



Global Recession Threatens the Global Proletariat

by Mica of MIM(Prisons)
October 2022

It seems unanimous that 2023 will be a year of recession. A recent report from the United Nations Committee on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) opens up with:

"The world is headed towards a global recession and prolonged stagnation unless we quickly change the current policy course of monetary and fiscal tightening in advanced economies.

"Supply-side shocks, waning consumer and investor confidence and the war in Ukraine have provoked a global slowdown and triggered inflationary pressures."(1)

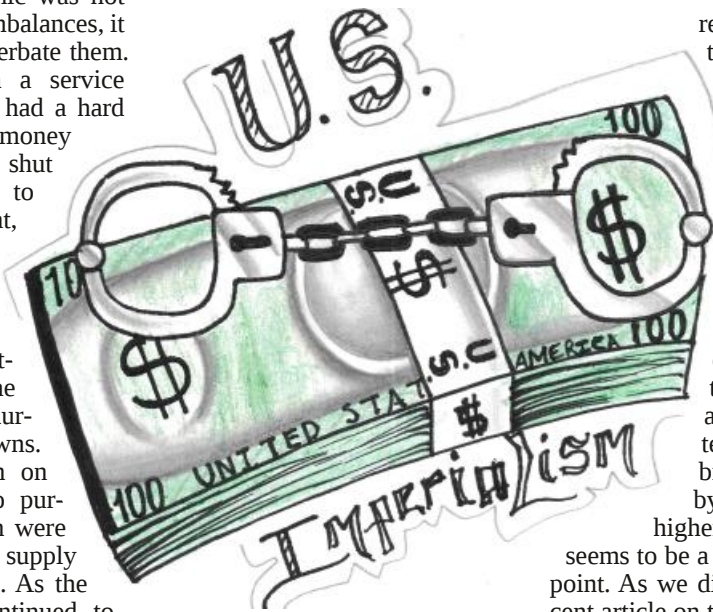
Before talking more about the report, let's start with some basics. Recession is something that is unique to capitalism. It is a product of capitalism's inherent contradictions. In previous economic systems, problems of getting resources to people were caused by things like plagues, floods, droughts and war. All things that we are still familiar with today. But there is no other economics system where people go hungry because of "market forces" preventing adequate production and distribution. This happens at all times in capitalism, but it will be affecting broader swaths of the population as we go into recession.

While the pandemic was not the cause of current imbalances, it certainly helped exacerbate them. Because we live in a service economy, Americans had a hard time spending all their money when things were shut down. They're used to regular entertainment, movies, costly sporting events and clubs, having people prepare food for them and the infamous getting their hair done which they cried for during the early lockdowns. Having all that cash on hand, they turned to purchasing goods, which were harder to get due to supply chains slowing down. As the U.S. government continued to roll out benefits to Americans they wanted to buy more things and there were less things available to buy. Companies selling things increased prices, and the pressure for inflation began.

The ability to keep printing dollars (in the forms of COVID relief money and low interest loans) is backed by the fact that the dollar is the dominant currency for international trade. And this is backed by U.S. dominance of international monetary organizations and U.S. militarism shaping the world economy in its image.

Increasing Dollar Power

In 2022, the U.S. Federal Reserve got serious about addressing inflation as it began to surpass 8% year-over-year (when they'd



like it closer to 2%). In recent months, the Fed has continued to increase the interest rates by .75% at each meeting they have every 4 to 6 weeks. They have indicated that they plan to continue to do so to bring down wages and inflation. One of the goals of the Fed here is to increase unemployment and cool down the job market by making it more expensive for companies to borrow money. Recently Americans have had their pick of jobs with many opportunities to increase their incomes. Under capitalism, this is somehow a bad thing. Contrast this with the MIM Platform for a socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, which guarantees employment (as well as free day care, medical care, public transport and college education).

The UNCTAD report highlights the even greater negative impacts of raising interest rates in the United States on the Third World proletariat. Yet, UNCTAD's calls for, "Central banks in developed economies to revert course and avoid the temptation to try to bring down prices by relying on ever higher interest rates," seems to be a pipe dream at this point. As we discussed in our recent article on the war in Ukraine (see "Ukraine: Imperialism in Crisis" in *Under Lock & Key* 77), the U.S. dollar is the reserve currency, which means what the U.S. Fed does has huge implications for money everywhere.(2) And other imperialist countries have filed suit by increasing interest rates to protect their own currencies from more extreme devaluation. The British pound just hit it's all-time low exchange rate to the dollar, putting them almost at 1-to-1.

While Americans complain about oil prices rising from inflation, war and supply chain issues, OPEC has announced it is cutting production, which will increase global oil prices. This is not helping the cause of the Fed and the U. \$. government trying to mitigate inflation for Americans.

Relatedly, Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries the UNCTAD forecasts to exceed "normal" pre-COVID GDP trends next year. However, President Biden is striking back at Saudi Arabia threatening to cut off arms sales to the country saying their leadership role in OPEC is aiding Russia, who has been engaged in a proxy war with the United States for more than half a year now. Again, we are seeing increasing divisions among the global powers. Similar to the divisions that precluded WWI and WWII as discussed by author Richard Krooth.

In our review of *Arms & Empire* (see *ULK* 78) we quoted Krooth's explanation of the role of the strong dollar in bringing on the Great Depression:

"...making it the hardest currency in the world, pushing up its value vis-a-vis other currencies, but also making it inaccessible to nations that otherwise would have purchased from America. When other nations could not obtain dollars by exports to the U.S., obviously they could import nothing at all. And so U.S. exports tended to fall and had to be replaced with bilateral trade agreements. Up went U.S. unemployment when markets fell away and bilateral trade could not replace them. Then down came the dollar, the U.S. devaluing in 1933 in an attempt to stimulate the exports again. But, alas, it was too late. The depression was on, production was down, America was spreading crisis to Europe!" (p.119)

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Illegal Censorship in TX Persists as Resistance Grows

by MIM(Prisons)
October 2022

MIM Distributors has confirmed at least 135 pieces of our mail that have been censored by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) in 2022. However, the vast majority of our mail goes unaccounted for, so we know that the actual number is in the many hundreds.

Censorship in Texas is not new. The TDCJ banned our book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán* for many years. More recently it was brought to our attention that that decision had been reversed and a number of comrades were able to receive the book. However, Allred Unit has censored the book 4 times in 2022. The bourgeois state has always repressed political speech

that is opposed to its oppression.

Most of the censorship in 2022 has been triggered by and targeted at organizing efforts around the Juneteenth Freedom Initiative. In particular, letters with updates on the campaign and plans to boycott the holiday. The most censored letter actually was mostly reports on censorship by the TDCJ itself.

Many comrades reported that the censorship of the infamous June 8th JFI Campaign Update letter was appealed automatically by the TDCJ. We received dozens of letters stating the censorship was upheld by the Director's Review Committee (DRC) on appeal because the letter was "inciting a disturbance." Yet all the letter called for was to boycott

the holiday and instead spend it advocating for a list of demands including an end to long-term solitary confinement, censorship and unpaid labor. In other words, peacefully advocating for your rights has been made illegal for Texas prisoners. That is why we say prisoners in this country do not enjoy full citizenship rights and instead must fight for them.

Meanwhile, of the dozens of notifications that we received, none of them specified what the item was that was being censored, or what about the item was objectionable. When we wrote the DRC to point this out we received no response. Similarly, our letter to Allred Unit warden Jimmy Smith regarding blanket censorship went unanswered. This is a violation of caselaw, such as

Crofton v. Roe (9th Cir. 1999) 170 F.3d 957, which concluded:

"Unsupported security claims couldn't justify infringement on First Amendment rights."

