



May/June 2018, No. 62

Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

## 2018 Survey of U.S. Prisoners on Prison Labor

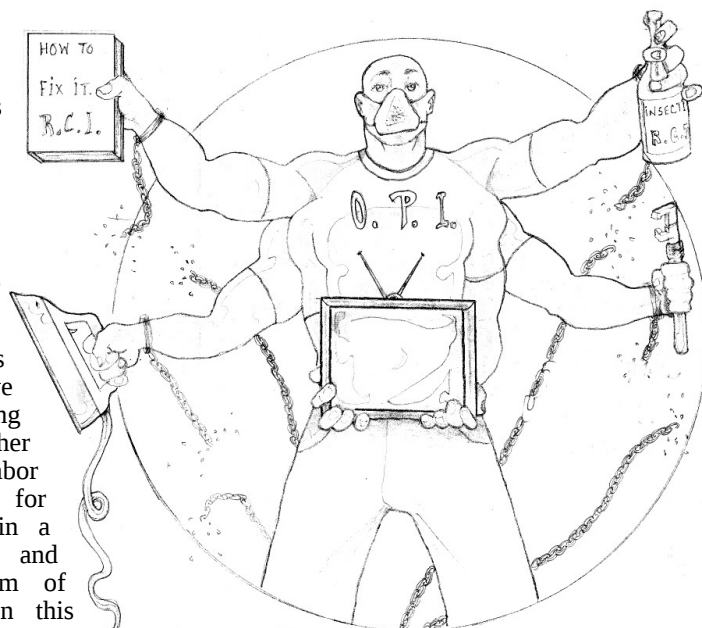
by MIM(Prisons)  
June 2018

The Western press often aims the disparaging term "labor camps" at Asia and the former socialist countries of the world. Yet, with the largest prison population in the world, it should not be surprising that it is the Amerikans who have more prisoners working for them than any other nation. And their labor subsidizes the cost for Amerikans to maintain a highly structured and institutionalized system of national oppression in this country.

While prisons do "cost" taxpayers money, Amerikans benefit directly, indirectly and psychologically from the criminal injustice system. There is a lot of money being made off the system, not by exploiting prisoner labor, but in the form of public employee salaries. In Pennsylvania, for instance, prison guards are among the state's highest paid employees.(1) And in many states these jobs are so important, the guard unions will successfully fight against any prison closures, even when there aren't enough prisoners to fill the cells. Meanwhile, prisoners are doing much of the maintenance work in these institutions, for little or no pay. In the vast majority of U.S. prisons, the state would need to hire more people if they couldn't use prisoners to help with prison operations.

In this article we will look at the relationship between prisoner labor and the cost of running prisons. Our goal is to understand what work prisoners are doing, what they are being paid, what the impact of that work is, and how battles around prisoner labor can be a progressive part of the fight against the imperialist criminal injustice system.

This winter MIM(Prisons) conducted a survey of ULK readers regarding prison labor,



in part in response to many organizations' recent focus on this topic. The results are what we believe to be the most comprehensive dataset on prison labor in the United States.

In our 2009 issue on this topic, we reported on prison labor in 11 states and the Federal system, representing over half the country's prison population. In 2018, we received reports from 20 state systems and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. This survey far exceeds our 2009 survey in content and consistency. This article will present our preliminary results, with the full report to come in a later, more in-depth publication on the economics of the U.S. prison system.

### How many prisoners have jobs?

Overall, 44% of prisoners have a job assignment, which includes school and other programming in some states. This varied

*Continued on p. 4...*

MIM(Prisons)  
PO Box 40799  
San Francisco, CA 94140  
[www.prisoncensorship.info](http://www.prisoncensorship.info)  
[mimprisons@posteo.net](mailto:mimprisons@posteo.net)  
subscriptions are FREE for prisoners  
do NOT write checks to "MIM"

## Prisoners Producing on Farms and in Factories

by a Texas prisoner  
May 2017

I don't know what prisons people are talking about when they say that they don't make a profit, because here the furniture factory is almost all profit. The wood is donated from the free world on a tax write off, they buy glue, paint, nails, etc. And the state pays the guards. The electricity is paid on a scale. They pay a set price no matter how much they use because they couldn't afford to pay for all that they use.

The bus shop where they rebuild buses in the freeworld is almost all profit because the freeworld people pay \$5 to bring it in to get fixed. They pay only for materials and the prison furnishes free labor.

We have thousands of acres of land where we grow our own food plus prisons ship stuff back and forth to other prisons. We have hogs, chickens, cows and slaughter houses so our prisons in Texas are pretty self-sufficient in food. So cost is the guards, the rest is profit here in Texas. The little things like fuel, tractors and such is cost which they are all paid for.

Here's some more examples from *Prison Legal News*(1):

*"Rep Alan Powell of Georgia says the state gets better results out of a prisoner in 12 months hard labor than sitting in a cell. If the tax payers pay to build roads or pick up trash, they let the prisoners do it. In keeping with that philosophy, Georgia's Department of Transportation is using parole violators to clean up trash on highways statewide. It costs the department millions of dollars every year to pick up litter along Georgia's 20,000 miles of state and federal roads. ..."*

*"In October 2011, Camden County, Georgia considered a proposal to place two prisoners in each of the county's three firehouses. The prisoners would respond to calls alongside firefighters, who would be responsible for supervising them. It was hoped that using prisoners convicted of non-violent offenses rather than hiring more firemen would save the county \$500,000 annually. The prisoners would not receive any pay but would be*

*Continued on p. 5...*

## 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:** 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 also cannot return them to you. Rather than focus on only your case, we strongly encourage comrades to write articles about the political implications of their situation, and work on cases that will positively impact the ability for prisoners to organize against imperialism and capitalism.

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.

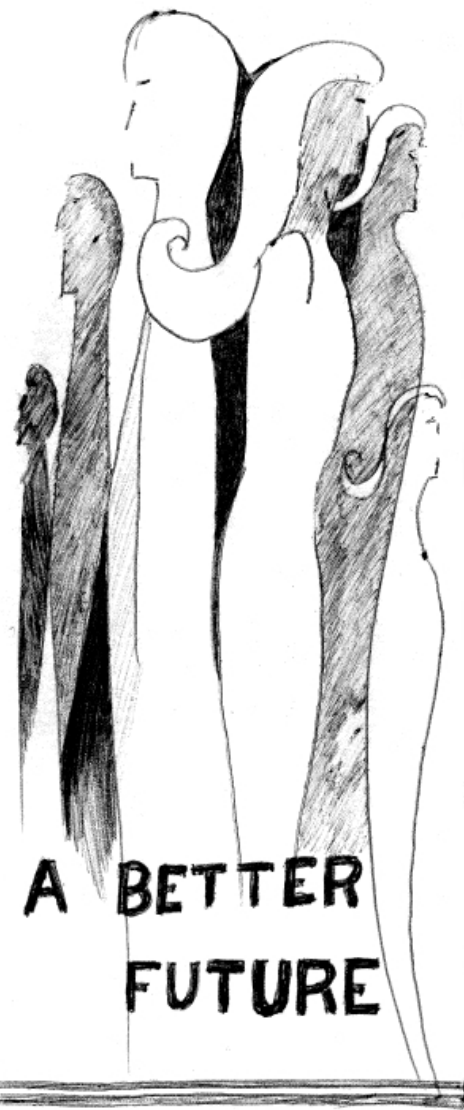
★ Send your organization's name and a statement of unity to MIM(Prisons). Your statement can explain what the united front principles mean to your organization, how they relate to your work, why they are important, etc.

★ Develop peace and unity between factions where you are at on the basis of opposing oppression of all prisoners and oppressed people in general. Campaign around the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity.

★ 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.

# UNITED TOGETHER



Cut on the dotted line to make a bookmark/flyer about the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP).

We need more UFPP artwork the shape of this column (approx. 8" x 2.5") for future ULKs.

Send your artwork and UFPP inquiries to:  
MIM(Prisons)  
PO Box 40799  
San Francisco, CA 94140

... Continued from p. 1 ...2018 Survey

greatly between prisons, from less than 1% to a maximum of 100% where working is mandatory. Of those who do work, most are engaged in work related to maintaining the prison itself.

### What do prisoners do?

The pie chart shows results from our survey showing at least 63% of prisoners engaged in prison maintenance. There is a significant "Other" category that may or may not fall into prison maintenance. While our survey results so far show 25% of prisoners working in agriculture or industry, this does not correspond with other information available. UNICOR, the state-run industries for the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), accounts for less than 7% of those held by the BOP. Yet UNICOR is the biggest user of prisoners in the country, with half the revenue of all other state-run industries combined. Meanwhile the three biggest prison states only use 2-6% of their prison population in their state-run industries.

While our results confirmed a majority working in maintenance of prisons, we believe this to be greatly underestimated and will work to refine our figures.

### How much are prisoners paid?

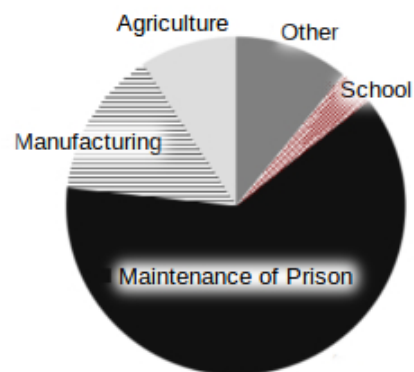
Working prisoners mostly fall into two categories: prison maintenance and state-owned industries. The latter generally offers higher wages. Below are averages for all U.S. prisons from a Prison Policy Initiative survey of state agencies(2):

maintenance		industries	
low	high	low	high
\$0.14	\$0.63	\$0.33	\$1.41

Our statistical analysis of low and high wages by state matched up quite closely with the Prison Policy Initiative survey, with many states being right on. This helped us confirm the numbers reported by our readers, and substantiates the Prison Policy Initiative data set, which covers every state, and comes from state sources.

From our data we can say that almost half of prisoners who work in the United States make \$0.00. Generally in lieu of pay, 43% of jobs in our survey offer credits of some sort (usually promising time off their sentence). Though states like Texas are notorious for these credits being meaningless or not applied. About 11% of prisoners who work do so for neither pay nor even the promise of credits, according to our preliminary results.

### U.S. Prison Labor Assignments



### Who do prisoners work for?

**The state.** The portion of prisoners working for private industries is very small. We've long been frustrated with the outdated, self-referential, or complete lack of citations used by most when writing about private companies using prison labor.(3) Our initial results only returned 4.3% of prison jobs being attributed to a private company, and of those who produce a product, 1.8% being sold to private companies. While we will continue to tally and interpret our results, these are in the ball park of what we can infer from a literature search of what is going on in prisons across the United States.

As John Pfaff pointed out in his book *Locked In*, "Public revenue and public-sector union lobbying are far more important [financial and political engines behind prison growth]." (see p. 18) These state prison industries are becoming sources of revenue for state budgets. This could be worse than private corporations lobbying for more imprisonment. It's the very state that decides policy that is directly benefiting financially.

### A U.S. Proletariat?

Of all the so-called "workers" in the United States, prisoners, along with non-citizen migrants, are some of the only people who face working conditions comparable to the Third World. OSHA has no real ability to enforce in prisons, and in some cases prisoners do hazardous jobs like recycling electronics or the tough field work, that many migrants perform. A recent exposé of a "Christian Alcoholics & Addicts in Recovery (CAAIR)" program in Oklahoma documented that prisoners were promised drug treatment but when they joined the program were forced to work in chicken processing plants. The prisoners suffered gnarled hands, acid burns, injuries from machines and serious bacterial infections.(4) While this is only a tiny minority of prisoners, the fact that they are susceptible to such conditions does speak to the closeness this class

*Continued on next page...*



... Continued from previous page

### ...2018 Survey

of people is to the Third World proletariat.

While at first glance the pay rates above clearly put U.S. prisoners with full time jobs in the exploited classes, we must consider that by default prisoners' material needs are covered by the state. However, there are still some basic needs that are not covered in many prisons. Many prisoners face conditions with insufficient food, exorbitant co-pays for medical care, and a requirement to purchase hygiene items, educational materials and other basic necessities. And for the lumpen who don't have money in the bank or families who can cover these needs, pay for work in prison is essential.

### Labor Subsidizes State Budgets

But even where prisoners are expected to pay for these basic necessities and are not paid enough to cover the costs, we don't find net profit to the state. In spite of prisoners' work, facilities are still run at a huge financial loss to the state, and profits from prisoner labor are going to subsidize the state budget. Sure lots of individual guards and other prison staff are making good money, and corporations are also cashing in by selling products to the prison and to prisoners. But none of this is coming from prisoner labor. Prisoner labor is just helping to cut the costs a bit for the state. Below we lay out our calculations on this question.

Ultimately, we're talking about a criminal injustice system that costs \$80 billion a year. There are profits from the 4.3% of prisoners who work for private industries. But most of the revenue comes from state-run prison industries. These state-run industries bring in a revenue of \$1.5 billion a year.(5) At a generous profit rate of 10%, that would be

\$150 million in net gain, or 0.2% of costs. Because so many prisoners aren't paid or are paid very low wages, we could even double that profit rate and still have a very small gain relative to the cost of prisons.

Another way to look at this calculation is to consider the costs to house one prisoner compared to the potential revenue they generate when working full time. It costs about \$29k/yr to house a Federal prisoner. If these prisoners are leased out to private companies for \$10/hr and the state keeps all the money, the state only makes about \$20k,

still losing money on the deal. Obviously, when the state undercharges for labor, private companies can make a profit. But that profit is subsidized by the state, which has to pay for prisoners' housing and food, and the greatest expense is actually in how to keep people locked inside.

We can also calculate savings to the state from prisoner labor using our survey numbers. We chose \$10 per hour below as a rough compromise between the Federal minimum wage, and a typical CO's hourly

*Continued on p. 7...*

... Continued from p. 1

### ...Production

*eligible to be hired as firefighters, five years after their release."*

*"In Washington, with a \$1.5 billion apple crop at risk, state officials ordered prisoners into the orchards in November 2011."*

I've been to prison 7 times in 4 states and I have 20 years done. I'm on this side where you can actually see this kind of stuff happening from day to day. They do illegal stuff all the time to cover up stuff, and freeworld people never hear this because they try to keep it all on this side of the fence.

*"Colorado has used prison labor on private farms since 2005, when the state enacted stricter immigration laws. Around 100 female prisoners from La Vista Correctional Facility are employed weeding, picking and packing onions and pumpkins under the supervision of prison guards. The prisoners receive \$9.60 an hour, of which about \$5.60 goes to the state. At least 10 Colorado farmers use prison labor..."*

*"In Arizona, Wilcox-based Eurofresh Farms employs around 400 prisoners through an Arizona Corrections Industries program. The prisoners are paid close to minimum wage. ...*

*"Florida is another state that has put its prisoners to work on farms, including a program that began in 2009 which uses work crews from the Berrydale Forestry Camp on a 650-acre publicly-funded farm at the University of Florida's West Florida Research and Education Center. The prisoners grow collards, cabbage and turnips in the winter, while the spring crop yields snap peas, corn and tomatoes."*

*"The arrangement provides the University with agricultural research and supplies vegetables for prisoners' meals. In 2010 the farm program resulted in \$192,000 in food cost savings at the prison and saved the University \$75,000 money that otherwise would have been spent on paid staff."*

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This letter is interesting in that it provides an array of examples of what prisoners are doing in their

jobs. Just looking at agriculture, the examples from Texas and Florida involve prisoners producing the food they eat. This is not economic exploitation. But what are the conditions that they have to work under? We would support prisoners fighting for proper sun protection and water breaks at such a job, but do not see a good economic reason to oppose working to produce food for one's own population.

