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## Islam as Liberation Theology

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)  
January 2016

In the 20th century New Afrikans reached out to Islam in an attempt to find identity outside of Amerikan culture. In Islam they found history, identity, independence, integrity and a connection to the larger world, in particular the Third World. Today, revolutionary Islam is reaching out to New Afrikans and the First World lumpen. Just this month, an Al Shabaab-affiliated video was released featuring the stories of young men recruited from Minnesota who were martyred in Somalia fighting the African Union troops who serve their U.S. imperialist master. The first five minutes of this video is a pointed critique of the history of national oppression in the United States and the idea of race. It features footage from Rodney King to Michael Brown and uprisings in Ferguson, Missouri, prisoners from Georgia to California, and sound bites from Malcolm X to Anwar al Awlaki. It is an agitational piece that clearly promotes the national interests of New Afrika.(1)

In the video, Islam is presented as the answer to the racism and social hierarchy based on biology that is inherent to Amerika. The conception of Islam as a liberation theology is not difficult to make given the prominence of the concepts of *jihad*, or Holy Struggle, and *shahada*, translated as witness or martyrdom. The Holy Struggle is to be one with Allah and to represent righteousness, truth and goodness as determined by Allah's divine wisdom. While *jihad* and *shahada* do not require armed struggle, martyrdom in battle for Allah's will is one way that Muslims can reach *shahada* according to the Qur'an.(2)

Throughout the stories of the Minnesota martyrs there is a theme of not fearing death, but rather running towards it. In regions where revolutionary struggle and political dissent of any form has been brutally crushed, Islam might fulfill a need in providing this basis for courage in the face of imminent death. There are many examples in history of the oppressed finding courage in a belief in their own immortality, but they generally did not end well for the oppressed. Ultimately, the myth of immortality may be good at recruiting cannon fodder, but it leads to recklessness and a lack of a scientific approach that is required for victory. We see the brazen unscientific approach to battle playing out in the Islamic State, which is now losing ground after a couple years of impressing the world with their successes.

Like the Muslim in *jihad*, the communist struggles to discover truth and goodness. But the communist serves the people, not Allah, so that goodness is relative to the real lives of hu-



myn beings, and truth is that which changes the conditions of that reality. Whether we can serve the people better in life or in giving our lives will depend on the situation. But as most Muslims will agree, serving truth and goodness does not come in seeking death. Rather than finding our strength and resolve in myths, we look to this world to find strategic confidence in our victory. The vast majority of the world's people suffer under the current imperialist system. Yet that system depends on those same people to derive the profits that keep the system moving. So there is an inherent

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## The Lumpen's Religion

by Loco1 of United Struggle from Within  
and Ndugu Nyota of RSF  
November 2015

Let's talk about religion. Specifically, let's address the question of whether religion is or is not useful in the struggle against prisons and against imperialism.

Many of today's prison groups and lumpen organizations (LOs) are well rooted in religious ideas, theories and practices. For example, the Nation of Gods and Earths and the Rastafarians are both very influential among New Afrikan LOs. The LOs in prison have had experience in the areas of adopting certain religious values for the sake of defending themselves against total annihilation. Whether using religion, spirituality or faith as a conventional method to serve this goal for prisoners will bring about liberation faster than any other method will be determined by prisoners and prisoner-led efforts. [History has already proven dialectical materialism as an ideology to be far more effective at bringing about liberation than religion and faith, but we agree with testing it as a tactic in certain conditions as discussed below. - ULK Editor]

Prisons are a political effect of the bourgeois imperialist oppressive structure, which is determined to take more of the world's wealth and riches than it gives. Therefore prisons are political and produce political prisoners, as MIM(Prisons) holds: "...all prisoners are political prisoners because under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, all imprisonment is substantively political."

Prisoners begin to develop a consciousness of their environment by evaluating the material conditions they are in. Through a process of unity-criticism-unity they often transform themselves into the change they wish to see. This transformation often begins to manifest in individual decision-making skills. One begins to evaluate the pros and cons of indirect and direct action, to spread solutions to fellow prisoners' conflicts, and eventually one becomes sought out by the masses as a leader.

While the reality is that all prisoners are political, as we begin to develop our political consciousness we find we are prohibited from being directly involved in the politics that we are subject to. When U.S. prisoners take that conscious state of mind to the level of organizing, campaigning and agitating, they become victims of laws criminalizing politicking in prisons. Many prisoners and LOs are well aware of this weapon of the snakes. Prisoners have little to no legal

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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. It serves as a forum to develop and promote agitational campaigns led by MIM(Prisons) and United Struggle from Within (USW). It is a free newsletter for prisoners in the United States, edited and published by MIM(Prisons). It is mostly written and illustrated by USW and United Front for Peace in Prisons comrades behind bars. *ULK* is mailed out every other month.

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.

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).

### 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. It 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 six cardinal points, but they can't consciously disagree with any of them. See page 12 for campaign info.

### What is MIM(Prisons)?

The Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, or 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) expresses general unity with all other groups and outbreaks against imperialism; mass movements against oppression have as many forms as forms of power. In this spirit, we insist on telling the uncompromised truth and discussing and criticizing the strategy and tactics of any given action. MIM(Prisons) encourages everyone, communist or not, to be involved in the struggle against imperialism. MIM(Prisons) distinguishes itself 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 expanded 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 sector of the 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 Krushchev 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.

### Free Political Books for Prisoners

Our Free Political Books for Prisoners Program is a Serve the People (STP) program founded on the model of the Black Panther Party's Breakfast for Schoolchildren and other STP programs, and on the basis of Mao's emphasis that communists should serve the people in everything we do. The purpose of the Free Books for Prisoners program is to help prisoners turn their time under lock and key into a time to develop their politics and build with us toward the beginnings of a more just and productive society. We collect and send out political, legal and his-

torical books primarily (we also have some dictionaries and other reference items that are useful for writers). The materials we distribute are selected to help people study the conditions under which they are living and to turn their knowledge into political organizing.

We know that many of our subscribers lack financial resources, and this should not be a barrier to education. Because our purpose is to organize, we expect that comrades will exchange work for the books we send. You should write articles for *ULK*, create revolutionary art, form study groups with other comrades and work through the study group to educate and organize, share our literature and expand our mailing list, lead campaigns against local examples of oppression, or come up with other ways to contribute to the struggle. If you can afford to send donations, and if your facility rules allow, sending us stamps is the best way to donate. We can always use them to get you more books or to help other comrades who cannot afford to pay for their books. (Tell us if you want to send a check or money order so we can send you instructions.)

We can send you a list of specific titles that we currently have available, but it is better to request general topic areas or include substitutions because our stock is constantly changing. The literature list also lists prices for the books we send in if you want to purchase them, but again, lack of funds will not keep you from getting literature, but lack of political work will. We ask you to help us build MIM(Prisons) and United Struggle from Within through your own work in exchange for the books.

If you would like to receive books from MIM(prisons)'s Free Books for Prisoners program, please let us know the subject areas you are interested in, and the work you are doing in exchange.

### Fight Censorship

*Under Lock & Key*, *MIM Theory*, study materials, letters, and even books like dictionaries have been censored by the state, especially ever since MIM began organizing on behalf of prisoners decades ago. If your MIM(Prisons) correspondence is censored, the first thing you need to know is that you are not alone in struggling to get your mail and reading materials. You will need to be prepared to do the work yourself (making copies of rejection notices, filing grievances, sending copies of these documents to us), but we can send instructions on how to do this. In some cases, we can support your appeals with letters of our own.

These are some basic steps we recommend to everyone in prison:

1. Find out *now* what the prison rules say about your right to receive mail and reading materials. You should read this policy carefully and get a copy for your file if possible. You can also send us copies of the rules to post on our website as a resource for the public.

2. Find out what the prison's implementation of these policies is like. Many times the policy looks reasonable on paper, but the prison staff behaves totally out of line. Ask around.

3. To keep our correspondence going, write to us every 6 months. If you're writing us regularly and are not getting any mail from us, there's a problem with your mail delivery. Do not assume we are ignoring you.

4. If your correspondence with us is censored, it is very important that you keep copies of all the paperwork, (rejection notices, grievances, etc.) and send us copies of these as well. Often this is the only way we find out that our mail has been censored. Once we know of the censorship, we can work with you to fight it.

## Expand Spanish

If you write in Spanish or would like to translate *ULK* articles written in English into Spanish, this helps the development of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism among the Spanish-speaking peoples of the world, particularly in the internal semi-colonies of the United States who are a fast growing segment of the prison population. If you want to do translation, let us know. If you want to submit articles in Spanish, go ahead.

## Share *ULK* and Recruit New Subscribers

Let others read the literature we send you. Talk to potential comrades about our politics and work, and have them write in to get put on our mailing list. Our subscribers (you) play a vital role in the growth of our mailing list. Remember, a subscription is free!

## Administrative Details

Your subscription will be active for 6 months after each time you write to us. If we do not hear from you for 6 months, you will be automatically removed from the mailing list. We recommend writing to us regularly so you don't lose track of when to update your subscription.

For people outside of prison, all issues of *ULK*, plus additional reports from within U.S. prisons, are available on the website [www.prisoncensorship.info](http://www.prisoncensorship.info)

**Your address:** Please send us as detailed an address as possible, including your full legal name, prison and unit name, prison ID #, street address and P.O. Box, city, state, and 9-digit zip code. Please check with the mailroom to make sure you have the correct information. This is essential for us to send you anything.

**Releases:** Let us know if you are looking at a (possible) release date in the next two years. We are working on beefing up our release support, and it requires a lot of set-up while you're still locked up. Also let us know your expected address post-release if you have one. Even if it is only the address of a relative who you think will be in the same place for a while, this could be the difference between losing contact and staying in touch and politically active after you are released.

**Your persynal papers:** Please do not send us legal papers that pertain to your case unless you have checked with us first. In general, we cannot do anything with your legal papers as we do not have the resources to get involved in individuals' cases. We cannot return them to you. Rather than focus on only your case, we strongly encourage comrades to work on and write articles about the political implications of their situation.

Please do not send us your only copies of artwork, articles or other writings unless you are certain that you will not need them in the future. Comrades have requested that we make copies of their work and send these copies back. Doing this takes up time and money that would otherwise go to filling book requests, fighting censorship and answering letters.

## Other Resources

PARC provides a free resource guide for prisoners. Tell them you heard about them from MIM(Prisons):  
Prison Activist Resource Center  
PO Box 70447  
Oakland, CA 94612

Inside Books Projects sends free books and a resource guide to prisoners in Texas.  
Inside Books Projects, 12th Street Books  
827 West 12th Street  
Austin TX 78701  
[ibp.resourceguide@gmail.com](mailto:ibp.resourceguide@gmail.com)

\*see our partial political glossary p. 23\*

## Choosing One Ideology Over Another: The Materialist Method

(reprinted from the *Maoist Internationalist Movement* "What's Your Line" pamphlet)

*"We can (and must) begin to build socialism, not with abstract human material, or with human material specially prepared by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. True, it is not an easy matter, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion." V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism," - An Infantile Disorder," Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 50.*

It is only by examining the practice of various ideologies over the long run of history that one can decide which ideology is the most effective in promoting the end of oppression of oppressed groups by oppressor groups. In contrast, some people think it is fair to compare an abstract idea with an actual movement. That is not materialist method. Once one allows ideas to be compared with actual, historical movements one has no way of stopping all kinds of comparisons of ideas with actual practices. One can only compare practices with practices.

It is intellectuals and Trotskyists who compare practices with ideas to see how good or bad the practice is. With this comparison, for example, it is easy to shoot down the practice of Stalinism with the ideas of Trotskyism or the ideas of Madison and Jefferson or any idea for that matter. This method is not wrong because it is Trotskyist or Madisonian. Rather, Trotskyism is wrong because it uses this idealist method to criticize Stalinism instead of comparing Trotskyist practice with Stalinist practice.

In the same vein, it's not fair to compare Maoism with Jesus Christ in the abstract. Maybe Mao did not obey the 10 Commandments. But his followers have a better practice than the Christians when it comes to ending oppression.

The only time it is correct to evaluate a practice in relationship to an idea is within that practice. Maoists can determine if there are better ways to be Maoists and tap existing potential by discussing ideas within Maoism. Even then, the only proof of the validity of a new Maoist idea is by comparing one Maoist practice with another Maoist practice.

Hence MIM uses the "where's the beef" taunt to everyone else. There are an infinity of logically consistent ideas ranging from professors' pet economic models to Hare Krishna. Only some ideas, however, have come with practices to end oppression. By choosing the ideology that goes with the most historically effective practice of social change to end oppression, one separates oneself from dogmatism and religion. Dogmatism may take the form of believing in reform no matter what; it may take the form of opposing dogma all the time, but in every case dogmatism and religion really amount to comparing apples and oranges, the apples being ideas and the oranges, practices. Dogmatists of all stripes conclude that oranges should be more like apples. In contrast, Marxist materialists just pick the best oranges.

MIM forms the following conclusions on the materialist method:

\* In debate, we must decide when it is appropriate to compare practices with each other.

\* Then we must decide on when it is appropriate to develop ideas within a practice.

(For more on materialism, how we study history, and how we develop our strategy, write in to our *Free Books for Prisoners* program. We have a number of study packs and books on this topic.)★

## 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.

...Continued from page 1 **...Lumpen's Religion**

standing in the U.S. bourgeois injustice system to defend against the assaults on their humyn right to politically advocate and demonstrate their class interest as lumpen in the United States.

By law, according to the U.S. Constitutional standard, prisoners have a right to grieve conditions relative to the prison environment. They have the right to correspond with members of society, including the press. But when those of the prison population begin organizing the locals into group actions, they are labeled as security threat group leaders. Prisoners are incapable of putting forth a defense to these charges because by state standards their groups are un-sanctioned. Without a license we are prohibited from driving forward the people to a state of consciousness from where they may liberate themselves.

LOs don't register their groups with the state, they don't report their activities to the state, and the majority of LOs don't pay taxes on any income of the organization; all behaviors criminalized by the state. Essentially, prisoners being involved in a public manner in/with prison politics are whooped from the jump start.

It is therefore no coincidence that religious/spirituality groups that focus on the lumpen have become quite popular within U.S. prisons. They provide a more free outlet for expression and camaraderie. Of course, this has been a role played by religious organizations since the days of the Roman empire, when the church recruited the labor of those who had no legal warrant to sell their labor. This can lead to these religious bodies being a voice in service of the oppressed or to the religious body suppressing the desires of the oppressed to the benefit of the oppressor.

At different times religion has played different roles ideologically and politically. Many New Afrikan lumpen read from Dr. Suzar's *Blacked Out Through Whitewash* that:

*"Jesus, was the Panther? An original name for Jesus was... son of the Panther!" (Blavatsky: The Secret Doctrine).*

*"Even the Bible refers to him as 'the Lion of the tribe Juda.' (Rv. 5:5) 'Jesus in fact, was a Black nationalist freedom fighter... whose goals were to free the Black people of that day from the oppressive... White Roman power structure... and to build a Black nation.' (I Barashango)*

*"Schoenfield reports in The Passover Plot p 194: 'Galilee, were[sic] Jesus had lived... which was home of the Jewish resistance movement, suffered particularly. The Romans never ceased night and day to devastate... pillage [and kill].'*

*"In the Black Messiah p91, Rev. A.B. Cleage Jr. writes that Jesus was a revolutionary 'who was leading a [Black] nation into conflict against a [white] oppressor... It was necessary that he be crucified because he taught revolution.' Jesus stated, 'I have not come to send peace, but a sword.' (The Holy Bible - Mathew 101.34 - King James Version)"(1)*

Depending on the leadership of the religious

institutions and the cleverness of the lumpen, religion and politics can go hand-in-hand with one another. Devout members of the left will disagree and dogmatic rightists will call for a lynch mob. But at the end of the discussion the outcome is to be decided by those directly related to and at the source of the phenomenon.

It is the position held by MIM(Prisons) that i admire most:

*"In some ways communism is the best way for religious people to uphold their beliefs and put an end to the evils of murder, rape, hunger and other miseries of humyns. Some argue that Jesus Christ must have been a communist because he gave to the poor."(2)*

Many prisoners utilize liberation theology as a means to merge their political strengths with the legal warrant of the First Amendment right to freedom of religious exercise as the defense against political attacks from the police state.

The lumpen's religion is the exception to the world's norm of religion as representing the status quo. There are many prisoners who fall into the wash of all faiths, but there is a powerful source of prisoner liberation theologians at the forefront of the anti-imperialist prison movement too. It is possible that this very source is the face of the

prison struggle for the age we are entering. Working smarter is working harder within the belly of the beast.