One comrade in Stevenson Unit who had achieved a reversal after appealing a recent censorship reports:

"I received the enclosed notice that the Director's Review Committee reversed the unit denial of 5 pages that could incite a disturbance mailed to me from MIM. I am now in possession of your MIM Censorship pack, and I can't seem to find any mention of riotous propaganda, or anything other than helpful caselaw in the struggle to uphold 1st Amendment rights. Systematic denial by the piggy is surely taking place be-

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ATTENTION
CORRECTIONAL
AUTHORITIES:

PLEASE READ THIS
CENSORSHIP NOTICE

As the distributor of Under Lock & Key we retain a First Amendment right to correspond with prisoners, just as prisoners retain a First Amendment right to correspond with the outside world. While a rational basis test is allowed for the censorship of publications entering a prison system, such allowance does not allow a blanket ban on publications because prison authorities do not agree with the message or content, which may be political or religious in nature. Censorship regulations must be rational and impose censorship only in furtherance of "an important or substantial governmental interest not related to the suppression of expression" and relate to "legitimate penological interests." The federal courts have ruled unequivocally that a prison agency censoring inmate publications and mail must provide the distributor or publisher with notice of censorship. This notice must provide articulate reasons for such censorship with specific references to the objectionable material. The distributor/ publisher must be given a meaningful opportunity to appeal the censorship decision to a person not involved in the censorship decision. Notice and opportunity to appeal are required by due process. We encourage you to carefully read and understand your agencies policies and procedures, as well as federal case law related to the censorship of incoming mail and publications addressed to prisoners.

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

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What is Under Lock & Key?

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

Fighting the injustice system is just one part of the anti-imperialist struggle, and it is important that comrades do not lose sight of the connections to the larger battle. 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 former and current U.\$ prisoners. USW is explicitly anti-imperialist in leading campaigns on behalf of U.\$ 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 Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support?

Launched in 2020, Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support (AIPS) is a MIM(Prisons)-led mass organization for those on the outside who want to support anti-imperialist prisoner organizing. Specifically, AIPS members and chapters will provide support for existing MIM(Prisons)/USW projects and help develop and support local campaigns to meet the needs of organizers inside.

What is MIM(Prisons)?

The Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, or MIM(Prisons), is a cell of revolutionaries serving the oppressed masses inside U.\$ 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.\$ 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.

On Prisons & Prisoners

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

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

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

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 historical 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.

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. 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.

Spread ULK

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 to U.\$ prisoners!

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.\$ prisons, are available on the website www.prisoncensorship.info. If you would like to become a *ULK* distributor, get in touch.

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.

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 Project sends free books and a resource guide to prisoners in Texas. Inside Books Projects, 3106 E. 14 1/2 Street

Austin, Texas 78702
insidebooksproject@gmail.com

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 need-less conflicts and violence within the U.\$ 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.

Interview with Union Organizer on the Labor Aristocracy

by MIM(Prisons)
October 2022

The Maoist Internationalist Movement has always dismissed the strategy of embedding itself in the Amerikan so-called working class and labor unions. The experience of the Revolutionary Union in that kind of work during the 1970s and 1980s was some of the most relevant and interesting to MIM founders, influencing their decision to reject it. Yet, since then, many other self-described "communists" have still advocated and attempted the labor union strategy among Amerikans.

A wave of popular support for labor struggles within the United States has been rekindled over the past year. This is primarily due to the successful unionizing efforts of the Starbucks workers in Buffalo, NY on 9 December 2021 and the Amazon workers in Staten Island, NY on 1 April 2022 — both of which set off more union efforts within their companies and have inspired many similar efforts throughout many different industries.

To many so-called "communists", this recent phenomena serves as a testament to the growing proletarian class consciousness among the U.S. working-class and their increasing revolutionary potential. To these revisionists and white nationalists, the proletarian uprising in the United States is just one economic crisis away. Yet most who are swept up in this union organizing populism lack the historical and theoretical background to the Amerikan labor aristocracy. Most are in it for their own self-interest and will be easily pulled towards fascism in a crisis scenario, but others do have real budding proletarian consciousness that can be won over with struggle and study.

In our efforts to investigate labor organizing in our contemporary situation, we found a

Free Palestine - Join the BDS Movement

by Triumphant of United Struggle from Within
August 2022

In yet another act of terrorism, Shareen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-amerikan journalist, was targeted and killed by the illegitimate state of I\$rael and its military. The I\$raeli state, its occupation of Palestine, and its armed forces are and have been backed by the united state's ruling class since 1932. On 11 May 2022, while on the job, covering an I\$raeli military raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank, she was maliciously assassinated.

Shareen Abu Akleh became a thorn in the side of the Israeli state as a result of her continuous on the spot coverage of daily state repression, human rights violations, and Palestinian genocide. She covered many detentions, home demolitions (which Palestinian homes were targeted in, and demolished to force them to relocate for I\$raelis) military raids of schools and universities, and Masjids, and killings of Palestinians. This brave frontline work placed her on I\$raeli hit lists.

Shareen Abu Akleh was a journalist for decades and a Palestinian revolutionary-nationalist, who being a trailblazer in

comrade with a friendly political line who has been involved in actual underground union organizing. What follows is an interview with this comrade, relating eir experience to the history of the labor aristocracy and labor organizing in the United States in general.

What things got you interested in doing union organizing?

A few years ago, I began working in an industry whose



workforce is primarily made up of the more vulnerable population within U.S. society. For example: ex-cons, immigrants, recovering addicts, etc. This vulnerability was often exploited by management and while it was never explicitly stated, there was an understanding by those in the vulnerable position that the employer had an upper-hand on them and that they had to abide by their requests to avoid any potential complications. This was particularly reflected in a request a coworker of mine (some kid from Central America) made in which ey asked if I would be willing to run if our manager ever called ICE on em in order to focus the agents' attention on me while ey slipped out and escaped. These coworkers often worked

her field, inspired many Palestinian and Arab wimmin to serve their people through the work of liberation journalism.

Her funeral brought out tens of thousands of supporters, mostly Palestinian, in Jerusalem. As pallbearers carried sister Shareen, the I\$raeli military attacked them, and further disrupted the occasion with malicious Zionist violence against Palestinian nationals.

Sadly, the colonization of Palestine, the Apartheid regime of I\$rael, and violent and fatal repression of native inhabitants is all apart of the imperialist system. What does imperialism look like? It looks like land theft, it looks like millions of people living without power or plumbing, it looks like bombing and shelling of homes, schools, hospitals and finishing the job by attacking refugee camps. It looks like storming universities, confiscating study materials, it looks like the process of erasing an entire human group, and that's exactly what's taking place in Palestine. There will be many who call for justice for Shareen Abu Akleh, but the sad truth is that justice for her and justice for the Palestinian nation can only be achieved with the end of the I\$raeli occupation.

Continued on page 4...

harder than those fortunate enough to have papers and/or a clear record, yet were treated like they were less than humyn. I couldn't stand that. I couldn't stand how disposable they were treated because they crossed a border, had a criminal history, or just have a messy past that they are trying to overcome.

During the pandemic, two people I knew from the vulnerable population (deemed "essential workers"), ended up dying from

revolution). I wanted to immerse myself deep within the working-class and help build the labor movement as a means to play my role in the struggle for socialism. Eventually, an opportunity to work on an underground union campaign targeting a major corporation presented itself and I dropped everything to be part of that campaign.

And how quickly the front-line workers who died from COVID-19 have been forgotten in order to move the capitalist economy forward. The United States, despite its wealth and resources, has had the most people die from COVID-19. It's at least good to hear that it inspired people like yourself to seek real change. Did you work with one union or many? Were they big/significant unions? Did you get a glimpse of how other union organizing operated, or can you only speak to one organization?

My situation was sort of unique as I worked in a sort of underground cell within the union, but ultimately I worked under two unions. These two are some of the biggest/most significant unions in the United States. They operated similarly — very bureaucratically. We did a lot of work with other big and medium-sized unions and they also seemed to reflect that structure. I can't speak on the more grassroots type unions.

An underground cell? That sounds interesting, how did that work?

I was a union salt, or rather, I was sent into a specific workplace by the union as an undercover organizer to help them organize it. In my case, I was entering one of the most infamous workplaces in the U.S. My goal was to immerse

myself with the working-class/ the masses and commit myself to the struggle for socialism.

Why do you feel this type of organizing didn't ultimately match your goals?

I believed that building up worker-power would lead to building up a pillar of support for socialism in the United States. My goals were political whereas the union's were not — this is the fundamental conflict between my interests and theirs.

What kind of things did you end up doing that you felt were not aligned with your goals and politics? Were these tasks/projects unexpected when you first got into union organizing?

