise of their very existence as gender oppressors. For

the gender aristocracy the bio-male provides safe/respectful good sex and the bio-female provides good sex in the form of a respectable/chaste partner. "Good sex" helps to distinguish and justify the existence of the gender aristocracy. Good sex is also a central source of pleasure for the gender aristocracy, to which they have very strong emotional attachments.

But the opponents to the MIM line on rape cannot explain away power differentials that are inherent in the patriarchy. They have no appropriate label for the sex that a womyn has with a man because she feels trapped in her marriage and unable to leave because of financial dependence. Or for the sex a womyn has with her girlfriend who is also her professor and in control of her grade at University. Or for the sex that a prisoner has with another prisoner because he needs the protection he knows he will get from someone who is physically stronger and respected. There are clear elements of power in all of these relationships. These are pretty obvious

Continued on next page...

...Continued from previous page **...Rape Debate**

examples, but it's impossible to have a sexual relationship in capitalism under the patriarchy that does not have power differences, whether they be economic, physical, social, work, academic or some other aspect of power. This is not something we can just work around to create perfectly equal relationships, because our relationships don't exist outside of a social context.

One assumption of our critics is that rape cannot be pleasurable to both parties. We disagree with this definition of rape, and believe that power play is very tied up with pleasure in leisure time, to the point that a coercive sex act can be pleasurable to all involved. We expect this is more common among the gender privileged.

Punishing Rapists

Another theme throughout the LLCO piece is the question of how we are going to determine who the "rapists" are that need to be punished if we are all rapists. This is combined with taking offense at being implicitly called a rapist.

The gender aristocracy cares about labeling and punishing rapists, again, because it distinguishes their good sex from others' bad sex. It is an exertion of their gender privilege. That is why most people in prison for rape in the United States are bio-males from the oppressed nations, and the dominant discussions about rape in the imperialist media are about places like India, Iraq, Mali or Nigeria.

LLCO accuses our line of discrediting anti-rape activists. MIM has been discrediting pseudo-feminism in the form of rape crisis centers for decades. Amerikan anti-rape activists take up the very line that we are critiquing, so this is almost a tautological critique by LLCO. Even in regards to struggles initiated by Third World wimmin, they are often corralled into a Liberal approach to gender oppression when not in the context of a strong proletarian movement. The imperialist media and those pseudo-feminists pushing an agenda of "international sisterhood" help make sure of this. This is an example of gender oppression and enforcing the patriarchy across borders using the gender aristocracy to sell it to the oppressed.

In general, we are not interested in finding the "real rapists" as we don't believe there is such a thing. Rape is a product of patriarchy – that is the essence of our line that all sex is rape. Imprisoning, beating or killing rapists will not reduce gender oppression in the context of a patriarchal society. Yet this is the only solution that is even vaguely implied in LLCO's critique.

Of course there are those who take the logic of the patriarchy to the extreme, just as there are those who take the logic of capitalism to the extreme. And we agree that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the masses will pick out these unreformable enemies for serious punishment. Yet, the majority of people who took up practices of capitalism or of the patriarchy will

...Continued from page 3

...Don't Loot
Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner. But we must handle our own.

If you are ready to commit to this struggle, then take up the Ten-Point Platform & Program of the Black Order Revolutionary Organization

be reformed. This does not mean these people never exploited, stole from or sexually coerced another person before.

Today is another story. We adamantly oppose the criminal justice system as a tool for policing sexual practices, just as we oppose it in general as a tool of social control to protect imperialism and the patriarchy. Therefore we find this desire to identify rapists to be a reactionary one.

Pushing for Gender Suicide

The problem with the ideology of the gender aristocracy is that their attachment to "happy sex" and the importance that most of them put on it will put them at odds with revolutionary attacks on the patriarchy. This is the practical side of "all sex is rape" as a tool to defang the gender aristocracy who will side with the imperialists on gender alone. If our critics get sad when we question the consensualness of their sex that is a good thing, because it challenges their attachments to the status quo. Truly radical changes must take place in our sex lives, our gender relations and our leisure time in general. The less resistance there is to this the better.