Prisoners should struggle to have their political interest respected by the state, but they should not concentrate more on convincing the police state that prisons are inappropriate, and the greatest crimes are being committed by themselves. They know this good and well already. LOs must concentrate on tactics that will forge united fronts capable of pushing the forces of history forward faster.

We conclude with a quote from Russian leader V.I. Lenin:

*"We must not only admit workers who preserve their belief in God into the Social-Democratic Party, but must deliberately set out to recruit them; we are absolutely opposed to giving the slightest offense to their religious convictions, but we recruit in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not in order to permit an active struggle against it."(3)★*

Notes:

1. Dr. Suzar, *Blacked Out Through Whitewash*, December 1999, A-Kar Productions.
2. MIM, *Choosing One Ideology Over Another: The Materialist Method*.
3. VI Lenin, *On Religion* page 24-25.

## Scientific Thought and Internationalism

by Durango of United Struggle from Within  
November 2015

As prisoners in this socially oppressive injustice system we tend to be attracted to philosophy to try to get a better understanding of why and how did we end up in a cage like some type of animal. Some choose religion hoping that some omni-present being can answer their questions and fill in the blanks. Others choose a more materialist ideology for a better scientific understanding to the present situation here in the United States. The rest just choose to ride it out and hope that the situation changes.

There is no denying that dialectically and historically the empire is socially unstable, so much so that the oppressive Amerikan Gestapo are killing us, free of judicial repercussion, in order to protect the bourgeois interests at the expense of the oppressed nations. The state sponsored bourgeois media are quick to suggest that the Amerikan gestapo killings are justified with no scientific facts to support their so-called reporting. The people must look past the bullshit smoke being blown in our faces and understand that shit isn't all lemonade and apple pies.

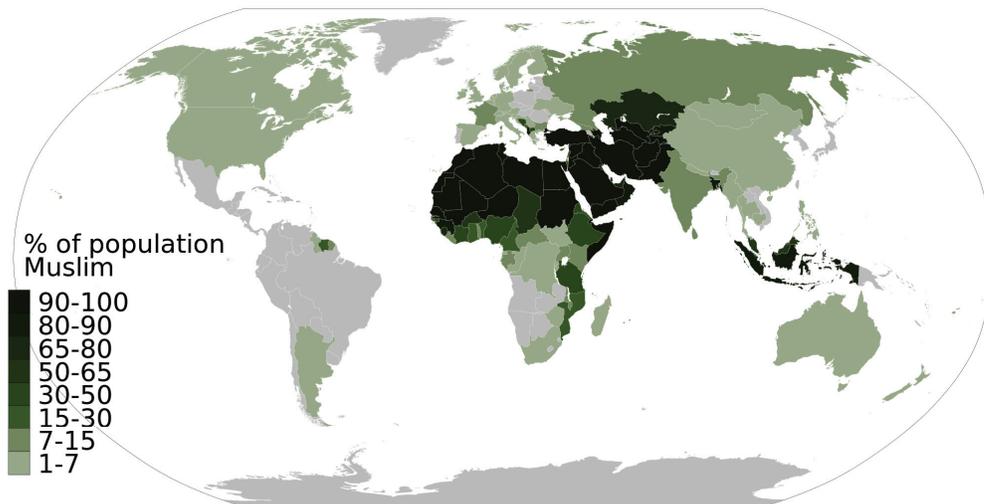
Religion doesn't tell us scientific facts, but actually dogmatic scriptures about this false paradise where those "chosen" can live free after death. So how can this spiritual being give those materially existing on this earth freedom? It cannot. Religion blinds us to what's really happening here. It is a poison infecting the masses with its dogmatic ideology.

Scientific theory with Maoist philosophy is the only way to freedom. Scientifically it teaches the masses to dissect hystory and to digest what is beneficial to the struggle. It gives us, the lumpen of the oppressed nations, a place in a socialist society where we can take part in the world's struggle for freedom. The former CPUSA called this line petty-bourgeois radicalism, but Maoism teaches that all prisoners are political prisoners. The United States has the highest prisoner population in world hystory with most prisoners coming from the barrios and ghettos. Growing up in poverty, the oppressed nations are forced to adapt to their reality. What separates the barrios and ghettos from the Third World? Nothing, we are the Third World. Today we Chican@s and New Afrikans make up most of the prison population. Centuries of oppression on our people has brainwashed us to accept this as our reality.

Fellow prisoners ask me, why do you read about China, or Palestine, etc? Or when I clearly state that I don't believe in God they look at me like I'm crazy. First I state that God is a facade, meant to pacify the masses and mind fuck them into accepting their oppressive reality. World hystory is our hystory, and by examining other nations' struggles we can philosophically advance as a people. The struggle in Palestine is our struggle and our struggle is the Palestinian struggle. Together we are one; the Third World.

Together we stand firm. The victims of the empire deserve justice and only we can bring that about. Oppose the imperialists wars on the Third

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source: M Tracy Hunter, wikimedia.org, data from Pew Research Center, Washington DC, Religious Composition by Country (December 2012)

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contradiction that will continue to play out in the form of class and national conflict until the exploitative system is destroyed and replaced with one that serves humankind.

### Islam is Growing

If there were to be a religion of the Third World proletariat, it would be Islam, just by the numbers. As of 2010, only 3% of Muslims lived in the imperialist countries, yet Muslims made up 23.4% of the world's population.(3) The Muslim-majority countries are dominated by young people, with over 60% of their citizens being under 30 years old today.(3) Thus the Muslim population is projected to increase, as Muslims will have birth rates twice the rest of the population for the next couple decades. The contradiction between youth and adults has always been an important one, with youthful populations being more open to change.

Of course, Islam has almost no influence in Central and South America, and significant chunks of Africa and Asia. So Islam does not represent the Third World as a whole. But First Worldist chauvinism is just as likely to come in anti-Muslim rhetoric as is to come in the form of racism these days. And it is interesting how its role among the internal semi-colonies of the United States has also emerged from the oppressor nation vs. oppressed contradiction, as we will examine in more depth.

It is of note that France, Belgium and Russia are the only imperialist countries that are predicted to have more than 10% of their populations Muslim by 2030.(3) In November 2015, France and Belgium were put under the equivalent of Martial Law in a search for radical Muslims in their countries. Paris remains under this oppressive police state months later. Following the attacks in Paris, there have been attacks in Russia and the downing of a Russian plane. Anti-Muslim nationalism is also a rife in Russia, which has recently joined the war against the Islamic State in full force.

In the United States, Muslims make up a mere 0.9% of the population.(4) For this reason there is great ignorance of Islam, but Amerikkans still share the anti-Muslim sentiments of other imperialist countries. 2015 saw the greatest number of attacks on Mosques in the United States on record, with a surge following the attacks by Muslims in Paris, France and San Bernardino, California.(5)

The imperialists have succeeded in creating a new race, that is Muslims, for the oppressor nation peoples to focus their hate on. Without this racism, there could be no bombings or occupations in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. Yet the white nationalists, in their own twisted logic, can claim Islamophobia is not racism because it is based in religion and not "biology." There are even those who argue that being anti-Jewish is racist but anti-Muslim is not. It is amazing that in 2016, politricks still trumps science, and most people still believe in race.

### Islam as Philosophy

Religion is idealism with organized rituals. The rituals include all sorts of things from regular meetings, prayer, fasting, philanthropy, dressing up, studying texts, marriage, etc.

Idealism is a broader category of philosophy

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### ...Internationalism

World, whether they're in Kabul, Juarez, or South Central.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We echo this comrade's internationalism as well as eir dedication to the philosophy of dialectical materialism. However, if we are to make a material analysis of the conditions in the First World ghettos, barrios, reservations and even prisons, we must disagree with em asserting that "We are the Third World."

Like the Third World, the internal oppressed nations of the United States are oppressed by imperialism and have histories connected to other op-

## Editor's Note:

January 2016

This issue of Under Lock & Key takes on the topic of religion. Many contributors to this ULK are members of religious organizations or trends behind bars and on the streets. And there is a theme in these articles of reconciling religion with revolutionary activism. For some prisoners religion is a part of their culture, and separate from their politics. While MIM(Prisons) is a communist organization, and so atheist, we promote a united front with individuals and organizations that share our anti-imperialist goals even if they do not share our ideology entirely. In this issue we discuss how we can unite with religious trends and organizations, while still maintaining that dialectical materialist analysis will ultimately lead humynity to reject all religion in favor of science.

We take an example from China under Mao when that country achieved the furthest advances towards communism yet seen in humyn history. The Chinese government did not force people to give up their religious beliefs. Instead they focused on education, and a transformation of the culture of feudalism into a culture of socialism. This path to communism, which they called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, provided the information, resources, and examples to help people understand why their beliefs in gods and other idealist concepts were incorrect and in fact served as a tool of their oppression under feudalism.

So many comrades behind bars submitted great articles on religion that we were not able to include some of the reports about religious repression. These reports show how the criminal injustice system uses religion as a tool of national oppression, as the article "Islam as Liberation Theology" explains. (see p. 1) It is this linking of national oppression with religion that has led to some of the historically strong religious alliances with anti-imperialist struggles, from the Catholics in north Ireland to the liberation theologians in Central America to the Islamic fighters in the Middle East.

We hope this issue of ULK serves to clarify why revolutionary scientists reject religion, but also how we can unite with those who still hold on to some religious cultural practices and beliefs to advance the anti-imperialist movement toward our shared goal. ★

pressed nations that are in the Third World. However, the distinction between First World and Third World is important because of the material benefits that those living within imperialist borders receive just because of the luck of where they were born. That is why we speak of the First World lumpen as a different class than the lumpen proletariat; First World lumpen are surrounded by the labor aristocracy, and not the proletariat. All U.\$ residents benefit from the flow of wealth away from the exploited in the Third World. True solidarity with the exploited must recognize this reality if we hope to liberate ourselves from imperialism, or else we risk falling into positions that put the interests of oppressed people in the United States over the interests of the oppressed elsewhere. ★

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### ...Liberation Theology

that includes religions. And there are different versions of idealism, as we might expect. What is common between the different versions is that idealism puts the mind as primary and matter as secondary or non-existent in terms of understanding the "real world." Prior to Hegel (b. 1770 - d. 1831), who introduced the radical method of dialectics, idealism was generally metaphysical. Metaphysical idealism is the belief in predefined, static things-in-themselves. For example, for those who believe in one god as the creator, everything that exists is defined by an ideal image from that god. For idealists, there is a barrier between what we perceive through our five senses, and this pre-defined ideal. Philosophers like Kant, who Engels called an agnostic, falling between idealism and materialism, believed that the real ideal was unknowable, or knowable only through faith. For many religions, it is the task of the individual to attempt to know that ideal or absolute truth by following the rituals of their religion. This passing from the material world to the world of ideas is called transcendence. Transcendence is a major theme of many religions.

For materialists there is no such thing as transcendence. We see that truth is obtained through our five senses in a constant process of gaining knowledge and understanding as a species through practice and the scientific method. There is no ancient scroll or secret key that will open our third eye allowing us to suddenly see and understand all the secrets of the world that are hidden from us by our senses. Or, as Engels puts it in describing why Hegel marked the end of philosophy:

*"As soon as we have once realised – and in the long run no one has helped us to realize it more than Hegel himself – that the task of philosophy thus stated means nothing but the task that a single philosopher should accomplish that which can only be accomplished by the entire human race in its progressive development – as soon as we realise that, there is an end to all philosophy in the hitherto accepted sense of the word. One leaves alone 'absolute truth', which is unattainable along this path or by any single individual; instead, one pursues attainable relative truths along the path of the positive sciences, and the summation of their results by means of dialectical thinking."*(6)

### Why Do We Still Have Religion?

The United States is exceptional in the First World in often defining itself through religion (Christianity). One recent book describes this as a fairly recent development, starting from a campaign by industrial capitalists with libertarian interests opposed to the New Deal.(7) The author points out, however, that Franklin D. Roosevelt used a lot of Christian language in his promotion of the New Deal and criticism of the evils of the capitalist class. Roosevelt used that language to capture the populist interests of the majority in the United States who were suffering from the Great Depression. The Christian language was an alternative to the communist language in the Soviet Union, which FDR was trying to save the United

States from. Since the Bolshevik revolution, religious language has been openly used to combat the materialist language of communists.

The capitalist class in the United States took up the religious lingo as a marketing scheme after they realized that campaigning honestly for their own interests against the New Deal was not going to get popular support.(7)

Religion can be a very deceptive tool in politics because the politicians avoid talking about the real issues. While in the realm of philosophy we can talk about religion as idealism, in the realm of sociology we see it as culture. And culture is part of the superstructure in that it reflects the economic substructure; in our world that would be (imperialist) capitalism. And within capitalism the fundamental contradiction that defines that system is that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. So, we will see how as the proletarian forces become stronger religion will reflect the proletarian world view, such as in Central America when socialism/communism had captured the interests of the masses in those Catholic countries. Religion must adopt a proletarian worldview to stay relevant as the scientific method begins to provide the masses with answers that the religions had failed to. In the status quo under capitalism religion most often reflects the interests of the bourgeoisie.

It has been popular in recent decades to talk about the clash of civilizations between the Muslim and Christian worlds. Some even look to history to show a long pattern of these clashes along religious lines. But these lazy historians cherry pick instances in history when religion is used to further the economic interests of different groups, as it often is. Yet a study of the causes of the most brutal wars in our modern industrial society demonstrate that it was all about trade, markets and national interests. The two world wars were inter-imperialist rivalries over these things.(8) Then as communism threatened to remove vast segments of the world from the capitalist market economy, the imperialists took aim at countries building socialism. The focus on religion in the the last couple decades is a direct result of the victory of the imperialists in crushing socialist aspirations around the world. This repression, combined with some of the negative experiences countries in regions like the Middle East had interacting with revisionists and social-imperialists claiming to be communists, has led to a significant turning away from the socialist path in many parts of the Third World.

### Islam and New Afrikans

Just as religion is today an outlet for many radical youth in the Third World, religion has been influenced by revolutionary politics in the context of New Afrika. In the 20th century we see a turn towards Islam by a number of New Afrikans who are searching for identity and liberation from oppression by Amerika. The great migration from the Black Belt to the industrial centers of the north was a time of great change for the nation, that left many searching for identity and culture. In fact, Noble Drew Ali, Elijah Muhammed and Father Allah all

came from the south to face unmet promises of freedom and the American Dream.(9)

The appeal of Islam for people like Noble Drew Ali seemed to be in that it was exotic and unknown in North America, yet well-established elsewhere in the world. New Afrikans have spent much time trying to create a new identity by linking their history to lost histories of other peoples, and this was the tradition that Ali worked in. But it wasn't just novelty that New Afrikans were looking for, it was something that spoke to their national aspirations, and not the same old Christian doctrines that had been used to keep their progenitors down.

There is a direct lineage from Ali's Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) to Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI) to Father Allah's Five Percenters, later the Nation of Gods and Earths (NGE). Even today people move from one organization to the other, building on the common mythologies between them. And all three organizations have had important relationships with various lumpen street organizations.

While loosely based on Islam with their founders basing their studies on religious texts, these groups represent a unique New Afrikan theology and culture. The NGE is the most eclectic of the groups because of its open nature. It had a more direct relationship to street life in New York City, and had influences from practices such as Rastafari, making it again a unique New Afrikan culture.(10)

While the NGE has generally shunned being called a religion, its primary purpose was in the realm of thought and philosophy. Father Allah focused on teaching, not on organizing people for any political goals aside from building opportunity for New Afrikan youth. On page 20 we discuss the Almighty Latin King Queen Nation and its openness to representing religious ideas, while primarily being a lumpen mass organization. In contrast, the NGE, while rejecting religion ideologically, functioned primarily as a religious or spiritual organization, at least at first. It did evolve to take on more characteristics of a lumpen organization after The Father was killed leaving the youth to organize themselves.