I thought I was going into the workplace to build relationships and serve in raising class consciousness, but ended up doing a bunch of non-campaign related tasks/projects, such as phonebanking for random surveys and canvassing for politicians I had never even heard of in neighborhoods nicer than the one I lived in. This was unexpected because I was sold such a militant/radical message by the persyn that recruited me. I had been upfront about my reasons for wanting to work for the union and how it related to my politics and this persyn told me that our goals were similar and that I was in the right place. So it was a surprise to me when I found myself doing a bunch of work that seemed no more radical than working for the Democrats.

Did your political line develop/change during this time? because of the work you were doing? or from external study on your own?

Continued on page 5...

ULK 79: MIM(Prisons) Update

by MIM(Prisons)
November 2022

First a correction. In *Under Lock & Key 78* the article "Understanding George Jackson" repeatedly referred to Hugo "Yogi" Pinell as being Puerto Rican when ey was actually of Nicaraguan descent.

In this issue we tried to tackle some questions of strategy for change. Most of our readers each issue are new to our work. And while everyone we hear from loves *ULK*, not everyone understands how we're different, or agrees with our different approach to change. In this issue we distinguish our strategy from those of reformists, those organizing the labor aristocracy into unions, and right and left errors around identity politics and idealism. We also feature the ongoing work around targeted campaigns around strategic issues of censorship, solitary confinement and building a united front within the prison movement in general, with revolutionary leadership.

Since last issue, we have a number of accomplishments to report. We published, printed and distributed the new zine *Power to New Afrika!* in Black August 2022. We have continued our training program for the *Revolutionary 12 Step Program* we began earlier this year with comrades inside and outside. We are caught up in mailing out responses to the intro study course, and should be mailing those on a weekly basis moving forward.

This means you can expect to get a response in less than 2 months. Hundreds if not thousands of comrades inside mailed petitions to the Department of Justice as part of the Juneteenth Freedom Initiative. And we continue to mail out copies of the petition. Dozens if not hundreds of postcards demanding an end to politically targeted censorship were mailed to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Departmental Review Board. With this, the distribution of *Under Lock & Key* outside prisons has increased. Comrades inside also continue to sustain our postage stamp needs with their donations.

While the above accomplishments were achieved with the support of some newer comrades, we also lost some support on the outside during this period. This has meant we have struggled to stay up to date on processing and responding to our growing influx of mail. It also has caused us to change how we mail out *ULK*, which will more than double our postage costs. As printing costs also increase, the annual cost of a subscription will be going up and we will update our readers in our next issue, so that you can donate enough to cover your own *ULKs* or more.

Related to donations, a comrade in California wrote:

"I'm writing to inform all comrades that I wrote the Khufu Foundation, sent them the requested stamps and within two weeks I received a copy of the lawsuit. I know MIM said that you

were unable to vouch for the Khufu Foundation, but I can and I would like to inform all the captive comrades that Khufu Foundation is legit, you will not be disappointed.

"Also in Under Lock & Key 78, I read the MIM(Prisons) update that talks about contributions/donations are needed, especially from the many comrades who are in prison. I'm taking the step to do my part as I enclosed a book of 20 stamps to cover my subscription coast as well as other comrades who are unable to provide the support with stamps. I would like to ask all of the comrades who are able and willing to donate a book of stamps because with a book of stamps we are able to cover our cost but also cover other comrades who are unable to give stamps. I also would like to ask the comrades who are able to try and donate one book of stamps every quarter (that's 4 books of stamps a year). Let's try to step up our contributions."

Requests for Texas Packs and the TDCJ's Grievance Operations Manual (which is regularly being censored these days) continue to increase. New comrades should read about our Free Political Books to Prisoners Program on p.2 and understand that you must send payments for these 2 items.

As discussed in this issue, many prisons have begun digitizing mail. Our newspaper cannot be processed by these services. So if you don't tell us what prison you are in when you write us we cannot send you a subscription. ■

A Look At the People's Struggle In Ghana: How Capitalism Exploits

by Triumphant of United Struggle from Within
August 2022

"We can't afford rent and we're sleeping outside. The youths are jobless" -Yaw Barimah, Ghanaian taxidriver

In late June 2022, street protests erupted in Ghana's capital city, Accra. The above quote matches the general feel and demands of the masses who took to the streets. Most lay persons are

tion' now reaching 27.6% and the accompanied reduction in value of the Cedi(1), they're unable to pay this allowance. The system of imperialism works in a way that parasitic countries like amerika hold economic hegemony over Third World countries like Ghana. This allows for the U.\$ currency, the dollar, to dictate the value of the national currencies of Third World countries. What this means for the Ghanaian and other Third World workers is that be-

world right now, the mechanism being used by capitalist exploiters is the depression of wages. This generally occurs when the wages of the worker are below the value of their labor power. Labor power here means human work, the sum total of a person's physical and mental effort.(2) Labor power is the primary factor in society's production. Uniquely however, only in capitalist society is labor power a commodity.

The process of commodification of labor power manifests itself in two conditions: (1) The worker is 'free' in that they can 'choose' to sell their labor as a commodity. (2) The worker owns nothing aside from their labor power (what the mind/body can produce). They have no means of production, or means of living and must sell their labor power to live.

Therefore, what we know as 'employment' in the capitalist economy consists of capitalists buying the labor power of the laborer and converting them into hired slaves.

The exploitation of workers is examined by the advent of surplus value. The degree of exploitation is examined by the rate of surplus value. The capitalist devises ways to maximize this rate of surplus value, which brings me back to depression and deduction of wages.

To comprehend wages, we must first overstand that wages are a 'disguise'. They are a way to fool the people into thinking they're getting equal value for their labor.

Marx said, "wages are not what they appear to be. They are not the value or price of labor, but a disguised form of the value or price of labor power."(3) Therefore the capitalists notion that they pay the worker the price of movement. **End all collaboration with the illegitimate state,** until Palestine is free.

MIM(Prisons) adds: One of the first essays many students of MIM study is *On Contradiction* by Mao Zedong. In it Mao explains how change must come from within. The liberation of Palestine depends on an effective national liberation struggle from within Palestine, but it can be assisted by resistance to the funding and arming of the I\$raeli state by Amerikans whose government is the primary prop of I\$rael. A strong anti-imperialist movement in this country would be able to limit the sale of military goods to I\$rael, Ukraine and anywhere else where the empire wants to fight wars against its enemies without sending its own troops. ■

Notes:
(1) 'Palestinian-american journalist assassinated,' Monical Hill, *FreedomSocialist*, vol.43, no.3
(2) 'Academic fortify boycott of Israel', Raya Fidel, *FreedomSocialist*, vol.43, no.3

their labor is completely fabricated.

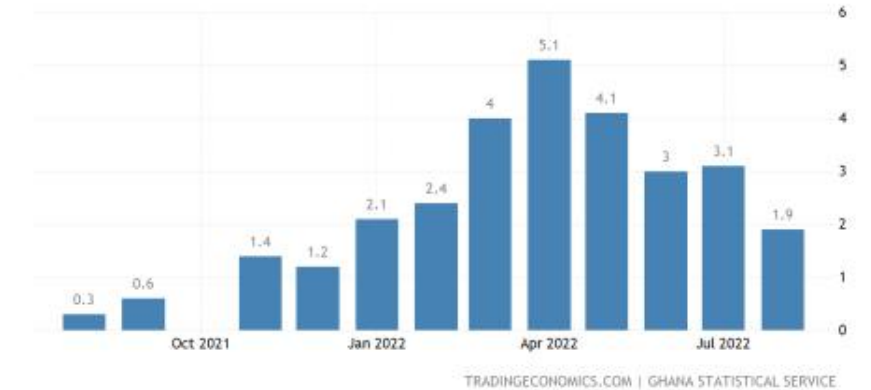
A key in understanding political economy is to comprehend the distinction between labor and labor power. Under capitalism what the worker is selling isn't labor, but is labor power, which is capable of being commodified, while the former (labor) isn't.

The next logical question is why? why is labor not a commodity? Commodities exist in their final state prior to being sold, labor doesn't. Also commodities are exchanged for equal value, according to the law of value. Therefore if labor was a commodity the capitalist should pay the full value created by labor, which would eliminate surplus value (the source of profit), which would

is that there is a contradiction between the nominal and real wages. The nominal wage is being held in place, while the real wage is in a downward trend, a decline.

