

## Survival and Stamina in Our Struggle

by MIM(Prisons)  
March 2016

Our struggle against imperialism and toward communism is a long, protracted struggle. It is carried out over decades and even centuries, with long-term (strategic) planning and lifetime commitment. Many who fight for communism give up their lives, not just through martyrdom but also through a lifetime of dedication. In such a long-term project, it is dangerous to lose sight of the larger context of our struggle.

Our enemies, the imperialists and anyone who's with them, will do everything they can to wear us down. They will drag us through the mud as much as possible, in the hopes that we'll get frustrated and give up, or frustrated and sacrifice ourselves on the focolist cross.

A typical reader of *Under Lock & Key* has committed some "crime" (as defined by the imperialists), and is imprisoned. The social conditions that lead to imprisonment are an essential part of the imperialists' protracted struggle to maintain power. As a means of keeping the internal semi-colonies under their boot, our enemies set up any number of false pretenses for putting as many of our potential comrades behind bars as possible.

Once turned on to *ULK*, a subscriber might

start participating in United Struggle from Within campaigns. Or ey might start learning more about Maoism: the most effective threat to imperialism shown in humyn history to date.

While participating in the anti-imperialist struggle definitely makes one's efforts at social change worthwhile, it does nothing to help a comrade make parole. It doesn't help you fly under the pigs' radar. It doesn't keep you out of the hole. Naturally, identifying with the struggle against the United \$nakes government makes one a target for that government's boldest repression. Our comrades are constantly denied parole, are constantly having their cells tossed, and are targeted for forced psychotropic druggings and other methods of mental deterioration. Their food is tampered with, they are beaten, and any tactic that may wear down and frustrate our comrades is employed.

In these social circumstances, we need to consider how are we going sustain our movement.

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**subscriptions are FREE for prisoners**

## Lumpen Struggle, Lumpen Survival

by Ehecatt and MIM(Prisons)  
March 2016

There are two important tasks which imprisoned revolutionaries need to carry out. The first is to build public opinion for revolution. The second is to survive their imprisonment long enough so as to ensure a lasting impact on the revolutionary movement long after their release. For those not getting out, it's important not to give up, as your contributions to oppressed peoples' movements are still very meaningful. It is from these concrete classrooms that some of the most dedicated revolutionaries emerge, returning to their communities after years in prison. Therefore the need for political instructors to train these students is dire. As such, survival pending revolution should be an important part of any comrade's focus while imprisoned.

Survival pending revolution can mean figuring out how to navigate everyday prison politics in a manner acceptable to the prison masses. At its most basic this can mean doing no harm in the masses' eyes. Ultimately, the prison movement is a mass movement. How can we lead a mass movement if the prison masses cannot trust us because we are actively working against their own righteous interests? How can we claim to stand for liberation if we are responsible for oppressing others? In our interactions with the prison masses we must be like fish swimming in the sea, not only blending in with our environment, but becoming one with our environment.

The anti-imperialist prison movement is a mass movement, but if we don't have the support of the masses then we don't have anything. This is an important point that real revolutionary organizations have understood from very early on. The Chinese Communist Party understood this and so they created an eight point program which helped to address the needs of both cadre and masses within the wider scope of revolutionary practice. Decades later the Black Panther Party would incorporate this same program into its organization, re-working the points to the BPP's specific conditions:

1. Speak politely.
2. Pay fairly for what you buy.
3. Return everything you borrow.
4. Pay for anything you damage.
5. Do not hit or swear at people.
6. Do not damage property or crops of the poor, oppressed masses.
7. Do not take liberties with women.
8. If we ever have to take captives do not ill-treat them.

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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 and jailhouse lawyers). 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. If you want to do translation, let us know. If you want to submit articles in Spanish, go ahead and send them in (it helps if you can still write your letters to MIM(Prisons) in English).

## 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 recently beefed up our release support, and it includes 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 **...Survival & Stamina**

How are we to make the most of the repressed and limited time and energy we do have? How can we protect ourselves from attacks on our physical and mental health, while locked in a tiny room with complete sensory control? How can we build ourselves up, not just for the day-to-day struggle, but for the long haul?

This issue of *Under Lock & Key* is on the topic of survival and stamina, focusing on some things subscribers can do to better their chances of survival, both mentally and physically, and make it possible to do their most for the anti-imperialist struggle. There is much important political work to be done, and a healthy body and mind is important for long-term sustainability of our contributions to the revolutionary struggle.

On survival, there are fights we must engage in for basic rights behind bars: the fight for medical care and other needs often denied through a corrupt grievance system, the struggle for access to education, and the battle against classification in mentally and physically dangerous long-term control units. Many campaign updates in this issue provide practical tactics for these battles as a part of our overall strategy.

Survival behind bars also requires the struggles for peace and unity among prisoners to build a situation of mutual respect, aid and cooperation. Several articles remind readers that this fight against repression requires united action. Building unity will help us win victories to improve our organizing conditions while we build the longer-term struggle. California prisoners write about the struggle to maintain the Agreement to End Hostilities, while the essay on lumpen class consciousness points to broader strategies we need to employ to unite lumpen organizations (LOs) for both survival and advancement.

There is also work that individuals can do to improve their outlook, education and use of time while behind bars. This is addressed in articles on how to be disciplined in your day-to-day life, focusing on study and organizing rather than watching TV, educating yourself, and fighting alienation and individualism. Education in particular is critical to survival in prison as it opens eyes and minds to the reality of prison conditions and the broader struggle that can unite and give purpose and direction to prisoners' lives. As a Pennsylvania comrade wrote: "The pigs try to stop real education in the gulags, because they know that when we have a true education and know the truth about the way things really are, they are defeated."

A life of survival without political struggle is just survival of the status quo. The most basic survival and stamina tactic is always understanding the connection between our lives, as anti-imperialists, with the lives of oppressed people all over the world. Our struggle is made of many actions over a long period of time, and every contribution has value. If we can maximize these contributions by taking care of ourselves and each other as best we can, our internationalist struggle will be all the better for it. ★

## Shun TV, Be Humble, and Check Security

by a California prisoner  
February 2016

Knowledge is the higher power. Thru dedication, struggle, sacrifice, knowledge and revolution we will put Aztlán along with the rest of the oppressed back in power. Don't let TV and the bullshit ass propaganda dictate what you can and can't do, much less a bunch of sheep heads with a stitched up patch that suppose to mean "authority say so." Also to my elders out in the so-called free world and the ones coming out them SHU dungeons after years and decades of oppression, my message is this: Avoid calling the youth "little

homies" as in diminishing their status comrade!! Instead if you are so "big," I'm assuming in *mind*, por favor embrace the youth and teach em to teach, teach em to understand, teach em to resist, teach em to organize. Put a mirror in front of em and give em a soul. Cuz 80% of the population are zombied out. We all put in work the same, but you that are looked upon as elder and leader, especially from out the dungeon, have a stage and a mic. Remember a true revolutionary is not categorized by age, looks, material items or what one did a thousand years ago, but by what one is doing now and is willing to do for the causa.

Continued on page 6...

...Continued from page 1 **...Lumpen Struggle**

Because prison can be such a violent place and communists are supposed to stand against oppression, comrades associated with the prison movement should make it a point to be best known as peacemakers rather than agitators, unless of course they are dealing with injustice at the hand of the oppressors. As such, the likelihood of injury is significantly higher amongst prisoners when compared to people on the streets, with one report citing that more than a quarter of state and federal prisoners report being injured since admission to prison.(1) These figures however do not account for prisoners who do not report injuries, so the real number is definitely higher.

Another common cause of injury in prison, which is often overlooked and under-reported, is the violence associated with prison sexual assault. According to Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) reporting, more than 1 million people have been sexually assaulted in prison over the past 20 years.(1) That's an astonishing 50,000 people a year every year for the last 20 years! Again this estimation by PREA is likely under-reported. Prison rape is important to prevent, not only for the obvious reasons but because with sexual assault in prison comes "an increase in other types of violence, including murder, involving inmates and staff, and long lasting trauma which makes it even more difficult for people to succeed in the community after release."(1, 2)

When it comes to substance abuse virtually all prisoners are addicted to something. Statistics show that 80% of prisoners abuse drugs or alcohol and that nearly 50% of jail and prison inmates are clinically addicted.(3) "Four of every five children and teen arrestees in state and juvenile prisons are under the influence of alcohol and drugs while committing their crimes, test positive for drugs, are arrested for committing an alcohol or drug offense, admit having substance abuse and addiction problems or show some combination of these characteristics."(3) This last point is very relevant to the lumpen in prison and lumpen youth because most prisoners started doing drugs and alcohol at very early ages, generally around the same time they start breaking bourgeois laws and getting into trouble. A hundred and fifty years ago social scientists like Marx and Engels started theorizing that breaking bourgeois laws was just another way for oppressed people to rebel against their oppressive

conditions. Needless to say that this form of rebellion was not very effective, but it is as Frederick Engels termed "revolution in embryo."

It is interesting that much of adolescence is spent in almost continuous rebellion, as this is generally the stage in humyn development when people begin to become conscious of the world around them in ways not experienced before. The fact that lumpen youth engage in criminal behavior at such an early age says a lot about the ways certain groups in society begin to exhibit early signs of what can only be described as an early group, or class, consciousness. This is important to note because it shows that the lumpen realize where their place in society under capitalist rule is, and they actively begin to figure out how to fit in it.

The real take away here, however, is that many people who currently find themselves in prison first learned to survive and fit into their oppressive social environment by both developing and adapting many negative behaviors as a way of seeking positive reinforcement within negative situations. Unfortunately for the oppressed this positive reinforcement came at the expense of reinforcing negative behaviors which has of course landed them in prison. Learning to combat such negative behaviors means having to unlearn many of the traits that were previously thought socially acceptable and necessary. In essence, this means learning to undo and working against the lumpen lifestyle. A lifestyle that is not only characterized by violence, alcohol and drug abuse, but by anti-people activity in general. As dialectical materialists however we are confident that the oppressed nation lumpen can learn to combat such negative character traits using the methods of unity-struggle-transformation.(4) The hope of the oppressed internal nations depends on it. ★

### Notes:

1. Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Ethical Considerations for Revisions to DHHS Regulations for Protection of Prisoners Involved in Research, "Ethical Considerations for Research Involving Prisoners", National Academies Press: 2007.
2. See ULK 29 for PTT of MIM(Prisons)'s article on the group Men Against Sexism (MAS), which did great work to build unity and protect prisoners from physical and sexual assault. MAS was organizing in the 1970s and 80s, and led to an eradication of sexual assault in prisons all across the state of Washington.
3. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., "Alcohol, Drugs and Crime."
4. Allyn and Adele Rickett, *Prisoners of Liberation: Four Years in a Chinese Prison*, Anchor Press: 1973.



## Basic Survival Tactics

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
January 2016

Survival in this imperial dungeon is a must. Survival is more than looking over ya shoulder wondering when a shank will be placed in your back. Survival in these walls has a broad base.

First, we must be vigilant in what we eat, the reason why is food nourishes the body, mind and soul. There are so many chemicals added to our diet that it kills or destroys us over a period of time. We must change our diet or balance it with more fruits and veggies. What I have done was get on a kosher diet rich in fresh produce, and cut back on a lot of mystery meat. How can we fight with all our strength if what we eat is making us weak?

Another survival method I use is peers. I connect to those held captive in the system of snakes, and politic with them so we can all be on point. Staying away from negative energy which brings chaos. I try to apply "each one teach one" as my everyday survival method, cause once you help your brother-comrade in need it brings a feeling of joy.

But the enemy can come with all kinds of tricks, and once they see you are a fighter for justice, then you're hauled off to a solitary confinement unit. Now that's when you must use all the tools to survive. One method that I currently use now while housed here is reading a lot of material and applying the principles to my everyday life. And spreading literature helps so us comrades can chop it up (converse) amongst each other and figure out ways to find solutions rather than being a problem. But I keep a simple program so I can survive in this imperial prison. Stocks of peanut butter in case food supply doesn't come. Batteries for fuel, radio to keep up with current events. And learning more about self, so I can be prepared mentally to overcome this injustice.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** On the topic of survival in solitary confinement, we distribute excerpts from the "Survivors Guide for Solitary Confinement" pamphlet that was released by the American Friends Service Committee. It is primarily authored by prisoners and gets into many

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## September 9 Day of Peace as Survival Strategy

by USW12 of United Struggle from Within  
November 2015

In honor of our comrades and others sacrificed and murdered at Attica on 9 September 1971, the purpose of this article is to promote unity, peace, and solidarity amongst all prisoners regardless of affiliation or association. For, "every individual who stands against oppression on any level is a freedom fighter." (1) And, "We want everyone to take the ideological development of our movement into their own hands." (2) We must face the truth that we can be our own worst enemy allowing our oppressors to manipulate us against our best interests through the tactic of divide and conquer. "And they use the gangs as their puppet to do hits for smokes and food. That's the real story in this place that the prisoners are brushing under the rug. It ain't just the pigs who are oppressing our people, it's their puppets." (3) These words ring true and those of us who have been held in these gulags for any appreciable amount of time can attest to its truthfulness.

As an alternative and challenge to do better for self, our organization, and movement, and, especially as an act of unity in remembrance of the atrocities inflicted on September 9th at Attica, a California prisoner offers this sage advice: "If you see someone in the struggle in need of some support, be that support. The number one reason for mistreatment in prison is lack of solidarity amongst prisoners. We need to start supporting

each other in order to have a livable life. Not only will we get along but we'll support each other when needed." (4) So let us adopt this comrade's viewpoint, at all costs, for together on 9/9 we stand and divided we fall. Let us be determined that failure shall not be attributable to our lack of due diligence and strong revolutionary action.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** This comrade penned the above message as part of eir commemoration of the September 9th Day of Peace and Solidarity in 2015 and suggested that it be used as a flier for other USW comrades. It is a good reminder of the need to address the contradictions within the prison population for true peace and solidarity to be achieved. And as the California comrade quoted points out, this is also closely linked to a general spirit of looking out for each other that must be developed year-round.

Alienation and individualism are important parts of our capitalist culture that make oppression and abuse possible. With solidarity and by looking out for each other the oppressor cannot get away with their abuses. That is why solidarity is central to the question of survival and well-being inside prisons. The campaign for mental and physical health in prisons cannot be separated from the campaign to build the United Front for Peace in Prisons.

September is just a few months away again, start organizing for the Day of Peace and Soli-

darity. Write to us for a copy of the September 9 study pack to start educating and building now. ★

### Notes:

1. A New York Prisoner, "Black August Call to Celebrate Freedom Fighters Year Round", April 2015, Under Lock & Key No. 45 July/August 2015.
2. MIM(Prisons), "Prisoner-led Study Groups Summary", July 2015, Under Lock & Key No. 45 July/August 2015.
3. A Florida Prisoner, "Is ULK Too Hardcore for DOC?", May 2015, Under Lock & Key No. 45 July/August 2015.
4. A California Prisoner, "Peace and Solidarity Challenge September 9", June 2015, Under Lock & Key No. 45 July/August 2015.



