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Publication of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons

How to Compete in a Rigged Electoral System

by an Indiana prisoner
April 2019

I was looking for a purpose in my life. I have been in prison over 10 years. What can I do in this place, I wonder. I hear so many people with dreams, or talents they would like to pursue. What is it that I like or have passion for. Politics is a love of mine, always has been. Also since being locked down, I want to help my people.

I started talking to these conscious brothers on the status of black men in America. One thing led to another and I was given information to contact *ULK*. Then the issue at hand was facing me. In *ULK* 64, I read the article written by a New York prisoner about voting and the mid-term.(1) This article and your reply sparked something in me. I'm not a writer, but I think this issue at hand may be the most important one for us as people.

I understand the writer's views, but also yours as well. I believe the worst thing we can do is decide that we can't change the political landscape. We are in America, and if we like it or not, the system is money and politics. Look, maybe we made a mistake yesteryear, when the leaders in the black community chose to fight for integration instead of us being a sovereign community. That's up for debate, and can be spoken about later. But back to the issue at hand, we didn't fight for sovereignty as a whole, so we must play the hand we have. I heard the same guys who told me about *ULK*, on the walk talking about how we don't need to vote. I also hear that displayed in the African-American Community so much. What difference does it make if we vote Republican or Democratic, they are both the same. Sorta like your reply to the article was stating. I get it, but this is why that thinking leads to the status quo. We can't win not fighting, right? We are not the majority, right? We hold no power in the political sense. We don't make the rules. The only way for us to win is to make the rules work for us.

I would not call myself a communist, but I do agree with a lot of the platform. I also know it's 2 major political parties. You can either work in one of those, or take your ball and go home. You can put resources behind
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Fascism, Imperialism, and Amerika in 2019

by MIM(Prisons)
April 2019

The communists in Germany admonished their fellow Germans after World War II for not heeding their warning that a vote for Hitler was a vote for war. To date, the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) has never promoted one U.S. Presidential candidate over another. In some ways the last two presidents have been notable, as Barack Obama was the first not-white President, and Donald Trump has made some openly chauvinist statements and received support for them. Both elections elicited participation from those who may have been closer to the MIM position of "it's all the same imperialist brutality" in previous elections.

During the 2012 presidential election in France, MIM talked about Jean-Marie Le Pen as part of the fascist camp. Ey was a far-right leader of the "National Rally" party. While Trump doesn't lead any particular white supremacist organization, ey certainly

makes clear eyr support for such groups, and they reciprocate in kind. Trump is very open in promoting various forms of oppression, to the point of promoting terrorism against oppressed peoples.

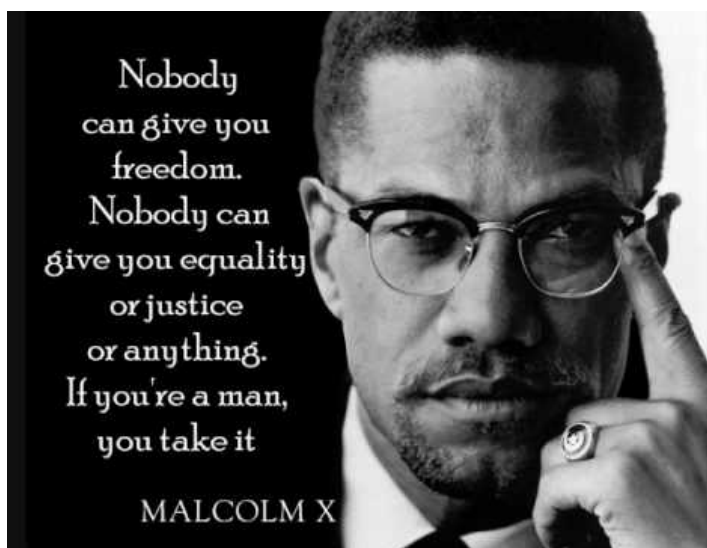
There are examples of politicians openly supporting the ideologies of white supremacy and neo-nazism from both the Democrats and the Republicans and from the earliest beginnings of Amerikan politics. David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, is a modern example of this. A former Republican Louisiana State Representative, Duke was a candidate in the Democratic presidential primaries in 1988 and the Republican presidential primaries in 1992, showing how this ideology crosses party lines and infuses mainstream politics. In 2016, Duke celebrated the presidential victory of Donald Trump, and the vision of his chief advisor Steve Bannon. Bannon's openly xenophobic and chauvinist *Breitbart News Network* contributed to Trump's campaign success, building an alliance of "Alt-Right" forces behind the president. These were many of the same forces that would later lead the infamous march with tiki torches in

Charlottesville, Virginia, chanting Nazi slogans and starting street fights with counter-protestors. These are some of the highlights of the Trump presidency phenomenon that have rightly elicited discussions around whether fascism and white supremacy are seated in the highest office of the United States.

Yet we must remember that the history of Amerika is a history of white supremacy. The country was built on the genocide of indigenous

people and the stealing of land and resources. Then came the enslavement, exploitation and mass slaughter of Africans. Later, the U.S. Constitution codified New Afrikans as inferior to whites. Former Senator, Vice President, and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun blocked the annexation of Mexico on the grounds that only white people

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subscriptions are FREE for prisoners
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What is *Under Lock & Key*?

Under Lock & Key (ULK) is the voice of the anti-imperialist movement within prisons in the United States. It serves as a forum to develop and promote agitational campaigns led by MIM(Prisons) and United Struggle from Within (USW). It is a free newsletter for prisoners in the United States, edited and published by MIM(Prisons). It is mostly written and illustrated by USW and United Front for Peace in Prisons comrades behind bars. ULK is mailed out every other month.

Fighting the injustice system is just one part of the anti-imperialist struggle, and it is important that comrades not lose sight of the connections to the larger battle. For this reason, in addition to news about prisons and prisoner struggles, we also publish more general news and analysis important to the anti-imperialist movement. We welcome support and collaboration from those who are focused only on prison issues, but we also challenge them to see the importance of carrying out their work as part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy.

Our current battles in the United States are legally permitted. We encourage prisoners to join these battles while explicitly discouraging them from engaging in any violence or illegal acts. MIM(Prisons) and its publications explicitly oppose the use of armed struggle at this time in the imperialist countries (including the United States).

What is United Struggle from Within?

United Struggle from Within (USW) is a MIM(Prisons)-led mass organization for U.S. prisoners and former prisoners. USW is explicitly anti-imperialist in leading campaigns on behalf of U.S. prisoners in alliance with national liberation struggles in the United States and around the world. USW won't champion struggles which are not in the interests of the international proletariat. It will also not choose one nation's struggles over other oppressed nations' struggles. USW should work independently, but under the guidance of MIM(Prisons), to build public opinion and independent institutions of the oppressed in order to obtain state power independent of imperialism. Members don't have to agree with MIM(Prisons)'s six cardinal points, but they can't consciously disagree with any of them. See page 12 for campaign info.

What is MIM(Prisons)?

The Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, or MIM(Prisons), is a cell of revolutionaries serving the oppressed masses inside U.S. prisons. We uphold the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and work from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat.

Imperialism is the number one enemy of the majority of the world's people; we cannot achieve our goal of ending all oppression without overthrowing imperialism. History has shown that the imperialists will wage war before they will allow an end to oppression.

As revolutionary internationalists, we support the self-determination of all nations and peoples. We support nations which choose to delink from the imperialist economy, including the right of the internal semi-colonies to secede from the United States. Today, the U.S. prison system is a major part of the imperialist state used to prevent the self-determination of oppressed nations. It is for this reason that we see prisoners in this country as being at the forefront of any anti-imperialist and revolutionary movement.

While our organization focuses on prisoner support, we believe that there is a dire need for Maoists to do organizing and educational work in many areas in the United States. We hope people are inspired by our example around prisons and apply it to their own work to

create more Maoist cells and broaden the Maoist movement behind enemy lines.

MIM(Prisons) expresses general unity with all other groups and outbreaks against imperialism; mass movements against oppression have as many forms as forms of power. In this spirit, we insist on telling the uncompromised truth and discussing and criticizing the strategy and tactics of any given action. MIM(Prisons) encourages everyone, communist or not, to be involved in the struggle against imperialism. MIM(Prisons) distinguishes itself from other groups on the six points below. We consider other organizations actively upholding these points to be fraternal.

- 1. Communism is our goal.** Communism is a society where no group has power over any other group.
- 2. Dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary.** In a dictatorship of the proletariat the formerly exploited majority dictates to the minority (who promoted exploitation) how society is to be run. In the case of imperialist nations, a Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations (JDPON) must play this role where there is no internal proletariat or significant mass base that favors communism.
- 3. We promote a united front with all who oppose imperialism.** The road to the JDPON over the imperialist nations involves uniting all who can be united against imperialism. We cannot fight imperialism and fight others who are engaged in life-and-death conflicts with imperialism at the same time. Even imperialist nation classes can be allies in the united front under certain conditions.
- 4. A parasitic class dominates the First World countries.** As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM Thought has expanded through materialist analysis, imperialism extracts super-profits from the Third World and in part uses this wealth to buy off whole populations of so-called workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new sector of the petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy; they are not a vehicle for Maoism. Those who work in the economic interests of the First World labor aristocracy form the mass base for imperialism's tightening death-grip on the Third World.
- 5. New bourgeoisies will form under socialism.** Mao led the charge to expose the bourgeoisie that developed within the communist party in the Soviet Union and the campaign to bombard the headquarters in his own country of China. Those experiences demonstrated the necessity of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class struggle does not end until the state has been abolished and communism is reached.
- 6. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was the furthest advancement toward communism in history.** We uphold the Soviet Union until the death of Stalin in 1953, followed by the People's Republic of China through 1976, as the best examples of modern socialism in practice. The arrest of the "Gang of Four" in China and the rise of Khrushchev in the Soviet Union marked the restoration of capitalism in those countries. Other experiments in developing socialism in the 20th century failed to surpass the Soviet model (i.e. Albania), or worse, stayed within the capitalist mode of production, generally due to a failure to break with the Theory of Productive Forces.

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

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

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.

... Continued from p. 1

...Elections

third party candidates, and lose, that's an option. Or you can hijack one of the major parties. That is the best and only option for us to get our platform to the mainstream. Look, the Tea Party (say what you will) started the hijacking of the Republican Party, crack after crack. They mobilized people who shared their worldview, forcing candidates to take up their issues or face a primary. This led to a more forthright party, and house of representatives. That allowed them to block President Obama's agenda, and force in their movement. It all led to this racist, bigoted, homophobic, anti-American nationalist, treasonist person who occupies what is supposed to be the people's house. Now it is no longer a Republican Party, it's his followers. They all have bowed down to "Dear Leader".

So we have the blueprint. Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Elizabeth Warren and others are pushing a socialistic platform. We need to mobilize our people to get out and hijack the Democratic Party; that's our only way. We need to force all Democratic politicians to take up more of our platform, or be primaried. We need to start at the grassroots level. Start getting our people or people who share our worldview on board and winning local elections. Then we repeat the playbook of the other side. Before we know it, we will have a party and a president who share our worldview.

I know it's hard work, but that is how we change the game. Other demographics are forcing their issues onto the main stage, besides us. By us saying "what difference does it make" we are not hurting anyone but ourselves. Like it or not, the game goes on if we participate or not. The other side prefers we don't take part. Isn't it funny the other side always are the ones who try to take our voting rights? Wonder why? Now the Democratic Party has not been friends to us, they have hoodwinked and bamboozled us. I get it, we don't trust them, but we must use them as our vessel for change.

I hope to be out soon. I can't wait to start my mission to fight against the status quo. I may not make it out before the next fight, but I hope you take my suggestions up for thought. Please take the fight up, mobilize our base, our future depends on it. He has declared war, it's up to us to fight back.

MIM(Prisons) responds: The author is saying that we must work within the capitalist electoral system if we want to make change. "The only way for us to win, is to make the rules work for us." If that's true, our strategy of trying to take over the Democratic party might make sense. But what if that's not true? What if there's

another way?

We aren't limited to just studying and learning from the history of the United States. We can also learn from the history of other countries. This includes countries that have had successful socialist revolutions. The Soviet Union, China, Albania, Vietnam, Korea, Cuba: all places where they won by forcibly overthrowing the government. None of these victories came through elections.

On the other hand, we can look at a few countries where socialist candidates did win elections. Chile, with the election of Salvador Allende in 1970 is a good example here. Allende tried to implement policies in the interests of the oppressed while in office, and the imperialists saw him as such a threat that they sponsored a coup which ended in Allende's death and the fascist government of Augusto Pinochet taking over in 1973. Implementing socialism in bits and pieces proved impossible in the face of imperialist opposition.

From the many lessons of historical struggles of the oppressed we conclude that the bourgeoisie will never give up power peacefully. For this reason, we know we can't vote them out of power. We have to take power and force them out. A socialist government in the United States would work against the interests of the bourgeoisie, so of course they would oppose it. This includes the bourgeoisie in the Republican and the Democratic parties.

So why were the Trump folks so successful in taking over the Republican party if we can't take over the Democratic party? Well Trump is an imperialist. This is just another brand of imperialism. Variations in imperialism will come and go, and the bourgeoisie will get behind various factions. That's not counter to their interests.

There will also be some local initiatives and candidates where the impact of victory will have a net positive effect on the oppressed. This could be part of strategic organizing locally. But that's very different from working to groom candidates in a long term strategy of changing Amerikan society via the electoral process as this writer is advocating. Yet this writer is advocating for us to groom and promote candidates in a long-term strategy of changing Amerikan society via the electoral process. Why not spend that energy working toward building dual power toward self-determination? Even if people sold out that struggle in the past, there's no reason we can't take it up now. We must move forward with the hand we've been dealt. ■

Notes:

1. a New York prisoner, "Mid-Term Elections, Do We Need to Vote?", September 2018, ULK 64.



- Cut on the dotted line to make a bookmark/flyer about the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP). See the opposite side of this bookmark for info about the 5 Points of Unity.
- Try to get others on board with the UFPP where you're at, and write in to ULK about any shifts in prison politics due to the United Front.
- And we need more artwork the shape of this column for future ULKs!

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Amerikan Fascism and Electoral Politics

by a Kentucky prisoner
April 2019

Before we speak on fascism in Amerika and its awesome powers in centralizing authority over all lower disenfranchised segments of the population, we must first see how it developed and evolved as an international movement intended for the ruling classes. Fascism is a form of totalitarian dictatorship that flourished between World War I and World War II. Similar governments, some modeled after the Italian system, were established later in countries of Europe, Asia and South Amerika.

Fascism as a world political movement is said to have ended with the close of World War II, which ended in the defeat of fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany. However it is my opinion that after the close of WWII, fascism did indeed emerge and consolidate itself in its most advanced form in Amerika. There are also other fascist countries still in existence, that are in open opposition to the instituted government, and in others as an underground movement fighting the government by employing guerilla tactics.

