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## Love Your Varrio by Liberating Your People

by Pili of Republic of Aztlán  
May 2019

Growing up in the internal semi-colonies (ie. Aztlán, New Afrika or the reservations), one is confronted with a certain form of oppression. This national oppression naturally compels our youth to come together and unite for survival purposes. This phenomenon is mirrored anywhere in the world where the contradictions exist between oppressor vs. oppressed nations. This results in oppressed youth forming youth survival groups, which the capitalist state calls "gangs."

Lumpen organizations, or lesser- organized youth survival groups, are a reaction to living under an oppressor nation and although it is a good alternative to assimilation or attempted assimilation to Amerikkka, there is a need to develop more fully to political consciousness. Political consciousness will be what leads to liberation of our nations.

In my own development, I realized how my varrio will always be my varrio, my homies always my homies, my brothers always my brothers. But in order to liberate Aztlán it will take more than being a rebel. I now know if I truly love my people and community I should uplift their consciousness, not turn my back on them. The goal is to bring my people to the side of revolution. The goal is to have my people develop as did the excellent example of the Young Lords Party. From a so-called "gang" to a revolutionary organization. This can be accomplished via political education. Each one teach one. Start with your cellmate, then neighbors, then homies on the tier and branch out. Leaders should institute political education and raise the consciousness of the org. This is when real accomplishments will be gained. Rise! ★

## From Gangster Mentality to the Communist Road

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)  
June 2019

Transforming the gangster mentality into a revolutionary one is possible because they are two sides of a coin. As an intermediary class, the lumpen can act out both bourgeois ethics (in the form of gangsterism) or proletarian ethics (as revolutionaries).

The lumpen implementation of bourgeois ethics is the gangster. The gangster in many ways imitates the most ruthless aspects of bourgeois behavior, allowing them to be potential tools of the imperialists. Yet there are aspects of the collective identity, the discipline, and perhaps most importantly the

connection to an oppressed nation, that you see in both the gangster and the revolutionary. This is what distinguishes the lumpen organization (L.O.) from the criminal gangs made up of correctional officers and police departments.

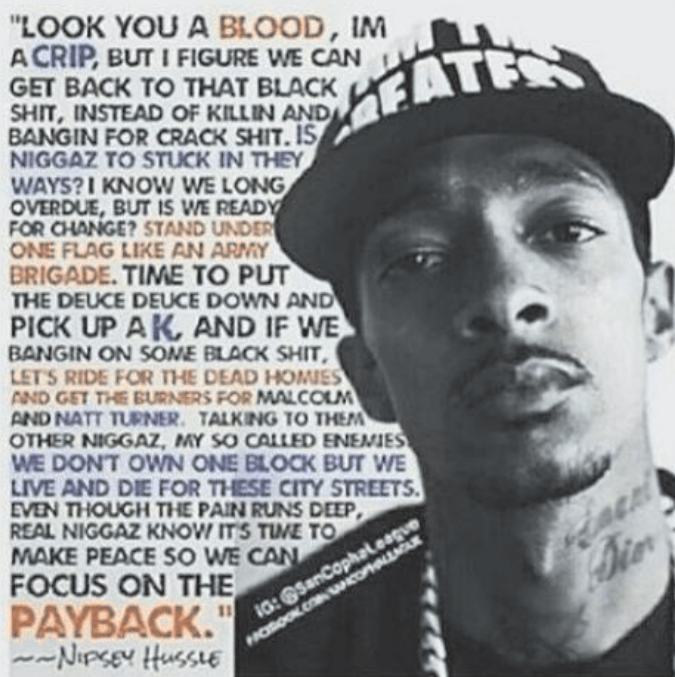
The lumpen implementation of proletarian ethics is the revolutionary. The lumpen revolutionary may be more adventurous and tend more towards left errors than the proletariat. Regardless, choosing the proletarian road, means reforming oneself to take on proletarian morality. The collective action and rebelliousness of the lumpen organization must mature into pure dedication to the people and a strategic approach to protracted peoples' war against imperialism.

We discussed these two roads in our review of J. Sakai's *The Dangerous Class and Revolutionary Theory* in ULK 64.(1) As we said then, there are two roads today, the communist and the capitalist. The capitalist is the old road, the decaying road.

So when comrades keep bringing up this question of "how do we overcome the gangster mentality," it is essentially a question of how do we move the lumpen off the old capitalist road and into building the new communist one.

Our critics might counter, "wait a minute, plenty of people give up a violent gang life without becoming proletarian revolutionaries." And they are correct. But this also has not put a dent in the presence of the gangster mentality in our society, has it? Individuals aging out of gangs and integrating into bourgeois society does nothing to combat gangsterism because the motivation, the causes are still there. Even those who reach out to dissuade youth from taking the same path only provide a band-aid. A class of people, excluded from the means of production and distribution, living in an economic system driven by profit, will keep reproducing the gangster mentality. Until we can replace capitalism with a system where everyone has a productive role to play and peoples' needs

*Continued on p. 6...*



**Rest In Power Nipsey Hussle**  
**15 August 1985 - 31 March 2019**

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



## 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](http://www.prisoncensorship.info)

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

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

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

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

## Other Resources

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

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

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

## Choosing One Ideology Over Another: The Materialist Method

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MIM forms the following conclusions on the materialist method:

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

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

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

## United Front for Peace in Prisons- Statement of Principles

The basis of any real unity comes from an agreement on certain key ideas. This statement does not grant authority to any party over any other party. We are mutually accountable to each other to uphold these points in order to remain active participants in this united front.

★ **PEACE:** WE organize to end the needless conflicts and violence within the U.S. prison environment. The oppressors use divide and conquer strategies so that we fight each other instead of them. We will stand together and defend ourselves from oppression.

★ **UNITY:** WE strive to unite with those facing the same struggles as us for our common interests. To maintain unity we have to keep an open line of networking and communication, and ensure we address any situation with true facts. This is needed because of how the pigs utilize tactics such as rumors, snitches and fake communications to divide and keep division among the oppressed. The pigs see the end of their control within our unity.

★ **GROWTH:** WE recognize the importance of education and freedom to grow in order to build real unity. We support members within our organization who leave and embrace other political organizations and concepts that are within the anti-imperialist struggle. Everyone should get in where they fit in. Similarly, we recognize the right of comrades to leave our organization if we fail to live up to the principles and purpose of the United Front for Peace in Prisons.

★ **INTERNATIONALISM:** WE struggle for the liberation of all oppressed people. While we are often referred to as "minorities" in this country, and we often find those who are in the same boat as us opposing us, our confidence in achieving our mission comes from our unity with all oppressed nations who represent the vast majority globally. We cannot liberate ourselves when participating in the oppression of other nations.

★ **INDEPENDENCE:** WE build our own institutions and programs independent of the United States government and all its branches, right down to the local police, because this system does not serve us. By developing independent power through these institutions we do not need to compromise our goals.

## How to join the United Front?

★ Study and uphold the five principles above.

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

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

★ Send reports on your progress to *Under Lock & Key*. Did you develop a peace treaty or protocol that is working? Send it in for others to study. Is your unity based on actions? Send us reports on the organizing you are doing.

★ Keep educating your members. The more educated your members are, the more unity you can develop, and the stronger your organization can become. Unity comes from the inside out. By uniting internally, we can better unite with others as well. Contact MIM(Prisons) if you need additional materials to educate your members in history, politics and economics.



## First Nation Organizer Statement of Unity with UFPP

by an Idaho prisoner  
March 2019

**Peace:** means to me and my organization that people have a right to be ok and have sanity and wellness in their lives and experience no harm to their persons or families, friends and so forth. I live in a behavioral health unit @ Pinta and see much suffering and I long to see reform and the end of senseless suffering.

**Unity:** I long to see the unification of all races and peoples in a harmonious and integrated diversity of embrace and brother/sisterhood and so forth. For too long the nations and people suffer because of bias and division and needless persecution. It's time to band together.

**Growth:** I long for a movement, which I believe MIM-USW are that movement that will spread like wildfire and join in true revolution and change.

**Internationalism:** I believe MIM and USW are a blaze waiting to happen and proposes a better cause than any I've seen in recent years. I believe it is a crown on the head of movements like NuIndian Uprising and American Indian Movement and also International/Foreign orgs like the mentioned. I feel that we, through this cause, can unite divided nations.

**Independence:** I believe that true independence is gained through communal occurrence. I am of Iroquoian descent and Marx and Engels described the Iroquois gens as communist in nature. I am Seneca-Cayneya Cherokee and Wyandotte (Wandat-Huron) and I believe once people join together under a true system and do away with genocidal imperialism, we will truly know freedom.

I make statement here to my pledge of unity with and to Maoist International Ministry of Prisons, the United Front and the United Struggle from Within.

I avow to uphold the 5 principles and contribute to cause and effect and the true struggle of this great and rising movement.

There is more to say for myself. But, that would be vain. This is not about me but aiding others and uniting people.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** The United Front for Peace in Prisons welcomes organizers like this comrade into the movement. The five principles of the UFPP (see previous page) underscore the basis for our unity and organizing work.

It is true that Marx and Engels argued that traditional indigenous hunter-gatherer communities were based on egalitarian social relationships and common ownership. They called this primitive communism. But they were clear that we can't go back in time. As history marches forward, new contradictions have developed. Class contradictions developed throughout the world, manifesting first in slave societies, then in feudalism, and most recently in capitalism.

We now need to overthrow capitalism in order to establish a new form of communism around the globe. And unfortunately we can't just get to communism overnight. Capitalism has corrupted the thinking of many people with a lifetime of reactionary culture and drive for individual profit, so we will need a period of dictatorship of the proletariat under the transitional phase to communism that we call socialism. This dictatorship will forcibly keep the minority who support exploitation of the majority out of power.

It will take many years to work through the period of socialism to establish a true communist society where no group has power over any other group. As we work to get there, we should take inspiration from the egalitarian nature of historical humyn societies. Anyone who says that humyns are just inherently selfish and incapable of creating a communist system should study this history. ★

### Beaten Down But Never Broken

by a New York prisoner  
March 2019

*You can put me in the jailhouse  
But I'll look at it as a clubhouse  
You can give me a violent shove  
But in the end I'll rise above*

*You can call me an inmate  
But I still won't show you hate  
You can make me wear this ugly green  
But when my bid is done and over I'll burn it  
with kerosene*

*You can show me disrespect  
But I'll laugh and still show you respect  
You can show me your rage  
But I will not engage*

*You can violate my mail  
But I'll remember I'm in jail  
You can restrain me with your chain  
But I will stay sane*

*I may be beaten down  
But I'll never be broken*



- 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!

PO Box 40799  
San Francisco, CA 94140

## Don't Defeat the Gangster Mentality, Embrace it!

by a Washington prisoner  
May 2019

Gangster mentality can mean different things to many. A gang is a group of people with a common goal. I must emphasize that all words/concepts are subject to connotations that don't necessarily have good intentions. Gang/gangster therefore carry negative and positive connotations, like other words like socialism, anarchism, communism, etc. It has been MIM(Prisons)'s aim to educate us about these ideas through the proper usage of science.

With this in mind, I consider myself a gangster. Since I believe in the idea of working with others towards a common goal, to me it is not about "defeating this gangster mentality," it's about embracing it and re-directing it towards the "Shining Path." We have a common enemy, and resolving our minor contradictions doesn't necessarily mean that we have to defeat our gangster mentality. This kind of language is what causes rejection from the lumpen organizations (L.O.s) in many cases. This is the language that is used by state-financed organizations and Christian groups/org.

I understand that MIM's direction is different, but those who pick up *ULK* and glance at it may see this language and will put *ULK* down. My approach has, and will continue to be, one that politicizes the gangster mentality. This is where you will find the most dedicated comrades, and, because they are respected they find themselves in a position to make real changes that erase that divide among different gangs and further our struggle in the right direction. It is about learning and teaching about our minor contradictions and working to overcome these minor obstacles.

In *ULK* 67, USW 11 wrote about how the state of Washington is doing whatever it can to depoliticize prisoners, and how among those places where you find the gangster mentality is where you find the most resistance against the state.(1) When L.O.s understand the power they have working collectively, things begin to change and form. After all, gangs are in contrast with the individualistic mentality in the United States, and are a response to the socio-economic conditions we face in and out of prison. It's a way to survive, in a place where the capitalist and oppressive system emphasizes individualism. ★

Notes: 1. USW 11, Analyze Local Conditions for Organizing Opportunities, *ULK* 67, April 2019.

## Gangster Actions Don't Match Words

by a Missouri prisoner  
February 2019

This is the first article I have written for *ULK*. I was especially interested in writing about the topic above because, all too often, I have witnessed how the 'gangster' type are eager to dictate to others how their mission is to bring unity, yet their actions and attitudes are completely misplaced. For instance, if we are to fight oppression within the prison system, how is extorting other prisoners, assaulting others, etcetera, a means to that end?

I am not, nor would I ever become, gang-affiliated. In my opinion, if a person joins a gang, it is because they are too weak to stand up for themselves. Prison has become a daycare. Whites sell out whites, blacks team up with whites and babies have babies. What the hell? I've met pedophiles who are ranking gang officials, and snitches are free to roam as they please. Nothing makes any sense anymore and, just for the record, any gang which encourages a prisoner to extend their sentences or which demands that parents of children perform acts which result in them not being able to see them, that crap is no better than the lowest of the lowly.

The things gangs in Missouri do and continue to do are stupid and their actions bring upon us all the oppression. Gang

members in Missouri, though they continuously spout the B.S. about solidarity, unity and integrity are, in turn, the cause and continuing justification for our being oppressed.