## Welcome to Ad-Seg/SHU (aka Fuck Your Sleep!)

by a California prisoner  
March 2016

Title: "Welcome to Ad-Seg/  
SHU" or "Fuck Your Sleep!"

Artist: CDCR staff

Producer: Jeffrey Beard - Secretary of CDCR

### Lyrics:

"Whack!" \*Beep\* (12am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (12:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (1am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (1:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (2am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (2:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (3am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (3:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (4am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (4:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (5am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (5:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (6am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (6:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (7am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (7:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (8am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (8:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (9am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (9:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (10am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (10:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (11am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (11:30am)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (12pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (12:30pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (1pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (1:30pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (2pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (2:30pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (3pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (3:30pm)  
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 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (8pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (8:30pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (9pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (9:30pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (10pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (10:30pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (11pm)  
 "Whack!" \*Beep\* (11:30pm)  
 Repeat... Repeat... Repeat

The new hit single across California.

Available now @ Pelican Bay State Prison,  
California Correctional Institution, San Quentin  
State Prison, Corcoran State Prison, & Old/New  
Folsom State Prison.

Stand up for your rights now to get your free  
tickets!

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** In mid-June 2014, the California Department of Corrections and "Rehabilitation" (CDCR) implemented the new Guard One system. Its stated purpose is to ensure that guards are checking prisoners' status on a regular basis for safety. Its real effect is sleep deprivation, and



no increase in safety for prisoners. Every half hour the guard hits the sensor making a "whack" noise, followed by a loud beep. This system has been reportedly implemented in all SHUs, and we have confirmed it at San Quentin State Prison, Pelican Bay State Prison and California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi.

Our comrades have been grieving these conditions on the basis that it is torture, for months, to no avail. On 1 February 2016, over 70 people rallied at CDCR headquarters in Sacramento to oppose the torture tactics. The Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition has been behind much of this organizing. And while we recommend checking out their site for more info on this campaign, we don't recommend following their organizing strategy because it is a reformist one that keeps people spinning their wheels while nothing changes.

The recent settlement to change how the CDCR tortures people in the SHU is a perfect example of that. The reformists cheered the settlement as a step forward. But as revolutionaries we focus on two types of change: 1) changing the whole system so that things are actually better, and 2) changes that help us change the whole system. The battle against long-term isolation is both a battle for humyn rights and a battle for prisoners' ability to organize for their own interests, which will help bring real change. The settlement, which keeps the SHU in place, allows torture to continue to be used as a way to stop prisoners from organizing for their own interests, and therefore is not progress. The reformist view sees any little concession as progress. We see it as a distraction.

Not only have they not ended torture in the SHU, they've stepped it up a notch with Guard One. While sleep deprivation is not a new tactic for control units, it is a horribly destructive one. Therefore we call on all who care about humyn beings, from reformists to revolutionaries, to support the comrades in SHU who are grieving and filing lawsuits against this torturous practice. More info available on at [www.prisoncensorship.info/campaigns/CA/](http://www.prisoncensorship.info/campaigns/CA/)★

...Continued from page 4

...Shun TV

Anyone can sit on a bunk and zombie out at the stupid box (TV) for all your life. That my friend is not a revolutionary individual, an Oh Gee or whatever you want to call it. The youth is our future. Embrace and teach. Oh, one more thing, don't get caught up on the goodies. The pigs love to see that shit. I wonder why?

Also, there's this hardcore book that just came out: *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*. Man, everybody needs to read it. Go on and put that paypal you was gonna spend on hold and order this book. And don't forget to also slide a donation to MIM to help out with the books and material that MIM provides to the less fortunate. Think of it as the prison kitty we have here in the yards and write in!!

Enclosed is a bit of stamps as a donation, and I've been recruiting. I hope they'll pitch in as well.

p.s. For those going to board, know that the swine is conducting a facebook background check, trying to catch mofos on the web. Incognito fellas, it can result in a denial of parole.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** A few good tips from our comrade here who is putting eir money where eir mouth is. While we do not promote an idealized revolutionary lifestyle, we do think that people can often underestimate the effect that watching TV has on people and their health. And if that is what you are doing with all your time you really aren't living life.

MIM has long been cutting edge in terms of promoting good security practices and technologies. And a while ago we realized that even prisoners need to be conscious about security in relation to computers and cell phones as we wrote about in *Under Lock & Key 31*. Finally, if prisoners want to get *Chican@ Power*, it is available for the discounted rate of \$10 from MIM Distributors or for work exchange from our Free Books for Prisoners program.★

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...Basic Tactics

mental health tactics, including meditation, setting a schedule, and regular exercise. These tactics are useful for any comrade who's serious about political organizing, whether locked up or not.

Sometimes our oppressors will put us in a strip cell with no bedding, no warmth, no food, no water, no medical attention. In those moments, there's little we can do as far as relying on peanut butter reserves. But maintaining everyday practices that keep us healthy and strong, and with a strong ideological understanding of the reasons we're facing these horrible conditions, will help us remain strong and make it through this torture. Our survival tactics may be individual at times, but our struggle is vast.★

# The Free Speech Society Presents: The Conflict Resolution Committee

by a California prisoner  
March 2016

[In January 2016, MIM(Prisons) received a report from a comrade in Kern Valley State Prison stating that the Agreement to End Hostilities (AEH) had been broken there. The incident included an attack by one group, and retaliation by another group against others not necessarily involved in the original attack. The original attackers reportedly ran to the state for protection. The prospects for peaceful resolution were not great. In response to this report, a comrade now working as part of the Free Speech Society sent

us this update on efforts to reconcile the conflict in line with the AEH.]

All power to the people who do not fear real freedom!!!

## Mission Statement:

In the aftermath of two small-scale race-based "isolated" incidents that occurred on B-facility in January of 2016 at Kern Valley State Prison, the Free Speech Society was able to successfully initiate a conflict resolution committee as a part of the inmate advisory council (IAC) that has been

established at this prison.

The conflict resolution committee ensures the de-escalation of potential conflicts between various groups/formations on B-facility. As it constitutes a body of like-minded individuals that is both representative of the totality of the various groups/formations on B-facility, but also capable of resolving potential or actual conflicts in a responsible, positive, and expeditious fashion. In the past, Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP) administrators, which is inclusive of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations (CDCR)

*Continued on next page...*

# Seeking USW's Help to Build Peace in Pelican Bay

by a California prisoner  
February 2016

I am a true soldier for the cause of change and the fight it takes to accomplish it. I have been housed at Pelican Bay State Prison since 2013, after being released for a sticking. My prior dealings with this place dates back to 1996 when I did my first bid. Currently I have chosen to embrace change and growth as well as a United Front for Peace at Pelican Bay State Prison.

I am currently involved in "P.E.A.C.E.", Prisoners Embracing Anti-hostilities and Cultural Evolution. We have been going strong for over 8 months. Our cause is based on embracing anti-hostilities and cultural evolution amongst Africans, Hispanics, Whites, Asians, Islanders, and Native Americans by way of partaking in tournaments of basketball, handball, volleyball and having made a conscious choice for change.

These efforts are not being taken lightly by this prison, and every effort is being made to

stomp our push for change. The oppressor has refused to follow any of their own set rules and regulations as far as Inmate Leisure Time Activity Groups (ILTAG) are concerned and assisting our approved ILTAG from running said tournaments without any hassle or fear of our sponsor being prevented from performing his duties without constant nickel and dime harassment tactics.

Pelican Bay State Prison is not open for change, I have been placed in Ad-Seg due to what staff here refer to as "causing ripples." I did 9 months with no charges or a finding of guilt as to that 115 [Disciplinary Report]. A comrade took on the Men's Advisory Council chairman job and raised many concerns of the general population, only to find their house searched by squad numerous times, and constantly given urine tests, though none of these tactics ended with any findings of guilt.

I have so much to share with you all including the atmosphere on these main lines and the new tactics being used to incite violence, chaos

and riots. I am on the front line as are so many other brethren here, but we need that voice and the way shared with us on how to proceed in the correct way.

I wish to further educate the masses here at Pelican Bay State Prison as do others, but we seriously need a support system from the outside. Just like the distance of this place from civilization, this is what it feels like to seek rehabilitation, peace, and change at a place that specializes in oppressing. Prisoners' mail is not going out or coming in, and there is no way to prove either way. The 602 [prisoner grievance] process is in shambles; even when you win in this prison you still lose. Every action causes a reaction and Pelican Bay is notorious for their continued nit picking until they get the reaction they are seeking: chaos, violence, riots and disunity amongst prisoners.

We humbly ask for your assistance in bringing change to Pelican Bay State Prison, and the followers you possess in how to proceed. Please include all information and knowledge needed to proceed. Contact myself, and all will be shared with the men concerned. P.E.A.C.E.★

## FREE POLITICAL BOOKS

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

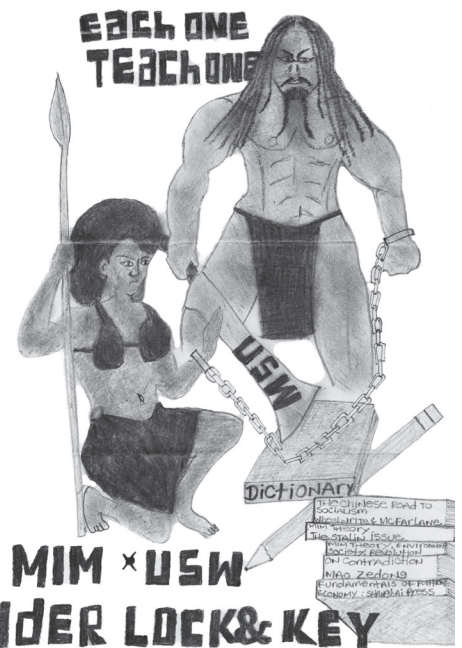
The Books for Prisoners Program relies on donations of books and money. **We need to cut back on how many and how often we send out books if we don't get more funding.** If you have any contacts on the outside who can donate to our program, or who can hook us up with dictionaries, Mao or Lenin, or other 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





... Continued from previous page ... **Conflict Res.**

headquarters in Sacramento, California have made errors in one form or another, by failing to ensure the engagement of the primary stakeholders that are representative of those groups/formations actually engaged in a conflict, nor has there been a body of "like-minded" individuals specifically tasked with resolving potential conflicts before they mature into actual hostile-based conflicts, whereby unnecessary disturbances become manifest, which jeopardize the safety and security of both prisoners and staff.

Per Departmental Operations Manual (DOM) 53120.5.3 (viz. "Special Concern Sub-Committee") the KVSP B-facility Men's Advisory Council will enact the Conflict Resolution Committee (CRC). The CRC is convened for the sole purpose of resolving potential and actual conflicts on B-facility whenever and wherever they occur, and effectively articulating these resolutions to the entire prisoner population, with special attention given to the groups/formations in conjunction with the Agreement to End Hostilities (AEH).

Because appropriate representation is essential to the resolution of conflicts in an effective and responsible manner, the composition of the CRC will reflect prisoner representation from each specific group/formation who will in turn be responsible for engaging and positively resolving any subdivisions in these groups. A basic outline of the CRC representative body will consist of a representative from each of the following groups/formations: [list of 11 groups]

Because of the sensitive nature of this special concern sub-committee, the CRC must have access to the units on B-facility, per approval of the facility captain. The daily activities of the CRC are designed to increase dialogue across cultural lines of every formation/group to promote a stronger foundation upon which issues can be put forward and resolved in a constructive manner. Communication and timing are essential components to preventing conflicts before they mature into hostile-based conflict. Therefore, CRC

members must be able to talk to who they need to, when they need to. Our objective is to be proactive in resolving potential and/or actual conflicts within the general population. All prisoners are encouraged to relay any and all potential conflicts to the CRC so they can be resolved in an expeditious manner. The function and activities of this committee shall be to ensure equal and effective representation of the entire general population in the resolution of potential and actual conflicts on B-facility. The entire CRC body will abide by the by-laws of the Inmate Advisory Council (IAC). Our Struggle Continues!!!

For more information about the Free Speech Society go to: [www.freespeechsociety.org](http://www.freespeechsociety.org)

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** What started as a report on the breaking of the AEH at one of the largest California state prisons, has been turned around to a testament of the practical work of the AEH. The release of comrades from SHU is at play here in ensuring that the AEH is upheld by the prison masses in a way that addresses the needs of the masses.

In short order, comrades at KVSP have put to work the tools at hand to address the contradictions among the people there in a practical way. This is an example that should be followed and repeated throughout the state and the country. All that said, in the long run we must caution against depending on institutions of the state to meet the needs of the oppressed. Conflict is not the natural state of the oppressed, it is created. And the history of CDCR is one of utilizing, encouraging and even creating divisions among the prison masses for its own interests.

When the Short Corridor Collective asked the CDCR to distribute the AEH statement, that was a correct tactical approach to working with the state. When the CDCR refused, it still strengthened the cause of peace and unity among the oppressed. In a recent essay a USW comrade lays out the history and current reality of the MAC/IACs in California prisons.(1) While their formation was based

in the strength of the prison movement, they have since been used to undermine the movement, as the comrade argues, as a sort of neo-colonial force akin to U.S. foreign policy abroad. Meanwhile, another comrade in Pelican Bay who has been struggling to build peace (see p. 7) reports that attempts to work within the MAC and within an approved Inmate Leisure Time Activity Group have both resulted in increased harassment by staff who see unity as a threat.

Again, we commend the comrades at KVSP who have utilized the tools available to them to address a very dangerous situation, and we offer our support in those continued efforts. But we recommend that all those attempting to build peace in prisons study the 5 principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons.(see p. 3) Independence is one of those principles, because without independence the masses do not have the ability to make decisions for themselves and provide real solutions.★

*Note:*

1. "MAC/IAC: Working for the People or Working for the Pigs" by Ehecatt of United Struggle From Within, June 2015.

## The 2 Strikes Law

by USW73 of United Struggle from Within  
February 2016

No doubt even throughout the global community many have heard of the infamous "3 Strikes Law." In California if someone gets 3 felony convictions they face a sentence of LIFE in prison. The law has created quite a bit of controversy and there's been a few token reforms to it that mean about as much as calling San Quentin (SQ) a "Correctional Center" instead of a prison.

SQ's Adjustment Center (AC) is also in the midst of controversy and in the process of implementing reactionary token reforms in much the same way. They also implemented what could be called "The 2 Strikes Law." The SQ oligarchy calls their oppressive tool of retaliation Operational Procedure (OP) 608 Section 825 A.4. Here's how it gets implemented:

On 25 December 2015 while en route to group yard Sergeant Rodrigues waved a piece of paper in a prisoner's face, after asking him if he remembered refusing to show his asshole to officer C. Burrise the other day. Rodrigues tells the prisoner he is going to the AC for receiving two serious Rules Violations Reports (RVRs) within 180 days of each other. A death row prisoner receives an indeterminate SHU term for that.