In 1966, a couple years after the Five Percenters began, the New York City Police Department reported that they saw the decline of 200 street gangs, and the rise of one – the Five Percenters. (11) While they often found themselves in violent conflict with the armed wings of other New Afrikan religious sects, in 1971 the NYPD believed the Five Percenters worked with Muslims and Rastafarians in a vigilante killing of ten suspected drug dealers. Around that same time, in the 1970s, the Five Percenters played a leadership role in inspiring gangs to come together to obtain anti-poverty funds, parallel to what groups like the Vice Lords and Black P. Stone Nation were doing in Chicago. (12) In the later 1970s the Five Percenters recruited whole street gangs into their fold whose members accounted for a significant portion of the arrests in Brooklyn during those years.(13)

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### ...Liberation Theology

In another article on the MSTA, a comrade explains the dual roles of the organization, which began as a civic organization and later became a religion. (see p. 9) This duality is another thing that MSTA has in common with the NOI, NGE and other New Afrikan organizations that are just as concerned with the nation as with spirituality. This role is also seen in leaders of Christian-based churches, as well as lumpen organizations in the New Afrikan community. While this is a manifestation of the continued national interests of New Afrikans separate from Amerika, it has unfortunately been used against their national interests as well. Some revolutionary theorists have pointed out that it is the most scientific revolutionary leadership that has been targeted for complete annihilation by the state, leaving those with idealist and profit-motivated views to fill the leadership vacuum.

Back in 1996, *MIM Notes* criticized the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan for stating that an earthquake would strike California in response to federal agents' harassment of NOI officials. *MIM* wrote, "While Farrakhan's statement appears on the surface to be an extreme example of religious metaphysics, Farrakhan was in fact skillfully using metaphysics as a cover for a crypto-pacifist line directed at his followers." (14) Farrakhan followed in Elijah Muhammad's footsteps, who predicted many major events that never materialized. The mythology of Fard (who is considered a prophet by the NOI) and Elijah Muhammad promoted the idea that the Black man was god and created the white man over 600 years of grafting by the scientist Yacub. Muhammad, and his follower Clarence 13X (later Father Allah), believed that after 6000 years the Black man would return to power, which happened to be in 1966. Muhammad predicted the "Fall of America" to occur that year. The early years of the Five Percenters focused on preparation for this event.

While Father Allah was close to Malcolm X even after both had left/been forced out of the NOI, ey did not join up with Malcolm because Malcolm had rejected the story of Yacub after eir trip to Mecca. (15) Later, Father Allah would take up the line that devilishment was a state of mind and not a genetically distinct white man that was bred by Yacub. (16)

It was Malcolm X who had developed the most scientific theory of liberation coming out of the NOI, which ey seemed to be separating from eir religious beliefs before ey was assassinated, by setting up two separate organizations. Malcolm X inspired many, but it was the Black Panther Party, a Maoist, and therefore atheist, organization that best claims to be the direct descendents of Malcolm's ideas.

It is *MIM(Prisons)*'s line that the principal contradiction within the internal semi-colonies is that between integration with Amerika and independence from Amerika. The continued interest in the mythology of Yacub indicates an unscientific re-

jection of integration by many New Afrikans. The organizations discussed here all have a significant base in the New Afrikan lumpen, and have ideologies that reflect a kernel of the drive for national independence. While some people from MSTA and NGE have recently distanced themselves from Third World Islam, we shall see whether this becomes the dominant tendency, indicating a further move towards integration with Amerikkka for New Afrikans. ★

#### Notes:

1. *Path To Paradise 2, Al-Kataib foundation for media productions 2015.*
2. A. Ezzati, *The Concept of Martyrdom in Islam, Tehran University, Al-Serat, Vol XII (1986).*
3. *The Future of the Global Muslim Population, 27 January 2011, Pew Research Center.*
4. Michael Lipka, *Muslims and Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world, Pew Research Center, 7 December 2015.*
5. Eric Lichtblau, *17 December 2015, Crime Against Muslim Americans and Mosques Rise Sharply, New York Times.*
6. Frederick Engels, 1886, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, section I.*
7. Kevin M. Kruse, 2015, *One Nation Under God: how corporate America invented Christian America, Basic Books.*
8. see Richard Krooth, 1980, *Arms & Empire, Harvest Publishers.*
9. Michael Muhammed Knight, 2008, *The Five Percenters: Islam, Hip-hop and the Gods of New York, Oneworld Publications, p.263.*
10. *Ibid.*, p.203.
11. *Ibid.*, p.87.
12. *Ibid.*, p.142.
13. *Ibid.*, p.144.
14. reprinted in *MIM Theory 14: United Front, 2001*, p. 72.
15. Knight, p.47.
16. *Ibid.*, p.111.

## Truly Quoting Marx on Religion

by an Oregon prisoner  
June 2012

Often we hear or read quick quotes which are taken to mean something, or infer something different from the intended meaning. Marx's quote on religion is just such an example.

We have all heard or read Marx's "statement" that "religion is the opiate of the masses." This is not an accurate quote of what Marx wrote in his "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." This quote has given rise to the belief that Marx did not take the issue of religion seriously and dismissed it as folly. This is not true. (1)

Let's review in context what Marx did write about religion:

*"Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people."*

The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about conditions is the demand to give up a condition that needs illusions. The criticism of religion is therefore in embryo the criticism of the vale of woe, the halo of which is religion. Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain, not so that man will wear the chain without any fantasy or consolation, but so that he will shake off the chain and cull the living flower.

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### On Prisons & Prisoners

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

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

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

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...Marx

Clearly Marx is not discussing the seriousness of religion, or the role it plays in the lives of oppressed peoples. Marx realizes the power of delusion that religion holds over people. I disagree with MIM(Prisons) that religion "is simply a belief in authority."<sup>(2)</sup> Perhaps that is true for some people. But I believe it is a panacea for woe and oppression – a search and hope for a better life than the one believers currently lead. It is the oppressed's answer to the question of existentialism.

Due to the anxieties of existence – anxieties people experience as the result of natural causes like floods, famine and earthquakes, or man-made causes such as enslavement, exploitation or oppression – that make people feel powerless, they often resort to magical thinking, or beliefs in supernatural agents as a plea for the anxiety to end. Thus was born religion, its roots in anxiety.

Religion is a potent tool of capitalism and imperialism. To eliminate one, all must be eliminated if the people are to experience true freedom and liberation.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** Overall, we have great unity with what this comrade writes about religion and Marx's view of it. But our disagreement with something we wrote is a bit of a strawpseudonym argument. First, it is ironic to use Christopher Hitchens to criticize us as too dismissive of religion. Hitchens was popular for his atheist ideas among the American petty bourgeoisie. His attack on so-called "Islamofascism" was better received than his allies on the left (led by Bob Avakian) and right (epitomized in David Horowitz). All three represent the spectrum of white nationalist thinking that uses religion as an excuse to attack the oppressed nations, primarily in the Islamic world today.

In this attempt to critique, we think this comrade takes the quote from the "Fundamental Political Line of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons" out of context. The article presents the religious view in a discussion on science, correctly stating that it is simply a belief in authority, rather than a belief in one's own ability to study reality and find truth.

The MIM article also discusses pre-scientific thinking, addressing religion's role as a "panacea for woe and oppression." In pre-capitalist times, such thinking was the norm and religion was more than just an attempt to deal with the bad times, it was an attempt to explain all aspects of reality. Once scientific thought was developed and popularized, it has been the class interests of the oppressors that have kept religious ideology alive to serve their interests, as this comrade alludes. But that doesn't mean everyone who is religious is a dupe. Muslims are currently striking some of the greatest blows against U.S. imperialism, so they must have a pretty good grasp on how to actualize their own interests in a world that throws many horrors in their direction. ★

Notes:

1. "God is not great: how religion poisons everything" by Christopher Hitchens p9-10
2. "Fundamental Political Line of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons" March 2012. p17.

# Religion is an Opiate for Prisoners

by cipactli of Brown Berets - Prison Chapter  
September 2015

Religion is a very volatile subject for some, even in prison. Looking back on my own prison journey, some of the most heated debates with my fellow prisoners have been in regards to religion. Although the belief in the supernatural is a metaphysical practice, it is one with deep roots in the minds of the internal semi-colonies. It is for this reason that an analysis of religion and its effects is needed.

## From where does religion derive?

No matter what religion, they all have one thing in common: they originate from ideas that are outside of reality. Most religions come from ancient peoples attempting to understand the material world in which they lived.

Many of the ancient religions believed that when it rained it was the Gods crying because they were angry or sad. Tornados were thought to be the wind Gods who were angry. The Mexica (Aztecs) believed the Sun would only rise if people were sacrificed, if their hearts were ripped out, and burned. Even in recent years when the earthquake in Haiti occurred religious people said it was God punishing Haitians for practicing Voodoo – another religion.

Today we know when it rains and hails, it is nature at work. Earthquakes are the movement of the Earth's crust. We know that tornados are caused by different air temperatures and humidity. We know all of this because of science, and we can now explain these events without relying on mythology or folklore.

Our scientific development as a society isn't limited to weather; we have developed our collective understanding of the world we inhabit in all realms of science. We don't know everything, but where there is an explanation based in materialism we should move past the outdated concepts offered by religions. And where we don't yet have an explanation we should look to the material world for answers rather than resorting to religious idealism. The old worn out saying that "God works in mysterious ways" is really just another way of saying someone doesn't have an answer. Ultimately the belief in religion is ignorance. But it's not a benevolent ignorance; it is at its core reactionary and goes against true liberation.

## Religious Cults in U.S. Prisons

Many people held in U.S. prison kkkamps come to these dungeons extremely demoralized, abused and uncertain. It is very disorienting to be criminalized by an occupier and harmed by an entity you don't even understand. Like our ancient ancestors, many fall back to religion when they don't understand the reality of their imprisonment. Whether it is politics, national oppression or the weather, religion remains a crutch for those

without answers to their mysteries.

The formation of religious groups in U.S. prisons represents a contradiction. Religious cults in prison are attempts by the oppressed to deal with their oppression, or attempts by our oppressors to explain our oppression to us in terms that also placate us. We are using religious groups to try to help ourselves, but ultimately we end up stuck in an escapist fantasy.

Among Chican@s and other Raza prisoners, Catholicism is probably the most popular religion. Many Chican@s that I have debated within prisons will defend Catholicism as a part of "our cultura." Catholics in prison do not create groups that are active outside of the chapel. At the same time one will see both those Raza who belong to lumpen organizations (LOs) and those former "gangsters" who have taken up this brainwash ideology all comfortably praying together in the chapel. The colonizer's religion has become so respected that most Chican@ LOs will be okay with its people leaving the LO to dedicate themselves to religion. But as some comrades have brought up, those same Chican@ lumpen groups would not react the same if their people left to take up revolutionary politics.

Amongst New Afrikans, Muslims are most common within prisons. Of all the religious groups in Califas prisons, the Muslims are most organized and operate much like LOs. It is in the Muslim services where one will hear a lecture on concepts like discipline, unity and dedication.

Many Muslims also connect to outside Muslim organizations and work to connect prisoners who are released to the outside Muslim community. This is something that the Catholics or Christian Chaplains/communities do not really do. So in this sense Muslims do more prison outreach.

## How Religion Pacifies Prisoners

Most prison administrations are happy to promote religion and make sure Bibles are in abundance. Religious channels on the TV are rapidly approved for the prison viewers and Chaplains/Imams are welcomed to enter even the maximum security prisons and walk the tier. These religious leaders are welcome to distribute their propaganda while revolutionary publications are censored, books on national liberation are used to label one a part of a Security Threat Group, and even visits from activists are denied. This is because one ideology teaches one to get free from the oppressor and the other teaches one to simply pray that the oppressor will stop oppressing you.

Rather than teaching prisoners how to fight oppression religion teaches people to pray for forgiveness from the oppressor. It teaches that some supernatural being has a plan and if we humbly accept our oppression in life we will be rewarded in some afterlife.

Continued on page 10...





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### ...MSTA

*of imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy -- and the only way to combat these material forces is to scientifically analyze the contradictions in society and build a secular revolutionary movement, a movement without religious bias which can unite all the oppressed."*(1)

## Conclusion

While i don't have the time or space to go into all of the contradictions within the MSTA, it is safe to say that it has no ties to the Sovereign Citizen Movement. It is inherently more progressive than most organized religious groups operating in the New Afrikan community, but there is a leadership vacuum. A scientific leadership, that knows how to balance the spiritual aspects of life, with materialism.

At the same time,

*"some people talk about a 'nation' but really don't wanna be one (independent), as evidenced by their efforts to crawl back on the plantation. How can we tell? You can identify those trying to crawl back on the plantation by the way they identify themselves, i.e. 'black', 'African-American', 'ethnic group', 'minority nationality', 'underclass', anything and everything except New Afrikans, an oppressed nation. Amerikkka is the plantation, and continuing to identify yourself within the Amerikkkan context is evidence of the colonial (slave) mentality. Ain't no two ways about it."*(2)

It is the people who make hystory and it is our responsibility to create the type of society that we want to live in. Otherwise, you ain't got no right to complain about the oppression you face.

1. MIM, *Religion and the Anti-Imperialist Movement, MIM Theory 13: Revolutionary Culture, 1997, pg 49.*  
2. James Yaki Sayles, *Meditations on Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth: New Afrikan Revolutionary Writings, 2010, Spear and Shield Publications.*

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** We have received a number of other responses to discussion around the MSTA, following the article "Talks about Sovereignty: A Scientific Approach" printed in *Under Lock & Key 44*.

**A comrade from Michigan wrote:** I see myself as a new generation Moor and I see and understand the weak and ineffective leadership that's in the Moorish movement. ...I have decided to bring about a serious change in the Moorish movement and its ideology and to become politically, socially, economically and culturally in the struggle to remove oppression and exploitation of the New Afrikans, poor people and Third World countries. This is the reason why I founded the Moorish Islamic Liberation Movement as its Chief Executive Ruler.

...I support the Sovereign Freedom Movement, and I recognize the U\$. Empire government but I'm not a 14th Amendment Federal Citizen, I'm a state citizen under the 11th Amendment of the U\$. constitution. ...

The Moors are indigenous to the Americas be-

cause the old Moorish Empire extended from the northeast and southwest Afrika across the great Atlantis even unto the present day North, South and Central America... This Moorish Islamic Liberation Movement has many different associates and alliances because to destroy and overthrow imperialism is going to require a great many alliances. I'm against no other Moorish organization but I disagree with the methods and ideology of teachings because it's too many secrets and not enough action.

I stand with the oppressed, exploited and the poor people of the world because of the cruel abusive and foul treatment by the imperialist and the powerful of the proletariat and lumpen. We stand together in solidarity as Souljas in the revolutionary cause to establish freedom, justice and equality for all people wherever they may be. Our principles are Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom and Justice.

**A comrade in Illinois wrote:** I am writing to you about your recent article that talks about sovereignty. The Moorish Americans are not on a sovereign citizen movement, get it right. We are not some new organization, the Moors are the true indigenous people and nations of the land as you know that the Moors was denationalized during slavery and given slave names and Black state of mind, they were made negroes, colored folks, black people and in 2015, African Americans. Now take a look at the Constitution of the United States of America, Article 1, Section 2. You know where it says three fifths of all other persons. Do you know what they are talking about? They are talking about Willie Lynch syndrome man breaking and slave making!...

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We thank this latter comrade for sending many pages of materials on the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA). Much of our response here is based on the information in those documents.

The MSTA denounces the terms "Negro," "Colored," "Black" and "African American" to describe a people, primarily because it denies the nationality of said people. Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees all people the right to a nation and to change their nation, and is cited by the MSTA as part of their claim. We agree with this foundational aspect of the MSTA that recognizes the independent nationality of what we call the New Afrikan nation, which was formed by the importing of slaves of various African nations by European settlers. MSTA looks at the history of Amerika, and the 14th and 15th Amendments, and states that it "could never seriously include people of color, women or commoners." Again, we agree here that there is an antagonistic contradiction between the Amerikan oppressor nation and the oppressed.

As the comrade from BORO describes, MSTA's idea of a Moorish American Nation seems to parallel what we call the New Afrikan nation. They explain their use of the term Moor in that it is an ancient civilization, with a glorious history,

*Continued on page 15...*

# Take off the Blindfolds

by a Texas prisoner  
June 2015

"Religion is what keeps the poor from killing the rich." - Napoleon Bonaparte

It seems Napoleon had a firm understanding of the opiate of the masses. Imperialism has been using religion as a tool of oppression for hundreds of years. It isn't any less apparent today inside the U.S. prison systems. In some cases, units offer 2-3 times as many religious classes as educational courses.

Most religions, especially Judeo-Christian ones, champion punishment, often unjustly, under the reasoning of "because I say so." There's no objective investigating, and nothing is circumstantial. This propaganda is flooded into the prison system to create the mindset that prisoners are bad people and do not belong in society. This also helps the people in the free world who do not see us as deserving of human rights. So they allow the imperialistic oppression to continue. Criminals shouldn't be punished, they should be rehabilitated.