In general, fascism was the effort to create, by authoritarian means, a viable national society in which competing interests were to be adjusted by being entirely subordinated to the service of the nation. The following features have been characteristic of fascism in its various manifestations:

1. An origin at a time of serious economic disruption and of rapid and bewildering social change
2. A philosophy that rejected democratic and humanitarian ideals, however glorifying the absolute sovereignty of the state, the unity and destiny of the people, and the unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the dictator
3. An aggressive nationalism, which called for the mobilization and regimentation of every aspect of national life and made open use of violence and intimidation
4. The simulation of mass popular support, accomplished by outlawing all but a single political party and by using suppression, censorship, and propaganda
5. A program of vigorous action including economic reconstruction, industrialization, pursuit of economic self-sufficiency, territorial expansion, and of course war, which was dramatized as bold, adventurous, and promising a glorious future

Although fascist movements often grew out of socialist origins (for example, in Italy), fascism always declared itself the uncompromising enemy of communism,

with which, however, fascists' actions have less in common. The propertied interests, fearful of revolution, often gave their support to fascism on the basis of promises by the fascist leaders to maintain the status quo and safeguard property. Once established, fascist regimes ruthlessly crushed communist and socialist parties as well as democratic opposition, regimented the propertied interests, and won the potentially-revolutionary masses to the fascist programs.

Thus, fascism may be regarded as an extreme defensive expedience adopted by a nation faced with the, sometimes illusory, threat of communist subversion or revolution. In 1922 Benito Mussolini set up the first successful fascist regime which initially had about 320,000 members. The party was supported at this stage of its development principally by a number of large landowners and industrialists, high-ranking army officers, subordinate government officials, and the bulk of the police. Oppressed to the fascist party were liberals, and democrats who were impotent to cope with it.

Toward the end of 1922 the fascists occupied police headquarters, railway stations, telegraph offices, and other public buildings in the northern cities of Italy. Although the constitutionally-installed government requested Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, to proclaim martial law in order to crush the fascists, the King decided to collaborate with Mussolini and invited him to come to Rome to form a government. Mussolini arrived in Rome 29 October 1922. This was known as the fascists' March on Rome.

After Mussolini's elevation to power, fascism became totalitarian. Expansion was the keynote of Mussolini's foreign policy. Among the specific aims of Italian fascist foreign policy were control of the Adriatic Sea, increase of the European area of Italy, enlargement of Italy's Afrikan empire, and domination of the Mediterranean Sea, which Mussolini called "mare nostrum."

Although highly suspicious and jealous of the German dictator Adolf Hitler, Mussolini found himself pushed into an alliance with Germany in the so-called Rome-Berlin Axis. The alliance led to Italy's entry into World War II on the side of Germany, which proved to be a fateful mistake. Throughout the war the fascist regime was dependent for survival on the superior military and economic resources of Germany. As a result, the German influence became predominant, and in effect, Italy became a vassal of Germany. When the Allies invaded Italy in 1944, the Italian population turned against the fascist regime

and its German overlord. The people rose in revolt in 1944-45, abolished the monarchy, and established a republic.

Amerika has established itself as the mortal enemy of all socialist activity on earth. Remember that fascism allows no genuine opposition to its rule. It is a geopolitical arrangement where only one political party is allowed to exist aboveground, and no oppositional political activity is allowed. Despite the presence of political parties, there is only one legal politics in the U.S. — the politics of corporatism. The hierarchy commands all state power.

Donald Trump's documented congratulatory messages to Putin are not simply diplomatic gestures. Trump is a fascist. Trump, like FDR, was born and bred in a ruling class of families. His role is to form a new fascist regime, much like the "new deal," to merge the economic, political and labor elites. Extreme nationalism has prompted a national emergency to fund a wall to keep Mexicans out. This is much like the violence that was geared at the Indians and against us as blacks.

In my view, worrying who to elect will do us no good. With people like Trump in office the lower class should become more aware of their class enemies. In my view our only recourse is a highly organized class war and then we go on to the restructuring of society. That is the answer.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This author takes a scientific approach to defining fascism. Ey offers five points which define fascism which include economic expansionism and domestic repression along nationalist lines. The first point is of great interest to us: does fascism require a time of serious economic disruption? If so, what does this look like? We didn't see serious economic disruption with the election of Trump, but this author implies that Amerika has been fascist for longer than the Trump administration. So we ask the question: when did this disruption happen and when did Amerika become fascist?

While we find this author's history of fascism on point, we wouldn't say that "fascist movements often grew out of socialist origins" but instead acknowledge that some fascist leaders started off in socialist movements before changing political direction and becoming fascist. This is not surprising as the mass base for fascism is a group communists will also be recruiting from, and we need to be careful that our messages to these people don't push them in the wrong direction of reactionary national self-interest.

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could be free, writing "we have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race." (1) This explains why Puerto Rico never became a state, why the First Nation state of Sequoyah was not accepted until it was subsumed into a white-dominated Oklahoma, and why the admission of Hawaii faced great resistance that was mitigated by accepting a predominantly white Alaska at the same time. (2)

In this article we offer our analysis of the difference between bourgeois democratic imperialism and fascist imperialism. And we will discuss some of the implications of a shift towards fascism for our organizing work. In "Fighting White Supremacy in Amerika" (p. 8) we go deeper into the cultural shift towards increasing white supremacy and our thoughts on ways revolutionaries should respond. We hope this analysis helps others think scientifically about oppression and resistance and the best strategies for organizing in 2019.

What's in a label?

Should we call Trump fascist?

MIM(Prisons) leans towards caution in the use of the term *fascist*. First, we don't want to oversell the distinction between the Trump government and the Obama government. Normalizing imperialism, as if it is progressive, or as if the Hillary Clinton brand would have been less viciously militaristic and brutal for the people of the Third World, is a dangerous outcome of this sort of distinction. And we don't want to confuse people about the potential for progressive results from imperialist elections. We need to be clear that imperialism is brutal and murderous; it is not a kinder gentler condition entirely distinct from fascism.

With integration, it is only in the last 50 years that Amerika has even begun to be conceived of as anything but a white settler

nation, and the brutal history of that white settler nation is imperialism, but not fascism. We are entering a period where the majority of politically active people in this country have not lived in an openly racist political system for the first time in this country's history.

Based on our analysis of the current stage of imperialism, and our caution using the term *fascist*, we don't campaign against the Trump regime because it holds and acts on fascist ideology. We campaign against the U.S. imperialist government because it is imperialist and it is the enemy of the majority of the people in the world. We think that this is an important point to emphasize in our organizing today. We don't want to campaign to change the president, and we don't want to mislead people into thinking what we really need to do is get these fascists out of office. At this point, our other options of Mike Pence, Bernie Sanders, Barack Obama, and Hillary Clinton all have approximately the same enmity toward the Third World and oppressed peoples.

Sometimes we need to be alarmist about terms like *fascism*. Right now, we see the danger of misleading people on this strategic question to be the greater danger. In our work organizing the petty bourgeoisie towards socialism there might be a time when calling parts of the Amerikan government fascist will help to clarify the contradictions.

Imperialism is National Oppression

In recent years there has been a rise in white nationalism and white supremacy among Amerikans. (p. 8) We should not be surprised that racist ideas are growing again; society's ideas reflect its structure. And the structure remains one of national oppression until imperialism is overthrown. It's very hard to justify imperialism without a sense of superiority of some sort. There has to be some reason why virtually everyone in the United States is in the top 10% by income globally, and saying it's because we steal wealth from the rest of the world doesn't go over as easily as just claiming we're more productive (read: superior).

Imperialism is the advanced stage of capitalism where a few powerful nations divide up and colonize the world for profit. It is manifested today most violently against Third World peoples who suffer under brutal dictatorships, which serve their Amerikan imperialist masters. These dictatorships ensure the United States access to cheap labor and raw materials.

"Whether it is Iraq, Afghanistan or the West Bank, it is clear that without openly adopting fascism, the essence of u.s. imperialism and

its allies today is genocide and any tally of the victims of U.S. imperialism will show that it has implemented much more of Hitler's genocidal plans than Hitler did." (3)

Why Identify Fascism?

Imperialism is a global system of exploitation requiring war, forced starvation and murder through denial of medical care and other basic needs. Imperialism kills millions! Fascism is imperialism without the cover. Fascism is more overt. When the imperialists are forced to turn to fascism, we can win more of the middle forces to our side as they revile in disgust.

So we need to know when we are approaching fascism (and of course when we are in it) because our strategy and tactics will change to address this new situation. In both bourgeois democracy and fascism our overall orientation focused on overthrowing imperialism is the same. Yet we see two likely changes:

1. Our definition of who are our friends and who are our enemies will likely change as we make alliances with anti-fascists among the classes that are not anti-imperialist under bourgeois democracy.
2. Our organizing strategy and tactics will change to focus on the fight for democratic rights and defend the targets of fascist brutality.

"The difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism is a matter of quantitative changes leading to a qualitative change. The qualitative differences are relevant to us in terms of their effect on our policies towards non-proletarian classes." (3)

The key is defining when that qualitative change takes place, so we can prevent it or, failing that, appropriately respond to it. And in anticipating the qualitative change we need to ask if we are currently seeing an increase in quantitative changes. In terms of sustained quantitative changes within U.S. borders, a few things might be happening that would be important to note. None of these are required for a shift to fascism, but they are still potential identifiers.

1. Declining economics of the majority, the petty bourgeoisie. As the petty-bourgeoisie loses the economic privileges that put them firmly in the supporting-imperialism camp, they will have more potential to embrace communism as being in their material interests. But they will also be more easily rallied to fascism as an ideology that demands those privileges as a birthright.
2. We might see increasing incidents of white supremacy as quantitative changes leading towards the qualitative change to fascism.

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Revolutionary Projects Often Fail Due to Lack of Political Consciousness join MIMP's study courses

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Denial of Voting Rights Exposes Amerikan "Democracy"

by an Arkansas prisoner
April 2019

In response to "Mid-Term Elections, Do we Need to Vote?" in *ULK 64*, I wholeheartedly agree that we should be talking about elections.(1) I believe anyone wanting to see society progress would desire their voice be heard in the electoral process.

Here are two issues we can fight for. Both issues bring an opportunity to work with others for the collective good of all.

1. Voting rights for prisoners. We are all part of society, whether living in Freeworld or Behind The Wall. As part of society, our voices deserve to be heard. The time has come for disenfranchisement of the incarcerated masses to end! Any organization or individual working toward improving inmates' lives and living conditions should be well-equipped to lobby for voting rights for prisoners.
2. Ballot access for third parties. Ballot access laws vary from state to state. For many states, it's a case of the foxes guarding the hen

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3. Heightened class struggle is a likely precursor to fascism. This presents such a risk to the imperialists that they use fascism to put down the struggle.

"Democratic" Imperialism or Fascist Imperialism

Communists define fascism as a form of imperialism. This is based in our study of the history of fascist systems. There are two forms of imperialism: "democratic" imperialism and fascist imperialism. Fascist imperialism is a dictatorship of the most extremely reactionary elements of finance capital. When talking about governments and countries, we do not use the term "fascist" unless they are imperialist.(4) The exception is that fascism can be imposed by an imperialist government from the outside through a puppet government. But the key point here is that fascism is imperialism. A fascist state power is a capitalist state power.

Including "imperialist" in our definition of fascist states excludes some countries and governments from the label, but it doesn't help identify what we should call fascism." Our most commonly-used reference on this comes from Dimitrov: Fascism is "the open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital."(5) The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is not

house. Both Democrats and Republicans have a vested interest in keeping very restrictive access laws in place. Regardless of political affiliation: Communist, Socialist, Libertarian, Constitutional, Green, or Independent, all have an interest in less restrictive ballot access laws.

MIM(Prisons) responds: Voting is considered a fundamental right in capitalist society. One that is required for democracy to function. The fact that this right can be taken away from 6.1 million people because of a felony conviction illustrates who is and is not included in Amerikan bourgeois democracy.

And it's not just that prisoners and those convicted of a felony can't vote. What about all the workers in this country who don't have citizenship? They contribute essential labor to the economy, and money in taxes, but will never be eligible to have a say in elections.

And further, it's true that ballot access laws are very restrictive. And these restrictions are in place to help keep the

open when the people are allowed redress, through the courts, etc. In the open terroristic dictatorship you stop raising money for legal fees, and start stockpiling supplies.

So what will fascism look like? Will we just know it when we see it?(see p. 6 for more historical context on this question) Certainly the suspension of bourgeois democratic rights should be a sign that we are no longer in a bourgeois democracy. But sometimes this is insidious. Bourgeois democratic rights don't exist for migrants. They are severely limited in oppressed nation communities with large lumpen populations. And many new laws, such as the Patriot Act, have been passed to limit civil liberties in recent decades. The Trump administration is continuing this trend, stepping up voter suppression while also attempting to add a census question about citizenship. But unlike these moves, which primarily target oppressed-nation people, the fascist suspension of bourgeois democracy will be felt by all segments of society. In that sense we can ask ourselves, "is a white petty-bourgeois persyn likely to be killed or imprisoned just for advocating communism?" If the answer is "no," then bourgeois democratic rights are still in place. ■

Notes:

1. Conquest of Mexico, by John C. Calhoun, 1848.
2. "The Political Dealmaking That Finally Brought Hawaii Statehood", *Smithsonian.com*, June 15, 2017.
3. MIM 2002 congress, "Theses on Fascism in 2002".
4. "The Strategic Significance of Defining Fascism", *MIM(Prisons)*, November 2016.
5. George Dimitrov, *Against Fascism and War*, New York: International Publishers, 1986, p2

established power structure in place.

These are problems with Amerikan "democracy" that we should expose. They help underscore the truth that this is not a democracy at all; it is a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This particular dictatorship happens to serve the majority of the people living within Amerikan borders. Amerikan citizens get some really valuable benefits from living in such a wealthy country. This includes being paid wages higher than the value of their labor. They are basically being bought off to keep the country peaceful so the bourgeoisie can continue to plunder the Third World.

So far, we're totally in line with the writer's position. But where we diverge is on the question of what to do about voting rights and access. Beyond exposing this situation to expose the hypocrisy of capitalism, should we also put our time and resources into the campaign to fight for these rights? This is where we argue that there is something fundamentally wrong with Amerikan "democracy" that can't be fixed by getting access to the ballot for more people. Even if those who gain access are primarily the oppressed within U.S. borders, this will not fix Amerikan "democracy."