Instead of fighting for our right to not be abused by 'the system,' Missouri gangs are the tinder with which the fire under oppression is fueled. For every instance of stupidity by Missouri gang members, we, as a whole, lose an integral part of the overall voice with which we need to be able to defend ourselves from the wrongs of the system.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This author asserts that "if a person joins a gang, it is because they are too weak to stand up for themselves." We ask in return: why is it wrong to seek out others to help you defend yourself? Lumpen organizations arose, on the streets and in prisons, in response to very real threats to the safety of oppressed nation people. It is not realistic to think that, in the face of institutional violence and attacks, or organized violence from other groups of people, one should stand alone. And seeking this help and unity is not a sign of weakness.

However, we do agree with this writer that organizations that require their members to engage in anti-people activity, or which engage in actions that harm the general

prisoner population, are not friends of the fight against the criminal injustice system. There are many different types of lumpen organizations and conditions vary in different areas. In some situations staying away from L.O.s might be the best practice for anti-imperialists. But at this stage, to organize the lumpen masses, we need to be building unity between lumpen organizations where possible, not perpetuating the fighting that the prison administration encourages.



As a young member of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party J.V. Stalin edited the party's newspaper, *Pravda*, and raised funds for Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik faction via robberies, kidnappings, and protection rackets. He was repeatedly arrested and exiled to Siberia (successfully fleeing multiple times). His group pulled off the largest bank robberies of the time and did not keep anything back for themselves. Stalin was always without money, as all money went to the Party. Thanks to this funding, their Party was able to seize state power in Russia in 1917. Years later, following Lenin's death, Stalin became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, overseeing the first socialist economy. During WWII, he led the USSR, and the free world, in an all-out war to defeat white supremacy and fascism in Europe and Japan. We regularly print articles in *ULK* from comrades in lumpen orgs doing just this to highlight and learn from as most of our readers in prison are in or have been in lumpen organizations. ★



... Continued from p. 1 ... **Commie Road**  
drive our society, instead of profit, only then can we truly overcome the gangster mentality.

A few years back, in *ULK 51* a comrade summed up some discussion around this topic among USW comrades:

"Today's youth show the same apathy, indifference and nihilism as the youth of 1955. It was the civil rights movement that awoke the youth of that era. USW comrades struggled over what today can take the place of the civil rights movement. War, environment and imperialist expansion were three good starting points to organize around. We lumpen youth have more stake in the future environment and it is us who fight the wars. It helps to understand that those starving to death and suffering/dying from preventable diseases are our people. We must fulfill our destiny or betray it. All this nitpicking and betrayal between sets/sides contributes to humankind suffering. We must overcome this flaw.

"The principal enemy we must defeat is the glamorization of gangsterism. A revolutionary or a gangster? What are we? Can the two coexist in a person and still be progressive? Gangsterism plants fear by oppression, and revolutionaries are in struggle against oppression. This internecine violence we perpetrate between sets is what the pigs want us to do. They sold us this shit in *Scarface* and we've built on to it and made it our own. Overcoming the glamorization of gangsterism will take proletarian morality, conscious rap, exposing the downsides and ills of gangsterism, the glamorization of revolution, revolutionary culture, and possibly to redefine the word gangsta. Gangsters are parasites and revolutionaries are humankind's hope. It's as simple as that. We need to leave the lumpen mentality for a proletarian one. Many true revolutionaries were once gangsters. Gangsterism is a stage, basically.

"Self-respect, self-defense and self-determination define transitional qualities

of a revolutionary. Bunchy Carter, Mutulu Shakur and Tupac all transcended the hood and grew into progressives. What we are seeking as USW is opening up the spaces for gangsters of all walks of life to enter the realm of anti-imperialism and begin a transformation of mind, actions and habits to develop into the model of a revolutionary gangsta with the capability of forwarding the cause of the people. We must understand our potential. It is us, we reading these ULKs, that hold imperialism in our fists. A real gangsta is one who has gone revolutionary and has kicked off all the strings of social control - mental illness, drugs, fantasy, despair, escapism, etc.(2)"

A program for overcoming the gangster mentality involves a multi-pronged approach. We must expand and develop the membership of the vanguard cadre organizations. Simultaneously we must organize the lumpen masses around a minimal program of unity. As K.G. Supreme of USW stressed in an article on this topic, it is revolutionary nationalism and anti-imperialism that provides a viable group identity and movement to rival that of the current L.O.s that dominate the terrain.

"Cultural Freedom is the best weapon for defeating the gangster mentality. Cultural freedom that is geared in nationalist liberation of oppressed nations, and exploiter nation suicide for members of the euro-american oppressor nation. As Marcus M. Garvey of the African nationalist organization, UNIAACL said, 'Power is the only argument that satisfies man.'"

And as Pilli discusses in "Loving Your Varrio by Liberating Your People," we must embrace the oppressed people, communities and organizations. And we must encourage growth within them. Communists are not here to attack the gangsters or the addicts, that is what the bourgeois state does. We are here to guide others down the same path of education and growth that we have found.

United Struggle from Within has long put forth the slogan, "Unity from the inside out." This embodies the dialectical process of developing unity within one's own thinking so that one can better build unity with others; that an organization must struggle within its membership to build unity before it can unite with others in the nation; and that a nation must build unity before it can properly unite in its own interests with other oppressed nations.

"Unity-struggle-unity" is a related slogan that depicts how we should approach building unity among the people, addressing contradictions amongst the people. We can't be all unity, we must challenge, question and

struggle. But we start and end with unity, so that we can grow in that direction.

"Each one, teach one" is a slogan that stresses the role of education, especially in these early stages. It also embodies the truth that we all have things to learn from each other. Education and learning are a central part of our program for building the cadre and the masses.

These slogans, and others, should be actively built around. Comrades should study and popularize the 5 points of the United Front for Peace. We should organize events and study programs around Black August, the Commemoration of the Plan de San Diego and the September 9th Day of Peace and Solidarity. MIM(Prisons)'s Free Books to Prisoners Program offers study materials around all of these topics. We also offer correspondence study courses, which all comrades wishing to work with USW should join. We offer a wide array of revolutionary literature for your own independent study and for prison-based study groups.

While uniting around study groups and education is important for building cadre, most people will only be able to unite with us around concrete battles. It is up to comrades on the ground to determine what winnable battles exist where you are. What are the masses' righteous demands and how can we mobilize them to achieve them? How can we build Serve the People programs locally by pooling resources and helping others out? It is in these concrete battles that we gain mass support, and we learn to organize, lead and challenge injustice.

We believe we have the correct theoretical basis and the framework of a program for this stage of the prison movement. But there is much to be done to experiment and learn from. As K.G. Supreme stresses, the lumpen masses must get deep into the gangster mentality, understand it so as to transform it.

"It is important, in defeating the gangster mentality, that those serious about raising the consciousness of the subjects of gangsterism, first come to terms with the mentality as a lifestyle from the vantage point of inside the mind of a first world gangster. Approaching the subject from any other angle would be an inferior method promised to fail in producing any significant impact in the social behavior of those that are the target. The investigation into this gangster mentality should be led by those who are infected with the mentality. This isn't to say petit bourgeoisie nationalist groups cannot support the leaderships of those struggling against the gangster mentality. It is to say that the petit

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

We support **prisoner-led study groups** with lit and study questions. Tell us about your study group to get stocked up!

We also run correspondence study courses. The **introductory study group** studies the science of dialectical materialism and organizing strategy in level 1, and some basics on Maoism in level 2. Graduates can go on to join our University of Maoist Thought, which studies more advanced material. Write in to sign up and get more info.

# Building Revolutionary Consciousness Against Reactionary Gangsterism

by USW30 of United Struggle from Within  
June 2019

*"We find ourselves today forced into a re-examination of the whole nature of black revolutionary consciousness and its relative standing within a class society steeped in a form of racism so sensitized that it extends itself even to the slightest variation in skin tone." - Comrade George (B.I.M.E.)*

Almost 50 years after the assassinations of our comrades W. L., George, Khata-Ri, etc, etc. and the enemy has totally disseminated our party and reinforced their system to potentially negate our future revolutionary movements! What do we do now?

Our demand for narcotics to temporarily numb the pain of half life in capitalist U.S. is helping to fuel our distraction. Half of us sell dope and the other half use it!! Killing our unity and revolutionary potential! Now here we are, in capitalist U.S. torture chambers! Many of us are addicts, chasing a high right now! Some of us "claim a set" and from this identity cannot see being cool with the brotha of another "set." Some are lifers, who are weary of sacrificing themselves for the reactionaries to benefit! Some have already fallen too far (i.e. KKKop collaborators), and in turn, work covertly to undermine our movement! Others are poltroons, and out of their fear(s), they knowingly sabotage our progression as a U.S. disfavored minority. Many of us are "armchair revolutionaries" in that our practice(s) never match our stated militant goals. Others see control of the "underground economy" as being revolutionary. I do not have the answers. I am simply a New Afrikan man seeking community input as I continue to stride firmly. My questions are:

1. How is the "revolutionary consciousness" developed in a time of reactionary gangsterism?
2. At what point does this so called "revolutionary theorist" have to put his theories into practice?
3. How can we ever trust a cat who has ever worked as an informant or jail house rat? By his very obvious individualism he has demonstrated his priority is ideal of "me first." Which, to us, says that once the pressure(s) of isolation, pig abuse(s), additional time, etc. comes into play, he will tell again. Setting us back even further!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This comrade and eir questions posed was one of the inspirations for the topic of this issue of

ULK. And we hope we have at least begun to provide some answers and guidance for those of us struggling with these questions.

This comrade also mentions a serious side-effect of the current gangster era, which is propped up by the drug economy. This reality serves as a material incentive in the form of profits for the seller and in the form of chemical triggers in the brain of the buyer. We addressed this situation in more depth in ULK 59 where we recognized the challenges in even questioning the drug economy in today's prison environment. It will require progress on other fronts to make a dent on the struggle against the poisoning of oppressed communities.

So what is to be done today?

## Build a Revolutionary Culture on the Streets

**USW30:** Recently I heard of my older brotha/comrade's passing and it has me wondering... how do the brothas/ sistas, who've embraced revolutionary consciousness inside, transition to outside struggles? Taking into consideration that the lumpen are in a state of defeatism and quite fratricidal!

I personally exited Federal Bureau Of Prisons after 17 calendars. I jumped right into local progressive politics and organizational volunteer work, serving the lumpen! Yet, seemingly at every outing one was forced to repel some form of gang reactionary threat(s). Most of which, stern chastisements sufficed. However, all B.S. aside, I guess what I'm saying is, without a "progressive culture" in play within the

"hood" We are at risk of A) being victimized by our misguided lumpen, conditioned by capitalism to fratricidal violence, B) or we ourselves react to reactionary threats and in turn reinforce the lumpen's perceptions of us, "prison revolutionaries" that return to "gangster" conduct once out.

In truth, the only communities I saw which had requisite support systems; minimal threat of intra-national violence, and universal code of community morality were Islamic. I continually read pieces in ULK, where cats profess to be "materialist dialecticians" and as such, against "spirituality." What I suggest to those living in New Afrikan areas in particular is to analyze the impact of Islam on it. Contrast that with that of the so-called revolutionaries. We must figure out more effective ways to bring unity, as we methodically strive to bring Babylon down. Rather than spit unproductive rhetoric which services interests of the pigs by dividing militants from one another.

Those who are truly analyzing the body of facts (i.e. U.S. history) would have to acknowledge that those of Afrikan ancestry have always held spiritual connections and/or beliefs in a higher power/creator. Upwards of 40% of enslaved Afrikans were Muslim. Leading many slave captors to recommend traffickers firstly "break" them (i.e. torture Islam out of them) prior to bringing these known rebels to the United States and England. My point being those who truly work to build revolutionary culture must work with Muslims and in turn find common ground to then gain traction in

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## ...Commie Road

*bourgeoisie nationalist must not seek to dictate the leaderships that struggle to defeat the gangster mentality, as to not contaminate the nationalist liberation objective, spreading culture indifferent to the destructive culture, spread by the bourgeoisie.*

*"...As more and more ground level leaderships disconnect themselves with the lifestyles that encourages behavior motivated by the gangster mentality, there becomes a need to replace the un-natural behavior with disciplines motivated by reconnection with natural lifestyles that are in harmony with the growth and development of a parasite outkaste of society, matured into a productive component of the internationalist objective to end national oppression by the exploiting nations in independent nations. Only culture that promotes national*

*liberation struggles, applying political methods in interest of the oppressed can be relied on to replace the mentality of gangsterism... Emotions do not dictate the course of action in gradual transformation from unconscious behavior to conscious population. Instead the culture of educating against defeatist mentality, births the scientific approach of the analytical prisoner, who in turn of reversing the gangsterism pop culture for a popular culture of upliftment in nationalist liberation objectives that free the available remedies of exploited and nationally disadvantaged, free themselves. The key to defeating the gangster mentality is investments in engineering techniques that make anti-imperialist culture popular." ★*

Notes:

1. Wiawimawo, "Sakai's Investigation of the Lumpen in Revolution", ULK 64, October 2018.
2. USW461, "Fighting Apathy Among the Lumpen", ULK 51, July 2016.



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revolutionary culture building. **...Building**

Materialists must dialectically look at U.S. history and correspond tactics to today's realities confronting historically oppressed peoples! Teach Christians examples of Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, etc. Teach Muslims about El Hajj Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X), etc. That even though we may come from varying socio-cultural backgrounds, we have the very same oppressors and system. That the Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Atheists, Communists, etc. who live within U.S. borders all share the same injustices, inequalities, and pig brutalities on a daily basis. As such, we must cast aside the divisive rhetoric and build class unity or die. As a Muslim of New Afrika, I am obligated to fight all oppressors. Personally, I could care less if the askari at my side believes or not. Long as he/she is committed to struggle...to death or death row. Does it matter if I must make Salah, before we run towards our oppressors? Well, that's my take and regardless, I will continue fighting, organizing, and striving! Peace.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We agree with this author's point that we should be working with the left wing of the Muslim movement, and other religions. We addressed this question in depth in *ULK 48*. As communists we embrace materialism and encourage scientific thinking about the world. But this does not prevent us from uniting with all who can be rallied against imperialism. And the rabid anti-Muslim sentiments coming from the Amerikan imperialists creates fertile breeding ground for anti-imperialism.