In the other scenarios, the prisoners are producing food for private companies, who are profiting off the sale of their product. In the Colorado example prisoners are being "paid" \$9.60, which is well over the U.S. minimum wage, and well over the average value of labor.(2) So if the prisoner actually received all that money, they would be participating in the exploitation of the Third World proletariat, receiving superwages. This becomes more true when you consider that the prisoner has food and housing provided.

In reality, the Colorado prisoners receive less than half of the wage, which is less than minimum wage. Arizona prisoners also receive minimum wage. This puts them near the average value of labor. If they were paid, say, \$2 per hour, then we could say they are clearly making less than the average value of their labor and being economically exploited.

By virtue of being in the heart of empire, we are all benefiting from the economic system of imperialism. Even to some extent most U.S. prisoners are better off, compared to life in the Third World. It is this reality that makes battles over wages and labor organizing in general rarely a progressive battle in this country. It is only when talking about populations who do not enjoy full citizenship rights, such as prisoners and migrants, that we can even consider progressive wage battles.■

Notes:

1. David Reutter, 15 May 2012, Prison Slave Labor Replaces Freeworld Workers in Down Economy, Prison Legal News, May 2012, page 1.

2. Calculated on 2016 data at approximately \$7.70 per hour.

### ON "OBJECTIVE" REPORTING

ULK 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 ULK. 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.

## Notes on Advancing the Struggle Inside: Prison Labor

by el Independista of USW  
June 2018

Prison labor is an interesting concept. Compared to the enormous expenditures (financial, mental, physical, etc.) the rewards/benefits of prison industrial labor are trivial in the extreme.

Excluding coveted "prison industry" posts, over 95% of prisoners are employed in prison maintenance, construction, administrative/educational labor). [This figure may be accurate in this comrade's state. Our preliminary results across 22 systems in the U.S. show almost 25% working in manufacturing and agriculture. -- Editor] Indeed, such work does prove beneficial (in the case of kitchen labor -- invaluable) to prison operations. Kitchen work notwithstanding, the sum total of benefits is small. So why do prisons use prisoner labor? Especially considering it does little to lessen the economic burden of penal institutions on society. There are two plausible answers to this question. Surprisingly, neither is directly linked to financial interests.

In the first place, prisoners are employed to reinforce socially acceptable behavior and occupational patterns (by capitalistic standards). While this may *sound* perfectly justifiable and even admirable; truth is, it is far less altruistic. Reinforcement of socially accepted roles is an integral aspect of the subjection-manipulation cycle (see *ULK 52* -- "An Invaluable Resource?" And *ULK 54* -- "The Adaption of Capitalistic Controls"), which through an invasive, subtle and constant life-long indoctrination, endeavors to create a homogeneous populace. Prison labor is meant to be a control for inducing conformity in prison which later translates to the same out in society. An objective achieved through subjection (mandatory labor) and manipulation (rewards or reprimands, restrictions and sanctions) in a never-ending cyclic process. A process similar to Pablo Escobar's approach to business -- plata o plomo (silver or lead). In simple terms, accept my favor or risk my displeasure. This reality is paralleled throughout society. Contribute to capitalism, strive to become a capitalist, or experience privations, marginalization, ostracization, imprisonment or worse. In a way, prison labor is a form or reeducation, along capitalist lines.

In the second place, labor in prison provides an added buffer against unrest and radical organization among prisoners. Prisoners structure their days around their jobs, giving it importance and prominence in their daily lives. Many would feel lost at sea,

wayward, direction-less without it. It gives the prisoner a focal point distinct from and meaningless to their best interests -- toppling the penal system. Distracted by menial duties, most prisoners never bother to contemplate their plight, subjection/manipulation, origins of their situation and the oppression, which made it all possible (eventual?); not even mentioning the oppressors who become an abstract "them."

As such, prison labor does four important things for capitalism:

1. Reeducates deviants (self-determinants)
2. Reinforces classism
3. Drains on and distracts prisoner intellect
4. Impedes any meaningful development (mental, physical, political and social)

Prisons are gargantuan popular control systems. Prison labor is a system within a system created for the advancement of a thriving capitalist state -- inequality and an overabundance of commodities. Considering how many prisoners work prison jobs, join society's labor force and become re-acclimated to capitalist control, the effectiveness of prison labor as a process is quite horrifying. Ignorance is a capitalist's bliss. Knowledge is a revolutionary's power. Understanding reality as it confronts us is the first step to dismantling the penal institute as a whole.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** The point that much prison labor is not actually saving operating costs is an important piece to our analysis that we have yet to quantify. According to our survey, some 460,000 prisoners are working in prison maintenance jobs in the state and federal systems at a median of 150 hours per month. To hire that work out at \$10/hr would cost around \$9 billion, or what would amount to 10% of the money spent on the criminal injustice system.(see our calculations and explanation in the summary article on the our 2018 prisoner labor survey, p. 1)

However, it is not uncommon for state-funded programs to hire more people than they need to complete a job, because profit is not the motive. And it makes sense to pay prisoners for attending schooling and other programming activities when the motivations above are considered. This is another perspective on prisons as social control. Socialist states have and will also use prisons to shape populations in a certain direction. Of course, the state apparatus serves the economic system. In socialism, prisons combat classism. In capitalism, they reinforce it.■

## Pennsylvania Spends on Prison, Cuts Services

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
June 2017

I want to write about my thoughts on prison reform and rehabilitation specifically in the state of Pennsylvania. Prison reform? Criminal "justice" reform? As long as the criminal justice system and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PDOC) remain lucrative industries those things will never happen!

To have any type of reform, I believe people should be held accountable for their misconduct (judges, prosecutors, governors, secretary of corrections, correctional officers, etc.) but that's never the case in Pennsylvania. Here in Pennsylvania, these rural areas in particular, the PDOC is a refuge for the unqualified and uneducated people who don't desire anything better for themselves.

Pennsylvania's state budget is crumbling due to the amount of overtime received by COs and to the excess state employees hired in the PDOC. Governor Wolf announced that he wanted to lay off 900 unneeded state employees and close a few jails because of the budget strain. However, he was opposed (almost violently) by the rural population. Their argument wasn't about the "criminals" that could possibly go free; they were concerned about not finding employment anywhere else. Overwhelmed, Wolf decided to only close one prison (which wasn't in a rural area) and retain the state employees (COs).

Instead of doing what he originally saw fit to do, Wolf was forced to cut back on the Meals on Wheels program, raise the state tax, and allow the sale of alcohol on Sundays amongst other things. As you would figure, all of those cutbacks didn't even begin to alleviate the budgetary stress. Why? Because those things weren't issues.

The fact still exist that there are too many state prison officials being hired and Pennsylvania needs to cut back on this senseless hiring, but Gov. Wolf was pretty much bullied out of action. All of this factors into the lack of prison and criminal justice reform, for if there was someone who could educate the tax payers who honestly believe that their "hard earned" dollars are "keeping their community safe" instead of funding a correctional officer's workers' compensation scam, educate them about where their money is actually going and what needs to

*Continued on next page...*

... Continued from p. 4 ...**2018 Survey**

wage. In reality, no U.S. citizens would work maintaining prisons for minimum wage. And a negligible number of COs would bring themselves to do something "for" prisoners, such as cleaning their showers. If non-prisoners were needed to maintain prison facilities, we suspect only migrant workers would be up for this task.

Another consideration is that jobs in prison are mostly used to keep people busy (i.e. keep people not reading, and not organizing). If paying "freeworld" people to do these jobs, they would certainly hire many fewer employees than they have prisoners doing the same tasks.

These calculations are primarily to demonstrate magnitude, not actual budget projections.

62% of 800 thousand prisoners (percentage with state-run jobs) = 496 thousand prisoner workers  
150 hours/mo work on average \* 12 months of work = 1,800 hours of work  
496 thousand \* 1,800 \* \$10/hr = \$8.9 billion in savings

So we estimate that hiring non-prisoners to do the work that prisoners currently do would cost about \$8.9 billion, which adds up to an additional 10% of the overall costs of running prisons. That's a sizeable increase in costs, but prisons are still far from profitable. We can add the two numbers above together

to estimate the total earnings + savings to the state from using prisoner labor. That total is still less than \$10 billion. Bottom line: the state is still losing \$80 billion a year, they're just saving at most \$9 billion by having prisoners work and earning back another \$150 million or so of that \$80 billion, through exploitation.

Those arguing that a massive prison labor strike will shut down the prisons may be correct in the short term, to the extent that some prisons which rely heavily on prison labor will not be able to immediately respond. But that certainly doesn't mean prisoners being released. More likely it means a complete lockdown and round-the-clock johnnies. And historically states have been quite willing to pour money into the criminal injustice system, so covering a 10% increase in costs is not that far-fetched. On the other hand, states are even more willing to cut services to prisoners to save money. So the requirement to hire outside staff instead of using prisoner labor could just as likely lead to even further cuts in services to prisoners.

### History of Prison Labor in U.S.

In 1880, more than 10,000 New Afrikans worked in mines, fields and work camps as part of the convict lease system in the South. This was shortly after the creation of the 13th Amendment, and eased the transition for many industries which made use of this prison labor. In the North prison industries were experimented with around this time, but imprisonment costs prevented them from

being profitable. And in response labor unions began opposing the use of prison labor more and more. By the Great Depression, opposition was stronger and the government banned the use of prison labor for public works projects.(5)

In 1934, the Federal Prison Industries, or UNICOR, was formed as a way to utilize prison labor for rehabilitation and state interests without competing with private industry. This protection for private industry was ensured with strict restrictions on UNICOR including limiting them to selling only to the states. This has maintained the primary form of what might be considered productive labor in U.S. prisons. UNICOR does function as a corporation aiming to increase profits, despite its tight relationship to the state. While state agencies used to have to buy from UNICOR, this is no longer the case, making it fit better into Marx's definition of productive labor. Those running the prisons for the state, whether public employees or prisoners preparing meals, would not fall into what Marx called productive labor because neither are employed by capital.

Starting in the 1970s, there has been legislation to loosen restrictions on prison labor use by private industry.(5) (see Alaska House Bill 171 this year) However, we could not find in our research or our survey any substantiation to claims of a vast, or growing, private employment of prisoners in the United States.

... Continued from previous page ...**PA**

be done. If a majority of the tax payers knew the truth about their money, about the funding of our oppression, suppression and torture, I believe that they would be more inclined to demand criminal justice and prison reform.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This writer provides a good exposure of the interest that prison guard unions and other prison employees have in maintaining or increasing the number of imprisoned people and the number of prisons in the United States. And also the political power these workers can exert when their jobs are threatened.

But we have to put this information in a larger context. Prisons are a very small part of state budgets, so it's not the CO overtime causing the Pennsylvania budget to crumble. In the Pennsylvania 2016-2017 budget, 8% went towards prisons.(1) It is good that the budget crisis in Pennsylvania is leading to considerations of closing prisons, but the response by COs and others benefiting from jobs with the prisons is the same we see across

the country. Nonetheless, we need to be honest that shutting down a few prisons won't make much of a dent in the state budget.

While we would also like to think that people faced with information about oppression and torture would oppose it, we don't think the terrible conditions in Amerikan prisons are such a big secret. Many Amerikans are vocal in calling for even worse conditions, arguing that prisoners deserve whatever happens to them. And there is little outrage when stories of corruption among prison guards come out. The financial rewards all Amerikans are getting by living here within this wealthy imperialist country has created a population that supports imperialism and its criminal injustice system. While the oppressed nations within U.S. borders do generally come down against the oppression and corruption, the Amerikkkan nation, especially in rural counties, can be counted on to throw its support behind the system.■

Note: Penn Live, July 8, 2016. PA spends more on prisons than colleges, report says.

### The Future of Prison Labor

The key to all of these battles is keeping a focus on the national liberation struggles that must be at the forefront of any revolutionary movement today. There are Amerikan labor organizers who would like to use the prisoner labor movement to demand even higher wages for the labor aristocracy. These organizers don't want low-paid prisoners to replace high-paid petty bourgeois workers. This might seem like a great opportunity for an alliance, but the interests of the labor aristocracy is very much counter to national liberation. They are the mass base behind the prison craze. They would be happy to see prisoners rot in their cells. It's not higher pay for prisoners that they want, it's higher pay for their class that the labor aristocracy wants. The prison movement is intricately tied up in the anti-colonial battle, by the very nature of prisons. And to move the needle towards real progress for humynity, we must reinforce this tie in all of our work. This means we can't allow the labor aristocracy to co-opt battles for prisoner workers' rights and wages.

*Continued on p. 17...*

# Marxist Economics and Amerikan Mass Incarceration: Revisiting ULK 8

by MIM(Prisons)  
June 2018

While many euro-Amerikans languish and suffer in U.\$. prisons, it is those whose land the Amerikans seized and occupy, and those the Amerikans enslaved and exploited, who disproportionately rot here. The First World lumpen are an excess population, that imperialism has limited use for.

One solution to this problem has been using the lumpen to distribute and consume narcotics. Narcotics, and the drug game, pacify the lowest classes of the internal semi-colonies, by providing income and distracting drama, while circulating capital.(1) Of course, rich Amerikans play a much larger role in propping up drug sales.

Another solution to the excess population has been mass incarceration. Prisons serve as a tool of social control; a place to put the rebellious populations that once spawned organizations like the Black Panther Party and Young Lords Party. Meanwhile, imprisonment serves to drain the resources of the internal semi-colonies in numerous ways.(2) This reinforces their colonial status in relation to the Amerikan empire. As an institution, mass incarceration serves as an outlet at home for the racist ideology that imperialism requires from its populace for operations abroad. The criminal injustice system sanitizes national oppression under the banner of "law and order," reducing the more open manifestations of the national contradiction within the metropole that brought about the recognition of the need for national liberation in the 1960s and 1970s.(3)

The following are excerpts from a Minnesota comrade's response to "MIM(Prisons) on U.\$. Prison Economy", originally published in *ULK 8* currently available in the "13th Amendment Study Pack"(updated 8/10/2017).

