



U.S. Imperialism Seeks Cuban Detente for Economic Expediency

by a North Carolina prisoner
March 2015

The United States and Cuba recently agreed to restore diplomatic ties after a half-century of hostility, taking steps toward ending one of the world's last Cold War standoffs. President Obama's announcement, made in coordination with President Raúl Castro, stated that these long-estranged countries would restart cooperation on a range of travel and economic issues and reestablish the American embassy in Havana that closed in 1961 after the Cuban Revolution.

While the Cuban Revolution was a blow against U.S. imperialism, which had a chokehold on the Cuban economy, after the 1959 revolution Cuba became dependent on the state capitalist Soviet Union. By 1959 a new bourgeoisie had arisen in the Soviet Union and it had turned away from its socialist orientation toward state capitalism. Instead of building socialism in Cuba, Castro and his government ended up building a satellite colony of the USSR.(1) Amerikan refusal to associate with Cuba was a reaction to the Cuban people successfully shutting down Amerikan dominance and a concession to the many wealthy Cuban immigrants who fled to the United States after the revolution, rather than a serious political stance. The Amerikan

imperialists have not hesitated to associate with governments and countries that are strongly anti-Amerikan when the economic benefits of the relationship are compelling.

The recent policy changes forge significant economic ties between the two countries by allowing U.S. financial institutions to open accounts with Cuban counterparts, easing restrictions on the export of U.S. agricultural and telecommunication gear to Cuba, and permitting U.S. citizens to use credit and debit cards there. The biggest boost in the short-term from the changes will come from remittances, which will now allow relatives of Cubans to send back \$2,000 a month to their homeland, up from \$500 at the moment. Remittances are the island's leading source of income. In cash and in kind (appliances and clothes), they account for \$5.1 billion a year in income, nearly double tourism at \$2.6 billion.(2)

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Torture Spreading as Tool of Social Control

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
February 2015

In this issue of *Under Lock & Key* we take on the issue of social control in prisons through long-term isolation, known as control units (CUs). CUs are permanently designated prisons or cells in prisons that lock prisoners up in solitary or small group confinement for 22 or more hours a day with no congregate dining, exercise or other services, and virtually no programs. Almost 50% of *ULK* subscribers are in CUs, while this is true for less than 5% of the overall prison population in the United States.

This topic comes up a lot in *ULK* because control units are used to punish and isolate prisoners speaking up against the criminal injustice system, those with influence over others, and even those who just won't go along with the programmed repression of everyday prison life. Our prisoner activist comrades and United Struggle from Within members are often found in these long-term isolation cells, still writing for *ULK* and organizing others in whatever way they can. CUs attack our ability to organize and are yet another way the prisons foment divisions between prisoners.

We know that long-term isolation has serious mental and physical health consequences. The conditions are eloquently exposed in the article on the Delaware prison system.(p. 8) And the dangerous health effects are discussed in the article "Who's Defining Mental Illness?"(p. 8)

The use of CUs is expanding within the Amerikan criminal injustice system and the past and future growth of CUs are explored in the review of the book "Out of Control"(p. 5) and our summary of recent results from our own control unit survey, below.

With all this information on the development and purpose of CUs we need to turn to activism and what we should be doing to fight back. Many of the articles in this issue offer insights and options. And for the overall development of the movement we call attention to the article on the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity(p. 3) and the lessons for the united front from the Bandung Conference.(p. 10) By building a United Front for Peace in Prisons we are laying the groundwork of unity and peace to take on important battles like the one to abolish CUs.

The fight against CUs is important for the

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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.

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...Cuba

The immediate benefits for the country are obvious. The Cuban government reported that economic growth for 2014 was around 1.4%, and an estimated 40,000-50,000 Cubans emigrated in the past year. For economic reasons, Cuba is starved for cash, and its biggest trading partner, Venezuela, is facing an economic crisis due to the recent plunge in oil prices. Analysts say the possibility of losing Venezuelan aid likely played a role in reaching an agreement with the United States.

Business Opportunities Abound

Restoring trade ties will benefit the U.S. economy, allowing companies to join other countries which have operated for decades in Cuba and made their own capitalist inroads, such as Canada and European Union member-states. U.S. farmers, already helped by a partial lifting of the embargo for agricultural goods, will have new export opportunities. Despite heavy regulation and strict limitations, U.S. exports of agricultural goods to Cuba grew to \$547 million in 2010 from \$4 million in 2001.

Groups ranging from the American Farm Bureau Federation to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly support a lifting of the embargo because they see Cuba as a significant export market. Opportunities abound elsewhere, such as in telecommunication, retail, tourism, and natural resources. "Cuba needs everything we make in the United States," said the global government affairs director for Caterpillar, Inc. The company hopes to soon install a dealership in Cuba. "We've been calling for a new policy toward Cuba for 15 years." U.S. hospitality companies also are eager to do business in Cuba when they can. "The minute it's available, we'll be down there," the CEO of Choice Hotels International, Inc. was reported as saying.(3)

All this is evidence of the capitalist system in Cuba. U.S. companies want access to this market that corporations based in other capitalist countries have been enjoying for years.

Yanqui to Soviet Social-Imperialism: Neglect of Socialist Alternatives

With the 1959 revolution, Cuba sought to dismantle the economic hegemony the United States had over the country. Partial nationalization of certain sectors of the economy, followed by a complete confiscation of foreign-owned property, were met with stiff U.S. opposition, as many American citizens held large investments there. On 3 January 1961, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba after Castro charged that the U.S. embassy in Havana was the center of counter-revolutionary activities in the country. In February 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed an embargo on most U.S. trade with Cuba. The Cuban economy at the time was in serious danger. Industrial plants, confiscated after the revolution and now in disrepair, lacked the raw materials to keep operating. Spare parts for factory equipment and

Carry on the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
January 2015

I'm responding to the article "Summing Up September 9 Protests" from *ULK 41*. I became aware of United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP) Day of Peace and Solidarity from my August issue of *ULK*. I fasted on September 9, but it was done in a custom as Ramadan. This year I will fast according to UFPP custom. Solidarity means working or struggling in a union, and I want to start with those who choose to participate. In solitary confinement here at this prison it is difficult to get the prisoners to partake in the fast because of their political immaturity. Many of them are gang members and they are in the hole for fighting amongst themselves. I try to talk with them about taking life more serious, but peer pressure is what forces many to stay in a state of illusion.

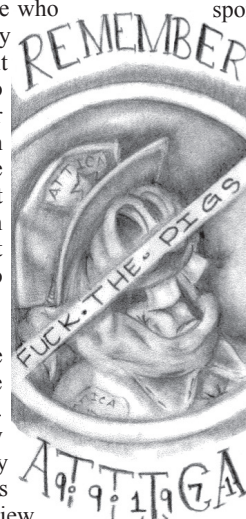
You asked what needs to be done about the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity to broaden its impact. We must continue to promote that day and try to let prisoners see it as a day of unity that represents all prisoners in this racist country. They need to view it as a so-called holiday for prisoners throughout this country. Try to promote to them that this is their day in solidarity with the brothers or comrades at Attica, who lost their lives for better conditions in prisons. Being in captivity since the mid-seventies, I learned that this new generation of prisoners doesn't appreciate the sacrifices those made decades ago. I was labeled as a ring leader and spent over 3.5 years in the hole for being one of the peace makers during the Camp Hill spontaneous uprising.

I understand that not everyone can fast for health reasons, and most individuals can't afford to risk losing their prison jobs because that's the only income they receive. Therefore, you must

come up with an alternative so that everyone can still support the cause of September 9 in their own way, because you don't want anyone to feel as though they can't be part of the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity because of not fasting or needing to work. Hopefully we can have a larger participation this year. I'm looking forward to it and I will definitely spread the word.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This writer is responding to the article we published summing up the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity 2014, which saw a decrease in reported participation. We asked for input on how we should proceed with that action. We agree with promoting this as a day of solidarity with the comrades in the Attica struggle, and we encourage everyone to participate in building peace, by networking, putting a moratorium on fighting, and educating others on the necessity of peace. This is something that can be done regardless of whether you take up the fasting and work strike, by reaching out to educate others about the Attica struggle and our work today and why we need to build peace

between individuals and groups throughout the prisons. If we can have this one day with no conflict between prisoners, that would be a great victory in demonstrating what is possible, and we can use that to build lasting peace. A critical part of this is education: our activists need to be well-educated themselves on the history of this struggle, so that leading up to, and on, September 9 they can in turn educate others. To this end we've put together a study pack for everyone building the United Front for Peace in Prisons, which includes historical information about Attica as well as organizing materials for September 9. Write to us for a copy. Let's make 2015 the most productive Day of Peace and Solidarity yet! ★



motor vehicles made in the United States were no longer available. Crop yields were poor, and food rationing began in March 1962. Against this backdrop, Cuba signed a \$700 million trade agreement with the Soviet Union, following up on a \$100 million credit and agreement to deliver a large procurement of sugar two years earlier. By mid-July of that year, thousands of Soviet military and economic advisors were making their way to the island.

While an improvement over the neo-colonial status it held under the United States, the new alliance Cuba had forged with the Soviet Union was hardly symbiotic in nature. This strings-attached relationship also affected Castro's drive to diversify Cuba's economy through industrialization, which ultimately proved unsuccessful. Historically, Cuba's most valuable crop has been sugarcane. Under U.S. tutelage, more than half of the cultivated land was devoted to this crop for export to U.S. markets. Little changed after the revolution, and sugar

accounted for almost two-thirds of all export revenues. This heavy dependence on a single crop continued to hinder Cuba's economy. Cuba needed sugar to carry out its trade agreements with the Soviet Union and its allies, and as a result, agricultural diversification and the ability to feed its own people suffered. Cuba's economy remained stagnant, and became heavily dependent on Soviet aid. With the eventual collapse of the Soviet bloc, Cuba was severely wounded economically.

Furthermore, the material aid given to Cuba was of inferior quality, and was not geared towards the needs and climatic conditions of the Caribbean country. Castro's early advocacy of violent revolution throughout Latin America put it at odds with and weakened Cuba's relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviets in turn would curtail economic aid whenever the Cuban government stepped too far out of line, as was the case when Cuba opposed its and the Soviet bloc countries' invasion of Czechoslovakia in

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...Control Units

anti-imperialist movement, but it can only be waged in the context of the broader struggle. We might win some reforms and gain some freedom for our activist comrades behind bars, and better conditions for the general prison population, but until we dismantle the criminal injustice system we won't be able to effect systematic change. And that will only happen with the overthrow of imperialism because, as is clearly exposed in this issue of *Under Lock & Key*, prisons are a critical tool of social control for the imperialists. There's no way the imperialists will give up that control, and they always look for new ways to spin national oppression to sound tolerable and even necessary to the Amerikkkan public.