They claim Jesus once said to "turn the other cheek." Pacifists rarely enact change. Religions for the most part promise a better afterlife which gets people to overlook and ignore what's going on here and now. They preach that if you sit on your hands and keep your mouth shut, it will be better after you are gone. I'm sure the imperialist pigs have no qualms about expediting your departure. Amerika loves this "shut up and take it" mentality; it's what the country was founded on. Every day, I see prisoners take verbal and physical abuse from the institution and do nothing because they are "trying to be good Christians."

The lumpen need to take off the blindfolds placed on their eyes by the church, synagogue, or mosque and realize materialism is the vehicle to a better life of freedom. Meaning true freedom from oppression in this current life they're living, not down the road after they're dead. ★

## On "Objective" Reporting

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

# - UNITED STRUGGLE FROM WITHIN -

**Under Lock & Key** is the main organizing tool of **United Struggle from Within (USW)**. This page details some of the active campaigns that USW is involved in. Those who want to push the revolutionary struggle forward from behind bars should get involved with USW by working on these campaigns, or initiating their own.

## SPREAD UNDER LOCK & KEY

Our subscriber list grows in many ways: comrades passing *ULK* around in their facility; sending us sign-up lists of new subscribers; getting ads in other prisoner publications; and doing organizing work that attracts attention of the imprisoned masses. A basic task you can do for USW is get people to subscribe to *ULK*. It is free for U.S. prisoners!

A very effective 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(Prisons) 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 em write to get eir 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.

## EXPAND STUDY GROUPS AND LITERACY

We are trying to expand our literacy support. Anyone who teaches literacy behind bars should get in touch with us to help develop this program.

We also support prisoner-led study groups with literature and study packs. To start a study group in your area, you can simply discuss this issue of *ULK*. Choose what to study next based on what concepts interest you from your discussion. Send us periodic reports on what you've been studying, and we'll 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 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.

## STOP SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Last issue we reported on the 30-minute "suicide watch" checks at Pelican Bay State Prison, California, and exposed it as a common tactic of the oppressor. Comrades should file grievances, complain to the warden, and publicize the lawsuit in San Quentin. Ask for *Under Lock & Key* No. 47 for more info.

## TEXAS ACTIVISTS STAND UP!

The Texas Activist Pack was recently updated in January 2016. This is a large pack of info, compiling all our campaigns in Texas. The current active campaigns include a protest against the limitation of 5 indigent letters per month; combating the deadly heat; and the petition to ensure our grievances are addressed. TDCJ has removed the grievance manual from its law libraries. All Texas prisoners should get this information, share it with others, and write reports for *ULK* on their progress with the campaigns. Ask for it! If you can send in a donation for it, that will help offset the cost to print and mail it out (about \$2.50 per pack).

## WE DEMAND OUR GRIEVANCES ARE ADDRESSED

If you are experiencing problems with your grievance process, such as delays, unanswered grievances, or harassment, you should join this campaign. Petitions are available for Alaska, 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 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, volunteer to rewrite the petition to work for your state. We recently created a version that can be used country-wide, for people in county jails or who can't otherwise rewrite the petition.

**Update This Campaign** - If you participated in this campaign in the past, send

us a report on what happened. Even if no one ever responded to your petitions, that is useful information. Tell us how you used it to help organize others and build group consciousness.

## FUNDING NEEDED TO EXPAND ULK

This issue of *ULK* was funded 3.5% by subscriber donations. Our goal is to have the costs to print and mail *ULK* covered at least 10% each issue. Every single stamp helps!

A donation is stamps or a money order that's **not** intended for some other resource such as the Texas Activist Pack, political books, or the Strugglen Artists Association. Any payment that comes to us without an explicit reason is considered a donation to this goal. We are going to continue to track donations we receive, and in future issues we will report on how much of the issue was funded by your donations.

## FIGHT CENSORSHIP

We are pushing campaigns against censorship in Florida and Virginia. Write in if you can offer legal support to these struggles. See page 2 for more on fighting censorship.

## BECOME A ULK FIELD CORRESPONDENT

For the print version of *ULK*, we look for news and articles with theoretical and anti-imperialist content. We also want to feature articles that show how people have organized against these conditions, and not just document them. MIM(Prisons) offers resources and opportunities to help you develop as a writer, including a Writing Guide and, for those who complete some of our study courses and become regular contributors to *ULK*, a *ULK* Writing Group.

If you've written us a letter, then you have all the skills you need to become a *ULK* Field Correspondent. When reporting on conditions, details are good, but keep it short. Not only does someone have to type all these articles, but remember that it is not your one report that's gonna make a difference; it is the accumulation of reporting from across the country and the connections we make between those struggles. So leave room for others to tell their stories, which strengthens your own.

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

Planned themes for upcoming issues:

49 - Survival and Stamina: Taking care of yourself while locked up in the belly of the beast; Tactics for maintaining mental health, physical health, and political integrity in the face of extreme national oppression and isolation; Pushing the boundaries of subjective self-imposed limitations and how this interacts with real-world limitations of confinement.

50 - Black Panther Party 50 Year Commemoration

## SHUT DOWN CONTROL UNITS

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

We have the most complete data on control units available online at the website below. 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](http://www.abolishcontrolunits.org/movie)

## BUILD A UNITED FRONT FOR PEACE IN PRISONS

Part of our struggle to shut down control units is to end prisoner-on-prisoner violence via the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP). See page 3 for more info on what the UFPP is about and how you can get involved.

## Muslims Fighting for Rights in Arkansas

by an Arkansas prisoner  
August 2015

*[Recently several prisoners wrote in to describe the religious discrimination against Muslims going on in Arkansas prisons. The Supreme Court determined that the prison must allow people to grow facial hair if this is a part of their religious beliefs, but the Delta Regional Unit continues to deny this right. Below, several correspondents explain their struggle. - Editor]*

Prisoner #1: I am a Muslim and through religious beliefs I should be able to grow and groom neat facial hair. It was proven in the Supreme Court (*Holt vs. Hobbs 135 S. CT. 853*) that the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) policy was not the least restrictive means of preventing prisoners from hiding contraband and disguising their identities. I went through all proper procedures and paperwork to get a script saying I was able to grow my facial hair through religious beliefs. I was approved by the unit Chaplain for my script, but when it came to the next step of the Warden signing off on it I was denied due to him determining if I was sincere enough. What gives the Warden the right to determine a person's sincerity about their religious beliefs?

Prisoner #2: I am currently incarcerated at the Delta Regional Unit in Deumott, Arkansas. I have been in my walk of faith (Islam) sincerely for almost three years now. In the beginning I didn't think that I would suffer from so much ridicule for choosing this way of life, but still, I hold my head high and continue on my walk of faith.

Sometime and somehow, this ridicule and discrimination has to cease. I am ready to come together with a group of fellow prisoner to stand up for our rights as well as the things we believe in.

The current problem that I am having involves the ADC programming policy. A law was recently passed that allows prisoners to grow their hair and/or facial hair for religious purposes only, and Muslims seem to be the majority of those who are being denied their rights, along with me as well. I am currently in the middle of a grievance process because I was denied my script. I think the problem is religious discrimination.

Prisoner #3: Warden James Gibson and the Chaplain Chuck Gladdon are violating the constitutional rights of the Muslims and other prisoners under their care. The supreme court ruled in *Holt v. Hobbs* that the grooming policy was a substantial burden on prisoners' religion, by not allowing them to grow facial hair/beards. As to security concerns, the Supreme Court also said it was not the least restrictive means of stopping prisoners from hiding contraband, or disguising their identity.

The procedures are still burdensome because all the Muslims who apply for the right to wear a beard are denied automatically while the white

## Call for Campaign Updates

by MIM(Prisons)  
December 2015

In 2010 a comrade in California initiated a campaign to demand that grievances be addressed by the California prison system. This comrade created a petition that anyone behind bars could use. The campaign quickly took off in California and spread to other places where customized petitions were created for use in 14 different states.

We have reports from some states that are still actively fighting the corrupt and broken grievance systems using the petitions developed to demand grievances be addressed. But we also have a number of states for which we have petitions, but we haven't gotten an update in a long time. We still get requests for copies of these grievance petitions, but we're not sure if they are being put to use, or if the petition is entirely ineffective.

The goals of the grievance petition campaign are first to build unity amongst prisoners around a common goal, and second to try to resolve grievance problems, in order to help address some bru-

talities and injustices of the prison environment. An individual sending out one petition won't bring relief, but building with others in your facility around this campaign will help address at least one of these goals.

Here is the list of states for which we need updates on grievance campaign work:

Arizona	Montana	Oklahoma
Colorado	North Carolina	Oregon
Kansas	Nevada	South Carolina

Anyone who's used the grievance petition in any state should let us know what you did with the grievance petition. Help us update the campaign, even if it's just to say that your work so far hasn't produced success. Tell us what grievances you are trying to fight, how you used the petition, and the participation of your fellow captives.

It is a critical part of the work of any political organization that we learn from our practice, and continue to improve our work. By reporting on your grievance campaign work, you are contributing to the dialectical materialist method of revolutionary struggle. Together we can improve our practice to be even more effective over time. ★

## Punished for Reporting Brutal Assault During Ramadan

by a New Jersey prisoner  
August 2015

I'm a Muslim here in the New Jersey gulag. Back during the month of Ramadan, I witnessed the pigs brutally and viciously assault a fellow Muslim. I felt so strong about the incident that I wrote to the local regional FBI. And as it would turn out, they shipped the Bro out to another of the New Jersey gulags.

Well about a month after that incident, I was snatched up, and placed on temporary close custody status. A prisoner may be placed in temporary close custody for a period not to exceed 72 hours, unless there are exceptional circumstances, or substantial evidence found to warrant an extension at this time. Well I was in temporary close custody for 12 days. But the prison Special Investigative Division came to interview me regarding some

inmates are receiving the right to grow hair or receiving a religious accommodation script from Warden Gibson and Chaplain Gladdon. Even after the Supreme Court made its ruling, this has not changed.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This denial of rights to Muslim prisoners is more than just religious discrimination. Because the majority of Muslims in Amerikkkan prisons are New Afrikan or Arab, targeting Muslims fits in with the overall system of national oppression that is especially acute within the criminal injustice system in the United States. Further, Americans like to equate Islam with terrorism in a racist attempt to denigrate entire nations. While the cultural practice of growing facial hair is not a particularly revolutionary battle relevant to the Maoist

*Continued on next page...*

info they received, stating that I was trying to rally prisoners to attack female prison guards, regarding the incident on the Bro. Now what's funny about this whole thing is that it wasn't only female guards who attacked my Bro. Well I offered to take a polygraph test in order to confirm my truth.

I was eventually released back into general population, with no reason as to why, and no "we made a mistake." But I've come to understand over the years that the insidious prison system is used to destroy people mentally, as well as physically and spiritually. I had to report this incident, and I felt that every one of us who witnessed that brutal assault should have done the same. About 20-25 Muslim prisoners saw it, why didn't they write reports? I had to report this incident to *Under Lock & Key* because these kinds of conditions need to be made known to the public outside. I don't hear from the outside much, mostly because I've been forgotten about.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** While we can't say whether the brutal assault of the Muslim prisoner was related to eir religion, this comrade provides an example of where religion can serve the oppressed. If Muslim prisoners are moved to fight brutality from their religious teachings, they can be an ally of the anti-imperialist movement. In fact, we call on all religious prisoners to think about the teachings of their religion around violence and brutality and use this as motivation to join your fellow prisoners in fighting the criminal injustice system. Often religion is used as a tool to keep people passive, but revolutionaries should seek to ally with all who can be rallied to our cause. Those who are targeted for repression because of their religion, as Muslims in the U.S. often are, will be most likely to see the connections with broader oppression and join the struggle. ★

## Fables and Facts: Fighting Police Brutality

by a Virginia prisoner  
May 2015

When young Trayvon Martin was killed, people held candles and prayed to "God." And George Zimmerman walked away free. Then we heard of the young brother in Missouri, unarmed yet gunned down by a pig – an amerikkkan kolonial thug. The people held candles and quoted fables from the book of "God." The pig went free.

Cleveland, Ohio – Black child of twelve. Yes, Black not because of his dark skin color, but Black because of the gaping wound to human dignity because he was gunned down by another enforcer of white amerikkkan privilege. The people wept and prayed while the assassin slithered away quite free.

Then Wisconsin and another brother of African descent. Unarmed yet shot and killed by scum who are sworn to "protect and serve." The killer pig was not even charged with a crime while the people sing and pray and dance and wave candles to their "God." But suddenly – Baltimore.

Freddy Gray killed by pigs. This time people overturn vehicles; break into businesses; loot them; set fires; throw rocks and bottles at pigs. And six pigs are indicted.

Perhaps "God" merely honors large candles of burning buildings and burning cars? Or perhaps white amerikkkans only care about dead people of color when the financial losses come to Whitey? Like when the oppressed say, "Get your pigs under control or we will burn your fucking city to the ground."

Do we want social and economic justice that

requires people held accountable? Or do we want merely to whine and pray and bemoan the injustice of the amerikkkan grand jury that failed to indict a pig who killed a brother selling loose cigarettes? Facts reveal observable actions leading to desired outcomes. Fables reveal actions of pointless futility.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** This writer is spot on about the failure of prayer and kind requests to change systemic violence. It is only with force that the imperialists will give up their guns. Yet we don't mean to say that we should just take up arms and act without planning and organizing.

The righteous anger of the masses in Baltimore is a power that must be harnessed by a revolutionary vanguard party. The oppressed can coordinate their actions and ensure these actions are taken only when victory is possible through strong and centralized leadership. We are still at the stage of educating and building for revolution. Part of this work involves spreading anti-imperialist theory to all who know from personal oppression and experience that they must fight back, helping them to see the bigger picture and take up leadership in the struggle.

We must remember that in Oakland, California, cars were lit on fire and businesses were looted in response to the murder of 22-year-old New Afrikan Oscar Grant. Grant's murderer, a transit cop, was indicted, charged, and imprisoned. In the end, it was a slap on the wrist for this blatant murder. For a period of time the state will respond to people protesting in the streets. They may go through some motions or formalities to appease people and quell their anger. But ultimately there will just be more names to add to the list of oppressed nation people killed – a list that has been growing for centuries. It should be obvious that we need more fundamental changes to our daily life than body cameras and reliance on our present injustice system.

For more lessons from the struggle for justice for Oscar Grant, see our articles: "Oakland Stands Up" January 2009, in ULK 6 "Weak Verdict, Stronger Movement" November 2010, [www.prisoncensorship.info](http://www.prisoncensorship.info) "Oscar Grant: organization, line and strategy" January 2010, [www.prisoncensorship.info](http://www.prisoncensorship.info) "Pig Gets Off for Murder" July 2010, in ULK 15★

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...Arkansas

movement, this attack on oppressed nations under the guise of religious expression is important to expose. We are receiving many similar reports from correspondents in Texas prisons, where they are being fired from any jobs near the guards or administration if they decide to grow a beard, even though they are allowed to grow them per policy and religious "script."

Communists are working towards a world where all people are free to express themselves, without restrictions that come from the oppression of groups of people by others. However, we are also working towards a society where all people are provided education and scientific analysis around the false prophets and gods that religion proffers. We do not need faith in higher mystical powers, instead we need humynity to take responsibility for its own destiny and build a society where we can have faith in the ability of people to solve the problems created by people, as well as the problems we face in our material world.

Under socialism, all people will have the freedom to practice whatever religion they choose, but they will not be given the platform to proselytize for their religion and build a broader movement of mysticism. Science and scientific thinking will be the basis of education. Only this scientific method will ensure an end to oppression of all groups of people. For more on how religion was handled in communist China under Mao, ask for our religion study pack.★

## FREE POLITICAL BOOKS

MIM(Prisons) runs a Books for Prisoners Program where we mail out political theory and history books and magazines in exchange for political work. See page 2 for more on how to get free books.