*"In as much as I agree with MIM's positions in this study pack, I find it beyond the pale of relevance in arguing over whether the conditions we now exist under are in fact slavery or exploitation or rather oppression that revolves around laws devised to ensure that the first class's social, political and economic control is maintained. Mass incarceration might be all of those above or none at all, to those of us in the struggle. What we all can agree on is that mass incarceration is a machine being used to exterminate, as the imperialists see us, the undesirable sub-underclass.*

*"...Prisons are being used to remove black and brown males at their prime ages of producing children, going to college, and gaining meaningful vocational training. This*

*loss of virulent males in our communities does more than weaken them. It removes from the female an eligible male and acts no different than sterilization. Instead of incinerators or gas chambers, we are being nurtured, domesticated, doped, and fed carcinogens. Moreover, prisons have provided us with disease-ridden environments, poor diets, minimum ambulatory exercise, and poor air and water. Lastly, the removal of cognitive social stimuli necessary for the maturation of social skills has created an underdeveloped antisocial human being lacking in compassion and individuality.*

*"...the reason that the slavery or exploitation argument doesn't resonate for those of us who are on the front line, I think, is because it's muted by the point that incarceration is an institution created by the oppressor. It will have vestiges of slavery, exploitation, and social control within it. To what degree? is arguable."*

So far we have no disagreements with this comrade. And while we have long upheld this point to be important for our understanding of mass incarceration in the United States and how to fight it, we do recognize that the slavery analogy will resonate with the masses on an emotional level. The comrade later goes on to reinforce our position:

*"Eradication is where slavery and mass incarceration split. Although slaves were punished and victims of social control, they had value and were not eradicated."*

A crass example of this was exposed last month when Kern County pigs turned on one of their own and released a video of Chief Pig Donny Youngblood stating that it's cheaper to kill someone being held by the state than to wound them. These are state bureaucracies, with pressure to cut budgets. While keeping prison beds full is in the interest of the unions, it is not in the immediate financial interest of the state overall.

Whereas we agree with this comrade when they discuss the role of convict leasing in funding southern economies shortly after the creation of the 13th Amendment, we disagree with the analogy to funding rural white communities today.

*"The slave, instead of producing crops and performing other trades on the plantation is now a source of work... So to insist states aren't benefactors of mass incarceration is incredulous. Labor aristocrats and the imperialist first class, who are majority Caucasian males, have disproportionately benefited."*

The difference is a key point in Marxism, and understanding the imperialist economy today. That the existence of millions of

prisoners in the United States creates jobs for labor aristocrats is very different from being a slave, whose labor is exploited. And the difference is that the wealth to pay the white (or otherwise) prison staff is coming from the exploitation of the Third World proletariat. And the economy around incarceration is just one way that the state moves those superprofits around and into the pockets of the everyday Amerikan. The "prisoner-as-slave" narrative risks erasing the important role of this imperialist exploitation.

Another reason why we must be precise in our explanation is the history of white labor unions in this country in undermining the liberation struggles of the internal semi-colonies. Hitching the struggle of prisoners to that of the Amerikan labor movement is not a way to boost the cause. It is a way to subordinate it to an enemy cause -- that of Amerikan labor.

There is a cabal of Amerikan labor organizers on the outside that are pushing their agenda to the forefront of the prison movement. Their involvement in this issue goes back well over a century and their position has not changed. It is a battle between the Amerikan labor aristocracy and the Amerikan bourgeoisie over super-profits extracted from the Third World. In this case the labor aristocracy sees that prisoners working for little to no wages could cut into the jobs available to their class that offer the benefit of surplus value extraction from other nations. Generally the labor aristocracy position has won out, keeping the opportunities for real profiteering from prison labor very limited in this country. But that is not to say that exploitation of prison labor could not arise, particularly in a severe economic crisis as Third World countries delink from the empire forcing it to look inward to keep profits cycling.

While our previous attempt to tackle this subject may have come across as academic Marxist analysis, we hope to do better moving forward to push the line that the prison movement needs to be tied to the anti-colonial, national liberation struggles both inside and outside the United States. And that these struggles aim to liberate whole nations from the United States, and ultimately put an end to Amerikanism. Selling those struggles out to the interests of the Amerikan labor movement will not serve the interests of the First World lumpen. ■

## Notes:

1. See "Drugs, Money and Individualism in U.\$. Prison Movement" and other articles in *ULK 59*
2. One study estimated the costs of incarceration at almost \$1 trillion annually, with most of those costs placed on the prisoners, their families and communities. see "MIM(Prisons) on U.\$. Prison Economy -- 2018 update, February 2018, Under Lock & Key 60.
3. "New York Prisoners Report on Labor and Economics, May 2009, Under Lock & Key Issue 8



# The Politics and Economics of Mass Incarceration

by USW11 of United Struggle from Within  
April 2018

Throughout the numerous issues of *Under Lock & Key (ULK)*, we have read countless articles detailing the unjust and inhumane conditions of imprisonment across U.S. prisons and jails. Many of these stories, and the compelling analyses they entail, help shape and develop our political consciousness. From the hunger strikes in California to the rampant human rights violations in Texas on to the USW-led countrywide grievance campaign, through the pages of *ULK*, we have shared our organizing struggles, the successes and setbacks. As a result, our clarity regarding the illegitimacy of the U.S. criminal (in)justice system has sharpened tremendously.

And yet, there are some political and economic dimensions of our imprisonment that seem to evade our critical gaze. It is not enough that we become familiar with each others' stories behind the walls. At some point, we must move toward relating our collective organizing experiences in prison to much broader struggles beyond prison. To this end, the anti-prison movement(1) is but a necessary phase of national liberation struggles that has serious implications for anti-imperialism. And in order for the anti-prison movement to advance we must analyze all sides of the mass incarceration question.

Many of us already understand that prisons function as tools of social control. We also recognize that U.S. prisons are disproportionately packed with oppressed nation lumpen, ostensibly because these groups organized and led national liberation movements during the late-1960s to mid-70s. After these movements succumbed to repression from U.S. reactionary forces (COINTELPRO), the U.S. prison population rose dramatically and then exploded, resulting in what we know today as mass incarceration.(2) Thus, we see, in a very narrow way, the basis for why U.S. prisons serve in neutralizing the existential threat posed by oppressed nation lumpen.

But understanding the historical basis of mass incarceration is only one part of the question. The other part is determining how the systematic imprisonment of oppressed nation lumpen has developed over time, and exploring its impact throughout that process. Because while the question of mass incarceration may seem as formulaic as "national oppression makes necessary the institutions of social control," the reality is this question is a bit more involved than mere physical imprisonment.

The latter point in no way opposes the analysis that the primary purpose of mass incarceration is to deter oppressed nation lumpen from revolutionary organizing. In fact, the political and economic dimensions of mass incarceration described and analyzed later in this article function in the same capacity as prison bars — in some instances, the bonds of poverty and systemic marginalization, or the racist and white-supremacist ideology that criminalizes and stigmatizes oppressed nation lumpen are just as strong as the physical bonds of imprisonment. If oppressed nation communities, particularly lumpen communities, are kept in a perpetual state of destabilization, disorganization, and distraction, then these groups will find it that much harder to effectively organize against a status quo that oppresses them.

The point of this article is thus to widen the panorama of our understanding, to take in those political and economic dimensions of mass incarceration that too often go unnoticed and unexamined, but are nonetheless important in determining the line and strategy necessary to advance the anti-prison movement.

## Partial Integration Set the Table for Mass Incarceration

As pointed out above, mass incarceration deters oppressed nation lumpen from revolutionary organizing. But what does this analysis really mean in today's context of the national question? How does the prevention of oppressed nation lumpen from organizing for national liberation impact the national contradiction; that is, the contradiction between the Euro-American oppressor nation-state and the U.S. internal oppressed nations and semi-colonies?

The lumpen-driven liberation movements of past were, in part, strong rebukes against the integrationist Civil Rights movement (which of course was led by the bourgeoisie/petty-bourgeoisie of oppressed nations). Thus we see the partial integration agenda as an alliance and compromise between the Euro-American oppressor nation-state (its ruling class) and the comprador bourgeoisie of oppressed nations. It is meant to answer the national question set forth by the earlier protest movements (revolutionary and progressive) of oppressed nations, on one hand, and to ease tensions inherent in the national contradiction, on the other hand.

In exchange for open access to political power and personal wealth, the comprador

bourgeoisie was tasked with keeping their lumpen communities in check. To this point, it was thought that if Black and Brown faces ruled over Black and Brown places, then much of the radical protest and unrest that characterized the period between the mid-60s to mid-70s would be quelled.

This is the very premise of identity politics, and, as Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor aptly notes: electing leaders of oppressed nations into political office does not change the dire material and socioeconomic circumstances of the communities they represent.(3) In her book, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, Taylor goes on to describe the failure of partial integration (and identity politics) with respect to the New Afrikan nation,(4) contending:

*"The pursuit of Black electoral power became one of the principal strategies that emerged from the Black Power era. Clearly it has been successful for some. But the continuing crises for Black people, from under-resourced schools to police murder, expose the extreme limitations of that strategy. The ascendance of Black electoral politics also dramatizes how class differences can lead to different political strategies in the fight for Black liberation. There have always been class differences among [New Afrikans], but this is the first time those class differences have been expressed in the form of a minority of Blacks wielding significant political power and authority over the majority of Black lives."*(5)

Here we see Taylor not only describe the inability of partial integration to remedy the plight of the entire New Afrikan nation and its communities, she also articulates very precisely the internal class divisions of New Afrika brought to light by such an opportunistic agenda, which serves to enforce and maintain semi-colonialism. There is a reason why the Euro-American oppressor nation-state allied with the comprador bourgeoisie, as their interests were (and are) clearly more aligned than conflicting, given the circumstances. Where the bourgeois / petty-bourgeois integrationists wanted access to capitalist society, the lumpen and some sections of the working class of oppressed nations saw their future in their liberation from U.S. imperialist society — two very different "political strategies" reflective of somewhat contentious "class differences."

Furthermore, Taylor highlights the moral bankruptcy of partial integration (and identity politics) with the contemporary lesson of Freddie Gray's tragic murder and the Baltimore uprising that followed. She explains, "when a Black mayor, governing a

*Continued on next page...*

... Continued from prev. page ...**Politics**

largely Black city, aids in the mobilization of a military unit led by a Black woman to suppress a Black rebellion, we are in a new period of the Black freedom struggle."(6) This "new period" that Taylor speaks of is nothing more than good-ole neo-colonialism.

To elaborate further, an understanding of the Baltimore uprising, for example, cannot be reduced down to a single incident of police murder. Let's be clear, New Afrikan lumpen (and youth) took to the streets of Baltimore in protest and frustration of conditions that had been festering for years – conditions that have only grown worse since the end of the "Black Power era." Obviously, the political strategy of identity politics (i.e. "the pursuit of Black electoral power") has not led to "Black liberation." Instead it has resulted in an intensification of class tensions internal to the U.\$. oppressed nation (in this case, New Afrika), as well as increased state repression of oppressed nation lumpen.

This latter point is evidenced by the support of policies from the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) that target, disrupt, and imprison oppressed nation communities (lumpen communities).(7) At the same time that these communities struggled under the weight of economic divestment and merciless marginalization, conditions which in many respects worsened under the political leadership of the comprador bourgeoisie, the drug trade opened up, providing a precarious means of survival. Predictably, as "crime"(8) increased so too did the creation and implementation of criminal civil legislation that fueled mass incarceration. To really get a sense of the true interests of the comprador bourgeoisie of oppressed nations, we only need to look at the positions taken by the CBC, the so-called champions of freedom, equality, and justice, which "cosponsored conservative law-and-order politics out of not political weakness but entrenchment in Beltway politics."(9) It is clear that partial integration has been "successful for some," but it is equally apparent who the victims of this opportunistic agenda have been.

What is often missed in any serious and sober analysis of the CBC (or any other political org. representative of the comprador bourgeoisie) is the legitimacy it bestows upon the prison house of nations: U.\$. imperialist society. This legitimacy isn't some figment of imagination, but a material reality expressed primarily in the class-nation alliance signified by the partial integration agenda. Dialectically, while the comprador bourgeoisie is granted the privileges of "whiteness," access to political and economic power, the lumpen and some

sections of the working class of oppressed nations are deemed superfluous (not necessary) for the production and reproduction of U.\$. imperialist society. Of course, the election of more members of oppressed nations into office goes a long way in maintaining the facade that the United States is a free and open society that respects and upholds the rights and liberties of its citizenry. However, identity politics will never obscure the sacrificial zones within U.\$. society — South and Westside Chicago, Eastside Baltimore, Compton and South Central and East Los Angeles, and many more deprived urban lumpen areas — maintained and, in many cases, made worse by partial integration.

Unfortunately, this is where we find the oppressed nation lumpen today on the national question, held hostage by a set of identity politics complicit in its further marginalization and oppression.

### Politics of Mass Incarceration

In discussing the failure of partial integration to effectively improve the material and socioeconomic life of the entire oppressed nation, we can better appreciate the **extreme limitations** of such an anemic political strategy that is identity politics. But if the legitimacy that partial integration (and identity politics) provides U.\$. society can only go so far in actually pacifying oppressed nation lumpen, then by what other means and methods are these superfluous groups controlled? In the next two sections, we will explore and analyze this question.

Racism and white supremacy are constant ideological threads woven throughout the founding and development of U.\$. society. In each era, be it slavery, segregation, or mass incarceration today, the primary function of this political ideology is to rationalize and legitimate the oppression and/or exploitation of colonized peoples, which throughout these different eras invariably involved employing particular methods of social control against these peoples or specific groups thereof.

Now, of course, we cannot compare the fundamental nature of slavery with that of mass incarceration. And to be clear, this is not the point of this particular section. It should be obvious to the casual ULK reader that where the slave performed an essential economic role and was therein exploited and oppressed, oppressed nation lumpen have no role within the current socioeconomic order of U.\$. society, as it is systematically denied access to it. The point, however, is to show how the ideological forces of racism and white supremacy, while they have assumed different

forms depending on the historical era, are mobilized in service of the status quo. It is in this sense that political motivations underpin the system of mass incarceration. And as we will see in this section, these motivations are historically tied to the oppression and/or exploitation of U.\$. internal oppressed nations and semi-colonies.

To be sure, the need to control oppressed nations has always been a paramount concern of the oppressor (settler) nation since settler-colonialism. During the era of slavery, slave codes were implemented to ensure that slaves were held in check, while slave patrols were formed to enforce these measures. We see here the emergence of the modern U.\$. criminal (in)justice system in its nascent form, with its proto-police and proto-criminal laws. But it wasn't until after the abolition of slavery that we find express political motivations to criminalize oppressed nations. For Angela Y. Davis,

*"Race [nation] has always played a central role in constructing presumptions of criminality ... former slave states passed new legislation revising the slave codes in order to regulate the behavior of free blacks in ways similar to those that had existed during slavery. The new Black Codes proscribed a range of actions ... that were criminalized only when the person charged was black."(10)*

While the Black Codes were created in large part to control New Afrikan labor for continued exploitation, we are able to see the formation of policies and policing designed for the specific purpose of repressing oppressed nations. As a side note, irony doesn't begin to describe the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment, meant to abolish slavery, to disestablish one system of oppression only to provide for the legal and political basis for another system of oppression - convict lease labor.

Furthermore, Davis observes that, "The racialization of crime – the tendency to 'impute crime to color' ... did not wither away as the country became increasingly removed from slavery. Proof that crime continues to be imputed to color resides in the many evocations of 'racial profiling' in our time."(11) In this sense, oppressed nation lumpen criminality under conditions of mass incarceration is analogous to Afrikan "inferiority" or First Nation "savagery" under conditions of settler-colonialism. In both instances, there are narratives, informed by racism and white supremacy, which serve the continued functioning of the status quo.