Control Unit Survey Responses

MIM(Prisons) has been soliciting for data on CUs in *Under Lock & Key* for the past several issues. We're forced to do this because there is no central information source on CUs in prisons in the United States. Even for states

that publish data on their population and report on the existence of control units, the counts of prisoners housed there are not always accurate, and there is a trend to downplay and under report on CUs. Whether this is by giving them a different name (administrative segregation, super max security, security risk housing, tiers, etc.) or by refusing to talk about these long-term isolation cells altogether, this subterfuge and denial is evidence that the prisons know control units are cruel and unusual punishment.

In response to the frequently heard question of how would we deal with crime differently, first we point out that we do not agree with a definition of crime that allows the biggest murderers and thieves to run the government and military. Once the people have power to control the definition and enforcement of laws to be in the interests of humynity and not profit, we'll be able to thoroughly deal with the real criminals. We hold up the example of prisons in China during the Cultural Revolution to show how communists handle crime and justice.

Prisons in China during that time were places of political education and retraining. Landlords, capitalists, and spies were given an opportunity to understand their crimes against the people, to make self-criticism, and to learn new and useful skills so that they could return as productive members of society. This is in direct contrast to the Amerikan criminal injustice system, which builds recidivism and isolates politically active and influential prisoners in control units without even a pretense of education or rehabilitation.

We received 54 responses to the control unit survey over the past year and this article summarizes some of the new findings. The respondents broke down by state as follows:

# Respondents	1	2	4	6	8	13
State	AR	AZ	IN	CA	TX	GA
	DE	CT				
	FL	KS				
	MD	PA				
	ME	TN				
	MO	WI				
	NV					
	OR					
	SC					
	UT					

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...Cuba

1968. After a round of economic arm-twisting, Castro took a more neutral stance.

Unlike the socialist veneer of Soviet-revisionist economic cooperation, communist China's line at the time in regard to socialist financial and material aid had its basis in mutual cooperation and advised that it should be tailored to the needs of both countries with an aim towards economic self-sufficiency. In no way should it be conditional and carry high interest, which perpetuates the cycle of indebtedness in the recipient country. Material aid should be of first-rate quality and not technologically outdated. It should also suit their material conditions. Soviet agricultural implements exported to Cuba, for instance, did much damage to sugarcane fields.

Socialist Principles?

In his latest speech on the subject of normalization of relations, President Raúl Castro stated that Cuba "will not give up its socialist principles." Despite his assertion, we contend that he and Fidel had already done so by 1961. They embraced the fallacy that you cannot get production without incentive, instituting many Soviet-styled agrarian and industrial measures such as the implementation of work incentives and wage differentials to better boost production quotas. Looking to Mao Zedong's implementation of moral incentives to reward the workforce in China for overachievements in production could have been a viable alternative to this. The class struggle was also sidelined with their focus on economic output as a gauge of their country's success in building socialism, which constitutes a failure to do away with the theory of productive forces – a policy which has led many a socialist revolution to its revisionist perdition.

This is a critical reason why the Cultural Revolution in China represents the furthest

advance towards communism in history: capitalist theories and practices will not just disappear under socialism and must be actively combated. Otherwise a new bourgeoisie will arise from within former proletarian forces and attempt to take power against the interests of the masses. This happened in the Soviet Union, and their treatment of Cuba demonstrates clearly the state capitalists ignoring the needs of the Cuban people.

Since Raúl Castro took over from his brother Fidel in 2008, the Cuban government has undertaken a series of tentative economic reforms to move the country away from the state capitalist framework to a full-fledged capitalist system.

Keeping Solidarity in Perspective

Having endured centuries of repeated imperialist encroachment, Cuba has managed to attain a degree of independence and sovereignty over its affairs. We support Cuba's right to self-determination, and applaud the Cuban government's notable success in providing educational and medical services to all segments of Cuban society. Cuba's anti-imperialist stance on a range of issues remains strong, and in a confrontation with imperialism, Cuba deserves our backing. Yet Cuba is not socialist, and the Cuban people know that their government at this point in its history is not a revolutionary government, but a pragmatic one. It is our hope that the people of Cuba will experience a blossoming of revolutionary consciousness and organize for their rights in the coming years as capitalist encroachment places their country in the cross-hairs of further economic exploitation. ★

Notes:

1. For more history of Cuba see Chapter 5 of MIM Theory 4: *A Spiral Trajectory: the Failure and Success of Communist Development*.
2. "Cubans Differ Over Impact, Focus on Economy," *Wall Street Journal*, 19 December 2014.
3. "U.S. Firms Examine New Ties," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 December 2014.

The high response rate from Georgia, Texas and California is at least in part reflective of the activism going on in those states, as well as the control unit prisons and cell blocks that have proliferated in those states. In many cases we received data on the same prison from multiple sources.

While close to half of the survey respondents did not report on the year the control unit opened (presumably because they didn't know), 12 of the units reported on opened in the past 2 years. That's a lot of new prison control units. This includes prisons in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Maine and California.

Some prisons are control units in their entirety. Modeled after the first long-term isolation prisons in Marion and Lexington, these facilities are entirely dedicated to long-term solitary confinement. But most control units these days are separate sections within an existing prison. This might be a whole yard, several units, or just specific cells. This makes it more challenging to count the number of control unit beds/prisoners accurately, and gives the prisons a way to hide their torture programs within regular prisons.

The reasons given for locking prisoners up in long-term isolation vary, but most come back to some sort of justification based on safety and security, citing a history of violence or fighting, or rule violations. In many prisons there is a policy of locking up "Security Threat Group" members, also known as "gang members," for which validation is arbitrary and punitive, as we discussed extensively in *Under Lock & Key* 41. As one prisoner explained: "If you are politically conscious and write about such they claim 'gang activity'." Several others described the arbitrary nature of control unit assignment, explaining what gets people into these units in

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Book Review: Out of Control

by a California prisoner
March 2015

Out of Control: A 15-Year Battle Against Control Unit Prisons
by Nancy Kurshan
Freedom Archives, 2013

"All human activity is collective – a combination of the work and inspiration shaped by those who came before us and those who labor with us." – Nancy Kurshan

Nancy Kurshan does an excellent job of highlighting the significance of a 15-year struggle of the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown (CEML) from 1985-2000. This struggle was initiated to end the lockdown at Marion Federal Prison, located in the state of Illinois, which morphed into one of Amerikkka's earliest and most notorious control units (CUs) and isolation-based torture chambers. At its core, the book illustrates countless examples of mutual aid and cooperation, along with emphasizing the importance of having clearly established goals and objectives that can be reasonably achieved.

As with any struggle that is geared towards movement building, CEML began with the idea of a few individuals; founding members Nancy Kurshan, Jan Susler, and Steve Whitman initially just wanted to educate the people by exposing to the public the systemic practices of social, political, economic and racial injustices that are inherent in the prison system, and how these contradictions impact and affect our communities. It wasn't long before their work took on a life of its own, that was molded by their relentless strategic planning and organizing.

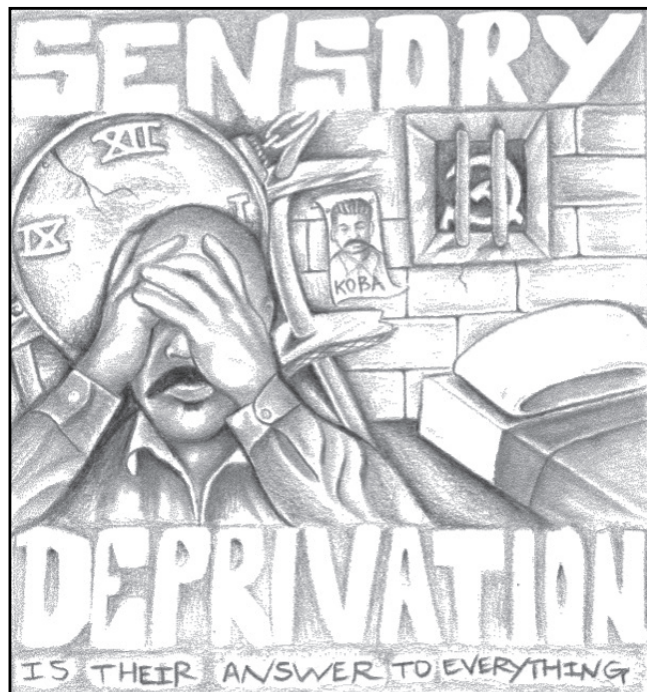
Unbeknownst to many in society, solitary

confinement units were originally modeled after the diabolical technique of the mad scientist, Dr. Edgar Schein of MIT. He provided a blueprint on how to break and brainwash the Chinese prisoners of war in his book *Coercive Persuasion*. Nancy Kurshan excerpts a passage from Schein's article "Man Against Man":

"In order to produce marked changes of attitude and/or behavior, it is necessary to weaken, undermine, or remove the supports of the old attitudes. Because most of these supports are the face-to-face confirmation of present behavior and attitudes, which are provided by those with whom close emotional ties exist, it is often necessary to break these emotional ties. This can be done either by removing the individual physically and preventing any communication with those whom he cares about, or by proving to him that those whom he respects are not worthy of it, and, indeed, should be actively mistrusted..."

"I would like to have you think of brainwashing, not in terms of politics, ethics, and morals, but in terms of the deliberate changing of human behavior and attitudes by a group of men who have relatively complete control over the environment in which the captive populace lives." (p. 12)

This history gives relevant context to the California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) gang validation



policies/practices, and in particular to CDCR's newly-created step-down program (SDP). The SDP is where we prisoners have been targeted and persecuted with the same purpose and objectives that Schein had in mind – to break and brainwash us! It must be noted that Pelican Bay's counter-intelligence unit (Institution Gang Investigators – IGI), has successfully destroyed the only real outside support I had. They falsely accused my beloved lil sister of promoting gang activity via a letter she sent me to tell me that Black Panther Party members were going to be attending and supporting a community event that was being held on my behalf to raise awareness about my status as a political prisoner and forthcoming parole board hearing.