Fighting for voting rights implies there is value in voting in imperialist elections. If all the disenfranchised former prisoners had voted for Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump, would that improve the conditions for the oppressed in the world? How about if Bernie Sanders wasn't suppressed by the Democrats and all former prisoners voted for em? Sanders, who supports U.S. military intervention and protectionist economic policies, including closed borders, was excluded by the Democrats. Perhaps expanding beyond a two-party system would have allowed Sanders to compete in the election. But we still have only imperialist candidates. And no anti-imperialist candidate can be elected as president of the dominant imperialist power in the world. We can't take down imperialism through the ballot, we can only do that through armed struggle.

With that said, there can be value to fighting electoral battles on a local scale. In these cases it's possible to win some victories that will set up better conditions for revolutionary organizing. For instance Chokwe Lumumba was elected Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi.(2) Lumumba was Vice President of the Republic of New Afrika. This is a situation where the oppressed have an opportunity to build independent power and used local elections to further this work. Under suspicious circumstances, Lumumba died eight months after taking office.(2)

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Fighting White Supremacy in Amerika

by MIM(Prisons)
April 2019

There was a significant increase in white supremacist activism in response to the election of President Obama. And another upswing around the election of President Trump. We see this as a cultural phenomena, as economic conditions for the Amerikan nation are not declining.(see p. 10) These activists are not part of the imperialist government. We want to distinguish between fascism as state power, a terroristic dictatorship of imperialism, and the ideology of white supremacy and extreme national chauvinism. In this article we will look more closely at the latter phenomenon in Amerikan society. As revolutionaries we need to think about what the rise in white supremacy means and what we can do to fight for a scientific understanding of the equality of all nations.

Defining White Supremacy

The white supremacists often look to Nazi Germany as an ideal society, and promote white nationalism. We see these views in a

range of right-wing organizations calling themselves neo-Nazis, white supremacists, white nationalists, and some even calling themselves revolutionary anti-capitalists. We use the term *fascist* to identify these organizations as they all espouse the genocide of, or forcible separation of oppressed nations from Amerikan prosperity, as a way of promoting the superiority of white people within Amerika.

The vast majority of politics in the United States are white nationalist. We will use the term *white supremacist* here to refer to those who explicitly believe that white people are a separate race, and this racial category denotes inherent superiority.

White Supremacy Rising

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) monitors what they call "hate groups" and "hate crimes," releasing an annual summary report and keeping public dossiers of organizations and individuals on their website. The SPLC includes oppressed-nation nationalist organizations in this definition, including some

revolutionary nationalist groups. In spite of this major ideological error, we can use their data to get a picture of what's going on.

In 2017, a post-Charlottesville *Washington Post* / *ABC News* survey found that 9% of Americans (328 million people) thought it was fine to hold neo-Nazi or white supremacist views. And according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University at San Bernardino, hate crimes in the six largest U.S. cities were up 20% from 2016.(1)

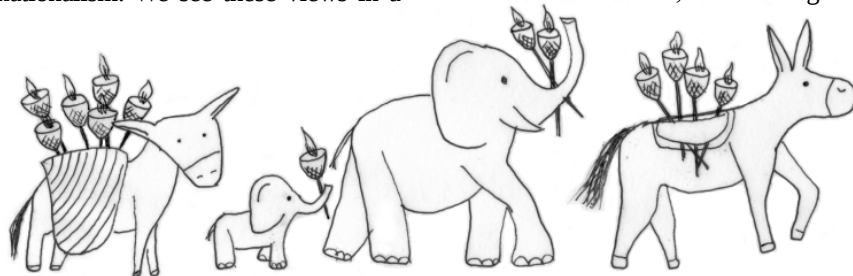
In 2017, in the early months of Trump's presidency, there was an upswing in white nationalist activism. Online organizations like the Daily Stormer and Stormfront saw dramatically increased interest (Daily Stormer: 2016 summer 140,000 views per month up to 750,000 in August 2017; Stormfront gained 30,000 new users between January and August 2017). This lines up with the SPLC findings that neo-Nazi groups grew 22% in 2017. At the same time they recorded a 20% increase in Black nationalist groups. The SPLC correctly identifies this as a reaction to rising white supremacy.(1) In 2018 the SPLC again reported an increase in white nationalist groups, up 50% from 2017. The previous all-time high number of "hate groups" identified by the SPLC was in 2011, shortly after Obama took office as President. 2018 marked the fourth year in a row of increased numbers of "hate groups" after a decline over the previous four-year period.(2)

Our observation of white supremacist activism affirms the SPLC statistics on the growing membership and popularity of these organizations. And we conclude that there is in fact a rising sentiment of Amerikan nationalism in this country. The conditions of the petty-bourgeoisie have not worsened, so this is not a response to declining economic status.(see p. 10)

Culture Driving Reactionary Shift

Conditions for oppressed nations have changed over the past few decades. This is seen in laws preventing various forms of overt discrimination, affirmative action in college admission, and growing opportunities for petty bourgeois New Afrikan and Chican@ advancement. Further, culturally overt racism is considered unacceptable by a growing segment of the population. The white population in the United States will soon be less than 50% of the total. And Obama was elected president. While not truly impacting their economic situation, the culture created by these changes is seen as a threat by many in the

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... Continued from previous page ...**Voting**

Single-issue organizers who don't see the opportunity available to us in building toward revolution should definitely focus on the two campaigns this author suggests. People who are building dual power, like in Jackson, and have electoral politics as a specific piece of their overall strategy, should go for it if that's what they determine is the way to move forward in their conditions at this time. And bringing in people who support electoral politics generally to support a campaign for a specific candidate like Lumumba is an agreeable tactic.

As revolutionaries, we know better than to expect liberation from elections, and we need to be clear about that. The recent mayoral election in Oakland, California holds an example of playing up both sides of this contradiction. When Cat Brooks, an admired New Afrikan nationalist and radio personality, ran for Mayor of Oakland in 2018, ey was clear that ey was running for the

position because that's what the community ey organizes with asked of em. When introducing eir campaign over the radio waves, ey was clear that eir campaign was about issues, organizing, and mobilization — not a government office. And ey rallied support among many sectors of society, not just the revolutionaries and anti-capitalists. In the context of a campaign like this, revolutionaries can use elections to build the movement. We always need to be clear with people that we won't be winning, as a movement, through the ballot box. We hold up these two examples (Jackson and Oakland) as models of how to incorporate electoral politics into revolutionary organizing in a way that pushes our struggle forward rather than subsuming the revolution into Amerikan "democracy." ■

Notes:

1. a New York prisoner, "Mid-Term Elections, Do We Need to Vote?", September 2018, ULK 64.
2. Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons), "Election Begs Question of the Road to Dual Power in New Afrika", June 2013, ULK 33.
3. MIM(Prisons), "Mayor Chokwe Lumumba Dead - Demand An Autopsy!", March 2014, ULK 37.

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white nation. The rise in white-supremacist sentiments is in part a response to a cultural phenomenon. Trump's campaign slogan has been understood by people on all sides to really mean "Make America White Again."

Along with the material shift in national makeup of the population has come phenomena in the culture that have made many young white males defensive, and wanting to retreat into that identity of being a white male. Bourgeois ideas of race, identity and individualism have shifted the legitimate critique of a white male power structure to one of micro-managing behaviors. The petty-bourgeois obsession with lifestyle politics and its unscientific distortions of the analysis of oppression made by revolutionaries has contributed to the recent popularity of white supremacist ideas, especially in online forums.

In research for our book *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, Kathleen Belew found that throughout American history post-war periods corresponded with rises in white power vigilantism and radical violence more than other factors, such as immigration, economics, or political populism. In other words, the experiences of being an occupying force in the Third World brings people over to violent white supremacy. This is a validation of Zak Cope's thesis that white nationalism cannot be abolished within the imperialist system dominated by the United States. It may be tempered at home, in times of stability, among those who never think about the brutal slaughter their country is waging against people of the oppressed nations. But those doing that killing must come up with ideological justifications for their actions.

We've discussed previously that identifying as white is to identify as oppressor.(3) To deny this is to deny the structure of imperialism in the world today. It is the task of communists and progressives in European/Euro-settler countries to discourage people from identifying with white pride, and celebrating the genocidal, colonial, and settler behavior of our respective nations. Currently, there is a growing population of young petty-bourgeois white men who feel persecuted in a racist and determinist way. The fact that the dominant ideology being presented against white supremacy is bourgeois identity politics has led to a heightening of conflict, without any real solutions on the table.

As contradictions heighten, people will pick sides. That is inevitable. But some of

the contradictions that are feeding white nationalism in the United States should be avoidable. The lack of a scientific, internationalist voice in the mainstream dialogue is pushing this country in dangerous directions.

Labor Aristocracy and White Nationalism

The labor aristocracy, the class of people in imperialist countries who have been bought off with spoils of the exploitation of Third World peoples, is a critical group in our analysis of white supremacy and fascism within the United States. We distribute H.W. Edwards' book titled *Labor Aristocracy: Mass Base of Social Democracy*.(4) Yet, in 2005, MIM passed a resolution titled, "The labor aristocracy is the main force for fascism."(5) How can one class be the mass base for two different systems? Especially a petty-bourgeois class, which Marxism has seen as not having the strength to impose its will on other classes.

Really, social democracy and fascism are just two sides of the same coin. This was seen practically in 1930s Germany, where both forces vehemently opposed the communists. These systems align with both the left and right wings of white nationalism in the United States. The left wing struggles with the imperialists for more handouts, while the right struggles against the oppressed nations to extract more wealth, leading to outright theft and other forms of primitive accumulation. The majority petty-bourgeois classes in the imperialist countries may rally to the right for fascism because the falling rate of profit leads the imperialists to share less of the spoils of imperialism with this class. Social democracy is also a push for more sharing from the imperialists, even when conditions are not particularly getting worse. As such, the Americans rallying for more pay are reactionary nationalists, even if they disavow overt racism of the fascist type.

Some of the most radical elements of fascist mass organizations present themselves as anti-capitalist in these early stages, so it is not uncommon for people to mistake fascism for a movement of the petty-bourgeoisie to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The ascent of full-blown fascism is dependent on the ability to rally a relatively privileged homecountry working class to the cause of fascism. But fascism is inherently a movement for capitalism. The goal may be to put different people in power, but they are still the bourgeoisie once they take power, because they will have control of the means of production.

And in spite of the aspirations of some, the petty-bourgeoisie is not going to rally

enough power to overthrow the imperialist bourgeoisie. At best, they can hope to embolden and support the wing of fascist imperialists in their battle against the democratic imperialists. This is the historic role of the petty bourgeoisie; they are not a decisive class in the capitalist system. This doesn't mean we should ignore them. As an imperialist country edges towards fascism, it is well worth the revolutionary's time to try to push the petty-bourgeoisie away from fascism. But we should do this with our eyes wide open, aware of their class interests and cultural influences.

Fight with Science

We are anti-imperialists first and foremost. Imperialism embodies the principal contradiction that must be resolved to move society forward the fastest. For some, anti-fascism is principal in their lives because white supremacists are actively targeting their bourgeois democratic rights. And in prisons, oppressed people find themselves having to deal with fascists in their daily lives, whether working for the state, as fellow prisoners, or both. As a matter of self-defense, obviously anti-fascism against non-state actors can become primary for some. But for our movement overall, as internationalists in the First World, anti-imperialism must be our priority.

In Germany leading up to Hitler and the Nazi party taking power, conditions for the German workers declined greatly. These workers were already part of the privileged class that we call labor aristocracy. But after World War I the German economy was devastated and the result was this severe decline in economic privileges. In spite of these conditions, the majority of German people did not rally against fascism. There was a relatively strong communist movement in Germany at the time, but even

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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).

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.

Economic Update: Amerikkans Prospering in 2019

by S.A. Ternint
April 2019

The u.\$. economy has succeeded in stabilizing itself, at least for the near future. As reported previously (1,2), the majority of amerikans are prospering; their pockets lined with the bribes of imperialism, the labor aristocrats of the united \$nakes are unlikely to support genuine socialism any time soon.

In 2007, amerika faced an economic downturn. Excessive lending allowing amerikans to buy overvalued houses led banks to the point of collapse when debts could not be repaid. As the effects of the crisis spread, stocks fell, jobs were lost and the economy began to contract. The financial crisis has been rightly recognized as the worst to affect the First World since the Great Depression. However, it has also been rightly recognized as being of lesser severity, earning it the moniker the Great Recession.

And since then? The state of the amerikan economy has been not that of crisis but of recovery. Unemployment peaked in October 2009 at 10.0%. After that, it steadily declined. In early 2019, almost a decade later, unemployment now sits at 4.0%. In

fact, by this measure the u.\$. economy is doing better than ever. Monthly unemployment figures in 2006, before the crisis, were around 4.5%, 4.4% at the lowest. In 2018, they were around 4.0%, with the highest being 4.1% in the beginning of the year.(3) Labor force participation has decreased 2% since October 2009, but is at an average value over the last 65 years.(4) Another indicator of economic prosperity, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, has grown over the past five years, surpassing 25,000 points and setting 15 all-time record highs in 2018.(5) The bull market does not just enrich a few bourgeoisie: with 55% of amerikans owning stocks, the majority of the u.\$. population is petty-bourgeois and benefits from rising stock market. (6)

In 2017, Americans spent, on average, more than five hours a day pursuing leisure, a number essentially constant over the preceding decade.(7) Between 2009 and 2018, average wages increased by 23%, faster than the rate of inflation.(8,9) As 2018 drew to a close, the average hourly wage in amerika was \$27.53 (median hourly wages have seen similar steady increases to just over \$23).

Contrast this state of affairs with China, where the hourly wage in 2016, adjusted for

purchasing power parity, was \$6.39. Or India where it is \$3.10.(10) In China, hourly pay is less than a quarter of that in the u.\$. In India, it is less than an eighth. It is clear that this wage disparity can only exist because amerikans benefit from the exploited surplus value of Third World labor.(11) So-called socialist groups in the United States "fight for 15," ignoring both the low wages paid in other parts of the world and the fact that many workers inside u.\$. borders are, by virtue of nationalist immigration policies designed to preserve amerikkkan wealth, considered "illegal" and unable to benefit from a higher minimum wage.

Despite the fact that the numbers above have been adjusted for inflation and geographical differences in purchasing power let's entertain the supposition that some aspect of the cost of living has not been accounted for and that amerikan workers are still being exploited. If amerikans were truly being exploited, then they would have little to no property or wealth of their own. However, 64% of amerikans own a home, about the same as in the mid 1990s.(12) This number is fairly stable; since the 1960s, homeownership rates have fluctuated in a fairly narrow range, peaking close to 70% in 2004 and never falling below 62.9% since 1964.(13) In 2018, the average u.\$. home had an asking price of over \$200,000.00.(14) Many amerikans own their homes outright, while others may have a mortgage and look forward to outright ownership in the future. An amerikan with a 30-year mortgage, for example, expects that they will pay off their home in 30 years and enjoy a comfortable retirement in it. Ignoring issues of credit, interest and down payment that would automatically exclude Third World workers, a Chinese worker attempting to buy the same house with a quarter of the income would need to spread out payments over 120 years, while an Indian worker would need to labor for literal centuries. The average amerikan dwelling, leaving out furniture, cars and other luxuries, already represents a greater accumulation of wealth than the typical Third World worker could make in eir lifetime.