Given that the criminalization of oppressed nations is not some modern

*Continued on next page...*

... Continued from prev, page **...Politics**

phenomenon, but one that originated in the hystorical oppression and exploitation of oppressed nations, we now have a different angle from which to view mass incarceration. Part of this view involves recognizing that the criminal (in)justice system, law enforcement, and legislators are not neutral arbiters of justice or "law and order." These people and institutions are infected by racism and white supremacy and thus function to carry out ideological and political aims.

Therefore, it is important that we remain diligent in uncovering the many guises under which racism and white supremacy lurk and hide. This is no less significant today as it is in the cultural arena where reactionary ideas and ideologies are propagated and traded. To be more clear, when trying to rationalize why oppressed nation lumpen are imprisoned at disproportionate rates relative to similarly-situated Euro-Amerikans, arguments about lack of responsibility and no work ethic are tossed around as explanations. Mainstream media go even further by portraying and projecting stereotypes about oppressed nation lumpen (and youth), that is to say, stereotyping the dress, talk, and actions, which is really a subtle but sophisticated way of stigmatizing. Of course, this stigmatization goes on to construct a criminal archetype, which many of us see today in nearly every facet of U.S. media life.

All of these factors, taken into consideration together, shape the public conscience on "crime" and criminality, laying the groundwork for rationalizing the great disparities characteristic of the current criminal (in)justice system. Unsurprisingly, this propaganda has worked so effectively that even oppressed nation members find it hard to ignore. So where there should be unity on issues/incidences of national oppression, none exists, because the oppressed nation is divided, usually along class lines. Taylor strikes at the heart of the matter:

*"Blaming Black culture not only deflects investigation into the systemic causes of Black inequality but has also been widely absorbed by [New Afrikans] as well. Their acceptance of the dominant narrative that blames Blacks for their own oppression is one explanation for the delay in the development of a new Black movement."(12)*

This is certainly the plan of partial integration, to divide the oppressed nation against itself and thereby legitimize the marginalization and oppression of oppressed nation lumpen in the process. Naturally, this paralyzes the oppressed nation from acting on its right to self-determination, from pursuing liberation.

To frame this point another way, take a Chican@ business owner. This persyn has a business in a predominantly Chican@ lumpen community, despite residing in the suburbs. This business owner sees Chican@ youth hang out and skip school. Ey sees them engaged in questionable, possibly criminal activity. Add in the scenario that local media frames crime as a virtue of Chican@ lumpen youth on a nightly basis. And then say one day one of those Chican@ kids is killed by the police. How will the Chican@ business owner respond?

Before the era of mass incarceration, the overwhelming majority of the oppressed nation would have viewed this scenario for what it was: a police murder. Today, we cannot be so sure.

To sum up, the current criminal (in)justice system, law enforcements, etc. are unfair and unjust not because these institutions are biased against oppressed nations, but because the fundamental nature of society, the basis upon which these institutions are built and set in motion, is founded on the oppression of non-white peoples. We must remember that slavery was legal and segregation was held up as permissible by the highest courts in this stolen land. For us to view mass incarceration solely from the social control perspective undermines any appreciation for the urgency of anti-imperialism, for the need for a reinvigoration of U.S. national liberation struggles. We need to be more nuanced in our analysis because the system is nuanced in its marginalization and oppression of oppressed nation lumpen.

### Economics of Mass Incarceration

This nuance mentioned above is primarily played out on an economic plane. And there are many economic dimensions and impacts of mass incarceration that maintain a strangle hold on oppressed nation lumpen and communities.

We can explore how contact with the criminal (in)justice system can leave an oppressed nation member and eir family destitute, through fees, fines, and other forms of financial obligations. We can look at the impact of prisons located in rural communities, providing employment opportunities and economic stimulus. We could even investigate prison industries and how prisoner labor is utilized to offset the costs of incarceration. However, the point here is that there are many things to analyze, all of which, taken as a whole, disadvantage oppressed nation lumpen and their communities.

The most consequential impact of mass

incarceration is how it feeds the cycle of poverty and marginalization characteristic of lumpen communities. Basically, the criminalization / stigmatization of lumpen reinforces its material deprivation, which in turn nurtures conditions of criminal activity as a means of survival, further unleashing the repressive forces of the criminal (in)justice system, which proves or validates the criminalization / stigmatization of oppressed nation lumpen in the first place. Thus, oppressed nation lumpen are inarguably subjected doubly to the poverty and marginalization, on one hand, and to the relentless blows of national oppression, on the other hand.

Todd Clear, provost of Rutgers University – Newark, who specializes in the study of criminal justice, draws a stark picture of this cycle of crime and poverty that lumpen are subjected to:

*"A number of the men are gone at any time; they're locked up. And then the men that are there are not able to produce income, to support families, to support children, to buy goods, to make the neighborhood have economic activity, to support businesses ... the net effect of rates of incarceration is that the neighborhood has trouble adjusting. Neighborhoods where there's limited economic activity around the legitimate market are neighborhoods where you have a ripeness to grow illegitimate markets."(13)*

What Clear is depicting is not so much the fact that crimes take place in lumpen communities. Clear is emphasizing that criminogenic factors (factors that strongly tend to lead to criminal activity/inclination) are really a reflection of the lack of socioeconomic opportunities to social upward mobility. This is the essence that fuels the dynamic relationship between crime and poverty. What Clear fails to mention is that there are Euro-Amerikans who are in similarly-situated circumstances as oppressed nation lumpen but are more likely to escape them where oppressed nation lumpen are trapped. This is so for reasons already mentioned in the above sections.

Furthermore, not everyone in lumpen communities are imprisoned; in fact, most likely never see the inside of a jail or prison. But enough people do go away and stay away for a considerable period of time that the community is destabilized, and familial bonds are ruptured. When free, the imprisoned persyn from the lumpen community represented some sort of income, and not a liability weighing down a family, financially, morally, etc, already struggling to make ends meet. Enough of these families are part of the lumpen

*Continued on p. 14...*



# United Struggle from Within

## AZTLAN UNIFICATION

Write in for fliers for the Plan de San Diego commemoration and education opportunity.

## BUILD A UNITED FRONT FOR PEACE IN PRISONS

Organize locally for the September 9th Day of Peace and Solidarity, to promote the United Front for Peace in Prisons and an end to conflict amongst prisoners. The principal contradiction that must be unraveled to address many of the problems prisoners face is petty divisions that prevent unity. See page 3 for more info on what the UFPP is about and how you can get involved, including a flyer you can use to share with others.

## SPREAD UNDER LOCK & KEY

Our subscriber list grows in many ways: comrades passing around issues and lit; 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 prisoner 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 the 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.

## 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 AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, KS, LA, MS, MT, NV, NC, OK, OR, SC, and TX. NEW: If the state-level petition doesn't bring relief, we now have a new follow-up petition written to federal law. Write in to get a copy of this additional resource which holds states accountable to federal requirements.

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) does not 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.

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 still useful information. Tell us how you used it to help organize others and build group consciousness.

## CA USW Must Prepare Unity Btwn Mainline and SNY

by USW 44 of United Struggle from Within  
April 2018

I'm writing on this topic a bit early because a lot of young brothers and sisters don't have true or real understanding regarding Black August and Bloody September. But for those of us who are politically aware, both months are rich with our blood, our struggle, and our resistance. As people who fight oppression during these two months as a peoples' movement we should focus our energies around the discussions and actions of George Jackson, the Black Panthers, Assata Shakur, Che Guevara, and any of the many revolutionaries who have set the stage for us.

We should push political education, progressive action, and the revolutionary history. We should most aggressively focus on the establishment of stronger security, because on 16 April 2018 the Department of Corrections and so-called "Rehabilitation" started a statewide weapons sweep of all California prisons to ensure that no weapons are on the prison yards when the state integrates mainline prisoners with SNY prisoners later this year.

We know first-hand what the power structure is doing – they're hoping that the yards all blow up. That would show that their jobs still matter and that we need to be in prison. This is their most outrageous move in years, and they've been feeding the disconnection of mainline and SNY for years as a tool of divide and conquer. The divide and conquer tactic has never been more effective than it is today.

As they say, a tree without roots is dead, and so is a people who are not rooted. Men such as comrade George, Huey P. Newton and Malcolm X started and enhanced their political line in prison as colonial criminals. Within these concentration camps and deep dark confines of Soledad Prison and San Quentin, the alchemy of human transformation took place. They all began to turn the cells they held into libraries and schools of liberation. As George said, to create a new world we have to be a representation of this new being, "The New Man", in words and in deeds, thoughts, and actions. This new man will be in his highest revolutionary form. So as they turned their cells into classrooms, so must we. And as they internalized the most advanced ideas about human development, so must we.

George stated that:

*"I met Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Engels and Mao, and they redeemed me. For the first four years, I studied nothing but politics and economics and military ideas. I met Black Guerrillas, George Big Jake Lewis, James Carr, W.L. Nolen, Bill Christmas, Tony Gibson, and many others. We were attempting to turn the Black criminal mentality into a revolutionary mentality."*

George and his comrades became living examples and inspirations of organized resistance for prisoners across the country. But on 21 August 1971, Comrade George Jackson and two others were murdered along with three prison guards in a gun fight inside one of California's maximum security prisons called San Quentin. For this reason, and many more, we hold bloody August as sacred.

Huey P. Newton was murdered 22 August 1989, in West Oakland on Tenth and Center, by a young drug dealer named Little Blood. He was a product of this system; the young hating the old, the light-skinned hating the dark. That's the same divide we have here today. I can get into the shit and kick up dust with the rest and the best. But I will not allow anyone to stop my hard work in being an organizer and educator. I've

*Continued on p. 14...*

## Active Lawsuits

by a Texas prisoner  
December 2017

My beloved comrades at *ULK*, please take whatever steps necessary to convey this information to your readers, particularly those on the Texas plantations. It is my hope this will move a few to join in this all-out attack against mass incarceration, which those brothers on the Eastham Plantation are being persecuted for.

First, we have launched an attack on the totality of the living conditions on this plantation: double-celling, sleep deprivation, extreme heat, contaminated water, no toilets in the day rooms and rec yard, overcrowded showers. At present we have 5 lawsuits filed and hoping to have 5 more by the first of the year. They are listed at the end of this missive for those who might want to obtain copies and/or file for intervention. I would urge each plantation to file because each plantation has different violations, which in their totality are cruel and unusual.

Next, we have launched an attack on the symbiotic-parasitic-relationship between Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and the American Correctional Association (ACA). Last year we sent numerous letters to the ACA headquarters in Virginia with various complaints including the delayed posting of scheduled audits. Apparently someone was moved to do the right thing. Then notices for the January 2018 audit were posted here in October. As a result, we of the Community Improvement Committee (CIC) here on the unit have sent petitions with hundreds of names with numerous complaints of ACA violations and requests for a Q&A in the gym or chapel. This is being done with individual letters as well. Plus, we have sent the actual notice to various reform organizations requesting them to visit the unit during the audit and act as overseers pointing out particular areas of violations such as the giant cockroach infestation beneath the kitchen.

Next we have and intend to continue to urge the public to stay on top of their legislators to change the law, making it mandatory that prisoners be compensated for their labor.

Finally, we have filed an application for Writ of Habeas Corpus requesting to be released immediately due to the fact that the time sheet shows one has completed 100% of his sentence – that even without the good time, the flat time and the work time equals the sentence imposed by the court. In addition we are drafting something similar for those sentenced under the one-third law.

We are submitting to the court that these prisoners have a short-way discharge date. The application for Writ of Habeas Corpus was first filed in the state court in Travis County and denied without a written order in the Texas court of criminal Appeals (#WR-87,529-01 Tr.Ct. No. D-1-DC-02-301765A). We are now in the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District Tyler Division (McGee v Director, #6:17cv643). This info is supplied so that those with the means may download the info and/or keep track of the case. The following are the case numbers for the totality of living conditions complaint, which is also in the U.S. District in Tyler:

Walker v. Davis, et al., #6:17cv166  
Henderson v. Davis, #6:17cv320  
Douglas v. Davis, #6:17cv347  
Burley v. Davis, #6:17cv490

The Devil whispers: "You can't withstand the storm"  
The Warrior replied: "I am the storm."  
- The Mateuszm

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** These comrades

are pushing the struggles to improve conditions inside Texas prisons along its natural course. Countless prisoners have sent grievances, grievance petitions, letters to the Ombudsman, letters to elected officials, and letters to various TDCJ administrators on these same issues. We have seen some victories, but mostly we've had barriers put in our way.

The next step laid out for us is to file lawsuits, which is another kind of barrier. Lawsuits take years and sometimes decades to complete, and innumerable hours of work. When we do win, we then have to go through additional lawsuits to ensure enforcement. And on and on it goes...

If we expect the lawsuits to bring final remedy, we must be living in a fantasy. A quintessential example of how the U.S. government behaves regarding lawsuits can be seen in how it totally disrespects treaties with First Nations. When the U.S. government, or its agencies, doesn't like

*Continued on p. 16...*

## Solitary Confinement Ongoing Despite Policy Changes

by a Texas prisoner  
May 2018

I would like to ask your staff a question. I recently received *ULK 60* and it made a statement that solitary confinement was abolished in Texas in 2017. When I seen that, it floored me. I say that because i'm writing this letter FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. So did I miss something? And if so, how can I fight from here to rectify the situation?

I let others read that and we all was stunned. I mean stunned. Are we reading this statement in your newsletter wrong?

Also we would like to know what is the Texas Pack and how can I obtain one? Your newsletter has shed light on a lot of things that are helpful for us in this place, and I just would like to say thank you and keep up the good work.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** In September 2017, TDCJ announced it would no longer use solitary confinement for punishment, or as a method to encourage good behavior. It would "only" use "Administrative Segregation" (totally different from solitary confinement, right?) for "gang members, those at risk of escape, and those who are likely to attack other inmates." (1) That month, 4,000 people were still held in isolation on these grounds. Consider that only 75 prisoners were actually released from solitary confinement after this policy change.

We appreciate that this writer spoke up, because this is a very common practice. The Department says "we're not using it for punishment," while holding many, many people in isolation. The claim of gangs and security threats is often cited as the justification for the "exception" to their superficially-humanitarian publicity stunt.

Some examples include the Tier 2 program in Georgia, and the indefinite solitary confinement in California prisons that led to the mass demos in 2011-2013 and the Ashker settlement.

No matter what you call it, or what "justifications" are given for why it's used, solitary confinement is *always* torture, and *never* necessary. We have no doubts that solitary confinement can and should be ended, for everyone, today.

As for the Texas Pack, we are still updating and mailing this out. It's one of our more expensive projects, so we're asking for subscribers to send a donation of \$2.50, or work-trade, to get the Texas Pack. This packet contains all our campaign info relevant to TDCJ, including on the grievance process, medical copay, and indigent mail restrictions. Send your donation to the address on p. 1, and ask us for more info if you want to send a check/money order.■

Note:

1. Hagstrom, Anders, "Texas Ends Solitary Confinement as Punishment for Inmates", The Daily Caller, 22 September 2017.

... Continued from p. 11

### ...Politics

community that the cycle mentioned above seems to be unbreakable. Kids growing up in broken homes, forced to assume adult roles, only to make kid mistakes that come with adult consequences; and the cycle continues.