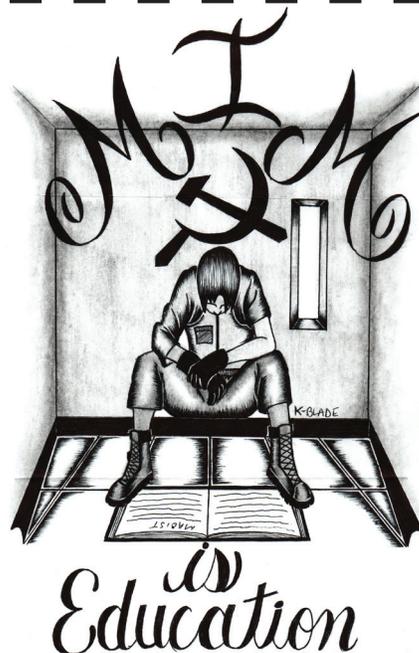
The Books for Prisoners Program relies on donations of books and money. If you have any contacts on the outside who can donate to our program, or who can hook us up with dictionaries, Mao or Lenin, or other political books, please tell them to contact us at the address on page 1.

### Some "must read" titles:

*The Chinese Road to Socialism* by Wheelwright and McFarlane  
*The Capitalist Roaders are Still on the Capitalist Road* by China Study Group  
*The Political Economy of Counterrevolution in China: 1976-88* by Henry Park  
*Fundamentals of Political Economy* by Shanghai Press  
*Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat* by J. Sakai  
 "On Contradiction" by Mao Zedong

### Classic MIM Theory magazines:

Issue 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism  
 Issue 4: The Failure and Success of Communist Development  
 Issue 6: The Stalin Issue  
 Issue 8: The Anarchist Ideal and Communist Revolution  
 Issue 10: Labor Aristocracy  
 Issue 12: Environment, Society, Revolution



## Book Review: Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism (part 1 of 2)

by Ehecatl of United Struggle from Within  
January 2016

*Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism*  
Gilbert Achcar  
Haymarket Books 2013

*"Thus, as in all idealist interpretations of history, historical phenomena are fundamentally explained as cultural outcomes, as the results of the ideology upheld by their actors, in full disregard of the vast array of social, economic and political circumstances that led to the emergence and prevalence of this or that version of an ideology among particular social groups." (p. 77)*

Not too long ago the author of this book appeared on the political news show *Democracy Now!* with Amy Goodman. During this appearance Achcar made the statement that the people who are joining groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda in 2015 share the same socio-economic background and social alienation from the prevailing system as the people who joined the various Marxist-led movements in North Africa and the Middle East during that region's de-colonization process. The author went on to state that it was the oppressed classes' material existence under colonialism that pushed them towards the communist movement then, and that it is this new generation's similar oppression that has them taking up arms once again, and not some mistaken sense of cultural-religious doom at the hands of the Christian West, no matter what some within the revolutionary Islamist movement might subjectively think.(1) In other words, what we have been seeing happening today within the majority Muslim countries is not Muslim resistance to what some have erroneously labeled a "Holy War" or cultural imperialism as seen thru the rubric of globalization. Rather, what the author says we are seeing is nothing more than the continuation of the class struggle in its religious form. And while at first glance this might seem like a breath of fresh air within an atmosphere dominated by the imperialist media, upon closer inspection what the author puts forward in this book is in fact just a more detailed and eloquent version of Bob Avakian's proposition of the "theory of the two outmodeds"(2); a dogmatic and disingenuous, First Worldist, chauvinist rephrasing of Engels' negation of the negation.(3)

This book is a collection of four essays which the author describes as a comparative Marxist assessment of the role of religion today, as well as of the continuing development of religious ideology within the class struggle. The author also attempts to provide the reader with a Marxist materialist assessment of Christian liberation theology and Islamic fundamentalism not only in regards to each other but with respect to bourgeois cosmopolitanism and "revolutionary internationalism."

### Religion and Politics Today from a Marxian Perspective

In this first essay Achcar introduces us to the general theme of the book: The chauvinist First World belief that Western domination of the world has brought not only progress to the Third World,

but created a better overall society compared to what "Orientalism" had to offer. Orientalism is just old terminology used to describe everything east of Europe. It is also used to describe Middle Eastern and Asian societies prior to the rise of Western European colonialism, and liberation thereof. Lastly, the term and concept of Orientalism was also used to describe the re-emergence of Muslim dominance in politics and culture immediately preceding liberation in what we today call the Middle East.

Definitions aside, this book is very inconsistent on a Marxian level as Achcar does a good job of advocating ideas long since refuted and proven incorrect by Marxist scientists, not only in the realm of theory, but in the social laboratory as well. Paradoxically however, this book has a strong dialectical thrust to it as the author uses dialectical analysis to both inform our position and present our thesis; yet he fails to balance out this dialectical analysis with Marxist material-

ism, thus presenting us with subjective findings. Therefore, while the author takes a correct dialectical approach to the development of religion vis-a-vis the class struggle, Achcar simultaneously negates the reality of world politics in the "Orient" which of course leads him to the wrong conclusions.

This criticism of Achcar is also applicable to our failure to locate and define the principal contradiction in the world once imperialism developed. Part and parcel to Achcar's biased position with respect to the progress of the West is our comparison of Christian liberation theology to Islamic fundamentalism as a philosophy of praxis categorizing both as "combative ideologies arising out of the class struggle" but thru the dominant human ideology (religion). However, the author incorrectly posits that the former is inherently progressive due to its origins with the oppressed and poverty stricken followers of Jesus, while the latter is inherently backward and reactionary because of its early beginnings with

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that is found in the bible. They imply that a nation not found in the bible does not exist. This is a metaphysical view that nations cannot change, form, or disappear with time. Their need to define their nation as timeless seems to lead them to declare the Moorish American Nation to be the indigenous people of and "Heirs Apparent" to the lands of "North America, South America, Central America, and the Atlantis Islands, referred to as the Caribbean Islands." This is echoed by our comrade from Michigan above. Elsewhere the MSTa seems to contradict this when writing, "the Moorish, were a new nation of people, brought forth on this continent by the European forefathers." It is not clear from what we've read how the MSTa reconciles their identity as an indigenous nation to America with the historical fact of the African slave trade and the many First Nations that existed in America prior to that trade that brought masses of Africans to this land.

Now to this question of MSTa and sovereignty. While none of our correspondents above see the MSTa as a Sovereign Citizen movement, at least one of them was quite well-versed in and supported the Sovereign Citizen ideas. As established above, there are different sects of the MSTa. At least a couple of them publicly denounce the Sovereign Citizens Movement.

Yet, the language in many of the documents sent to us are quite similar to that of the Sovereign Citizen Movement, so it is easy to see how the two have merged in some places in recent years. They speak of "legal trickery" and go on and on about archaic legal language to explain the situation they are in and how to get out of it. But in reality it was brute force and oppression that put New Afrikans where they are as a semi-colony of Amerika. The law is merely a smokescreen to cover that up. So that is where we disagree with the MSTa and those who look to Sovereign Citizen ideology for liberation. They treat the legal concepts they talk about as concepts that define our reality. In contrast, we

believe it is people, and ultimately the masses, who define human destiny. The MSTa's and Sovereign Citizens Movement's approaches are a sort of idealism, where the ideas are these legal concepts that are held up as the ultimate cause of their predicament and solution to it.

Some of the materials sent to us were from the Moorish Order of the Roundtable, founded in 1982 (rvbeypublications.com). This group happens to be the target of an article "Debunking sovereignty myths" on moorishscience-temple.org. So we see there is disagreement and even confusion among those calling themselves Moors on this question. We support those who are working towards greater clarity. The piece by the BORO comrade above puts the issue plainly, and the work of BORO speaks to their efforts to put a scientific political agenda into practice. We will continue to work with the comrade trying to start the Moorish Islamic Liberation Movement to move in a similar direction. ★

### Under Lock & Key not enough political education for you?

If one *ULK* every 2 months isn't enough political study for you, you can join a Maoist study cell through MIM(Prisons). We facilitate introductory and advanced study groups through the mail. And we support prisoner-led study groups with free books, magazines, and other study materials.

The introductory study course costs \$5 and you can trade work for study if you can't pay. We start with articles written by MIM(Prisons) on the topic of prison economics, which is one of the most misunderstood topics in our movement. Next we study a booklet on the basics of our political line titled *Fundamental Political Line of MIM(Prisons)*. The last essay we study in this introductory study group is Mao's essay "On Contradiction," which explains the philosophy of dialectical materialism (how we study history). Write in today to sign up for the next group. (Tell us first if you need to pay with a check.)

## Odinism/Asatru: Disproving Wyte Supremacist Myths

by an Illinois prisoner  
January 2016

As a former wyte supremacist, a revolutionary, and an Odininist I am equipped to expose the invalidity of the wyte supremacist myths associated with Odininism. Odininism (also known as Asatru) is a polytheistic religion; meaning there are multiple Gods and Goddesses. The religious text of Odininism is the Poetic Edda. The Edda is made up of different books similar to the Bible called Lays.

Several wyte supremacist organizations point to the God Heimdall as being the father of the wyte race in light of Voluspa, St. 1; Lokasenna, St. 20; and Thrymskvitha, St. 15. However, closer examination will shatter such claims.

First, although Heimdall is cited as being the father of the three classes of men (freeman, noble, and slave) (1) nowhere within the Edda is he cited as being the father of men. Lee M. Hollander notes in his translation of Voluspa, St. 1 that the description of Heimdall being the father of all "hallowed beings" most likely refers to the Gods rather than man. Furthermore, in Voluspa, St. 17-18 we are told that Odin, Hoenir, and Lothur came across the lifeless corpses of the first man and womyn (Ask and Embla). Odin granted them Soul, Hoenir gave them sense, and Lothur granted them being and blooming hue.

Therefore, Heimdall is clearly not the father or man - let alone the wyte race. Anyone who claims he is is distorting the Edda to fit their own subjective agenda.

Secondly, the description of Heimdall as being fair-haired and "whitest of the Gods" is not completely accurate. He may very well have blond hair and be wyte. Yet he is most definitely not the "whitest of the Gods." (2) Baldr, the son of Odin and brother of Thor, would have to be considered wytest of the Gods because his name literally translates as "white." (3)

Finally, the mentioning of three classes of man does not support claims of wyte supremacy within Odininism. It is true that one of the classes listed is that of slave. However, nowhere throughout Rigsthula does it specify a certain race as belonging to any particular class. The ancient Germanic peoples - along with the Vikings - were known to have possessed wyte slaves as well as non-wyte slaves. In ancient times slaves were customary in many cultures.

However, the class system described is one of feudalism and is therefore not practical in modern capitalist society. Furthermore, as communists, we recognize that the concept of classes is oppressive and an integral aspect of imperialism. Therefore, the mentioning of classes is irrelevant in modern times except in the historical role that it plays within Odininism.

In the Lay Havamal Odin commands his followers to be kind and hospitable strangers (St. 2); not mock others (St. 30); look out for the

well being of others (St. 40,48); not argue with fools (St. 122); and that no one is so good as to be beyond corruption, nor is anyone so bad as to be beyond redemption (St. 133). These commandments - along with the Nine Noble Virtues (Strength, Honor, Courage, Joy, Independence, Loyalty, Realism, Perseverance, and Heritage) actually oppose racism. Odininism/Asatru is, in reality, a communal religion. Thus it is compatible with communism.

Notes:

1. *The Poetic Edda*; Trans. By, Lee M. Hollander; Rigsthula; ppg. 120-138

2. *ibid* St. 15.

3. *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*; by Rudolf Simek; p 26-30.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This correspondent is defending Odininism as a religion compatible with communism, and condemning those who use it as a platform for white supremacy. Communists have long been saying that for people truly practicing what their religion teaches, often those ideals are compatible with, and best achieved, through developing communism. It is good to point out to religious people when their actions run counter to their ideology, as we may be able to unite around those who hold the equality of all humyns as an important principle, or those striving for peace, as this comrade is.

That those religions have not even come close to ending oppression on the scale that dialectical materialism has, is evidence of the ineffectiveness of these religions to reach their own purported ideals. That various religions all across the world (from Odininism to Christianity to Islam to Buddhism) are construed as platforms of domination, shows how these ideologies play out in the real world. Rather than looking for truth by choosing which ideology makes the most sense to us, we compare practices with practices to figure out how to reach our goal of a world without oppression. Odininism's ideals may be compatible with communism. But Odininism is not a route to communism.

This comrade attempts to dispute white supremacy by making arguments about who was the whitest of the gods and the "father of the wyte race." As scientists we prefer to point out that humyns evolved into being on this planet. We were not put here by gods. And so there is no higher source of truth or basis for considering some humyns superior to others.

It is good that this comrade recognizes that classes are oppressive, but our struggle against class oppression is not just against "the concept of classes" as ey writes. Rather our struggle is against the reality of class systems that are oppressive and integral to imperialism, and to historical class society. Slavery was not simply customary, but rather the system of slavery required a class of people, slaves, who were used to do much of the most difficult work. It was not out of tradition that people held slaves, just like it is not just tradition that leads to the oppression of the proletariat under capitalism. So the mentioning of classes is not irrelevant in modern times, it is critical that we analyze the class system and fight against it. We can not eliminate it by not mentioning it. ★

## Movie Review: "Spotlight" Dramatizes Catholic Church Sex Abuse

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)  
December 2015

*Spotlight*  
Open Road Films  
2015

In 2001, reporters at the *Boston Globe* newspaper exposed widespread sexual abuse of children by priests in the Catholic Church and the long-running coverup of this abuse by Church leadership. Priests who were known to have molested children were moved to new parishes where they repeated the abuse, with full knowledge of Church leadership. The *Globe* printed a series of stories that led to the resignation of Cardinal Law and great embarrassment for the Church. *Spotlight* dramatizes the work done by the reporting team at the *Globe* to uncover the facts in this case, and the resistance they faced in a city dominated by the Catholic Church.

Overall *Spotlight* does a good job demonstrating the tremendous harm that the institution of the

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the Arab merchant classes of proto-feudalism. By comparing these two religions Achcar tries to have us draw parallels between the "communistic tendencies" of early Christianity and the proper-tied character of early Islam, thereby attempting to produce a divergence in the reader's mind as to what is inherently progressive and what is not.

While an argument can be made to support the thesis of revolutionary Islam as the path forward for those Muslims oppressed by imperialism, less can be said of the social democratic turn that the proponents of Christian liberation theology have taken. Achcar attempts to frame the issue by hypothesizing that the world of today is the inevitable outcome of Christian liberation struggles in Medieval Europe which served as early models for bourgeois democracy through the equalization of power through armed struggle. To prove this the author finds it useful to point to various revolts and peasant struggles in the Middle Ages in which the class struggle began to take on religious overtones with the Protestant Reformation. Prior to this however, Achcar praises liberation theology as the embodiment of what he refers to as the "elective affinity" in Christianity that can lead the world to communism. In other words, liberation theology is the positive aspect in Christianity which can also play the principal role in bridging together religion with the cause of communism. Furthermore, the author says that this elective affinity draws together the "legacy of original Christianity – a legacy that faded away, allowing Christianity to turn into the institutionalized ideology of social domination – and communistic utopianism." (p. 17)

When pointing out examples of more contemporary struggles the author states:

*"It is this same elective affinity between original Christianity and communistic utopianism that explains why the worldwide wave of left-wing political radicalisation that started in the 1960s (not exactly religious times) could partly take on a Christian dimension - especially in Christian majority areas in 'peripheral' countries where the bulk of the people were poor and downtrodden..." (p. 23)*

When speaking of Islam's "inherently" reactionary character today Achcar attributes it primarily to what he describes as

*"the tenacity of various survivals of pre-capitalist social formations in large areas of the regions concerned; the fact that Islam was from its inception very much a political and judicial system; the fact that Western colonial-capitalist powers did not want to upset the area's historical survivals and religious ideology, for they made use of them and were also keen on avoiding anything that would make it easier to stir up popular revolts against their domination; the fact that, nevertheless, the obvious contrast between the religion of the foreign colonial power and the locally prevailing religion made the latter a handy instrument for anti-colonial rebellion; the fact that the nationalist bourgeois and petit bourgeois rebellions against Western domination (and against the indigenous ruling classes upon which this domination relied) did not confront the religion of Islam, for the reason just given as*

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### ...Spotlight

Catholic Church did to thousands (likely tens of thousands) of youth, and the pervasive influence and power of the Church in the city of Boston, Massachusetts. No attempt is made to justify the actions of the Church leadership who covered for the abusive priests, nor does the movie suggest that anything was changed by the newspaper stories, instead concluding with a list of hundreds of cities around the world where similar abuse scandals were uncovered.