The Liberal argument is that by policing individual behaviors you can avoid being raped or raping someone else. This is just factually untrue. Yes, we need to transform the way people interact as part of the overthrow of patriarchy, but because gender relations operate at a group level, policing individual behaviors alone is just another form of lifestyle politics.

Just as all Americans must come to terms with their status as exploiters, and must view themselves as reforming criminals, gender oppressors must come to terms with the ever-presence of rape in the behaviors that they get much subjective pleasure from. Until they do, they will not be able to take on or genuinely interact with a proletarian line on gender. ★

Notes:

1. Stay tuned for expansion of our line on sex as a social construct, and how intersex and trans people fit into the patriarchy.
2. Write in for more of our criticism of LLCO and an update to this debate.
3. Comments on "All Sex is Rape". 20 July 2014, LLCO.org.
4. For more depth on MIM's gender line, get the magazine MIM Theory 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism. MIM Distributors, 1992.

(BORO), and become a material force capable of changing society and the world.

To the youth in the streets: you are the future of our nation. You are the lifeblood of the movement we are building. You must understand that at the heart of every great social revolutionary movement is the urgent need to transform people into a new and more advanced human being by means of struggle.

The u.s. doesn't want New Afrikan and other oppressed people to recognize that we can count on Ourselves – and Ourselves alone – for solutions to the problems of violence, inadequate housing, inadequate health care, unemployment, etc.

"The police and those that they truly serve and protect, do not want us to glimpse through our youth, the power that lies within each of us. If the Crips and Bloods can bring peace to our communities, and the police can't or won't, then why do we need the police? If the Disciples, Vice Lords, Cobras, Latin Kings and other street organizations can serve and protect Our children and Our elders, and the state demonstrates that it can't or won't, then why should we continue to depend upon it and profess loyalty to it? If the power to end violence exists within our communities, then We should be looking for ways to increase Our power, and We should be looking for ways to exercise it."

Ours is a fight to become masters of Our Own destiny. We struggle so that We can seize the power to freely determine and fully benefit from Our productive capacities, and to shape all productive and social relations in Our Own society.

The onus is on Us if We want to solve any problem in Our communities. It ain't on Our enemy to solve Our problems – even though they created them! So by appealing to the Mayor, Governor, and President with the belief they will satisfy Our needs, We end up hampering the development of the self-confidence of Our people. When We call upon the oppressive state to solve Our problems, We promote the idea that it is not necessary to struggle against it to replace it. However, none of this is to say that demands should not be made upon the state. It is only to say that we should have no illusions, and We should allow none to be cast.

In order to gain the power that We need – we must first respect each other, love each other,
Continued on page 13...

Under Lock & Key not enough?

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

The whole study course costs \$5. You can trade work for study if you can't pay. Participants must be able to receive the study materials via mail and respond to each assignment on time. Write in today to sign up for the next group starting February 2015.

- UNITED STRUGGLE FROM WITHIN -

Under Lock & Key is the main organizing tool of **United Struggle from Within (USW)**, the mass organization led by **MIM(Prisons)** for prisoners and former prisoners. 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

A basic task you can do for **USW** is get people to subscribe to *Under Lock & Key*. It is free for U.S. prisoners! The most effective way to expand our readership is to ask other prison publications to run free ads or plugs for *Under Lock & Key* and **MIM(Prisons)**'s Free Political Books for Prisoners Program. The ad could say something like "MIM is a revolutionary anti-imperialist group fighting criminal injustice, and helping prisoners to organize and educate themselves. Sends free political books and dictionaries, offers a free subscription to their newspaper *Under Lock & Key*, and runs correspondence study courses. Write to MIM for a free subscription." Be sure to include our contact info from page 1.

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. We have plenty of back issues if you need them for recruiting, just ask.

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. States to newly join the grievance campaign are **Georgia, Kansas, and South Carolina!** Petitions are also available for **Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas.** Write in to get the petition for your state. If your prison's policies allow, give 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.