To be sure, this cycle has been in force with respect to oppressed nations since the end of slavery. It has just become necessary over time to enact laws and policies that now target and disrupt these communities. Both the politics and economics of mass incarceration work to keep lumpen communities from organizing for national liberation as was done during the late-60s.

### Conclusion

Part of any strategy related to our anti-prison movement is first recognizing these dimensions of mass incarceration, and taking into account that we live in enemy society where enemy consciousness prevails, even amongst much of the oppressed nations. We have to also recognize that the interests of oppressed nation lumpen are not the same as the other classes of the oppressed nation. There are some members of the oppressed nations who have bought the bill of goods sold by partial integration. They are fully immersed in the delusions of identity politics, subtly sacrificing their true identity for the trinkets of "whiteness."

Understanding and recognizing these points means we can focus our organizing efforts on building public opinion and independent institutions, on a concrete class/nation analysis and not because someone is Black or Brown. We need to be patient with lumpen communities as they are in that day-to-day grind of survival and may not (or cannot) see the merit in our movement. Ultimately, we need to step up and be those leaders of the movement, so when we do touch we hit the ground running.■

#### Notes:

1. The author views all forms of power within U.S. society that maintains the basic functioning of the status quo as illegitimate. This analysis extends to the criminal (in)justice system, where the aims of state-sanctioned repression are not only realized but validated. Prisons, to this end, are one of the primary institutions symbolic of this illegitimate power. In our effort to agitate and educate our mass base (imprisoned lumpen), we have determined it necessary to also build public opinion around our base's current conditions of imprisonment among the larger U.S. population that may be receptive to prisoners' struggles and the analysis that the U.S. justice system does not produce justice. Where "anti-prison" is specific and agitational, "prison movement" seems vague and broad. We want to raise consciousness and agitate around the point that the criminal (in)justice system is illegitimate, therefore prisons are illegitimate. And from this point of analysis work toward advancing the national liberation and anti-imperialist struggles. For more information, see MIM(Prisons)'s "Applying Dialectics to the Prison Movement Within the Greater

System of Imperialism," February 2014.

2. As mentioned above, partial integration is an alliance and compromise between the Euro-American ruling class and the comprador (national) bourgeoisie of oppressed nations. But partial integration is also an agenda, a list of functions and tasks that are carried out in service and maintenance of U.S. imperialist society. For example, it requires the strategy of identity politics to create the illusion of full citizenship with attendant rights and liberties among oppressed nations. Moreover, it requires oppressed nation political leaders to support and carry out policies that result in the further marginalization and oppression of lumpen communities, even implementing policies of mass incarceration.

3. Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahatta. From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, Chicago, Haymarket Books. 2016. p. 77. Taylor gets at the point: "Across the United States, thousands of Black elected officials are governing many of the nation's cities and suburbs. Yet, despite this unprecedented access to political power, little has changed for the vast majority of African Americans [New Afrikans]."

4. While the author wanted to include more diverse references and perspectives from different oppressed nations, time and resources did not permit. But to give a brief example of identity politics from a Chican@ perspective: Dolores Huerta was someone who struggled with Cesar Chavez in the fight for Chican@ and Mexican@ farm worker's rights. While Chavez and Huerta weren't exactly revolutionaries, they did a lot to raise consciousness and build unity among the farm workers. But just as the civil rights leaders degenerated into cogs of the oppressive machine that is U.S. imperialist society, so too did Chavez and Huerta. Huerta to this day stumps for the Democratic party to garner votes from the Chican@ nation, using eir iconic status as a UFW activist. For more information, see the article, "The Politics of Opportunism and Capitulation: The Myth of Dolores Huerta." November 17, 2014. <http://siglodelucha.wordpress.com>.

5. Taylor, p. 80.

6. *ibid*, p. 80.

7. The CBC grew out of the Civil Rights era, as many of its founding members were part of the movement. This means it is reformist at best and staunchly reactionary at its worst. The CBC acts as the political wing of partial integration, respective to the New Afrika nation, mobilizing support among New Afrikans for electoral politics, in collaboration with Euro-American liberals, be they Democrat or Republican.

8. The labeling of any action as a crime is a political act that in the final analysis represents the interests of the status quo and its representative class. If the status quo is unjust and coercive, then the political function of justice is tainted and thereby illegitimate for reasons already discussed above. For us, as Maoists, the standard of proletarian justice is our measuring stick for defining and adjudicating behavior that is detrimental to the proletariat and its interests. So while "crime" by bourgeois standards rose within these marginalized communities it is important that we recognize the coercive nature of the material reality within these communities. To view "crime" as a neutral concept in our society is to ignore the very real institutional and structural pressures, often manifested in the socio-economic realm, that lead to criminal behavior, when these pressures are indeed coercive.

9. Taylor, p. 100

10. Davis, Angela 4. Are Prisons Obsolete? p. 28.

11. *ibid*. p. 30.

12. Taylor, p. 49.

13. Clear, Todd. "Why America's Mass Incarceration Experiment Failed." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/todd-clear>

## A Tribute to James "Doc" Holiday

by an Oregon prisoner  
February 2018

I recall entering United States Penitentiary (USP) Leavenworth in 1993 as a very ignorant, reactionary member of a street tribe in need of guidance. I was approached by an individual seen by others in many lights; original gangsta! Comrade George's comrade! Revolutionary! Major underworld figure! All of the above and some. All I know is, the brotha James "Doc" Holiday freely gave of himself to educate all of us tribal adherents.

Making it mandatory that we both exercise daily (machine) and read progressive literature, because consciousness grows in stages. As such, he brought many a tribal cat towards a more revolutionary-oriented ideal. Some accepted New Afrikan revolutionary nationalism. Others gained structure, within their respective tribes (Kiwe/Damu national identities). Whichever choices we made, the overall revolutionary objectives were being met, in that the seeds of liberating consciousness had been sown. We learned of: Che, Fidel, W.L. Nolen, Marx, Lenin, Mao, Huey P., Bobby, Fred, Bunchy, Comrade George, Assata, etc. So many more unnamed heroes/heroines of the movement for change and liberation.

*Continued on next page...*

... Continued from page 12

### ...Unity

given twenty years to this mainline and SNY, so I'm going to push on. As Frantz Fanon stated in *Wretched of the Earth*, "There is no taking of the offensive – and no redefining of relationships." We know that the power structure wants us dead or locked up. So in case you didn't know, the revolution is on.

Power to the People  
Build to Win

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** The California USW Primer explains how the split between SHU/mainline and SNY in California is at the heart of building a united front of prisoners in the state. All California USW comrades should have a copy of the primer as a guide for their work. Long-time readers of *ULK* will know that we have printed countless articles addressing this issue. Write in if you can use copies of some of these articles to help in your organizing for the September 9 Day of Peace and Solidarity this year. The campaign to build peace and unity between mainline and SNY will be coming to a head this year, and USW must play a leading role in guiding things in a positive direction as this comrade calls for.■



... Continued from previous page ... Doc

Was "Daktari" perfect? No! He had flaws and vices like most hue-mans raised in capitalist United States – this putrid system which conditions us to value money over character. However, it is my contention that, to overlook the strengths and contributions this elder made to both Cali state and Federal systems' revolutionary cultures is to aid our common oppressors in suppressing the memories of all whose stories could serve as inspirational tools.

Utilizing materialist dialectics to analyze our forerunners' strengths and weaknesses as they relate to contributions to struggle is a positive. Constructively critiquing their actions and/or strategem which negatively impacted our progression towards building revolutionary culture is also a positive. Personally, I do not view giving honors to our fallen as "cult of personality." As a New Afrikan by DNA, I know firsthand how important it is for "us" to have concrete examples to emulate. Sad reality is, U.S.-born New Afrikans have been conditioned via historical miscarriages to see themselves as inferior to others. As such, before giving them/us Marx and the like, they should be taught examples of U.S. folk of color. Identification with/to New Afrikan cultural identity is key to building viable revolutionary culture, prior to more global revolutionary cadre education.

With that, I recently embraced Islam. The need of a morality code was imperative for me (individually) in order for me to continue to be an asset to the overall struggle. Regardless of my personal religious belief, I shall remain committed to giving of myself – blood, sweat, tears, my life if need be – to advance the struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. This loyalty and devotion to the cause, come hell, or forever in isolation, is a direct result of the seeds planted in USP Leavenworth all those years ago by James "Doc" Holiday. I honor him accordingly as an educator, elder, father figure, and comrade.

Recently my family attempted to locate Doc via FBOP locator and as his name was not found, thus I assume he has passed on. I shall miss his wit and grit. Revolutionary in peace!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** The greatest tribute we can pay to Doc, and all of the people who helped raise us to a higher level, is to carry on his legacy through our actions. We don't mean to just "be about" the struggle, or to shout them out in remembrance. "Each one teach one" is a good place to start, and we can even look more deeply at what it was about our

Continued on next page...

## Censors in Their Own Words - May 2018

by MIM(Prisons)  
April 2018

U.S. imperialist leaders and their labor aristocracy supporters like to criticize other countries for their tight control of the media and other avenues of speech. For instance, many have heard the myths about communist China forcing everyone to think and speak alike. In reality, these stories are a form of censorship of the truth in the United States. In China under Mao the government encouraged people to put up posters debating every aspect of life, to criticize their leaders, and to engage in debate at work and at home. This was an important part of the Cultural Revolution in China. There are a number of books available that give a truthful account, but far more money is put into anti-communist propaganda. Here, free speech is reserved for those with money and power.

In prisons in particular we see so much censorship, especially targeting those who are politically conscious and fighting for their rights. Fighting for our First Amendment right to free speech is a battle that MIM(Prisons) and many of our subscribers spend a lot of time and money on. For us this is perhaps the most fundamental of requirements for our organizing work. There are prisoners, and some entire facilities (and sometimes entire states) that are denied all mail from MIM(Prisons). This means we can't send in our newsletter, or study materials, or even a guide to fighting censorship. Many prisons regularly censor *ULK* claiming that the news and information printed within is a "threat to security." For them, printing the truth about what goes on behind bars is dangerous. But if we had the resources to take these cases to court we believe we could win in many instances.

### DOCUMENT PRISON ABUSES

We receive many reports about terrible conditions, abuse and neglect in prisons across the country. While most of these don't make it onto the pages of *ULK*, we do type these up for publication on our website ([www.prisoncensorship.info](http://www.prisoncensorship.info)).

Documenting and monitoring the abusive conditions in American prisons is an important part of our work. Keep sending in these reports! Web users can search by state and facility to read your reports.

Denying prisoners mail is condemning some people to no contact with the outside world. To highlight this, and the ridiculous and illegal reasons that prisons use to justify this censorship, we will periodically print a summary of some recent censorship incidents in *ULK*.

We hope that lawyers, paralegals, and those with some legal knowledge will be inspired to get involved and help with these censorship battles, both behind bars and on the streets. For the full list of censorship incidents, along with copies of appeals and letters from the prison, check out our censorship reporting webpage [www.prisoncensorship.info/data](http://www.prisoncensorship.info/data)

### Michigan – Macomb CF

*ULK61* was censored because it is "mail with stamps, stickers, labels, or anything affixed to the paper with an adhesive".

### Pennsylvania DOC

The PA DOC sent MIM(Prisons) a letter regarding *ULK61* that read: "This is to notify you that the publication in issue advocates and encourages prison solidarity. As such, it violates Department policy for the reason previously stated."

### Pennsylvania - SCI Pine Grove

A prisoner forwarded us a copy of the Notice of Incoming Publication Denial for *ULK60*. The reason given was "Bondage of little girl, Depicts female officers in negative manner." Clearly the PA DOC didn't like our article criticizing an advertisement using an image of a little girl in bondage, or our criticism of gender oppression in prison.

### Illinois - Stateville Correctional Center

A prisoner wrote: "I have received notice from the repressors here, on more than one occasion that you sent me a copy of your pub *Under Lock & Key*, and each time that you did, i was told that this pub is on the 'censored' list and any other literature from 'MIM Distributors' because it promotes: leadership and organizing of inmates against the prison staff - administration, and that this is a threat to the safety and security of the prison, therefore inmates are not allowed to have any of your pubs."

MIM(Prisons) received a notification of censorship of *ULK 61* sent to this same persyn in Stateville. The reasons given: "Promotes leadership & organization, instructs offenders to organize. content may be detrimental to the safety & security of the institution." ■

# Why the Beef?

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
May 2018

For a while now I've wondered why all the conflict between anarchists and socialists/Marxists/Maoists. I mean, we are two revolutionary forces who are committed to the abolishment of capitalism, imperialism and all forms of oppression. We have that in common and that is what's important. I understand that our strategies and ideologies are a bit different, but what's preventing us from getting together in solidarity, agreeing to disagree and focus our energies on the revolution combining our strengths and common ground? Why can't we cease to tear each other down? I don't know about anyone else, but this bothers me! The energy used to tear one another down, discrediting one another, could be used to gain some real headway by picking up arms together to combat oppression. Of course there are more experienced and more politicized people than me that may wish to give me some feedback and critique. I welcome critique, feedback and criticism.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This is a good question, especially for building a united movement against imperialism. There are many reasons to build unity with all who can be united. Maoists advocate a united front against imperialism because this format of organizing allows all organizations to freely build their own movements and push their own ideologies, but come together against a common enemy.

At the same time, we do believe there are some very good reasons to refuse to unite with some organizations. Just because a group calls itself "socialist" or "anarchist" doesn't mean it is automatically on the right side of the struggle. In the extreme, we have the national socialists who are really fascists, as an obvious example. But even among those claiming to be progressive revolutionaries there are some organizations that have taken up such wrongheaded and dangerous political lines that we consider them to be more use to the fascists than to the revolutionaries.

In the case of anarchists in general, we do not see them as enemies. In fact anarchists have the same end goal as communists: a society where no people have power over other people. But anarchists don't have a strong history of success in progress towards that goal. We see their approach of jumping right from imperialism to anarchism as idealist, because it hasn't played out in real life at even a comparable scale to the socialist experiment.

It's just not realistic to overthrow the imperialists and keep them overthrown, without a period of proletarian state power. We have too long of a history of class, nation and gender oppression for that to happen. The bourgeois classes will need to be forcibly repressed, and culture will need to be radically altered on a mass scale. It might take generations before humyns evolve to live peacefully with no oppression. As MIM wrote in *MIM Theory 8*: "Communists know that it takes power to destroy power, whereas anarchists see power itself, independent of conditions, as the enemy of the people."

In the First World, in particular, there are some anarchist (in addition to socialist) groups which are doing work that actively supports imperialism. It's important that organizations clearly work out what are the most important questions of political line that we face today. For instance, we have, in this country, a bought-off class of people who are clearly economically and ideologically in support of imperialism. Yet some so-called socialist and anarchist organizations see these people as their mass base, and call on them to rally for even higher wages and a bigger piece of the imperialist pie. That's not progressive, that's a call to fascism! And so we can't unite with such political stances. In fact if that group calls itself "socialist" or "anarchist" or even "Maoist," we think that's more dangerous than if they openly organized for fascism, because it is misleading people about what is the communist struggle. ■

Notes: For a copy of MIM Theory 8: The Anarchist Ideal and Communist Revolution, send \$5 or equivalent work trade.