The two RVRs involve the prisoner's refusal to submit to unclothed body search procedures either prohibited by OP608 Section 765(2) (local prison rules) and state law, or not applicable to East Block (EB) prisoners. In fact, before either of these RVRs were fabricated the prisoner had filed several staff complaints citing the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and alleged "sexual harassment under the guise of security." The prisoner also wrote an informal letter to

*Continued on next page...*

## On Prisons & Prisoners

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

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

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



# Vanguard of the Revolution: More Revisionist Panther History

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)  
March 2016

*The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*  
by Stanley Nelson  
2015

This film screened in major U.S. cities in the fall of 2015. I was planning to use my notes in an article for our 50th issue on the 50th anniversary of the Black Panther Party. However, in February 2016 the film was shown on PBS with much publicity. Knowing that our readers have now seen the film we wanted to put some commentary out sooner rather than later. But do make sure to check out *Under Lock & Key Issue 50* for a more in-depth counter-narrative to this pop culture film.

*The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* is an eclectic collection of video and photography, along with contemporary commentary from some who played important roles in the Party. The producer clearly had no deep ideological understanding of the Black Panther Party, as critics on the left and the right have already noted. What he was good at was picking out some good sound bites and emotionally moving clips. Yet, even still, as someone with extensive knowledge of Panther history, I often found the film boring. Most of the audience seemed to enjoy it based on the loud cheering at the end.

I have not watched Stanley Nelson's other films, but it seems that a film on the Panthers is within the realm of previous documentaries he has produced (*Jonestown*, *The Black Press*, *Free-*

*dom Riders* and *Freedom Summer*). It is curious that he takes on these topics, and then does such a shallow portrayal of the Panthers. He says he was 15 when the Panthers formed and was always fascinated with them, but was not a participant in the movement himself.(1)

In line with the lack of ideological understanding, the treatment of Panther leaders was dismissive. The most in-depth discussion of Huey P. Newton was related to his downward spiral into drugs and crime after the Panthers had been well on their way to dissolving. Nelson features sound bites from interviews calling Newton a "maniac" and Eldridge Cleaver "insane." Eldridge Cleaver was cast as a misleader from the beginning in this film. While both story lines are based in reality, the story that is missed is the great leadership role that Huey played, both ideologically and in practice, in building the greatest anti-imperialist organization this country has seen. At that time Eldridge too played an important role ideologically and organizationally, even if he was less consistent than Huey. Fred Hampton was given a more favorable portrayal by the film, but he died a martyr just as he was getting started. (And despite the attention given to Hampton's assassination there is no mention of him being drugged beforehand, presumably by an FBI spy.) There is a pattern of character assassination in the film that does nothing to deepen our understanding of what the Panthers were, why they succeeded, and why they failed. It will turn some people off to the Panthers and push people towards an individualist or anarchist approach to struggle.

To get an accurate portrayal of the Panthers one is better off watching archival footage, as today you can find ex-Panthers of all stripes, and very very few who uphold the Maoist ideology of the Panthers at their height. Former chairman, Bobby Seale, who long ago stopped putting politics in command, was barely mentioned in the film, perhaps because he refused to be interviewed.(1) Elaine Brown, who took over the chairperson position after the party had already moved away from a Maoist political line, does appear but has written a scathing denunciation of the film and asked to be removed from it.(2)

As other critics have pointed out there is a lack of mention of national liberation, socialism, communism, and the international situation overall at the time. It is ironic for a film titled "Vanguard of the Revolution" to ignore the key ideological foundations of the vanguard. This reflects a clear effort to build a certain image of what the Panthers were that ignores the basis of their very existence. As such, this film contributes to the long effort to revise the history of the BPP, similar to the efforts to revise the history of other influential revolutionary communist movements in history. This only stresses the importance of building independent institutions of the oppressed to counter the institutions of the bourgeoisie in all aspects of life and culture.★

Notes:

1. Stanley Nelson, Q&A with the director, September 2015.
2. Elaine Brown, Ex-Black Panther Leader Elaine Brown Slams Stanley Nelson's 'Condemnable' Documentary, *The Daily Beast*, 3 July 2015.

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## ...2 Strikes

Specialized Housing Division Facility Captain J. Arnold asking him to abolish his "Perversion Enforcement Team Training Project" (PETT Project). That got the prisoner a punitive cell search response resulting in the confiscation of a loaner TV and theft of art supplies valued at \$48. So now you know the motive. But let's see what else this means for ALL death row prisoners thinking Seigle & Yee are to the rescue.

Seigle & Yee are the attorneys currently representing the "AC class" regarding the long-term/indeterminate SHU program conditions experienced by death row prisoners in the AC. One prisoner who corresponded with Seigle & Yee attorney Emily Rose Johns in early 2014 from his recently acquired EB (SHUII) cell reports advising her a wave of prisoners formerly doing indeterminate SHU terms in the AC was flowing into EB and being assigned to the "Sun Deprivation Program."(1) This prisoner came over to EB just ahead of that wave. Johns's response to our dilemma was, "We intentionally kept the scope of the case narrow for many reasons, including out of respect for the experience prisoners in the AC had with the Thompson case."

So now it's about time that someone points out that experience prisoners in the AC had with the Thompson case, including not rescinding the 2

Strikes Law, and that OP 608 Sec. 825 A.4. is still being used as a revolving door into the abyss of indeterminate SHU terms. How leaving that door wide open could be hailed as a reform or "respect for the experience of prisoners in the AC had with the [SQ/Seigle & Yee] case" remains to be seen by a lot of prisoners literally LEFT IN THE DARK for years.

This unfolding experience brings to mind an article from a recent issue of *Under Lock & Key*. (2) It sets the record straight, explaining in detail the "reforms" hailed in the media regarding indeterminate SHU terms with respect to prisoners subject to the cruel and unusual conditions in the Pelican Bay gulag. Just as the so-called reform left the doors wide open to every other SHU in California's gulag system, merely limiting the time spent doing an indeterminate term at Pelican Bay to 2 years. It's nothing, NOTHING different than SQ's 2 Strikes Law being intentionally contested. Torture cannot be reformed. So the practice of long-term isolation must be ABOLISHED. The construction of more SHUs at SQ must stop because it is torture.★

Notes:

1. "Bringing the Truth to Light: The Result of Sunlight Deprivation at San Quentin", [prisoncensorship.info](http://prisoncensorship.info), August 2014.
2. Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons), "Torture Continues: CDCR Settlement Screws Prisoners", *Under Lock & Key No. 46*, September 2015.

## All Censorship should be Appealed

by an Illinois prisoner  
January 2016

I would like to comment on one recurring theme I've observed in recent issues of *ULK*. I've noticed a willingness from prisoners who seem to accept a prisonrat's word that they cannot appeal the censorship of your – or others' – literature. I have yet to encounter a prison system which does not have a process for screening books, magazines, etc. While they may be loathe to follow those procedures, we need to force them to at least go through the motions of properly reviewing our literature, as once that review is completed, then we can take our complaints to the local federal courts. While they don't always afford us the relief we deserve, sometimes we do prevail, and if nothing else our lawsuits are expensive to defend. At some point the attorney general's office will tire of defending policies which don't comport to the state's own regulations. If we continue to give up at the first sign of resistance, we will never accomplish any of our goals. Those who are unwilling to defend their rights deserve none.

Continued on page 14...

## Beyonce's "Formation" and Super Bowl 50

by PTT of MIM(Prisons)  
February 2016

Beyonce is the Queen of pop in the United States, so this review isn't meant to uphold em as a revolutionary force. Eir ties to Empire and the lack of internationalism in eir recent series of publicity stunts is a reminder of Beyonce's attachment to U.S. institutions. Instead this article is meant to analyze eir performance at Super Bowl 50, and eir recently released song and music video, "Formation", from a revolutionary Maoist perspective.

The "Formation" video is the most interesting thing in pop culture in a long time, and the Super Bowl performance was likely the most interesting thing in all football history. Beyonce's dancers donned afros and berets (yet, not pants), and performed eir new song "Formation." Like Nina Simone, Beyonce is being compelled by the struggle of eir nation to take an explicit political position. Simone correctly stated that "desegregation is a joke" and Beyonce is suggesting that cultural integration is not worthwhile. After Martin Luther King was assassinated, Simone performed a poem which called for violent uprising against "white things", imploring New Afrikans to "kill if necessary" and to "build black things" and "do what you have to do to create life." (1) Simone was a reflection of eir nation at the time. While Beyonce's twirling of albino alligators is a weak replacement for Simone's poetic diatribe, we hope today's New Afrikans will keep pushing cultural icons in more militant and separatist directions.

### The Song

Let's start with what holds this whole phenomena together. The lyrics for "Formation" are *not* revolutionary. (2) They promote consumerism, making billions, drinking alcohol, being light-skinned, and fucking. They primarily promote cultural nationalism and economic integration with Empire. What comment the lyrics make on the international relationship between New Afrika and the Third World is more promotion of Black capitalism, on the backs of the most oppressed people in the world – those who are slaving over eir Givenchy dress and dying to mine the diamonds in the Roc necklaces ey is rocking.

Alicia Garza, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, correctly calls out Beyonce's bad economic recommendations in this song, "her celebration of capitalism – an economic system that is largely killing black people, even if some black people, like her, achieve success within it – [has] also been a source of important critique." (3) Although Garza's comment is tame, it's an important generalization to be made. Considering Garza's following, it's an important persyn to be making it.

On a positive note, the song celebrates New Afrikan culture that is still under so much attack in the United States. While we prefer the revolutionary content and gender relations contained in Dead Prez's "The Beauty Within", "Formation" is

still an exercise of Black pride. Whether that pride is then mobilized into a revolutionary internationalist direction is up to the New Afrikan masses, who aren't getting a whole lot of clarity from Beyonce on that tip.

"Formation" calls for New Afrikan unity of the sexes, and of females as a group (not unusual for Beyonce's typical pseudo-feminist fare). In the lyrics about going to Red Lobster, or going on a flight on eir chopper, or going to the mall to shop up, Beyonce advocates a reward-based system for harmonious sexual relations. Beyonce also brings in gay and trans New Afrikan culture, from the use of the word "slay" over and over, to the voice samples and New Orleans Bounce style of music used for the song. (4) Resolution of gender antagonisms within New Afrika are a good thing. But if the goal is Black capitalism, that's bad for the international proletariat and just an extension of the gender aristocracy phenomenon into the relatively privileged New Afrikan internal semi-colony.

MIM(Prisons) upholds the line that all sex under patriarchy has elements of coercion (5), and offering perks for enjoyable sex is still an expression of patriarchal gender relations even if Beyonce is not a typical male father figure. Within the predominantly white Amerikkkan nation, rewards for compliance with patriarchy help to unite Amerika against the oppressed nations. (6) But within the oppressed internal semi-colonies, these lyrics are more interesting, especially considering the long tradition of the Amerikkkan-male-dominated recording industry's use of divide-and-conquer tactics in selecting which music to record and promote. Beyonce isn't promoting sexual entitlement or sexual passivity – patriarchal values that do more to divide New Afrika in practice, and which are heavily promoted in mainstream culture. Assuming whoever is fucking Beyonce could still feed emself without relying on that trade, it's not a matter of life and death, and so these lyrics are less of a threat of starvation than a promotion of national unity. When united against a common oppressor, subsuming the gender struggle to the fight for national liberation, gender harmony in the oppressed nations can be a revolutionary force.

The best part about the song is the separatism and militancy. If the song were to get stuck in your head, it *could* be a mantra for working hard and uniting. It even gets into who the unity is directed against – Beyonce twirls on them haters, albino alligators. Ey twirls them, as in alligator rolls them, as in kills them. The haters are albino alligators, as in they're white. Ey calls on others to slay these enemies, or get eliminated. In other words, choose a side.

### The Video

The "Formation" music video, which was released as a surprise the day before the Super Bowl, is a celebration of New Afrikan national culture and a condemnation of oppression of New Afrikans. It is thick with important and unmistakably New Afrikan cultural references. Beyonce sings, poses, raises a Black fist, and drowns on top of a New Orleans Police car, sinking in floodwaters. A little Black kid hypnotizes a line

of cops with eir incredible dancing, and the cops raise their hands in surrender. Beyonce raises two middle fingers on a plantation. There are references to the Moorish Science Temple, gay and trans New Afrikan culture, hand signs, a Black church service, and more, more, more... (7) "Stop Shooting Us" is spraypainted in the background. The subjects of the video look directly into the camera, confidently, and say "take what's mine," including Beyonce's kid Blue Ivy, complete with eir baby hair and afro.

This video doesn't clearly distinguish between integration and secession. Should New Afrikans just keep trying to make peace with Amerikkka, but while asserting a Black cultural identity? Should New Afrika honor its culture, and lives, by separating itself from Amerikkka and forming its own nation-state? Should this nation-state be capitalist or communist? Outside of a revolutionary context, much of the cultural markers that are present in this video could be taken as integrationist. Hopefully the militance and anti-white sentiment of the video will push New Afrika to get in formation to study up and push for actual (not just cultural) liberation from the many forms of oppression highlighted in the video.

### The Super Bowl Halftime

That Beyonce was permitted to perform with dancers dressed up like the former Black Panther Party members is somewhat of a mystery. Is it because, ignoring any political content, one would still witness a show of tits and ass, so for the average ignoramus watching the biggest football event of the year, it's no different? Maybe it's because this year is the semi-centennial anniversary of the Black Panther Party, so it's gonna come up in mainstream culture sometime, might as well come up with lots of distraction from the political content. Or maybe the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement has made room for this performance to be possible, and perhaps even necessary to quell uprisings by helping New Afrika feel included in such a paragon cultural event. For whatever reason(s), it's obvious this half-time show would not have happened a few years ago. In fact, Beyonce led the entire halftime show in 2013 and while ey avoided any mention of patriotism, ey didn't reference police brutality or New Afrikan nationalism either. It's a milestone, and one that shows Black pride is definitely resurfacing country-wide.

Not surprisingly, the Super Bowl has a long history of promoting white nationalism. (8) Some overt examples include in 2002 when U2 helped the country mourn 9/11, with Bono wearing a jean jacket lined with an Amerikkkan flag which ey flashed at the audience, with the names of people who died in the "terrorist" attacks projected in the background. In 2004, Kid Rock wore an Amerikan flag as a poncho, and when ey sang "I'm proud to be living in the U.S.A." over and over, two blondes waved Amerikan flags behind em. When necessary, the Super Bowl even has a tradition of promoting integration and "world peace," some of which we explore below. At this year's performance, Coldplay upheld these decidedly white traditions. Where there was one Amerikan flag, it

*Continued on next page...*



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## ...Formation

was during Coldplay's portion of the performance. When there was feel-good bouncing and rainbow-colored multiculturalism, Coldplay was leading it. When the audience was told "wherever you are, we're in this together," the singer of Coldplay was saying it. It's not surprising that the white Coldplay frontman would be the one to promote this misguided statement of unity. As explored in the review of Macklemore's "White Privilege II" project, no, we're not in this together.<sup>(11)</sup> And we don't need white do-gooders playing leadership roles that distract from national divisions, and thus, the potency for national liberation struggles.