And it is not a question of a vast economic divide within the u.\$. Even among amerikans with an income below the national median, over half owned a home in 2018.(15) The majority of amerikans are therefore in possession of considerable wealth, which they invest in assets and spend on plush accommodations. The typical amerikan acts more like a member of the bourgeoisie than of the proletariat.

There remain significant economic differences between the wealth of whites and

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...White Supremacy

they could not win over the masses to the side of anti-fascism. The German communists made serious mistakes.(6) We must study those mistakes, but we also need to understand that we can't count on the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie pushing them to communism.

We need to work now to push the petty bourgeoisie in imperialist countries on the road towards revolutionary thought, even while recognizing that their class interests will keep the majority firmly in the imperialist camp. We are targeting the scientific non-voter: those who might be rallied to the scientific-sounding arguments of white supremacy, and who are pushed towards fascist ideology by all the idealism / metaphysics spouted by people claiming progressive politics.

As a group, the white nation is reactionary because their economic interests are tied up with imperialism, but this does not mean that all white individuals are reactionary, especially youth. And we want to push for accountability among the white nation. With this in mind, we see the need for a mass organization that will focus on targeting oppressor-nation audiences

and directly working to prevent the rise of fascist ideology.

As an alternative to white supremacist views, there needs to be a culture of taking responsibility among the imperialist-country populations. We should be working hard to make imperialist-country populations take responsibility for what their nations have done and continue to do to oppressed nations around the world, perhaps in the form of calls for reparations. The goal is to increase scientific thinking, increase persynal responsibility for one's nation's behavior, and push the oppressor nation away from white supremacist views, toward action in the form of nation suicide. ■

Notes:

1. 2017: The Year in Hate and Extremism, Southern Poverty Law Center, February 11, 2018.
2. The Year in Hate: Rage Against Change, Southern Poverty Law Center, February 20, 2019.
3. a California prisoner, "To Identify as White is to Identify as Oppressor," February 2017, ULK 55.
4. Get Labor Aristocracy, Mass Base of Social Democracy by H.W. Edwards by sending in \$12 or equivalent work-trade to our address on p. 1.
5. See the archive of the MIM etext site at <https://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/wim/cong/fascismcong2005.html>
6. This article is not an analysis of the mistakes of the German communists. To read more on this topic, request our "Fascism and Contemporary Economics Study Pack." Send in \$3 or equivalent work-trade to the address on p. 1.

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Weeding Out the Roots of Imperialism

by an Indiana prisoner
March 2019

We see now in these times a great number of mass movements springing up and struggling for particular causes. A new generation of activists forming and struggling against ever more specific issues. For almost any social issue affecting anyone in the United States today you will find some type of movement underway to combat it. From racism, sexism, religious intolerance, wages, to police brutality, prison reform and sentencing reform, etc.

These kinds of issues have more or less always existed here in the United States and mass movements have more or less always accompanied them. However, not much has been accomplished. Every one of these issues and forms of oppression continue to plague society, with some of them becoming even more acute. Of course, to many, much has appeared to have changed; with some reforms made and concessions given, the great tactic of pacification and distraction has been utilized. But after generations of struggle and "victories" (reforms) why is it that these problems continue to exist?

These things are like weeds: you can chop them down and it may appear as if they have been removed or cut so low that they are no longer perceived as problems, but they grow right back because the roots were not ripped out. This leaves one mowing the same patch of weeds week after week.

All social movements that aren't struggling to eliminate the root cause of these forms of oppression are only battling non-principal contradictions. This doesn't mean that these issues aren't important, it just means that they are merely effects of the principal contradictions, not their cause. They are by-products of the system that, like weeds, constantly reproduces itself so long as its base remains intact.

What is the base from which these non-principal contradictions originate? It is the mode of production: capitalism. It is the economic base that created and perpetuates these forms of oppression people continue to fight. What people continue to fight is the superstructure that protrudes from the base. But these types of struggles will be an eternal one if we continue to fight what appears to be the cause of oppression instead of its essence.

Karl Marx's scientific study of history, and sociology in particular, allowed him to demonstrate how our material conditions determine our social relations with each other. Let's hear Marx putting forth this concept:

"Assume a particular state of development in the productive faculties of man and you will get a particular form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce, and consumption and you will have a corresponding social constitution, a corresponding organization of the family, of orders or of classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society. Assume a particular civil society and you will get particular political conditions which are only the official expression of civil society."

So goes the materialist conception of history. But we don't have to take Marx's word for it. We can analyze history and see for ourselves how each different stage of

development of the productive forces and the mode that these forces were subsumed produced its own social relations peculiar to that mode of production. And with that, its own contradictions, whether they be manifested in culture, class, gender, "race," etc. This demonstrates that our material relations have been the basis of our relations.

This is the concept of the base (mode of production) producing the superstructure (social relations, politics, laws, ideology, morality, desires, etc.). We use this concept to show that a lot of the forms of oppression that we struggle against are produced by the nature of the economic foundation that we are dominated by. It has produced and continues to reproduce these contradictions.

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...Economics

the wealth of New Afrikans and Chican@s within U.\$. borders. But even with that disparity, the vast majority of U.\$. citizens are profiting from the exploitation of the Third World, giving them a solid economic interest in imperialism. In a future article we will provide an update on the economic status of oppressed nations within U.\$. borders.

A Boom in False Consciousness

In the bourgeois media we've seen a recent uptick in pieces examining the growing generational divide. Older commentators bemoan the laziness and entitlement of millennial (born in 1981-1996), while younger commentators decry the indulgence and thoughtlessness of baby boomers (born 1946-1964) who have depleted the Earth's resources and left no economic opportunities for future generations. The former is the typical "kids these days" grousing. Disproving the latter: homeownership among people aged 35 and under has gone from 64.0% in 1994 to 64.4% in 2018.(16) In other words, economic opportunity has actually increased for younger amerikans. Millennial wealth has more than doubled since 2007, with the other generations seeing either a net increase in wealth or a partial recovery in the value of their sizable assets since the financial crisis.(17)

Any discussion of a generational gap in economic opportunity is false consciousness. Nothing could underscore this point further than the fact that any generational disparity in wealth will be rendered moot when the millennial children of bourgeois boomers receive their inheritances. In fact, it will not even take that long. Just as aristocratic scions of yore could remain resident in the family manor, or plantation, and not have to worry about

actually working for a living, young "professionals" (i.e. those tasked with administrating the parasitic u.\$. economy) can buy large homes in expensive metropolitan areas because they receive financial assistance from their parents.(18)

Amerikans, as a whole, enjoy high wages and a comfortable lifestyle not available in the Third World. The majority of amerikans possess considerable wealth in the form of houses and are closer to the petty-bourgeois than the proletariat in their economic position. Because of this economic interest, the Amerikan populace is unlikely to support a genuine communist revolution. Without a solid internationalist perspective, any talk of socialism within amerika will be a phony national "socialism," at best redistributing from one tier of the labor aristocracy to another and at worst heightening the violence inherent to international superexploitation. ■

Notes:

1. Wiawimawo, "Building United Front, Surrounded by Enemies: Case Study of the U.S. Housing Market Decline," ULK 17 (2010).
2. Wiawimawo, "Amerikans Richer Than Ever," ULK 42 (2015).
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate for Persons 16 and over" (LNS14000000).
4. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Trading Economics, "United States Labor Force Participation Rate".
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6. Gallup, "In Depth: Stock Market".
7. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Average hours per day - leisure and sports" (TUU10101AA01013585).
8. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Average hourly earnings of all employees - total private, seasonally adjusted" (CES0500000003).
9. Coinnews Media Group, CPI data, Inflationcalculator.com.
10. Gordon, L. and Mohiuddin O. "China Still Lucrative for Businesses Despite the Rising Wage Rates." Euromonitor International (2017).
11. MCS, "Imperialism and its Class Structure in 1997".
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13. U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 14. Quarterly Homeownership Rates for the U.S. and Regions: 1964 to Present."
14. U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 11A/B. Quarterly Median Asking Rent and Sales Price of the U.S. and Regions: 1988 to Present."
15. U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 17. Quarterly Homeownership Rates by Family Income: 1994 to Present."
16. U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 19. Quarterly Homeownership Rates by Age of Householder: 1994 to Present."
17. R. Fry, "Gen X rebounds as the only generation to recover the wealth lost after the housing crash" (Pew Research Center, 2018).
18. H. Seligson, New York Times "The New 30-Something," 2 March 2019.

United Struggle from Within

CA USW PROMOTE PEACE DURING NDPF INTEGRATION

Last year California USW made a renewed call to focus on building the United Front for Peace in Prisons in the context of the new Non-Designated Programming Facilities that are integrating SNY and GP populations. This has been the major divide in CA for some time. And while many are uncertain and wary, this is also a potential opportunity to bridge that gap. Keep sending in your reports on successes and failures in building peace during the integration process. See p. 13 and California USW Primer for more info.

BUILD A UNITED FRONT FOR PEACE IN PRISONS

Organize locally to promote the United Front for Peace in Prisons and an end to conflict amongst prisoners. See page 3 for more info on what the UFPF is about and how you can get involved, including a flyer you can use to share with others.

SPREAD UNDER LOCK & KEY

Every subscriber should pass this issue of *ULK* on to someone else. Even better if you can get them to actually read it! We're happy to send you a replacement copy for the one you passed along.

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!

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, NY, NC, OK, OR, SC, and TX. 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.

MAKE *ULK* A MONTHLY NEWSPAPER

MIM(Prisons) has set the goal of making *ULK* monthly by 2022. Our tactics to build for this include expanding our distributors and funders on the street. USW comrades can help by recruiting individuals or institutions you know that might be willing to carry, distribute or fund *ULK* on a regular basis. Have them get in touch.

Many Angles to Work On

by a Virginia prisoner
March 2019

26 December 2018 — A lot of situations have been happening since my last letter. As you can see my location has changed once again. Reason being is because at the last/previous slave-pen that held me many prisoners, including myself, filed informational complaints and grievances on a situation that occurred with two pig-officers. To make a long story short, these two pigs taunted and encouraged a mentally-ill prisoner to cut his wrist with a razor-blade. While this mentally-ill prisoner is in the shower or even in his cell, he is not allowed to be in possession of a razor. This is a rule laid by River North Correctional Center (RNCC), and of course this incident happened in the Restrictive Housing Unit (segregation). Knowing this prisoner came from the SCORE unit, which is a unit that houses mentally-ill prisoners, these two officers was excited to attempt to get this prisoner to slice his wrist. Well, the prisoner did cut his wrists.

Now, this is where everything begins to hit the fan. These two pig-officers (C.O. Devine and the C.O. Denton) began to panic. The prisoner is bleeding out and now has to be rushed to the medical unit. Both pigs are immediately questioned by their superiors as to how the prisoner got hold of an open razor.

They lied and tried to stage the whole incident as a self-motivated suicidal attempt.

Their superior, Sgt. May, tells two things: 1) to search the prisoner's cell and see if they could find anything that could assist their claim, and 2) if they're unsuccessful, find other prisoners on the tier to open as many razor casings as they can to support the pigs' cause. How I know all this? Well for one I'm on the tier it occurred, two, C.O. Devine came and practically begged me to help him get out of that situation. I felt disgusted, angry and disrespected!!!

Right then and there, I began to organize the unit to act in assistance with the mentally-ill prisoner and to expose the corruption and wickedness of RNCC's pig-staff. We filed paperwork, wrote out to ACLU, the DOC, the media, and got our lawyers involved with our family. At this time, the pigs were harassing each prisoner who was in the movement. We continued to push with agitation and exposure. More repression came down. Still we continued and are continuing. Then, the pig-admin started to separate us and transfer us to different prisons but the movement continues!

As of right now, I've been transferred from RNCC to another Maximum Security prison in Virginia. However, the movement is still at full swing. Two other participants

have been shipped here along with me. We still remain in contact with the others also.

Well, that's the mini-story of what happened, and the struggle against repression followed us at this site. Mind you, that situation happened on 5 November 2018, I was removed from the prison shortly after, and today I'm just receiving my property. In addition to that, pig-officers here will cut off my commode for long periods so that I'm unable to flush my toilet. When I try to file Emergency Grievance, they either don't take it up or take it and don't give me a receipt. Who knows what they'll do next. I'm up for the fight!

On another note, I am still active in my teaching mode. I have organized political education classes on the tier and one of the two subjects I started with was teaching dialectical materialism and the whole dialectical transformation process. I felt good starting that class because I have enough information regarding dialectical materialism. However, the other class on what New Afrika was and New Afrikan revolutionary nationalism. I struggled because my knowledge of it is low! But I tried given the circumstances.

Nevertheless, my class on dialectical materialism was successful in bringing an

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Notes on Bridging Gap Between SNY and GP in CA

by MIM(Prisons)
December 2018

The article we printed in *Under Lock & Key* No. 65 on the forced integration and its relation to the Agreement to End Hostilities continues to elicit responses. However, reports are still sparse, so we reiterate our request to readers in California to continue to send in updates on the progress of the integration. One comrade was won over by the article:

"I've never thought about the SNY situation, as written in your No. 65 issue, page 9, about the AEH agreement as I would pertain to a group of konvikts that usually leave a bad taste in most dudes' mouths. I have a cousin in SNY that I've written off for like 5 years. After reading your past few issues, I think I'll get at him this week."

There was concern coming from Valley State Prison, where a comrade wrote on 18 December 2018:

"I am writing to let you know I did receive ULK 65, and I enjoyed reading about G.P.'s mixing with SNY, it's crazy. There will be people filing lawsuits. The G.P.s are expected here at Valley State around 15 January 2019. I can imagine things will get bad."

Yet we received a positive report from another comrade at Valley State Prison from 17 February 2019:

"I have a new 'bunky' who is a GP prisoner who came here to VSP as part of the integration of SNY & GP. There have been no problems with him and I am using this as an

opportunity to learn more about how all of us can build unity using the UFPP Statement of Principles as a guide. We here appreciate all the material support of MIM(Prisons) and the valuable organizational guidance. The ULK No. 66 article "Ongoing Discussion of Recruiting Best Practices" was damn good and quite helpful as well."

The above victories are small, and do not necessarily give us a picture of what is happening across CDCr. But they do speak to the possibilities of the positive leadership of USW and the efforts to build a United Front for Peace in Prisons. However, negative reports are coming from concerned family members. One womyn campaigning for support for her loved one in Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility reports that he has been repeatedly brutalized after refusing to give information to guards. The guards are setting up scenarios reminiscent to the Corcoran SHU gladiator fights, except this time with many-on-one, to punish those that don't cooperate with their manipulations.