... Continued from previous page ... Doc

comrades' actions that made them such great organizers. In analyzing their actions, we can build on that in our own organizing.

We encourage our readers to take a closer look at what turned you on to revolutionary organizing and politics. It surely wasn't just one action from one persyn, and it surely wasn't just an internal realization. Who was it that helped develop you, and how did they do it?

Especially for *ULK 63*, we want to look deeper at organizing tactics and approaches within the pages of this newsletter. One thing we can look at is our memories of what other people did to organize us. Think about the people who helped develop your revolutionary consciousness, and write in to *ULK* your observations.

What was their attitude? What methods did they use? How did they react when someone was half-in the game? How did they behave toward people who were totally in denial? Where did they draw the line between friends and enemies? What are some memories you have of when the spark was lit for you, that told you you needed to struggle to end oppression, rather than just get what you could for yourself? Send your stories in to the address on page 1 so *ULK* readers can incorporate your experiences into their own organizing tactics. ■

... Continued from p. 13 ... Lawsuits

something, they don't really give a shit what the law says. This has been true since the beginning of this government. We don't see any evidence that this will ever change.

Yet, lawsuits aren't all bad. They can sometimes create a little more breathing room within which revolutionaries can operate. Lawsuits can also be used to publicize our struggles, and to show just how callous the state is, if we lose.

Yet, most importantly, lawsuits keep comrades busy. Before any lawsuit, there needs to be a solid analysis of winability, and the likelihood of other options. While we are relatively weak as a movement, lawsuits are a fine option, and building a movement around these lawsuits will give them strength. But if your legal strategy doesn't also include building up collective power to eventually protect people without petitioning the state to do it, then your legal strategy is as useless as a feather in a tornado.

The comrades fighting these battles inside Texas have done a great job of spreading the word to outside organizations to garner support and attention for their lawsuits. We support their efforts to make Texas prisons more bearable for the imprisoned lumpen population, and we support their efforts to link these lawsuits to the greater anti-imperialist movement. And when they decide that lawsuits aren't enough to bring a real change in conditions, we'll support that too.

The U.S. legal system's role is to keep the United States government as a dominant world power, no matter what. The extreme heat in Texas prisons isn't just an oversight by administrators. And it's not even just about racism of guards. It is directly connected to the United State's role in the oppression and repression of oppressed nations across the world. If the legal system fails, don't give up. Try something else to bring it down. Lawsuits are not the only option. ■



... Continued from p. 7 ...**2018 Survey**

While U.S. caselaw does not recognize prisoners as employees, there continue to be new lawsuits and arguments being made to challenge prison labor in various ways.(6) We see these challenges to certain aspects of the law on unpaid labor as reformist battles, unlikely to have much bearing on the future of the prison movement. It is unlikely the courts will see prison maintenance as labor requiring minimum wage protection. So if changes are made in the law, we expect them to be very marginal in scope, or to actually encourage more private employment. In contrast, the mass mobilizations that have focused on pay, among other issues, are advancing the struggle for prisoner humyn rights by organizing the masses in collective action.(7)

While half of prisoners work in some form, about half of those aren't paid. And this is because an income from work is not a condition of survival when food, clothes and shelter are provided by the state. However, there is a trend towards charging people for different aspects of their own incarceration. The narrowly-focused movement to amend the 13th Amendment could have the consequence of expanding such charges, and actually making it affordable for the state to imprison more people because they are paying for their own needs. While we concluded in *ULK 60* that there has not been a strong decrease in imprisonment in response to the 2008 financial crisis, the rates have certainly stagnated, indicating that we may be bumping up against financial limitations.(8) A scenario like the above could undermine these financial limitations, unless they are

accompanied by laws prohibiting the garnishing of prisoner wages.

The delinking of Third World countries from the U.S. empire will create more economic crisis as wealth flow from those countries to this one will decrease. This would create more incentive for forced labor in prisons that is productive, providing value for the rest of Amerikans. This is what occurred in Nazi Germany, and could occur in a future fascist scenario here. While we can definitively say the last prison surge was not driven by profits, that doesn't mean it couldn't happen. And if it did, it would be a very dangerous thing. On that we agree with the mass sentiment opposed to prison labor. But to date, in this country, it's been more expedient to exploit value from elsewhere. Even the convict leasing of the late 1800s was the vestiges of an out-dated system of exploitation that was eventually abandoned.

Very few prisoners in the United States are close to the means of production. Therefore it is not the role of the prison movement to seize the means of production, as it is for the proletariat. It is our role to build independent institutions of the oppressed. And this has often meant seizing institutions like churches, schools and even prisons in the examples of Attica and Walpole. Ultimately, such acts must build support for larger movements for national liberation. Prisoners have an important role to play in these movements because they are one of the most oppressed segments of the internal semi-colonies. But they cannot achieve liberation alone. ■

## Hypocrisy Must Stop

by a Pennsylvania prisoner  
February 2018

I have noticed that the New Afrikan people (NAP) have been crying out for justice for their people against oppression for ages. As an advocate and activist to end all oppression I stand beside them 100%. Oppression is an ugly thing and needs to be totally eradicated. However, I have also noticed that large numbers of NAPs and Latin@s oppress another "minority" group, namely the LGBTQIA community on a continuous basis. The same reasoning and ideology used by white supremacists to oppress others, especially NAP and Latin@s, is being used by NAP and Latin@s to oppress the LGBTQIA community. I feel that if people want to be free from oppression, they should in turn refrain from willingly and consciously oppressing other humyns and humyn groups. Justice and equality should be collective, not subjective and for certain people only. Does anyone else see this hypocrisy? I'm open to critique and feedback.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** As communists, we struggle for an end to all forms of oppression. It's a constant struggle to educate ourselves and others, and consciously struggle against biases that have been ingrained over years of living in this corrupt system. But while we live in a society built on class, nation and gender oppression we can expect to see forms of all of these within progressive movements.

There are a few principles we apply here. One is recognizing the principal contradiction and focusing on pushing that forward. Another is unity-struggle-unity. So as we unite with all anti-imperialist forces to resolve the principal contradiction (the oppression of Third World nations by the U.S.-led imperialist block) we will struggle over questions such as these in an attempt to build greater unity with revolutionary nationalists who may retain reactionary ideas around gender. ■

### Notes:

1. Joel Shannon, 28 February 2018, Six-figure salaries: In 2016, some of Pa.'s highest paid employees were prison guards, York Daily Record.
2. Wendy Sawyer, 10 April 2017, How Much do Incarcerated People Earn in Each State?, Prison Policy Initiative.
3. Recently a self-described "Maoist" made a public statement that every product we touch has come from prison labor at some point in the supply chain. When we pressed for research backing up this statement, ey

Continued on p. 24...



## Book Review: Locked In

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)  
March 2018

*Locked In: the true causes of mass incarceration - and how to achieve real reform*  
by John F. Pfaff  
2017 Basic Books

With over 2 million people behind bars, Amerikkka locks up more people per capita than any other nation in the world. But within this system of mass imprisonment there is an even more striking story of national oppression: New Afrikans locked up at 5 times the rate of whites, and Chican@s and First Nations also locked up at disproportionately high rates. We might hope that a book about the true causes of mass incarceration (and how to achieve real reform!) would address this discrepancy. But Pfaff, like all good bourgeois scholars, is focused on how to make capitalism work better. And so ey sweeps this whole issue under the rug in a book that offers some really good science and statistics on incarceration. Here we will pull out the useful facts and frame them in a revolutionary context.

Overall *Locked In* does a good job of exposing some important facts and statistics often ignored by prison researchers. Pfaff attacks what he calls the "Standard Story." This is the name he gives to the common arguments anti-prison activists make, which ey believes are counter-productive to their (and eir) goals of prison reform. Ey claims these arguments either over-simplify, or are straight up wrong, about why we have so many prisoners in the United States, and as a result target the wrong solutions.

### The big picture

Pfaff sometimes gets lost in the details and fails to look at the big picture. For instance, ey argues that "we are a nation of either 50 or 3,144 distinct criminal justice systems" talking about the big differences in how each state and even each county deals with prosecution, sentencing and prisons.(p. 16) While it is true there are significant differences, this thinking evades the importance of looking at the big picture that it's no coincidence that so many distinct counties/states have such high rates of imprisonment in this country. It's a good idea to examine state and county level differences, and learn lessons from this. But using this information in the interests of the oppressed requires an understanding of the underlying role of the Amerikkkan criminal injustice system in social control and national oppression, the topic Pfaff studiously avoids.

In one of eir rare references to the role that nation plays in the criminal injustice system in the United States, Pfaff bemoans that "Obviously, effecting 'cultural change' is a very difficult task."(p. 228) Ey entirely misses the fundamental national oppression going on in this country. To em it's just about attitudes and cultural change.

Pfaff does raise some good big picture questions that scientific capitalists and communists alike need to consider. Discussing the importance of balancing the cost of crime against the costs of enforcement Pfaff asks "what the optimal level of crime should be." "Why is crime control inherently more important than education or medical research or public health?" "What if a reduction in prison populations would allow 100,000 children with at least one parent in prison to now have both parents at home, but at a cost of a 5 percent rise in aggravated assaults (or even some number of additional murders) – is this a fair tradeoff, even assuming no other criminal justice benefits (like lower future offending rates among these children)?" But Pfaff notes that politicians in the United States are not able to talk about these things. Even Bernie Sanders's discussion of investing more in schools and less in prisons was in the context of reducing crime more efficiently. It's just not okay to say education should be prioritized over crime control.(p. 119) And so Pfaff concludes that we must work on reforms that can be implemented within this severely restricted political system. We see this as evidence that the system will never allow significant change.

Another place where Pfaff frames the larger context in useful and scientific ways is around the question of why people commit crimes. While ey dances around the social causes of crime, Pfaff offers some good analysis about how people age out of crime. And this analysis leads to eir position that we shouldn't be calling people "violent offenders" but instead just saying they have committed violent crimes. Data shows that most people commit crimes when young, and as they age they are far less likely to do so again.

### Crime rates and imprisonment rates

Pfaff is a professor of law at Fordham University, and like people working within the capitalist system ey accepts the capitalist definitions of crime. This means ey ignores the biggest criminals: those conducting wars of aggression and plunder against other nations in the interests of profit. For the purposes of this review we will use the term *crime* as Pfaff does in eir book, to refer to bourgeois-defined crime.

Crime rates in the U\$. grew in the 1970s and early 1980s. Pfaff believes that "rising incarceration helped stem the rise in crime."(p. 10) Disappointingly ey doesn't put much work in to proving this thesis. But at least ey concedes that locking up more people may not have been the best response to rising crime.(p. 10) And ey goes on to note that crime rates continued to fall while prison populations also fell in later years: "Between 2010 and 2014, state prison populations dropped by 4 percent while crime rates declined by 10 percent – with crime falling in almost every state that scaled back incarceration."(p. 12) So even if locking up people in the 70s and 80s did curtail some crime, clearly there isn't a direct correlation between imprisonment rates and crime rates.

There was a drop in the number of prisoners in the United States between 2010 and 2014 (4%), but this was driven by California which made up 62% of the national decline. Outside of California, total prison populations fell by 1.9% during this same period. But at the same time total admissions rose by 1.1%. Pfaff cites this statistic in particular to point out a failure of prison reform efforts using the metric of total prison population. If the goal is to reduce the prison population overall, looking at the drop in people locked up will miss the fact that the total number of prisoners is actually rising!(p. 69) This is an important point as we know that prison has lasting effects on all who are locked up, as well as on their community, even if they are only serving short sentences.

### War on Drugs is not driving prison growth

Disagreeing with the common argument that locking up low-level drug offenders is driving up the prison population, Pfaff points out that "only about 16 percent of state prisoners are serving time on drug charges -- and very few of them, perhaps only around 5 or 6 percent of that group, are both low level and nonviolent. At the same time, more than half of all people in state prisons have been convicted of a violent crime."(p. 5) So ey argues that targeting non-violent drug offenders is focusing on too small a population to make a significant impact.

Pfaff offers extensive data analysis to demonstrate that the number of people serving time for drug convictions just aren't enough to be a major driver of state prison growth. Ey does concede that "the single biggest driver of the decline in prison populations since 2010 has been the decrease in the number of people in prison for drug crimes. But focusing on drugs will only work in the short run. That it is working now is

*Continued on next page...*

... Continued from previous page

### ...Locked In

certainly something to celebrate. But even setting every drug offender free would cut our prison population by only 16 percent." (p. 35)

From this analysis Pfaff concludes that it is essential that prison reformers not avoid talking about violent crime. "From 1990 to 2009... about 60 percent of all additional inmates had been convicted of a violent offense." (p. 187) "[T]here are almost as many people in prison today just for murder and manslaughter as the total state prison population in 1974: about 188,000 for murder or manslaughter today, versus a total of 196,000 prisoners overall in 1974." (p. 185) And due to length of sentence, "Violent offenders take up a majority of all prison beds, even if they do not represent a majority of all admissions." (p. 188) So those serious about cutting back prisons will need to cut back on locking people up for violent crimes.

### Length of sentence

Pfaff concludes that longer sentences are not the cause of rising imprisonment rates. This is the opposite of the common anti-prison activist position: "despite the nearly automatic assumption by so many that prison growth is due to ever-longer sentences, the main driver of growth, at least recently, has been steadily rising admissions for fairly short terms." (p. 74) "[M]ost people serve short stints in prison, on the order of one to three years, and there's not a lot of evidence that the amount of time spent in prison has changed that much – not just over the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, but quite possibly over almost the entire prison boom." (p. 6)

Pfaff does concede that official sentences, per statutes, have gotten longer, but ey claims time served has changed much less. At most average time served in state prisons increased by 36% between 1990 and 2009, which ey calls a small increase that can't explain most of the prison growth over that time. (p. 58) Ey argues that tough sentencing laws are all about politics and legislator image, trying to look tough on crime. But they count on prosecutors not actually imposing the maximum punishments.

### Private prisons vs public employees

We agree with Pfaff that private prisons don't play a very large role in the current Amerikan criminal injustice system. "Private spending and private lobbying ... are not the real financial and political engines behind prison growth. Public revenue and public-sector union lobbying are far more important." (p. 7) And ey correctly identifies

"the real political powers behind prison growth are the public officials who benefit from large prisons: the politicians in districts with prisons, along with the prison guards who staff them and the public-sector unions who represent the guards." (p. 7)

Pfaff makes a compelling point: public prisons will act the same way private prisons act when facing the same contractual incentives. Ey goes on to argue that it might actually be better to expand private prisons but give them incentives for better performance, such as rewarding lack of recidivism.