Although we cannot find evidence of such a high percentage of Muslims among enslaved Africans. At the time that slaves were captured from Africa indigenous religions were the most common practice. But traffickers (and slave owners) attempted to break slaves of all their practices that tied them to their homeland, regardless of what religion or other cultural norms.

While we often talk about the imprisoned lumpen as being one of the most revolutionary populations in the United States, it is also in a backwards state of affairs. Meanwhile, the last time we saw a strong revolutionary consciousness penetrate the prison population was when there were strong vanguard organizations in the oppressed nations on the streets. We must recognize that part of building a strong revolutionary movement in prisons is building an even stronger one on the outside.

United Struggle from Within serves as a conduit for connecting the two, via prisoners who are released. MIM(Prisons)'s Re-Lease

on Life Program provides support to those who are struggling with these challenges after release. And we have a lot of work to do to build strong revolutionary communities for comrades around the United States.

### Revolutionary Theorists or Revolutionaries

**USW30:** Within the context of criticism-self-criticism, I am wondering when we as revolutionary theorists on the inside, shall righteously analyze the definition(s) of "revolution"/"revolutionary"? And in turn, be honest with ourselves (within the New Afrikan community) about if we are truly on that path that Col J (RIP), W.L. (RIP) etc. strode. I am questioning myself as well?! As the Kentucky comrade pointed out on p. 8 of *ULK 65*.(1)

Many of us claim to be revolutionaries, but have yet to truly embrace the reality of revolution! Or, shed the ethos of Gangsta. We create plethora of revolutionary documents in prisons, only to return to society and criminality. Recently a young New Afrikan referred to a fellow rad as "homeless dopefiend!" This made me think back.

The economy of capitalism murders millions daily. We have seemingly been co-opted by enemy cultural tenants! We have comrades embracing drug dealing as acceptable conduct! Poisoning our communities, profiting off of the destruction of our underklass citizenry! Then, returning to prison in turn advocating for addicted rads to be cast aside! We have rads claiming revolutionary authenticity, that have yet to stand against the real enemy, yet take pride in shopping blood of their own! The contradictions are glaring and I believe these are just a few of the things which have a real progressive and revolutionary movement stagnating!

Perhaps a retracing of steps is needed? As in... acknowledgement of enemy's defeat of the revolutionary movement in the 60s! That the "Black Power" of the 70s was a reformist attempt(s) to somehow safeguard some aspect of sociocultural pride, while rejecting the dominant amerikkan kapitalist culture! Which in turn, led to the 80s crack epidemic and subsequent abandonment of all things

revolution. For a "piece of the pie!"

These cats coming into prison today... fratricidal, apolitical, and addicted! Are the effects of our failures as leaders, in our communities! How can he claim Col J (RIP), when our day to day conduct is a reactionary affirmation of "Superfly" and "the Mack?" These youth see the hypocrisies, and this is why we cannot gain their support! To speak about revolution and yet not live a revolutionary example is unacceptable! And fraudulent in the 1st degree! I am no longer going to refer to myself as a revolutionary until I engage in revolution! Nor will I reference Col J (RIP) as my "comrade," until I follow his examples!

I thank the Kentucky comrade for eir critiques in the last two paragraphs, as they struck home for me! We must reform the "gangstas" within our movement... or destroy them! As their overt materialistic individualisms will destroy us... or, turn the progressives back into elements of reaction!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** There is a bit of an existential crisis for the revolutionary in non-revolutionary times. We don't take on the term "revolutionary" as if we were superheroes, but merely to describe our political goals and ideology. But, it does bring us back to question 2 above. And we'd say that a revolutionary must always be putting eir theories into practice. And that includes not waging revolutionary war in a non-revolutionary situation. That is a basic principle of the guerilla.

As USW30 says, the youth can detect the phony revolutionaries who just talk the rhetoric while acting out the negative aspects of the gangster role. We can act as revolutionaries, as individuals, in our day-to-day behavior in interacting with, serving, and standing up for the people.

There's a reason we get letters regularly mentioning the comrades who died in the struggle 50 years ago. Their legacy lives on because they stood up as examples. And even if our names don't become legendary, we will inspire the youth and the masses around us through our correct actions. ★

Notes: 1. "Black Panthers in Today's Climate," by a Kentucky prisoner, *ULK 65*.



You can kill a revolutionary but you can never  
kill the revolution.

(Fred Hampton)



# Whites Can Be Lumpen Too

by an Illinois prisoner  
February 2019

I strongly disagree with the exclusion of whites from the ranks of the lumpen within the United States. (see the tenth paragraph of Wiawimawo's article "Sakai's Investigation of the Lumpen in Revolution" in *ULK* 64) Although most whites in the United States enjoy "white privilege" there are also whole communities of disenfranchised, impoverished whites. These communities are heavily reliant on government support systems to survive (i.e. food stamps, SSI, welfare, section 8 housing, etc.). They are also rife with crime, drugs, and street gangs.

For example, take the [lumpen organizations] L.O.s from Chicago (i.e. the Gaylords and the Simon City Royals). Both of these organizations were started by disenfranchised, impoverished communities consisting of mostly whites. They were originally founded to protect their communities from outside forces.

By stating that only oppressed "minorities" can be considered lumpen, Wiawimawo is engaging in paternalist politics that causes divisions within the movement. The truth is that any people that fit the political, social, and economic profile are lumpen. Disenfranchisement is not unique, nor immune, to any nationality. In solidarity!

**Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons) responds:** We are sending you a copy of "Who is the Lumpen in the United States?" so you can better understand our position on this question. First let's look at the quote from my article that you are responding to:

*"This is why, in our work on the First World lumpen in the United States, we excluded white people from the model by default. We did this despite knowing many white lumpen individuals who are comrades and don't fit the model."*

Note i say that we know "many white lumpen individuals who are comrades," meaning we agree with you that there are white lumpen, we just excluded them from the model presented in the paper cited. So why did we do this? Well, it is mostly based in our assessment of the principal contradiction in the United States being between the white oppressor nation and the oppressed nations. In the paper we do write:

*"White men [who are currently/formerly incarcerated lumpen] number about 1.3 million, but are much more likely to find employment and join the labor aristocracy*

*after release from prison. While in prison white men do fall into the lumpen class but lack the oppressed nation outlook and so often join white supremacist groups rather than supporting revolutionary organizing. This is just one factor contributing to a national outlook that leads us to exclude whites overall when discussing the revolutionary potential of the First World lumpen."*

We also point out that historically the settler nation made up of Europeans has always been a petty bourgeois nation, while the oppressed nations have histories that are largely proletarian, but also lumpen-proletarian. History affects our national and class consciousness, so we can't just look at a snapshot in time. But the point of the paper was to show the size of the First World lumpen in the oppressed nations of the United States and a snapshot of how their conditions differ significantly from the white nation.

We'd say the examples you provide are exceptions that prove the rule. It takes some digging to come up with them, but certainly they exist. And in the context of the topic of this issue of *Under Lock & Key* we can certainly agree with you that they should not be ignored.

Most often, in U.S. prisons, when we talk about white L.O.s we are talking about white nationalist groups of some type. In our study, white supremacist organizations that are promoting fascism in this country today are made up of three main groups: former military, members of lumpen organizations/prisoners, and alienated petty bourgeois youth gathering around racist subcultures on the internet. The first two are the more dangerous groups, though the third gives the movement more of a feeling of a mass base of popularity. In our work it is with the second group that we can have the most impact. And we've had a number of former hardcore white supremacists become leaders within United Struggle from Within, and many more have participated in progressive battles for prisoner rights. It is in such alliances with the oppressed nations around the common interests of the imprisoned lumpen that we can really win over potential recruits who were initially drawn to fascism.

We welcome reports on examples of white lumpen organizing in the interests of ending oppression, and further analysis of the white lumpen as a base for progressive organizing. ★

Notes: 1. Wiawimawo, "Sakai's Investigation of the Lumpen in Revolution", *ULK* 64, October 2018.

## Thoughts on Sex Offenders and the Lumpen

by Ehecatt of United Struggle from Within  
January 2019

Revolutionary Greetings!

Just writing in to say great job to everyone who participated with the latest *ULK* [64]. That said, I also want to give my input on various articles that sparked my interest:

**RE: "Notes On Advancing The Struggle Inside: Sex Offenders Revisited" by el Independentista**

1) In the second paragraph of this article, the author states that Sex Offenders (S.O.s) constitute a more dangerous element than murderers "because S.O.s often have more victims, and many of those victims become sexual predators, creating one long line of victimization."

As to your first point that S.O.s constitute a more dangerous element in comparison to murderers, I think your reasoning here is purely subjective as well as characteristic of the lumpen mindset both inside and outside of prisons, which the criminal lumpen vies to minimize their own parasitic and anti-people behavior. This way the lumpen can say "I may be a thief, but at least I'm not a pedophile." "I may be a gang member, but at least I'm not a rapist, etc." It is a notion that's caught up in all kinds of hypocritical bourgeois standards of honor, integrity and other nonsense. It's bourgeois moralization.

2) In the second paragraph the author states: "Contrarily, sexual predators affect the entire societal composition. They perpetuate

*Continued on p.11 ...*

### DOCUMENT PRISON ABUSES

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

Documenting and monitoring the abusive conditions in Amerikan 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.

# Fighting the System From Within

by a Louisiana prisoner  
December 2018

While expressing full unity with MIM(Prisons), I feel compelled to also urge those who say they are engaging in the fight against imperialism to expand their reach. We are living within a time where the public is realizing that prisons and other oppressive methods are doing more harm than good. Campaigns are being launched throughout the world on behalf of the rights of prisoners and the oppressed in general.

MIM(Prisons) encourages those struggling against imperialism to be united no matter the group one may claim as long as it's against imperialism. We have a justice system that perpetuates the institution of racism in this country through its targeting of the most marginalized communities: people of color, women and the LGBT community. As one we are more than they are and it's time we realize this truth and act on it NOW!

The public generally associates torture with physical violence; they sometimes have a hard time accepting that there are equally brutal forms of mental torture. It's interesting, though. Back in the 1940s and 1950s when stories came out about communist regimes holding prisoners in isolation for very long periods of time, we had no problem calling that torture.

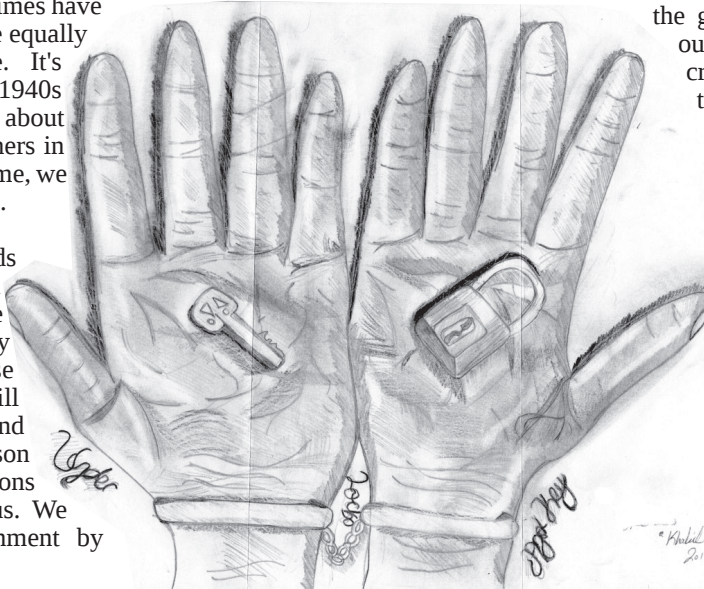
We all have family and friends who can be our voice as well as a way and means to destroy the system from within. If our family and friends were employees at these prisons they would expose the ill treatment we are receiving, and misconduct of the other prison officials. Shutting down prisons should be a prisoner's main focus. We must stop funding our imprisonment by buying things from these prisons.

If the state has to pay they will soon run out of money as they are doing in Louisiana, and now Louisiana is forced to release prisoners due to lack of funds and the feds refuse to give them any more money.

Many may not share my views but one can not disagree that picking up the torch after someone else or starting one's own movement will be rewarding. As I think about all of the movements and campaigns that have been launched on behalf of prisoners or other oppressed people, I wonder why these groups have not thought to get prison jobs in order to expose the system. If they are fired or harassed because

of it they can bring suit over it. We must encourage this. *ULK 51* ran an article about a Louisiana correctional officer who exposed Winn Correctional Center.(1) Changes were made and the private prison group lost its contract with the state. So what I am suggesting works.

We must keep our minds on decarcerating our states by educating ourselves and others of the root cause for incarceration and working with others to create the ideal community. Create opportunities for this place, get family, friends, and the community to participate and play the role of developers. It's been proven over and over again that when we invest in ourselves, plan and build for ourselves, people thrive with virtually no crime. If we are true champions of human rights and mean to fulfill our constitutional guarantees of a more perfect union, then we have a moral obligation to end prison slavery, overhaul our criminal justice system and decarcerate by fighting the system from within the system.



**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We want to expand on this comrade's comment about educating on the root cause for incarceration. This is a critical point to understand. It's definitely not profitable to lock up so many people. In reality prisons in the United States are a tool of social control, used mostly to keep oppressed nation lumpen in check. We can win some critical battles against the criminal injustice system, but we aren't likely to end the mass incarceration until we take down imperialism as a whole. The prison system is too tied up in U.S. imperialist domestic policies.