One comrade had a more mixed report from Chuckwalla Valley State Prison, 22 February 2019:

Yesterday we received our first group of general population "active" prisoners and the whole event quickly turned into a spectacle. Over a hundred prisoners flooded the yard last night in anticipation of these "active" prisoners. Their purpose was to physically assault these general population prisoners if they attempted to assault any SNY prisoner. While I myself did not go outside, I am guilty of looking out my window in anticipation of seeing some violence. Once

I saw how these G.P. prisoners were virtually swarmed, however, and once I heard and saw how some prisoners became giddy with excitement at the possibility of seeing someone get hurt my mood changed from one of an expectant spectator to one of repulsion, anger and empathy.

Most disturbing of all however was how officers literally abandoned these incoming prisoners to their fate. Officers (some in riot gear) simply waited on the sidelines for something to happen while packs of SNY prisoners taunted, intimidated and pushed up on these prisoners asking them if they were here to program or get stupid, waiting for the wrong answer. All of the prisoners who came to this yard stayed. However, about an hour prior to this other G.P. prisoners were taken to another yard where we know something happened because we saw everyone pruned out on the ground. And a few days prior some other G.P. prisoners were taken to A yard where one of them got jumped as soon as he set foot on the yard. We know this cause plenty of people in another building were able to see this from their windows and they all corroborated each others' stories.

On the one hand it's understandable that these SNY prisoners are chomping at the bit after some of them have been victims of gen. pop. prison gang violence. Others are merely interested in defending themselves against possible sneak attacks from G.P. prisoners that may be lying in wait. While many others unfortunately just wanna f___ somebody up.

It also doesn't help that we keep hearing stories of how other SNY prisoners are viciously attacked upon setting foot on a G.P. turned NDPF yard. Most SNY prisoners have never been victimized anywhere on G.P. or snitched on anyone. They're just not into the

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... Continued from prev. page ...**Angles**

understanding of its definition and its operation to my students. I used the information you provided me in the "Introduction to the Materialist method by MIM(Prisons), October 2017" and "Choosing One Ideology over Another: The Materialist Method" by MC5 of the Maoist Internationalist Movement. I explained how dialectical meanings of material things, people, and ideas transform in a struggle for liberation. I explained how the dialectical transformation moves in a perpetual sequence from without to within to without back within, and just keep going on and on. I gave examples on how it works in a way they could better understand, and tried my best at breaking it down and building it back up.

I want to ask you if you can send me anything that I could use in our P.E. classes to help educate us in what New Afrikan

revolutionary nationalism is and how did it originate, and just the whole concept of the New Afrikan nation. If I have to pay for it let me know, but it'll be a while before I can purchase it because I'm suffering from economic hardships as of right now but eventually I could scabble something up. Just let me know.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We are happy to send study materials to people who are running study groups and organizing locally. We have two articles that discuss the concept of New Afrika that were printed in ULK that we can send you. The New Afrikan Subcommittee of the USW Council is interested in commissioning someone to turn the content of these articles into a flier (with art) if that is something your study group (or anyone) is interested in. For more in-depth reading on the theory and history of Black/New Afrikan nationalism we have a study pack on the legacy of the BPP(\$6) and one on revolutionary feminist proletarian

nationalism(\$8). Send in a donation to the address on p. 1, or equivalent work-trade (e.g. a report on the organizing and political education you're doing, like this article!).

We also print this letter as an excellent example of organizing in spite of conditions of repression. This writer is working with others to fight the criminal injustice system from multiple angles. First there is the fight against the pigs who pushed the prisoner to cut eir wrist, and tried to get others to help them cover it up. Then there is the repression that followed, with the transfers and keeping up contact with other activists. And finally there is the study group, pushing forward both learning and practice at the same time.

This comrade is setting an example of perseverance in defending revolutionary principles, and building and maintaining unity with others. ■

Political Preference for Segregated Housing

by a Missouri prisoner
January 2019

In prison, it is considered to be a privilege to be a part of the general population (G.P.). And it is considered a punishment to be placed in a segregated housing unit (SHU). In order to compel prisoners to abide by the rules of the prison, this system of reward and punishment is put into place.

Here are a few key differences between G.P. and a SHU: In G.P., you may get to come out of your cell for two to three hours a day. You live with a cellmate. You may have access to the gym and library. You may spend any funds you have on canteen items. You may walk to the chow hall, and you may walk to medical and any other program you attend.

In a segregated housing unit, you are in your cell for twenty-three to twenty-four hours a day. You may or may not have a cellmate. You have no access to the gym and the only books you have access to are the ones the librarian sends to segregation. You may only spend funds on legal material, stationary, and hygiene products. You have your food brought to your door as well as your medication, and your opportunity to participate in programs is limited.

Now, I shall elaborate upon this contradiction and give you the views of a politically conscious prisoner. Most prisoners are so uneducated and illiterate that if a topic doesn't show up on television, they know nothing about it. To be placed in segregation away from their "idiot box" would bring them unbearable anguish. They also cannot do without being able to get on the telephone, shake their loved ones down for money, and then spending it all on extremely over-priced canteen items. The young hip-hop generation cannot imagine having to exist without the support of their fellow gang members to boost their courage to oppress another, or trade hedonistic rap songs with one another.

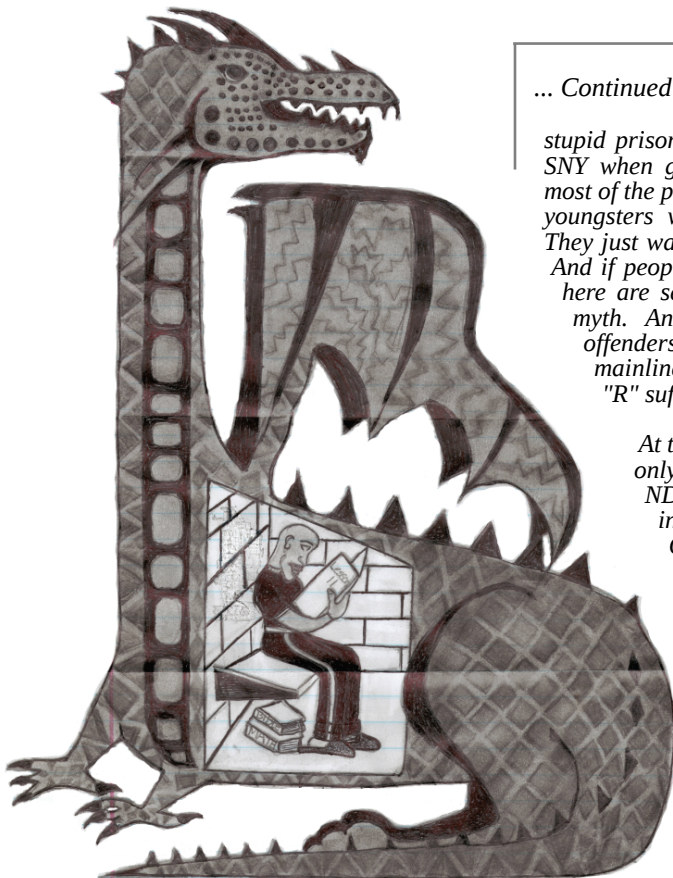
Therefore, being placed in a segregated housing unit is terrifying to most prisoners. So much so, that they will tap-dance, bend over backwards and shine the warden's boots. Quietly suffering verbal abuse and humiliation from corrupt psychotic pigs. And when their frustration builds up, they will direct their anger at another prisoner, never abasing the iron hand oppressor.

Then there are those of us who do not care for rewards and punishments. We simply choose not to participate in the perpetuation of our own dehumanization. We choose not to assimilate into the

machinations of the koncentration kamp. We don't care about snack cakes, sodas, and chips; we'd rather not be brainwashed by the Nazi programs; and we can do without the zombifying tel-a-vision. We find peace in the seclusion of solitary confinement where there are fewer distractions. Without having to be herded like cattle to and from the chow hall and medical, we have more time to reflect, study and work toward our goal of state-less society.

MIM(Prisons) responds: Yes, we should try to take advantage of any opportunity to do the best possible political work we can. For those locked in solitary, this means plenty of time to study and write and think. But we know this isolation has some very negative consequences for humyn physical and mental health.

Organizing is necessarily about interacting with other people. So while it's true that we run into lots of folks who are content to just sit in front of the T.V. and do their time, our challenge is finding ways to reach them. Isolating ourselves from the masses inherently makes us disconnected from them, and also isolates us from potential recruits who are mixed in G.P. and ready to jump on board. For those in seg, this comrade's advice about making it a good use of your time is well placed. But for those with contact with others, let's strive to make the best of it in G.P. too by building and growing the movement. ■



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...CA

stupid prison politics and so they opt to go SNY when given the chance. For example, most of the prisoners here are just a bunch of youngsters who ain't never been nowhere. They just wanna do their time and go home. And if people want to say that most people here are sex offenders, well that too is a myth. And yeah, there are some sex offenders here, but there are many on the mainline as well, they just don't got that "R" suffix on their jackets.

At this point I firmly believe that the only way there can be peace on these NDPFs is if the G.P. shot callers initiate a truce and prohibit the G.P. from assaulting SNY prisoners arriving to their yards. Once SNY's hear that SNY prisoners are being left alone on their side of the fence then they will begin to respond in kind, as SNY prisoners are only reacting to what's going on on G.P. As it is, one of these G.P. prisoners here claims to still be G.P. but just wants to do his time and go home.

No one is bothering him, while other prisoners have actually extended olive branches to some of these guys and given them some basic necessities.

Anyone who represents prisoners on either side of the integration, who needs help reaching out to the other side with messages of peace should contact MIM(Prisons). We will help facilitate any efforts at developing such a truce as suggested above. ■

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...Amerikan Politics

Finally, we're unsure about what this "new fascist regime" is that the author suggests Trump is building. It doesn't fit into the five defining points the author offers above, if this is a change from democratic capitalism. In fact, as the author points out, the building of a wall to keep Mexicans out of the United States isn't particularly different from the historic violence against indigenous people or the enslavement of Africans and more recently the oppression of New Afrikans. So we are not seeing the change in Amerikan society that would merit now calling it fascist under Trump. ■

Prisons Spend Billions for Social Control

by el Independista of USW
March 2019

First and foremost, allow me to debunk an ever-present myth; one that continues obscuring and detracting from debates about prison. Prisons are NOT profitable businesses, at least, not in the manner of the Exxon Mobiles, Sam's Clubs, Wynn Resorts and Carls Jr.'s of the world. While there are "for-profit" prisons in existence, they constitute an extreme minority within what many refer to as the Prison Industrial Complex (a mistaken belief). Reality is that 92-98% of all prisons are state-run entities. This means they are appendages of the state/federal government in whose territory they operate. Prisons are no more for-profit than is the local police department, courthouse, legislature or DMV (although the latter is debatable).

Now we turn to the heart of the matter. If prisons aren't profit-generating behemoths, then why do they proliferate in capitalistic societies like rabbits in heat? The penal institution, as a system, is the direct byproduct of capitalism. I don't mean commodity-centrism in economic terms. Rather, prisons came about to address political fallout consequence of a political-economic ideology; let's nickname it "Haves and Have Nots Syndrome" (Hahn Syndrome, for short).

It is clearer and clearer, day after day, generation following generation, that Hahn Syndrome is progressively worsening. As the syndrome advances in stages, the Haves become narrower in number. Contrarily, the Have Nots expand. Haves being not only those with wealth sufficient to manage life as they see fit, more or less. Haves are also those with authority over the processes of production, modes of exchange, political/social landscape, those with an appreciable amount of influence, power normally aligned to capitalist interests. Have Nots being not merely those without an over-abundance of wealth, but also those marginalized, disenfranchised and excluded from the political/social landscape. Have Nots are volatile, excluded masses. Of course, these must be attended to in earnest as the minority comprehends the masses' threat. Thus, a complex inter-dependent, self-perpetuating social control mechanism: the penitentiary.

Looking at the global picture of capitalism, we can identify trends: inequality (social, economic, gender), formal systems (justifying abuses, discrimination, prejudice), excluded masses, and above all, penal institutions. No coincidences there. These are all byproducts of capitalistic systems making it all-but-

inevitable that such behemoths must be employed. Capitalism has, in "civilized" society, resorted to far more effective measures than good, old fashioned plomo (read: marginalization, isolation, disenfranchisement, invalidation, forfeitures, imprisonment).

What does this do for capitalism? Take an undocumented immigrant. Ey is not a citizen — meaning without rights or validation — which translates to being exploited for labor or political ends. Trumpists push for wall funding on the political side; harvesters, nannies, etc. on the laboral. Exploited for labor when profitable and politics whenever convenient. This is only one example of Hahn Syndrome in action on Have Nots.

First World lumpen can, due to their best interests, be counted among Have Nots; especially considering they are prime targets for prison. Hence, 2-million-plus incarcerated and over 6 million under state management (according to BOP.gov and U.S. Census Bureau statistics). For those who don't become good capitalist contributors, prison is their final or eventual destination.

An ignorant mass is the mob. The mob is easily swayed this or that way. An excluded, disaffected, educated mass means a rebellion, a resistance, a real opponent for capitalism. Something capitalists will do anything to avoid. Why spend ill-gotten gains educating disorganized, excluded masses, turning them into a potential usurper, when you could just lock them up? While penitentiaries do not generate super earnings, they are necessary for any capitalistic ideology and society to function. Such behemoths swallow whole dangerous sections of the mob resulting in its impotency.

The mob's ignorance is bliss for capitalists. Why waste millions, billions, building behemoths to swallow the mob? Why do you avoid giving a gun to somebody who wants to kill you? Self-preservation. And capitalist logic is no different. If the central issue can be distracted from (not discussing capitalism and the role of prisons in perpetuating it) then every effort within the bounds of capitalistic systems will fail. This is why the mass must be educated, because then we'll realize the system is just a game of smoke and mirrors. Reform? The Behemoth keeps devouring.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We agree with this author on eir fundamental point that prisons are not for profit, but rather for social control. We want to offer some clarification on the sectors of society discussed above.

First, the definition of Haves and Have
Continued on next page...

Learning Through Punk Rock

by a Georgia prisoner
March 2019

I'm excited for the upcoming issue about successful recruiting techniques. I can contribute 2 ideas concerning this. What's been useful for me is to always make it obvious I don't seek to impose my personal belief or philosophies upon others. I only offer them for examination, evaluation, and possible use! Which is something I've noticed you all practice. Also, since you continually point out how you are open to and accepting of criticism.

The second is more rare, I think, and perhaps not a method to be used by everyone, but I know it does work for some! There's a documentary called "Punks Not Dead" and in it Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day is discussing how everything he knows about politics was learned through punk rock, not boring school teachers. How in order for something to commit to his memory it's better if it's in some kind of offensive fashion. A little twisted or demented, humorous in a "sick" sort of way, and I can relate to that!