It is outrageous and enraging to see the stories of abused children, the lucky ones who made it to adulthood, and hear about Church authorities who, upon learning about these cases, moved to silence the abused, promising it would never happen again, even while they knew the priests had a history of exactly this same abuse against other children. It is an interesting contrast that, while quick to believe that all Muslims are terrorists when a small minority of them fight back against imperialism, Americans presented with so much evidence would never consider calling all Catholics child molesters. Even non-Catholics in the United States are well indoctrinated to believe that the churches are forces for good and Christianity is a religion of good people.

In the end the movie lets the Catholic Church off the hook. By focusing on just this sex abuse scandal, *Spotlight* portrays the rest of the Church activities as generally benevolent. Further, it implies that the abusive priests are just psychologically impaired in some way, and so this has allowed the Catholic Church to say they've solved the problem by introducing psychological screening for those wanting to enter priesthood. We believe it is the very institution of the Catholic Church, along with the patriarchy that it so ardently supports, that leads priests to be indoctrinated into eroticizing power over helpless young kids. It's not a flaw in the individual, but rather the system itself that is flawed, and not in a way that can be fixed by psychological screenings. Religion has a long history of supporting the patriarchal dominance of male power and reinforcing gender inequality.

One problem with focusing on the serious harm the Catholic Church does to Americans

*well as out of sheer opportunism..." (p.24)*

The author then goes on to say that Islamic fundamentalism grew on the decomposing body of Arab nationalism, citing it as "a tremendously regressive historic turn" (p. 25). In reality any ideology that is based on mysticism and idealism will never be enough to defeat imperialism once and for all whether that be Christian liberation theology or Islamic fundamentalism. That said, as materialists we must still make the assessment of what movement is currently doing the most to challenge imperialism today. Is it the Islamic fighters who are engaged in a series of anti-imperialist struggles? I am reminded of something the Maoist Internationalist Movement once said in an article on pan ideologies:

is the omission of the even greater harm the Church has done globally. Consistently a force for reaction, the Church at best has pretended neutrality while watching dictators murder, plunder, and oppress entire nations of people. Just as *Spotlight* shows the power and influence of the Catholic Church in all levels of Boston's city politics, in many cases there is documentation of this Church's support for and work with reactionary governments around the world.

As a strong centralized religious institution with a long history, the Catholic Church is an easy target for people looking to document the reactionary role of religious institutions. But they are just one example of the harm religious institutions have on society. After overthrowing the imperialists and putting a government in power that serves the interests of the oppressed (a dictatorship of the proletariat), the people will have the power to ban reactionary institutions. When we see the tremendous harm that the Catholic Church did to so many children over so many years, it should be obvious that this institution should be outlawed. And those who perpetuated and covered up the molestation should face the people's courts. There is no justification for allowing such dangerous institutions to continue.

Yet, we don't need to outlaw religion as a belief under the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Mao explained about their policy in China under socialism:

*"The Communist Party has adopted a policy of protecting religions. Believers and non-believers, believers of one religion or another, are all similarly protected, and their faiths are respected. Today, we have adopted this policy of protecting religions, and in future we will still maintain this policy of protection." (Talk with Tibetan Delegates, October 8, 1952)*

It is not that we want to force people to change their beliefs. Rather we think that once we eliminate reactionary culture and institutions and teach all people how to reason with dialectical materialist methodology they will give up old ideas and beliefs that are not based in science. Just as Confucianism was discarded by most Chinese so too will other religions be discarded by humanity as we advance towards a world without the oppression of groups of people. ★

*"The measure of any ethnic ideology is whether it focuses its fire on imperialism as the enemy. If the pan serves to fry imperialism then it is progressive. If the pan fries non-imperialist nations, then it is reactionary and should be thrown out." (4)*

But things aren't always so clear cut as we might want them to be, which is probably why later in that same article MIM said:

*"It is only the struggle against imperialism as defined by Lenin that can really bring global peace. Other wars can bring no net gains to the international proletariat, just more or less dead exploited people. The plunder of the imperialists is much greater than that conducted*

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# Five Percenter Responds to Religion Study Pack

discussion compiled by MIM(Prisons)  
January 2016

The motivation for this issue of *ULK* was to better address those who write us from a religious background. We also thought that our study pack on the topic could use some updating. Therefore it was timely that we recently received an in-depth response to this study pack to spur discussion. One of the readings in the religion study pack is on the struggle of the Tibetan lamas who rose up against the oppressive rule of the Dalai Lama after socialism was established in China. This article begins with a response to that from Legion.

**Legion comments on Religion Study Pack:** In the excerpt from Chapter 10: Reform in a Major Monastery(1), I recognize the principal contradiction to be rebellion vs. religious thought (I define religions as a doctrine of ethics derived from "spookism"). When the lamas took the time to work out problem #13 (master their circumfer-

ence/cipher, 360 degrees/120x3) they came to see the very nature of the Buddhist teachings and began active rebellion against the 10% ruling class. The elimination of classism liberated the poor righteous teachers from the bondage of captivity. When people use religion to secure position, all they do is promote imperialism/colonialism and economic oppression, which is very devastating to the humyn condition. With autonomy you have freedom to see the reality of your power. The feelings of the lamas is in line with the Nation of Gods and Earths student enrollment #1, when you master your condition you become owner ruler sustainer, God of your universe.

The lamas also came to the reality that the only way they would find any peace or equality was to unify, arm themselves and defend their position in the face of the oppressor. And when the goal of peace was obtained they went about their lives, with the power of self-determination in the form of religious freedom.

The issue with the blind, deaf and dumb religious belief lies with the fact that traditions and institutional doctrine lead people towards the path of faith instead of scientific discovery. Dialectical materialism is based on history but whose history? The fact is that when technology is stolen and corrupted holes and cracks appear and when one discovers for self the answers become liberating in themselves. For example, ancient Egyptians perfected communism thousands of years before Marxism existed. Yet, through racism and colonialism the history was nearly erased from record books. But with the science beginning to catch up with the absolute truth we can begin to understand why the religious institutions gravitate towards oppression because with knowledge comes power and responsibility.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This analysis is a good example of how the Nation of Gods and Earths (NGE) evolved from indigenous New Afrikan liberation theology by rejecting religion and moving towards materialism. The rejection of faith in fa-

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## ...Book Review

by any oppressed nation's neighbors."(4)

These statements are liberating because they free us from all the imperialist clap-trap about the evils of Islam. So long as these movements keep their sights trained on the imperialists then they will remain "inherently" progressive.

On that same note, not everything in the book is bad, and we should at least give Achcar some credit for pointing out that even Islamic fundamentalism can be divided into separate entities, instead of simply painting all Islamic fighters with a single brush as most Western intellectuals tend to do:

*"Thus two main brands of Islamic fundamentalism came to co-exist across the vast geographical spread of Muslim majority countries: one that is collaborationist with Western interests, and one that is hostile to Western interests. The stronghold of the former is the Saudi Kingdom, the most fundamental, obscurantist of all Islamic states. The stronghold of the anti-Western camp within Shi'ism is the Islamic Republic of Iran, while its present spearhead among the Sunnis is al-Qa'ida."(p. 25)*

## Conclusions

Marxist philosophy and methodology is based on the most radical rejections of philosophical idealism with emphasis on revolutionary practice. Therefore our criticisms of religion and religious ideology should remain within the scope of critiquing certain ideological props as used by the imperialists to justify and support imperialism along with all of its oppressive structures which made up the world today. Organizations like those coming out of Islamic fundamentalism should be viewed by revolutionaries as developing out of the principal contradiction filling the voids left by the Marxists and revolutionary nationalists when those movements were either smashed or capitulated. Rather than denigrating these combative ideologies the

way that Achcar does, we should instead champion their victories against imperialism while simultaneously criticizing where they fail to represent the true interests of the Muslim people.

As Achcar correctly states, the hystory of Islam in combating Western interference in the Orient is but the natural dialectical progression of the anti-imperialist struggle absent a strong communist movement. However, it is Western nihilist politics in command which fails to appreciate the positive role that Islamic fundamentalism plays in the anti-imperialist fight. While the author raises a lot of good points in this book ey still fails to arrive at the correct conclusions. Real internationalists will not hesitate to celebrate every blow struck against the imperialists when it comes from the oppressed, whereas First World chauvinists hiding under the cloak of communism will continuously cringe at the barbarity of the oppressed for fighting back.★

Notes:

1. Throughout this review I have decided to use the terminology of revolutionary Islam or any variation thereof not only to denote the anti-imperialist character of various Islamic fundamentalist organizations, but to put forth a viable alternative to the negative connotations of the anti-imperialist Islamist movement that have been popularized by the western media.

2. The theory of the two outmodeds by the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party USA (rcp=U\$A) is a Trotskyist conception conjured up in order to divert the masses of the world's oppressed people from the path of national revolutionary war against Western imperialism. While the theory of the two outmodeds correctly states that U.S. imperialism and the Islamic fundamentalist movement are two opposing forces in contradiction to each other, it simultaneously and erroneously states that the conflict that has developed out of this contradiction cannot be resolved in favor of the people of the Muslim majority countries absent the participation of a strong socialist movement that is exclusive of revolutionary Islam. Instead, what is needed, the revisionists say, is a socialistically pure revolutionary organization on the part of the Muslim nation's communist party. Furthermore, according to this theory, Islamic fundamentalism as an anti-imperialist force has only been able to develop in an Amerikan created vacuum

as a negation to Amerikan imperialism, while Amerikan imperialism has likewise only been able to act as a negation to revolutionary Islam in the region. Therefore, the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and revolutionary Islam can only serve to negate each other in a purely mechanical way, with one backward and reactionary system stepping in to replace the other, along with the possible defeat of the other. Hence, the theory of "the two outmodeds."

In contrast, the dialectical materialist view recognizes important qualitative differences between the two forces. The pushing of neo-colonial forces out by revolutionary Islamic forces are victories for anti-colonialism, with meaningful implications for the future of the oppressed.

The backward and reactionary political line enjoins the oppressed Muslim masses and other people of the oppressed nations to work for and attempt to create a socialistically pure road to emancipation. It rejects Joseph Stalin's and Mao Zedong's concept of a national United Front between the various anti-imperialist forces of the oppressed nations. This is also a disagreement with MIM(Prisons)'s third cardinal principal supporting a united front with all who oppose imperialism. Not only do we see the opposing line as setting back our ability to succeed, but we see that it often leads to allying with imperialism as the rcp=U\$A did in calling for the overthrow of the Iranian government, or more recently with the broad support among Amerikans for U.S. bombing of the Islamic State.

Stalin and Mao correctly taught us that there are only two sides in a battle and it is naive to think that we can defeat the imperialists without forming "un-holy" alliances with other anti-imperialist forces no matter what their strategic aims may be. Indeed, there is a reason why Maoists believe that a communist's stance on the principal contradiction is a dividing line question. Imperialist nations vs the oppressed nations: What side are you on?

3. Mao Zedong criticized this concept stating that "the negation of the negation does not exist at all" and that such a conceptual construct was really just a re-statement of the law of contradiction itself, and therefore not a useful tool in the science of dialectical materialism. Furthermore, within the context of the "two outmodeds" the negation of the negation is not only mechanical but promotes metaphysics.

4. "Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, Pan-Slavic and Turanian nationalism: Progressive or reactionary pans?" Maoist Internationalist Movement, September 2003

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### ...Study Pack

vor of scientific discovery puts the NGE ideology close to our own. However, as an amalgamation of ideas from different New Afrikan movements, NGE literature often refers to things that are not actually based in scientific discovery. An example is in the citing of Egypt as developing communism before Marxism existed. While primitive societies existed in communalist social structures, Egypt in the period mentioned had a highly developed society. And like all complex societies known to date, it had a hierarchical social structure. There is a tendency to rewrite history to paint the past of oppressed nations to be more noble. But this does a disservice to our understanding of how to actually build communism today.

Another feature of the existing religion study pack is a debate among a few members of the NGE, one of whom (Infidel) was in the process of leaving the organization for its promotion of imperialist views and idealism. One piece that particularly triggered Infidel to move away from the NGE was an article from *The Five Percenter* newspaper (2006) by the God Born King Allah on the relationship between those in prison and those on the outside. Below is a relevant excerpt from that article highlighted by Infidel.

*"The fact that the father[sic] respected the American government is very important and he raised our Nation to do the same. The reality that the Father fought for this country in the Korean War showed that he was a true patriot... It showed that his love for the country of his birth outweighed any disappointment he may have had with the treatment his people suffered in the Jim Crow era that he came up in. ... Gods and Earths in the Armed services... are fighting to insure[sic] that people all over the planet can enjoy the Freedoms that their own Nation is still denied in America... the Father... must have seen how the religion of Islam and Muslims would become synonymous to terrorists posing a danger to America way back in 1964. His personal separation from religious Islam and Muslims as well as the Nations[sic] separation from them as well in the past and present excludes us from being linked to any terrorist, Muslims or radical Islam, period."*

This same newspaper printed a statement calling on members to join the military in October 2001 because "we" were attacked.(2)

One NGE comrade in the study group counters that the article represented a few misguided members, taking a similar position to Legion below. However, we must note that the NGE is a mass organization and it does not have a defined political line. While not the focus of what Father Allah taught the Five Percenters, eir political views were in fact quite reactionary and pro-Amerikkkan in relation to international politics.(3) So as we work and build with the many Five Percenters who do take up an anti-imperialist stance, we think it would be a mistake to see the NGE as an organization made up of anti-imperialists at this time.

**Legion responds to NGE debate:** NGE have, according to the 8th degree of the 1-14, socialist political views. So, anyone claiming anything else should do the basic knowledge on anything

before firing shots into a crowd. I have done the knowledge on United Struggle from Within (USW) principles and built with a few Gods along the way and point after point has a parallel with NGE science. Let's not forget NGE don't practice Islam as religion but as science; a science of everything in life. Religion tends to feed into the imperialistic trend of getting everything funneled to the top while everyone else works hard for nothing.

With regards to Infidel's commentary, I see no reason that one would be confused with comments made, unless it was made to agitate and stir up debate. NGE metaphysics is a philosophy that seeks to explain the nature of being (life) and reality (dialectical materialism). To call the allegorical nature of lessons sham science is false evidence appearing real based on, time after time "Western" science has proven that 1. the Blackman is God, and 2. that the nature of the oppressor is exactly how it's described in the lessons.

...If we take a look at the "Arab" movement vs. the NGE movement, you find mostly similarities. Let's be logical about it. Keep in mind, I make no apology for another man's statements. Just facts. NGE has been at the forefront of the Third World in America (prisons). MIM's focus is on prison. "Arabs" get labeled terrorists by the same people that lock up young Gods for borning knowledge. Plus, most overlook the fact that the father served before not after he came into the NOI.

...Infidel also states, "You claim to have 7.5 ounces of superior brain power (compared to the white man's 6 ounces. Please tell me you don't actually believe this, brother)..." Man is God, so God is Man, period. The 7 reps Man-God/God-Man, 5 reps Justice/Power. Therefore NGE does have manpower and the "white man" whom prior to 1492 did not exist (people were referred to as Irishman, Englishman, Dutchman, etc), created as an oppression tool this version of equality that only applied to the genocidal pilgrims who trekked across the Atlantic. The white man is only available on paper and as a mindstate. I know plenty of so-called Black men who are white as snow and vice versa. Black is dominant consciousness, white is weak consciousness.

...The focus would be very different if MIM(Prisons) and NGE knew each other in depth from inception. But, like many others before and to the present, most humyns get stuck on doctrine instead of looking at the bigger picture. Supreme Power Allah told me in civilization class people get so wrapped up in the designs of one tree, that they fail to recognize the forest. When you debate over small things, big things never become material. HC [the coordinator of the MIM-led study group] says, "such a persyn will not be able to be as effective fighting imperialism if they don't learn and apply the science of dialectical materialism." Once again I emphatically state, we focus on manifesting using metaphysics, or in layman's terms we make apparent to the senses reality and reality is the answer to the equation. Numbers and letters, formulas and theories are what? Science.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** Legion is one of those comrades who have taken up anti-imperialism. By the time we heard from em, ey had already gained a good understanding of USW and the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP). Not only that, but ey had put the UFPP into practice(4) applying the scientific method to the laboratory of the U.\$. prison environment. This leads us to put more weight in eir words above, which we have a lot of unity with. In the last paragraph ey talks about finding common ground rather than dogmatically debating minutia to divide us. MIM(Prisons) hopes this issue of *ULK* in particular works at that common goal.