This comrade brings up the interesting situation in Louisiana where prison and state officials were threatening to release a third of the prison population (10,000 prisoners) if the 2018 budget cuts were implemented. Although there was a lot of news about this potential "crisis" at the time, since then we found no follow up. Presumably the state found the money to keep people locked up. In 2017 Louisiana officials made similar threats, though on a smaller scale. Obviously funding is necessary to keep prisoners locked up, but it seems that Louisiana keeps finding enough money to keep their prison infrastructure intact. We fully support prisoner boycotts and other financial attacks on the system. But, as we explored in detail in *ULK 60* most of the funding is already coming from the state budget so we need to approach these battles with a clear understanding of the potential impact.(2)

We agree with this comrade's evaluation that people can thrive with no crime. It is the capitalist patriarchal system that creates the current culture of crime, and puts the biggest criminals in charge of murder, rape and large scale theft around the world in the name of the government. And so we would extend our moral obligation beyond ending the criminal injustice system and to ending the imperialist system.

Finally, we want to comment on the "communist regimes holding prisoners in isolation." This is common anti-communist propaganda but we're not sure exactly what the author is talking about here. In the 1940s and 50s over a third of the world's people embarked on the socialist road. And there is no doubt the Amerikan propaganda machine told lots of stories about those countries' evil behavior. In hindsight a lot of these stories have been proven false.

In the case of China, we find the best example of a true system of reeducation and rehabilitation. In fact, the entire country undertook a reeducation campaign to remould individuals and the society as a whole to serve the interests of the people rather than the interests of profit. One example is shown in the book *Prisoners of Liberation* by Allyn and Adele Rickett, where we see that their conditions of confinement were different from conditions in U.S. prisons in significant ways. They were housed with other prisoners, and not isolated. They were provided with literature and newspapers, not cut off from society. They were encouraged to expand their

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... Continued from previous page ... **Fighting** perspectives and grow together, not to just watch TV and withdraw into themselves. And ultimately they came out of prison praising the communist government in China. ★

Notes:

1. MIM(Prisons), "Private Prisons Exposed and Same as Public", ULK 51, July 2016.

2. MIM(Prisons), "MIM(Prisons) on U.S. Prison Economy - 2018 Update", ULK 60, February 2018.

## Updated Resource Guides Available

MIM(Prisons) provides a number of guides for people looking to get involved in the work that we do. We have recently put out updated versions of our two most used guides: our censorship pack and our introductory letter describing MIM(Prisons)'s work and that of United Struggle from Within (USW).

If you have ever experienced censorship of our mail we should have sent you a copy of our censorship pack. It provides a general strategy, tips and caselaw that can help you.

This pack has developed over the years with the contributions from many jailhouse lawyers and MIM(Prisons) comrades. This latest revision was done by a comrade on the outside who has been doing work at a reasonable rate for us over a long period. Mostly ey has appealed censorship of our mail by the state. But more recently ey has helped with other projects like the censorship pack. We want to thank this persyn for eir consistent work over the years that has contributed to expanding our abilities to address this key aspect of our organizing strategy: fighting censorship.

If you have ever expressed interest in working with the movement or asked how to get free books, or how other of our programs work, you should have received a copy of what is titled "Second introductory form letter." The letter starts by introducing the programs and policies of MIM(Prisons). Then the larger section is an overview of USW. It is this latter section that we have changed the most, incorporating material from *Under Lock & Key* 66. The USW Coordinator oversaw this new version using a rewrite of the old one done by Loco1 of USW. The new version is more concise in some areas while providing more info on how the structure and policies of USW have evolved in recent years.

If you want an updated version of either of the guides above, just let us know next time you write us. These guides help us get people active in the programs of our movement in prisons all across the country.

... Continued from p.9 ... **Sex Offenders** crimes against the males and females, provoking deep burrowing psychological problems and turn many victims into victimizers...The difference is not in the severity of the anti-proletariat crime, but in the after effects."

And murderers and other criminals don't have the same or worse effects on society? All victims of crime and violence will develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to varying degrees. The psychological and emotional trauma that a victim of a robbery and the survivor of a sexual assault suffer can be very similar. The same goes for the friends and family of murder victims. And while it is true that some (I don't know about many) survivors of sexual abuse do turn into perpetrators of those same crimes, the same can be said of victims and survivors of other crimes, i.e. domestic violence, verbal abuse, and yes, murder! Just look at the factors that go into perpetuating gang violence.

That said, there is one huge difference when it comes to murder, sexual abuse, and their after effects. Whenever there is sexual abuse and violence victims are able to move forward and heal from their physical, emotional and psychological wounds if they receive the proper care and attention. When someone is killed, however, there is no rectifying the act. There is no coming back.

3) In the fifth paragraph you state: "...murder is more of a one-two punch knock out, where sexual deprivation is twelve rounds of abuse...Most murderers are not serial killers..."

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, serial is defined as "appearing in a series of continuous parts at regular intervals." By this definition, then, and in conjunction with your reasoning, many gang members can be defined as serial killers.

4) In the eighth paragraph, you state that: "...rehabilitating sexual predators can be made on an individual basis by revolutionaries who are able to see past the label prejudice though their efforts, if conducted scientifically, a systematic method can emerge for once the revolutionary is successful...sex crimes will be a problem for capitalism, socialism, or communism. Revolutionaries will have to address the problem sooner or later."

On this we agree, revolutionaries will have to address this problem sooner or later so why not get past the idealist rhetoric, which you inadvertently espouse, and begin dealing with it now by moving beyond lumpen rationalizations on the matter.

Comrades should learn to understand that under the current power structure, all sex is rape and that sex criminals cannot be rehabilitated only revolutionized. This means that you cannot rehabilitate someone into a system that has gender oppression and rape built right into it. Therefore, comrades should learn all about gender oppression and the patriarchy and how the patriarchy not only informs what gender oppression is, but defines it.

## RE: "Sakai On Lumpen In Revolution"

I only wanted to comment that the ghettos and barrios are not only being dispensed but shifted. The Antelope Valley, High Dessert and other under-developed regions in Southern California are good examples of this trend. Over the past 10-15 years, there has been a slow but steady trickling out of Chican@s and New Afrikans from the wider Los Angeles area and into places like Lancaster, Palmdale, Mojave, California City due to gentrification.

Also, in relation to your article on Sakai's book, what's the status of the MIM(Prisons) book the Lumpen Handbook?

In Struggle!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We published what was intended to be one chapter of a book on the First World lumpen as *Who is the Lumpen in the United States* (available for \$5). Prior to that we put efforts into the book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán* (\$10 for prisoners). Current research efforts are aimed at summing up the final results of our updated survey on prison labor in the United States. We will be publishing this final report along with a larger collection of writings on the economics of prisons in the United States. So that's something to look out for in 2019.

The Lumpen Handbook was envisioned to address more topics related to organizing the lumpen class in a revolutionary way in the united States today. We have not had the capacity to carry out that project to the scope originally envisioned, but this issue of *ULK* is an example of our efforts to continue to tackle that topic.

We also have notes to develop into a *Selected Works of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (1983-2008)* book. Another project we would like to see to fruition if we can garner more support for our existing work in the coming years. ★

Notes:

1. El Independista, "Notes On Advancing The Struggle Inside: Sex Offenders Revisited", ULK 64, October 2018.

2. Wiawimawo, "Sakai's Investigatio of Lumpen in Revolution", ULK 64, October 2018.

## 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 article below and California USW Primer for more info.

### **BLACK AUGUST/COMMEMORATE PLAN DE SAN DIEGO**

August has historically been a month of study, building and organizing for imprisoned New Afrikans. It is also the month we commemorate the Plan de San Diego (see p.22), which called for a liberated Aztlan, as well as New Afrikan and Indigenous lands. The land question is primary to national liberation. We have a Plan de San Diego flier, articles on the meaning of New Afrika, and more in-depth literature on the struggles of the internal semi-colonies for USW organizers.

### **BUILD A UNITED FRONT FOR PEACE IN PRISONS**

Every September 9th is the annual Day of Peace & Unity. Start organizing local actions now. See page 3 for more info on what the UFPP is about and how you can get involved, including a flier you can use to share with others. Get our September 9th study pack for more info.

### **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 will also send you a follow-up petition written to federal law. Write in to get a copy of this additional resource which holds states accountable to federal requirements.

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.

## California Prisoners; Love and Reconciliation is Key to Unity (UMOJA)

by Loco1 of United Struggle from Within  
April 2019

In the February 2019 issue of the *SF BayView* there was a headline that read, "California Prisoners endangered by forced merger of Snitch Yards." And it dawns on the world, how can a prisoner in the prison state capitol affect change on a national, and international level, if they can not find unity as a population suffering under the exact same conditions of: Police Brutality, Don't ask Don't Tell, Code of Silence Policies, Corrupt Administrative Justices, and Counterfeit Social Justice/Prison Reform Advocates. Prisoners in California suffer, as a whole, under these conditions, yet the leaderships of the most politically advanced wrestle over popularity contests between who is "active" and who is non-active, who is with the business and who is not. Just what business is it that defines whether a person in prison is active or not? Is it not the Freedom of All Persons in Prison we struggle for, or is it but a select few?

Aren't we all political prisoners, under these current conditions? Of course, there are those amongst the population of prisoners who are deserving of a bit more popularity than others. Those who carry the

publicity of high profile cases as social justice activist, militants and radicals. All in all however, do we not share the similar suffering under this condition called imprisonment?

In California, leaders must really mature themselves and their followers to the level of love and reconciliation, this be prisoners and former prisoners. The time is: N.O.W.

Headlines like this one in the *SF BayView*, designating all Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) facilities as "snitch yards," are not only mis-leading the public support of the California abolitionist population, but also an abuse of power that promotes dis-unity amongst the prison populations. Prisoner leaderships must be wise in the manner with which we allow for our movement to be represented by members of the public. The most important aspect should be the information that leaders allow to be published on the state of population affairs. It must be accurate information, based on facts, that the leaders use when representing the movement, or its population.

It is a fact, not all prisoners housed at SNY Facilities are snitches. So for the headline, "...Forced Merger of Snitch Yards"

to be presented by the *SF BayView* newspaper does a (dis)service, to not only one of the strongest vehicles and stages for the prison abolitionist movement, but it hurts the movement as a whole. What, social justice and prison reform for all but SNY prisoners?

Prisons across North America are faced with a similar issue to the SNY facilities. Those who benefit the most from the all-too-common misnomer that all SNY are snitches, child molesters, sexual deviants, are the law enforcement agencies. This too includes mainstream corporate news reporting agencies. #Fakenews. There are individuals who testified in the event of their commitment offense all over prison, not just SNY. And what is to be said about leaderships within prisons affiliated with drug operations, serving poison to the community, gun violence involving non-combative casualties of peoples, kids, grandparents, relatives? And what about the big homies on the line affiliated with pimping, pandering and prostitution. How many underage homegirls have we condoned being out in the trap after curfew?

Prisoners across the United States in the  
*Continued on next page....*



# Anti-Imperialist Opposition to AFRICOM Heard in U.\$. Koncentration Kamps

by MIM(Prisons)  
April 2019

The campaign to get the U.\$. military operations of AFRICOM out of Africa has been popularized in recent months. The Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) initiated a petition drive, which they extended to 4 April 2019, the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Comrades in United Struggle from Within stepped up and made a substantial contribution to this drive from within the U.\$. koncentration kamps.

... Continued from prev. page

...Umoja

states of TX, OH, LA, AL, NY, PA, FL, VA, NC, and SC have begun concerted efforts to consolidate the various factions of their prison populations, scattered across the board, for the sake of unity. This effort is known as the National Freedom and Justice Movement. If the leaderships, and their followings within California prisons do not cease in their petty quarrels and name-calling skirmishes on both sides, SNY and GP, those who have often been at the center of the global discussions for prison reform and abolitionism might find themselves on the wrong side of history. This is a most sincere call for prisoners in California, whether it be former prisoners, juvenile lifer prisoners, non-violent offender prisoners, level 4, 180 & 270 prisoners.

See, the one thing you all have in common? You're prisoners. There may be some who hold strictly to the Agreement to End Hostilities while others will develop under the United Front for Peace in Prison. Wherever it be, get in where you fit in and carry love first of all. The movement is larger than all of us, none is without error, thus there must always be room for reconciliation.

I for one beg your mercy  
In struggle and strength

**MIM(Prisons) comments:** The *BayView* article in question was written by someone who, despite our disagreements on questions of Marxism, has done a lot to advocate for people in the California Security Housing Unit (SHU) system. The anti-SNY attitude is still the status quo among the Lumpen Organizations (L.O.s) that were once the main targets of the SHU. And some supporters of those who spent years and decades in those torture cells parrot the disparaging attitudes towards SNY, which peaked at almost one third of the California prison population before the forced integration began.

To add to the list(1) of California, Texas, Louisiana and Georgia, USW comrades came through with petitions from Oregon, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. California and Texas also produced quite a few more signatures. And some individuals from Maryland and West Virginia sent their signatures in as well. A large number of our subscribers are in long-term isolation and therefore collecting others' signatures is very difficult.

BAP submitted about 3500 signatures to the Congressional Black Congress

We stand with the families who are concerned about the safety of their loved ones, and who are exposing the state for using the NDPFs as coercive tools of violence against those who don't just go along with the state's program. Our approach remains one of advocating for and supporting comrades in these NDPFs who are advocating for the principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP). (see p.3) While the forced integration currently serves the state, this is only true as long as prisoners stay divided. By building the UFPP in the interests of all imprisoned people, we can turn this tool of oppression into an opportunity to transform decades-long divisions in the California prison system. We have a long way to go, but some day these divisions must fall.

The latest reports from within the NDPFs are included below.

**A California prisoner reports on integration at California Correctional Institution:** In CCI-Tehachapi level III, the prisoners who challenge the status quo are quickly transferred out to the so-called Non-Designated Programming Facilities (NDPF). There they will become targets due to our SNY status. This is how CDCR has been rehabilitating California's enslaved population. If we don't jump when they tell us to jump, or crawl on our knees and hands, we are considered program failures.

The same type of racist rehabilitation that George Jackson found in the 1960s, I found it myself in 2018 at CCI-Tehachapi. CDCR is creating monsters, on purpose. This is why many of us come out hating society and would rather die off than return to prison.