Instrumental in CEML's successful grassroots organizing were several key factors:

- 1) They made a point of not just jumping into activities but rather committed fully to doing the groundwork necessary to make events successful. This allowed them to preserve and maximize their limited resources. For example, they would initiate plans 3, 6, or 12 months in advance, containing specific objectives that they wanted to achieve in their line of work.
- 2) Their collaborative work with political prisoners such as Sundiata Acoli, Oscar López Rivera, Alejandrina Torres, Bill Dunne, Safiya Bukhari, Hanif Shabazz Bey, Carlos A. Torres, Silvia Baraldini, and Susan Rosenberg, which later included the prisoners who were also being subjected to various human rights abuses. CEML members were able to learn first hand of the contradictions that plagued Marion Prison and others like it, thus equipping CEML with the necessary tools to achieve their objectives, while providing substantive support to prisoners. Pivotal in this exchange was CEML including the prisoners in the decision-making process

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...Continued from previous page **...Control Units**

their prisons: "COs will falsify the lock up order and sergeant and lieutenant will go along", "Any and everything. Such as litigator-grievance filer", and "No information in inmate handbook. As far as known, administrative discretion."

Most people were unaware of new control unit prisons being opened or planned for in their state, but 13 people reported on known plans for new control units. This underscores the importance of our work to shut down these torture chambers.

Many survey respondents reported on the conditions in these control units. Below are some of the representative descriptions:

"Subpar treatment of prisoners, small food portions, withholding of property, mail, etc."

"They are all sensory deprivation torture at its best"

"We don't get yard correctly or food in proper proportions"

"Barbaric, human degradation less than dogs receive at the pound"

"We are locked in for 24 hours a day. Shower, sometimes every other day for 30 minutes. We get

outside recreation for 5 hours once every 7-10 days"

"Each cell here only gets 30 minutes a day of dayroom and 3 hours of yard a week"

"They lie on us, beat us up, starve us, they don't give proper medical attention"

"While in segregation for almost four years, myself and other prisoners were subjected to the most inhumane and barbarous treatment. There were periods in which we went months without getting showers; In my almost 4 years here, I had recreation/exercise maybe 20 times. Prisoners would be stripped out, completely naked in their cells for days. Prisoners would be gassed/maced with multiple cans of this toxic agent – guys were sprayed so regular and with such large quantities of gas, they many of them had built up physical and psychological resistances to the torture – guys would brag about being able to 'eat' the gas, and the officers were so use to using such large quantities of gas, if they gassed someone with only one can and the person coughed and choked, they'd say things like 'you lil' bitch, you can't even take a full can.' Prisoners would be denied food, prisoners were beaten with restraints on, prisoners were shot with the canisters of tear gas guns, while locked inside of their cell, and on May 7th or 8th of 2012, one mentally ill prisoner was allowed to hang himself, while the officers simply slept the night away. There are so many crimes that have been committed behind these walls by animals that have the audacity to call us (the least of these) criminal."★

...Continued from previous page

...Out of Control

when strategizing for a particular action and/or a community event.

- 3) CEML understood the importance of having organizational infrastructure. They constantly distributed pamphlets, leaflets, flyers, brochures, and other propaganda-based materials via the workshops, seminars, and study groups they held, to educate the people about their line of work. This ensured the basis of clearly-defined organizational expectations being set forth, which made it easier for CEML to receive support from the community.
- 4) CEML did not limit the focus of their primary objective to just ending the lockdown at Marion; they also instituted additional campaigns that became interconnected to their pursuits. For example, the prisoners at Marion were being forced to drink, shower, and wash themselves in toxic, polluted water. The exposure of this contradiction brought about outrage from the environmentalists, and this allowed CEML to forge a united front with them.

MIM(Prisons) adds: We agree with this writer about the value for activists in the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown's (CEML) summary of their 15-year history. *Out of Control* provides valuable historical documents and analysis on the development of control unit prisons in the United States and their use for social control, as well as organizing lessons from fifteen years of CEML activism dedicated to fighting the torture units. By linking to historical documents, the online version of this book is a particularly useful resource and should serve as an example to other activists about the importance of not just doing our organizing work, but of documenting and summing up our lessons for the future. (Quotations below will reference chapter numbers because the online book does not have page numbers.)

In this book we learn that CEML was the original source for some of the critical statistics we still use today about the disparity in incarceration of New Afrikan people in the United States. And based on their correct understanding of the use of prisons as a tool of social control targeting oppressed nations, and the use of CUs to target revolutionary activists,

CEML correctly predicted the dramatic expansion of the prison population and of control unit prisons. CEML's analysis of the criminal injustice system in the United States lines up well with our own:

"[W]e realized that there was virtually no connection between crime and imprisonment. Rather, imprisonment was being used as a method of social control for the most rebellious segments of society, in this case Black people and other people of color."

"We reasoned and asserted that just as prisons were to control rebellion in society, control unit prisons were to control other prisons, and that the 'holes' or 'boxes' within control unit prisons were used to control control unit prisons, etc. Just boxes stuffed in boxes." (ch. 29)

CEML was initiated by Nancy Kurshan and others, coming out of movements such as the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. Kurshan summarizes their view on organizing: "In our corner of the movement, we felt we had a particular responsibility to organize other white people to fight racism and injustice." (ch. 4) MIM(Prisons) agrees with some of the theory behind this approach, in particular the idea of focusing on the needs and goals of oppressed nations' struggles for self-determination within the United States. Kurshan writes: "We thought it was important not to compete with the self-organization of people of color, and everything we did was in close consultation with activists in those communities. In addition, we tried to support the agendas that were developed by those activists." (ch. 4) Kurshan goes too far into identity politics in some of her statements, as it is critically important not to abdicate leadership to others simply based on their nationality, but rather to look for correct political line. However, the real problem with this idea of organizing white people to fight racism and injustice was found in CEML's incorrect analysis (or lack of analysis) of classes within the United States. CEML approached the white nation as if they have an economic interest in fighting opposing injustice and that their position of wealth and power as a group is not based in group (nation). Talking about "racism" rather than "national oppression" is indicative of this mistake. This amounts to just attacking a symptom of the problem rather than the root problem itself.

The United States is a society based on national oppression with the white nation in power and the oppressed nations facing dramatic disparities in education, housing, income and of course imprisonment. Further, the United States is a wealthy imperialist country where the vast majority of citizens enjoy class privilege. And so when we look at who we want to organize we need to first understand what their class and national interests are in the status quo. Those suffering national oppression have an interest in changing the status quo but they still benefit from class privilege just by virtue of their U.S. citizenship. And those benefiting from national oppression (the predominantly white Amerikan nation), and enjoying wealth from the exploitation of the global proletariat, have a strong class and national interest in upholding the status quo, including the oppressive criminal injustice system.

Strategies like the one CEML undertook in Tamms, Illinois to organize the community incorrectly tried to pose the opposition to the prison in the economic interests of the community members: "When it looked like the small southern Illinois town of Tamms might be the site of the new control unit prison, Erica, Leila, and Joey traveled to Tamms to speak with members of the community regarding the nefarious nature of these CUs. They distributed literature debunking the notion that the prison would provide locals with an economic shot in the arm." (ch. 22) In reality prisons often provide economic help for the communities where they are built in the form of new jobs and spending. We should take on the nefarious nature of CUs without misrepresenting the economics of prisons and the interests of those employed or potentially employed by the prisons. In 2013 Tamms was closed for budget reasons and the guard's labor union delayed the closure with a lawsuit allegedly over safety concerns.

Kurshan explains CEML enjoyed only small victories while facing defeats in all of their larger goals. Our understanding of national oppression within the United States helps us see why we are unlikely to win big victories for the oppressed while the imperialists are in control. Further, CEML put too much faith in their ability to impact Congress, although CEML did recognize that politicians would not take action without outside pressure:

"Our focus on Congress was never exclusive, because we realized that only through grassroots activism — people in the streets — could we hope to get any action from the politicians on these issues. We had to build a movement of people to challenge the dominant ideology regarding imprisonment." (ch. 21)

Ultimately to win this battle against CUs and the criminal injustice system we will need to dismantle the capitalist economic system itself. CEML did not put their work in that context and so were not pushing forward the important work of building towards communist revolution. Only with a dictatorship of the proletariat in power will we be able to make fundamental changes to Amerika's injustice system. ★

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.

Control Units: Social Control for Semi-Colonies in the United States

by cipactli of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter
February 2015

Comrades living outside of the First World, and specifically outside of United Snakes borders, may be surprised at the social reality of this prison house of nations. The methods employed on the internal semi-colonies are in ways like what is seen in the Third World. The concentration camps in the United States are renamed control units (CUs) and in most cases the CU population are from oppressed nations. Although the names of these torture centers change, the purpose is the same. The CUs are the centers of neutralization.

Amerikkka attempts to bribe the population living under its heel, and for those who cannot be bought off with luxury items, it tries hard to isolate and dehumanize us lest we influence others. The state understands that even a bribed population may be concerned with humyns being housed in dog kennels without sunlight for decades, so they created the "gang" boogeyman. Just like Nixon created the "war on drugs" in order to criminalize the oppressed nations in the United States, today the war on the oppressed continues and rages on, only the control unit is the contemporary "final solution."

Understand the Enemy's Control Units

Although most of us held in CUs think of ourselves as strong-minded warriors and soldados, sometimes we underestimate the effects that CUs have on us as people. Sure we are strong-minded, it is why we were kidnapped from the mainlines and stuffed in here. But it's important that we understand the nature of the CU so that we can find ways to combat its effects.

The Russian investigative journalist Andrei Soldatov said in an interview about a year ago, about whistle blower Edward Snowden and his current circumstances,

"Snowden is not a trained intelligence agent. But those who are can tell you, if you live in a controlled environment, you cease to be truly independent-minded because everyone and everything around you is also controlled."(1)

If lumpen are "independent-minded" compared to most of the bought-off populations in U.S. borders, then as the above journalist noted, a controlled environment works to crush this independence. CUs can thus be seen as a bigger tool than many realize. This is not saying that all prisoners held in CUs are not or cannot be independent-minded, but it does mean that we need to guard against this because CUs do attack our independence.

Those of us who are held in CUs are those who threaten Amerikkka the most; it is why we are buried alive in these tombs. Our methods of social organization are outside the influence of the oppressor nation, and this scares them. This fear to protect their privilege compels Amerika

to find new ways of neutralizing their enemies, and under the guise of the war on "gangs" it can and does use torture by CUs with little notice from the majority of the U.S. population.

Bush 2's legal mouthpiece John Yoo said abuse becomes torture if it inflicts severe pain, and if the interrogator intends to inflict severe pain or suffering. Yoo defined severe pain as necessarily being associated with death, organ failure, or serious impairment of bodily functions. And abuse isn't considered torture unless there is "prolonged mental harm," with "prolonged" defined as over months or years.(2)

This gave the United States and its agencies unfettered reign to dive deep into all of its torture projects and unleash them on oppressed people in and outside of U.S. borders. Anything short of organ failure can be used on prisoners. Control units are used by "interrogators," because before we are released from CUs the state wants us to debrief or do journals. The state is also pushing profile requests, sometimes called "compass" in order to build its intelligence on imprisoned lumpen. This helps them repackage our oppression in the name of "corrections."