"When the purchasing power of money declines and the prices of the means of livelihood go up, the same amount of the nominal wage can only be exchanged for a smaller amount of means of livelihood. Then the real wage falls. Sometimes even if the nominal wage goes up a bit, but less than the increase in prices of the means of livelihood, the real wage will still decline."(4)

This is essentially what we observe playing out in real time in Ghana and elsewhere. As the above quote alludes to, simple economic reforms like increase in



Month-on-Month inflation rates for the Cedi

aware of the current effects of inflation on the daily lives of the average people. Many of us have not made the necessary connection that such inflation and other tricks capitalists use to increase the amount of surplus value extracted from the populace, are inherently apart of the internal dynamics of capitalism itself. Our failure to understand this brings our protests, and dissent to a screeching halt once the point of economic reformism is reached.

In countries dominated under imperialist neo-colonialism, such as Ghana, the weight of economic exploitation is maximized. As conditions sharpen, the exploited classes of Ghana are beginning to stir. On July 4th four teacher's unions went on strike in opposition to the neo-colonial government's refusal to pay 'cost-of-living allowances' of at least 20% of their wages.

The government holds the position that due to 'Annual infla-

cause their wages are paid in money, the national currency, the amount of their pay, although the same on paper, is devalued along with national currency.

So the exploitation of the Ghanaian worker has intensified. Their labor is still required to be done at the same rate, same hours labored, same amount of labor, and same wage paid. What has changed is the value of their labor power; with inflation, the amount of cedi it takes to maintain the worker's needs is greater. Yet wages have not increased, or not increased as much.

To allow the common people to overstand our common interest in overthrowing capitalist dictatorship it is necessary to understand and breakdown plainly, the inner-working of capitalism and how it effects the lives of the people.

In Ghana, as described above, and many other places around the



Declining value of Ghana's cedi priced in U.\$ dollars

eliminate capitalism.

If labor was a commodity, it would have value and that value would be determined by the amount of embodied labor. This can't happen. How can the value of a phenomenon be determined by the value of itself?

What labor is is the process of labor power. Therefore the wage paid to the laborer is equal to the value of the labor power. In other words, it is the amount required to keep the proletariat as a class alive and working — that is the value of labor power. Whatever extra the worker's labor power produces above the value of labor power (the wage paid to keep the proletariat alive) is called **surplus value** and it is what is 'exploited' by the capitalist. The wage itself is the chain that binds the exploiter to the exploited. The revolutionary demand must be to abolish the wage system.

The term 'cost of living allowance', caused me to think of our need to overstand where the idea of 'cost of living' or 'standard of living' has its roots.

We begin by concluding that these are two distinctive wages. In the political economy of capitalism, there are **nominal wages** and there are **real wages**. Nominal wages are expressed by the wage payment of money.

In our quest to find the 'cost of living', we can't use nominal wages as representation. The cost of living will only be reflected by the amount of means of livelihood which can be bought by the money wage (nominal wage). What the nominal wage can purchase is the cost/standard of living and is called **real wages**.

What is taking place in Ghana

wage will not end this phenomenon, the elimination of surplus value is the only solution. The bourgeoisie will always use the tools of inflation, price increases and rent increases to increase the contradiction between the nominal wage (money paid) and the real wage (what can be bought) to increase the rate of surplus value accumulation (the exploitation of the people).

In conclusion, I want to point out that while the protests organized by Arise Ghana and the work strike by the four teacher's unions are significant struggles for the daily hurdles of life for the Ghanaian people, the people must be made to distinguish between the causes and effects of economic hardship. When a sick person has a cold and a running nose, they don't merely get a tissue for the nose without curing the cold itself. The peoples exploited by imperialism must synthesize the economic and political struggles.

Closing with a word from Marx,

"The working class should not forget: in this daily struggle they are only opposing the effect, but not the cause that produces this effect; they are only delaying the downward trend, not changing the direction of the trend; they are only suppressing the symptom, not curing the disease."(5) ■

DOWN WITH CAPITALIST-IMPERIALISM!!!

Notes:
(1) The Cedi is the national currency of Ghana.
(2) *Fundamentals of Political Economy*, edited by George C. Wang,; Chapt.4, pg.59
(3) K.Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, selected work of Marx &Engels Vol.3
(4) *Fundamentals of Political Economy*, chapt. 4, pg72
(5) K.Marx, *Wages,Prices and Profit*, *Selected Works of Marx &Engels*, Vol.2

... Continued from p. 3

... Free Palestine

FREE THE LAND!!! FREE PALESTINE!!!

The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement is a grassroots initiative that began in the early 2000's to gain international support for the occupied Palestinian nation against Israel's continued military suppression, genocide and land theft.


In recent years the BDS movement has indeed gained international support, even in the face of reactionary pro-imperialist backlash from the states who support genocide, land theft and military crimes.

The goal of BDS is to isolate Israel on the international field by upholding the "simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity".

Students around the world have been pressuring their schools and universities to join the 'Academic Boycott', initiated in 2004 by the Palestinian campaign for the Academic and cultural boycott of Israel (PACBI). As student activism again comes to life here in the United States, it is important that students engage in internationalist frameworks. Amerikan student activists should support the academic boycott of Israel, which is part of the overall BDS movement. Stu-

dents should do this not as a mere moral cause, but the understanding that over 50% of the U.\$ states strongly support the Israeli military-apartheid-colonization, so much so that 35 states have Anti-BDS laws. They support the frequent military raids of Palestinian universities under the pretext of 'countering terrorist activities', the imprisonment and murder of student activists peacefully protesting, closure of schools and the recent Israeli military move to arbitrarily control what is and isn't taught in universities. A new government procedure allows the military to restrict visiting professors who teach subjects supposedly 'not relevant to Palestinians'.

In the United States, the free flow of ideas has begun to be brought to an end. Book bans, Don't Say Gay laws, the backlash against Critical Race Theory, what's next? Will the same reactionaries rally police/ military force to suppress your student demonstration? The book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán* has been banned in prisons in many parts of occupied Aztlán. Will the reactionaries prevent your free thought? **Newsflash, they already are!** Students in North America should pressure their institutions to join the Academic boycott and the wider BDS

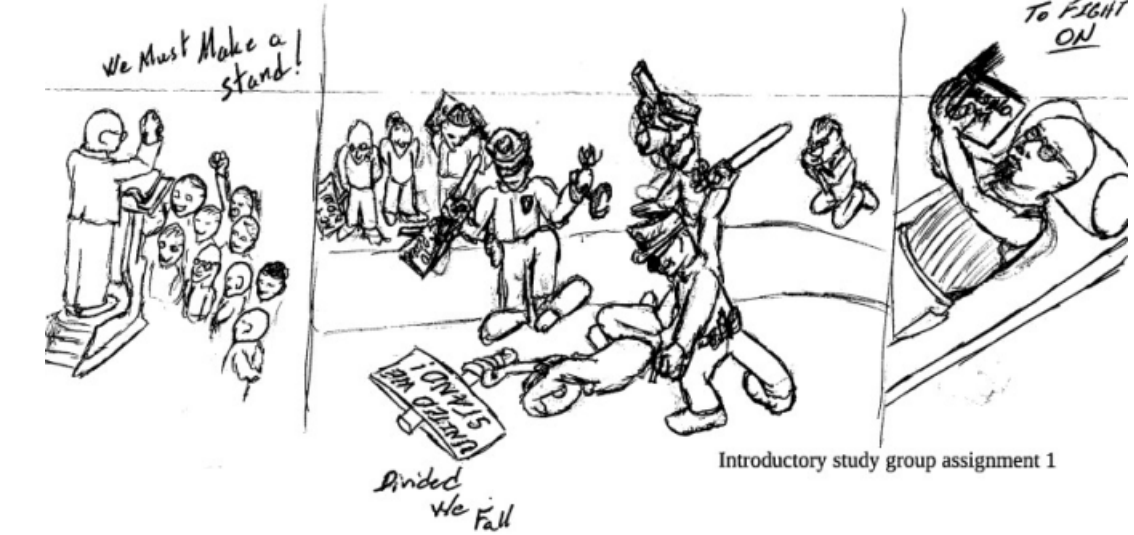


DONATE TO MIM (Prisons)

“ Sending money to them will help fund not only the next issue of *Under Lock and Key*, but the free Books to Prisoners program. If you believe that Black Lives Matter, then donate to MIM(Prisons) and continue funding the education of revolutionaries behind prison walls. ”

Send cash or stamps to:
MIM(Prisons)
PO BOX 40799
San Francisco, CA
94140

Are Ideas in a Book Materialist?



by Melo x
August 2022

Responding to "What did you disagree with?" when studying "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?"