At the end of the Coldplay-led halftime show, the stadium audience made a huge sign that said "Believe in Love." On the other hand, some of Beyonce's dancers were off-stage holding a sign that said "Justice 4 Mario Woods" for cameras. One is a call to just have faith that our problems will go away. Another is a call for a change in material reality: an end to murders by police. (Side note: Someone who was allegedly stabbed by Mario Woods just prior to Woods's 20-bullet execution has come out to tell eir story. Whether ey mean to or not, this "revelation" is being wielded in an attempt to discredit Beyonce as a competent political participant, and to lend more justification to the unnecessary police murder of Woods. Whatever Woods did just prior to eir execution, that ey is dead now is wholly unjustified. The demand for "Justice 4 Mario Woods" is correct, and underlines how New Afrikan people are gunned down in the streets without due process, which is supposedly guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.)

While Beyonce's performance didn't break new ground by bringing up politics or social problems, it was done in a different way than in the past, that may be a marker for how our society has changed. The costume Beyonce wore, which was adorned with many shotgun shells, was a reference to the costume Michael Jackson wore during eir Super Bowl 1993 performance. Where Michael Jackson had banners of a Black hand shaking a white hand, Beyonce had Black Panther dancers, so touchdown for Beyonce. But where Beyonce sings "you might be a Black Bill Gates in the making", Jackson advocated for the children of the world because "no one should have to suffer." Beyonce's individualist capitalism is devoid of any awareness that today's New Afrikan wealth, especially of Gates proportions, is stolen by the United States military from exploited nations across the globe. Yet Jackson's multiculturalism invites unity with oppressor nation chauvinism, which historically usurps oppressed nation struggles and drives them into the ground.

In Janet Jackson's performance in 2004 (you know, the one where Justin Timberlake stalked em around the stage and then exposed Jackson's breast to the world), ey performed the song "Rhythm Nation." The video for "Rhythm Nation" features militant outfits, with pants. In the video, Jackson and eir dancers intrigue a few Black people who are wandering around what appears to be the Rhythm Nation's underground headquarters, another reference to the enchant-

ing powers of dance. "Rhythm Nation" is about unity and brotherhood, "break the color lines", but it's not about Blackness.<sup>(9)</sup> At the Super Bowl, Jackson called out various injustices faced by oppressed nations (prejudice, bigotry, ignorance, and illiteracy) and called out "No!" to each one, but didn't make it about New Afrikan struggle. That Beyonce clearly delineates eir struggle from the struggle of whites with this performance is an advancement off of Jackson's.

On the topic of organizing females and combating New Afrikan female internalized racism, Beyonce's performance is a step above other performances. A few examples: Nelly and P. Diddy's dancers in 2004 were dark-skinned but were straight-haired compared with Beyonce's backups. In 2004 they also wore straight hair, as in Madonna's performance in 2012 as well. Even though Madonna called on "ladies" like Beyonce does, Madonna called on them to cure their troubles on the dance floor. Beyonce calls on ladies to get organized (in formation). It should be obvious which message MIM(Prisons) prefers.

During Madonna's performance, MIA gave a middle finger to the camera during the lyric "I'ma say this once, yeah, I don't give a shit." But then MIA and Nikki Minaj joined a tribe of dark-skinned, straight-haired cheerleaders revering Madonna as their blonde, white idol. Beyonce's Panther dance-off with Bruno Mars is a step in a better direction. We also prefer Beyonce's dancers forming a letter "X" on the field (likely another New Afrikan reference), as opposed to Madonna's self-aggrandizing "M".

Whether it's dancing at the Super Bowl or dancing in front of a line of pigs, impressive dancing isn't what's going to get the New Afrikan nation out of the scope of Amerikkkan guns. Beyonce is a culture worker, so that's eir most valuable weapon at this time. As long as she keeps shaking her ass, white Amerikkka might stay hypnotized and let Beyonce continue to promote New Afrikan pride. Hopefully many people in New Afrikan who watched the Super Bowl will study up on history, as Beyonce hints at, and revolutionary internationalism of the Black Panther Party can be injected tenfold into the growing Black Lives Matter movement.<sup>(10)</sup>★

### Notes:

1. A. Loudermilk, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, "Nina Simone & the Civil Rights Movement: Protest at Her Piano, Audience at Her Feet", July 2013.
2. "Formation" lyrics
3. Alicia Garza, *Rolling Stone*, "Black Lives Matter Co-Founder to Beyonce: 'Welcome to the Movement'", 11 February 2016.
4. Jon Caramanica, Wesley Morris, and Jenna Wortham, *The New York Times*, "Beyonce in 'Formation': Entertainer, Activist, Both?", 6 February 2016.
5. and Christopher Rudolph, "Who Was Messy Mya?", *NEWNEXT*, 9 February 2016.
6. See MIM(Prisons)'s "All Sex is Rape" study pack.
7. MIM, *MIM Theory 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism*, 1992, \$5.
8. Jessica Bolanos, *Huffington Post*, "11 References You Missed in Beyonce's 'Formation'", 9 February 2016.
9. Andrew R. Chow, *The New York Times*, "Super Bowl Halftime History: It's Been a Long Time Since Those Sousaphones", 4 February 2016.
10. Janet Jackson, *Rhythm Nation 1814*, "Rhythm Nation", 1989.
11. This article on Black Agenda Report is a good complement to our analysis above, pushing Beyonce and Black Lives Matter to abandon capitalism altogether: Reggie E., "How the Corporate Media Uses Beyonce to Co-Opt the Black Radical Movement", *Black Agenda Report*, 2016 February 23.
11. We plan to print this analysis in ULK 50.

## Surviving and Staying Active on the Streets

by a Texas prisoner  
August 2015

I am anxious to address your and my concerns regarding former prisoners' activism once released. I've never encountered anyone who espoused a similar observation to what I am about to present. So, per my experience, the following is a very individualized perspective, and therefore, possibly incorrect. It may outright counter MIM(Prisons)'s line on self-reliance. But what I recall as the greatest hardship for me upon my previous release was isolation. The only Maoist camaraderie I located was not in my city, but on the internet via MIM and the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL). I had to settle. The local Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) was the only group that even remotely resembled my political philosophy and activism ideology.

But it was settling. Lifestyle revolutionary, anarcho-fascist, nihilists. I could be hypercritical. It's been said I'm left of Mao, but really, I might be right of Stalin. As a Leninist, I am a staunch advocate of military-like party discipline. These people, I'm sure, regarded me as an authoritarian dick. But, adhering to my instructions, we were able to garner over 1200 pro-Churchill petition signatures in less than 40 hours.

Politics before personalities.

I had worked as an avowed M-L-M with the ABC per their anti-prisons campaign, and other single-issue activities. Often times when in a verbal, confrontational struggle, the ABC folks would approach me asking why I hated them. I didn't. I truly liked and enjoyed the social company of the ABC people. But I was not going to compromise line. The relationship between ABC and myself quickly degenerated and ended with a campaign of slander against me. I could indeed write a paper entitled "Why the ABC is the Police."

*Continued on page 14...*

## 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 your 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.

## MISSOURI PRISONERS DEMAND ACCESS TO COURTS

In Missouri, prisoners in administrative segregation are being denied legal material unless they have an "active case." Of course one needs to do research before an active case can even begin, so this bureaucratic red tape is just another arbitrary denial of access to courts, and a violation of the U.S. Constitution. Write in for the petition, which can be easily adapted to any security level.

## 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.

## TEXAS ACTIVISTS STAND UP!

*Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*, and the *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook* have recently been banned across the whole state of Texas indefinitely. We need comrades inside to take this to court, and hopefully to have the TDCJ policies changed to disable permanent bans on books.

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; combatting 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 7.6% by subscriber donations. That's more than double our last issue! 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 Texas, 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:

50 - Black Panther Party 50 Year Commemoration

51 - Lumpen class - see p. 20

52 - Wimmin's prisons - MIM(Prisons) is a prisoner support organization, but our influence among wimmin in prisons is limited. We have deeper engagement from trans-wimmin prisoners held in men's prisons than with people held in wimmin's prisons. Where are the revolutionary wimmin at? How can we organize with them toward communist revolution?

53 - Fascism

## 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)



## Advancing the Illinois Grievance Campaign

by an Illinois prisoner  
December 2015

Upon reading *ULK 46* I was once again reminded of the difficulties that us prisoners face trying to have our grievances heard. I would like to share with *ULK* readers a remedy for this issue that I have discovered.

Pursuant to *Powe v. Ennis*, 177 F.3d 393 (5th Cir. 1999); and *Lewis v. Washington*, 300 F.3d 829 (7th Cir. 2002), if prison officials refuse to hear your grievance, your administrative remedies are exhausted. You do not need a response to your grievance to pursue your issue in the courts. You need only prove that you filed the respective grievance.

This can easily be done. First, after you have written your grievance fill out a Proof of Service form stating that on such-and-such date you sent so-and-so a grievance regarding such-and-such issue. After you have filled out the Proof of Service form get it notarized at your facility's law library. Secondly make sure to make copies of both your grievance and the Proof of Service form to keep in your files. Finally, repeat this process at every level of your state's grievance system.

For example: In Illinois there is a three-step grievance system. I have personally used this method in the past (successfully). First, I filed my grievance with my counselor; next I filed it with my institution's grievance office; then I filed it with the Administrative Review Board. Each time I filed my grievance I also filed a Proof of Service form. By doing so I was able to show the Court that I had attempted to resolve my claims through the grievance process. This resulted in the court siding with me and denying the State's Motion for Summary Judgement. I am enclosing proof of this method's success for MIM(Prisons) to verify.

Although this is not the ideal solution it is one that will allow prisoners to pursue their legal matters without being obstructed by the Capitalist swine.

### Example Proof Of Service

Hereby comes [your name] to swear under penalty of perjury that on the date signed below I sent the [prison name] Grievance Officer a grievance dated [date] concerning the misplacement of my TV and Norelco Razor by prison authorities through the institutional level mail service.

Executed this \_\_ day of \_\_ [month] \_\_ [year]  
\_\_\_\_\_[signature]

[get this stamped and signed by a notary public.]

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** This is a helpful update to the country-wide grievance campaign and likely is a tactic that can be used in states other than Illinois. How "easily" this tactic can be employed depends on the conditions of one's confinement. As some prisoners are held in 24-hour lockdown,

## Exhausting Grievances for PLRA

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
March 2016

I write in response to the USW campaigns published in *ULK 47*. Please be advised, the grievance system is nationally governed by the United States Supreme Court Prison Litigation Reform Act. Although each state has its own format, a DOC failure to respond to a grievance at any stage is a failure of them to make the exhaustion remedies available.

Make sure in between stages to submit a simple delinquent notice if your grievances are not responded to. Make sure to do this twice, and retain copies. Then move through the stages and, if necessary, the delinquent notices will suffice if litigation elevates to court level. Also, a grievance rejected cannot be held by the exhaustion requirements of the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) because the rejection deemed the filing a non-grievable issue, therefore you have exhausted the grievance procedure and may proceed if necessary. Please see:

438 F.3d 804, 809, 812 (7th GR. 2006)  
569 F.Supp 2d 398, 406-07 (D. Del 2008)  
287 F.Supp. 2d 210, 212 (WDNY 2003)  
231 F.Supp. 2d 341, 350 (D. Me 2002)  
54 F.Supp. 2d 199, 206 (S.D. NY 1999)

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** Many people facing problems with the grievance procedures where they're held also do not have access to a copy machine, or their cells are tossed and all their documentation is sabotaged. This suggestion of notifying staff of delinquency twice, and keeping copies, ap-

with no access to a law library, and the only receipt offered for filing a grievance is another beating from prison guards, they might not be able to easily employ this tactic. But for many prisoners, this might be a stepping stone from having one's grievances altogether ignored, to getting one's foot in the door in the courts.

Many people have requested copies of our state-specific petitions to demand grievances be addressed after running into problems with the grievance system. From all the petitions we have sent out, we've heard few updates about the progress on this campaign. It's important that we sum up our political practice and learn from it. And through this summing up we can determine how to best modify our practice to improve it. We call this ongoing summing up and improving of our practice "dialectical materialism." This is a scientific approach to our political work that enables us to learn from doing, and when we do this summing up publicly, through a newspaper like *Under Lock & Key*, we can apply these lessons across a broad base of organizers and be far more effective in the work that we are all doing.

So if you use, or have used, the above tactic, be sure to tell *ULK* if it helped you, or what you did to improve it. That way we can all learn from each others' practice to improve our own. ★

pears like a good tactic if possible. We would also encourage subscribers to request the *Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual* chapter on the PLRA that we distribute for \$12 or equivalent work-trade. If you can afford to buy the *Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual* outright (approximately \$30), we can send you the publisher's order form.

The mere existence of the PLRA, plus all the little headaches that make it so difficult to exhaust all available remedies, are signs that the criminal injustice system in this country is a total joke. It's not designed for justice at all – it's designed to frustrate and pacify, and provide busy work for, the oppressed people who are subject to its control. In addition to trying to fight winnable battles through the courts when possible, we encourage our subscribers to get deep into political study and organizing, which gets at the core of this unjust capitalist system and all its organs of oppression. ★

## Making Moves on Indigent Mail Campaign

by a Texas prisoner  
March 2016

In 1987, the *Guajardo v. Estelle* case, modifying the correspondence regulations in the Texas prison system, was finalized. One of the results of *Guajardo* was prisoners with less than \$5.00 in their trust fund accounts were considered indigent, and thereby entitled to five one-ounce First Class correspondences per week, and unlimited legal and privileged correspondences.

Circa 1998, Jason Powers, attorney at law, with the firm Vinson & Elkins, contacted me informing me the state had filed a motion to vacate *Guajardo* pursuant to the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA). Powers solicited my assistance in defending plaintiffs' objection to State's motion. Obviously, the plaintiffs failed to prevail.

My concern regarding recent constrictions in indigent correspondence procedures is: Since vacating of *Guajardo*, indigent prisoner correspondence has been reduced from the 5 personal letters a week and unlimited legal correspondence, to 5 personal and 5 legal correspondence per month. This, when the indigent requirement has remained less than \$5.00 since 1978, never being adjusted per the inflated dollar.

As such, I intend to commence a petition campaign directed at State Senator John Whitmire, State Committee on Criminal Justice, demanding not only that the 5x5 weekly indigent correspondence regulations be reimplemented, but that the standard of indigence required be adjusted to reflect a realistic inflated dollar. So fly this by your grievance writers and gauge their thoughts on the matter.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** The reduction in indigent prisoner correspondence envelopes has a direct impact on prisoners' ability to stay in contact with family, fight legal battles, and engage in

*Continued on next page...*

# Contradiction Between Hippocratic Oath and Prisons

by a comrade of United Struggle from Within  
January 2016

I just wanted to take advantage of this lull in the recent pain I've been struggling with, as much psychologically as physically. It should get better, relatively speaking, and pass. It usually does. The only thing that's truly effective is the pain medication I'm on, but I'm not in any position to request an increase. I've got a good doctor right now and he does what he can, of course within the restrictions imposed upon him that limit his abilities. It's really just so damn frustrating, not being able to identify the root of the pain. I can't help but genuinely wonder if I'd be subjected to this if I were not incarcerated and had good insurance and doctors?

You see, my doctor can only do so much here behind these walls for a number of reasons. Resources are practically non-existent and anything he wants to do, it's first scrutinized and questioned. And if it's okayed then he has to outsource it to an outside specialist and hospital. And quite often the specialists will either "shoot it down" or use it as an opportunity to run up a bill and bill it to the state. That is, they'll admit me for several days, or a week, run a load of expensive but pointless tests that they've run before. So I'm shackled to a bed and they always either discontinue, or significantly reduce my pain management to ineffective dosage.