Control units are tied to our colonization process. They are but physical manifestations of colonization in the 21st century. So theory that forms in response to CUs, and which attempts to give us ways to not just cope but combat these torture centers, must keep in mind that colonization is at the root of our current battle.

One author put it this way:

"It is my contention that any theory must take into account the fact of colonization of Chicanos. This is not to suggest that colonialism is the only or the 'correct' perspective, but rather that colonization is an essential historical fact that cannot be ignored. Just as any theory of black oppression must consider the legacy of slavery, so any perspective on the Chicano must be cognizant of its colonial legacy."(3)

Our theories revolving around the internal semi-colonies in U.S. borders must take into account the reality of us as a colonized people. For Aztlán, the First Nations, New Afrika and Boriqua, we are NOT Amerikkans. We are nations that are colonized by Amerika, and CUs are tools used in this colonization process.

What Good Can be Made of Them?

Looking at it from a dialectical approach, yes CUs are horrific designs which I have seen suck the mental capacities out of brilliant thinkers for years, but there is some promise for those held in the camps. Control units provide us with concrete examples of our oppression so that we can teach people on both sides of the prison walls exactly what national oppression entails. Another nugget that we can glean from CUs is that they concentrate the most rebellious sectors of the prison mass. Those held in CUs have an audience and are in many ways leaders in their

own right already, within their own circles of influence. So it is from here where the seeds of revolution will be sown to spread throughout the prison system.

The lumpen within CUs, and those being released to the general populations across the United States, often struggle against the state and its oppression. This is good. But unorganized forms of struggle must be transformed into organized forms of struggle. In order for this

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Denied Recreation in Ad-Seg

by a Texas prisoner
March 2015

We are placed back here in Administrative Segregation (Ad-Seg) for being part of a security threat group (STG), a supposedly "confirmed" gang member. I was placed in Ad-Seg in 2002 for corresponding with other prisoners in another unit who were already confirmed. I got out of prison in 2004, and have just recently come back this past year, and once again I find myself placed in Ad-Seg even though I am not part of a gang. I have tried to write to the gang officers and even wrote a history report about my association in the past. I was told I would go to a G.R.A.D. program that's designed for ex-gang-members. I have yet to hear anything.

During this time in Ad-Seg, we are supposed to receive an hour of exercise (recreation) per day. Well I have been here on this unit going on 6 months and have been to recreation only twice. I have written a Step 1 grievance only to be told that they would get to us when staff permitted. They claim to be under-staffed. But general population gets their daily recreation, and they have enough staff to allow them to shake our cells down every other day during showers. There are other units that are really under-staffed, yet their Ad-Seg blocks receive their hour of recreation. It's sad because some of us need the exercise for medical reasons, and all of us need it for mental issues. Constantly in the cell all day every day is really a mind battle and a severe health issue.

MIM(Prisons) responds: In *Under Lock & Key 41* we published many accounts of gang validation being used as a tool of social control. The STG designation is held over the heads of prisoners who are often among the most politically active, and then used as an excuse to isolate them from others. It is irrelevant to the prison administration whether or not these "confirmed" people actually affiliate with a criminal organization. And in some places, working with MIM(Prisons) is considered criteria for classifying people as a security threat. We publish accounts like this one to demonstrate the ongoing conditions of torture in these isolation programs, and the arbitrary use of the STG label. But in reality we do not trust the criminal injustice system to decide who is a threat to security; the biggest security threats are running the Amerikan government and its military and prison systems. ★

Delaware Prisons Exposed

by a Delaware prisoner
March 2015

In the early 2000s Delaware spent tens of millions of dollars to develop supermax (SHU) and maximum security (MHU) buildings. These buildings house nearly 1,000 prisoners – a robust portion of Delaware's prison population. Destined for these torture chambers were supposedly the most unruly and depraved individuals: those with violent crimes and violent prison records; the kind of people widely considered to be beyond rehabilitation. The problem is, Delaware doesn't have many prisoners who fall into that category. So while some of the few prisoners who fit that description are in the SHU, it is filled mostly with prisoners guilty of only minor infractions such as using drugs or getting into minor scuffles. Even infractions for innocuous "contraband" can earn a prisoner enough "points" to be sent to the SHU.

In the SHU prisoners spend all but 3 hours a week locked in their cells. They come out for "rec" 3 times a week for 45 minutes each time, in a cage roughly 200 square feet in size, followed by a 15-minute shower. They have no contact with other prisoners and are handcuffed whenever they leave their cells. The SHU possesses an eerily Machiavellian structure where everything is incentivized, from how many phone calls and visits a prisoner can have each month, to how much commissary they may purchase, and even whether or not they are allowed a TV or radio. All prisoners entering the SHU start out with the barest of privileges (if they can be called that) and may earn an increase in their "level" every 90-120 days. If a prisoner fails to graduate to his third level (out of four) he will likely remain in the SHU for an additional year. On the lowest levels prisoners are severely isolated from the outside world, being allowed just one phone call and visit each month. Commissary is limited to \$15-\$25 every other week.

Implicit in nearly every interaction with the guards is the potential, the threat, of violence; every breath is a potential disciplinary infraction, or "write-up." Many rules are either unknown or go unenforced, making for a milieu where a guard could enter, quite literally, any cell in the SHU and find a reason to write up its inhabitant. If you have more than three books at any given time it could be a write-up, or you put water in your Pepsi bottle, or put a picture of your family in your locker, or hang wet clothes up to dry. Almost anything can be considered "non-dangerous contraband." Any guard has the power to keep a prisoner from seeing or talking to his family, a power not infrequently abused. This kind of isolation and control is maddening for the individuals who live under its influence; any refusal to comply with these instruments of violence – any lack of submission – can be met with a can of mace followed by beatings, restraints, and time in the "hole."

It is not too late for Delaware – or any other

Who's Defining Mental Illness?

by an Ohio prisoner
March 2015

Psychological diagnoses made in bourgeois society seek not only to isolate and treat mental illness on an individual basis, but also says the illness neither affects, nor is affected by, others.

Taking isolation in prisons into account (where research shows that being locked up in itself can cause mental illness) one begins to see the so-called facts in bourgeois reasoning behind individual diagnoses as fallacious. Individual diagnosis benefits the bourgeoisie by separating the individual from h environment, forcing the illness to be considered through the biological lens where it is said to be internally developed. This method negates a persyn's social and cultural influences, economic plight, outside forces acting upon h social milieu, as well as individual interpretation of all the above.

Inside isolation pods in U.S. prisons we are subject to sensory deprivation, restricted movement, lighted cells 24 hours a day, the constant clanging of metal doors, bullying by guards, unhealthy food, as well as sporadic screaming and banging by those even more deeply affected by imperialism's woes. This constant barrage of negative stimuli over a period of time is agitating, if nothing else. Agitation leads to the need for an outlet for the release of pent up tension. That tension leads to anger and resentment. This anger can have far-reaching, long-term effects. This awareness is underlined by my own persynal experience of having a quick temper, blurred reasoning after being agitated, and less thought out reaction to anger with little to no thought of consequences.

The bourgeois system is backwards because it is idealistic (diagnosing as biological and as

state, for that matter – to acknowledge and fix their mistake, converting these buildings into "normal" medium or medium-high security housing. Recidivism has not declined, and neither has the number of institutional disciplinary reports. Meeting violent offenders with more violence, along with mental and physical torture, is not an effective method of reform. It will only make the prisoners more fluent in the language of violence. The millions of dollars spent could have been more wisely invested in productive programming and treatment, methods that would actually improve the quality of life of these prisoners. The SHU costs more than twice the amount to operate as ordinary prisoner housing. Converting these buildings would free up funds that could be more wisely spent on means to reduce recidivism, instead of in a way that only worsens the lives of prisoners, and serves to perpetuate a lifestyle of violence and crime. Prisoners released directly from the SHU are frequently angry, bitter and full of resentment. Studies have shown that these individuals are at a much higher risk for recidivism than those released from general population.

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not affected by environment) and metaphysical (mental illness affecting only the individual and unchanging). Both these are world outlooks that imply things are what they are and will always be what they are. These outlooks are supported by the bourgeoisie because they compel apathy (indifference to the rule of the bourgeoisie because there seems to be little we can do to change things) and acceptance of the "order of things" by the masses who come to accept the conditions as inherent and the dominance of bourgeois leadership as unchanging. Basically the bourgeois classes push this line of reasoning because it allows them to hold on to power.

While the bourgeois classes perpetuate imperialism and deny responsibility for world conditions (including the systematic incarceration of oppressed nations) they also label all who refuse to subscribe to their world view as sick, radical, deviant, disillusioned and, of course, mentally ill.

In *Under Lock & Key 15* after asking the question "who is mentally ill?" MIM(Prisons) quotes MCB52 that those who are diagnosed with mental health problems are mostly "pissed off people rationally resisting the hegemonic culture one way or another."

The method of diagnosis will change once the people begin defining and deciding our own conditions. Fed up with the conditions we find ourselves and the world in, fed up with being agitated, let's begin to agitate back. And let's build independent institutions that operate outside the diagnostic structure of the bourgeoisie, where the people decide who is mentally ill based on their contributions to the further development of the people's interest, not because we refuse to take part in a system that oppresses us and others. ★

MIM(Prisons) responds: We agree with this comrade on the problem of individual diagnosis for mental illness in bourgeois society. This standard especially benefits Amerikkka because it justifies drugging up oppressed nationals full of psychotropics in the name of psychology, while leaving the structure of prisons and solitary confinement intact. We have heard reports from many comrades in prison that the so-called therapists want to prescribe them strong psychotropic drugs (or even force them to take these drugs), which they refuse because it will have a negative impact on their ability to engage in politics. Yet these comrades' requests for a restful night's sleep, or adequate nutrition, are ignored. Individual diagnosis permits individual (mis)treatment.

The most progressive of psychologists in the bourgeois countries do see a connection between the individual and society. But the vast majority of those are reformists who do not see the link of the individual's mental illness to the capitalist economic system itself. These academics can be our allies, such as those in the struggle to abolish long-term solitary confinement. But their reformist leaning is inherently limiting.

There is use for mental health practitioners

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...Delaware

The SHU not only allows the administration to control the prisoners within its confines, but also the prisoners in general population. They are able to control and bully the prisoners-at-large with the mere presence, the threat, of the SHU. Looming in the background is the implicit threat that if you step out of line, even for small infractions, you may ultimately be carted off to the slow-motion torture chambers. This provides great leverage against the prison community.