MIM(Prisons) responds: Culture, including music from punk to rap and even some country, helps make politics relatable and is a great approach for educating folks. We publish art and poetry in part to reach different groups of people and offer another way for people to pick up revolutionary ideas. And we aspire to include more infographics in *ULK*, and also eventually run video channels and radio shows. Ideally there should be musicians making revolutionary music, film makers producing revolutionary films, and many other genres of contributors. If you've got skills in these areas, step up and get involved, we need your contributions! ■

We need more artwork for *ULK*!

Especially topical artwork for the upcoming issue! Topic: Defeating the gangster mentality

And ongoing discussions on UFPP, CA integrated yards, labor aristocracy, Anti-Africom campaign, prisoner-led study groups.

Send in your artwork to PO Box 40799, San Francisco, CA 94140

Write in for our guide to creating anti-imperialist art!

Spreading ULK = Spreading Consciousness

by a Georgia prisoner
March 2019

The Amerikkkan government views our power of enlightenment as immeasurably more dangerous than their wars, and will stop at nothing to try and suppress it. Most of us already know but it can never be overstated enough.

Back in the horrific segregation unit (that I was housed in for almost 6 months) I had the pleasure of witnessing this: I ended the year by composing a 30-page letter to you and also by putting every copy of *ULK* in my possession into circulation. Overnight the other captives' conversation transformed from mostly useless chatter into inspired pro-active resistance-fueled talk. They would approach my cell door, timidly, in hopes of receiving more. I'll never forget the hungry look in their eyes and the lesson I learned in this.

It baffles me how blind so many remain to how prisons work, even while stationed in the very center of it. So I understand better now the need, in most cases, of beginning at square one, then perhaps setting a slower pace than I've practiced in the past in the goal of enlightenment. Although the combined effort of my methods and your printed words did seem to move things along rather quickly.

Maybe you recall how, as I was composing the year-end letter to you, I had the pleasure to overhear prisoners discussing if it's realistic and possible to succeed in fighting back against the system. With 2-against-1 deciding that it is. Then the one who didn't believe so shouting for grievance forms. While the sadistic and beyond-lazy unit manager looked on and listened in with a pained and disappointed look on his face. This was only days after I'd passed *ULK* 65 along.

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.

After this I quickly distributed everything anti-establishment in my possession. By New Years Day everything I had was passed along. Throwing shit on prisoners by other prisoners was a common and daily occurrence, but by the 3rd a loud-mouthed and worthless nurse was covered and the next day a C.O. While I don't endorse the act of propelling excrement missiles, if it must be done then at least let pigs roll in it!

That same day I received a note from a prisoner terrified he would suffer a seizure and die while in the seg unit due to the criminally inadequate medical staff and the deliberate indifference displayed by the C.O.s. While writing my response to him, a mail clerk delivered to me a brand new *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook* so I sent him my used one along with my response and of course your address. The next morning a prisoner in seg is found dead. A month to the day of my relaunch of medical grievances which had been postponed by my having to document 6 months worth of obvious retaliation from the pigs.

By January 7, previously apathetic prisoners are demanding grievances and statement forms while I'm circulating the grievance petition and the next morning I transfer to my current location. An extremely cushy prison set up which I'm thankful to be at. But at the same time I'm overwhelmed with feelings of survival guilt for the ones left behind there, and all of the fucked up prisons. I am rather stoked about how I'm not completely cut off from current events any longer since I'm free from the sensory deprivation torture chamber and will be able to prepare essays about recent news now. Like this border wall nonsense with the true purpose to provide a physical manifestation for the racial resentment found inside many of those in Trump's base. I'd advise the idiot in chief to remember the humpty dumpty nursery rhyme.

In the lengthy year-end letter I'd written how I planned to share my history with the grievance process to demonstrate how the petition arrived right on time and almost seemed pre-planned. It's definitely a game changer and I can never thank you enough. If you are interested in viewing that, I'll be more than glad to send it in the future. Right now I want to go over my history with *ULK* so far and also request any extra issues available to learn from and circulate.

This time last year I had the good fortune of coming across *ULK* 60. I signed up for a subscription and received 61. I got 62 and after fucking up the audit the next day an angered and cowardly unit manager removed it from my back pocket and destroyed it

before placing me outdoors until medical had to treat me for dehydration. The next issue was covered in shit thrown by prisoners who were weak-minded enough to be enticed by the pigs in hopes of thwarting the continuation of my 1983 Civil Action claim. Fuck, the interruptions won't stop — it sure is easier to write in seg! I will come up with a way to remain better focused in the next one comrades. In the meantime I will continue on to service to others, defending the oppressed, and self-sacrifice geared towards meeting the goals towards greater good.

MIM(Prisons) responds: Thanks for sharing this great example of the potential impact of sharing political literature with others. Not only was this comrade engaged by coming across *Under Lock & Key* but then they went on to engage others by sharing *ULK*. It's always inspiring when we get to see the positive results of our organizing work. Spreading around *ULK* is a great way to have an impact. If you want to get extra copies for distribution write in to let us know. ■

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...Social Control

Notes might seem obvious, but this is actually a point of much debate among activists. We see many so-called leftists claiming that workers in the United States are part of the oppressed group (the Have Nots) but we see that their wages are artificially inflated with the profits of exploitation of the Third World. And so these folks are very much the Haves on a global scale.

In general we look at the oppressed nations within U.S. borders as the groups with the greatest interest in fighting imperialism. But with the class focus that Haves and Have Nots implies, we would define the Have Nots to include undocumented immigrants and the First World lumpen. The lumpen is defined as the class of people in the First World who are excluded from the productive process. By virtue of living in the First World, this class, on average, receives more material benefits from imperialism than the global proletariat. As such their interests are not the same as the exploited classes and we do not include them in the "lumpen-proletariat." But their conditions in many ways parallel those of the lumpen-proletariat, standing in stark contrast to the majority of the First World populations.

MIM(Prisons) published a pamphlet "Who is the Lumpen in the United States" which includes our contemporary class analysis of this group. We do not see evidence to suggest this group is growing. Send in \$3 or equivalent work-trade to the address on p. 1 for your copy. ■

Prisoners Role in Expanding ULK

by MIM(Prisons)
March 2019

In 2018, about 1% of our subscribers in U.S. prisons donated money each month. Those comrades supplied about 2% of the funding for printing and mailing *Under Lock & Key* to prisoners across the country. If you include all money from comrades behind bars, including literature purchases, and MIM(Prisons)'s full operating budget, those comrades provided about 5.8% of our total funds. This is not an insignificant portion of our budget, yet it remains relatively small considering our primary audience is U.S. prisoners

We are still in the progress of exploring options for how to make *ULK* a monthly newsletter. While we hope to be more efficient with our resources as part of this campaign, there is little doubt our total costs are going to increase significantly. And the comrades in MIM(Prisons), who fund the vast majority of what we do, will not have the ability to cover such an increase. Therefore this expansion will have to stand on 3 legs: 1) partners who we hope will co-publish the new newsletter, therefore taking on some portion of the funding and distribution; 2) recruiting new distributors on the streets who will also contribute a monthly

amount to fund the new newsletter; and 3) our existing subscribers in U.S. prisons.

Many years ago we reported that prisoners funded 4% of *Under Lock & Key* and set a goal of increasing that to 10%. Since then we've tracked donations separate from payments for literature or other services. Today, we have a ways to go to reach that modest goal of funding 10% of *Under Lock & Key* from comrades behind bars.

If you are a reader of *ULK* who thinks that doubling the frequency with which we can send communiques out to prisoners across the country is a needed expansion, please think about how you can organize to contribute to funding that expansion.

Currently, a one-year subscription to *Under Lock & Key* costs about \$10 to fulfill. We don't know what that number will be under the new scenario yet. The goal of funding 10% of *ULK* could be reached by 10% of prisoners who receive *ULK* contributing \$10 per year. Remember we only have 1% of our subscribers donating right now, covering about 2% of the costs. We need at least ten times more of you to step up to help make this goal attainable. Contact us for info on how to donate by check our MO. ■

Supreme Court denies PLN FL censorship appeal

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
January 2019

On 7 January 2019 the Supreme Court refused to take up a First Amendment case challenging the statewide ban of *Prison Legal News (PLN)* in the Florida Department of Corrections. The ban has been in place since 2009. This appeal was the final attempt to challenge the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals which sided with the Florida DOC.(1) Each year thousands of cert petitions are filed with the Supreme Court and most are not heard. As is typical, no reasons were given for the PLN case denial.

The Florida DOC maintains that they are censoring *PLN* for safety and security reasons. The appellate court found this censorship justified related to certain advertisements in *PLN* including ads for pen pal services, businesses that purchase postage stamps, and third-party phone services.

We know there is no real safety and security justification for censoring *PLN*. It's an educational publication that helps many prisoners gain legal knowledge and fight back against injustices. *PLN* is, however, a threat to the institution of prisons in the United States. Prison Legal News fights for prisoners' rights

and exposes injustices around the country. This is counter to the interests of a system that is focused on social control.

A number of groups stepped up to file or sign briefs in support of *PLN*. Of particular interest is one from a group of former Correctional Officers, including some from Florida. They argue, very rationally, that the complete censorship of *PLN* is an exaggerated response to security concerns and a constitutional violation.(2) Of course these former C.O.s, and many others who support allowing *PLN* into the Florida DOC, made very narrow arguments that still protected the DOC's "right" to censor anything they deem dangerous. These supporters are just opposing censorship for something so obviously not dangerous as it exposes the falsehood that prisons are censoring mail in the interests of safety and security.

This *PLN* lawsuit sets a very bad precedent for others fighting censorship as the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision stands. Fortunately it should not directly impact *ULK* as we don't run these third-party ads. Though Florida did censor *ULK* 62 for "stamp program advertisement." While we do accept stamps as donations, we run no stamp programs. This

New "Socialist" Parties

by a Washington prisoner
December 2018

I would like to hear your opinion of the growing political party that has been moving slowly over the past few years and that is the so-called Socialist Democratic Party. I myself have an exceptionally hard time with their concepts and ideals as I was born shortly after Komrad Stalin's death and was raised in the USSR in a home that lived and breathed the ideals of Komrads Lenin and Stalin. I am extremely interested to hear and hopefully read your views and ideals concerning the United States and the SDP as it is forming today. Please enlighten me as much as you can on this issue.

MIM(Prisons) responds: The context in which we've seen this "new Socialist Democratic Party" label is mostly from reactionary sources who claim that the mainstream Democratic Party is too far left. This is the derogatory name the right wing is using for the Democratic Party.

This is a problem for genuine socialists/communists. We know the Democratic party is far from socialist. In fact they are squarely in the middle of mainstream Amerikan capitalism. And so it just gives socialism a bad name.

However, historically there was a Socialist Democratic Party, founded by Eugene Debs in the late 1800s. It was combined into the Socialist Party in 1901. Debs was then the Socialist Party's candidate for President in Amerikan elections between 1900 and 1912.

There are also plenty of self-proclaimed socialist organizations that operate within the electoral system. We call these folks social democrats or democratic socialists. These organizations may advocate nationalizing private industries and
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goes to show that when there is no justification for censorship, the prisons will just make up things not even in the publication.

Any ruling upholding censorship in prisons is a bad one. This ruling further exposes the reality that there are no rights under capitalism, only power struggles. The First Amendment only protects speech for those privileged enough to buy that protection. ■

Notes:

1. Steve Horn, 5 December 2018, PLN Files Cert Petition with Supreme Court Over Florida DOC Censorship, Prison Legal News December 2018, page 12.
2. https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/18/18-355/66804/20181015115843987_PLN%20Amicus%20Brief%20-%20Final.pdf

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... "Socialist"

abolishing production for profit, but their strategy is reform through the ballot box. Genuine communists, on the other hand, want to abolish classes altogether, and recognize that overthrowing the bourgeoisie will require armed struggle.

The list of social democratic organizations in the United States includes the Socialist Party, the Democratic Socialists of America, the Socialist Labor Party and others. These parties all support electoral struggle within the Amerikan system. Some are also revisionists, claiming to uphold Marx while opposing eir idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is a group that has gained ground in the United States on the heels of the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. Sanders identifies as a democratic socialist, but ran as a Democratic Party candidate. The treatment of Sanders by the Democratic Party alienated many young Amerikans who turned to the DSA. The DSA endorsed Sanders, after the 2016 election. It is the largest organization in the United States that falls under the meaningless umbrella of "socialist," with over 50,000 members. While it does not claim Marxism, it does critique capitalism. In 2018, the DSA celebrated getting two candidates into Congress, as well as a handful of state-level victories and many local election wins.(2)

From our Maoist glossary:

social democracy: *The social movement to improve or maintain conditions of the broad parasitic classes. The economic base of social democracy is the labor aristocracy. An organization or movement does not need to be openly (or even consciously) social democratic to be considered so. Social democracy is the principal social (not military) prop of imperialism, ensuring superprofits flow from the exploited countries to the exploiter countries. (Labor Aristocracy, Mass Base of Social Democracy by Edwards, H.W., Chapter II)*

The recent rise in popularity of the DSA symbolizes a growing interest among imperialist country youth in critiques of capitalism as its inner contradictions unravel. While most Amerikans will stick with the DSA-style "socialism" that serves the material interests of exploiters and does not actually threaten capitalism, there is a smaller, growing interest in communism as defined above. ■

Notes:

1. For more on the failure of social democrats and their ideology see "Why Maoism not Democratic Socialism: Part 1" by MCS.

2. NPC Statement on 2018 Elections, 7 November 2018.

Analyze Local Conditions for Organizing Opportunities

by USW11 of United Struggle from Within
November 2018

It is the aim of this article to look deeper into the question of prison organizing, to determine what fundamental factors-forces need to be in evidence for there to be a viable Prison Movement, and above all to give an honest assessment of the U.S. lumpen prisoner's potential to be leaders of *any* progressive movement. However, it should be noted that the conclusions reached in this article are specific to Washington state prisons. It is the hope of the author that other cadre across U.S. prisons will pick up the pen and conduct their own serious and sober investigation.

For MIM(Prisons), the principal contradiction determining the development and direction of the Prison Movement is expressed in terms of consciousness, not class or nation.(1) With individualistic (petty bourgeois) attitudes and behavior occupying one pole of the contradiction, the other pole is occupied by more group-oriented (progressive) conduct and concern. And at this time, as it has been for some time, individualistic consciousness is the dominant pole of the principal contradiction. In other words, within a given prison environment, most prisoners view their interests (short-term, medium-term, and even long-term) being realized through individualism (and opportunism). Accordingly, group-oriented thinking and action are rarely seen and therefore have little-to-no impact on the Prison Movement.