TEXAS ACTIVISTS STAND UP!

There are a few campaigns building in Texas right now, and we've put all the information and help guides together into a Texas Activist Pack. The current active campaigns are a protest against the new limitation on 5 indigent letters per month; combatting the deadly heat in Texas prisons, and the petition to ensure our grievances are addressed. Write in to get the Texas Activist Pack!

EXPAND STUDY GROUPS

Form a study group in your area. To start, you can simply discuss this issue of *Under Lock & Key*. Choose what to study next based on what concepts interest you from your discussion. Send us periodic reports on what you have been studying, and we will send you plenty of literature to delve into. We can also help get the reading materials through the mail to your comrades if needed. As you study, you can compile study questions to create a study pack for future groups who want to study the same material. **MIM(Prisons)** runs Maoist correspondence study groups, but an in-persyn group may be better for those whose mail from us is being censored, or to reach people who wouldn't join our group.

FIGHT CENSORSHIP

Everyone should send **MIM(Prisons)** copies of your censorship documents for denied issues of *Under Lock & Key* and other mail from **MIM Distributors**. We upload these documents to our website prisoncensorship.info to publicize how censorship is used for political repression. We also use them to track where we are being blacklisted, why, and to write appeal letters on behalf of our active comrades. You should always file grievances and appeals for your censored mail. There are ongoing anti-censorship campaigns in several states. Let us know your mail is being censored and we can plug you in.

BECOME A ULK FIELD CORRESPONDENT

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 Writing Group.

For *ULK 42* we are going to focus on the United Front for Peace in Prisons. Page 2 of *ULK* outlines the Principles of the United Front, and we regularly report on new signatories. September 9 has been observed as a day of peace and solidarity to build the United Front and honor the Attica uprising of 1971. Tell us the practical steps you've been taking to build peace behind bars, and the effects and difficulties of this organizing work.

ULK 43 will be on control units and long-term isolation. Control units are often used as a tool of political repression. We will be summing up the survey results from page 15 in this issue. Be sure to fill out the control unit survey if you haven't already!

If you've written us a letter, then you have all the skills you need to become a 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 yours.

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

OPPOSE THE ISRAELI SETTLER STATE

A statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people has been issued by prisoners in California, and we are collecting signatures to a petition opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestine. See page 1 or write in for more info.

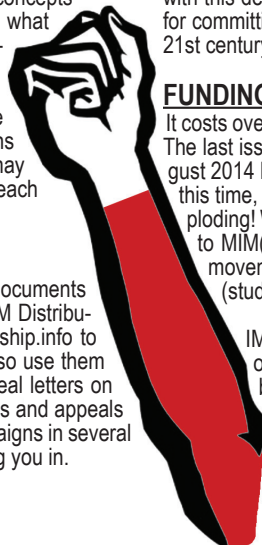
"As prisoners of good conscience we reject the genocide and slaughter which has historically been imposed on the people of Palestine and which is currently being played out by the Jewish state ever since the creation of Israel in 1948. And while the American imperialists and their general citizenry and population have found us guilty of crimes against civil society, we prisoners likewise find them guilty of crimes against humanity for their collusion with the state of Israel to exterminate the Palestinian nation.

"Within these walls we are as yet powerless to tap into the potential of the imprisoned lumpen, but we are not yet powerless to sign a piece of paper to denounce the state of Israel and their support in the United States. Therefore with this declaration we angrily express our indignation with the state of Israel for committing genocide, and the Israeli people for allowing it to happen in the 21st century after vowing 'never again.'"

FUNDING NEEDED TO EXPAND ULK

It costs over \$200 to print an issue of *ULK* with 4 extra bonus pages of content. The last issue where donors and Sustainers made this happen was July/August 2014 No. 39. We thought we were going to be able to print a bonus issue this time, but made an error in our calculations. Plus our subscriber list is exploding! We need \$70 more to print bonus pages in the next issue. Donations to **MIM(Prisons)** go straight into our work to help build the anti-imperialist movement behind bars, and donations that aren't for anything specific (study group, books, etc.) go toward adding bonus content to *ULK*.