I disagreed with the basis of idealism not being action. To think is action. Thought can be provoked by stimuli collected by the body's sensors, which is more reactionary. Or you can create a thought or an idea, but this is action. Mental action nonetheless but action all-in-all. And it must be understood physical action comes from mental action. As I write this I understand the materialist method is physical action. Well I guess I don't have a disagreement but rather a question, is ideas placed on paper in book format considered materialism?

Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons) responds: As comrade Melo X explains, we can have thoughts that are reactions to physical stimuli, or we can create thoughts. But this "creation" of thoughts is also a response to the physical world. What we might call reason, abstracts concepts based on our experience with real phenomena, or physical things we can interact with.

"the faculty of understanding is not a 'thing in and of itself,' because it becomes real only in contact with some object."(1)

Dietzgen explained how the idealists see the mind as separate from the sense perceptions of the material world. So Melo X is correct to see the unity between them. The comrade also distinguishes creating thoughts from more passive perception. This realization demonstrates the role of reason in developing scientific understanding from our perception of the physical world around us.

We also agree that our thoughts impact our actions. Hence we stress class consciousness as an educational process that is a product of our interactions with the class system.

So, are ideas in a book part of the materialist method? Well, it depends on what ideas. A book can promote contemplative reasoning. Bourgeois books will promote bourgeois thinking that harbors much idealistic reasoning in order to deny the contradictions inherent to the capitalist system. All that said, 99% of our materialist understanding of the world is based in history, and

therefore must come from books (or other historical record). If we discarded books in our scientific pursuits we could not continue to build on the knowledge of the past, but would be stuck relearning the same things with each generation.

It is a crass form of materialism that says everything must come from persynal experience and direct interaction with the physical world. Rather we must learn from the actions of the people who came before us, and as we develop new theories they must be tested by us in practice through action and not just tested in our contemplative, subjective minds. Another way to look at this is that books are recorded practice and direct experiences of other people. Frederick Douglas' writings are from eir practice with chattel slavery, and Lenin's writings are from eir practice with the first proletarian revolution. When we say that all knowledge is 99% history, we're not saying we should spend all our time learning using books but to see it as a starting point so we can make new practice in the future. ■

Notes:
1. Joseph Dietzgen, *The Nature of Human Brain Work: An Introduction to Dialectics*, PM Press, 2010, p.58.

... Continued from p. 3 **... Interview on the Labor Aristocracy**

Yes. My political line changed drastically over my time with the union. Partially because of the work, but mostly from deeper study. Like I mentioned earlier, I salted at one of the most infamous workplaces in the U.\$. and while the work in itself was difficult, no one there really belonged to the vulnerable population. You needed papers and a clean record for at least five years in order to work there. So I was working with a very different group of people — a group of people I began to understand more and more through my persynal political study. They were not the proletariat and they did not share the same interests with the proletariat. They were labor aristocrats who, despite not being unionized, still benefit from the spoils of global imperialism. I became disillusioned with my work after understanding the reactionary role labor unions and the labor aristocracy have actively played throughout the history of the United States and among the global proletariat.

Of course we should not be quick to draw general conclusions from our own limited experiences as that would be an empiricist error. Were you able to connect your experiences to the historic experiences of others?

I definitely do not think my experience can be used to make broad generalizations on how a typical rank-and-file organizer's experience looks like given its unique form, but I think it does

reflect an all too common experience faced by those organizers motivated by a genuine desire to struggle for revolution, but who misdirect their energy into union work, non-profit work or any other form of controlled-opposition work that ultimately serves to further legitimize the bourgeois state. There is a bit of naivety that stems from a lack of skepticism towards such organizations and overall lack of experience from such organizers. That is the importance of studying historical experience; to help guide us on what works and what doesn't work.

For example, the experience I often connect (or at least keep in mind the most) was that of the historic IWW because they were an open anti-capitalist union with the goal of organizing all workers. In retrospect, they closely matched my goals and the goals of the other self-proclaimed communists I have worked with. They were relatively successful as a union and were perhaps the best case scenario regarding unions, yet they failed to carry out anything revolutionary and fell short of pushing an anti-imperialist line in fear of the repercussions they would face from the U.\$. government. Self-preservation marked higher on the priority list than class struggle to a union of "radicals"; this seems important to keep in mind whenever you find yourself working in an organization full of liberals.

So the people you had worked with previously were also not

unionized? but they were lacking in full citizenship rights, whether by birth or as punishment by the injustice system? What are your thoughts on the organizing potential there based on your experience and studies?

No, the people I had previously worked with were not unionized and the industry as a whole is typically non-union (with an exception of the more skilled within said industry that make up a very small portion of the workforce). There seems to be too many complications in trying to organize this workforce into a union, primarily because of how willing another persyn who is lacking full citizenship would be to replace them. Also, as I mentioned earlier, the consequences for this vulnerable population are much more detrimental, which lessens the likelihood of participating in a campaign that can risk their employment. Some people need a job to satisfy the terms of their parole and losing their job puts them at risk of going back to prison. When you're in a more desperate situation, you're more willing to put up with shit. With that being said though, I do think there is organizing potential among them — it just so happens not to be in labor. Most of them come from oppressed nationalities and their lack of full citizenship rights demarcates them further from being accepted by oppressor society, demarcating them from an amerikan identity. I believe there is potential to organize this particular population of

... Continued from p. 1 **... Global Recession**

While Europe is not quite in the rough shape it was at that time, de-industrialization has been the trend, as Amerikan's have had more and more say in how their economies are structured. As we discussed in our recent article on Ukraine, the Amerikans have been conspiring to prevent a close relationship between Germany and Russia. Now it seems that the sabotage attack on the Nordstream 2 pipeline that was built to pipe gas from Russia to Germany is a continuation of those efforts by the Amerikans.

Economic Policy and Economic Systems

The UNCTAD report makes a number of recommendations to mitigate the impacts of the coming recession on the exploited Third World nations of the world, who of course will suffer the most. Again, these problems are inherent to capitalism and cannot ultimately be avoided without replacing it with a socialist economy. However, there are economic policies that can improve, or even save, the lives of millions of people today under capitalism. But they would need to be a bit more radical than those suggested by UNCTAD.

The MIM Platform includes two policies to be enforced by international banking authorities under capitalism:

1. Elimination of international currency exchange rate fixing by governments.
2. Tying of exchange rates to a standard basket of goods.

The UNCTAD report points out exchange rate depreciation in just six months this year for a number of exploited countries:

Sri Lanka: 77.8%
Ghana: 32.1%
Sudan: 29.7%
Egypt: 19.8%
Haiti: 15.6%

In the current system, when the currency in Sri Lanka depreciates by 77.8% that means that day-to-day expenses for the proletariat of Sri Lanka are probably about doubled. If exchange rates were tied to a standard basket of goods, then this would no longer be the case. Prices of things like food and fuel would be stabilized across the globe in local prices. The impact on the imperialist system on the people of Ghana is explained in more depth on the previous page.

Importantly, the above two demands by the MIM Platform

the U.\$. workforce around the national question, but only through practice will we see if this proves to be correct.

What do you see as possible solutions/roads forward for you or anyone who shares your goals? How do they contrast with the practices within the labor organizing movement in this country as you experienced it?