It is public prison employees who are the strongest opponents of private prisons. This was seen in Florida where an attempt to privatize 27 prisons was killed after the public employees' union got a bunch of congresspeople to vote against the bill. (p. 87)

This strength of public prisons lobbying is also behind the fact that closing public prisons doesn't necessarily result in much savings because the unions will aggressively oppose any lost jobs. In Pennsylvania, the state closed two prisons in 2013 and laid off only three guards. In New York the prison population dropped by 25% since 1999 but they have not closed any prisons. (p. 88)

Pfaff concludes: "In other words, reformers should not really be concerned with the privateness of the PIC. They should worry that as prisons grow, the supporting bureaucracies – private and public alike – will grow as well, and they will fight against anything that jeopardizes their power and pay." (p. 91)

Pfaff is correct that private prisons are not driving imprisonment rates. Actually, public employee wages are playing a much larger role. However, there are valid reasons to oppose privatization for reformers, or anyone who subscribes to a sense of humynism. In our bourgeois democracy, the law does provide for greater accountability of public institutions. Therefore, public prisons will generally allow less unnecessary suffering than private ones. Of course, neither privatization, nor the public sector can eliminate the oppression of the capitalist state that is meted out by the police and prisons. Yet, privatization of the state-sanctioned use of force only creates more problems for those working for progressive change.

### Recidivism

Pfaff disagrees with the argument that a big driver behind the prison population is recidivism, specifically that lots of people are being sent back to prison for technical violations or small issues. Ey does find that

in most states the number of parole conditions has gone up, from an average of 11 in 1982 to an average of 18 in 2008. (p. 62) But digging into recidivism more deeply, Pfaff cites a study that found that only about a third of people admitted to prison end up returning. And ey correctly notes that if the commonly cited Bureau of Justice Statistics claim of a 50% recidivism rate is wrong, this just means that even more people are ending up in prisons at some time in their lives. This is perhaps an even scarier story than the high recidivism rate because it means that even more lives are being ruined by prison.

### States vs counties

Pfaff points out that the \$50 billion that states spend on prisons is only about 3% of state spending. And as has been seen in examples above, the savings from decarceration are not that great if states can't actually close prisons or lay off guards. Also, releasing individual prisoners doesn't result in much savings because prisons work on an economy of scale. While we can calculate the average cost of imprisonment per person, we can't translate that directly into savings when one persyn is released, because the entire infrastructure is still in place. (p. 99)

New York City actually did cut its prison population recently, along with a few other urban counties in New York. However, rural counties sent more people to prison so the overall impact was growth, not decreasing numbers of prisoners in New York. (p. 76) Similarly, higher crime rate areas like Los Angeles and San Francisco in California send relatively fewer people to prison compared to more rural counties which tend to be more conservative. (p. 77)

We touched on this urban vs. rural discrepancy in imprisonment rates in a recent article on national oppression in prison in *ULK 60*, suggesting that this could be the primary driver behind the (temporary?) drop in the discrepancy between imprisonment rates of oppressed nations and whites. Since more whites are in the rural counties, statistically that's who is getting locked up if those counties are locking people up at a higher rate. Pfaff's data backs up our theory.

### Prosecutors driving imprisonment

Pfaff argues compellingly that the primary driver behind the boom in prisoners in the past few decades is prosecutorial toughness: prosecutors are charging more people with more serious crimes.

*Continued on next page...*

... Continued from previous page

### ...Locked In

Prosecutors have a tremendous amount of latitude. They can determine the charges brought against people, which in turn drives the level of seriousness of the crime and potential sentences. They can also decide when to take a plea and what to offer in the plea.

To prove the impact of prosecutors, Pfaff cites data between 1991 and 2014 when crime rates were falling. During this period the arrest rates by police matched crime rates, which means that as violent and property crimes fell so did arrests for those offenses. In states Pfaff examined, arrests fell 10% between 1994 and 2008. But at the same time the number of felony cases rose steeply. Fewer people were entering the criminal injustice system but more were

facing felony charges. Pfaff calculated a 40% increase in felony cases. Ey found this was the only thing that changed; felony charges resulted in imprisonment at the same rate as before. So Pfaff concludes: "In short, between 1994 and 2008, the number of people admitted to prison rose by about 40 percent, from 360,000 to 505,000, and almost all of that increase was due to prosecutors bringing more and more felony cases against a diminishing pool of arrestees." (p. 72) The probability that a prosecutor would file felony charges against an arrestee basically doubled during this time period.

Pfaff attributes this prosecutorial aggression to a few things. First, the number of prosecutors trying cases has increased significantly over the past forty years, unrelated to crime rates. Prosecutor discretion is not new, but they seem to be using it more and more aggressively in recent years. And it is the prosecutors who have complete control over which cases get filed and which get dismissed. Prosecutors also have a huge advantage over public defenders, whose budget is significantly less than prosecutors and who don't benefit from free investigative services from law enforcement. (p. 137)

Overall Pfaff finds very little data available on prosecutors and so finds it impossible to come to firm conclusions about why they are so aggressively increasing prosecution rates. Ey spends a lot of the book talking about potential prosecutorial reforms but also concludes that mandatory data collection around prosecution is essential to get a better handle on what's going on.

While this data on the role of prosecutors in driving imprisonment rates in recent years is interesting, revolutionaries have to ask how important this is to our understanding of the system. Whether it's more cops on the

streets driving more arrests, or more aggressive prosecutors driving more sentences, the net result is the same. If we're looking to reform the system, Pfaff's data is critical to effectively targeting the most important part of the system. But for revolutionaries this information is most useful in exposing the injustice behind the curtain of the system. We want to know how it works but ultimately we know we need to dismantle the whole system to effect real and lasting change.

### Solutions

Even within eir general belief that prisons are necessary to stop crime, Pfaff makes some good points: "To argue that prison growth contributed to 25 percent of the drop in crime does not mean that it was an efficient use of resources; perhaps we could have achieved an equally large decline in a way that was less fiscally and socially costly." (p. 116) And ey goes on to note that studies suggest rehabilitation programs outside of prison do a much better job reducing crime.

Some of Pfaff's solutions are things we can get behind, like adequately funding public defenders. And most of them, if effective, would result in fewer prisoners and better programs to help prisoners both while locked up and once on the streets. But still these solutions are about relatively small reforms: giving prosecutors more guidance, expanding political oversight, expanding parole and providing more scientific structure to parole decisions, appointing prosecutors rather than electing them, setting up better contracts with private prisons paying based on how prisoners performed upon release.

All of these reforms make sense if you believe the Amerikan prison system has a primary goal of keeping society safe and reforming criminals. This is where we deviate from Pfaff because we can see that prisons are just a tool of a fundamentally corrupt system. And so reforms will only be implemented with sufficient belief from those in charge that the fundamental system won't be threatened. And certainly the Amerikan imperialists aren't looking to "improve" or reform the system; they will only react to significant social pressure, and only as much as they need to to take pressure off. ■

## U WRITE 4 ULK

We encourage subscribers who have never written in on a ULK topic before to send in an article submission for any upcoming issues.

We recently revamped our guide for writing articles for ULK, which is a helpful tool. But you don't need it to get started - just put pen to paper!

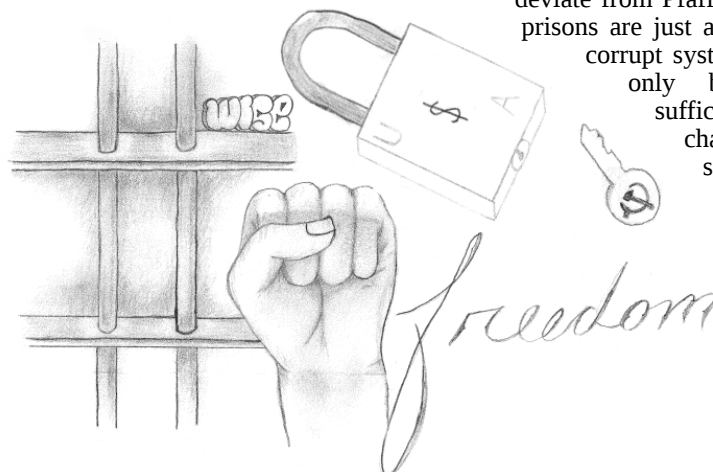
Planned themes for upcoming issues:

**63 - Organizer Techniques** - When you were turned on to revolutionary politics, how did it happen? Think about what people around you did to encourage your participation, and send in your "how i was recruited" story.

Do you find people in your facility impossible to relate to? Do your organizing conversations seem to go nowhere? Do you struggle to get people to see the importance of writing grievances, or participating in campaigns?

Or do you have some of this figured out? How do you communicate with and motivate others? How do you help them find their inner leader and develop it? Have you figured out how to get around common conversation roadblocks? We want to hear from you! Send us your sample dialogues, and yard-tested organizing approaches.

**64 - Crimes Against the People** - Follow-up to the ULK issues focused on sex offenders and drugs. Also discussion of how we handle crimes against the people at different phases of our revolutionary project.





# Trump Says North Korea Treated Prisoners "Excellent", u.\$. Certainly Doesn't

reprinted from anti-imperialism.org  
by Joshua Alexander  
May 2018

Yesterday, u.\$. strongman Donald Trump thanked [Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)] leader Kim Jong-un, "who really was excellent" to the three amerikans he ordered released from detention. Kim decided to release the amerikans, two of whom had been involved with work at the private, protestant-run Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST), and none had served out their terms for various offenses including espionage, "hostile acts", and other, undisclosed charges. The oldest detainee, Kim Dong-chul, who had been detained since 2015, made a public confession to spying for South Korean conservative elements. The DPRK government also later elaborated that he had bribed several Pyongyang residents for information about the country's nuclear weapons program. The men were released as a gesture of good faith ahead of Kim's summit with the erratic u.\$. president.

By all accounts—those of the u.\$. regime, the North Korean government, and the detainees themselves—they were treated well. Kim Dong-chul, the oldest and presumably least vigorous of the men, who also faced the most serious charges, told reporters that he "had to do a lot of labor. But when I got sick, I was also treated by them." This is nothing new. A well-meaning, but ever so slightly kooky, amerikan by the name of Arturo Martinez, who attempted to defect to the DPRK in 2014, said he was treated "extremely well" by authorities, but was repatriated nonetheless. And besides the faux hysteria and Time Life melodrama of the Laura Ling incident, Ling had indeed been treated well in North Korea, despite her charges, and besides being given medical treatment for ulcers, was admittedly able to teach her guards yoga poses of all things. Kenneth Bae, the tourist-proselytizer who admittedly attempted to form some sort of underground christian dissident network in the country, was sentenced to work on a soybean farm, where he received treatment for his diabetes and enlarged heart. Matthew Todd Miller, a man with far too many double consonants in his name, and far too many ridiculous ideas in his head, reported that he had been "prepared for the torture. But instead of that, I was killed with kindness." The 85 year old amerikan Merrill Newman, who was detained for 42 days in 2013, was constantly waited on by physicians, and had his blood pressure and pulse checked four

times a day. Obviously there's a conspiracy afoot to treat detainees decently. In light of this, it is clear that Otto Warmbier, the carceral tourist who returned to the u.\$. in a coma, and upon whom the family refused to have an autopsy performed to prove or disprove mistreatment, was an outlier, and most likely a self-induced case.

The above is only expected from humane captors, but we find it necessary to mention amidst the ridiculous hyperbole and outright defamation of People's Korea. And the attention to the health of prisoners in the DPRK stands in stark contrast to u.\$. prison regimes. The u.\$. incarcerates more people, real and per capita, than any other country on earth. At 750 inmates per 100,000 citizens, it is seven times higher than the next highest industrialized country, Spain. Despite constitutional protections "guaranteed" by Supreme Court ruling in *Estelle v. Gamble* in 1976, treatment in u.\$. prisons is lacking, shoddy, inconstant and expensive. In most states, prisoners are expected to pay copays to get treatment, sums insignificant to the correctional budgets of these states, but prohibitively high to people who can make as little as 12 cents an hour in prison jobs, where basic necessities like toothpaste and deodorant represent several days labor for each item.

According to the public policy initiative at Wharton, Trump's alma mater, lack of access to healthcare in prisons has become "its own form of capital punishment." Denying inmates basic treatment for common diseases like Hepatitis C, or mental health treatment of any kind, as well as punishing inmates who make repeated requests for hospital access, are all used by the carceral state to torture, dehumanize and police a mostly colonized population. Settler colonialism is always willing to cut off its nose to spite its face, and it has done just that by incubating an epidemic of Hep C behind bars, where 17% of inmates are exposed to the disease, compared to 1% of the general population, putting its own population at risk.

And of course the u.\$. doesn't limit its barbarism to prisons. As we speak, Gina Haspel, former CIA blacksite coordinator who oversaw the systematic torture of u.\$. captives, as well as destruction of evidence related to that torture, is awaiting confirmation to become the high inquisitor of the u.\$. apparatus. Haspel, and the u.\$. intel machine, oversaw horrific tortures that have never even crossed the imaginations of the critics of the DPRK, including forcing

## Robbery by the FLDOC Canteen System

by SKS Heruglyphx of USW  
June 2018

While reading a comrade's April 2017 *SF Bay View*, National Black Newspaper, I came across an ad regarding the Texas prisoners' actions regarding the commissary injustice.

This ad helped me realize that the unarmed robbery of the loved-ones of prisoners is not only a Florida atrocity, but a national occurrence. Prisoners in Texas and other states are being used as a means of robbing not only tax payers, but loved-ones of prisoners, who are constantly being punished for supporting prisoners financially and emotionally. The imperialist monopolizers are making hundreds of millions annually through the commissary system. I can't help but confirm and echo the main points of the Texas prisoners' ad:

1. Sub-par and poor quality food items.
2. Faulty electronics that regularly break (after short use).
3. Tennis shoes which tear up after a week of use.
4. Inflated prices and price gouging tactics.
5. Abuse and disrespect from employees of commissaries.

All of the above mentioned is nothing but the truth to which I would love to add more. In Florida, specifically Charlotte Correctional Institution, there exists a staff canteen menu and a prisoner canteen menu. The double standard and financial

*Continued on p. 23...*

food into the anuses of detainees, combining in dystopian fashion two of the most important tools of repression employed by the imperialists; namely force feeding and rape. Besides the usual fare of simulating drowning, exposing inmates to extreme temperatures, and depriving them of sleep, Haspel and her colleagues forced their captives to stand on broken limbs in stress positions, froze at least one captive to death, and admitted to repeated sexual assaults against detainees.

Make no mistake, any u.\$. mainstream publications that attempt only now, after decades, to correct much of their defamatory and, frankly, dehumanizing and racist line regarding People's Korea, it is only because they are run out of the State Department, and are forced at this moment of possible detente to dance to Pompeo's tune, as they always have. U.\$. media is loyal only to power, and no amount of self respect, "journalistic integrity" or any moral inkling will get in its way. ■

# Opresión Nacional en las Prisiones: Todavía se siente fuerte

por MIM(Prisiones)  
Febrero 2018

Los EStados Unidos encierra a los Nuevos Afrikanos a una velocidad de 5 veces más rápido que a los Euro-Amerikanos. La tasa para los Chican@s es de por lo menos 1.4 veces más alta que la de los blancos, y la forma en que las prisiones recogen información sobre los "Hispanos" hace que probablemente este número sea muy bajo.(1) Este exceso dramático de encarcelación de las naciones oprimidas en las prisiones de U\$. no es nuevo. Pero el alto número de gente encerrada es un fenómeno relativamente reciente. En la década de los 60, la disparidad entre las tasas de encarcelación era prácticamente la misma de la de hoy. Pero la población en prisión era mucho menor, de forma que impactaba a mucho menos gente.