Corruption amongst, and abuse by, the guards is not some abstract concept, but rather a pervasive, daily reality throughout the prison. This manifests itself in a number of ways from filing illegitimate disciplinary reports, to provoking or sanctioning physical altercations between prisoners. Guards will disseminate information that leads to violence, such as if a certain prisoner is a sex offender or a snitch. On more than one occasion I've witnessed a guard provoke a prisoner verbally, and taunt him until he had a reaction, which was then used as an excuse to assault the prisoner, claiming the prisoner acted aggressively.

There is almost nothing a prisoner can do to address such abuses. A group of prisoners that does manage to unite in an effort to organize, make their voices heard or address social concerns will quickly be exposed by some informant (often from within their own circle) and then targeted by the guards and administration. Something will be "found," or some reason invented to have them moved or sent to the SHU. The guards may simply make something up and call it an "investigation." And why not? Nobody is going to stop them. All the power to do so has been stripped and suppressed.

These deplorable conditions create an environment that often feels helpless and insurmountable to the prisoners who live

through it. They are being oppressed and controlled, mistreated and abused, on a daily basis. They have no means of addressing these abuses – even the grievance procedure is hopelessly flawed, not permitting the prisoners to grieve the conduct of the guards, or any procedure whatsoever. They recognize that they are being subjected to conditions that surpass mere punishment for their crimes. They are playing in a rigged game. The parole board isn't actually there to help us obtain our freedom; it's there to give the illusion that it is possible, so that we may be controlled. The few that are successful will emerge as scarred, changed men, living with the knowledge and pain of what they were forced to endure, and the daily suffering that continues by the people they left behind.

Readers may wonder why they should care about how prisoners are treated. The majority of them did, after all, commit some sort of crime. But it is no secret that the United States imprisons more of its citizens than any other country, with a prisoner population numbering more than 2.2 million, which is 25% of the world prisoner population. We breed criminals to feed into the prison industrial complex for profit. It is a new form of segregation and slavery, done under the guise of justice. We should care because people who would otherwise be productive, contributing members of society are being indoctrinated and conditioned to perpetuate the revolving doors of recidivism. We are not "correcting" bad or criminal behavior; we are not reforming lives or serving justice. What we are doing is abusing millions of our very own, our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, our neighbors. These people seldom come away from the experience cleansed of their criminal inclination or reformed in any productive way. We should care because if this system of injustice operated the way it was intended, we could actually reduce crime and make our neighborhoods, our country, safer. We should care because while most think it won't happen to them, injustice

may strike anyone at almost any time. It could very easily be your loved one on the opposite side of the razor wire. And in that moment it will be no consolation that the general public will find them deserving of the mistreatment they will endure at the hands of our deeply flawed (and too often corrupt) "justice" system.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This essay from our comrade in Delaware does a good job exposing the criminal injustice system as a tool of social control rather than a system for punishment and rehabilitation. In particular, the uses of long-term isolation, and the effects on those locked up this way, are important reasons behind our campaign to shut down all prison control units.

However, we do not agree with the analysis of the "prison industrial complex" (PIC) or the claim that the United States is locking up people for profit. The term PIC implies this profit motive, and it's just factually incorrect. While individuals and some private corporations do make lots of money off the prison system, this is not money that comes from prisoner labor but rather a subsidy from the government which is footing the bill for the imprisonment of so many men and women. The rest of this writer's article actually underscores the point that prisons are for social control, not profit.

So while we agree with this comrade's appeal to Americans to join the struggle against the criminal injustice system, we don't think that the general public will join up because injustice might strike them at any time. This injustice is actually very targeted to oppressed nations within U.S. borders. The general white nation American has more interest in rallying behind expanding prisons in order to preserve their national privilege. We call on Americans to join the struggle, but not out of self interest, rather because it is in the best interest of humankind to put an end to national oppression and social control. ★

Georgia Prisoners Stand Up Against Control Units

by a Georgia prisoner
February 2015

A hunger strike against the Tier program at Georgia State Prison started on February 24, 2015 and will be official as of February 26. So far four prisoners are refusing food trays!

I was recently transferred to Georgia State Prison (GSP) and arbitrarily placed on a Tier 2 Step Down Program. These administrators have placed a ban on all newspapers, magazines, and any publications dealing with any form of press, so I have not received any of your periodicals since I was transferred in December.

I have filed grievances challenging this violation of the First Amendment and also the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments due to these prisonrats stripping me and others of all personal property, denying access to the law library or outside recreation, and deliberately abusing grievance procedure by refusing to process any grievance that is submitted.

Further, prisoners are being placed on this so-called behavior modification program with no due process! Prisoners are being punished for disciplinary reports that are five years expired, and for sanctions already served. No one in this program has been given any form of evidentiary hearing nor any Disciplinary Report (D.R.) that has sanctioned this so-called program. In fact, all are being punished for past behavior. Even if the D.R. was dismissed or expunged from the prisoner's file he is still forced into this Administrative Segregation Unit.

Prisoners are being housed two men to a cell and locked down 24 hours a day. Prisonrats state that this is not for punishment, nor is it solitary confinement, but they call it "isolation" with a roommate. There is nothing rehabilitative about this program and it only instills anger and hate into the individuals housed here.

The only prisoners who have been released off this program are prisoners that have either maxed out their sentences, died back here (3

prisoners in the past 90 days), or debriefed and turned snitches for the prisonrats.

The majority of mail sent out to family and press is shredded or tossed into the trash, so we are struggling to get public attention drawn to this torture program. It looks as if we will be forced to participate in a hunger strike in order to get help in ending this prolonged solitary confinement program. So we ask that eyes and ears be placed upon this place because there are those ready to starve themselves in order to force these prisonrats to remove us from these cruel and inhuman conditions.

MIM(Prisons) responds: Comrades in Georgia have been aggressively exposing and fighting the Tier program since it was implemented in 2013, and in some facilities have been writing petitions and gathering signatures against this torture. We offer much respect to those willing to sacrifice their health in order to demand changes to these horrible conditions. And we will do what we can to support this battle (which

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Lessons from the Bandung Conference for the United Front for Peace in Prisons

by Ehecatl of United Struggle from Within
March 2015

"Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. Once you see how they got theirs straight, then you can know how you can get yours straight." - Malcolm X, Message to the Grass Roots

The basis of any social movement is unity. Unification is most often formed around a common oppression and recognition of necessity by a sometimes common, sometimes diverse group of people in order to link up together to fight the oppressive powers that be. The Asian-African Conference of 1955 held in Bandung, Indonesia was the first time in history that representatives from Asian and African countries met to discuss strategic methods for combating the effects of imperialism on their people. All of the 29 countries in attendance were not only newly independent following the beginning of the disintegration of the old colonial order, but represented a quarter of Earth's land surface.(1)

The Bandung Conference was sponsored by the Prime Ministries of Indonesia, Burma (now Myanmar), Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), India and the Philippines. The most notable and prestigious country to attend however was the then-socialist People's Republic of China. The convocation of these newly emerging forces was an important step towards the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement and it is from the legacy of both Bandung and the Non-Aligned Movement that the concept of the Third World would later be developed. Most notably barred and excluded from attending the conference were any and all Western imperialist powers, including the then-social-imperialist Soviet Union, as the newly emerging forces were looking to make a clean break from all variations of imperialism.

The Bandung Conference considered problems of common interest and concern to the countries of Asia and Africa, and discussed ways by which their people could attain fuller economic, cultural and political cooperation. And while to many today, particularly in the First World, the idea of the Third World

liberating itself from the artificially-produced poverty of capitalism without the benefit of U.S. "aid" may seem like a pipe dream, those of us who know the mechanisms by which imperialism operates know that what is actually ridiculous is the notion that the United States and other imperialist powers would ever sit idly by as the oppressed and exploited organized for their own liberation to the point that they are no longer dependent on such First World aid. As a matter of historical perspective, Malcolm X would later explain the social context for the exclusion of the white man at Bandung:

"The number one thing that was not allowed to attend the Bandung Conference was the white man. He couldn't come. Once they excluded the white man, they found out that they could get together. Once they kept him out everybody else fell right in and fell in line. This is the thing that you and I have to understand. And these people who came together didn't have nuclear weapons, they didn't have jet planes, they didn't have all the heavy armaments the white man has. But they had unity."(2)

To be clear, it's not that the oppressed Asian and African countries were excluding the white man out of some sense of racism. Rather they were excluding the representatives of various white nations because the issues being discussed at Bandung were in direct contradiction to Western imperialism and the white nations they are in the service of. The United States responded to this political snub which they perceived as a threat to their political and military hegemony, as well as to their material interests, with various destructive acts. The most serious of these being the attempted assassination of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and the mid-air explosion of the passenger plane "Kashmir Princess."(3)

Even with such acts of barbarity committed on the part of the imperialists against the oppressed for daring to carve out an existence on their own terms, the Bandung Conference was a success as the final communique of the conference can attest to: economic cooperation on the basis of mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty, technical assistance in the form of experts, trainees, pilot projects; the establishment of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development; the stabilization of commodity trade in the region and the stabilization of international prices and

demands for primary commodities through bilateral and multi-lateral arrangements, just to mention some of the more groundbreaking methods by which the Bandung Conference sought to break the colonialist stranglehold on their nations.

The Bandung Conference was also convinced that *"among the most powerful means of promoting understanding among nations was the development of cultural cooperation. The Asian-African Conference took note of the fact that the existence of colonialism in many parts of Africa and Asia, in whatever form, not only prevented cultural cooperation but also suppressed the national cultures of the people. From the denial of basic rights in the sphere of education to a peoples basic right to study their own language."*(4)

Out in the so-called free world we can see modern day examples in the closing of "ethnic studies" departments and the banning of Chican@ and other Latin American history books in racist Arizona; to the denial of prisoners' abilities to learn their people's true history for fear of "Security Threat Group" validation. What the imperialists and prison administrators really fear however is the unity of the oppressed based on common national identities and the creation of revolutionary nationalist organizations that would surely bring most prisoners together, as opposed to the divisive gang feuds that currently mark the reality of many prisons.

In the years following the Bandung Conference, the world saw the rise of national liberation movements all over the Third World, from guerrilla armies to People's Wars in the imperialist periphery, to the fledgling national liberation movements and armed struggles that under-laid the Civil Rights movements in the core capitalist countries, principally the United States. Political thinkers attributed these movements in part to the "Spirit of Bandung" and the example set there for the rest of the oppressed nations by the Bandung 29, in particular the People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC led by example, showing the world what true independence and balanced self-reliant development could look like. For what many oppressed nations could only just begin to aspire to, the PRC was already doing and had to a large degree already accomplished.