So my doctor here is very limited in what he can do without ultimately risking his own employment. You push too hard to provide adequate health care to us animals and it won't be long be-

fore you're seeking employment elsewhere.

Philosophically, it's really an interesting dilemma. Especially for a Marxist, or one well acquainted with "the unification of opposites." As we know, the prison system as an appendage of the "state apparatus", is in its very essence, that is, by its "nature," an oppressive institution.

All doctors take a Hippocratic oath and although the oath is subjectively interpreted, the practice of medicine is objective, and the practice of medicine in its "essence" (nature) is irreconcilably opposed to the essence of the prison system

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## ...Mail Campaign

political education and organizing. The criminal injustice system wants to curtail these activities as a part of the goal of social control. As revolutionaries we support campaigns to expand access to correspondence, as we know this is critical to our ability to reach our comrades behind bars. We look forward to input from other grievance campaign participants about this new tactic in Texas.

Another campaign that is active in Texas is the right to access to a law library. We also recently learned that the *Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook* has been banned across the Texas Department of Criminal Injustice as of October 29, 2015. Texas is continuing a long history of assault on oppressed peoples in that state, and the only way we're going to be able to overcome the new (and old) tactics developed (and re-instituted) daily is to overthrow the state apparatus that makes it possible. Obviously Amerikkka's government system has got to go. ★

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## ...Appeal

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** There are no rights, only power struggles, so we agree with this comrade that it is important that everyone step up to fight the censorship battles that are preventing revolutionary material, or any other mail, from getting in to the prisons. Unfortunately many states do have "unappealable" (per policy) censorship. For example, in Texas the *Chican@ Power* book was recently banned. Per Texas prison policy, this book is effectively censored forever. We are pushing comrades in Texas to take this to court to not only get the book in to prisoners in Texaztlán, but to attempt to change this policy across the board.

We are not so optimistic that the attorney general's office will tire and give up, and in fact we know that even in victory the courts and the government are likely to just change the laws on us rather than let us win. But we do agree that these battles are sometimes winnable, and it is persistence that pays off. At the same time, everyone taking up these legal battles should use their fight as an opportunity to educate others about the struggle, and why we are facing so much censorship of anti-imperialist educational material. In this way, even if we lose in the courts, we have made good use of our time by helping others to learn from the fight and building resistance outside the legal realm. ★



and its very existence.

So any doctor employed by the state (prison) is in direct opposition to the very essence of its employers. This is an objective phenomenon that exists whether one is conscious of this inter-connection of opposing tendencies, or not.

Ultimately the doctor will either submit and capitulate to the interests, i.e. trajectory, of the state through a slow process of indoctrination that occurs both subtly and conspicuously, consciously and subconsciously, as well as from their own experience that they will have with those prisoners around them. And this is the greatest

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## ...Release

But it was the isolation of being the only Maoist in my city's radical elements. The ABC told me as much stating maybe I'd be better off in a different city, closer to my own kind. But even at the most secluded times, I could be found handing out *MIM Notes* (most downloaded from the internet) proselytizing for revolution - by myself. That can get a little lonely.

Back to the Re-Lease program, I believe it of immediate import: computer security. I've missed a few things the last few years of my accelerated downward spiral, but the last I heard, those wishing to use public library computer labs must present a photo ID, your ID # being your access PIN #. That was my experience when I attempted to use a public library computer in the 2000s. I also remember librarians protesting a provision of the Patriot Act requiring public libraries to maintain records of materials parolees had checked out. I found this to be significant, as the library system had available books, CDs, DVDs, etc. by authors that might attract pig scrutiny.

It has been my practice to utilize computer labs available at a University, mainly at the law library as I had integrated myself with the staff there due to my uncommon knowledge of law. This is where I printed out *MIM Notes*. A little difficult at the office. Too many trips to the printer and you would be watched. When I could I'd have several cadre accompany me. I would download *MIM Notes* from my computer and I would signal cadre to retrieve them from the printer. This way the same persyn was not observed accessing a printer; and if I got busted for performing non-office business, we could just switch to another computer.

On a good day we could produce 50 *MIM Notes*. A good week, we could do this 3-5 days. That compounded by the notes periodically sent by MIM, and good quantity of papers were put on the street in the west campus area for a period of approximately 3 years.

Isolation is a big problem. I believe it is paramount releasees be connected to other revolutionaries. Or maybe I'm just antisocial. I have a fear that I may be degenerating into misanthropy which, to my way of thinking, is anathema to socialism/communism/statelessness. Anyway it is

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# Displaced People: The Outcome of Imperialist Aggression Around the World

by Durango of United Struggle from Within  
February 2016

Since 2010, after the so-called "Arab Spring" that caused governments in North Africa and the Middle East to crumble, those regions have been in all-out war at the expense of the people who populate them.

Over here on this side of the world, people have prejudiced animosity towards the people who populate war-torn countries like Syria and Yemen. First World nationalists and the bourgeoisie, along with the petty-bourgeoisie, believe that the displaced people risking their lives to come to the United States or European Union threaten their First World lifestyle. What nerve these money hungry, war-mongers have. It's a fact that very few First Worlders have actually seen war, or experienced hunger, or had to give up everything and risk their lives taking a chance migrating to a new country, sometimes even a new continent, to have a so-called "better life" and partake in the "Amerikan dream" that everyone talks about.

600,000 people crossed into Europe this year, sometimes 10,000 a day.(1) This is a cycle that goes back centuries, but now that it's affecting the First World's backyard, the imperialists have no choice but to admit that it's gotten out of hand. Now the imperialists are calling it a "world crisis." My question to them would be, what world are you talking about? I doubt they're talking about the world as a whole.

In the European Union, right-wing parties that promote xenophobia were on the rise way before the displaced people started pushing through their borders.(1) Now protectionist E.U. governments are complaining that Europe will change for the worse because of the mass migration plaguing their countries. They complain that the displaced people will "take their jobs, get spoiled on government benefits, and worst of all change the identity of Europe."(1) Wow, I say fuck their identity, for centuries they've been destroying ours.

Thanks to globalization, smuggling displaced people has become a full-blown enterprise.

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...Release

political isolation I am apprehensive about upon my release.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** In our 2010 article "Reassessing Cell Structure 5 years out" we asserted that 1-persyn cells have a high likelihood of degeneration, and also are at a disadvantage when it comes to criticism/self-criticism. It is important that this comrade reached out to other Maoists thru the internet.

We have been soliciting feedback from our comrades on what helps people stay politically active after they are released from prison. As an ongoing forum for discussion, and an institution to develop our Re-Lease on Life program further,

Smugglers charge up to \$1,200 a persyn and children at half that. This is big business with a lot of activity in the Mediterranean. So much so that 100 boats leave Turkey for Greece almost daily, each packed with over 40 people. All this adds up to over \$5 million a day for the smugglers.(2) This is true capitalism, getting rich off the people of the Third World.

Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, is to blame for the wars in poor regions like the Middle East with the real victims being our children. Our youth are being poisoned with bourgeois culture, and parasitic class ideology. That type of mentality is everywhere: in books, magazines, TV, and the radio. No matter what part of the world you're in, all you hear about is how great Amerika is, the so-called land of the free where nobody's poor, or hungry, or cold. People, some still children, leave their home countries because they want to believe in a utopia where they are safe from bombs or stray bullets. Only thing is that the imperialist propaganda machine doesn't tell them that the "Amerikan dream" is for a chosen few. According to an ABC news report aired on *Good Morning America*, "5,000 children crossed the U.S./Mexico border alone in October."(3) Now they're in concentration camps being processed to be deported back to their poor, war-torn, inhumyn countries.

The imperialists call this "radical ideology," but as materialists and students of Maoism we point out the fact that the First World exploits the Third World for its cheap labor and resources. These bureaucratic pigs justify their imperialist policies by claiming to promote democracy and Liberal capitalism. But in reality they flex their muscles in the Third World to intimidate other nations for the purpose of exploiting their oil fields or mines that are rich in minerals, and any nation that resists is called "undemocratic" or "ruled with an iron fist," attacked by the imperialist propaganda machine. Now that some nations want some of that wealth (that was made off the oil or minerals) the imperialists stole, the imperialists push policies to block any of those nations from entering the empire and partaking in the benefits that the wealth provides. It's all in the hystory books for anyone to see. The First World exploits the Third

we are going to be printing a bi-annual newsletter devoted to this topic. This will be a place for those planning for release, and those who are politically active post-release, to collaborate and build. Thru this newsletter we can discuss various tactics on how to address political isolation in locations where there are no local Maoist cells, and other problems facing politically active releasees.

Along with this newsletter, we have revamped our Re-Lease program over the last year. We are not yet in a position to provide for basic needs such as food and shelter, but we can't let political isolation in the belly of the beast pull solid comrades out of the struggle. Be sure to tell us your release date, if it's coming up within the next 2-3 years, so we can start prepping now! ★

World in the form of neo-colonialism.

As anti-imperialists we oppose U.S. and E.U. aggression in the Third World, and we put them on blast for their crimes against humanity. If NATO could stabilize the Middle East with their billions of dollars/euros they would have done it by now. Now the imperialists see that they have awakened a giant, not in the form of socialism, but still, in the form of anti-imperialism. The bourgeois media gives off this false perception of the people of the Third World as illiterates, uncivilized, and religious fanatics, but hystory is on our side and just like in China, Cuba, Vietnam, etc. the people of the Third World will prevail.

Just like in Nazi Germany the United States is using white nationalism in the form of patriotism to use fascist-like tactics and policies to repress oppressed nations here in the United States. It's sad really, some actually believe that imperialist forces overseas are actually protecting their freedom. And to those who speak up on the crimes the state department commits against their own people, well just look at Edward Snowden. And if you're against the war crimes committed by the U.S. forces, well just look at Bowe Bergdahl. Both are considered traitors.

We must educate the youth that flashy cars and jewelry is not what life is really about. The reason that people have for coming to the United States is that they too want to get rich and own a mansion in Beverly Hills. This is what the United States preaches and then they complain when others flood their borders to partake in the "Amerikan dream." We must expose the real criminals. Down with the imperialists and their puppet regimes, all power to the people. ★

Notes:

1. Karl Vick, "Exodus: The Great Migration", *Time Magazine*, 19 October 2015.
2. Simon Shuster, "Exodus: Smugglers' Cove", *Time Magazine*, 19 October 2015.
3. ABC News, *Good Morning America*, "5,000 children crossed into the U.S. alone in October", November 2015

## 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.)

## Prison Scares off Subscribers

by a Florida prisoner  
January 2016

I request that you stop writing or sending me any of your publications. I am not involved in promoting, recruiting, security threat groups of Latin Kings, promoting hunger strikes, or any other disruption of the institution. I received a notice of rejection or impoundment of publication on 1/7/16. Also on 1/7/16 I was placed in confinement under investigation that I believe your publication caused. Therefore, I wish not to have any involve-

ment with this publication or MIM Distributors.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We have removed this writer from our subscription list but we print this letter to show people just how far the prisons will go to try to intimidate people and stop them from learning from anti-imperialist literature. Unfortunately this person never even saw a copy of *ULK* and so does not know just how far off the claims are. There are no prison policies or laws that legitimately allow for the isolation of a prisoner due to receipt of educational material, nor can literature like *ULK* identify a prisoner as a security threat. However, we know that the prisons see revolu-

tionary education as a threat to security because of the consciousness this brings. A conscious prisoner is more likely to fight for their legal rights, and to advocate for the rights of others. A conscious prisoner is more likely to educate others and organize them to fight for their rights. And so, the prisons consider this a "threat to security." What we really threaten is the security of their system of social control. We respect that there are some who are not ready to suffer for this struggle, but for all those who stand strong and maintain their right to receive *ULK*, in spite of reprisals, we know that sometimes even this is a revolutionary act.★

## Medical Neglect Covered up with False DR in Kansas

by a Kansas prisoner  
January 2016

I would like to share a struggle that many Kansas captives are dealing with currently. In the past few years, the synthetic marijuana drug known as K2 has flooded the prison system. Its use is easily hidden from detection because urine analysis tests don't regularly detect it. One way it's detected is from red eyes. The KDOC is saying "red eyes" is a determining factor in writing a class one Disciplinary Report (DR) for substance abuse.

I recently had a seizure (my medical history includes epilepsy) and was rushed to the clinic. I came to with red eyes from having the seizure and the nurse said to me "you have no history of seizures, did you smoke some K2?" With this comment, I was not treated for my seizures, I was taken straight to segregation, and while still in handcuffs had another seizure in the cell. From hitting my face, I was bruised and bleeding. The nurse came down and said "It's just the drugs coming out of him, keep him in seg. We've already seen him." I was scared I was going to die!!! I hadn't used any drugs, I was having seizures and medical was refusing me care. It was later found in the computer that I had been treated for seizures, had been on anti-seizure medication, and had been hospitalized for seizures. Because of the DR I was placed in segregation for 21 days and had my visits suspended for one year. I filed appeals and even contacted the Kansas Medical Review Board. They concluded "because of this inmate's history of seizures, we believe the DR may need to be re-evaluated."

No one in the Department of Corrections was willing to correct this DR. The nurse that made the comment "this might be from K2" told me word for word "you should be able to beat this on appeal" after she was made aware of my past history of seizures. In her medical report (that was used to find me guilty) she stated "inmate has no history of seizures." That was clearly medical malpractice, my history was in her computer, and I told her I had a history of seizures and she called me a liar.

I have now paid \$195 and filed a 60-1501

*Continued on page 19...*

## One More Doctor Replaced

by a South Carolina prisoner  
October 2015

There is some good news. Remember the doctor Robert Sharp mentioned in the *ULK* 40 Hailey Care article? He was terminated from Ridgeland Medical and rumor has it that he's in Florida. A lot of effort was expended in trying to get him out, however much work needs to be done still. It seems the history of slavery, Willie Lynch, and other institutionalized oppression still have an effect on a certain class of people here in South Carolina.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** We've been reporting on the deficient medical care in this South Carolina prison for nearly two years. By our count, they are on at least their fourth incompetent doctor in that time, and we have no reason to believe the medical care was any better before that time.

While it can be a useful battle to organize around, in the end removing "Doctor" Sharp, or any of the doctors in question, won't solve the problem of inadequate medical care at Ridgeland Correctional Institution. Reformists spend all their energy trying to get a better doctor, or a better medical director, or a better president, or whatever. But inadequate medical care for prisoners likely isn't Sharp's only offense to huminity. There are more forces at play than just Sharp's bad judgement or malice. And there are more Sharps than we can count, other doctors at other prisons all across our country providing similar or even worse treatment. There are likely more Sharp-type doctors working in U.S. prisons than not, and when they are removed from their job, they just go to a different facility and are replaced by a similar "doctor." As was explained in the Hailey Care article, the inadequate medical care is even sponsored by the Governor of South Carolina.