Legion uses *metaphysics* as a term analogous to science. Metaphysics can be used to mean different things, and we are not sure what its meaning is here for Legion. However, we typically use metaphysics to define a type of materialism that is antithetical to dialectical materialism. Where dialectics recognizes things as always changing, based on contradictions found within the thing, metaphysical materialism sees things as static, or even eternal. For example, a metaphysical position would be that humyns are greedy, while a dialectician might say that humyns in a certain time and place (ie. 20th century United States) have developed greedy tendencies on average.

Where we see metaphysical tendencies in the NGE lessons is in the meaning put into numbers and letters. As if the number 7 or 360 has eternal meaning and power and aren't just concepts created by the humyn brain.

Legion critiques Infidel for making literal readings of the NGE ideological foundations. We cannot speak to how they are more often interpreted. We like Legion's interpretation of them as metaphors that might fit in with Loco1's ideas on how religion is an important tool for the imprisoned lumpen.(see p. 1) However, we also know that things like the story of Yacub have been and continue to be interpreted as literal truths by many in different New Afrikan organizations. So we would not be so quick to dismiss Infidel's critique. The creeping of religious idealism into NGE ideology is also reflected in the following quote from Tupac Shakur when asked, 20 yeras ago, what religion ey follows:

*"I talked to every god there was, in jail. I think that if you take one of the 'o's out of good, it's god, if you add a 'd' to evil it's the devil. I think some cool motherfuckers sat down a long time ago and said let's figure out a way that we can control motherfuckers, and that's what they came up with, is the Bible, woo woo..."*

*"...I believe in God... It makes sense that if you good in your heart, then you're closer to God. But if you evil then you're close to the devil. That makes sense. I see that every day. All that other spooky shit don't make sense. And I don't even believe, I'm not dissin' it, but I don't even believe in the brothers, I was in jail with 'em and having conversations with brothers; 'I'm God, I'm God.' You God? open the gate for me. You know how far the sun is and how far the moon is, how the hell do I pop this fuckin' gate? And get me free up*

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# Kingism as a Religion

by a Mississippi prisoner  
September 2015

Religion: "Something one believes in devotedly"

My religion is Kingism which gives me faith in myself, a national self-respect, and power to educate the poor and relieve the misery around us. By putting to practice the true essence of Kingism as described in our Kings Manifesto and Constitution (K M/C), I've learned from one stage to the next of nation life the importance of understanding the social factors surrounding each stage.

When I was a kid I did things without giving them the serious thought that they demanded. I spent a lot of my younger years being immature and acting on impulses that led me astray (by my own choosing). But I didn't end my life by believing that all was lost. As I grew older and was being guided by our nation's literature and mentors of our older leadership, I was being molded and shaped to becoming a better man and king.

Most importantly I always had faith! Faith in myself, faith in my nation, and faith in our creator. I always believed I could overcome any obstacle that was put before me, but like all Kings and Queens, we all need guidance in our lives and courage to withstand the trials of time, to lead us on this golden path of righteousness. A brother showed me from the holy bible 1st Samuel, that looks can be what allures us to failure as men and kings. Following someone who may look like they have it all is not necessarily the path chosen to walk. Listening and responding are vital in our growth as men and leaders. Our creator wants obedience from the heart which derives from love and respect. That's how one can tell if there is authenticity to the actions and motives behind our family's behavior. That's how God knew David was after his own heart. Although he messed up numerous times he didn't make the same mistakes several times, he had faith, and was loyal in his guidance.

Truth should be the light and source that guides our loyalties. Loyalty is one of the strongest aspects of courage! In essence the summary of 1st Samuel that I've learned from should be leadership, obedience and understanding that no government or set of laws can substitute for the rule of our creator. If we possess that fiber we can and will become great kings and the true leaders we were intended to be. We can demonstrate effective leadership under our creator by showing the personal qualities that pleases him and reveal to our nation and people that one person can make a difference.

It takes courage and strength to stand firm in your convictions and even to confront wrongdoing in the face of opposition. But as men and kings we must stand firmly in our position and quest for righteousness. Greatness is often inspired by the quality and character of our leadership. The ultimate greatness that we should desire is to love others as God loves us. Then you'll achieve greatness.

Sometimes we have to tear down and rebuild

our lives. We must understand that once a king becomes critical or too educated, deconstructionism will come naturally for us. But deconstruction is rather useless without reconstruction – without a positive vision. It is the easiest thing in the world to point out what is wrong, who is wrong, and to stand on a pedestal of superiority without doing anything positive or becoming a positive answer to dilemmas as such. After one deconstructs we can find out what you are actually for! An awful lot of activists and reactionaries have no positive vision, nothing they truly believe in and finally no one to love. They get entangled and overwhelmed with what's wrong and think by eliminating what's wrong, the so-called contaminated element, that the nation will be pure and right again. This I believe is a major illusion. In this way we are merely in the politics of expulsion. How then can we as a body transform and integrate one that has begun to deconstruct back into the mainline of our K M/C?!

What is true justice and peace? Problem-solving in my opinion by punishing and shunning will not itself create our new vision. Can we conform to our creator's words and become a solution instead of using one to scapegoat an issue? We must not be hasty about accepting someone's condemnations of another person, especially when the accuser may profit from the downfall. Hope and meaning give us purpose; let's find out his/hers and help their transformation. If one does not deconstruct for reconstructing transformation then the element of hope is gone, and love is not intrinsic, then the finality is shunning. Prison sees this phase more than any reality! Remember anything lasting is transformation, not change! We should all allow the ongoing transforming ways of Kingism to be the vaccine that continues to cure the desolate halls of hate, envy, greed, and ego. May the blessings of the ancients and the wisdom of the ages be our guide in all things we do. Peace in Black and Gold yesterday, today, tomorrow, always and forever. Amor de Rey!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This commentary about religion demonstrates well some of the useful qualities of religion while hinting at the significant pitfalls of faith in a creator. This comrade starts off talking about faith in self, and national self-respect. These are important qualities, and applying these to the belief and power to educate the poor and relieve misery around us is a correct way to approach serving the people. The ALKQN has done some very positive work around revolutionary nationalism and organizing.

This comrade also derives some very good values from eir faith in a higher power: the importance of leadership and of loving the people. Ey also stress that "truth should be the light and source that guides our loyalties." The problem comes in when faith in a "creator" is used as the source of truth. We do not get truth from some higher being; we get truth from study and practice. There are many things in the bible that are clearly not factual and even contradictory to other parts of the bible. This is not a good source of truth either. If we use religion as a basis for truth we will all too often find ourselves on the wrong

... Continued from previous page **...Study Pack**  
outta here. Then I'll be a Five Percenter for life!  
But, never seen it." (5)

Like Legion, Tupac calls for a materialist approach that works here in this world. His critiques of religion parallel those of the NGE in rejecting spookism but not the concept of God altogether. Yet, Pac also had criticism for the Five Percenters he encountered while in prison. Another way to put what he said is that combating idealism is more than just rejecting the God in the sky. Most of the idealist European philosophers that Lenin and Engels spent so much time critiquing did not believe in a God above.

Legion provides an interpretation of the 7.5 ounce brain that is not based in ideas of race or biology, but rather an analogy for the history of white nation oppression. This is an example of an interpretation that is friendly to our own. In fact, we'd point out that Irishmen existed as separate from the "Native" white nation in North America into the early 1900s. This interpretation of oppressors as evil, while rejecting racial categorizations, was put forth by Father Allah and even further back by other New Afrikan liberation theologians who strove to empower Black people, while rejecting a biological basis for race.(6)★

#### Notes

1. Anna Louise Strong, 1959, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet*, New World Press: Peking.
2. Michael Muhammed Knight, 2008, *The Five Percenters: Islam, Hip-hop and the Gods of New York*, One-world Publications, p. 175.
3. Knight, 2008, pp. 6, 113-114, and 266.
4. Legion, June 2015, *God Body Builds UFPP Using Science*, <www.prisoncensorship.info>.
5. 2Pac, interview with Vibe magazine, May 1996.
6. Knight, 2008, pp. 14 and 105.

side of the oppressed vs. oppressor struggle. This is especially true if people think about their work as having the goal of pleasing a god instead of the goal of serving the people.

Groups like the ALKQN tend to pick and choose things from religions that work for them in an eclectic way, rather than accepting the doctrine of any one religion as a whole. This is closer to the materialist method, but it is disguised in religious language, which is misleading.

We disagree with the definition of religion given at the beginning of this comrade's essay. While it has often been stated by revolutionaries that "the people are my religion," this is just an analogy. Maoism is an ideology, and dialectical materialism is a philosophy. And as Engels stressed, all philosophy can be divided into two main camps – idealist and materialist – with all religions falling in the idealist camp and Maoism falling in the materialist.

*ALKQN though not a religion is essentially religious, most of its struggle and goals are of a sacred nature, much of it is woven into the structure of Christianity.(1)*

If ALKQN is not a religion, what is it? It is

Continued on next page...

## Fight Religion with Scientific Materialism

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
December 2015

We, captives in the dungeons of the United Snakes of Amerikkka, have to realize that imperialism and religion were some of the main reasons many oppressed nations stay oppressed. I say this because religion instills false hope and cannot be trusted to bring an individual truth. Truth is within us. It's not some dogma that's external. A lot of us look for happiness in goods, money, fame, etc. But those things are illusions. What's real is our consciousness and attaining a higher realm of consciousness.

Imperialists use religions as a way to divide and conquer. Religion is also used to create racism and slavery. I am talking about mental enslavement. Militaries are built to protect the imperialist religions so that they can keep you in a daze and exploit you and control you. When the Europeans sailed to Africa they used religion as a tool to pacify. And in turn the Africans were turned into consumer goods used to work the lands taken from the First Nations. So we can see how religion is good and bad. But man must know thyself. And all superstitions should be thrown away.

Revolution will defeat imperialism before religion does. And not because of turning the other cheek. But realizing that this school of thought

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### ...Kingism

a mass organization of the First World lumpen class, in particular those of the Boricua and Chicano nations; peoples whose history has included extreme oppression at the hands of the Catholic Church and who took on Catholicism and other forms of Christianity as part of their modern culture. The history of the ALKQN under King Tone's leadership in New York was a period of strong Catholic influence. ALKQN also incorporates Santería and makes references to Islam and Buddhism at times. This taking of ideas from various cultures represents the eclecticism of the ALKQN. Eclecticism is common in a mass organization, because they, by definition, include people with varying ideas and beliefs. And while religion has been a significant piece of their eclecticism, it is not the defining characteristic of the organization, so we would tend to agree that the ALKQN is not a religion.

The ALKQN is an interesting organization that parallels the Nation of Gods and Earths (NGE) in some ways. The NGE has historically had an anarchist view towards structure and leadership. While the ALKQN does have a structure and hierarchy, like NGE it has strong democratic traditions, in particular around questions of religion, allowing for and even defending a diversity of views. This reflects the United Front for Peace in Prisons principle of Growth. Both organizations have had prayer as part of their cultures, but without a specific belief system around the role of

does nothing but enslave minds to support a corrupt system to oppress nations all over the world. So I conclude to say revolution will bring heaven here on this earth. But religion will bring hell and divide us all. Unite and fight imperialism.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We have a lot of unity with this comrade's comments on religion as a tool of national oppression. However, we do not agree that "What's real is our consciousness and attaining a higher realm of consciousness." Lenin wrote the book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* to refute the ideology of subjective idealism which remains popular to this day among those who want people to focus on raising their own consciousness while ignoring the external material world, as if self-improvement is a revolutionary act in and of itself. As Lenin explained, "the fundamental premise of materialism is the recognition of the external world, of the existence of things outside and independent of our mind..." He makes it clear that we must look at matter and not just consciousness as a part of the materialist method: "Matter is primary, and thought, consciousness, sensation are products of a very high development. Such is the materialist theory of knowledge, to which natural science instinctively subscribes." This is important because if we focus only on our own consciousness we will never be compelled to act to create material change in the world. This is essentially what religions tells people, but religion focuses the consciousness raising on knowing a god or higher power. Both approaches will leave the suffering in the real world untouched.★

prayer or who they were praying to. The NGE, of course, does not believe in any God outside of humn beings, indicating a progression of spirituality towards materialism. ALKQN fits more into the traditional definition of a liberation theology with its explicit religious ideas, while urging "members to reflect on their 'realidad humana' through rituals and ceremonies which highlight the daily experiences of poverty, unemployment, police brutality, and racism."(2) More specifically, anti-imperialism from a Third World proletarian perspective has been a strong influence on the ALKQN ideology dating back to the 1960s.(3)

It is eclecticism that allows mass organizations like ALKQN to adapt and survive over long periods of time, unlike the Young Lords Party and the Black Panther Party, which were both crushed by state repression and a lack of conditions to support their specific mission as Maoist vanguards. Kingism is an ideology of the oppressed that promotes fighting the oppressor and it holds back the oppressed by promoting mysticism rather than science.★

Notes:

1. David C. Brotherton and Luis Barrios, 2004, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*, Columbia University Press: New York, p. 173.
2. *ibid*, p. 263.
3. Lord Grim, 15 June 1999, *Revolutionary History of the Almighty Latin Kings/Queens Nation*, MIM Notes 188.
4. similarities between the ALKQN and NOGE are not surprising as they rose from similar conditions in similar time periods, with the rise of the ALKQN in the NYS prison culture reportedly being in response to the well-organized New Afrikan prisoners affiliated with the NOGE (see *The Five Percenters: Islam, Hip-hop and the Gods of New York*, p.165)

### Pharaoh Obama

by a Utah prisoner

Solitary Supermax has become me  
Senses numbed, mind gone crazy  
Losing it, lost it, am lost  
Freedom you say? How much does it cost?  
May I pay in this sweat drip from my brow  
Years alone or my tired soul? You must tell me how  
But don't even whisper, "Accept the way this system is"  
Not a chance you greedy imperialistic pigs  
Open the Mexican border, leave the Middle East alone  
Downsize these concentration camps, let my people go!  
Money, money, that's all you're about  
Amerikkka's guilty, the gavel comes down. ★

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### ...Cuba

avance hacia el comunismo en la historia: teorías y prácticas capitalistas no van a desaparecer así nada más bajo el socialismo y deben de ser combatidos activamente. De otra manera una nueva burguesía se levantará desde las fuerzas proletarias anteriores y intentarán tomar el poder en contra de los intereses de las masas. Esto pasó en la Unión Soviética, y su trato a Cuba demuestra claramente como los capitalistas del estado ignoraron las necesidades de la gente cubana.

Desde que Raúl Castro tomó el control de su hermano Fidel en el 2008, el gobierno Cubano se ha tomado una serie de reformas económicas tentativas para mover al país de un estado capitalista de cuadro a un sistema capitalista totalmente desarrollado.

### Manteniendo Solidaridad en Perspectiva

Habiendo soportado siglos de repetidas intrusiones imperialistas, Cuba se les ha ingeniado para alcanzar un grado de independencia y soberanía sobre sus asuntos. Apoyamos el derecho de auto-determinación de Cuba, y aplaudimos el notable éxito del gobierno Cubano de proveer servicios educativos y médicos a todos los segmentos de la sociedad Cubana. La estancia anti-imperialista de Cuba en una serie de asuntos se mantiene fuerte, y en una confrontación con imperialismo, Cuba se merece nuestro apoyo. Más sin embargo Cuba no es socialista, y la gente de Cuba sabe que su gobierno hasta este punto de su historia no es un gobierno revolucionario, sino un pragmático. Es nuestra esperanza que la gente de Cuba experimenten un florecimiento de conciencia revolucionaria y que se organicen por sus derechos en los años venideros conforme la intrusión capitalista pone a su país en la mira para futura explotación económica.★

Notas:

1. Para más historia de Cuba ver el capítulo 5 de *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 Diciembre 2014.
3. "U.S. Firms Examine New Ties," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 Diciembre 2014.

## El Objetivo del Imperialismo Estadounidense Buscando Aliviar Tensiones con Cuba: Conveniencia Económica

por un@ prisoner@ en North Carolina  
traducido por un@ prisoner@ en California  
March 2015

Los Estados Unidos y Cuba recientemente acordaron restaurar sus lazos diplomáticos después de medio siglo de hostilidad, tomando pasos para finalizar uno de los últimos enfrentamientos en el mundo de la Guerra Fría. El anuncio del Presidente Obama, hecho en coordinación con el Presidente Raúl Castro, declaró que estos países alejados por largo tiempo volverán a comenzar cooperaciones en una serie de temas económicos y de viaje y el restablecimiento de la embajada Americana en La Habana, la cual fue cerrada después de la revolución Cubana en 1961.