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...Georgia

we only learned about in mid-March due to mail delays). We cannot advise on the specific situation in GSP, but we caution activists behind bars that whenever possible we should build support both inside and out before engaging in such a potentially dangerous action. *ULK* is one good venue for building public opinion, and when we can get the publication into prisons it also serves to help build the cadre of dedicated folks willing to take these actions. Without this support the prisoncrats have an easier time isolating and breaking activists, and can even use this to permanently harm or even kill someone. ★

Free Political Books

Under Lock & Key is free to all prisoners. MIM(Prisons) also runs a Books for Prisoners Program through which we mail prisoners political theory and history books and magazines in exchange for political work. Prisoners requesting books need to tell us what work you want to do, or just send in the articles, artwork, poetry, report on a study group you formed, etc. For many prisoners, the easiest way to start is by becoming a Field Correspondent for *ULK* (see page 12). When requesting books it is best to ask for general topic areas and let us send you whatever we have on hand.

Our Books for Prisoners Program relies on donations of books and money. If you have any contacts on the outside who can donate to our program, or who can hook us up with dictionaries, Mao or Lenin, or other political books, please tell them to contact us at the address on page 1.

France Targets National Minorities on the Streets and in Prisons

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
February 2015

After the recent attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, the French satiric weekly magazine, there has been a lot of focus on the Muslim population in France. Islam is a religion and not a nationality, but because Muslims in France come predominantly from North Africa and the Middle East, anti-Muslim sentiments feed into xenophobia and attacks on national minorities. There are a lot of parallels between the situation for Muslims in France and the oppressed nations (such as New Afrikan, Chican@ and First Nations) within U.S. borders. And recently these contradictions have been exposed in French prisons as well.

French law prohibits asking people their religion and so no official statistics are collected on the size of the Muslim population. Based on a variety of studies it is estimated that about 10% (5 million) of the the people living in France are Muslim. The 3 million foreign-born Muslims in France mostly come from the former North African French colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.(1) Muslims in

France face significant economic hardship and generally do not enjoy the spoils of imperialist plunder and exploitation shared with French citizens. Unemployment among youth (15-29 years old) in France in 2002 was at 15% for French citizens and 46% for migrants from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Turkey. Even for immigrants with a college degree the rate of unemployment was twice that of natives with a college degree.(2) Similar disparities are seen in educational achievement by Muslims compared with non-Muslims. And a large portion of the recent immigrant population and their descendants are found in housing projects concentrated in and around France's large cities.

As we find in Amerikan prisons, the French imprisoned population is disproportionately from oppressed nations. Although Muslims make up less than 10% of France's population, they constitute about half of France's 68,000 prisoners. (Overall France has a much smaller prison population than in the United States, with less than 1 per 1,000 residents locked up compared with the Amerikan imprisonment rate of 7 per 1,000.)

One of the Kouachi brothers involved in the *Charlie Hebdo* attack previously spent 20 months in prison just outside of Paris. Media reports are claiming that he was locked up for petty crimes and turned to radical Islam based on his education and exposure behind bars, and that it was there he met another Muslim convert in prison who helped with the Paris attacks. Detailed background on this man suggests he became involved with Islamic leaders on the streets, but did radicalize in prison. It's hard to say how much of this prison radicalization story is a ruse to justify targeting Muslim leaders behind bars.(3)

The Kouachi brothers, French citizens of Algerian parents, grew up in housing projects in Paris. They were poor and surrounded by others like themselves: national minorities in a country that is moving increasingly towards xenophobia. These national minorities find themselves isolated and disproportionately represented in the First World lumpen class.

A survey conducted in 2014 in France found

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...Bandung

"[The Spirit of Bandung] can be summarized in the following five principles: (1) respect for the fundamental rights of people as well as for the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter; (2) respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; (3) equality of all nations and people both large and small; (4) non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries; (5) no recourse to acts or threats of aggression or to the use of force. These five principles were also referred to as the 'five points' of peaceful co-existence."(5)

The Bandung Spirit Lives On!

Today prisoners from different nations and many different cliques and sets are taking part in the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP) and are hence putting united front theory into practice. Peace and unity between prison organizations mark not only the beginning stages of national liberation movements within the oppressed internal nations within the U.S. empire, but the embryonic stages of the peoples' struggle in the United States for socialist revolution in alliance with Third World communist movements. Just as surely, the Bandung Conference marked the entrance on the hystorical scene of the people's liberation movements in Africa and Asia, and represented the first impetuous rising of countries still oppressed or scarcely liberated from imperialism. Thus, from this we take the five principles for the UFPP.(also see p. 2)

Peace: By organizing to end needless conflict amongst prisoners we not only struggle against the pigs divide and conquer strategies, but we set a positive example for others and likewise help to begin the constructive reconstruction of our prison and lumpen organizations and nations.

Unity: As against a common oppression we fortify our peace-treaties by using this opportunity to work together in one form or another to both better our conditions and understanding of each other.

Growth: Without growth on an individual level or a group level our newfound unity will not survive. So comrades should take the time to build themselves up and each other so as to aid and push the movement further, as the movement in return will push us all further.

Internationalism: Mao Zedong said that in wars of national liberation patriotism is applied internationalism. Within our conditions this essentially means that in struggling for our own nations now we effectively aid the struggles of other oppressed nations by forcing the oppressors to contend with us. Hence on a strategic domestic and international level our tactics are to pit ten against one.

Independence: Then and now independence has always been the ultimate aim, both at Bandung and in the prison movement. By building our own institutions and programs of the oppressed independent of the U.S. prison administrators and their inmate lackeys we help solidify and consolidate the prison movement. Just as the sponsoring countries at Bandung cut out the white man and found that their unity and movement could only be strengthened as a result, so must we cut out all the prison administrations' officially sanctioned prisoner representatives because they cannot truly serve us, but have only served to better oppress and suppress us.

For all these things to work we need not only unified resistance to oppression, but the one crucial aspect that was missing at Bandung. We need vanguard leadership and mass struggle

working together so that the prison movement will truly get somewhere and not merely stagnate and die after a few petty reforms are put in place. Hence we need correct leadership to guide that resistance. Correct leadership and struggle comes from a correct understanding of material reality and of the correct methods for influencing that reality; not sporadic and short-lived rebellions where the masses learn nothing but the taste of defeat with incompetent leadership that has no one's interest at heart except for their own, and who clearly lack the vision of carrying the struggle forward until true change and reform is won. This is the difference between victory and defeat, and it is the kernel of truth which we must all grasp if we want to change our reality.

Connected to this kernel of truth is the fact that the prison movement will be dialectically connected to the streets and to the national liberation movements of the internal semi-colonies. All that is left for us to do is to grasp these truths as part of the objective laws of development for our cause and vigorously build on them. As such there can be no successful prison movement without the help of the rest of the oppressed nation masses and various revolutionary organizations outside of prison walls, just as there cannot be any successful national liberation movements for the oppressed without the help and leadership of the revolutionary lumpen in the semi-colonies and behind prison walls playing a vital and pivotal role.★

Notes:

1. Wikipedia: Bandung Conference
2. Malcolm X, *Message to the Grass Roots*, 1963.
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *The Asian-African Conference*, www.fmprc.gov.cn.
4. Final communique of the Asian-African Conference of Bandung (24 April 1955).
5. Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, *Daily Life in Revolutionary China*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972, pp. 407-408.

- 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! A great method is to ask other prison publications to run free ads 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(Prisons) 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, unanswered grievances, or harassment, you should join this campaign. Petitions are available for **Alaska(NEW!), Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina 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 the 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 limitation on 5 indigent letters per month; combatting the deadly heat; and the petition to ensure our grievances are addressed. Recently the TDCJ made a move to remove the grievance manual from all law libraries. All Texas prisoners should get this information and share it with others. Ask for it!

EXPAND STUDY GROUPS

Issue 45 of *ULK* is going to be dedicated to our prisoner-led study groups! We need people who run or participate in a study group to write reports and offer advice to others based on their experience. We want to offer analysis of how prisoners' group study impacts the struggle for peace and solidarity, and how we can build on this front.

To start a study group in your area, 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.

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. We reject the genocide and slaughter which of the people of Palestine, 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. Write in for more info.

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 oppressive 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.

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.

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

Due to space restrictions, many of the reports we get don't make it into *ULK*. Instead they are available on our website, which serves as an archive tracking the behavior of prison staff over years. 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.

Below is a list of upcoming topics for *ULK*. Contributors can send in art, poetry, reports and analysis on the topics below to help us build these issues. If you send in an article submission, we can send you feedback and help develop it!

- 44 - science and scientific leadership
- 45 - prisoner-led study groups and education
- 46 - United Struggle from Within campaigns
- 47 - freedom fighters
- 48 - religion

ABOLISH CONTROL UNITS

Control units are used as a tool of political repression to alienate and torture anyone who works for change from within prisons. Control units can be generally described as: Permanently designated prisons, or cells in prisons, that lock prisoners in solitary confinement for 22 or more hours a day with no congregating dining, exercise or other services, and virtually no programs for prisoners. Prisoners are placed in control units for extended periods of time.

CA lawsuit update - 9 March 2015, a class action lawsuit against CDCR's use of long-term isolation was clarified to include all who have been in solitary confinement more than 10 years, even if they were transferred out of Pelican Bay State Prison. This stymies CDCR's efforts to undermine the lawsuit by moving people around. (Critical Resistance press release)

Research - We have the most complete data on control units available at www.abolishcontrolunits.org. Much of this data came directly from prisoners themselves. Help keep it updated by writing to MIM(Prisons) at the address on page 1 to get a survey for your state.

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

FUNDING NEEDED TO EXPAND ULK

ULK is free to all U.S. prisoners. Each copy costs about \$1 to print and mail. To cover the cost of your issue and one more, that's \$2 per issue or \$12 per year. It costs about \$300 to print 4 extra pages in *ULK* and we've raised \$60 so far. Fill the raised fist and get bonus content! The last bonus issue was No. 42 (January/February 2015). 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*.

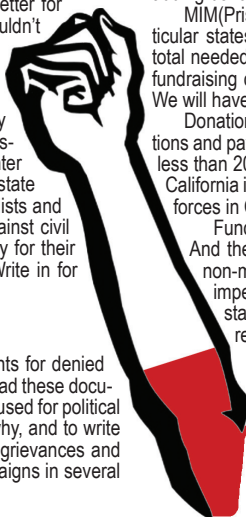
MIM(Prisons) coordinates United Struggle from Within (USW) leadership within particular states via Councils, and the California Council contributed about a third of the total needed for the bonus content in *ULK* 42. Since the California Council started their fundraising campaign, the amount collected in donations has been steadily increasing. We will have to wait and see if that continues or if it reaches a plateau.