IMPORTANT: We can not accept checks or money orders made out to "MIM Distributors." When it is time to send in your pledge by check, we will send you instructions how. If you want to send a one-time check, let us know first. If your facility rules allow it, stamps are always the best way to donate!



Summing Up September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity

by MIM(Prisons)
November 2014

For the past three years, on September 9 prisoners across the country have joined in a solidarity demonstration on this anniversary of the Attica uprising. It was initiated by an organization that was a part of the United Front for Peace in Prisons. That organization is no longer around, but new organizations and individuals have carried forward the struggle.

The organizers call on activists to take this day to promote the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP) by building unity with fellow captives, and to demon-

strate resistance to the criminal injustice system by fasting, refraining from work, engaging only in solidarity actions, and ceasing all prisoner-on-prisoner hostilities. In some prisons the demonstrations are big and involve many participants, in others just a handful of people join in, and in some places only one person stands up. But every action, large or small, contributes to raising awareness and building unity.

This year we received only a handful of reports from comrades about their September 9 organizing work. This is in contrast to the reports from the past two years which showed a growing interest and involvement in this day of protest. It is also in striking contrast to the widespread response and organizing around the Palestine petition by United Struggle from Within (USW) comrades.

We take this opportunity to re-evaluate the September 9 action. The question for all UFPP signatories and USW organizers: Why was organizing for the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity so limited in 2014? Should we do something different in 2015, either to help promote the September 9 action, or by focusing on other campaigns and protests? Send us your thoughts so we can sum up and continue to expand our efforts to cease prisoner-on-prisoner violence in the U.S. criminal injustice system. ★

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...Don't Loot

educate each other, protect one another and allow no harm to come to any member of our community – whether that harm be from inside or outside of our community.

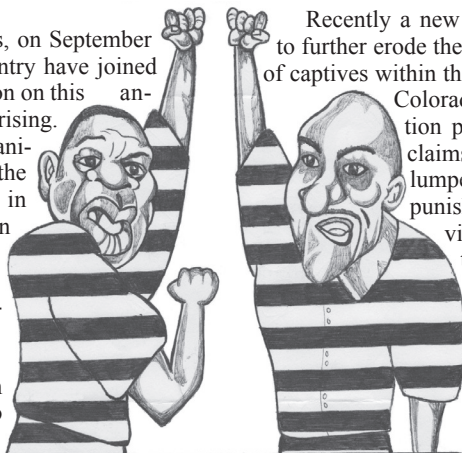
Be smart. Be strong. But most of all during these intense days of struggle, be safe. Intensify the struggle for self-respect, self-determination and self-defense. This is your brotha and comrade from inside the belly of the Amerikkkan beast. Unite or Perish!!

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Colorado Punishes "Associates" for Actions of Others

by Indio of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter,
Colorado
October 2014

Ad-Seg anyway.



Recently a new program was launched to further erode the self-esteem and morale of captives within the bowels of neocolonial

Colorado, "the violence reduction program." This program claims to target lumpen-on-lumpen violence by "group punishment." In essence, if violence breaks out between individuals or groups, the prison can punish five known associates of those who participated in the violence, even when those five had nothing to do with the incident.

SEPTEMBER

The administration says this will help ease tension so all "offenders can

9 1971

live in a safe environment and take advantage of what DOC has to offer." Right, that's bullshit.

Because of our tribal, religious, or political affiliations they will hold us as a unit responsible for one another's actions. Wouldn't isolation as a group only promote that much more strength of the group anyway? If we as individuals came in alone and will ultimately go home alone, why are the staff and administration telling us that we are responsible for the actions of people we hang out with?