Aunque la Revolución Cubana fue un golpe contra del imperialismo Americano, el cual mantuvo bajo llave a la economía Cubana, Cuba se volvió dependiente del estado capitalista de la Unión Soviética después de la revolución de 1959. Para entonces una nueva burguesía había subido en la Unión Soviética y se había alejado de su orientación socialista hacia el estado capitalista. En vez de construir socialismo en Cuba, Castro y su gobierno terminaron por construir una colonia satélite de la Unión Soviética.(1)

El rechazo Americano de asociarse con Cuba fue una reacción al exitoso alto de la denominación Americana de parte de la gente Cubana y una concesión a los tantos inmigrantes Cubanos ricos que se fugaron a los EE.UU. después de la revolución, en vez de una postura política seria. Los imperialistas Americanos no han dudado en asociarse con gobiernos y países que son fuertemente anti-Americanos cuando los beneficios

económicos de la relación son imperiosos.

Los recientes cambios de política forjan lazos económicos significantes entre los dos países permitiéndole a instituciones financieras de EE.UU. abrir cuentas con contrapartes Cubanas, facilitando restricciones en la exportación de equipo agrícolas y telecomunicaciones a Cuba, permitiendo que los ciudadanos Americanos usen tarjetas de crédito y débito en la isla. El mayor alzamiento a corto plazo de los cambios vendrá por remesas, las cuales permitirá a los parientes de Cubanos mandar \$2,000 al mes a sus tierra natal, que del límite presente de \$500. Las remesas son la fuente más grande de ingreso económico de la isla. En efectivo y productos (aparatos y ropa), cuentan por 5100 millones de dólares al año en ingresos, casi el doble de lo del turismo que cuenta por unos 2600 millones de dólares.(2)

Los beneficios inmediatos para el país son obvios. El gobierno Cubano reportó que el crecimiento económico para el 2014 fue al rededor de 1.4%, y que aproximadamente 40,000-50,000 Cubanos emigraron en el año pasado. Por razones económicas, Cuba está hambrienta por efectivo, y su mayor socio de comercio, Venezuela, está enfrentando una crisis económica debido a la reciente caída de precios del aceite. Los analistas dicen que la posibilidad de perder la ayuda Venezolana tal vez jugó un papel en el alcance del acuerdo con los EE.UU.

### Abundancia de Oportunidades de Negocios

La restauración de lazos comerciales beneficiará a la economía EE.UU., permitiéndole a

compañías unirse a otros países que han operado por décadas en Cuba y hecho sus propias incursiones capitalistas, como Canadá y estados miembros de la Unión Europea. Agricultores Americanos, ya ayudados con el levantamiento parcial del embargo a productos de agrícolas, tendrán nuevas oportunidades de exportación. A pesar de las fuertes regulaciones y limitaciones estrictas, las exportaciones de productos agrícolas Americanos a Cuba crecieron de 4 millones de dólares en el 2001 a 547 millones de dólares en el 2010.

Grupos que van desde la Agencia de la Federación Agrícola Americana (American Farm Bureau Federation) hasta la cámara de comercio de los EE.UU. apoyan fuertemente el levantamiento del embargo porque ven a Cuba como a un mercado de exportación significativa. Las oportunidades abundan en otras partes, como en la telecomunicación, la reventa, el turismo, y recursos naturales. "Cuba necesita todo lo que hacemos en los Estados Unidos," dijo el director de relaciones del gobierno de Caterpillar, Inc. La compañía espera pronto instalar una concesionaria en Cuba. "Hemos estado pidiendo una política nueva hacia Cuba por 15 años." Compañías de hospitalidad Americanas también están deseosas de hacer negocios en Cuba cuando puedan. "El minuto que sea disponible, estaremos allá," se reportó que dijo el Jefe Ejecutivo Oficial de Choice Hotels Internacional, Inc.(3)

Todo esto es evidencia del sistema capitalista en Cuba. Las compañías Americanas quieren acceso a este mercado que corporaciones basadas en otros países han estado disfrutando por años.

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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 EE.UU.. Mantenemos la ideología comunista revolucionaria del Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoísmo y trabajamos del punto del proletariado del tercer mundo.

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Nuevas burguesías se formarán bajo el socialismo. Mao guió la marcha para exponer la burguesía que se desarrolló dentro 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 dentro del modelo capitalista de producción, generalmente por la falla de romper con la teoría de fuerzas productivas.

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...Cuba

## De Yanqui a Imperialismo-Social Soviético: Negligencia de Alternativas Socialistas

Con la revolución de 1959, Cuba buscó desmantelar la hegemonía económica que los EE.UU. tenía sobre el país. La nacionalización parcial de ciertos sectores de la economía, seguida por confiscaciones completas de propiedades de propietarios extranjeros, fueron enfrentadas con fuerte oposición de EE.UU., pues muchos ciudadanos Americanos mantenían grandes inversiones allí. El tres de enero de 1961, el Presidente de EE.UU. Dwight D. Eisenhower rompió relaciones diplomáticas con Cuba después de que Castro culpó a la embajada Americana en La Habana de ser un centro de actividades contra-revolucionar-

ias en el país. En febrero de 1962, el Presidente John F. Kennedy proclamó un embargo en la mayoría del comercio de los EE.UU. con Cuba. La economía Cubana en ese tiempo estaba en serio peligro. Las plantas industriales, confiscadas después de la revolución y ahora en un estado destartalado, necesitaban los materiales principales para seguir operando. Partes para los equipos de las fábricas y vehículos motorizados hechas en EE.UU. ya no estaban disponibles. Las cosechas eran pobres, y la racionalización de alimentos inició en marzo de 1962. En contra de este foro, Cuba firmó un acuerdo de comercio con la Unión Soviética por 700 millones de dólares, seguido por un crédito de 100 millones de dólares y un acuerdo de entregar una gran porción de azúcar dos años atrás. A mediados de julio de ese mismo año, miles de consultantes económicas y militares iban en su camino hacia a la isla.

Aunque fue un mejoramiento sobre el estado neo-colonial que tenía bajo EE.UU, la nueva alianza que Cuba forjó con la Unión Soviética fue apenas simbiótica en naturaleza. Esta relación con deudas-pendientes también afectó a Castro en su manejo para diversificar la economía Cubana a través de industrialización, cual al último comprobó ser sin éxito. Históricamente, la cosecha mas valiosa de Cuba ha sido la caña de azúcar. Bajo la tutela de EE.UU, más de la mitad de la tierra de cultivo era dedicada a esta cosecha para exportarla a los mercados de EE.UU. Poca cambió después de la revolución, y la azúcar contaba por casi dos tercios de todos los réditos de exportaciones. Esta gran dependencia en una sola cosecha continuó a obstruyendo la economía Cubana. Cuba necesitaba azúcar para cumplir su tratado

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### IDEOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS

**MAOISM:** Maoism is the doctrine which guided the first successful Third World peasant revolution that liberated China in 1949 and guided the building of socialism in that country until capitalism was restored in 1976. Maoism influenced all the subsequent anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia and inspired many other revolutionary movements including ones inside the United States.

Maoism is famous for many changes in China, including land reform; collectivization of agriculture in what was then a poor country; ejecting both foreign occupiers and pro-landlord elements with the strategy of "People's War" against numerically, financially and technically superior enemies; abolishing China's huge drug addiction problem; ending pornography and prostitution; eliminating the practice of breaking wimmin's feet (footbinding) to make them smaller and supposedly cuter; establishing China's first law allowing divorce and eventually instituting worker-run industry without private property in the means of production.

Complete revolution is fundamental to Maoism. This means that all social, cultural, political and economic relations must be revolutionized. People will not be liberated by simply breaking the state or smashing capitalism. China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the best example we have of this attempt to completely eradicate capitalist influence in a society.

**INTERNATIONALISM:** The ethical belief or scientific approach in which peoples of different nations are held to be equal. Internationalism is opposed to racism and national chauvinism.

We Maoists believe the nationalism of oppressed nations is "applied internationalism." We oppose nationalism of oppressed nations directed at other oppressed nations. We seek a united front of oppressed nations led by the international proletariat against imperialism.

Today there are two kinds of internationalism: bourgeois internationalism and proletarian internationalism. In the bourgeois internationalist view, peoples of all countries should have a chance to become exploiters. In the proletarian internationalist view, exploitation inevitably leads to violent conflict, so peace amongst nations depends on a global view not defending private property.

**REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM:** The solution to the plight of the oppressed nation in liberating itself from the global imperialist system to attain self-determination. Revolutionary nationalists see the struggle of the nation as primary. They may or may not be communists.

### ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

**IMPERIALISM:** Lenin defined imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. 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, imperi-

alism determines much of the material reality that everyone on planet Earth faces 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.

**CAPITALISM:** Capitalism is a mode of production, or economic system, where the bourgeoisie or capitalist class owns the means of production and exploits the labor of the proletariat. Because the proletariat owns nothing, they are forced to sell their labor power on the market in exchange for what they need to survive. When they work for the capitalist, the capitalist owns the value that they create and only pays them the portion of this value to sustain themselves. The rest is called surplus value, or the profit exploited from the worker, which is the basic law of capitalist economic relations.

**STATE CAPITALISM:** Under state capitalism, the state nominally owns the means of production, but production is organized around profit, not the needs of the people. The Soviet Union became state capitalist under Khrushchev, and China became state capitalist under Deng Xiaoping. In both cases, a new bourgeoisie developed within the state apparatus and the Communist Party itself.

**SOCIALISM:** When Maoists use the term socialism we are referring to the transition stage between the capitalist mode of production and communism. This involves organizing society with the goal of meeting people's needs, not making profit. History shows that a dictatorship of the proletariat (as opposed to our present dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) is necessary to make socialism work and maintain democracy in a socialist society. Class struggle continues under socialism.

**COMMUNISM:** The abolition of power of people over people. This means abolishing all oppression, whether of nations by nations, classes by classes, women by men or any other division in society. Communism is based on mutual cooperation, peace and justice instead of oppression.

Long-run goals of communism include the abolition of classes and organizing society without governments or borders. As in certain tribal societies in the past and living still today, communists believe that it is possible for humans to organize themselves without war, crime, starvation and homelessness. When there are social problems, communists blame those problems on how society is organized. They seek to organize society to bring out the best in people, however flawed the species may be. No communist leader has ever claimed that a society has achieved communism yet. That means the industrial societies of our time have either lived in capitalism or socialism. Finally, communists believe that a communist party - not just ad hoc or individual organizing - is necessary to seize state power from the oppressors.

### CLASS DEFINITIONS

**BOURGEOISIE:** The exploiter class most characteristic of the capitalist system. Their wealth is obtained from the labor of others, in particular the proletariat.

The term "bourgeoisie" now usually refers to the capitalist class in common usage. The capitalist class is those who own

enough property that they would not have to work to make a living. This class only works if it wants to. Also included in the term are people with very powerful positions in production or government generally. A ruler may or may not have great assets on hand, but if they really wanted them, they has the power to get them.

There is another common and critically important usage of the term "bourgeoisie." Technically the bourgeoisie includes other sections, including those more numerous than the capitalist class. The "petty-bourgeoisie" or "petit-bourgeoisie" refers to people who are exploiters but not on the scale of the capitalists. The petty-bourgeoisie often owns its own means of production or professional skills but does not hire enough workers to be able to quit working and still live a life of leisure. There are other categories of bourgeoisie that are not capitalist, such as what Mao called the "comprador bourgeoisie" which owes its existence to imperialist capitalists and cannot function on its own as a capitalist class.

**LABOR ARISTOCRACY:** Unlike the traditional petty bourgeoisie, they do not own their own means of production and so must work for others. But unlike the proletariat and semi-proletariat, the labor aristocracy in the First World earn more than the value of their labor and therefore have interests that fall in the bourgeois camp allying with imperialism.

In the First World today we define this group as the lower segment of the petty-bourgeoisie, working for a wage and earning more than the value of their labor but without the means to get a loan to start a small business themselves. This group benefits from the imperialist world's superexploitation of the Third World. They are bought off by the imperialists with these superprofits. In the First World this group is not exploited and so not part of the proletariat. On the contrary, their incomes are often higher than those traditionally classified as the petty bourgeoisie in the Third World, further demonstrating their bourgeois character.

**PROLETARIAT:** The group of people who have nothing to sell but their labor power for their subsistence. The proletariat does not draw any profit from any kind of capital because they have none. Proletarians are propertyless and thus have "nothing to lose but their chains." The proletariat is the least conservative element of society.

There are several groups that fall within the proletariat: 1. The working proletariat are exploited by others who make a profit off of their labor. 2. The non-working proletariat make up the reserve army of the proletariat. In current times this group is usually temporarily unemployed and seeking employment. The long-term unemployed usually fall into the lumpen-proletariat. 3. The lumpen-proletariat, a group of people who are unable to sell their labor power in the long term and so end up living as parasites on other proletarians. This group is found in the Third World, and is distinct from the First World lumpen.

**FIRST WORLD LUMPEN:** The class of people in the First World who are excluded from the productive process. By virtue of living in the First World this class, on average, receives more material benefits from imperialism than the global proletariat. As such their interests are not the same as the exploited classes and we do not include them in the "lumpen-proletariat." But their conditions in many ways parallel those of the lumpen-proletariat standing in stark contrast to the majority of the First World populations. This class includes U.S. prisoners, and which is a focus of the organizing work MIM(Prisons) does today.

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## ATTENTION PRISONERS:

You must write to us every 6 months to stay on our mailing list.  
Tell us what mail you've gotten since the last time you wrote.

**Under Lock & Key No. 48**

**January/February 2016**

...Continuado de la pág. anterior

### ...Cuba

de comercio con la Unión Soviética y sus aliados, y como resultado, su diversificación agricultura y su habilidad de alimentar a su gente sufrió. La economía de Cuba se mantuvo estancada, y se volvió muy dependiente en la ayuda Soviética. Eventualmente con la caída del bloque Soviético, Cuba fue herida económicamente severamente.

Además, la ayuda material dado a Cuba fue inferior en calidad, y no estaba equipada para las necesidades y condiciones climáticas del país Caribeño. La abrogación temprana de revolución violenta por todo Latinoamérica de Castro lo puso en desventaja y debilitó las relaciones de Cuba con la Unión Soviética. Los Soviéticos por su parte acortaron la ayuda económica cada que el gobierno de Cuba cruzara la raya, como fue el caso cuando Cuba se opuso a la invasión y de Checoslovaquia por la Unión Soviética y sus países en 1968. Después de una ronda torciendo en brazo económica, Castro tomo una estancia más neutral.

A diferencia de una aparente cooperación económica de la Soviética-revisionista, la línea de China comunista en esa época en consideración a la ayuda material y financiera socialista estaba basado en cooperación mutua y aconsejó que debería hacerse a la medida de la necesidad de ambos países con la meta hacia una economía auto-suficiente. De ninguna manera debería de ser condicional y llevar altos intereses, lo cual perpetúa el cielo de endeudamiento en el país receptor. La ayuda de material debería de ser de

primera calidad y no anticuado tecnológicamente. También deberá servir sus condiciones materiales. Implementaciones agrícolas Soviéticas exportadas a Cuba, por ejemplo, causaron mucho daño en los campos de caña de azúcar.

### ¿Principios Socialistas?

En el último discurso sobre el tema de normalización de relaciones, el Presidente Raúl Castro dijo que Cuba "no dejará sus principios socialistas." A pesar de su aserción nosotros contendemos que él y Fidel ya lo habían hecho desde 1961. Ellos aceptaron la falacia de que uno no puede tener producción sin incentivo, instituyendo varias medidas agrarias y industriales del estilo Soviético, como la implementación de incentivos de trabajo y diferenciales de sueldos para alzar mejor las cuotas de producción. Viendo las implementaciones de Mao Zedong de los incentivos morales para recompensar los logros de producción por encima de lo normal de la fuerza laboral en China, pudieron haber sido una alternativa viable a esta. La lucha de clases también fue puesta al margen con su enfoque en rendimiento económico como medida del éxito del país en construir socialismo, la cual constituye un fracaso de deshacerse de la teoría de las fuerzas productivas - una póliza que ha llevado a muchas revoluciones socialistas a sus perdiciones revisionistas.

Esta es una razón crítica por el cual la Revolución Cultural en China representa el mayor

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## ¿Quieres leer más en español?

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

We need volunteers who can read and write well in both English and Spanish to translate for *Under Lock & Key*. A fast growing segment of the U.S. prison population is Spanish-speaking migrants. By translating into Spanish, you can help *ULK* reach out to our imprisoned compañer@s.

Write in to put in work!

En Lucha!