Depoliticization of WA State prisons

Washington state is no different in this regard. In fact, it is exceptional in a level of individualism, opportunism, and soft-shoe parasitism that prevail among its prisoners. The anti-people behavior of snitching, drug culture, extortion through manipulation, etc. is not exclusive to Washington prisons. Such behavior can be seen in just about any U.S. prison, in settings where violence and viciousness are the only coins with purchasing power. And yet, in Washington prisons, extremely adverse conditions are pretty much nonexistent, and with it a large part of the basis for prison organizing.

Washington state has created a new, depoliticized prison environment that has anesthetized the Washington state prisoner to the contradictions that come with imprisonment. With the Washington prison of today being somewhat safe, devoid of the ever-present threat of physical and sexual violence, and other forms of overt predatory behavior, the prisoner is no longer forced to question and think critically about the

conditions of incarceration. Indeed, today the prisoner is numb to the political dimensions of incarceration.

There are essentially three ways in which Washington has managed to accomplish this. First, it has all but institutionalized snitching, allowing for the systematic abuse/misuse of protective mechanisms (such as PREA and other federally-mandated laws) by prisoners and staff.(2) And because consequences for snitching went out with the old prison politics, this encourages more prisoners to join the growing horde of informants. This results in more and more prisoners seeing their interests protected by the state, when unfortunately, it only reinforces the status quo of their imprisonment.

Second, WA State has institutionalized privileges. Prisoners can join culture groups where they have activities and functions. There are a bunch of special jobs as well as the most coveted Correctional Industries job. Programs range from education and vocational to religious and community support. Of course, cable TV, J Pay, food fund raisers, and quarterly food packages contribute to the sanitization of the prison environment. All of these taken together allow the prisoner to carve out eir own specialized niche of doing time, whereby ey becomes a better inmate instead of a better person. More importantly in the eyes of WA State ey becomes reliable because eir behavior is predictable.

Finally, the third and most important way WA State created a depoliticized climate

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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 can send you a 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:

68 - Defeating the gangster mentality

How can we re-define toughness? Can we stop the lumpen from fighting one another and turn their anger on the system? Why do people talk a good revolutionary game but fail to put it into practice? How can we create a culture that sees harming other oppressed people and collaborating with the enemy (i.e. the state) as severely wrong?

Debating Fascism in Amerika

by a Kentucky prisoner
April 2019

I received your response to my article on the wonderful achievements of the Black Panther Party.(1) In this article, I articulated how fascism has taken possession of this country, and what should be seen as its most advanced form. This is the form that comrade George L. Jackson spoke of in

Blood in My Eye, "the third face" in power and secure. I also share this opinion, and it is rooted in my philosophy about the obvious place to start and end the colonial war, which will result in the independence of not only our brothers and sisters in the third world, but also the sleeping giant right here in Amerika.

The fact that Amerika has never entered a revolutionary situation is amazing to say the

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...Conditions

within its prisons was to dismantle and discredit the old guard. The old guard represented a collection of old-school prisoners, who were versed in prison politics of both revolutionary and reactionary iterations. Sadly, most of these prisoners have given up on handing down "game" to the younger generations, least of all organizing for better prison conditions. They are either bought off with a special status within prison reserved only for old timers, or become victims/hostages of their own vices. Those who have maintained a militant posture, over time, have their characters impinged in a pig-led campaign to discredit them and their organizing efforts. It is this dearth of political leadership and guidance that is most responsible for the depoliticization within WA State prisons.

Political conditions in West Complex

But such a situation isn't as discouraging when we look at the WA State penitentiary. The state penitentiary, West Complex, is a closed (maximum) facility, housing lots of young lumpen org members looking to wild out. So at the West Complex it is common to have race riots or prison lumpen organization (LO) rivalries. Fights are an everyday thing creating an atmosphere electric with tension. And at just about any moment staff can be victimized too. Yet, in a seemingly chaotic environment, where WA State has not eradicated "prison politics," the West Complex group-oriented action based on principled unity among all the prisoners resulted in concessions from the state.

In early 2018, West Complex prisoners got fed up with the poor food they were being served, and as a collective group decided to take action. It became such a big ordeal in the state that the governor, Jay Inslee, visited the facility to speak with a few prisoners who registered the grievances of the population. Of course, the visit by the governor was more show than a show of concern. The point is such group-oriented action actually resulted in some of the grievances of the prisoners being addressed.

Most notably was the addition of a hot breakfast to the menu where previously it was a cold sack.

Repression breeds resistance

The point that this example serves isn't that reactionary prison politics work or that violent prisoners are more suited for group-oriented action. No, the point here is that a repressive institution such as a maximum facility creates and nurtures violence; it promotes the continuation of reactionary prison politics. And as violence occurs and politics are pushed, the repressive nature of the institution tightens evermore. Eventually, prisoners are forced to deal with the meager, spartan existence the institution provides them. Some choose the path of more self-destructive behavior, but it is ALL who opts for the path of collective-oriented action when the conditions are ripe.

This isn't exactly a glowing endorsement of the maximum prison. Too much reactionary stuff occurs behind its walls by too many prisoners with reactionary consciousness. Leadership must be in place, the issue to organize around must be important to most if not everyone. And more importantly, there can be no hesitation once the wheels move forward and gains momentum. The organizing effort is too delicate of a process within the WA State prison environment, which is why more often than not conditions are left to rot.

The one definite conclusion reached about organizing in WA State prisons is that the max prison fosters a rebellion among its prisoners that has the greatest potential to serve the Prison Movement. There is a level of seriousness and critical awareness seen in the West Complex that is just nonexistent in other WA State prisons, due to the depoliticization program. This isn't to say that there aren't some enlightened comrades on WA State medium and minimum mainlines sprinkled here and there. It is precisely this "sprinkling here and there" of righteous comrades that the cacophony of "doing easy time" drowns out their leadership, however.

Redefining the prison movement for WA

While such a conclusion is discouraging for WA State revolutionary prisoners, the hope lies in defining — maybe redefining — what the aims of the Prison Movement are relative to the specific conditions of the WA State. If, in general, the Prison Movement is about improving prison conditions, agitating and educating the larger population on the systemic injustices of mass incarcerations, or challenging the legitimacy of prisons, then the WA State Prison Movement must focus most of its effort on agitating and educating, challenging the growth of prisons, etc. The basis for improving prison conditions has become an exclusive endeavor for the typical "legal beagle" in search of a big payday. The average prisoner has it too good to want to organize for better.

In conclusion, it is the overall contention of this article that the WA State Prison Movement exists, but solely in the individual practices of the few righteous comrades throughout the system.

Notes:

1. MIM(Prisons), "Applying Dialectics to the Prison Movement Within the Greater System of Imperialism," internal document for United Struggle from Within organizing, 2014 draft version.
2. WA State is unique in that most of its prison mainline is dominated (in terms of overall numbers) by sex offenders who in nearly every U.S. prison are marginalized, and often victims of violence and parasitism. This marginalized group in WA State has overrun the margins and are in effect mainstream; though it has yet to figure this out. Acting only out of self-interest (and self-preservation), this group constitutes the main base of snitches and confidential informants, even as the veritable threats to its existence have been neutralized. This has created a wider wedge for unity on any grounds among WA State prisoners, as snitching creates an unmistakable air of mistrust. Mistrust breeds individualism and opportunism.

This is a shortened version of a longer analysis from this author. Write to us to request a copy of the full essay.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This writer demonstrates how to study local prison conditions to determine the contradictions and where to best focus our organizing energy. This is something that has to be done from within each state by people who live there and know the conditions. It can't be done from the outside. With this analysis in hand, we can compare conditions, learn from best practices in other similar prisons, and build our organizing work in a scientific way. We welcome comrades in other states to follow this example and send in your own analysis of your state or prison-specific conditions. We also hope other WA prisoners will respond to this analysis with your thoughts and observations. And we look forward to building next steps for organizing informed by this analysis. ■

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...Weeding

Now it is systemic. If we are ever going to end racism, sexism, imperialism, mass imprisonment, poverty, hunger, etc., then we have to eliminate the thing that causes them.

Our movements must consolidate their efforts to attack the base. We have the valence, we just need to help the people make these connections. Everything is connected in some way to the economic base, its mode of production and distribution. Capitalism's system of "all against all" has created these contradictions we face. With colonialism, imperialism, and especially now with neo-colonialism, many new contradictions and forms of oppression have sprung up that can cloud our vision. But we can't continue to concentrate great amounts of our energy and resources in fighting the non-principal contradictions that don't target the system directly.

It is of course understood that at certain moments a nation's contradictions that were non-principal before, or perhaps even non-existent, can become principal contradictions. For example, in China before/during Mao's revolution Japanese imperialism was the principal contradiction, but afterward new contradictions became acute due to the ever-expanding nature of global capitalism.

In Vietnam before/during Ho Chi Minh's liberation movement against French colonialism, for the people of Vietnam colonialism was the principal contradiction. Then came the fight against U.S. imperialism which quickly became the principal contradiction. But these were particular contradictions, not general ones.

Imperialism is an appendage of capitalism. When the courageous and determined guerilla fighters of Vietnam defeated U.S. imperialism,

they did not end imperialism. They only ended U.S.-Vietnam imperialism.

The point is that while forms of oppression like imperialism can seem like the principal contradiction to certain nations at certain times, it can never truly be the principal contradiction overall. Even when China fought Japanese imperialism, and to them it was the principal contradiction, in the grand scheme of things it was not; it was the interests that caused imperialism.

Imperialism can not truly be defeated until the imperialist nations/empires undergo an internal revolution and the economic interests that drive imperialism cease to be. So long as global capitalism and the capitalist global market persists, imperialism will always exist in some form; it will only be shifted from one nation that

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...Debating

least. However, it does not mitigate the arrival of fascism. This country is indeed a police state wherein the political ascendancy is tied into and protects the interest of the upper class. It is very much characterized by militarism, imperialism, and racism. By those very definitions it would be silly for intellectuals to continue to ponder on the presence of fascism and its shock troops.

Our new "pigs are beautiful" President Donald Trump is trying to reverse the constitution in order to make Amerikkka an all-white nation as the "Founding Fathers" intended for it to be. But in determining this birthright claim, does this not automatically push out the European colonial master? This would seem to be a true statement, but if we look at fascist predatory culture, it shows that anything of any great value that ever traded hands between the Europeans was taken by a force of arms. History in itself is indeed economically-motivated class struggle. We also have the situation of Mexico being seen as a villain of white Amerikkka to glean from. This is the same stance that the earlier Europeans used to justify the extermination of the Indians and the racist attacks against black brothers and sisters who had already suffered the worst form of slavery in history.

There is much truth in your analysis. However, some truths have been mitigated or omitted to fit your contention. The earlier vanguard party's insistence to only beg for tokens, or to beg for an expansion of the system to include all of us, even after numerous failed attempts, clearly shows their ignorance of the capitalist masters. In a

capitalistic society, there must always be an upper, middle, and especially lower class. Asking the government to make certain areas better is the equivalent of making other segments of society a ghetto (poor whites, Asians Americans, etc.). This environment is all about winners and losers, which furthers the individualism that destroys trust.

The fact that the vanguard parties rallied around such issues as women's rights, prisoners' rights, etc. should not be ignored. However, those rights are still virtually ignored. Women still do not enjoy the same rights as men (i.e. #MeToo), and the prison industrial complex is still part of the imperialist plan to use our bodies as sources of cheap raw materials to build and expand capital. The 13th Amendment even legalizes slavery in the event that one commits a crime. So yes, Amerika is a fascist country. They use the argument of being "humane imperialists, enlightened fascists." The vanguard parties, instead of pushing for judicial redress which once again failed, should have ushered the populace to go to war against the capitalist masters. Anything less than that is reform.

MIM(Prisons) responds: It's unclear if this author is arguing that the United States has been fascist from the start. Or if there is a change we are seeing recently that marks a new fascist government. The former is an interesting argument. This comrade agrees that imperialism and militarism are part of fascism. And from that basis, one could argue that the genocidal foundations of Amerika look at lot like "the open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital" as Dutt defined fascism. [See intro article]

But we make a distinction between the repression of imperialism against oppressed nations, a feature of the brutality of imperialism, and the terroristic dictatorship of fascist imperialism. This is important because of the strategic implications. If the United States has been fascist from foundation, during World War II we would have to argue that the United States was not a potential ally in the fight against Hitler's Germany. History does not support this interpretation.

If the author is arguing that there has been some change in the United States since World War II, and it is only more recently fascist, then we want to respond to the definitions they offers more directly. Defining fascism as "militarism, imperialism, and racism" raises the question of how to distinguish that from good 'ole bourgeois democratic imperialism? Imperialism is characterized by militarism and national oppression (and by association, racism). And imperialism is all about protecting the interests of the ruling class. As we discussed in "Fascism, Imperialism, and Amerika in 2019," white nation supremacy is an inherent part of Amerikan imperialism. So that too is not, in and of itself, a good way for us to distinguish fascist imperialism from bourgeois democratic imperialism. In fact, the author is correct that the "founding fathers" of this country intended for it to be a white nation. Unless we want to argue that the United States was fascist from the start, throwbacks to previous policies are not inherently signs of a new fascist government. ■

Notes:

1. a Kentucky prisoner, "Black Panthers in Today's Climate," November 2018, ULK 65.

Coup in Venezuela to Secure Oil for Amerikans

by Soso of MIM(Prisons)
January 2019

The United States is attempting a coup in Venezuela, pushing Juan Guaidó, formerly a lawmaker in the Venezuelan government, to declare himself President. This subversion of democracy is par for the course for the imperialist United States. The United States will do whatever it takes to maintain access to cheap labor and resources in Latin America. In this latest round of intervention, the United States has rallied other imperialist powers and U.S. lackey governments to join the charade in recognizing the illegitimate government of Guaidó.

As of this writing, the coup is failing and the national bourgeois government led by Nicolás Maduro remains in power in Venezuela. President Trump has threatened military intervention and we can anticipate further subversion of democracy and covert and overt imperialist attacks on Venezuela in the months to come.

The Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela

Venezuela was colonized by Europeans in 1522. The people won sovereignty in 1821 led by Simón Bolívar. After WWI oil was discovered in Venezuela, prompting an economic boom. But the collapse of oil prices in the 1980s devastated the Venezuelan economy. As the standard of living fell and the government implemented harsh economic reforms at the demand of the imperialist IMF, the people began to protest. In 1989 massive riots were met with violence by the government. This led to several coup attempts. While these coups failed, they indicated the ongoing unrest and instability in the country.

In 1998, Hugo Chavez was elected President with an overwhelming majority of the vote and a mandate for change. Formerly a military leader, Chavez had attempted a coup in the previous years of unrest. While not a communist by any stretch of the imagination, Chavez represented the national bourgeoisie in Venezuela. This class is a progressive ally of the anti-imperialist forces. Chavez launched a "Bolivarian revolution" which began with a 1999 Constituent Assembly to rewrite the Constitution of Venezuela. The people were mobilized to participate in this political process.