On the other hand, revolutionaries aim to change the entire social and economic system. We want to eliminate the conditions that breed people like Robert Sharp, Nikki Hailey, and all their predecessors. We want to provide actual medical care for everyone in society, including prisoners. We want to create a communist society not based on capitalism or national oppression. Today we work on small reforms and education, to set the stage for the day when we will need to take up arms against the state in order to end the various oppressions inherent to capitalism.★

*...Continued from page 14* ...**Hippocratic Oath**

influence on them. I have to admit that I have a tremendous amount of respect for those doctors that do last as long as some of them do when I see how some (most) of these "inmates" act. (notice my distinction of inmate vs. convict).

Anyway, my doctor is in a no-win position. He does what he can without jeopardizing his job security. And although you and I would without a second thought, push and fight until we were unemployed, in these circumstances we are in the minority.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** This is just another example of how the oppressed struggle for day-to-day survival under capitalism, despite some principles like the Hippocratic oath. In every issue of *ULK* we print a statement discussing a better form of justice that will be implemented under the dictatorship of the proletariat. We often talk about Chinese prisons during the socialist period of 1949- 1976. The most in-depth reports we have of those conditions come from the former emperor and collaborator with the Japanese occupiers who slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Chinese people, and two American students imprisoned for spying for their country. (1) Both stress the fair treatment they received, and being fed adequate food in times when food was not always in adequate supply for the whole population. Meanwhile, in the heart of excess, in the United States, we have prisoners suffering from lack of basic needs.

It is obvious that this system has no interest in serving the oppressed. But what might not be so obvious is how prisons can and have been used in states that are of and by the oppressed. While a socialist state will use force to repress those who attempt to restore exploitation and oppression, the goal is to build communism. Therefore everyone is to be included in the benefits of society, and even the former class enemies will be won over by fair and humane treatment while being struggled with politically. That is what it looks like to engage in a project to abolish class differences. The key difference is the class in charge. It is only when the proletariat seizes the state from bourgeois rule that we will see systems that truly serve all people. Until then such claims are just political sloganeering.★

*Note:*

1. Allyn and Adele Rickett, *Prisoners of Liberation*. Available from MIM Distributors for \$5 or work trade, and Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, *From Emperor to Citizen*, Volume Two, Second Ed, 1979, Foreign Languages Press: Peking.



## Communist Education Threatened with STG Status

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
January 2016

Last week I received a visit from Deputy Superintendent Ondrejka, who is the head of the security department of this institution. He told me that he received word that I'm having some "undesirable contacts" sent to me in education materials. He stated that the mailroom supervisor is a Christian and that she feels offended when she sees communist materials in the mail when she searches it. Ondrejka said that he is aware that a lot of my communist mail is burned by the mail lady, even though it is illegal to do so.

When I asked Ondrejka if he is going to stop it from happening again, he said "Why should I? Stop getting things like that sent in and you won't have to worry about your mail being burnt." I stated to Ondrejka that I find it funny that the mail lady, who claims to be a Christian, gets offended at political study material, but lets all types of pornography into inmates via the same channels. Ondrejka said that he could care less about the smut, he is concerned about the communist literature that gets sent into his prison. He told me that the administration is about to start cracking down on anarchist and communist materials, and start labeling those who possess them as Security Threat Group (STG). He said that any further MIM literature will be stopped and deemed contraband.

This being said, I can see for myself just how critical political study really is. If the slavemasters are threatened by it, then it must have incredible worth. I am a firm believer that knowledge is the ultimate power, the greatest weapon there is. The pigs try to stop real education in the gulags, because they know that when we have a true education and know the truth about the way things really are, they are defeated.

I call all my fellow prisoners to arm yourselves: not with knives or guns, but with educational resources – knowledge. With these weapons we can defeat the powers of imperialism and capitalism! I salute all of my fellow comrades who are fighting the pigs on a consistent basis. I am right here on the battlefield with you. The pigs censored my first study assignment from MIM(Prisons), but I will not give up! My motto is and always will be resist, resist, resist! I want to thank MIM(Prisons) for giving me ground to stand on in this political battle we are fighting.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We agree with this comrade that knowledge is a very powerful weapon in our advance toward communism, and it is essential to a successful movement against all oppression. However knowledge alone is not going to enable us to defeat the powers of imperialism and capitalism. When we are strong enough and the conditions are right, we will be forced to pick up knives and guns in order to assert power over the oppressors – they won't have it any other way.

In our battle to protect our ability to disseminate

## Illinois Prisoners Build Communist Study Materials

by an Illinois prisoner  
March 2016

The Soldiers of Bondage (S.O.B.) is a revolutionary communist organization with its members consisting of political prisoners within the Illinois Department of Corrections. The party was founded on 2 July 2011 in Pontiac Correctional Center Segregation. Current membership is very small, but, with the publishing of this study guide, it is hoped that the party will grow nationally in both numbers and resources. A Manifesto of S.O.B. will be completed soon and it will hopefully be made available to prisoners across Amerika.

The "Communist Manifesto" is the most important piece of political literature to the communist. However, due to the many oppressive conditions that plague the lumpen proletariat within the United States, many prisoners have problems with comprehending the "Communist Manifesto." For this reason S.O.B. felt it necessary to create a study guide that would assist prisoners in obtaining as much information as possible from the "Communist Manifesto." This study guide contains 184 questions as well as answers from the text.

After creating the study guide the next question to be answered was how to make the study guide easily available to prisoners. After some debate it was decided that the only real option was to go through MIM(Prisons). We are not sure if MIM(Prisons) will just send this out to prisoners who request it or if they will make it one of their official study group programs. Either way it will assist prisoners in the development of their political consciousness.

Remember that the only way to combat the

nate knowledge thru the bars, we distribute a Censorship Pack, which has basic information on how to fight censorship of political materials. The mailroom staff in this anecdote is acting in complete violation of established caselaw on the issue of censorship in prisons. Below is an excerpt from the Censorship Pack, citing relevant caselaw

*"The decision to censor or withhold delivery of a particular letter must be accompanied by minimum procedural safeguards against arbitrariness or error." Procnier v. Martinez, 416 U.S.396. 94 S.Ct 1800*

*"Wardens may not reject a publication 'solely because its content is religious, philosophical, political, social[,] sexual, or . . . unpopular or repugnant,' or establish an excluded list of publications, but must review each issue of a subscription separately." Thornburgh v. Abbott, 490 U.S. 401*

*"When a prison regulation restricts a prisoner's First Amendment right to free speech, it is valid only if it is reasonably related to legitimate penological interests." Lindell v. Frank, 377 F.3d 655, 657 (7th Cir. 2004), citing Turner v. Safely, 482 U.S. 78, 89 (1987).*

We are looking forward to continuing to study and struggle with this comrade, in whatever way is possible. It might mean fighting off this illegal censorship first, and our Censorship Pack is a good place to start that battle.★

oppressive conditions we are subjugated to is to become aware of the cause and solution of our oppression. It is the hope of S.O.B. that this study guide will help many become aware of these elements. As Karl Marx and Frederick Engels articulated within the "Communist Manifesto," the proletariat must emancipate itself. Amerika does not have a proletariat. However, Marx and Engels's edict is just as true for the lumpen proletariat: the lumpen proletariat must emancipate itself. You must liberate yourself from the oppression you suffer. Begin your journey to become the New Man by educating yourself. Education is power. Resist! Rebel! Defy! In strength and solidarity, Cadre (on behalf of S.O.B.)

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** First we want to commend this group for their hard work focusing on communist education amongst the lumpen. The extensive study guide they created took a lot of work. And their decision to undertake a project that is focused on bringing up the level of theoretical understanding of the lumpen suggests that we have a lot of unity around our principal tasks at this time. MIM(Prisons) knows little about the S.O.B. organization so we cannot comment on our relative level of theoretical unity, and until they publish a manifesto we can only say that the "Communist Manifesto" questions suggest we agree on the bought-off nature of the vast majority of the imperialist-country workers who now constitute a petty-bourgeoisie. This is particularly important as we read a book like the "Communist Manifesto," which was written so many years ago when the labor aristocracy was just a very small segment of the working class, and the workers in First World countries were still a part of the proletariat.

We look forward to work and political discussion with S.O.B. We hope these comrades in Illinois serve as an example for other USW study groups across the country. If you want this study pack, write in to MIM(Prisons). Tell us if you already have the "Communist Manifesto" or if you need a copy.★



## Uncle Sam's Big Top

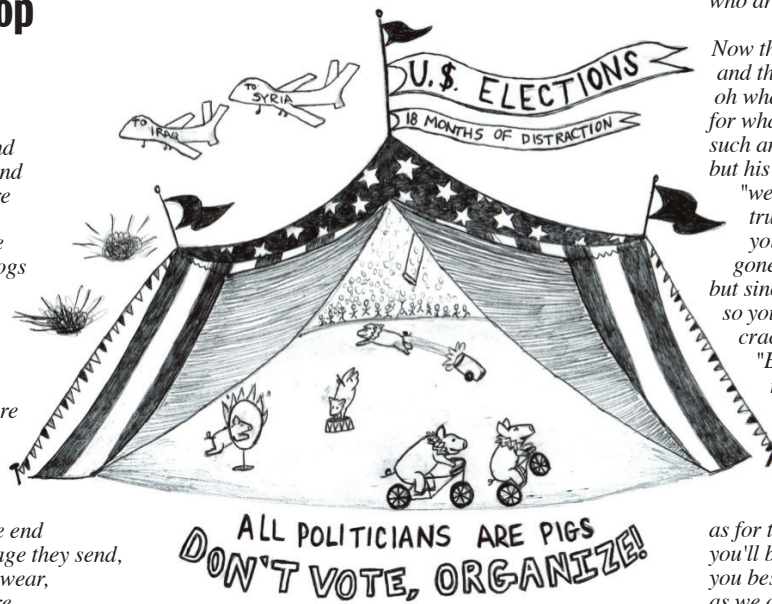
by an Oregon prisoner

Hark now all you merry souls  
and listen as the drumbeat rolls  
oh what sounds, and sights abound  
come one and all, let's gather round  
no worries friends, no danger here  
no cause for panic, fright or fear  
we're all friends, make no mistake  
don't mind these guards, guns, dogs  
and gates  
just follow me yes, right this way  
cause in this tent you're here to stay

Now step to the right folks, here  
you'll see  
stacks and rows of new TVs!  
such a thrill to sit and watch  
these flashing pictures as you rot  
now pay attention, here comes the end  
as you smile and nod at the message they send,  
as they tell you what to want and wear,  
on what to spend and when to care,  
on whom to hate, and emulate  
and who should run this police state  
it's all for your own good you see  
cause freedom of thought saps your energy  
yes, that's it, makes perfect sense  
now sit and stare and lets commence

Now once you're done with program phazing  
we've something else that's just as amazing  
a feast for the mind now, if you will  
euphoria! in just one little pill  
yes prozac, yes oxies, yes sweet ridalin!  
and xannies, and valium and yes vicodin!  
we've got benzos and dexos and zicobilafral  
we've got shit you can't pronounce at all!  
we've got your poison, whatever your vice  
opiate derivatives and pharmaceutical ice  
we'll fix your brain, your chondriatic disease  
your moods, your stress, even your shakey knees  
with only the sagest in new medications  
designed by private health care corporations  
profiteers in big business competition  
for capital gain and political position  
so pay no mind to that small print warning  
pay for your pills and take two every morning

And now that you're passive on new medication  
let's move right along to the next demonstration



onward we go into the main tent  
just purchase your seating arrangement for rent  
oh yeah, almost forgot to tell you  
we also reserve the full right to sell you  
and to buy you, and steal you  
and to enslave you, even to kill you  
but never you mind all of that just yet  
I'll explain it all later (once you forget)

Now come one and all, to the main demonstration!  
it's about to begin, oh what a sensation!  
oh what brilliance, oh what drama!  
the procession is even being led by Obama!  
it's the greatest of shows, the biggest one ever!  
the world's never seen such a grand endeavor  
you see, the producers and directors who hid in  
the shade  
have learned from mistakes that through history've  
been made  
from Rome to Germany, and even from Stalin  
we've studied the pitfalls in which they have fallen  
plus with post-industrialist balloons, toys and clowns,  
and gadgets and gewgaws, distractions abound  
in this consumerist culture, it's a glorious ride!  
but if you resist - force will be applied.  
now sit in your row, your correct social class station  
with your face to the front for the big presentation  
pay no attention to the stage hands behind

who are locking the exits and changing the signs

Now the music fades, the lights have gone low  
and the ringmaster enters to start off the show  
oh what will he do? what will he say?  
for what grand gala did we come all this way?  
such anticipation and so much suspense  
but his smile drops, and now he comments,  
"we're sorry folks, but there's been a mistake  
truth is, you get jack for the tolls we do take  
you've read the signs wrong, yet now they are gone  
but since you're all here, the show must go on  
so you there" he points to the bottom rung seating,  
cracking his whip at those few retreating  
"Black folks, Chican@s and freaks with mohawks!  
into the freakshow cages with locks!  
now don't waste your time and try to resist  
cause our bullies are on roid and you DON'T want them pist!  
as for the third world ladies and gents  
you'll be the labor to prop up our tents  
you best not complain, get your asses in gear  
as we control you with tactics of fear  
don't worry kind Amerikkans, no cause for alarm,  
just cooperate, I promise, we'll bring you no harm  
have a laptop, a smartphone, a "binky" of sorts  
a gesture of thanks for being such good sports  
we'll keep you medicated and very well fed  
we'll play your favorite cop shows and then send  
you to bed  
but don't get empathetic with those in our cages  
or we'll send in the drones to drop pies in your faces  
can't you see the benevolence of our militarization?  
it's all just for you, such insane exploitation  
such death to our slaves in third world countries  
such death to our ecosystem and our cute little monkeys  
and death to you dissenters who don't like our shows  
and death to nature, care of money-hungry CEOs  
and death to our search for meaningful progression  
and human progress itself, by way of oppression  
and death to all those that we can't squeeze for money  
and death to all those who even look at us funny  
as we pump millions in tons of poisonous fumes  
into the atmosphere in visible plumes  
all so your luxurious leisure can grow  
thank you for voting, now on with the show  
for the biggest one ever, too big to be stopped  
come one, and come all to Uncle Sam's Big Top! ★

## ULK 44 is On Point with Revolutionary Science

by Auntie Bellum of USW  
July 2015

Every article in *ULK 44* is on point! "Baltimore: Contradictions Heightening" leaves me hoping there are boots on the ground to guide the demonstrators into an organized resistance. It seems from historical examples that destruction of property and forcible removal of merchandise gets results, e.g. Rodney King, whereas candles and prayer obtain imperialistic praise, e.g. Trayvon Martin in Florida. When a kkkapitalist suffers economic harm, imperialist forces will crush a few of their own thug enforcers to restore the facade of calm. Destroy the property of the bourgeoisie and the killers of oppressed citizens get arrested.

Locol's article on the sovereign citizen move-

ment does much to dispel myth and urban legend. But often the hope of fallacy is stronger than the cold fist of truth. Recently a rumor has spread that prisoners may file a 42 USC 1983 petition for just \$35 if they tell the clerk to "file it in the green file without the protection of admiralty law." Even though I've shown men an order from a magistrate judge, and a letter from the court clerk, both stating \$400 is the filing fee (\$350 if *in forma pauperis* is granted), prisoners still insist they only have to pay \$35. I even showed them an order denying a prisoner's request to "file his petition for \$35."