Donations from all California prisoners accounted for almost 40% of the overall donations and payments to MIM(Prisons) in the last 6 months. In contrast, California makes up less than 20% of our subscribers. If we don't count the money collected by the Council, California is contributing a proportional amount. It is clear that the presence of advanced forces in California has led to greater financial contributions.

Fundraising campaigns are good, and can help us engage people in our struggle. And the example of California shows that ultimately our growth (in donations and non-monetary contributions) is going to come with stronger political support. Anti-imperialists inside and outside of prisons should aim to develop political understanding and depth among their recruiting base, so we can expand *ULK* more regularly and push forward our overall Maoist movement.

If your facility rules allow, you can just send us donations of stamps or embossed envelopes. If you want to donate on a regular basis, you can request to become a *ULK* Sustainer. If you need to send a check or money order, just let us know and we will send you instructions.

IMPORTANT: We can not accept checks or money orders made out to "MIM Distributors." When it is time to send in your 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!



Targeted for Validation Because of Prison Activism

by a Connecticut prisoner
March 2015

I'm writing in regards to the article "Gang Validation: Justification for Torture and Social Control" that the Connecticut prisoner wrote in *ULK 41*. I was housed in the same control unit in Corrigan Correctional Institution when the incident happened. When the prisoner who got caught with the 5 pages of Security Risk Group (SRG) paperwork returned back to the block (phase 3) I read the ticket and all paperwork that was associated with it. The paperwork clearly stated he was found in possession of the materials and he takes all responsibility. This clearly shows the prisoner who was transferred to Walker Correctional Institution was a target. I, and many other prisoners, believe he was a target of the pigs because of his ability to organize. It was actually through this brother that I first found out about *Under Lock & Key*. I feel that because of *ULK* I am better informed on the struggles within from state to state.

Since that incident I have also received a Class A SRG ticket because the words "Neva Will I" are supposedly Blood identifiers. Now I have been set back and have to wait for the ticket to clear to be eligible to start the program. The prisoners here in the state of Connecticut can be validated SRG members for something as simple as the "B" representing the Boston Red Sox Logo, or simply writing the \$ or cents sign. I'm guessing these pigs have to keep the beds filled up some way, right?

I have to try my hardest to stay under the radar because I am now being targeted due to an incident that happened which had nothing to do with me. Two prisoners engaged in a scuffle and the one who lost cooperated with the pigs giving up unreliable information. I was questioned by the Captain and Lieutenant of the block. I was told "Since you won't cooperate then I will do everything in my power to make sure you won't phase through the program!" by the Lieutenant while the Captain sat there and laughed. I simply responded, in control, "Regardless of how you feel, or what you do, time will continue to move forward whether I'm in the program or not!" Since that confrontation my cell has been subjected to searches 2-3 times a week and the pigs find nothing. I believe it is just a waste of time. There is no valid justification for torture and social control, but yet the pigs continue to use these units for such. We must all keep fighting regardless of how long it takes. A war has never been won in a single day! I want to say to all comrades in the struggle to stay headstrong (educated), positive and above all else remain militant! MAD*MEN (Minorities Against Depression/Oppression * Maximizing Education Nationally).

MIM(Prisons) responds: This writer describes the most common way that *Under Lock & Key* and general revolutionary education is spread behind bars: from one activist prisoner taking the information to others. And the result, as reported in *ULK 41*, is often punishment and even SRG

"validation" for the activist. It is good for us to know that our educational work is such a threat to the criminal injustice system that they go to great lengths to stop it: censorship, solitary confinement, physical abuse, and theft of property are some examples. The attacks on our comrades are actually a confirmation of the effectiveness and importance of this work. As this comrade points out, there is no justification for torture and social control, but these are common tools

Prison Organizer Falsely Validated, Transferred, Fighting Back

by an Ohio prisoner
January 2015

I was the vice president of an organization called the Long Term Offenders (LTO) which was making a lot of progress with the people and producing drastic change within the prison itself. Before my position with the LTO I was receiving material from numerous groups and corresponding with multiple movements, but as soon as I got into this position and the watchdogs saw how the prison as a whole embraced our platform and supported our cause, which was in the best interest of the prisoners, the watchdogs began to keep an eye on us, specifically on me. I caught wind that the administration was inquiring about me and I'm sure they received more than a few tips that "he's radical" or "he's always talking about the Panthers," from their in-house snitches.

The watchdogs began to monitor my calls and mail and saw that I correspond with a lot of liberation movements which they've labeled as "terrorist" groups. Then they began confiscating our mail (things I've received for years) saying it's promoting radical ideas about overthrowing the government which is a "threat to security" and not allowed.

In August 2014, the Security Threat Group inspection committee summoned me to their office inquiring about the Black Panther Party and Maoist material MIM(Prisons) sent me. I explained to them that I'm a facilitator, therefore I have an obligation to be well versed on a multitude of subjects. Because they weren't satisfied with my response, they stripped me of my clothes and examined my tattoos. They falsely labeled me as a "Blood" because of a crown I have on top of the word "King." They knew they needed something to justify any further action they choose to take on me, and by me being labeled as a gang member, that's all they need.

On 3 September 2014, I was placed in the hole under investigation because they confiscated the article I wrote for you all in another Ohio prison. They assumed it was me because of the content, but there were no names written or printed to confirm their allegations. The day they chose to label me falsely, they drew their weapons and aimed to kill mentally and physically, but I will not die a slave, I will live long as a revolutionary.

The watchdogs from Ohio's Department



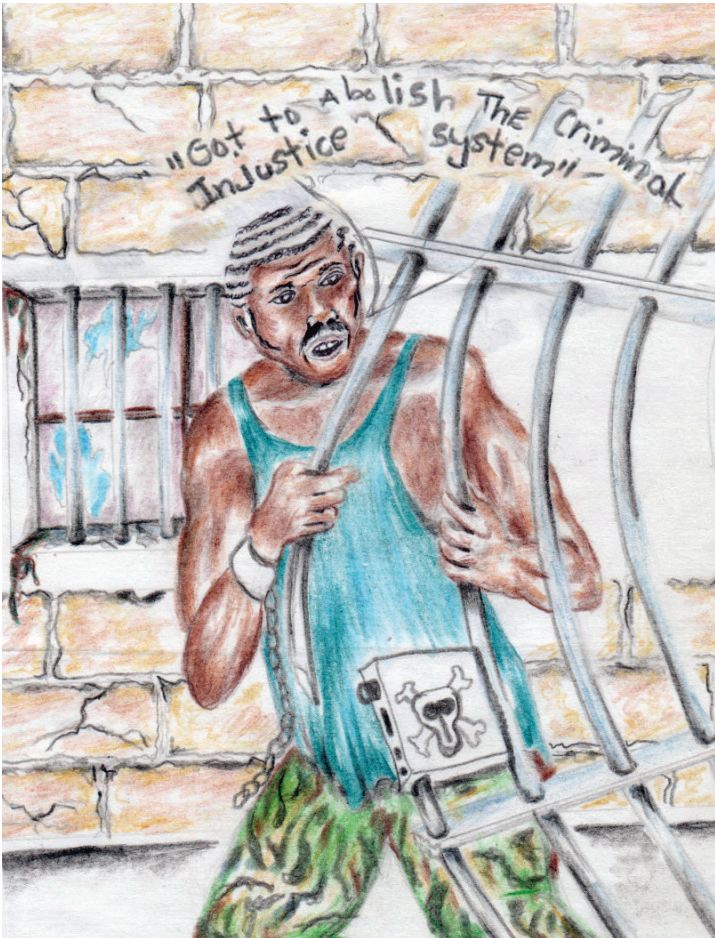
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of Rehabilitation Center came to pay me a visit in the hole, hoping to scare me into submission by throwing threats about how they'd send me to another state if I kept "teaching/reading that bullshit" and they also claimed I was on the FBI terrorist watchlist because of my affiliation with "anti-government" groups.

After 2.5 months in the hole they transferred me again, claiming I was a "threat to the order of operations." I've been here almost a month and have already started where I left off and have begun building the movement! There are a lot of street tribes here but few know they come from the Black Liberation Movement (BLM) or their original goals and purposes. I need to be able to reach these cats on that level so if possible could you send me materials on gang history and their connection to the BLM. When I was in the hole, the watchdogs confiscated all my reading material so I need you to help me recuperate from my losses.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This comrade is experiencing the repression that so many prison (and street) organizers face when they start to become effective in educating and organizing the people for revolutionary change. This was the focus of our last issue of *Under Lock & Key*. As this example demonstrates, the gang validation system is a tool of repression. It often has nothing to do with the gangs they claim are security threats or with preventing crime or violence. This is because they are not allowed to throw you in the hole just for being Black anymore. The liberal left demands that tools of oppression must evolve for those in power to stay in power under imperialism.

We condemn gang validations and long-term isolation aggressively because they are two of the biggest weapons being used against the imprisoned lumpen. And both of these weapons are contradictory to the principles of this country's founding documents. The government wants to fool the public into thinking prisoners are criminals and that is why they are being treated this way. But this repression is directly related to how the state handled the BLM of the 1960s and 70s, and to how they handle oppressed people fighting for basic rights all over the world. It is all about maintaining the imperialist system, where a minority prospers. ★



...Continued from page 11

...France

that 66% of the French believe there are too many foreigners in France. 75% of French factory workers, who are part of that labor aristocracy which enjoys elevated non-exploitation wages and benefits, oppose France embracing globalization. The mass base for fascism is the labor aristocracy in imperialist countries(4), and these same people are the base for the growth in support for the far-right National Front party which 34% of French people polled see as a credible political alternative.(5)

Kouachi's history in prison is being used to underscore France's concern about the radicalization of prisoners. Prisoners enter the system and learn about Islam from fellow captives. To address this "problem" French authorities are now experimenting with segregating those considered "Muslim radicals" from general population. This sounds a lot like long-term isolation or control units which are used in Amerikan prisons, torturing politically active prisoners. While details are sparse about the experimental units, prisoners subjected to these conditions are protesting the treatment. We can expect that this isolation will be used to target anyone who speaks out against the French government or other imperialist powers.