**A prisoner in California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility reports on 1 May 2019:** Here at SATF-D facility these guys' eyes are wired shut. We have been receiving a flux of prisoners from Soledad and New Folsom EOP facility. These individuals are New Afrikan and Chican@, they come from what are known as mainline soft yards, or

chairperson and co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.(2) With the additional 193 signatures we received since our last report we have submitted 423 signatures to the campaign. That is more than 10% of the total signatures collected! United Struggle from Within made a significant contribution to this campaign.

Of course, that is a small victory in the large task of ending U.\$. imperialism in Africa. An anti-imperialist message was brought to sections of Congress, and the

*Continued on p.15 ...*

50/50 yards. These are facilities where there is very little to zero accountability to the post-George Jackson structure of prison politicking. Where most mainline facilities there will be paperwork checking (investigations into a prisoner's commitment offense by other prisoners to determine the internal social status of prisoners on new arrival), or orchestrating the ostracizing of a persyn who co-operated with the police in their commitment offense. Although 50/50 facilities are considered mainline facilities, they don't engage in much of this sort of behavior. Now they are being introduced to SATF-D facility, which is supposed to be a Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY).

There have been a few fist fights, but overall the masses don't even care where these new arrivals are coming from. The leaderships within the facility are already on the look out for particular type of behavior. We ain't tripping on an individual's paperwork, one's sexual gender, or activity. Even if one transfers in and is a member of an STG, we are not ostracizing people here. Give it enough time, most guys are rolling it up and having admin rehouse them, rather than come with the police tactics. One of the strongest instruments being used is the United Front for Peace in Prisons statement, the Unity Principle.

I have persynally used the works of Larry Hoover and the "Blueprint for Gangsters Disciple to Growth and Development" by Ron Erwin to spread the truth to all G.D.s, and all who have been affiliated, influenced or associated with and by our movement. From Crips of various subsets like the Five Deuce, One-O-Seven and Seven Four Hoovers. To the Bloods of various subsets like the Black P. Stones, Four Deuce Brims, Anthens, these prison politiks, that are spread by gladiator wars, all have a root. At this local level we are spreading awareness of the liberation struggle of freedom fighters like: Leonard Peltier, Mutulu Shakur and Red Fox Falcon, drawing connections between them and the fathers (and mothers) of our movements. ★

## Imperialism is the Real Problem in Venezuela

by an Indiana prisoner  
February 2019

As Venezuela commemorates Hugo Chavez's socialist revolution of 20 years ago, bourgeois reactionary elements from within, with imperialism support, work to sabotage Venezuela's self-determination. Another case of u.s. imperialist aggression, and on a continent most dominated by it: South America.

While the self-declared president of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, has been receiving support from the united states, actual elected President, Nicolas Maduro, has been the target of u.s. imperialism for some time now. Are we truly to believe that Venezuela's recent issues are entirely the fault of the Maduro regime? It should not be overlooked that the problems in Venezuela, declared in the news as a humanitarian crisis, seem to have occurred around the same time economic/trade sanctions were imposed.

The united states and its South American followers, through the Organization of American States (OAS) (an organization formed at the behest of the united states over 50 years ago in order to consolidate geopolitical influence and quash revolutionary movements and too-far-left regimes that were spreading throughout Latin America at that time), have largely created Venezuela's most pressing issues with their refusals to do fair business in the form of trade and diplomatic cooperation which has left Venezuelans lacking many necessities.

The U.S. and OAS have been making it very difficult for the Maduro administration to help the people to properly live, let alone develop. So outside looking in, to the unaware, it may seem as if Maduro is "the bad guy" and this Guaidó character is "the good guy" and that u.s. support for him looks righteous, even humanely necessary, to oust this "corrupt socialist dictator" and "rescue the Venezuelan people." But understand that the Venezuelan situation is a product of u.s. imperialism. The same u.s. imperialism that caused the people of Cuba to suffer for over 50 years by the trade embargo and dictation that the OAS cronies turn their backs on Cuba as well or suffer the same fate. This all because Cuba fought to break the chains of neo-colonial dependency.

Helping to frame the narrative of Maduro being a "brutal dictator who refuses to treat

the Venezuelan people humanely" is the reactionary propaganda machine: u.s. news media. Daily they broadcast images of shipments of supplies going into, and remaining at the border of, Colombia, where u.s. politicians and reporters give interviews in front of the supplies they call "aid" that "Maduro refuses to allow to enter into Venezuela." Maduro said that he will not accept this "aid" because it is "tainted." He understands that this "aid" is not aid, it is imperialist bribery of the Venezuelan people.

Now footage of deadly clashes with police at the border, along with reports of

of a world market. Now an empire like the U.S. can destabilize an entire nation's internal economy, causing mass chaos, without invading and plundering it. Mere trade imbalances (unequal exchange) and economic sanctions can have the imperialist-desired effect of social upheaval, causing the targeted nation to look at the leadership as the cause, and welcome foreign intervention to come and save them from a situation created by imperialist aggression.

We can't know for certain what the reasons for this aggression are, but we can make informed speculation based off of historical analysis. Could it be that Maduro has instituted too many socialist-like

policies, like nationalizing much of Venezuela's oil production? Or because Venezuela does too much business with Russia, China, and Cuba? Does the united states want to own oil firms there and is upset that Maduro won't allow that? Past u.s. imperialist endeavors point to the latter as the primary motivation for its efforts toward regime change in Venezuela.

These efforts to destabilize and destroy a regime's credibility and ultimately to overthrow it is nothing new, especially in this hemisphere. Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Chile, just to name a few of the more known and overt

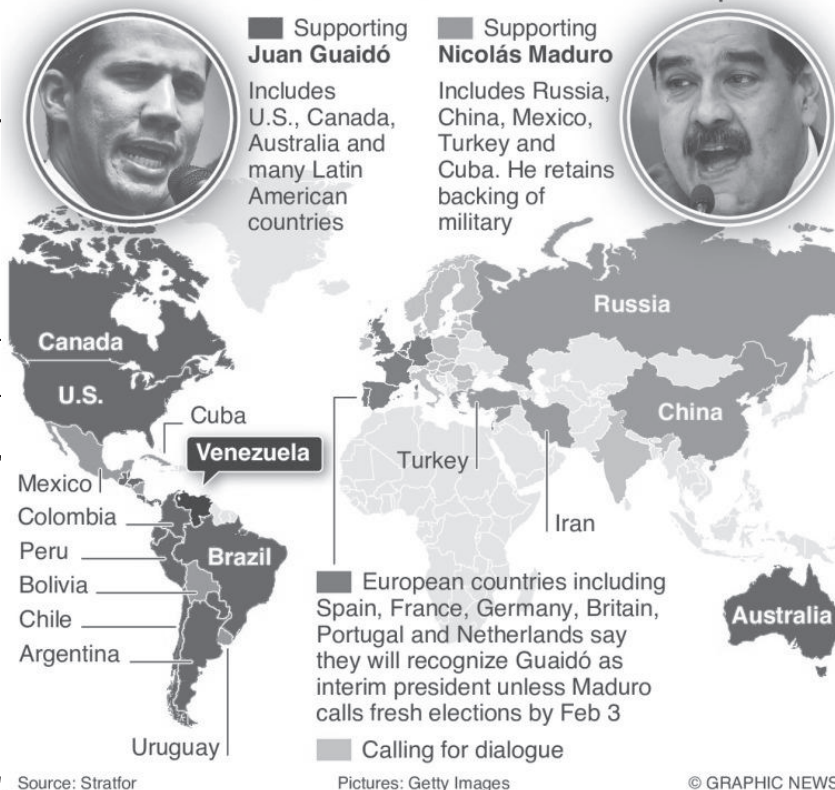
examples of u.s. imperialism in the Americas. If these actions prove to be successful then a puppet government of the united states., via Juan Guaidó, will most certainly be the outcome. But if these current actions don't produce the desired effect of regime change, then, as per usual, a military invasion seems to be next.

It doesn't help Venezuela's cause that no one seems willing to come out against this aggression and show solidarity with the president elected by the people. It is these times when we most lament the fall of the

*Continued on next page...*

### Who stands where on Venezuela?

The U.S. and a number of other countries have recognized Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's president in a move labelled by embattled President Nicolás Maduro as a U.S.-orchestrated coup



Venezuelan police and soldiers defecting, are being shown on a loop, further destroying Maduro's legitimacy and portraying the united states as "the good guys just trying to help while Maduro continues to brutalize the people." If you ruin people's lives and then offer some handouts, that doesn't make you a hero.

This type of economic imperialism being so effective is a consequence of the interdependency of economies (especially those of the undeveloped/developing nations battling with neo-colonialism) due to the globalization of capitalism and consolidation



# Texas Bans Mailing its own Grievance Manual to Prisoners

by Texas Coordinator of MIM(Prisons)  
April 2019

We just got word that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has denied delivery of the TDCJ Offender Grievance Manual to one of our subscribers in Texas. Not just at the unit level (we were not informed of the censorship at the unit level by Polunsky Unit mailroom staff, in direct contradiction to TDCJ's own policies)(1), but the Director's Review Committee even upheld the censorship of the grievance manual. The *Director*.

Well, what could possibly be the reason given for censoring TDCJ's own manual which was written for "offenders"? Couldn't tell you. All the notice says is it was "received in contradiction with BP-03.91, Uniform Offender Correspondence Rules." Don't forget, BP-03.91 doesn't just say that this item is denied delivery to this particular subscriber. It says that this item is banned in the entire state for all time. Just like *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*, our "Defend the Legacy of the Black Panther Party" study pack, and multiple issues of *Under Lock & Key* (at least including Nos. 63, 57, 54, 51, 45, 35, 32, 28, and 27).

You might be wondering why MIM Distributors is sending in the grievance manual anyways. It's a TDCJ document, after all. And according to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, the grievance manual ought to be available to prisoners.(2) Well, in September 2014, a memo went out that removed the grievance manual from all TDCJ law libraries.(2) Why would they do this? Don't know, they didn't say. TDCJ's grievance system is notoriously ineffective and deliberately obstructive. And Texas is historically one of the worst states when it comes to brutal national oppression. Seems to be part of those overall patterns.

We did have a "victory," so minor that it's even embarrassing to use that word. The Director's Review Committee Decision Form actually listed the name of the item that they censored! Wow! We didn't have to go hunting around in the list of mail we sent to this subscriber, guessing which item was censored based on the date we mailed it out. This is often a very difficult detail to pin down, considering how much mail we send in and the weeks- and months-long delays in the TDCJ censorship procedures.

So, we've been protesting the ineffective grievance process in Texas for almost ten years. The grievance manual was hidden almost 5 years ago. And now we can't even

mail in the grievance manual. We do plan to appeal this censorship to the Director's Review Committee, but often our letters to them go unanswered. In the short term, we need people (and lawyers!) in Texas to put pressure on TDCJ to stop obstructing prisoners' access to the grievance system. Ultimately we need to overthrow this totally

bunk injustice system and the economic system it protects.A

Notes:

1. See MIM Distributors's letter to TDCJ regarding censorship of ULK 63.
2. Texas prisoner, "Plan of Attack on Texas Hiding Grievance Manual", August 2015, ULK 46.
3. Texas prisoner, "Texas Hides Grievance Manual from Prisoners", November 2014, ULK 42.

... Continued from prev. page ...**Venezuela**

Socialist Bloc and its global influence and support for oppressed peoples. Cuba, only 90 miles from the United States, was only able to withstand imperialist aggression and resist capitulation to demands because it had socialist solidarity coming from China and the Soviet Union. But who will support Venezuela??

It shouldn't come down to a military invasion (as it did in Iraq and Vietnam) to raise people's consciousness and get them to mobilize to demand an end to imperialist aggression. It should be called out and reacted against now. We must articulate to the people the real forces at play here, because they won't learn it from the news. Support has to be mustered to oppose these types of actions from the United States. The unconsciousness of people in the world, and the United States in particular, that allows these things to go unchecked, is support for imperialism itself. As Fidel Castro put it: "to cease solidarity with the revolutionary movement does not mean to deny a pretext but actually to show solidarity with yankee imperialism and its policy of domination and enslavement of the world."

Venezuela's cause may not be a

revolutionary one, but it is a victim of imperialism from an empire incessantly working to consolidate its influence and turn every nation that it can benefit from into a neo-colony, which requires us to raise this truth as a common cause worthy of the most support. Defend Venezuela's self-determination!

Facts: Oil revenue is about 90% of Venezuela's revenue. The United States is the #1 buyer of Venezuelan oil at over 400,000 barrels per day.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** Our recent article on Venezuela(1) very much agrees with this writer's analysis. While Venezuela was never a socialist country in the Marxist sense, Maduro implemented many reforms in the interests of the people, and is staunchly fighting neo-colonialism. This government represents the national bourgeoisie and continues to operate within the capitalist system. It is an ally of the oppressed in this fight against imperialism. The imperialists are the real murderers and destroyers of planet Earth that we must stand against. And we stand with the Venezuelan people and their elected government against the U.S. coup efforts. ★

Note: Soso, "Imperialists Push Coup in Venezuela to Secure Oil for Americans", ULK 67, January 2019.

... Continued from p.13

...**AFRICOM**

streets of Washington D.C., by BAP last week. In solidarity, USW popularized the message behind the bars of U.S. concentration camps. When doing campaigns like petition drives, the interactions we have with the masses when collecting the signatures is even more important than the interactions BAP leaders have with Congress. Congress will not and can not end U.S. imperialism, only the oppressed people of the world have the power to do that. And that is why building unity among the oppressed around these issues is of utmost importance to our mission.

The torture and abuse enacted on the oppressed nations within U.S. borders is a product of the same system that is dropping bombs and unleashing brutal violence in African countries from Somalia, to Libya, to Nigeria. That is why MIM(Prisons) and United Struggle from Within are dedicated

to the anti-imperialist prison movement in the United States. Without anti-imperialism, the prison movement is limited to treating the symptoms and not the disease.