As for the sovereign citizen rubbish, it is historical fact that even when a legal remedy does provide liberation, the supreme court of the united snakes devises methods to make it inapplicable to the oppressed. Look up Dred Scott. Consider

that "a prison inmate ... is not an employee within the meaning of the [Federal Labor Standards Act]." (1) Does anyone honestly believe that an imperialist court of pig justices would uphold the sovereign citizen argument? Even if the argument was rooted in sound legal principles (and your articles shows it is not), the imperialist powers in the court are not going to say the government that empowered them is a fraud and void.

And Rashid is incorrect, especially on the subject of the labor aristocracy. First, MIM's definition can be validated by simply engaging in discussion with prison staff, including teachers. Those people do not identify with the workers in other nations. Recently a teacher told me that his gas prices should be lower because "Iraq owes us their oil in exchange for our blood in liberating them." When I replied that I don't recall any Iraqis

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## Arkansas: Winning Fight to Wear Facial Hair

by an Arkansas prisoner  
January 2016

Here is an example of choosing a small winnable battle by utilizing a United Front theory in practice among prisoners of Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC), organized to overcome the oppressive penal system about the human right to wear facial hair. In January 2015, the U.S. imperialist supreme court ruled that ADC could not prohibit prisoner Gregory Holt from growing facial hair for religious reasons. Prior to this ruling prisoncrats argued that prisoners could hide contraband in their hair or beards. With the above court ruling, prisoners had to apply for a religious accommodation script in order to sport a beard. In the spirit of revolutionary change, the prisoners within Arkansas collectively organized and filed 5,600 applications requesting a religious accommodation. Also there were 607 grievances that protested that all prisoners should be allowed to wear facial hair. Because of the surge of prisoner requests and grievances ADC asked the board to remove the restriction, allowing all ADC prisoners to wear beards. Beginning 14 January 2016 all ADC prisoners were allowed to wear facial hair. It just goes to show the power of a United Front,

when prisoners put their differences aside to accomplish a common goal.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This is a good example of the power of united action, even in prison where the people have so little power. One element of a United Front that is critical to anti-imperialists is revolutionary leadership. While it is possible for people to come together under even reactionary leadership to effect change, it is revolutionary leadership that makes it possible to consolidate the lessons of the organizing work and push forward from a basic unity around one issue to a broader unity to build a movement that can take on the criminal injustice system. This comrade's example of the fight to wear a beard is a very good starting point. It is an issue that unites many, and beard restrictions are generally religious repression covering for national oppression, disguised as a security issue. We can expose how this repression fits into the broader problem of national oppression, which the Amerikan prison system reinforces. As people see their power to come together to effect change, and understand the system behind the individual problems they are fighting, we can gain more supporters and activists in the anti-imperialist struggle.★

## Guerrilla Union Forms After Studying ULK

by a Georgia prisoner  
February 2016

I am currently writing to you from inside the walls of Georgia's Hancock State Prison where I am housed in its Tier II program. I am writing in hopes that I can be one of those who receives *Under Lock & Key* issues because I have a supreme respect for its message. I really value its information and am in hopes that I can help in spreading its message to the unconscious minds that fill these prison cells to its fullest capacity.

Also I would like to study and learn as much about Maoism, as I have taken his views as mine thus far. Me and three of my comrades have been rotating the few issues available among one another, and have taken to your 6 points and 5 principles as the foundation of our Guerrilla Union. We all come from different sides, but through awareness of the truth taught by you comrades of MIM we've put these titles aside and are now striving to build a strong unity under Maoist teachings and play our part in the struggle towards a socialist/communist society. Whatever must be done will be done on our end. This paper would do a lot for us.

Keep spreading the word cause with us it starts inside but continues when we return to the streets. Please keep me in mind, for I am a sincere comrade, and once again your paper would mean a lot to my strive. Your brother in the struggle, UHURU. Let's get free!!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This comrade is on the same track as thousands of other prisoners across the United States who have discovered that Maoism isn't just words written by some long-dead person from China, but a living philosophy that can be

applied to current conditions of oppression around the world. This should be no surprise, even to the imperialists if they are paying attention. Maoism is merely the practice and application of scientific thought, or as communists call it, dialectical materialism. We learn from history and apply those lessons to advance our theoretical understanding.

Prisoners, who are among the most oppressed people within U.S. borders, can see from their everyday experiences that the oppressors aren't giving up their power without a fight. This is just one example of why Maoists understand the need for a dictatorship of the proletariat after the people overthrow the imperialist governments. We need a system that can enforce the power of the people, even when the oppressors try to claw their way back into power.

And once we have established a system of government that is serving the interests of the majority of the world's people rather than the minority, history teaches us that we still can't rest easy. It's not just the old bourgeoisie of capitalism who will present a threat, but the new bourgeoisie that will arise and hope to seize power from within the party and government. This drive for personal power and wealth is a remnant of capitalist culture that won't disappear overnight after a socialist revolution.

It is these lessons, among others, that prisoners must study to help build an organization that can eventually join the oppressed nations of the world in successfully ending the reign of terror of the imperialists. Thankfully MIM(Prisons) distributes many of these materials and helps run study courses on vital topics. Write to us at the address on p. 1 to get involved!★

## Lead and Copper in Eastham Water

by a Texas prisoner  
November 2015

I received the Texas Grievance Pack you sent to me, and I am able to assist other Texas prisoners here on this unit in some issues which we are facing. Though none is as serious as the fact that a few months ago we prisoners on Eastham Unit in Lovelady, Texas, were and still are having to drink contaminated water which is tainted with at least lead and copper! The Officers here on this unit do not drink the water but we prisoners are forced to as we are trapped here like rats

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*...Continued from page 16*

### ...False DR

[habeas corpus petition] downtown. There is no way that simply having red eyes after having a seizure shows proof of K2 drug use. I know of several others who have had red eyes from allergies and have been convicted for this same bullshit writeup. I'm encouraging everyone who gets a substance abuse DR solely on "red eyes" to challenge this write up on the way to the courts. It needs to be done and change needs to be made. This is based on a pure assumption and no solid facts.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This medical neglect in Kansas underscores the prison's use of unscientific criteria to classify people into segregation. Just as so-called gang members are identified based on false evidence, now the Kansas DOC is identifying illicit drug users based on criteria so common they can use it to label anyone they like. Red eyes can come from a summer allergy, lack of sleep, or any number of other causes. Prisoners have to be careful they don't get soap in their eyes when washing their faces, if the prisoncrats are looking for an excuse to punish them. We echo this writer's call to everyone affected to challenge these writeups. And we urge this comrade, or others in Kansas, to draft a grievance that can be used by everyone for this challenge. This would make a good state-wide campaign because it ties together the issues of medical neglect and control units in a battle against a practice that will no doubt target politically active and conscious prisoners for isolation. We should work to build a united front to fight this policy in Kansas.★

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### ...ULK 44

ever asking us to invade their country and plunge it into civil war, he said, "You only hear what you want to hear." I was also informed it is fair for a factory worker in India to earn 46 cents an hour because "Amerikkka and England built that country for them." Really? And second, just because members of revolutionary groups are possibly from bourgeois or aristocratic backgrounds, it does NOT mean those groups as a whole will support revolution. But neither does it automatically exclude one from the fight. There were Germans who fought against the nazis. And Americans who fought for the bastards.★

*Note:*

1. U.S. Department of Labor Wages and Hours Division, *Field Operations Handbook*, Ch. 10, 10b27.

# Class Consciousness Amongst the Imprisoned Lumpen

by ULK Writers Study Group  
January 2016

**Why do we study class consciousness among the lumpen?**

MIM(Prisons) upholds nation as the principal contradiction in the United States at this time. In that contradiction we see the oppressed nations as the primary motive force for change. And within the oppressed nations in the United States we see the lumpen class as the greatest vehicle for revolution. In exploring this last point, we are interested in studying class contradictions and especially the class make-up and loyalties of the oppressed internal semi-colonies. In addition, in our prisoner support work we come across lumpen organizations that do not fall within a certain national alignment, leaving class as the common demoniator of those organizations.

This essay was written for the book on the lumpen class that MIM(Prisons) has been working on for a few years. We took a break to focus on putting out *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*, and now that that book is published and distributed we are refocusing on our analysis of the lumpen class in the United States. We have already completed a draft of a chapter of the book, based on our economic research about the size and composition of the lumpen class. We are distributing this draft chapter as a pamphlet for feedback.

While analyzing economic statistics is a vital part of understanding the lumpen class, the next step is understanding how to influence the class, and hence the class consciousness.

We are publishing this essay in *Under Lock & Key* to spark discussion and ask for feedback. We want to know how you've seen individuals and groups develop lumpen class consciousness. We are especially interested in how lumpen organizations (parasitic or proletarian-minded) develop class consciousness amongst their membership. How does that class consciousness overlap, interact or even conflict with national consciousness? Please send your reports to *Under Lock & Key* so we can all learn and grow from your practice!

## What is class consciousness?

Simply stated, consciousness is being aware and knowing what it is you are observing. When you eat you may be conscious of the chewing and swallowing. Many people eat without being aware of the act of eating – this is parallel to most people acting in a class's interests without being conscious of doing so; they just do what is good for them at the time. Consciousness of chewing does not automatically come with eating, and neither does consciousness of class position automatically come with belonging to a particular class.

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement (RAIM) defines class consciousness as "The understanding by members of particular classes that they represent a certain class, that their class interests may intersect or oppose those of other classes, and of their agency when collectively organized for class struggle. Typically, class consciousness is used to describe the most broad, clearest perspective of either the proletariat, the bourgeoisie or their sub-classes."

We study class consciousness in an effort to shape the lumpen into an alliance with the international proletariat. Without class consciousness, the lumpen act in ways which strengthen the position of the bourgeoisie: by upholding bourgeois cultural propaganda (e.g. radio rap), participating in self-destruction of oppressed nations (e.g. by selling drugs or fomenting gang divisions), allying with Amerikkans against the international proletariat for "patriotic" reasons, and the list goes on.

National oppression already leaves a persisting impression upon the consciousness of the lumpen of oppressed nations. All of the features of lumpen existence in the United States – police brutality, urban decay, limited job and education opportunities, mass incarceration, etc. – are features of national oppression. The elements of national oppression that lead the lumpen to the prison doors in the first place are then exaggerated once behind the razor wire. We would be in error to not appreciate that the lumpen has some intuitive grasp of their place in U.S. society. On some level people of the lumpen class realize they are disadvantaged.

Karl Marx said in 1847:

*"Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle." (1)*

In order for a lasting development to be realized in the lumpen, we need to do as Marx said and become a class "for itself" rather than a class blindly working for the bourgeoisie. Our work presently is in studying the contradictions today in our neighborhoods and cellblocks, and employing dialectical materialism to create short-range programs in order to push the people in the prisons, barrios, hoods and reservations forward to reach our long-term goals. We need cadre organizations, liberation schools, youth brigades and our own press. We need to develop alternative forms of power which rely on the people's independence outside of imperialism's sphere of influence. Time has proven that imperialism and the basic exploitative character of capitalism cannot be reformed nor can it be made to serve the interests of the people. It can only continue to engender war, poverty and untold strife at the expense of those neatly tucked away in the periphery.

In search of a better way, and in rejection of the comforts of imperialism and its blood money, we must choose which side of the struggle we are truly on. At any particular time lumpen, like all people, are either acting in the interests of the international proletariat or in the interests of imperialism. Most lumpen have no apparent probability of status advancement, so allying with the international proletariat is in the lumpen's class

interests. But if socioeconomic factors were to change and the lumpen now see opportunity for status advancement, then being allied with the international proletariat becomes class suicide.

One socioeconomic factor to take into account is the national question, which is directly related to national oppression and not necessarily economic status. For instance, there are New Afrikan and Chican@ labor aristocrats whose economic interests are with imperialism. And white lumpen are generally allied with imperialism and the Amerikkkan nation, even though they are imprisoned or their communities are poisoned by mining refuse due to capitalism. Thus, one may be an oppressed New Afrikan labor aristocrat and while aligning with the international proletariat may be viewed in an economic sense as class suicide, in a social sense this alliance would actually improve the probability of status advancement overall and not necessarily be class suicide.

## Lumpen unity and class consciousness in the U.S.

Speaking on the proletariat of his day, Marx pointed out that a common situation existed for the proletarians to unite under common interests. The same could be said about the Brown Berets and Black Panther Party during the 1960s and 70s. There existed a sharp level of oppression and police brutality within Chican@ communities, which inspired the Brown Berets to serve as protectors of their communities as well as reach out to those from other barrios, mainly lumpen, to join ranks with them by being productive forces for their people rather than common "gangsters."

The Black Panther Party (BPP) did a remarkable job building and developing class consciousness among the masses of the New Afrikan nation. The BPP was able to tie much-needed community programs to the stark material reality of New Afrika. Not only were the Panthers feeding the youth through the Free Breakfast Program, they educated the masses on their class position through this altruistic act. In one stroke they were able to secure the trust and gratitude of the people and illustrate the failures of the semi-colonial relationship in which the New Afrikan nation is ensnared.

There are glimmers of class consciousness in prison at times, but these episodes ebb and flow due to the bourgeois mindset of much of the prison population. Being raised in a First World country, we are influenced by its culture although it is not our own. As Mao said in his essay "On Practice," "in class society everyone is a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with a brand of class." The assumption of inevitable imprisonment or death; the glorification of drug and pimp culture; hustling for individual gain while harming our kin; and nihilism are examples of lumpen culture under the influence of the bourgeoisie.

At times we may see prison uprisings, strikes, or other prison organizing across national lines, but these events don't usually remain intact for very long. This is because class consciousness does not develop spontaneously, rather it must be cultivated and spread through education and agitation. Only through the help of an educated cadre – both inside and outside prison walls – can class consciousness develop.

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## ...Class Consciousness

### Present-day examples of class consciousness development in prison

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels said of class struggle for the workers, "The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers."<sup>(2)</sup> Marx and Engels understood that class struggle would continue so long as classes exist. They saw the union of the proletariat as the prize, not what concessions were gained from the ruling class per se.

Something similar was experienced with the California prison hunger/work strikes in recent years. The words of Marx and Engels were manifested, not in a "union of the workers" but in a union of the imprisoned lumpen. This union of lumpen produced the Agreement to End Hostilities. The real victory is in getting lumpen to see and experience that it is really us versus the pigs, and that a concrete force exists which oppresses ALL lumpen prisoners in some way. These are acts which cultivate an environment where class consciousness can grow; it creates a fertile ground for this process.

Within the environment of prison, lumpen organizations (LOs) are by far more structured and disciplined than they are on the streets. Despite the negative activity and values of parasitic LOs, there is reason to believe that they can operate to achieve revolutionary ends. Pick up any *Under Lock & Key* newsletter and one will find evidence of LOs working in prison to contribute to the anti-imperialist movement. So it isn't a far-fetched idea to use LOs as revolutionary vehicles in building consciousness among imprisoned lumpen.