I know a lot of comrades in Colorado read this, so let's get this rolling. If they will do this to us it won't be long until we all live just like we already do in segregation (Ad-Seg). What more can they take from us at all level IV places, maximum, etc.? We are only allowed two hours out a day for showers and rec. Two hours! With 22 hours of isolation, we might as well be in

I keep thinking of something I once read in MIM literature, that "people will not live under oppression forever." I can't blame my comrades who wish to resort to focoism, but we must remember violence and premature acts of resistance will no doubt set us back. If you really care and want to stop what's happening, it's time to bleed those pens. Unite – fight back.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This practice of punishment of "associates" is not unique to Colorado. In Washington a comrade sent in a copy of a memo about the Group Violence Reduction Strategy policy from Mike Obenland, Superintendent of Clallam Bay Corrections Center dated 22 October 2014. It states, in part,

"If a prohibited violent act occurs, restrictions are imposed on the offender who committed the prohibited violent act (perpetrator) and the offenders who interact with the perpetrator on a regular basis (close associates). Information provided by staff teams is used to identify perpetrators and close associates. This group of offenders is subjected to a cell search and up to six of the following restrictions for 30-days: [list of restrictions]."

This comrade from Colorado raises a good point about the contradictions inherent in the prison system and the repression against prisoners. On the one hand this new policy gives the prison the opportunity to punish and isolate anyone they want just by claiming they are affiliated with someone who engaged in violence, even if they never broke any rules themselves. But on the other hand, this repression will breed greater resistance, both by solidifying the unity of organizations that are punished as a group, and by incurring the righteous indignation of those affected by this arbitrary punishment. We can use this repression to build the revolutionary movement. As this writer says, we need to educate and write about what's going on, and we cannot be pushed into premature actions that bring down more repression. ★

MIM Prison Activism Labeled "Contamination"

by a Wisconsin prisoner
August 2014

I recently came across something that may be of interest to you. I was doing some research into this reactionary pro-prison propagandist organization known as the National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC). It's run by an adamant apologist for this pernicious system named Dr. George W. Knox. Dr. Knox and the swine that work for NGCRC routinely conduct surveys for the gulag system to help them identify and neutralize any potential "threats." I was able to get my hands on one of these surveys and preliminary finding reports that was conducted within 148 gulags in the USA, representing 48 states, and nearly 150,000 prisoners. Now, the part of the survey that I thought may be of some interest to MIM(Prisons) is the following:

Low Level of Contamination from the MIM

Some types of political extremist groups try to recruit inmates and prisoners in America, they can do this through the U.S. Postal Service. These groups often have sophisticated websites as well. The Maoist International Movement (MIM) exists to spread communist ideology among inmates incarcerated in American jails and prisons. It seeks to radicalize prison inmates and give them a platform for organizing resistance against the American government. If your inmates are corresponding with MIM, you might have a problem brewing.

The survey included the question "have any of the inmates in your facility corresponded with the Maoist International Movement (MIM)?" Only 4.6 percent of the respondents indicated that their inmates have been in contact with MIM. Thus, it would appear that MIM is not effectively reaching out to the

Continued on page 15...

El Activismo de MIM(Prisons) es Clasificado como "Contaminación"

por un@ prisoner@ en Wisconsin
traducido por un@ prisoner@ en California
August 2014

Recientemente me encontré con algo que puede ser de interés para usted. Estaba yo haciendo algo de investigación dentro de esta organización propagandista reaccionaria pro-prisión conocida como Centro de Investigación Nacional de Bandas Criminales (National Gang Crime Research Center - NGCRC). Este es dirigido por un inflexible defensor para este sistema, nombrado Dr. George W. Knox. El Dr. Knox y el canalla que trabaja para NGCRC habitualmente conducen encuestas para el sistema gulag para ayudarlos a identificar y neutralizar alguna potencial "amenaza." Yo fui hábil de meter mis manos en uno de estos informes y reportes de resultados preliminares que fueron conducidos dentro de 148 gulags en USA representando 48 estados y aproximadamente 150,000 prisioneros. Ahora, la parte del informe que yo pensé puede ser de algún interés para MIM(Prisiones) es lo siguiente:

Bajo nivel de contaminación de MIM.