At the same time, Chavez implemented programs to help the vast majority of poor people in the country. By 2005 they had eliminated illiteracy. Between 1999 and 2012 infant mortality was cut from 19.1 to 10 per 1000, malnutrition was reduced from

21% to 3%, and poverty rates were more than halved. Venezuela also paid off all of its debts to the World Bank and IMF and then withdrew from these imperialist organizations which promote economic subservience in the Third World.

While implementing internal reforms, Chavez took up the anti-imperialist pole of leadership in Latin America, in alliance with Cuba. In 2011 they helped launch the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), uniting 33 countries outside of imperialist control. In 2005, Venezuela launched a program to provide subsidized oil to 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Chavez was re-elected to two more terms as President, but died from cancer in 2013 before serving his third term. Nicolás Maduro has been the president of Venezuela since Chavez's death. As Vice President, Maduro was appointed to fill the role, and then won the popular election. Maduro again won a recent presidential election, but under the pretense that this election was not democratic, Juan Guaidó swore himself in as "interim President" in late January at the urging of the United States. Not even a participant in the election, Guaidó was previously the head of the national assembly, a body that was declared null and void in 2017.

Why does the U.S. care?

Venezuela is one of the world's leading exporters of oil, and is a founding member of OPEC. When Hugo Chavez took power, Venezuela was the third biggest supplier of oil to the United States and the United States continues to be the biggest buyer of Venezuelan oil. Chavez's government nationalized hundreds of private businesses and foreign-owned assets, such as oil projects run by ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips.(1)

We can look to the recent history of Venezuela to understand just how ridiculous is the U.S. claim to supporting "democracy" in that country. The United States backed the viciously repressive dictatorship of Marco Jiménez (1948-1958) because of their support of transnational corporations. This government imprisoned, tortured and murdered thousands of innocent Venezuelans. For this service the United States awarded Jiménez the military Legion of Merit "for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements."(2)

Obviously the United States' economic interests in Venezuela are significant. But

Control Unit Survey Questions

MIM(Prisons) has the most complete data on control units available at www.abolishcontrolunits.org. Much of this data came directly from prisoners themselves. Help keep it updated by completing this survey. Write out a separate survey for each prison you know of that has Control Units.

Control units can be generally described as: Permanently designated prisons, or cells in prisons, that lock prisoners in solitary confinement for 22 or more hours a day with no congregate dining, exercise or other services, and virtually no programs for prisoners. Prisoners are placed in control units for extended periods of time.

Return completed survey to: MIM(Prisons) Control Unit Survey, PO Box 40799, San Francisco, CA 94140.

1. Name and address of facility
2. What is the total population held at this prison?
3. What is the total capacity at this prison?
4. How many people total are in CUs at this prison?
5. What year did the CU open? (If there are multiple CUs tell us the year for each one)
6. What is the national/racial makeup of the population in the CU? (i.e. what percent is New Afrikan, Chican@, white, etc.?)
7. What is the source for this data? (i.e. you were in this CU in 2013, you are there now, etc.)
8. What year did you collect this data?
9. Is there anything else we should know about the control units where you're held?

there is also the geopolitical stability of imperialist control in Latin America more broadly. Cuba, Bolivia, Uruguay and Mexico are all refusing to follow the Amerikan imperialist lead in recognizing this coup. And the Venezuelan government has been a thorn in the side of the imperialists for years. Led by bourgeois nationalists, Venezuela is a solid anti-imperialist holdout in the region. The success of the Chavez government in retaining power and popular support is an embarrassment for the imperialists and an example for the oppressed in the region.

Continued on p. 23...

Volver a las Calles es Duro

por un prisoner@ en Texas
Septiembre 2018

Hemos estado tratando de establecer un programa efectivo de Liberación En La Vida, aquí en MIM(Prisons) por muchos años. Hemos extendido el apoyo de pre-liberación que ofrecemos a nuestros camaradas activos que están detrás de las rejas. Y hemos sentado algunas estructuras para un mejor contacto y apoyo en las calles. Pero, lo que podemos ofrecer es todavía muy poco frente a la realidad muy dura de una vida en las calles después de una estadía en prisión. Estamos trabajando en extender lo que podemos ofrecer. Eso se implica dinero. Pero eso también requiere de ideas y gente en las calles que trabajen en esto. Nosotros sabemos que lo que estamos haciendo ahora es inadecuado. Pero, estamos tratando de construir.

Por varios años publicamos el boletín, "Liberación en la Vida" (Release on Life newsletter (ROL)), el cuál fue enviado a nuestros camaradas en las calles y aquellos con una fecha de libertad en su futuro cercano. Pero no hubo mucho interés alrededor de este boletín. Nosotros sabemos que Bajo Candado y Llave (ULK) inspira a las personas por que recibimos muchas cartas sobre eso y envían artículos para el mismo. Liberación en la Vida (ROL) no inspiró muchas respuestas o artículos. Así que, vamos a descontinuar ese esfuerzo. En

su lugar, nos enfocaremos en apoyo práctico y logístico para nuestros liberados. Y seguiremos imprimiendo artículos sobre la liberación en Bajo Candado y Llave (ULK).

Pónganse en contacto con nosotros si tiene una fecha o espera ser puesto en libertad en los siguientes años. Empiece a trabajar con nosotros ahora para poder ayudarlo a que tenga éxito cuando salga a las calles.

A continuación hay una entrevista con uno de nuestros camaradas, quien recientemente fue puesto en libertad, subrayando los desafíos con la vida en las calles y la importancia de prepararse y educarse mientras todavía se está preso. ■

Saludos Revolucionarios!!! Yo fui puesto en libertad de la Penitenciaría el 9 de Julio del 2018. He estado fuera poco más de un mes. El Gobierno Estatal y Federal no nos están ayudando ni mierda. Esta en nosotros el trabajar duro para proveernos a nosotros mismos. Aprende todo lo que puedas mientras que estas en prisión, porque al salir a estas calles es pura acción sin parar. Para ustedes sin fecha de salida, mucho amor y respeto. Cada uno enseña a uno.

Pregunta: Has encontrado algún apoyo para encontrar vivienda? Y si no, que has hecho y que recomiendas a otros que hagan sino no tienen todavía arreglado el ir a vivir con otras personas?

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!

No, no he recibido vivienda. Yo no he recibido ni mierda del gobierno Estatal o Federal. Si tu no tienes amigos o familiares que te den un techo sobre tu cabeza, entonces sí vas a lucharla de verdad aquí fuera. Yo tengo familia y amigos que me han bendecido con apoyo.

Pregunta: Has podido inscribirte para cualquier programa de apoyo del gobierno (Estampillas para comida; Seguro Social; Asistencia Pública, etc)?

Sí, me inscribí para beneficios y mierdas de ese tipo, pero, tanto el gobierno Estatal como el Federal me negaron.

Pregunta: Que hiciste para encontrar trabajo después de haber sido puesto en libertad?

Yo aplique en agencias de empleo, mierdas como esa, pero cuando investigaban mi nombre, nunca me llamaban. Todavía no

Continúa en la página 24...

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 maoístas 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 (JDPOH 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 JDPOH 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.

U.S. AFRICOM Drone Bombings Surge in Somalia

by MIM(Prisons)
March 2019

The United States has been waging a low-intensity war in Somalia for over a decade, and it's only getting worse. U.S. bombings in Somalia have tripled since Trump took office. These bombings generally go unreported in the American press, but investigative journalist Amanda Sperber has helped bring what little information there is to light. According to her report, the administration has refused to explain to Congress its reasoning for the increased bombing campaign. The United States's Africa Command (AFRICOM) reports claim only terrorists have been killed in these "targeted attacks," while Sperger has

spoken with victims on the ground who list young children and civilians as being killed. This has become the common result of the U.S. drone wars.

In 2017, President Trump issued a directive allowing AFRICOM to assassinate anyone it identified as a member of Al Shabaab. The new president of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, is an American-trained puppet who has allowed AFRICOM to operate freely within the country. It is little wonder that Al Shabaab garners support with calls for national liberation in a country that has no free will independent of U.S. imperialism.

In addition to AFRICOM, it has been reported that the CIA is also assassinating people in Somalia, and their requirements for transparency are even more limited. While there are reportedly 500 American troops in Somalia these days, almost all operations, including the CIA, are run from the safety of the "Green Zone." They use drones to do the killing, and then claim that everyone killed was a terrorist.

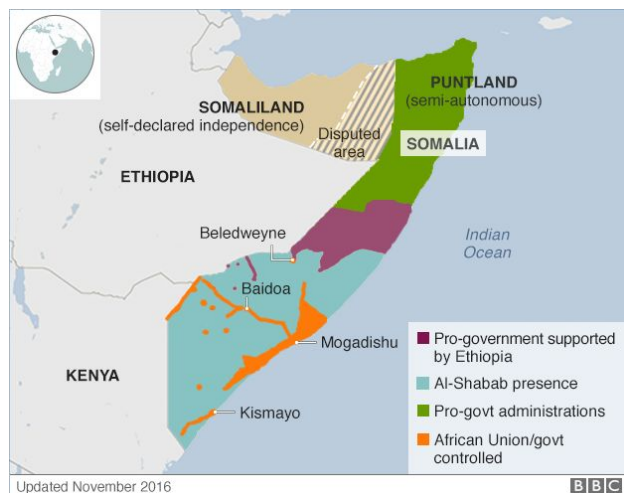
Southern Somalia is just one hotspot for AFRICOM-operated warfare on the continent of

Africa. It is these secret imperial wars that comrades in United Struggle from Within are standing up against by joining the campaign to Shut Down AFRICOM. We must work to lift the veil of secrecy around these wars, and build an anti-imperialist movement that is capable of challenging these unnecessary deaths from within the belly of the beast.

As this issue of *Under Lock & Key* goes to print we will be tallying up the final count of petition signatures from our readers. These petitions will be submitted to the Congressional Black Caucus by the Black Alliance for Peace in April. ■

Notes:

1. Amanda Sperber, 7 February 2019, "Inside the Secretive US Air Campaign In Somalia," *The Nation*.



... Continued from p. 21 ... **Venezuela**

The U.S. government has been plotting coups and working to undermine the government in Venezuela since Chavez took power. Back in April 2002 the Bu\$h government backed a short-lived military coup, but Chavez quickly returned to leadership. The United States has a long history of CIA-backed coups in Latin America. When direct overthrow of the government doesn't work, the U.S. government resorts to election meddling, murder of political leaders, and other underhanded strategies. All this is done in the name of "democracy."

The road forward for Venezuela

Venezuela is not a socialist country. Hugo Chavez brought to power a government representing the national bourgeoisie, not the proletariat. Progressive reforms were made under Chavez that serve the interests of the Venezuelan people as a whole in opposition to those of the imperialist United States. But Venezuela continues to operate within the capitalist model, despite rhetoric

about "socialism." Oil accounts for 98% of export earnings and 50% of GDP in Venezuela.(1) As production falls, the economy has nothing to fall back on. This problem is just one example of the failures of social democracy as a solution to the plight of the Third World proletariat.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the masses were mobilized around the question of putting the people's interests first and not profits. This was the battle against the capitalist road. Venezuela has yet to part with this road. But it continues down the road of national sovereignty, refusing to be a neo-colony of the United States. As such, the national bourgeois government in Venezuela is on the side of the proletariat, while lacking solutions to all of its problems. We must stand firmly in support of the Bolivarian government in Venezuela as it remains a balwark against imperialist intervention and subversion. ■

Notes:

1. Rocio Cara Labrador, 24 January 2019, "Venezuela: The Rise and Fall of a Petrostate, Council on Foreign Relations."
2. Brett Wilkins, 28 January 2019, "The History - and Hypocrisy - of US Meddling in Venezuela," *Venezuela Analysis*.

... Continued from p. 20

...Weeding

defeats imperialism onto another, and that cycle will continue.

To rid all oppressed nations of imperialist aggression we've got to rid the imperialist nations of the mode of production (capitalism) that makes imperialism necessary.

Of course, we must always continue to demonstrate against the by-products of capitalism, the non-principal contradictions. But in doing so we have to consolidate these movements and establish a consensus of consciousness so that while we continue to fight everyday oppression we can also understand that the fight is really much bigger and we have to all know what the cause of these forms of oppression is.

MIM(Prisons) responds: This is a great explanation of the nature of capitalism and why reformist and even individual anti-imperialist battles don't result in the immediate end of oppression. To do that, it's important to define the principal contradiction within any struggle. The principal contradiction is the thing that will push forward a struggle the most. It is the highest priority contradiction, the one that revolutionaries must focus their energy on. It is the string we can pull to unravel the whole situation. And so it's the most important contradiction to focus on right now.

As this author points out, in revolutionary war, as with the ones in Vietnam and China, the principal contradiction is between the imperialist occupying force and the oppressed masses. In the world today overall we see the principal contradiction as between the imperialist countries and the nations they oppress and exploit. In prison

Continued on next page...

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Under Lock & Key No. 67

March/April 2019

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... Continued from prev. page **...Weeding**
we can identify the principal contradiction in a particular situation. For instance when there is an ongoing battle between lumpen orgs then the principal contradiction in that prison might be between two imprisoned lumpen organizations. That doesn't mean it will be the principal contradiction forever. If we achieve peace between the warring lumpen groups, the new principal contradiction may be between the lumpen and the state.

We agree with this writer on the fundamental importance of the contradiction of capitalism. We say that the class contradiction, which under capitalism is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is the fundamental contradiction. This means it underlies all other contradictions within class society. As this author points out, this is an important guiding principle because it helps us understand why one

successful revolution in one country won't lead to the end of all oppression, even within that country. This doesn't, however, mean that class is always the principal contradiction. In fact, as noted above, the principal contradiction in the world today is between imperialist countries and the exploited countries. And even within U.S. borders we see the principal contradiction as between the oppressor and oppressed nations.

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

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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.

By evaluating every situation scientifically we can figure out what is the most important contradiction to focus our energy on. And in this way we can best push forward the revolutionary movement. ■

... Continuado de la pág. 22 **...Calles**
tengo trabajo. He estado afuera ya dos meses. Se puede decir que trabajo por mi propia cuenta.

Pregunta: Tú dices que las personas deberían aprender todo lo que puedan mientras que están presos. En qué tipo de programas y estudios les recomiendas a los presos que se enfoquen en prisión, para prepararse para cuando salgan a las calles?

Yo digo, que las personas deberían aprender todo lo que puedan en prisión, como leer libros. Yo cumplí mi sentencia en encierro solitario (Ad-Seg) porque soy un miembro activo de STG. Yo mismo me eduqué. Usa tu tiempo sabiamente porque una vez que salgas a calles, es todo otro mundo. ■