The struggle to get AFRICOM out of Africa continues. If you did not get a campaign pack with info on AFRICOM, write us to get a copy. Discuss what is going on in the Third World with those around you. Relate it to the oppression felt here. Write articles for *ULK*. Our 423 signatures did not shut down AFRICOM, but the oppressed will shut down AFRICOM some day. ★

Notes:

1. MIM(Prisons), "USW Rallies 100s of Prisoners Against AFRICOM in a Couple Weeks", ULK 66, January 2019.
2. "Black Alliance for Peace Delivers to Congresspeople Thousands of Signatures Opposing U.S. Militarism in Africa", BlackAllianceforPeace.com, April 2, 2019.

## Notes on Advancing the Struggle Inside: Defeating the Gangster Mentality

by el Independista of USW  
March 2019

What is a gangster? Simply a word, an idea? No Gangster is a psychology, a mentality.

Six things, in varying degree, regardless of locale, are always present in penal institutions: authorities (the badge), prisoners (captives), oppression, resistance, manipulation and violence. Oppression and manipulation are the badges' primary tools for controlling prisons. Captives have recourse to resistance and violence. The gangster is both target and aspiration for the badge and captives alike; if only for different reasons.

The badge sees gangsterism as a necessary evil. The "convict code" is based on gangsterism. The badge uses this to great effect. For example, misinformation offered by a "friendly" badge. There is no doubt a badge can call any captive a snitch, or worse, and be believed. Many reason that the badge does have access to every captive's file. What possible purpose could they have in lying to a gangster?

The badge's main concern is control. Controlling prisoner populations is most effective when the system can take advantage of pre-existing mechanisms, such as gangsterism or convict code. In such cases oppression seems organic, correct course of action instead of manipulation. More often than not a gangster learns information, suspicions emerge, questions asked, investigations follow. At the very least a captive's credibility is destroyed; at the extreme are ostracization and violence. This is not only true for the badge. Captives also manipulate gangsterism. A gangster's word has merit, more so than the badge's. Here too manipulation appears organic. A gangster's suspicions sway other captives' opinions so that character assassination due to personal enmity is all too familiar. The issue is not the manipulation but rather the lack of resistance.

Gangster is the pillar of lumpen communities. Eir honor, integrity are above reproach. Knowing this the badge whispers in the right ears and later watches captives eating one another like sharks in a small pond. At present, the rules of gangsterism are at the service of the badge. Changing the prevailing culture of captive vs. captive violence and badge collaboration is a serious problem to be resolved in prison today. Does this mean abandoning gangsterism? Gangsterism is tied up in all kinds of capitalist principles: machoism, classism,

patriarchy, etc. Yet, it is based in resisting the system: noble seed of revolutions. Understanding the forces at play is necessary for combating corrupted gangsterism, because, gangsterism can be a stepping stone to revolutionary mentality.

Every social environment evinces a subjection-manipulation cycle: subjection to rules, norms, expectations; and manipulation through rewards and negative consequences. Prisons are no different, neither is criminal intercourse. Capitalism for general society, gangsterism for captives. To bring gangsterism back to its revolutionary core we can turn to the democratic method – unity, criticism, unity.

Gangsterism is at the badge's service not only because of manipulation disseminated through gangsters but by lumpen divisions. In prison, far more than in society, lumpen become isolationists and separatists. Latinos with Latinos, further segregated by northern or southern affiliations or otherwise. Identical processes follow for all other lumpen. These divisions create barriers to communication, distrust and steady tensions. The badge plays on STG (Security Threat Group, a Homeland Security terrorist categorization term, also found in FBI documents referring to Brown Berets and Black Panther Party members or supporters) affiliations and nation prejudices as much as they do gangsterism and with the same end in view – greater control. Unity is the only real response. The badge is unified against us captives in their efforts. We, on the other

hand, are barely unified against each other. First and foremost, gangsterism should be centered on opposition and resistance to the badge. Captive vs. badge.

Gangsters must be extra critical with all information received from the badge. Nine out of ten times the badge doesn't tell you anything for your benefit. Information disseminated in the service of penological interests. Consider how many times the badge has warned you about a major shake down or offered to hold your contraband? They are always engaged in exercising more control. Beginning from a united oppositional front – captives vs. badge – it becomes possible to derail the subjection-manipulation cycle. Criticism is the second stage in this process; one must analyze eir motive, endgame and method of manipulation.

From unity in opposition and criticism of intelligence being gifted us we turn to unity in response. This last stage of the democratic method is determined on a case by case basis. Every prison is distinct in character. Gangsterism is not corrupted everywhere in the exact same degrees. In some facilities badge collaboration is excessive, in others captive vs. captive violence is the commanding concern. In progressing the struggle, captives must be able to unite against the badge. This means moving beyond nation prejudices and STG allegiances. This constitutes the hardest step in our struggle. ★

## Stop Funding Prison Services

by a Georgia prisoner  
January 2019

The year 2019 marks not only a new beginning, but a goal for unification for us all. As of January 2019, Governor Jerry Brown of California steps down, leaving \$150 million of debt for the cost of death row, and more than 740 men and woman seeking clemency. As well, the state of Georgia, which houses the largest prisoner population in segregation, looks to include another generation to their 5,000 offenders on lockdown.

In order to understand the problem of mass incarceration, and develop a solution, we first have to understand the facts from the myths. First, contrary to popular beliefs, the states actually lose money on the overall cost of prisons. States like Pennsylvania, for example, are undergoing critical budget crises in which it costs more to house you than it costs to send you to college. Almost \$1 trillion annually is the cost of incarceration. So if it costs so much to house us, why not just let us go?

Second, releasing offenders from prison will not fix the debt of operating prisons, because prisons operate on a fixed scale, which doesn't really change with the number of residents. It's roughly \$21,000 to house a prisoner, but the state doesn't save that if you're released.

Third, incarcerating individuals doesn't reduce crime. Between 2010 and 2014 the total state prisoner population dropped 4%, with California contributing to 62% of the total for the country. This dropped overall crime rate by 1%. However, the now-increasing rate of incarceration has more than doubled the crime rate.

*Continued on p.23...*



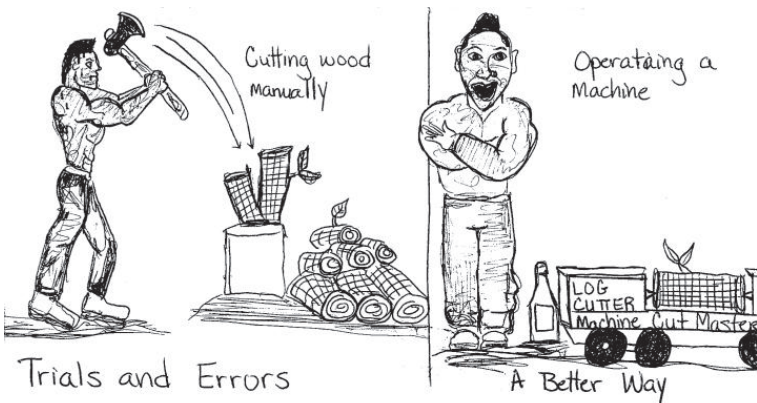
# Whether Gangster or Rev; Oppressed Nations Labelled Enemy

by a Colorado prisoner  
October 2018

We are caught in a system of competitiveness, manipulation, one against the other, brother against brother, family against family, people against people, gangs against gangs, ethnic groups against ethnic groups, color against color, class against class, instead of minority or lower class against the ruling class.

We focus too much on meaningless self-imposed politics that were manipulated into our minds growing up. Like ditch school, destroy your own neighborhoods, sell drugs to your own people, we gang bang, we fight our own over colors and sides only. The only way you can make it is by rapping about killing your own people or selling drugs to your own. As a Chicano I grew up not only hearing this from my peers but that's also what the music I was told to like and listen to said. The television also told me my people are only on TV as gang bangers, drug dealers, etc.

As I grew older I started to realize something is wrong here, where did I go wrong? What have I done for myself? For my family? For my people? Nothing but self-imposed distraction. I am soaking in my own blood and that of my people. I got a hunger for knowledge. Why is it things are the way they are?



The more I studied, the more I realized this is not new but a very old cycle set up by a system to manipulate my mind. A system that went after Martin L. King, a peaceful man, a pastor on his quest for civil rights. The government unlawfully wired his phones, tried to break up his family, tried to unlawfully disrupt his movement by all means to an end. We've learned how the CIA was helping Pablo Escobar flood our streets with drugs. How they dismantled and unlawfully disrupted the Brown Berets and Black Panthers because they were trying to

teach and uplift the people; telling them there is a system in place to oppress you, know and understand your rights, bear arms to protect your neighborhoods from pig brutality. After both Brown Berets and Panthers fell our children were open to assault by this system, poor schools, no jobs, drugs. Then record labels signed groups who furthered the system's wishes singing and rapping, "kill your own," "sell drugs," "it's cool to go to prison."

Regardless of tribe, set, race, if you are classified as Security Threat Group (STG) you are on the same boat as me. STG is a Homeland Security term for a domestic terrorist. First rule in war, identify your enemy. We have been identified and classified as enemies of the state. What else is there to be said? Are we to continue letting our self-imposed politics disrupt reality? Such insignificant things and views like colors and sides or race hinder our lives? They can stop one arrow not a hundred. There's nothing wrong with being part of groups, families, etc. But it is wrong when those groups lose focus of the message and cause. It is not okay to soak in the blood of your own people, period.

Learn from our oppressor, they are some cold operators, they understand the power of knowledge and education. The ruling class in the United States is composed of men and their families who use ivy league universities and elite law schools as private schools for their offspring and as training grounds for their corporate livelihoods. They rule us with iron precision through the military, the CIA, the FBI, private foundations and financial institutions. Their control of all the media of education and communication comprises an extremely effective system of thought control.

We must learn from someone who defeated this system. Ho Chi Minh understood the power of education. His mandated policy for his warriors and cadres was spot on. Fighting and violence is easy. You must have balance. You must be able to read and write, be able to teach others and most importantly fully understand and be educated in your political paradigm and why you are fighting.

Chicanos in Colorado are currently in a struggle for our true history. We hunger for knowledge because that knowledge has ended all violence between tribes, shown us our common interests, not the blind mentality of colors and sides. We are currently under assault by Colorado Department of Corrections, not allowing us to receive our real education, stopping all education or history on the concept of Aztlán, Chicano unity, Mexica movement, claiming it's STG. Since when is history and education a crime? Well for us minorities, always.

If there is to be a movement, then there must be leaders. Those leaders must be judged by their ability to give not take. Leadership must convey confidence, not egotism, one who sacrifices, not one who is an opportunist. Leadership is the act of using power to free people, not to control them. It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** The destruction of the Black Panther Party, the flooding of cities with drugs, and the rejection of literature on Chican@ history in prison are all manifestations of the same system. This system seeks to peacefully control oppressed nations by keeping them from learning about the history of this oppression and the many examples of resistance. And when that fails it locks up the oppressed, or even targets activists for death.

What can we do about this system with so much more power and resources than we have as activists and anti-imperialists? The truth is our side has more power; we have 80% of the world's population, which is exploited and oppressed by imperialism, on our side. The imperialists are paper tigers, that appear fearsome, but in reality are propped up on a fairly fragile structure of power.

That said, dismantling that structure will take a lot of organization, trial and error. As this comrade points out, we need to focus on education and fight to get true history into the hands of the oppressed. And then we need leaders to step up and organize and educate others. There is no special qualification for this leadership. Anyone who sees the problems in the world around them can take up organizing others to fight back. United Struggle from Within is an organization for these leaders, and MIM(Prisons) supports USW organizers with literature and resources. Get in touch today to get started with a local study group or campaign against repression in your prison or elsewhere in the world. ★

## How to expand ULK: some ideas

by an Illinois prisoner  
February 2019

The third goal of the expanded newspaper states, "Broader distribution of anti-imperialist information." (1) Furthermore, in the "who should be part of this expansion?" section of the article MIM(Prisons) states that "we will continue to publish articles from individuals who share our anti-imperialist agenda though perhaps are not Maoists."

I believe that the third goal can be achieved by practicing the above quote. The *ULK* subscription rate would increase by allowing "outsiders" to publish material within the publication (such as anarchists). This increase in subscribers would also increase the number of art and article submissions to *ULK*, as well as donations.

Let us remember that Marx agreed with Proudhon and other anarchists in regard to the necessity for the proletariat to abolish the state. It is only by abolishing the state that we can create a class-less society (since the state is the manifestation of class antagonisms). The dividing line between communists and anarchists is not the abolition of the state, but the process in which the state should be abolished. Because there are many similarities between communist and anarchist ideologies both *ULK* and its readers would benefit greatly from the inclusion of anarchist commentary (besides, MIM(Prisons) can always comment on an anarchist article to correct it if necessary.)

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** MIM(Prisons) welcomes anarchist writers to submit to *ULK*. This writer is correct that our areas of disagreement are limited to the strategy to getting to classless society, and we agree on our ultimate goal of society with no groups of people having power over other groups. There is also a lot to agree on in the struggle along the way.

The new newsletter in the works will still be a Maoist newsletter, meaning that all writings will pass through a Maoist editorial staff that will either edit or respond to any writings that disagree with the basic tenets of Maoism depending on the position of the author. We do think our readers benefit from seeing debates, and we want to focus on debates that push our movement and our unity forward. We share this comrade's idea that expanding the contributors to this publication will also expand our distribution. We invite potential contributors to get in touch. ★

Notes: 1. MIM(Prisons), "Make *ULK* Monthly", *ULK* 64, September 2018.

## First Impressions of a Potential Recruit

by an Oklahoma prisoner  
February 2019

By a bit of serendipity, I recently ran across the contact info for MIM(Prisons) and on a whim subscribed to the newsletter without fully understanding what I was to receive. After reading *ULK* 66 (the first response to my initial request) I feel inspired to offer my first thoughts of the movement in hopes it may aid in future recruiting.