The struggle for better wages, universal healthcare, remote work opportunities, or whatever "communists" and liberals are fighting for (i.e. union work) will not lead to revolution — but rather further pacification — which will ultimately serve imperialism. Communists should aim to wage class struggle, not facilitate social work. If diversifying

would affect the ability to pay off foreign debts as well. The UNCTAD report lists the percent of government revenues spent on external debt in a number of countries:

Somalia: 96.8%
Sri Lanka: 58.8%
Dominican Republic: 20.4%
Ghana: 28%
Jamaica: 26.4%

How the heck can a state spend 97% of its revenue on debts to finance capital (or even 25% for that matter) and ever be able to provide for and serve the people of that country. Exchange rates cannot fix these huge problems, which require debt forgiveness. But the current system of exchange rates does make these debt payments increase as exchange rates worsen as is happening now with a strengthening dollar (as most debts are held in dollars). Overall, the percentage of state revenue spent on servicing debts across the Third World has doubled over the last decade according to this UNCTAD report. As surplus value extraction becomes more difficult, interest payments on debt becomes a larger part of the net flow of wealth from the exploited nations to the imperialist countries.

There seems to be no momentum for MIM's proposed radical changes among the international bourgeoisie at this time, which means the economy will continue to tighten and shrink. And under capitalism that means people will suffer and die. The system is madness. If production of goods ceases to be profitable, production ceases, it does not matter how many people are in need of those goods. But one of the inherent contradictions within capitalism is that the tendency to compete and increase production constantly undercuts the rate of surplus value extraction. As a result profits are always (generally) becoming harder to come by. The introduction of the Chinese proletariat back into the imperialist economy after 1976, but especially in the 1990s, by the capitalists who run that country brought a breath of fresh air to imperialism with a huge, new source of surplus value. By 2008, the rates of profit had once again become harder to maintain, and today those contradictions are playing out in the form of hot wars, trade wars, currency wars and realignments of major powers. ■

Notes:
1. United Nations Trade and Development Report 2022
2. MIM(Prisons), April 2022, "Ukraine: Imperialism in Crisis" Under Lock & Key 77.

the beneficiaries of global imperialism sounds productive, then support a union. If not, then recognize the importance of keeping your politics in command. As a communist — the goal is revolution and the role we play is in advancing that goal. But we can't advance our goal if we cannot admit that we need to re-assess the situation we are working in. This requires deep study. So take a step back and study seriously. We are working in very unique conditions and it is important that we understand these conditions if we are remotely serious in our politics. Fortunately for us, Chairman Mao formulated the fundamental question when it comes to making revolution: Who are our friends? And who are our enemies? ■

Native Religious Rights and Cool Housing Struggles in TX

by Firewater of United Struggle from Within
August 2022

I'm attacking the "Heat Sensitivity Scoring (HSS)." We feel that being classified as "Heat Sensitive", which requires a cool-bed housing assignment, is a medical treatment and a medical diagnosis. A diagnosis that you should be able to choose if you want the "treatment" or not. We have a right to refuse medical treatment but they will not let us opt out of this "classification" and will not explain how this "Heat Score" was calculated.

The best information I've gotten on the Cool-bed litigation came from Nell Gaither at the Trans Pride Initiative PO Box 3982, Dallas, TX 75208 (214) 449-1439, tpride.org. She copied and pasted Document 59-2 from *Sain v. Collier* 4:18-CV-4412 and I had her letter entered in my case. It is a 4 page letter and you can buy it for \$0.50 per page from the Clerk in the Western District, Austin Division @ 501 W. 5th St., Suite 1100, Austin, TX 78701.

TDCJ makes Native American practitioners take a religious knowledge test before they will approve them for a Designated Native American Unit and if you can't pass the test you can't meet with clergy or attend ceremonies, etc.

I was shipped off of my Designated Unit and put in High Security in Allred because I was "Heat Sensitive." SO they denied me of my religion due to my health conditions and wouldn't tell me I had to re-take the test to re-apply for a Designated Unit (which is unconstitutional). Anyway, what they're really doing is shipping [lawsuit/paperwork] filers off to high security claiming they are "Heat Sensitive."

If this happens to others, all they need to do is contact the Chaplain and apply for a transfer to a Designated Unit again. They will have to take the test again as is TDCJ Religious Policy AD-07.30 policy number 09.02(rev3)p.1 &2 and policy 09.02(rev2) Attachment A.

We are looking to do away with

this unconstitutional religious discrimination and teach our own religion. TDCJ's text is based on Lakota religion and there are no Lakota tribes in Texas, so it is difficult to get Native Chaplains willing to teach a religion that is not their own.

People are fired up about *ULK* 78! I'm going to be ordering all of my grievances to send to TX Prison Reform. Thank you Triumphant of T.E.A.M. O.N.E.! for the good info. I've already ordered my grievances, I have 56! You can purchase them from the law library for \$0.10 each.

Note to my Connally Unit comrades: As of 1 August 2022, TDCJ will no longer make legal copies, which is fucked up! I'm having to send my original documents



ough the mail to the court and hope they don't steal my mail. Warden Rayford has banned inmate-to-inmate legal visits and there is no drinking water in the Law Library and no bathroom breaks. If you need to go to the pisser, your session is over.

No legal copies and legal visits hinders our access to courts, but I suggest sending an I-60 in and getting a denial on paper even if you don't need a jailhouse lawyer. Then, if you loose your case you can say this was because you didn't have your "helper." *Johnson v. Avery*, 393 U.S. 483, 490(1969) says you have a right to get legal help from other prisoners unless the prison "provides some reasonable alternative to assist inmates in the preparation of petitions." And if they are still retaliating after that, make sure you got a lot of witnesses. It is a federal crime for state actors (the prison officials) to threaten or assault witnesses in federal litigation 18 U.S.C.§1512(a)(2). ■

Obtaining Copy of Lawsuit on TX Mail Policy BP-03.91

by a Texas prisoner
July 2022

CAUSE NUMBER:3:21-CV-00337
STYLED NAME: *F. MARTINEZ, ET AL. VS MEMBERS OF THE TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, ET AL.*
RE: COURT FEES TO OBTAIN

Dear Friends:

Greetings, I am the leading plaintiff in the above styled and numbered case. Please be aware of the court fees to obtain copies of the case. Basically they charge 10 cents per copy, and the total fees for the following documents are as follows:

- * The Complaint (no exhibits) 32 pages
- * Motion for TRO and prelimi-

nary injunction (no exhibits) 31 pages

It will be a total cost of \$6.30 to obtain the above documents from the clerk of the court. You need to send a money order or institutional check to the clerk of the court at:

CLERK, US DISTRICT COURT
601 ROSENBURG STREET
ROOM 411
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550 ■

Document Prison Abuses

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

Documenting and monitoring the abusive conditions in Amerikan prisons is an important part of our work. Keep sending in these reports! Online readers can search by state and facility to find your reports.

Texas Continues to Fight Neglect, Censorship and Heat

by ST of Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support
October 2022

Texas prisoners face some of the harshest conditions in the kkkountry mainly due to neglect from prison staff, and disregard for prisoners' health, safety and rights. For example recently in Estelle High Security we had received a report from one of our readers on dialysis, and a copy of eir grievance,

On 15 August 22 at 5:45PM-7:10PM 11 Dialysis patients were put in a van with NO Rear A/C. We got to the rear gate of high security at 6:10pm our officer driving the van told Lt. Phillips:

"Hey there's Dialysis in the van and it's hot for them,"

Lt. Phillips said, "I don't give a

ported on from the Luther Unit. Meanwhile, Stiles Unit spent much of September in lockdown during the heat with no showers and limited food. Heat exhaustion and health issues are being exacerbated by lack of respite, this all being against directive A.D. 1064 requiring access to ice during times of elevated heat. The oppressors at this unit deny this happening of course, and show their own unwillingness to follow their own laws, which gives light to the real purpose of prisons of course being national and political oppression. Unity and mass action is the only way to address this, such as TX T.E.A.M. O.N.E.'s mass petition to mail to the U.S. Department of Justice as mentioned in *ULK* 78, "Juneteenth Freedom Initiative (J.F.I.) Phase 2".

This year has seen an increase in reports (at least 135 recorded by Texas Dept. of Criminal Injustice (TDCJ)) of censorship of mail from MIM(Prisons) across Texas, since the start of the J.F.I. As stated in the last 2 issues

of *ULK*, the J.F.I. is simply organizing for prisoners' legal rights as stated by the imperialist's own laws (peacefully advocating for legal rights is not inciting a disturbance). Massive censorship continues in the Allred and Hughes Units, among many others, where conditions are some of the worst in the state. The reason behind this as stated before is to prevent organizing and political education from prisoners, and to limit their knowledge of their legal rights. The state's interest are of population control, and torture (Restricted housing for decades is unconstitutional torture) along with the many cases of neglect beyond

fuck, I'm crossing my kitchen crew to the main building. They can fucken wait."