At the same time France does not appear to be slowing down the imprisonment of Muslims. For instance, in mid-January a 31-year-old Tunisian man was sentenced to 10 months behind bars after a verbal conflict with police in which he said that an officer shot in the recent

attacks "deserved it."(6)

The French government is facing the contradictions of a criminal injustice system that we see in all imperialist countries. Using prisons for social control means locking up oppressed groups, those who are most likely to disagree with and disrupt the capitalist system. But targeting oppressed groups for imprisonment creates an opportunity for prisoners to quickly become educated and radicalized against the system that put them behind bars. This is the system itself creating the conditions of its own demise.

While prisoners alone will not bring down imperialism, the lumpen in First World countries are potential allies of the international proletariat. And national polarization and xenophobia will feed the development and political consciousness of this lumpen class. ★

Notes:

1. "5 Facts About the Muslim Population in Europe," Pew Research Center, January 13, 2015.
2. "Being Muslim in France," Brookings Institute.
3. "Cherif and Said Kouachi: Their path to terror," CNN, 14 January 2015.
4. see our Fascism Study Pack
5. "Poll finds xenophobia on the rise in France," Ipsos survey results, reported in France24, 21 January 2014.
6. "French Muslims feel deeply torn by viral 'I am Charlie' slogan," Washington Post, 13 January 2015.

...Continued from previous page

...Validation

someone else, exposing at least one other person to revolutionary education. And everyone reading this should get in touch and make sure to get your own subscription since you can't count on being in the same place to borrow a copy next time. ★

Simple Minded

by an Ohio prisoner

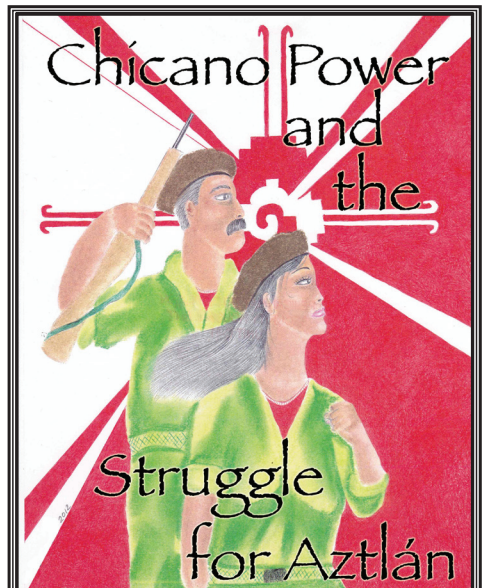
The simple minds try to tell me that we are not at war
Had to cover up my mouth with a wet rag cause the chemicals seeped thru the cell door

I know there was a reason behind why it was sprayed
I'm trying to fight for my rights so we won't get played
But these robots have no brains nor conscience
So they waited for the captain to okay
Cause its fuck me which fucks us cause they got to get payed
Been sprayed too many times that I've lost count
Plenty nights I've layed with burns all over my body
Orange stains all over these walls, sinks and sheets
Hunger strikes just so we can get something decent to eat

Pushing my mattress towards the door and their battling ram came rattling thru
For what?!?

I ain't even gon' lie, been fighting so long at times I forget why
Losing family cause they don't understand all I got left is my sanity
But they simple minded cause they think I'm fighting cause of my vanity
Immune to their chemicals and their tactics ain't up to date
Sprayed so many times I don't even need nothing to cover up my face
Sprayed too many times that the orange colors have become a part of my DNA
Prayed a lot of times but god seemed to look the other way
Muthafuckas screaming telling me the team on their way!!!
Six geared up men against one plus their paint ball gun
But before they enter they throw a bomb in the cell
I'm looking in these soldiers' eyes and they looking in a warrior's eyes
And all of us are nervous as hell

Click is the sound of the door
They rush in with shield in hand trying to take me to the floor
Once they get me down they sneak their shots in
But I shouldn't have it any other way
Cause their cowardly blows keep me fighting for another day ★



**New book coming
summer 2015!**

Written by two Chican@ prisoners of California, with the help of MIM(Prisons), this book explores the history and future of Aztlán, and the need for socialist revolution.

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Las Prisiones de Texas Matan de Calor a la Gente

por USW88 de United Struggle from Within
Agosto 2014
traducido por un@ prisoner@ en California

“La misión de la División Institucional es proporcionar seguridad y apropiada reclusión, supervisión, rehabilitación, y reintegración de criminales adultos, y para efectivamente dirigir o administrar instalaciones correccionales basados en estatutos estándares constitucionales.” Gobierno de Texas, código 494.001.

Para los que estamos alojados dentro de las prisiones operadas por El Departamento de Injusticia Criminal de Texas (TDCJ), sabemos que esta declaración no es más que mentiras bien-redactadas.

Recientemente La Clínica de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Texas saco este reporte; “Mortal calor en prisiones de Texas.” Basicamente el reporte prueba lo que muchos de los grupos ya saben: Que las condiciones dentro de las prisiones de Texas en el verano violan la prohibición de la octava enmienda contra el castigo cruel e inusual. TDCJ sigue diciendo al público que ellos tienen tácticas en el área para combatir el calor. Sin embargo, Brian McGiverin, un abogado del Proyecto de Derechos Civiles de Texas, dijo durante una conferencia de noticias sobre el tema; “catorce

muerter de prisioneros son fuerte evidencia que las medidas de la delegación de la prisión no hacen mucho para vencer los riesgos de salud ante el calor. El continúo, “la respuesta de que sus tácticas son adecuadas hoy, es ridícula.”

El senador John Whitmire, presidente del Comité de Justicia Criminal del Senado de Texas, dijo esto sobre el tema; “Pero yo puedo decirte que la gente de Texas no quiere prisiones con aire acondicionado, y hay muchas otras cosas en mi lista muy por encima del calor.” Las “otras cosas” eran educación, cuidado de salud, y programas de rehabilitación, pero este racista pontificador jamás dijo que el estaba comprometido a poner fin a las muertes sin sentido de prisioneros de Texas por empleados de TDCJ! Whitmire, quien ha estado en el senado de Texas cerca de 30 años, continúa poniendo ojos ciegos al abuso y discriminación sistemática de prisioneros alojados en las instalaciones de TDCJ. Sufrimos de discriminación racial, discriminación religiosa, asaltos sexuales, azotes y abusos violentos, y Whitmire continúa jugando a la política de los buenos viejos amigos.

Para demandas en asuntos específicos de la prisión, yo encuentre una estrategia que ha estado trabajando. He estado promoviendo que miembros de familia de los lumpen presenten demandas al ombudsman por internet. Ellos

mismos pueden presentar demandas públicas formales sobre una amplia variedad de asuntos y ahora estas demandas tienen que ser puestas en la internet para que el público las vea. ¡Hemos estado teniendo mucho éxito! Toda esa mierda de P.O. Box 99 a Huntsville es un desperdicio de tiempo y papel. Háganlo en internet y pongan a esos culeros en la calle frontal.

MIM(Prisons) agrega: Esto es solo un ejemplo del incontrolado abuso de prisioneros en Texas y a través del país, eso esta bien expuesto y documentado en ULK y en nuestro sitio web prisoncensorship.org. Pero tenemos la intención de hacer más que solo exponer la brutalidad del sistema de injusticia criminal Americana. Nuestra meta es organizar y educar para hacer un cambio significativo. A corto plazo peleamos batallas como la campaña para poner demandas de prisioneros dirigidas a que puedan crear mejores condiciones para nuestros camaradas detrás de las rejas. Pero a largo plazo sabemos que ningún político Americano jamás estará fundamentalmente yendo a cambiar el sistema de injusticia. Esto tomará a los oprimidos a unirse juntos para demandar un cambio para poner un fin al imperialismo antes de que podamos terminar el sistema de injusticia criminal. ★

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El MIM(Prisiones)

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

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

Como revolucionarios internacionalistas, 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 maoístas y amplíe el movimiento Maoísta detrás de las líneas del enemigo.

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

- 1. El comunismo es nuestra meta. El comunismo es una sociedad en donde ningún grupo tiene poder sobre cualquier otro grupo.*
- 2. Una dictadura del proletariado es necesario. En una dictadura del proletariado la mayoría explotada anterior dicta a la minoría (el que promovió la explotación) como la sociedad se debe conducir. En el caso de naciones imperialistas, una dictadura junta del proletariado de naciones 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.*

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Under Lock & Key No. 43 March/April 2015

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...Mental Illness

and counselors to work with revolutionaries in our present social context in order to help us resolve the mental illnesses we pick up just from living in an imperialist society. The goal of this mental health work should be to make us better revolutionaries, and not just so we can feel more comfortable going along with the status quo.

Of the few mental health practitioners that do see the bigger connections between capitalism and mental illness, most present-day radical counselors are found in the anarchist movements. A challenge with anarchism is it often seeks persynal "liberation" from capitalism today without a long-term plan of how to achieve liberation on a worldwide scale and for the most oppressed peoples in the world. We are not opposed to anti-imperialists of all

stripes achieving a higher level of mental health. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that mental illness can be a persynal motivating factor for many people into revolutionary politics ("i am depressed because this world is so fucked up and makes no sense"), and a resolution of persynal mental illness combined with the frustration many feel by the dead-end strategy of First World anarchism is a perfect formula to push people to age out of political struggle for good.

Professional psychological standards in the United States push for "objectivity" of the therapist, which is actually just institutionalized Liberalism. In Communist China, mental health workers were educated in political economy and would use Mao Zedong Thought to help people understand how their depression,

suicidal tendencies, or even schizophrenia fit into an international and material context. Rather than being limited to defining someone's "personality" or persynal chemical defect, mental health was seen on a mass scale as a product of society. Anecdotal evidence from our prisoner comrades and outside recruits has shown that mental health challenges can often be resolved on an individual level by taking up revolutionary politics and studying to understand all the nonsense of capitalism. ★

...Continued from page 7

...Social Control

to happen, conscious prisoners must exert a revolutionary influence on our fellow prisoners.

Prisoners tortured in CUs, no matter how long, are "baptized" into the social reality of life in the United Snakes. It is a wake-up call where lumpen of all nations are given a reality check. It is a place where all bribes are stripped away and the mask of U\$. imperialism is finally discarded. Although it is a painful process, the flip side is that control unit prisoners are more open to revolution, perhaps more so than any other sector of the U\$. prison system, and it is from the CUs that we will harvest the next generation of revolutionaries. ★

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 June 2015.

Notes:

1. Janet Reitman, "The Men who Leaked the Secrets," *Rolling Stone*, issue 1198/1199, December 19, 2013 - January 2, 2014, p. 89.
2. Wikipedia page for Torture Memos.
3. Alfredo Miranda, "Gringo Justice", University of Notre Dame Press, 1987, p. 222.