First and foremost, I tend to be distrustful of any organization, especially those with strong viewpoints. However, this fear was greatly abated by the statement that members need not agree with all points of the group so long as they do not actively oppose them. I feel this is an incredible strength of USW, and inclusion in any individual organization is a powerful tool for recruitment. It projects confidence by saying "we don't have to control your views" and encourages those who are close to, but not in, alignment with said views to sit and listen to what you have to say.

Secondly, I was impressed by the article/response format and self-criticisms. As an extension of the first point, it shows that USW practices what it preaches by allowing uncensored articles to be published, and independently it shows that no one, party leaders included, is above reproach. In my opinion, any organization willing to hold its members/leaders responsible for their actions is a cut above. We are all human, and prone to human error. To pretend otherwise is a discouragement.

My one word of criticism would be the use of jargon which made some articles obfuscated. I've written this article to mirror the way I normally speak, without regard to what my readers may understand, to help illustrate this point. While I have no doubt many readers will understand all my words, I'm sure there will be many who are put off by my use of uncommon terms. The same is true of any specialized language. While most words can be looked up in a dictionary (although lumpen still puzzles me), I think it is best to use simple language in recruitment material, or be sure to include a quick definition near the beginning.

I hope these observations will prove helpful to others. May your words match your deeds, your deeds match your values, and your values match your beliefs.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This is a good reminder to all writers for *ULK* that we should try to write in language that is accessible to our readers. Sometimes it will be necessary to use a word like "lumpen" because it is the only word that describes what we are talking about. But even then we can try to define our words in context. Sometimes we receive article submissions that are clearly written by well educated folks, but which seem to be showing off their vocabulary, and making it much harder to read than necessary. So we agree that writing as you would speak is a good general guideline.

With that said, we welcome everyone to submit articles to *ULK* regardless of your writing skill and political education level. We often get letters from folks who are hesitant to submit articles until they get more education. We suggest instead to just write about something you know. If you see some abuses at your prison, write about that. If you see some good organizing going on where you're housed, write about that. Start from what you know based on your real world observation, and add political analysis to that as you are comfortable. We can always help with the analysis, and we are happy to help with your writing too. But if you write like you talk, chances are it will come across as readable and make for a good article.

Let us know if you need a copy of our writers guide which gives you some helpful tips on language and format and topics.

And here's a definition of First World lumpen, the term we most commonly use: 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. ★

ULK is for U.\$. prisoners by U.\$. prisoners.

We think we need more art and international news for ULK. Send us your articles and art.

What do you think we need more of? What do you think ULK gets wrong? Let us know.

We have a writing guide and art guide for those who want more guidance for contributing.



## Redefining Convict Culture

by a Colorado prisoner  
February 2019

Here in Colorado there has been a push for solidarity amongst prisoners, particularly in units at Sterling Correctional Facility and Colorado State Penitentiary. I've been in prison for 5 years here in Colorado and have seen very little of this solidarity until now. Unfortunately, we here still have a long way to go.

Staff, who fear the trend of unity, have begun to sow seeds of unrest amongst certain groups. To do this, staff have resorted to spreading false rumors of sexual harassment, coupled with promises of "picks" and sexual favors for assaults on their intended targets. Staff's goal is to start a race war in place of the quelled tribal wars that have plagued this state for years. Unfortunately some prisoners have bought into this line of thinking, hook, line, and sinker.

In ULK 64 an article touched on this type

of "damsel in distress" thinking in Colorado prisons. This type of thinking is grounded solidly in our own informal subculture that ultra aggressive, chauvinistic behaviors promote one's own reputation for toughness and overall appearance of being a convict. The reality is that we as convicts are entirely in control of what standards define "toughness" and "convicts."

While I fully agree that some recourse should be taken against those who commit sexual crimes against children, women, and others in general, I'm not sure that violent action is the best solution in most cases. And taking violent action against another prisoner based upon unsubstantiated allegations of a prison guard (who, rather than use prison disciplinary methods, sought retribution by bribing prisoners) seems entirely anti-convict to me.

Maybe it's time for us as prisoners in Colorado to re-evaluate what it is to be a convict in this state. I know in many states, prisoners who do the pigs' bidding, even the

violent or illegal acts, would be considered stool pigeons for the man to control them.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** We've heard about this awakening within Colorado prisons from a few folks behind bars, and also of the repression that pigs are using to try to quell that unity.(1) This comrade raises the important point that building unity requires a rethinking of how people interact with one another. We have to start by defining who are our enemies and who are our friends. The C.O.s are not our friends. As this comrade points out, their goal ultimately is to sow division. We also can't trust the state to tell us which prisoners are our friends. We need to look at their actions. Even those claiming to be revolutionaries may not be friends of the revolution if they are acting counter to the unity of the oppressed. Re-evaluating what it is to be a convict in Colorado is building on the budding lumpen unity in that state. ★

Notes: 1. A Colorado Prisoner, "Colorado Fears Chican@ Activism", ULK 63, June 2018.

## Konfused Gangster Mentality: Stand for Something or Fall for Anything

by a North Carolina prisoner  
April 2019

I am writing on the behalf of the UBN/BBA of North Karolina. The movement is going downhill due to this new wave of beloveds. This new generation of Damus (especially the Emus) are konfused. We are breeding pliable brothers and placing them in strong positions as leaders of the movement. All these new komrades know is violence and gossip because time and patience is not being donated anymore. History is not being properly taught anymore, so they don't know where we come from as Damus! Everybody want to be leaders nowadays. They say you must stand on your own first before you can stand with a group. Katz just want to make a name for themselves.

I'm in tune with komrades in society as well as behind these enemy lines. It's getting a little bit better in some prisons in North Karolina but in most kounty jails such as the one I'm housed in the kommunication is shot to hell and it forces others to gossip and spread rumors. With those actions bring acts of violence and the gangster mentality. Which goes back to what I was touching base on at an earlier portion of this where I stated people are "pliable." They want to fit in or feel like they're important.

We need to go back to the original teachings. Go back to mandating the study of our history, our founding fathers, our true purpose, etc. We also need to create a better form of maintaining better communication behind these enemy lines as well as the blakktop. We are weakening our ownselves with all this bullshit we are doing as an entity! We forgetting that Damu is about "Positive over Negative." We are about killing oppression with a positive impression. All this Damu on Damu shit is a double oh banga.

Before we can expect to make a difference behind these enemy lines we must first make a difference within our own movements due to the fact we are who make up the prisons, and in unity, we will be the ones to make a difference. We must first unify though! This system don't give a fukk about us beloveds. Fukk the pig\$, and stop all of this snitching shit B! WTF is going on? The oppressors know more about us and our shit than we do. Tighten up komrades we gotta do better.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This comrade echoes the USW slogan of "Unity from the inside out." Lumpen organizations must build unity internally first, before solid unity can be built with other organizations. And building this unity inside prisons can also transfer to life outside of prisons. So this is an important call to be made. We look forward to hearing more from this comrade's efforts, successes and failures, and how they can be applied by others facing the same situation. ★

## 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.

The next five issues of Under Lock & Key will be devoted to each of the five principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons: Peace, Unity, Growth, Internationalism and Independence. See page 3 for more detail on these principles. We call on all readers to submit articles on these topics, what they mean to you, and how you are building on them.

**ULK 69 Independence** – How can we build institutions of the oppressed behind bars? Why shouldn't we just use the programs run by the U.S. government/police/prisons? What should be our priority for new independent programs to build?

**ULK 70: Peace** – What can we do to end the needless conflicts and violence within the U.S. prison environment? How can we fight the oppressors' divide and conquer strategies that encourage us to fight each other instead of them? What successes and failures have you had building for peace in your prison?

**ULK 71 Unity** – How can we unite with those facing the same struggles as us for our common interests? What tactics can we use to approach different groups and sets to build unity? What are the main challenges to unity in your prison or state?

**ULK 72 Growth** – What are you doing to educate yourself and others? Are there creative ways we can build new education programs?

## Fixing Credit Is One More Challenge for Releasees

by a Missouri prisoner  
February 2019

I'm writing about a problem that I've been dealing with for the last two years of my incarceration. If you all have any information that will help me, please send it or put me in touch with someone who can help.

Basically I had a normal life before I was incarcerated. Meaning I had bills. Due to my incarceration I fell behind on all my bills, ruining my credit.

I've found information in the library to run my credit report and contact my debtors. But the mail room here will not allow me to send out anything that has to do with finances. They advise me to appoint a power of attorney.

My problem is this, how does DOC expect us to be "rehabilitated" while incarcerated, but won't allow us to do for ourselves? I'm going to be released to society with terrible credit, no money and no means (legally) to provide for myself. And I'm certainly not the only one. This system is creating a cycle that turns DOC into a

revolving door. And does nothing but add to the paychecks for the state.

Everybody doesn't have family out there to provide for them. So I thought I could try to handle my own business but I'm being held back. I read the policy and it basically states that as a prisoner we are not allowed to sign financial contracts or start/conduct business via mail or phone.

So I'm reaching out to see if any other prisoners are having this problem. If so has there been a solution? Because I have several ideas on how we can help ourselves to have the funds to start over once released. But how do I implement them with the restrictions applied by DOC? Hell I don't even know if they'll let me send this out asking for help.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This comrade describes just one of many problems releasees will face as soon as they hit the streets. Usually thinking about your credit is not the first order of business for a released prisoner. But this can have a big impact on your ability to find housing and set up basic services (which require credit cards). There

are ways to rebuild your credit rating, but it's slow and one more problem to add to the difficulties of life on the streets with a prison record. And as this writer points out, all this adds up to a revolving door of recidivism.

We don't have any easy ways to help fix this credit problem, or the bigger question of how to set up businesses from behind bars. However, we hope that our comrades with release dates or finite sentences will start thinking about this well in advance. If you have someone on the outside who can help square up your delinquent bills, it's never too early to ask for help. And if your prison allows you to send mail out to those billers directly, you might be able to work something out with them to defer the debt.

If you have ideas to help folks hitting the streets to deal with these sorts of financial challenges, write in to share them. We want to help our comrades hitting the streets to ease their transition as much as possible. This is critical to making it possible for them to continue their political work on the streets. We need an army of former prisoners building independent institutions of the oppressed, to support new releasees. ★

## How to Fight PA Mail Policies

by an Illinois prisoner  
February 2019

In the article "Pennsylvania Digitizing Prisoner Mail" in *ULK* 65 Soso points out that PA's new policy will restrict prisoners to purchasing books directly (after the publication is first approved by the DOC). (1) By enforcing this policy the PA DOC is implementing a state-run monopoly on reading material within its prisons. The obvious reason for this imperialist act is to further censor prisoners' reading material.

Illinois comrades have heard our brothers' cries for help. This policy can be fought, but it will take time and dedication to prevail. *Crofton v. Roe*, 170 F. 3d 957, 961 (9th Cir. 1999) is a case finding that a regulation that only allowed a prisoner to receive publications he ordered and paid for directly bore no relationship to the interest of screening for contraband. You'll need to Shepardize this case to find cases from your Circuit that support this judgment.

What does this mean? It means that you can combat the current policy denying third parties to order you books. That might seem



like a small victory compared to the digitization of your mail and pictures, but any victory against the state is a victory for the people. Unfortunately, due to the security concerns regarding drugs being smuggled into the prisons through the mail, it is unlikely that this policy will be overturned by any court. The only method left for this issue is direct action in protest of the policy which garnishes public attention and support

(i.e. the mass hunger strikes in California in protest of the SHU which resulted in the abolishment of indefinite placement in the SHU). In Solidarity!

### MIM(Prisons)

**responds:** We hope that this PA mail policy will be challenged in the courts. Although MIM(Prisons) does not have the resources (or lawyers) to do this from the streets, we print this letter to support our jailhouse lawyers who are working on this battle. At the same time, this writer makes a good point

that we are unlikely to win these legal battles entirely. We can sometimes gain some small victories, that allow us things like greater access to educational materials in prison. But we need to keep in mind that political power only comes to those who take it. The imperialists and their courts will not give up this power without a fight. ★

Notes: 1. Soso, "Pennsylvania Digitizing Prisoner Mail", *ULK* 65, November 2018.



# Transition to Become a Better Man

by an Ohio prisoner  
April 2019

## Part 1

I am personally connected to this topic, being an active high-ranking individual of an organization. I have struggled trying to make the transition to become a better man. 22 years young, growing up I was never exposed to positive black, New Afrikan role models, or anyone older I could look up to who defined what it meant to be a man. Everyone I hung around was in a 5 years span older or younger and everyone who was successful was either an athlete, entertainer or criminal.

So when basketball or rapping didn't work out I turned to the street where toughness was defined by aggression and fearlessness. Fighting and shooting. I turned to my organization for the loyalty and love and the brotherhood. Being a gangster to me was being heartless to anybody who was not with you, and if they cross you, deal with them like an enemy.

Being incarcerated I learned that leaders and high ranking members need to revolutionize our organizations and get back to the original principles that we were founded on. Having influence is great power, we need to use this influence for education and fighting oppression. It is easy to talk about, it's a learning process. I can't define toughness or what it means to be a man, but I can explain personally why I am the way I am and what it takes to prevent another from falling victim. Unity is key. Changing your values so you cannot be controlled by privileges and understanding if you are not part of the solution, then you contribute to the problem. Most people care what people think so they let that stop them from acting on what they really feel. But you can't be for the revolution in mind but not in action.

Education and unity! Use the "negative" organizations as a vehicle for positive influence and change. It starts from the top: O.G.s teach the Y.G.s. Teach them how and they will fall in line.

## Part 2: What is a man? What defines a gangster?

A lot of New Afrikan brothas like myself have no idea because no example was taught by any positive New Afrikan role models. All we know is what the white-washed

media portrays to us. We listen to rap music that glorifies violence and objectifies our women. Our role models being dope dealers and our definition of gangster is Scarface, Larry Hoover, Pistol Pete...