It was about 90 outside. Our officer driving the van told her again, "They just got off dialysis."

Lt Phillips said, "They'll be fine."

Their report describes a fellow prisoner who had passed out after they were left in there for an hour. This is not the only heat related incident, as heat waves were going on for weeks, many units went without A/C or adequate ice or respite as re-

TDCJ Officials DENIED Summary Judgment in Fight to END Restrictive Housing in Texas

by Texas T.E.A.M. O.N.E.
August 2022

On 2 August 2022, Chief Judge Barbara M.G. Lynn rendered an Order Accepting Findings, conclusions and recommendations of the United States Magistrate Judge.

The Honorable Magistrate Judge Hal R. Ray Jr. submitted the findings, conclusions and recommendations on 17 June 2022, effectively denying TDCJ's officials qualified immunity defense and finding that continuous confinement in TDCJ's version of solitary confinement is INDEFINITE under the unconstitutional Restrictive Housing Plan. A date for trial has not been set though it was also recommended by Magistrate Judge Ray Jr.

The time is now for pre-trial preparations and the Plaintiff and Texas T.E.A.M.O.N.E. are requesting that individuals that are being held in TDCJ's Restrictive Housing please submit their testimony, artwork, poems and writings to the contact info below. We want to hear your stories about what you have suffered in TDCJ's Restrictive Housing. Anyone who wishes to participate in the trial must **first** submit their testimony to Texas T.E.A.M.O.N.E. Serious inquiries ONLY! Sec-

ondly, you must be willing to have your background checked thoroughly. So once again, serious inquiries ONLY!

Texas T.E.A.M.O.N.E. is putting together a scrapbook about victims of solitary. Submissions go to the address listed below, along with permission to publish your material. Submission should be turned in NO later than November 30th 2022.

Texas Together Ending All Mass Oppression and Exploitation

Contact: Texas T.E.A.M.O.N.E.- Legal Representative
113 Stockholm, #1A
Brooklyn, NY. 11221

MIM(Prisons) adds: The campaign against long-term solitary confinement is a campaign against torture and a campaign against political repression. It is perhaps the most important struggle in the U.S. prison movement. Texas has an opportunity to do what California failed to do. In California, an alliance of lumpen leaders and reformist organizations settled the *Ashker* suit (see: "Torture Continues: CDCR Settlement Screws Prisoners" from *ULK* 46) against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Texas T.E.A.M. O.N.E. will not be following suit,

what's referenced here.

MIM Distributors and our subscribers within the TDCJ have exhausted all administrative remedies with our appeals, letters and grievances. The TDCJ is not interested in following the law on it's own accord. Therefore we have begun to step up outside pressure on two fronts.

- * the legal front by filing a lawsuit
- * the public opinion front via our postcard campaign

"A prisoner's administrative remedies are exhausted when prison officials fail to timely respond to a properly filed grievance." (*Haight v. Thompson* 763 F. 3d 554 (6th Cir 2014)) According to this, if they do not respond to our grievances we can go on to a §1983 Civil Action.

Anti-imperialist Prisoner support (AIPS) has been hitting the streets with *ULK*, J.F.I. Flyers, and postcards to be mailed to TDCJ's Director's Review Committee office and Jimmy Smith's (Warden of Allred) office, collecting donations and educating those on the outside, we can always use more feet on the ground, and legal funds from those on the outside.

This short summary of some of the conditions recently faced by Texas prisoners is a call to unite against all oppression, primarily against the United Snakes of Amerikkka, and to unify under the common banner of Anti-imperialism. Don't let the divide and conquer tactics work as intended, this political oppression cannot and will not go unanswered. We need the people on the outside to support those on the inside in their efforts to further organize, rehabilitate, and educate in the United Struggle from Within in Texas. We need public opinion to shift, so keep on the pressure from both sides. The more they censor and oppress, bigger our fight gets! ■

All Power to the People

and will be taking this battle to trial with the goal of ending, not reforming, long-term solitary confinement in Texas.

As we go to print we have received word that the petty bourgeois reformers in Texas have launched their own suit related to RHU that may be an attempt to hijack efforts to end solitary in Texas. The reformers don't want to end torture in U.S. prisons, just limit it a little and hide it away. We are working to get more in-depth information of these developments, but mail coming out of the RHU related to this struggle is being censored by the TDCJ. This indicates that there could be collusion between the TDCJ and those who are working to hamstring the struggle against the use of torture in Texas.

As the Texas prison movement continues to grow, we must build broader awareness and support for this battle, especially among the most affected masses who are willing to dig in and fight for this. The largest prison strikes in history precluded the battle against the Security Housing Units in California, and yet the battle was lost. We must put politics in command and rally the prisoners and people of Texas to put an end to torture. ■

CA Grievance Victory; Bring Staff Misconduct to Executive and Legislative Branches

by Loco1 of United Struggle from Within
October 2022

Closing August 2022 with actions waged against the state of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR's) deliberate and intentional acts of sedition, systematic race crime, police gangs, mass insurance fraud, healthcare system abuse, etc. Members of United Struggle from Within (USW), Prisoners Legal Clinic - JLS, Lumpen Organizations Consolidated On 1 (LOCO1 United Front for Peace in Prisons) and ABOSOL7 say, "We Charge Genocide!"

In response to CDCr appeal #000000243827 (Deliberately denied access to CDCR 602 form (Rev. 03/20) in housing facility), the Department *grants* the claims set forth that corruptions officers employed at California State Prison - Los Angeles County (CSP-LAC) are involved in a concerted scheme of withholding revised models of CDCr grievance forms from the inmate population.

After being ignored at the institutional level where administrative executives maintain a strict code of silence to officer misconduct, an Associate Warden made a computer entry on a record affiliated with the log number that the claims would be

remanded for decision to an unknown entity on an unknown date. Though the appeal on its face, if found true would most definitely qualify under employee misconduct, that is a candidate for a staff/citizens' complaint.

As citizens' complaints are reportable on direct appeal to any federal county police agencies for public-civil prosecution, the issue of intentional mis-handling of an appeal process was exhausted to the state capitol by means of the Chief of Inmate Appeals, and favor has been found for the freedom fighters.

Now we call on the struggle to burn strong.

We shall demand Senate hearing and investigations be held on the subject of police gangs within the department promoting "don't ask, don't tell" climates amongst the population, by way of withholding access to the forms designed for speaking up and challenging abuse.

This is made known as a public service to the prison population to wean itself off of depending on the court system as it is conditioned into them to be. In order to not only relieve the stress on the local courts but to increase the volume on the traffic between the cities and their capitols.

The Senate hearings are called hearing for a reason.

MIM(Prisons) adds: A comrade at Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility(RJDCF) recently wrote Governor Gavin Newsom regarding the infamous gang structure that is running operations there and denying prisoners the services the CDCR promises to offer them. The comrade introduces the letter:

"While the *Armstrong v. Newsom*, 475 F. Supp. 3d 1038 (N.D. Cal. 2020) injunction requiring body cameras be worn by officers may have subsided the wanton violent attacks on prisoners, nothing has been done to address or rectify the criminally orientated structure which dictates the over-all daily operations of RJDCF. Such a failure renders RJDCF incapable of providing adequate rehabilitative programs and services to its prisoners."

Offering more evidence for what we've been reporting about drugs in prisons almost every issue, the comrade goes on to write,

"Long before in-person visits returned to prisoners, RJDCF has been, and continues to be, peppered with the paper chemical substance known as spice, and methamphetamine, both of which are eas[ily] accessible and openly used outside of cell on surveil-

lance cameras by various prisoners in common public areas. In fact, it is easier to access any one of these drugs here any day of the week than it is to establish or participate in a self-help program or access rehabilitative services."