En 1960, la tasa de encarcelación de los hombres blancos fue de 262 cada 100,000 residentes blancos de los U\$, y la tasa de hombres Nuevo Afrikanos fue de 1,313; lo cual son 5 veces más que la tasa de los blancos. Para 2010 la disparidad se había elevado hasta 6 veces. Esto significa que los hombres Nuevos Afrikanos eran seis veces más susceptibles a ser encerrados que los hombres blancos. Esta discrepancia tuvo un impacto mucho mayor en 2010 porque las

tasas de encarcelación se dispararon hasta el cielo, empezando en la década de los 70, de modo que para el 2010 la tasa de encarcelación de hombre Nuevos Afrikanos era de 4,347 cada 100,000.(2)

En 2000 la discrepancia en las tasas de encarcelación entre los Nuevos Afrikanos y los blancos empezaron en realidad a bajar, y para el 2015 ya estaba hasta en los niveles de los 60. Entre el 2000 y el 2015 la tasa de encarcelamiento para hombres Nuevos Afrikanos cayó 24%, mientras que al mismo tiempo, la tasa de encarcelamiento para hombres blancos se elevó ligeramente. Entre mujeres vemos la misma tendencia pero con una caída del 50% para las mujeres Nuevas Afrikanas y un 50% de aumento para las mujeres blancas.(3)

## Tasas de hombres Negros y Blancos en prisión

Tenemos que poner estos cambios en contexto. La tasa de encarcelación de Nuevos Afrikanos es todavía increíblemente alta en comparación con la tasa para blancos. La opresión nacional en las prisiones no se ha eliminado, ni de cerca. A la velocidad actual de cambio, tomaría hasta aproximadamente el año 2100 para que haya igualdad de encarcelamiento en la nación.

Pero no podemos ignorar cambios como estos, especialmente cuando son consistentes

a lo largo de un período de 15 años.

Las prisiones se usan principalmente como una herramienta de control social por el gobierno de los EStados Unidos. Las naciones oprimidas siempre han sido una amenaza debido a la relación dialéctica entre los oprimidos y los opresores. Y por eso, las naciones oprimidas enfrentan las tasas de encarcelación mayores. Y los objetivos más grandes son aquellos que organizan el cambio revolucionario, como vimos con las operaciones masivas del COINTELPRO contra el Partido de la Pantera Negra (Black Panther Party) y el Partido de los Señores Jóvenes (Young Lords Party) en la década de los 70.

Así que, ¿por qué el sistema de injusticia criminal cambiaría para disminuir la tasa de encarcelación de Nuevos Afrikanos pero no haría lo mismo para los blancos? Una explicación posible es que los cambios en el sistema de injusticia criminal se han realizado a velocidades diferentes en las ciudades y en áreas no urbanas. La caída en las tasas de encarcelación se debe principalmente a las tasas menores en las ciudades, porque en las zonas rurales no han cambiado.(3) Tal vez veamos que estos cambios se nivelen con el tiempo.

Luego de la proclamación de la emancipación, hemos visto cambios en la opresión nacional en la sociedad Amerikana

*Continúa en la página 23...*

## MIM(Prisiones) es...

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 un parte mayor del estado imperialista siendo usado para prevenir la auto-determinación de las naciones oprimidas. Es por esta razón que vemos a prisioneros en este país como manteniendo la delantera de cualquier movimiento anti-imperialista y revolucionario. Mientras que nuestra organización se enfoca en apoyo al prisionero, creemos que hay una necesidad grave de trabajo para el Maoísta en organizar y educar en muchas áreas en los Estados Unidos. Tenemos la esperanza que alguna gente se inspire por nuestro ejemplo alrededor de prisiones y que lo aplique a su propio trabajo para crear células maoísta y amplíe el movimiento Maoísta dentro 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. La dictadura del proletariado es necesaria. En una dictadura del proletariado la anteriormente mayoría explotada dicta a la minoría, la que promovió la explotación, cómo se debe conducir a la sociedad. En el caso de naciones imperialistas, una dictadura del proletariado de naciones oprimidas en uniónh (JDPON siglas en inglés) debe hacer este papel en donde no hay proletariado interno o una base significativa de masas que favorecen el comunismo.

3. Promovemos en frente unido con todos los que se oponen al imperialismo. El camino a la JDPON sobre las naciones imperialistas incluye en unir a todos aquellos que se puedan unir contra el imperialismo. No podemos pelear contra el imperialismo y pelear contra otros que están ocupados en conflictos de vida y muerte contra el imperialismo a mismo tiempo. Aún 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 cornularon y el pensamiento de MIM ha extendido a través del análisis materialista, el imperialismo extrae súper-ganancias del Tercer Mundo y usa en parte esta riqueza para comprar poblaciones enteras

de supuestos llamados trabajadores comprados por el imperialismo forman un nuevo sector de la sub-burguesía llamada la aristocracia laboral; ésta no es un vehículo para el Maoísmo. Aquellos que trabajan en los intereses económicos de la aristocracia laboral del Primer Mundo forman la masa básica del aprieto-mortal sobre el Tercer Mundo del imperialismo.

5. Nuvas burguesías se formaran bajo el socialismo. Mao guió el ataque para exponer a la burguesía que se desarrolló dentro del Partido Comunista de la Unión Soviética y la campaña para bombardear las jefaturas en su propio país, China. Esas experiencias demostraron la necesidad de revolución continua bajo la dictadura del proletariado. La lucha de clases no termina hasta que el estado se haya anulado y el comunismo de haya alcanzado.

6. La Gran Revolución Cultural de Proletariado en China fue el mayor avance hacia el comunismo en la historia. Apoyamos a la Unión Soviética hasta la muerte de Stalin en 1953, seguida por la República Popular China hasta 1976 como los mejores ejemplos del socialismo moderno en práctica. El arresto de la "cuadrilla de cuatro" en China y el ascenso de Krushchev en la Unión Soviética marcaron la restauración del capitalismo en esos países. Otros experimentos en el desarrollo del socialismo en el siglo XX fracasaron en sobrepasar el modelo Soviético (es decir, Albania), o peor, se quedaron dentro del modo capitalista de producción, generalmente debido al fracaso para romper con la Teoría de las Fuerzas Productivas.

... Continuado de la pág. 23

### ...Opresión Nacional

en varios momentos de la historia. Estos cambios generalmente suceden como respuesta a los movimientos sociales. Las reformas se dieron desde la segregación legal hasta la restricción de la discriminación abierta en ámbitos como el hogar, empleo, y préstamos. Pero estas reformas en realidad no pusieron un fin a estas prácticas; la realidad de la segregación y discriminación continuaron, simplemente cambiaron a formas más sutiles o escondidas. No obstante, podemos decir que en algunos aspectos, las condiciones para las naciones oprimidas dentro de las fronteras de los E\$ta\$os Unido\$ (EE.UU.), han mejorado. Esto no sorprende porque el gobierno de los EE.UU. no puede realmente tener disturbios activos dentro de sus fronteras mientras pelea tantas guerras abiertas e indirectas alrededor del mundo. El imperialismo es más estable cuando puede mantener tranquila a la población de su país natal.

... Continued from p. 21

### ...Canteen

discrimination can't help but be realized once both menus are compared. Prisoners are paying twice as much as staff for the same food items. Some of the most popular food items are listed below for your own concluding.

	staff	prisoners
sodas	.56	.99
honey buns	.70	1.35
chips	.50	.99-1.49
candy bars	.75	1.39
water	.50	.99
oatmeal	.23	.53
poptarts	.56	1.18
soups	.56	.70
ice cream	.93	2.19
danishes	.70	1.28
nutty bars	.47	1.00
saltines	.70	.88
trail mix	.47	1.00-1.28
pizza	1.64	2.98
tuna	1.87	2.47

The above list does not mention hygiene items. However, prisoners are paying exorbitantly for hygiene items that are clearly not worth their price. For example, the \$4 deodorant from prescription care and Oraline-Seccure (meant for indigent prisoners) leaves prisoners musty in just a matter of hours. The \$2.85 prescription care lotion is so generic it dries the skin quick as it moistens it. And it's definitely not meant for Black people. The \$1.12 prescription care shampoo does not lather up and causes more dried scalp and itching than the state soap. There is 99-cent soap claiming to be

En un país imperialista rico, los capitalistas tienen el dinero para integrar parcialmente las semi-colonias, comprándolas con los beneficios del saqueo imperialista. Sin embargo, la opresión nacional está tan arraigada en la sociedad imperialista moderna que no anticipamos la integración total de estas semi-colonias internas. Y por eso, creemos que la distancia entre las tasas de encarcelación de la nación oprimida y la blanca no estará cerca de cerrarse. Pero las corrientes actuales en las tasas de encarcelación se prestan para seguirles la pista. ■

Notas:

1. El Color de la Justicia: Disparidad Racial y Étnica en las Prisiones Estatales, el Proyecto de Sentencia, 14 de junio 2016.
2. La distancia de la encarcelación se amplía entre los blancos y negros, Pew Research Center, 6 de setiembre 2013.
3. Un Misterio de Encarcelación Masiva, El Proyecto Marshall, 15 de diciembre 2017.

anti-bacterial and 50-cent soap, both made by Silk. Neither of these soaps are worth even being given away for free.

Prisoners do not want these canteen items. They complain amongst each other but are too cowardly to write grievances or stop buying from canteen. We all know that it is our loved ones who are being attacked by the state. We all know our families who support us are being extorted, but the needle is just too deep in our veins. Florida only has one canteen vendor (Trinity) leaving us without options or other places to shop. We are simply victims of a monopoly and we are contributing to our own victimization.

It is quite clear that the canteen profits only benefit Trinity and high-ranking members of the state prison system. It is clear that the profits are being used against prisoners rather than for their welfare and genuine rehabilitation programs.

Even in the visiting park, freeworld citizens visiting their loved-ones are forced to pay prisoner canteen prices. This price-gouging is a war against the innocent citizens who support prisoners. It also results in the isolation of prisoners from the outside world and leaves prisoners dependent and vulnerable against the state.

One is left with no choice but the question: where is all the profit from the unarmed robbery of prisoners' loved ones? What is being done with these millions of dollars in profit? This matter must be investigated and objectively challenged. We prisoners surely need to stop perpetuating our own

### WANT TO READ MORE IN SPANISH?

We need volunteers who can read and write well in both English and Spanish to translate for ULK. A fast growing segment of the U.S. prison population is Spanish-speaking migrants. By translating into Spanish, you can help ULK reach out to our imprisoned compañer@s. Write in the put in work! ¡En Lucha!

### Yesterday

by a Texas prisoner

Yesterday, I was a sleeping victim  
victimized by class segregation  
Yesterday, I was comatose, to  
those who inflicted economic degradation  
These Imperialist weapon of mass  
Destruction  
is capitalism smoked screened by  
spiritual materialism  
The irony is that of a materialist in prison  
Yesterday, I was unconscious, to the  
drugs  
and guns that they sponsored  
Yesterday, I was out cold, to the bold  
manipulation, out-of-control of my own  
Yesterday, I dreamed the Amerikkkan  
dream  
thinking living free, was greed  
Today I have awoken, Eyes wide open  
Betita, Corky, Che, Zapata, and Poncho  
have spoken  
The spell is broken ■

victimization by the state of Florida DOC.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This writer exposes one of the many ways that companies and individuals are making money from the prison system in this country. While overall the prisons are run at a financial loss, subsidized for most of their costs by state and federal funds (i.e. taxpayer money), lots of people are still making money off the operation of prisons.

Obviously the prisons' employees (COs, administrators, etc.) are earning a good salary and have an interest in keeping the system going. In some prisons medical is contracted out, and then there are the many companies that sell prisons all the stuff they need to run: from clothing to food to furniture to security equipment. Most of this is funded by a subsidy from the government.

But canteen is a case of the costs falling on prisoners' families. And this is just one of many costs borne by families of prisoners. As we exposed in an article in *ULK 60* "MIM(Prisons) on U.S. Prison Economy - 2018 Update," mass incarceration costs families and the community \$400 billion per year. ■

MIM Distributors  
PO Box 40799  
San Francisco, CA 94140

PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
OAKLAND, CA  
PERMIT #731

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Under Lock & Key No. 62

May/June 2018

24

... Continued from p. 17

### ..2018 Survey

gave this article:

<https://www.cagedbirdmagazine.com/single-post/2017/03/28/50-Companies-Supporting-Modern-American-Slavery> This article includes citations that are significantly out of date and in some cases involve just a few prisoners such as the Victoria's Secret example (VS purchased products for a few years in the early 1990s that involved the labor of 35 prisoners).

4. Amy Julia Harris and Shoshana Walter, 4 October 2017, They thought they were going to rehab. They ended up in chicken plants,

Reveal, The Center for Investigative Reporting.

5. Lan Cao, 2018?, Made in America: Race, Trade, and Prison Labor, Chapman University.

6. Kate Morrissey, 30 December 2017, Class-action lawsuit alleges immigrants are forced to labor in detention, San Diego Tribune.

7. MIM(Prisons), October 2016, Broad Participation in September 9 FAM Prison Strike, Under Lock & Key 53.

8. MIM(Prisons) on U.S. Prison Economy - 2018 Update, February 2018, Under Lock & Key Issue 60.

### ATTENTION SUBSCRIBERS

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.

### ATTENTION CORRECTIONAL AUTHORITIES PLEASE READ THIS CENSORSHIP NOTICE:

As the distributor of *Under Lock & Key* we retain a First Amendment right to correspond with prisoners, just as prisoners retain a First Amendment right to correspond with the outside world. While a rational basis test is allowed for the censorship of publications entering a prison system, such allowance does not allow a blanket ban on publications because prison authorities do not agree with the message or content, which may be political or religious in nature. Censorship regulations must be rational and impose censorship only in furtherance of "an important or substantial governmental interest not related to the suppression

of expression" and relate to "legitimate penological interests." The federal courts have ruled unequivocally that a prison agency censoring inmate publications and mail must provide the distributor or publisher with notice of censorship. This notice must provide articulate reasons for such censorship with specific references to the objectionable material. The distributor/publisher must be given a meaningful opportunity to appeal the censorship decision to a person not involved in the censorship decision. Notice and opportunity to appeal are required by due process. We encourage you to carefully read and understand your agencies policies and procedures, as well as federal case law related to the censorship of incoming mail and publications addressed to prisoners.

If you have any doubt you should consult your agencies legal counsel. We are prepared to exercise our Constitutional rights and appeal censorship which does not adhere to applicable law. Such exercise of our rights may include legal action seeking declaratory and injunctive relief as well as monetary damages and legal fees. Failure to adhere to federal law, your state's administrative regulations and your agency's policies and procedures is evidence of malicious intent to violate our rights. See generally *Pell v. Procunier*, 417 U.S. 817 (1974); *Turner v. Safely*, 482 U.S. 78 (1987).

PLEASE GOVERN YOURSELF  
ACCORDINGLY.