Algunos tipos de grupos políticos extremistas tratan de reclutar internos y prisioneros en America, ellos pueden hacer esto a través del Servicio Postal del EE UU. Estos grupos frecuentemente tienen sofisticados sitios en la web también. El Movimiento In-

ternationalista Maoista (MIM) subsiste para difundir ideología comunista entre internos encarcelados en prisiones y cárceles Americanas. Esto busca radicalizar internos de la prisión y darles un programa para organizar resistencia contra el gobierno Americano. Si tus internos están manteniendo correspondencia con MIM, podrías tener un problema co-nciendose.

La encuesta incluía la pregunta "¿Tiene alguno de los internos en sus instalaciones correspondencia con el Maoist International Movement (MIM)?" Únicamente 4.6 por ciento de los encuestados indicaron que sus internos han estado en contacto con MIM. Así, esto parecería que MIM no esta efectivamente alcanzando a la inmensa mayoría de prisioneros Americanos. Al menos no todavía. Alternativamente, quizá tal contacto con MIM esta yendo bajo el radar de oficiales de la cárcel y de las prisiones.

MIM(Prisiones) responde: Este reporte en "Grupos y Bandas de Amenaza a la Seguridad (Gangs and Security Threat Groups)" no incluye mención de algunos otros grupos comunista, así que veríamos nuestra inclusión como una indicación del éxito de MIM(Prisiones) en alcanzando activistas de la nación oprimida y la exactitud de nuestra línea política en amenazando al imperialismo y dominio Americano. En realidad, como la encuesta admite, ellos no pueden realmente juzgar este numero basado

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...Don't Loot

MIM(Prisons) responds: This comrade lays out correctly the importance of self-reliance and organizing for independence to liberate the oppressed nations. We cannot rely on the state for salvation; the state is our enemy. We agree with this comrade on the ultimate need for force to take power back from the imperialists who control the state: they will not give up their power

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Spanish Translators & Editor 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.

If you have great written Spanish skills, volunteer to edit articles others have already translated. Write in to put in work!

en encuestas solo de administradores de prisiones. Nos gustaria alcanzar la inmensa mayoría de prisioneros, pero en la practica estamos enfocados en estos quienes están interesados en políticas anti-imperialistas o de mente abierta buscando aprender. Sin embargo, tomamos esto como una llamada de acción para los lectores de *Under Lock & Key*; Necesitamos incrementar el porcentaje de personas en contacto con MIM(Prisiones)! ★

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, apoyamos la auto-determinación de todas naciones y gentes. Apoyamos a las naciones que deciden desunirse de la economía imperialista, incluyendo el derecho de las semi-colonias internas de separarse de los Estados Unidos. Hoy, el sistema de prisiones de los EEUU es una parte importantísima del estado imperialista que es 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.*

Control Unit Survey

Control units (CUs) 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.** MIM(Prisons) has 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 completing this survey.

We also have a more extensive economic survey that you can use to collect anonymous data about prisoners, as part of our research on the lumpen class. Just indicate if you would like to become a survey proctor and help with this research.

Fill out a separate survey for each prison you know of that has Control Units.

Address/location: _____
 How many people total are in isolation at this prison? _____
 What is the total population held at this prison? _____
 What is the total capacity of this prison? _____
 What year did this prison open? _____ What year did the control unit open? _____
 Is the whole prison a control unit, or only certain units? if only certain units, which units, and how many people are in each? _____

What is the name of the control units/isolation in this prison? (i.e. security housing units) _____

What is the national/racial make up of the population in the CU? i.e. what percent is Black, Latin@, white, etc.? _____

What reasons are given for putting people in the CU? _____

Is the state planning to open any new control units that you know of? _____

Is there anything else you think we should know about the control units in your state? _____

What is your source for this data (i.e. you were in this control unit in 2013, your brother is held there, you are there now, etc.) _____

Year this data was collected: _____

Do you want to proctor a socio-economic survey for a lumpen research project? Y or N
 Return completed survey to: MIM(Prisons) Control Unit Survey, PO Box 40799 SF, CA 94140

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...Ohio

concerned with the colors a person wears, the organization to which they belong or any of that. I am a freedom fighter. I stand for a cause. I read, study and follow the ideology of the Black liberation movements of the past. I encourage not only my young komrades but people who I associate and deal with to find knowledge of self and to study, build and to better themselves. I am no angel and don't claim to be. I still have a lot of work to do but I'm moving at a righteous pace and setting the tone and paving the way for the masses to follow in a meaningful and constructive manner.