Lumpen organizations already bring out a form of consciousness within their membership, meaning they instill pride within their own people. LOs in prison are often organized by "ethnicity," and in that sense they develop their national pride, identity and culture. Their consciousness as a subgroup is raised. This is not class consciousness, and most times not even national consciousness, but it's a start, and more it's a platform which can be used and highlighted. Most LOs already have an ideological indoctrination process in place for new recruits; adding class consciousness to this structured education shouldn't be much of a stretch.

Class consciousness will only develop so much within a LO just like a crocodile will only grow so much when confined to a small fish tank. If the LO is engaged in anti-people activities, it is prevented from advancing politically. The parasitic nature of a profit-driven LO will never allow true unbridled class consciousness to develop because to do so would change the fundamental purpose of that LO. This is why **Growth** is one of the 5 principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons. Comrades must not be discouraged from growing from a parasitic lumpen actor to a class-conscious revolutionary lumpen actor.

Lumpen organizations and other subgroups can come together to become a whole and thus unite as a class, as did the proletariat in Marx and

Engels's day, as did the Russian proletariat unite with the peasantry (uniting two classes) and how Mao Zedong united the peasantry in China upon common interests with the proletariat. When conditions in prison reach an intolerable level of suppression that affects all prisoners as a whole, we will begin to see each other as sharing the same interests of ending oppression behind the walls. Unfortunately this will not automatically make all prisoners come together in unity. Prison conditions alone aren't a sufficient factor to promote class consciousness amongst imprisoned lumpen.

Practical experience shows that the more repressive the situation people find themselves in, the more likely they are to challenge the situation and find ways to combat it. In some facilities, a wide range of reading material is permitted to be possessed by prisoners, and the pigs aren't readily looking for politically conscious leaders to repress and harass. At first glance it seems the freedom of movement and association would be a good environment to run political study groups and organize with each other. However, the flip side of having little repression is that many choose to spend more time chasing and idolizing bourgeois lifestyles; instead of picking up some political lit to read, they choose to discuss Nikki Minaj's ass on the VMAs.

## How to organize

### Class-conscious lumpen must lead

The job of class conscious prisoners is to not just understand that change and development is good and inevitable, but we need to find ways to translate this understanding to the broader lumpen masses, and as quickly and efficiently as possible. It is on the lumpen to look beyond the interests of our own to achieve a higher level of political consciousness, and it is on politically conscious prisoners to point out the cause of our problems as well as what's stopping all from uniting.

### Organize around local experiences/conditions

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to awakening the imprisoned lumpen class. There are many different types of individuals and different backgrounds/histories and beliefs. And we organizers all have different strengths and operate in varying conditions. But in general, open lines of communication, dialogue, re-education, and finding common-ground causes to fight for helps the process.

What should be stressed as a development to higher consciousness is the injustices experienced in common. With this sense of having a common injustice done against us, we will be more susceptible to change. If there isn't a lot of immediate suffering to organize around, we can call on our common experiences prior to imprisonment. Even in relatively comfortable prison conditions, we can start by exploring how we came to imprisonment in the first place. The poor quality of teachers in our schools and mis-education given to us by the imperialists is by design.

We can then use these direct experiences to organize with others on practical projects – campaigns to improve our collective conditions of confinement, collective legal actions, appeals, literacy, etc. – and work to add to the preconditions

of class consciousness in prisons. Attempts to integrate politics with a prison struggle will bring a higher level of class consciousness only if we can explain to others how it's not just an isolated struggle within prison we're all confronted with, but the infrastructure behind the prison industry itself, its society, the socio-economic relations, its effects on our interspersal relationships and culture, and the world. When imprisoned lumpen begin to unite for common interests, then politically conscious prisoners should advocate for continued struggle. Once any concessions are granted, many tend to think "well, that's all we're going to get", or they see a tiny concession as a huge victory, and step back from organizing. This is a sign of a lack of class consciousness, and a lack of internationalism, that must be addressed by the prison movement leaders head on.

### Build study groups

We can lead study groups on deeper topics, or open debates on anything as simple as a news report. Although this may be harder in isolation, it is usually still possible to share material with others in your pod or initiate discussions on the tier. Sharing your views and hearing others' can bring many together if a common objective is trying to be reached. It helps to build public opinion in opposition to the bourgeois media outlets. When there are one or two lumpen within every group agitating in this way, along with strong communication in other circles, sharing reading material and legal work, it all works to push their studying into actual work, and go from being spectators to actors in the process of transforming these dungeons and the imperialist system generally.

There are many topics to study to give a thorough understanding of our class position, including the works of Marx, Mao, Lenin, Engels and other communist revolutionaries before us. Political economy unlocks the mysteries of the origins and results of class struggle. The bourgeoisie (the owners of the means of production) and the proletariat (those who had nothing so must sell labor power) make up the principal contradiction in the realm of political economy. Understanding these classes, and all their sub-classes, requires one to perform a class analysis so that one understands where people stand on the economic totem pole, and determine where the social forces stand. Part of class consciousness is understanding who's on our side and who's trying to imprison, kill, and dismantle us.

If we were to utilize the tables out on the yards for educational-neutral grounds instead of real estate or casinos, a lot more will be susceptible to change their patterns. One table could be strictly legal work (grievances, lawsuits, etc.); one for help with reading, college and GED; one for addressing the daily issues so that nothing arises to blindside folks; one for political education, etc. These tables would be neutral ground for all nations, LOs, etc. to gain knowledge and put it to use. They would function simultaneously as Serve the People programs and political education meetings, building unity and transforming the lumpen into a class "for itself." ★

#### Notes:

1. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy, Paris and Brussels: Progress Publishers, 1847.*
2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Communist Manifesto," Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1997, p. 44.

# Sobre la reconstrucción de las divisiones nacionales y regionales

(traducido de *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*, p. 8-9)

por Cipactli

traducido por un@ prisoner@ en Washington

Los Chican@s dentro de las prisiones de Estados Unidos están iniciando a sanar de los efectos de los cientos de años de colonialismo. Un indicador de esto es el histórico Acuerdo para Finalizar Hostilidades en las Prisiones en cual fue emitido desde el Security Housing Unit (Unidad de aislamiento de largo tiempo) en la prisión estatal de Pelican Bay, California en el 2012.(1) El hecho de que una guerra que duró más de 40 años entre los Chican@s en las prisiones haya parado es enorme. Ya no permitiremos que el estado nos manipule a emplear crimen entre moreno y moreno, y Chican@s conscientes dedicaremos nuestras vidas en la prisión a mantener este armisticio. Este paso es un movimiento enorme en la dirección a la paz y a la consolidación de la nación. Los Chican@s revolucionarios apoyamos este acuerdo de paz con nuestras vidas.

El proyecto de este libro es otro indicador de un salto en conciencia en la población Chican@ presa, el cual es el resultado del acercamiento y la unidad de Chican@s de los dos extremos de California a pesar de los esfuerzos de Amerikkka para dividirlos. Esto es otro índice, el que tengamos pensamiento Chican@ de las regiones norteñas y sureñas de California unidos en este trabajo precioso. Así es como se ve la reconstrucción de la nación!

La nación Chican@, como cualquier otro fenómeno, no es una masa estática y tiene muchas contradicciones. Las contradicciones que brotaron en este proyecto ayudaron a formar y ex-

pandir este libro, y se mantiene su fluidez en nuestra búsqueda de la verdad y el camino al futuro. Existen muchas formas de pensamiento Chican@ (Chicanismo) dentro de la nación y por todas las tantas regiones de Aztlán. Es la interacción de la gente con la realidad y el mundo material dondequiera que residan lo que le da nacimiento a su reacción en respuesta. La experiencia en nuestra vida fortalece y afecta nuestro crecimiento y no desafía así como seguramente enciende nuestras luchas. Los Chican@s existen en varios ambientes distintos, algunos más cercanos a México, comunidades blancas, ghettos negros, o a reservas. Algunos están conscientes otros no. El entender esta realidad social dentro de la nación es tal vez tan importante como el dedicar la vida de uno a sanar a la nación y el reconstruir a Aztlán. Sin el entendimiento de nuestras condiciones actuales, no podemos movernos hacia adelante.

El tema de este libro entonces puede sumarse mejor como cómo podemos analizar hoy a la nación Chican@ y los desarrollos históricos que están saliendo de las prisiones contemporáneas. Nuestra habilidad de vender nuestras "divisiones" históricas provocadas por el estado como presos Chican@s tal vez puedan ser una contribución para los Chican@s fuera de las pintas quienes puedan estar divididos por contradicciones políticas y regionalismo.

Este proyecto no hubiera tenido éxito en este tiempo sin MIM(Prisiones). Su duro trabajo debe ser aplaudido porque ayudaron a proveer varias formas de asistencia para este proyecto cuando muchos grupos han descartado a los presos Chican@s como indignos o incorregibles. MIM(prisons) fue extremadamente instrumental

facilitando esta colaboración entre Chican@s de los dos extremos de California y el fortalecimiento de nuestros acuerdos de paz. Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán (Poder Chican@ y la Lucha por Aztlán) solo pudo ser posible con su tiempo, trabajo y guía ideológica.

Tal vez no viviremos para ver nuestro trabajo ser victorioso, pero no lo hacemos por esto. Alguien dijo una vez "Tu no ganas, tú cambias el mundo" y supongo con este proyecto no contamos con ganar hoy pero si esperamos en crear un cambio para la nación Chican@, y, como un resultado, para el mundo.

Como Chican@s comunistas entendemos que pequeño regionalismo y etiquetas derivadas imperialistas son veneno para la nación. Este proyecto no es más que un preludio de lo que viene de parte del re-encendido del movimiento Chican@.

Aztlán libre! ★

## ¿Quieres leer más en español?

Tenemos algunos libros y revistas revolucionarios. Escribenos para pedir los. En cambio por la literatura gratuita pedimos que nos mandes algo de trabajo. Escribenos 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 compañeros. Write in to put in work! En Lucha!

## El MIM(Prisiones)

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

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

Como revolucionarios internacionalistas, nos apoyamos la auto-determinación de todas naciones y gente. Hoy, el sistema de prisiones de los EEUU es una parte mayor del estado imperialista siendo usado para prevenir la auto-determinación de las naciones 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 República 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.



## Lawsuit on Inadequate Rec and Food Pending, Seeking Assistance

by a Texas prisoner  
November 2015

The conditions continue to be much better here at Connally Unit in Kenedy, Texas since I filed that lawsuit on the recreation/lockdowns/food. But of course that could be reversed at any moment so I continue to push it and continue to use it as a tool to organize/mobilize the prisoners to take group action.

We are working on a mass grievance campaign at the moment, to follow up on some of the issues that are in the lawsuit but the administration hasn't adequately addressed. It's really pretty minor stuff, as the main thing was them canceling rec every day, and they have stopped doing

that. But I feel like you're either moving forward or you're going to move backwards, you know? And the real value in a group action like a mass grievance campaign is what it does to raise the consciousness of the group.

There is definitely a lot more interest since people here have seen that we CAN fight back. But the general consciousness level was so low here and the prisoners were so beat down and demoralized that it will take a LOT of work to develop any widespread activist mentality.

I'm going to enclose a copy of a form letter I typed up and sent out to about ten civil rights organizations already. It's pretty self-explanatory. Just trying to get some more support on this law-

suit. And I know your funding is very limited plus you aren't lawyers there, so you're not going to be able to help directly. But I'm sending it on the off chance that someone there might know a lawyer with sympathies towards the cause who might be willing to do something.

Like I explain in the letter, we don't necessarily need actual representation. This is a pretty straightforward case and they are going to want to settle at some point. Obviously they are - that's why they immediately started running rec again once I filed it. They know the records are going to show they were just flat out lying about these so-called staff shortages. But with a lawyer putting additional pressure I think we will get better terms on any settlement and a settlement will happen quicker.

*Continued on next page...*

**Abbreviated Glossary-** write in for our full glossary and more study materials on these topics

### 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 women'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 have 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, which is a focus of the organizing work MIM(Prisons) does today.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## 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. 49

March/April 2016

...Continued from page 19

### ...Water

in a wet box. At least the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TECQ) put up a public notice concerning this. So now we know and are aware that we are slowly being poisoned. This is the most pressing issue we are facing here. It is one thing to pay for your wrongs or crimes by doing time, but to also have to be poisoned by the state erstwhile is something else entirely.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** From the projects to reservations to prisons to indigenous peoples in rainforests, poisoning oppressed people slowly through contaminating an essential nutrient to humyn life – water – has long been a tactic of national oppression. In the pages of *ULK* we have long been reporting on contaminated water at various prisons across the country.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on lead:

*"Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body... Lead can accumulate in our bodies over time, where it is stored in bones along with calcium. Adults exposed to lead can suffer from:*

- Cardiovascular effects, increased blood pressure and incidence of hypertension
- Decreased kidney function
- Reproductive problems (in both men and women)"(1)

Below is information from the Minnesota Department of Health on Copper in drinking water:

*"Copper is a reddish metal that occurs naturally in rock, soil, water, sediment, and air. It*

*has many practical uses in our society and is commonly found in coins, electrical wiring, and pipes. It is an essential element for living organisms, including humans, and-in small amounts-necessary in our diet to ensure good health. However, too much copper can cause adverse health effects, including vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, and nausea. It has also been associated with liver damage and kidney disease."*(2)

The EPA enacted the Lead and Copper Rule in 1991,

*"The treatment technique for the rule requires systems to monitor drinking water at customer taps. If lead concentrations exceed an action level of 15 ppb or copper concentrations exceed an action level of 1.3 ppm in more than 10% of customer taps sampled, the system must undertake a number of additional actions to control corrosion [of pipes]."*(3)

If possible, find out the level of lead and copper in your pipes and if it exceeds the amount recommended by the EPA you may be able to start a campaign in your facility around this shared problem. The EPA is a notoriously bureaucratic organization (and part of the U.S. government that perpetuates the destruction of oppressed nations) so finding relief from them is unlikely. In the fight for survival pending revolution, avoiding known poisons might be a campaign to take on and use to build unity.★

Notes:

1. <http://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead#effects>
2. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/factsheet/com/copper.html>
3. <http://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule>

### The Awaken

by a California prisoner

Rising from the ashes like a phoenix  
Emancipated from the fetters of oppression  
O, the beauty of freedom!  
Imperialism is the absolute adversary  
And capitalism the daunting sin  
I was branded a rebel  
Because of my revolutionary stance  
This was a nightmare  
From which my only escape  
Was to awaken★

... Continued from previous page

### ...Lawsuit

I want to get these improvements locked in with a legally binding written agreement asap so that I can move on to other projects. So if you do happen to know a lawyer or have any other ideas for what you might do with this letter, please keep our struggle here in mind, okay? Thanks.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** Write to us for a copy of the author's letter ey sent to ten civil rights organizations. The letter outlines the conditions in Connally Unit regarding an egregious lack of recreation time and lack of adequate food. The author is asking for a lawyer to intervene in order to push the lawsuit to a quick settlement. If you are able to assist this struggle, please write to MIM(Prisons) and we will put you in touch with the leader of the suit.★