Being fearless and cold, making money by any means makes you a man, not tolerating disrespect, toting guns and how many women you had sex with all define your manhood. I sit here explaining that mentality and see the flaws in it.

Now let's talk about the cycle. Every parents' purpose should be to make the world a better place for the generation coming next. Speaking from my mind, the older generation kills me complaining about the younger generation and in order to solve a problem, first things first, you must start at the root. I will not deflect or place blame but this older generation, our own fathers, uncles, brothers start the cycle by failing to educate and expose their children to something different, something positive. They fall victim then allow their children to be influenced by white imagery of what a Black man is: violent, or supernaturally talented, only good for white man's entertainment.

I won't sit here and talk about it with no solution, so how do we fix it? Everything starts with the children and what we teach them and what they are exposed to. New Afrikan men must learn the most important part of parenting is presence. Just being available is so important for a child growing up. We need to expose our children to successful business leaders and entrepreneurs that look like us, not only athletes and movie stars or entertainers. Teach them to be financially literate. Teach them about this racist society and how to be prosperous in it. Only way to break the mentality is to replace it. A man is responsible, reliable, self-sufficient, wise, a man does not make mistakes. A man takes care of his children and family. Now that's Gangsta!

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** Everyone makes mistakes, and they are our source of empirical knowledge. So we should not fear them. What we think this comrade means here is that we should not keep making mistakes and not learn. We shouldn't live a lifetime of mistakes. If we listen to what society tells young New Afrikan men, not living a lifetime of mistakes means going against the grain.

Each One, Teach One! Whether a child or an adult. We all have things to teach. And only by learning from each other does our

## Control Unit Survey Questions

MIM(Prisons) has the most complete data on control units available at [www.abolishcontrolunits.org](http://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. Survey responders can get a back issue of *ULK* as a thank you.

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?

collective knowledge grow. While we can learn from our mistakes, most knowledge is history. So we don't need to make all the same mistakes the people of the past did to learn the lesson ourselves, empirically. We can leap frog ahead by building on the lessons from the past. It is this collective, historical knowledge that gives huminity the power to reach much greater heights.

Growth is key. We all go through many different stages of the learning process at different times. As long as we are moving in the same general direction, of liberation, then we can unite in our growth. ★

## Movilización de la Raza por Independencia

por un prisoner@ de California

traducido por Spanish

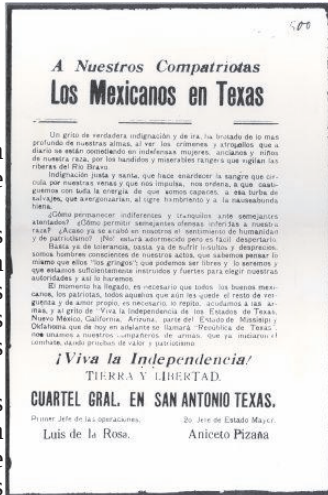
Translator

October 2018

Toda la materia está en movimiento y con ese movimiento continuaremos encontrando nuevas formas de aplicar la respuesta adecuada a nuevas ideas, y por supuesto nuevas acciones crearán nuevas reacciones.

Cada uno de nosotros tiene que encontrar la fuerza y la oportunidad dentro de cualquier área de nuestras vidas. En este desarrollo tenemos más capacidad de ayudar a otros en los mismos problemas. La nación del Chican@ de hoy está en una encrucijada. La población de la Raza está creciendo más rápidamente que cualquier otra. En un par de décadas seremos la población más grande de los Estados Unidos. Tenemos que entender que cualquier cambio que experimentemos genera oportunidades. En otras palabras, eventos externos con frecuencia ocurren como medios para facilitar los cambios internos y la consciencia. Una vez que la conexión interna es captada, toda creencia

teórica en la necesidad permanente de las condiciones existentes se rompe antes del colapso en la práctica.



Creo que en la independencia de cada nación hay una unidad que ayudará a

movilizar las grandes masas, entonces comenzamos a entender la importancia de ventanas de oportunidad. El poder chicano no es simplemente estar a cargo. No queremos imitar al capitalismo, pero simplemente ejercer un poder económico y sociopolítico, donde las relaciones sociales de producción reemplacen al capitalismo. Sin la influencia del imperialismo, sabemos que el imperialismo define crímenes y empuja a las naciones oprimidas a cometer crímenes. Sabiendo que la mayoría de las minorías no tienen nada que perder, y están bien armadas, cuando se revolucionan pueden servir como los peleadores más feroces.

No fuimos creados por las mismas fuerzas sociales y materiales que gobiernan la vida Mexicana, pero por la aventura imperialista de la incorporación de las Américas. Nuestra existencia por lo tanto, no está definida por el realismo de las fronteras, sino por las fuerzas sociales y materiales que

### 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!

han influenciado la manera en que nos desarrollamos desde antes y después de su imposición. Aztlán representa la tierra que fue invadida, ocupada y robada del pueblo mexicano. El suroeste es casa de muchos Chican@s, y naciones indígenas no mexicanas, cada una con derechos universales de gobernarse a sí mismas y existir como un pueblo autónomo y soberano. Así, la era del imperialismo es la era de la Nueva Democracia donde la mayor pelea democrática debe ser librada y liderada por las masas de las clases populares en una unidad donde la meta principal es la liberación nacional.

Este mes de Agosto conmemoramos el Plan de San Diego, que fue un plan para la Nueva Democracia por las semi-colonias internas que ocuparon la Isla Tortuga. Es tiempo de estudiar la historia Chican@ y aplicar el internacionalismo. Escribe a Movimiento Internaoinalista Maoista de Prisiones para folletos informativos de las campañas y enviar su propio ensayo y arte. ★

## MIM(Prisiones) es...

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

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

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

MIM(Prisiones) se distingue de otros grupos en

los siguientes seis puntos. Consideramos que las otras organizaciones que activamente mantienen estos puntos ser fraternal.

1. El comunismo es nuestra meta. El comunismo es una sociedad en donde ningún grupo tiene poder sobre cualquier otro grupo.

2. La dictadura del proletariado es necesaria. En una dictadura del proletariado la anteriormente mayoría explotada dicta a la minoría, la que promovió la explotación, cómo se debe conducir a la sociedad. En el caso de naciones imperialistas, una dictadura del proletariado de naciones oprimidas en uniónh (JDPON siglas en inglés) debe hacer este papel en donde no hay proletariado interno o una base significativa de masas que favorecen el comunismo.

3. Promovemos en frente unido con todos los que se oponen al imperialismo. El camino a la JDPON sobre las naciones imperialistas incluye en unir a todos aquellos que se puedan unir contra el imperialismo. No podemos pelear contra el imperialismo y pelear contra otros que están ocupados en conflictos de vida y muerte contra el imperialismo a mismo tiempo. Aún las clases de una nación imperialista pueden ser aliados en el frente unido bajo ciertas condiciones.

4. Una clase parasítica domina los países del primer mundo. Como Marx, Engels, y Lenin formularon 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 arista 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.



# Challenges Building Lumpen Unity

by a Florida prisoner  
March 2019

If we were to take the key differences as outlined by Willie Lynch such as age, skin tone, gender, etc. and replace them with more viable, up-to-date ones pertaining to the lumpen organization class i.e. nation, tribe, flag color, hood, set, block, race, etc., we get a slightly different blueprint but the exact same end results. Results that Lynch prophesized would be self-generating for generations to come. This blueprint was the same one implemented by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI COINTELPRO which saw the dismantling of our Black Power era vanguard. It is the same blueprint later utilized by law enforcement agencies such as L.A.'s crash unit, gang detail, gang surveillance unit and prison guards: divide and control!

An 11 October 2018 riot at Taylor CI saw 15 lumpens, including myself, from different orgs and tribes, beaten, rounded up, beaten some more and emergency shipped to Florida State Prison's (FSP) Control Management Unit. Arriving here and hearing the lumpen-on-lumpen disrespect and set-tripping on the tiers and back-windows was defiling to the sacrifice of blood, sweat and tears that we had made. We

had taken one small step against oppression but it was only one small step in one institution. Elsewhere, however, nothing had changed. At Taylor it was Bloods, Crips, Folk, a Stone, a local tribesman and a civilian standing together in solidarity, at FSP it was only business as usual.

Organizing unity at FSP is and has always been a challenge. Although it is not impossible, it hasn't happened much. Some of the main setbacks spawn from accessibility to each other as well as study material due to censorship. Group building is possible but slow as thoughts would have to be put on paper and kited from cell to cell risking being knocked off by C.O.s. Building on the back windows puts you in direct competition with nihilists, agent provocateurs and otherwise anti-revolutionaries, but it also puts you at risk of being placed on strip, written up, or worse for "disorderly conduct" if caught. Censorship is an ongoing problem for many revolutionary publications because it is said to be "inflammatory" and "poses a threat to security." I am not anti-C.O. I believe that C.O.s have a vital role to play in keeping order in a potentially hostile environment. I am anti-oppression. My prophecies arise when certain C.O.s (not all) abuse their authority, overstepping boundaries. Words

written on paper do not incite. Oppressive C.O.s incite.

Another setback is leadership. Somebody has to step forward and do what is right. Just because it is right. If nobody starts, then nobody can follow. As leaders it is our duty to guide the hand of young and less experienced brothers, especially when one misstep can weaken our chance of success as a whole. Water has always trickled down-hill so it is the leaders who must unite in solidarity in order to educate the rest of our tribes. Unfortunately, while we never lack those who wish to lead, we do lack those who are qualified to lead leaving room for avarice and chaos where none were meant to exist. Leaders have to step up and step out of their comfort zones and their needs to be liked. If something is wrong, it matters not how many are for it, leaders must stand against it. If a thing is righteous, it matters not how many don't like it, leaders must stand firm in its righteousness. This leads to the biggest setback of all: history.

The Lynch-like mindsets that have been indoctrinated through our histories of tribal genocide is a hard, hot bullet to bite when trying to establish peace with rival tribes with whom we have played live ammunition tag. This is what makes our hatreds towards each other perpetual, spanning generations – loved ones lost. The past is of value only as it aids in understanding the present; and in understanding of the facts of the problem is the first step to its solution. Understanding, as well as communication, can go a long way. Unfortunately, they are luxury not often experienced or allowed in our lifestyles, making way for petty, ignorant issues that often result in violence. We have to start somewhere. The breaking down of our walls and barriers is tantamount to the building up of peace and unity. Even if the peace process begins 1-on-1, 1-by-1, it is a beginning to something bigger than us as individuals, separated, the majority of us were created to override the oppression of our communities and our peoples. But only together can we begin to turn that ideology into a reality.

**MIM(Prisons) adds:** Transfers and control units are two tools the state uses to prevent positive movements among the prison population. So we should not blame the masses too much and recognize that we need leaders to step forward as this comrade does. Each one teach one.

While transfers are effective to stifle momentum, we must use them as an opportunity to spread positive ideas to new people. Control units are also effective tools of repression, and we must continue to focus on the campaign to end this torturous practice by the United Snakes. ★

... Continued from p. 16

## ...Funding

This being known, the United States still incarcerates more people per capita than any other country, at a cost of more than \$50 billion. Yet there has been little decline in the total amount of people incarcerated or amount of prisons. If we hope to fix this problem, we must first create a solution. The solution is to stop the incentive of incarceration! Even though the states lose money with prisons, the employees enjoy the financial gain. Many lobbyists are proposing to close prisons, but are opening prisons? Since most debt is subsidized to the state, the prison's main source of revenue is us! By funding the prisons we are keeping ourselves locked up. If we refuse to spend money in the prison, we can expect the prison to change.

This year marks the beginning of "Greatness Nation United" (GNU). We are the voice of the tired, the angry and defeated. I am inviting all youth to join the Greatness Movement, where we refuse to fund the prison's commissary, prison packages, or any JPay service. If you can't go completely without commissary, then once a month spending the lowest possible amount would impact as well. How is it possible we can

sacrifice our freedom for imprisonment but won't sacrifice "a few store goods" for your freedom? Change comes in numbers. I challenge all of you to being greater than your circumstances this year. Greater than your situation.

To everyone reading, we are greater than  
*Continued on next page...*

## 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.

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**Under Lock & Key No. 68**

**May/June 2019**

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... Continued from prev. page  
incarceration, only together can we achieve.

**MIM(Prisons) responds:** This writer sums up some important facts about the economics of incarceration. The facts about prison expenditures above can be found with background information in our article on the U.\$ Prison Economy, published last year.(1) And as this writer explains, releasing individual prisoners doesn't have much of an

impact on the overall cost of incarceration as long as the entire prison is being maintained. The main cost is the prison itself and the staff running it. And when prisoners are released the number of staff are not generally reduced unless the entire prison is shut down.

This comrade suggests a plan for action that will impact the prison financially. The idea of boycotting prison spending is one of the few areas where prisoners have some

potential power. To spend or not to spend is discretionary. Of course the prisons can try to starve people to force them to buy supplemental food for survival. But it is still an area of power for the prisoner.

Given the \$1 trillion in overall burden of prison costs, or just the \$261 billion in direct criminal injustice system expenses, how much impact can prisoners have with a boycott? Have others found this effective at forcing change in the past? When we organize actions against the criminal injustice system, it's always good to think critically about our potential impact as we build new and better tactics in this battle. ★

Notes: 1. MIM(Prisons), "MIM(Prisons) on the U.\$ Prison Economy - 2018 Update", ULK 60, February 2018.

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*Thornburgh v. Abbott*, 490 U.S. 401(1989)  
*Murphy v. Missouri Dep't of Corrections*,  
372 F.3d 979 (8th Cir. 2004)  
*Murphy v. Missouri Dep't of Corrections*,  
814 F.2d 1252 (8th Cir. 1987)  
*Nolan v. Scafati*, 430 F.2d 548 (1st Cir. 1970)

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by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), May 2017

translated & published by the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement, September 2018

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