MIM(Prisons) responds: The very method the prison uses for social control, targeting specific prisoners for segregation and other punishments, results in raising the political consciousness of those targeted. Experiencing this repression firsthand leads some who were entrenched in the lumpen mentality of fighting other prisoners to recognize the criminal injustice system is the common enemy.

This is an example of the dialectical relationship between repression and liberation, and is true in all historical eras and oppressive conditions – oppression breeds resistance. Repression of prisoners in the United States is one cog in the imperialist machine that condemns people all over the world for the benefit of the oppressor nations. Even though our struggle can seem overwhelming at times, we can have strategic confidence in our inevitable international victory over capitalism and all its devastating consequences. So long as oppressed people are being politicized and educated on the common enemy, from prisons in the United States to the mountains in Nepal, we will overcome and finally be allowed to eat and sleep in peace. The more the imperialists oppress people, the more people can be drawn in to revolutionary activism. How quickly and easily we achieve victory depends on how much political work we do today. ★

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...Don't Loot

peacefully. This is why communists call for armed revolution, and also why we go further and say that after taking power we will need a dictatorship of the proletariat for a period of time. This is a government acting in the interests of the proletariat (the formerly exploited class), and using force to keep the bourgeoisie from returning to power. In the case of the United States

...Continued from page 3

...Burkina Faso

Revolution (GPCR). In the end, even with the GPCR, the capitalist interests within the communist party managed to take power after Mao died. This does not negate the need for a GPCR but rather we need to learn how to start sooner and be more effective in this struggle.

Sankara was murdered in 1987 in a coup d'etat that brought Blaise Compaoré to power, a man who once called himself a revolutionary ally and leader alongside Sankara. Before the coup Compaoré held significant power within the government, and his takeover was supported by the French who were eager to return the country to neo-colonial status. Compaoré quickly demonstrated how far he had strayed from his supposedly revolutionary views, reversing nationalization of Burkina Faso's resources, and reentering the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This year, Compaoré attempted to modify the Constitution to extend his 27-year presidency, which led to the protests by Burkinabe last month.

While we support the uprisings and righteous demands of the people of Burkina Faso, we also encourage them to make ceaseless efforts to again increase their general level of political education and organization. Only with deep revolutionary consciousness and leadership can Burkinabe take complete control of their nation from comprador dictatorship, and ensure that it grows with the people's interests at the forefront. ★

we recognize the need for a joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the oppressed nations over the oppressor Amerikan nation.

The capitalists won't just go away after a revolution, and the culture of capitalism that is deeply ingrained in Americans won't disappear overnight either. We have seen in countries where revolutions happened that this government of force, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is an essential tool. Further, we require a revolution in the culture to change the

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...Contamination

vast majority of American inmates. Not yet at least. Alternatively, maybe such contact with MIM is going under the radar of prison and jail officials.

Source: "The Problem of Gangs and Security Threat Groups (STG's) in American Prisons and Jails Today: Recent Findings from the 2012 NGCRC National Gang/STG Survey," by George W. Knox, Ph.D., Executive Director.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This report on "Gangs and Security Threat Groups" does not include mention of any other communist groups, so we could see our inclusion as an indication of MIM(Prisons)'s success in reaching oppressed nation activists and the correctness of our political line in threatening imperialism and Amerikkkan rule. Communism is our goal: a society where no group has power over another group. This threatens the imperialist criminal injustice system for sure. In reality, as the study admits, they cannot really judge our reach based on survey of prison administrators alone. We would love to reach the vast majority of prisoners, but in practice we are focused on those who are interested in anti-imperialist politics and/or open-minded and looking to learn. Nonetheless, we take this as a call to action for *Under Lock & Key* readers: we need to increase the percentage of people in contact with MIM(Prisons)! ★

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ATTENTION PRISONERS:

You must write to us every 6 months to keep your free subscription to ULK.
Tell us what mail you got since the last time you wrote.

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Under Lock & Key No. 41 November/December 2014

Hystory is On Our Side

by an Ohio prisoner

I ask that you embrace
the tides of the times
We are no longer confined
with binds on the mind
Once we embrace
united front, scientific thought
and study for line
the long arm of imperialism's
law
is no longer strong
When through theory and practice
we arrive at the decision
to take up arms
which is a must
if we are to defeat
imperialism's parasitic
lust
with too much greed
for that which we don't need
We fail to heed
even the most basic of humyn
needs
As the Third World suffers
because of our greed
So turn the tides of the
times
Study for line
and overthrow imperialism...
Hystory is on our side. ★

...Continued from page 8

ritory and economy (which is different than a nation-state). The Palestinian people certainly meet these requirements. Nations can arise and fall over time, as humynity evolves and conditions change. While I\$rael has evolved into a nation today, Stalin was correct to argue that there was no Jewish nation in his day. It was only after WWII and a mass migration of Europeans to Palestine, and the genocide that cleared the previous inhabitants of that land, that I\$rael began its formation, following the Amerikan model.

As for the question of Hamas firing rockets into I\$rael, this certainly has happened. And we uphold the right of people to defend themselves. This is simply a question of incorrect facts. The Palestinian people are righteously defending themselves against a much more powerful oppressor who is constantly threatening their lives and taking over more of their land. A cursory study of history shows who is the agressor in this conflict. Even numbers from the end of July on this recent battle demonstrate this: while I\$rael reported 56 deaths (53 soldiers), in the Gaza Strip 1,170 had been killed, many of them civilians in their homes.(3) For those who are serious about studying the history of Palestine and I\$rael we can offer reading material, but for those who just want to support the imperialists and accept their lies and propaganda, it's probably best to just move on and look elsewhere for supporters. Let them eat their Thanksgiving turkeys and celebrate the superiority of Europeans over the indigenous people of the lands they occupy and destroy. ★

Notes:

1. Jonathan Cook. "How Israel is Turning Gaza into a Super-Max Prison," *Counterpunch*, 29 October 2014.

2. Our reader survey last year showed about half of respondents were in some form of solitary confinement. (see ULK 36)

3. "Israel Tortures Gazan Children, Obama Offers \$225 Million to Kill More Anyway," July 31, 2014, *Anti-imperialism.com*

...Palestine

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education and indoctrination we have all endured under capitalism, which teaches individualism, greed, racism, sexism and white supremacy. This Cultural Revolution, as they called it in China, will not only re-educate people in a way of thinking that serves the people, but also empower the masses to criticize their leaders and guard against restoration of capitalism.

All this starts with organizing ourselves now, under capitalism, under the banner of a communist movement. BORO, along with MIM(Prisons), is one of many small organizations doing this in the belly of the beast. BORO is also a part of the United Front for Peace in Prisons, working closely with MIM(Prisons) and United Struggle from Within, the MIM(Prisons)-led mass organization. Existing prisoner organizations should join and work within the UFPP, individuals should join USW, and experienced comrades should work to build vanguard organizations in their areas. Get organized! ★

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... False Divisions

on everything, and in the case of the UFPP there are just five key principles around which groups have unity: Peace, Unity, Growth, Internationalism and Independence. If your organization is interested in putting an end to the fighting amongst the oppressed and ready to take a stand against the oppressor get in touch for more information about the UFPP. See page 2 of this issue and stay tuned for ULK 42 where we will focus on the topic of the UFPP. ★