Comrades in North Kern State Prison have also been struggling to get their grievances heard:

"31 July 2022 — For the past month or two, us captives have been getting fucked out of our recreation (dayroom, yard) even though the orientation manual and Department Operational Manual acknowledges that we are entitled to 1 hour of recreation (outside/outdoor recreation) every day. These guards have been taking our yard and dayroom for the most blandest of reasons, a supposed "shortage" of building staff, or for a "one-on-one" or "two-on-one" fight amongst prisoners (fist fight), fights that these guards are well-aware of before the incident even happens. But still these guards shut down our whole program for any small infraction just to have an excuse to not run yard. I have done a "group" 602 grievance where 40 or so other prisoners have signed on to add weight to our issues, the institution has denied this grievance due to some trickery they employed. ...These guards are lazy, they don't want to let us out of our cells for nothing."

The RBGG Law Firm reports the following outcome of *Armstrong v. Newsom*, 475 F. Supp. 3d 1038 (N.D. Cal. 2020):

"As part of the remedial plans, CDCR must overhaul its staff misconduct investigation and discipline process to better hold staff accountable for violating the rights of incarcerated people with disabilities. Those reforms will begin to be implemented at the six prisons [including RJDCF, CSP-LAC, CSP-Corcoran, KVSP, CSATF, and CIW] in June 2022 and will be implemented at all CDCR prisons by mid-2023. CDCR must also produce to us and to the Court Expert staff misconduct investigation files so that we can monitor if CDCR is complying with the remedial plans and if the changes to the system will result in increased transparency and accountability."

We commend the comrades who are pushing for accountability around these court-ordered reforms in the systematic abuse within the CDCR. But as they both point out, criminal gangs are running these prisons, making the attempts at reform superficial. So much more needs to be done. It takes a lot of bravery to stand up to these gangs, and this type of bravery is what is needed to mobilize the masses of prisoners to rally to the cause for independent power. ■

... Continued from p. 1 ... **Texas Censorship**

cause they don't like the expression of political and social views that are protected by the 1st Amendment right against arbitrary government invasion. Oh well, life's hard. Harder if you're stupid."

Another comrade who won an appeal was convinced that our letter contained more contents because all ey got was an Unconfirmed Mail Form listing what we had sent em recently. Nope, that's all that was in the letter that was originally censored for "containing information to incite a disturbance." The only appeals that have achieved reversals so far have been for Unconfirmed Mail Forms (UMFs), our censorship pack, and a copy of the Bill of Rights. However, these reversals were not applied consistently, in other instances UMFs and our censorship pack was censored after appeal to the DRC.

While most of our censored mail was destroyed, one comrade in Allred had their's sent back to us. In the letter "An Address to Tx USW, All TeamOne Committees, and Tx inmates", the TDCJ seems to have highlighted where the letter mentions the "Juneteenth Freedom Initiative." Specifically it is the sentence that calls for filing complaints and petitions to the DOJ. We mailed out copies of such a petition with *ULK 78*. This is the type of activity the TDCJ is calling "inciting a disturbance" in order to censor our communications.

While *Under Lock & Key 78* seems to have reached many in Texas, we are still seeing an almost complete censorship of mail from MIM Distributors in prisons like Allred Unit and Hughes Unit. We've been told there is a whole shelf for mail from MIM Distributors in the Allred mailroom now.

Earlier this year, we reported on egregious censorship of a 12

step rehabilitation program and the TDCJ's own Grievance Operations Manual (see: "TDCJ Upholds Censorship of their own Grievance Manual" in *ULK 78*). (1)

MIM Distributors and our subscribers within the TDCJ have exhausted all administrative remedies with our appeals, letters and grievances. The TDCJ is not interested in following the law on it's own accord. Therefore we have begun to step up outside pressure on two fronts.

1. the legal front by filing a lawsuit: *Owolabi v. TDCJ Allred Unit*; 7:22-cv-00094-0 in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division

2. the public opinion front via our postcard campaign

Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support (AIPS) has been reaching out on the streets of Texas and elsewhere to bring this story to the masses and gather signatures on postcards we are sending to the TDCJs DRC to voice opposition to this illegal practice of handling our mail and communications.

One comrade observed:

"Going to the masses with these postcards was very eye opening. Conceptually, I knew many of the theories of how different classes of the oppressed nations react to building revolution differently, but to see how that plays out with my own eyes was something else. For example, many of the petty-bourgeois student types were more likely to scoff at or dismiss prisoner organizing out of defeatist attitudes at best (such as how censorship/repression is so big in prisons therefore we shouldn't try

at all) or take up bourgeois ethics and "justice" at worst (believing many prisoners "deserve" to be there). Many of the common labor aristocrat types tended to be more supportive, but also was discouraged in not being able to see the movement in Texas prisons right in front of them — expressed in attitudes of "what do they have to do with us here?" The oppressed nation lumpen (homeless, lumpen organization members, etc.) on the other hand were much more eager to sign the postcards in support of the comrades in Texas despite them being in another state. They knew how repressive the injustice system was either out of personal experience or through their close friends' personal experiences; and many expressed how even if all of our comrades in Texas were 100% guilty of the most heinous of crimes that the imperialists had no right to judge them expressed through sayings of "cops are the real criminals."

"Going through these personal experiences with the different types of masses can become prag-

matism itself on this comrade's part, which can become dangerous, so we should remind ourselves of the whole picture of what Chairman Mao said in eir essays "On Practice" and "On Contradiction."

Yes, mass work like this is how we learn how the masses will respond and engage in different campaigns, but we shouldn't be too quick to draw broad conclusions based on a little personal experience. Another comrade reported:

"There's so many people from all nations who are personally oppressed by the Texa\$ Criminal Injustice system, who with the right political education will be prepared to join the movement. There's no doubt in my mind as a supporter from the outside myself that there will be many more ready to put in the work, in the near, near future. The reception to the Allred censorship campaign has been nearly all positive so far, and many people of the oppressed nations here have told me persynally

that they've been looking for something just like *Under Lock & Key* to educate and organize the people.

"Keep on the pressure from the inside, you have millions more to come and push from the outside, we just have to keep our heads on tight, stay determined, and struggle on.

"ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!"

For the voices of the oppressed inside to be heard, we must increase the voices of support on the outside. We call on our readers outside to print out some postcards and fliers, and copies of this article and hit the streets today.

You can view the growing list of confirmed censorship in Texas on our website. ■

Notes:
1. MIM(Prisons), April 2022, TDCJ Upholds Censorship of their own Grievance Manual, *Under Lock & Key 77*



Intentional Death Chambers in Georgia Slave Plantations

by a Georgia prisoner
August 2022

Revolutionary greetings, my fellow comrades!

As a first time writer for MIM(Prisons) I must confess that, it's absolutely a blessing to have found such a space/medium to expose what's currently taking place within the Georgia Department of Corrections (G.D.C), hereinafter "Georgia industrial slave complex". Because honestly, with every issue of *Under Lock & Key*, I thirst to develop a political cadre, in order to establish a vanguard party among the (lumpen) prisoner class.

Here at Telfair State plantation, there's no real sense of political consciousness among the masses nor is there any form of unity among the street tribes, whom all proclaim to have been birthed out of Black struggle to combat against oppression from a political perspective to protect their community. To which I ask, isn't the slave plantation environment currently their community? Then why is it that their claims, tends to seem as though nothing more than "persuasive rhetoric" produced from the tenets of a force with every form of materialistic/imperialist reason to divide

the common? and yet, it gets worse.

There's a massive staff shortage at the root of many Georgia industrial slave sanitation failures and the problems don't stop there. It's beyond the crisis point and something needs to change. Because there's a real humanitarian crisis. In which homicide and suicide rates has already reached "unprecedented levels." At Least 25 slave prisoners deaths on plantation compounds in 2020 were suspected homicides, 7 at Macon State plantation, according to "G.D.C." and 19 slave prisoners supposedly killed themselves in 2020, twice the national average.

The "G.D.C." annual report for fiscal year 2019 (there was a lack of access for 2020 FY report) reveals constant churn. 78% of the departments new hires are (overseers) "Corrections officers," and 71% quit before the year ended. Gov. Brian Kemp, just proposed a 9.1% pay increase for plantation (overseers) guards that would raise their entry level salary from \$27,936 to \$30,730. The experienced staff are leaving as fast as they can to get out of here. What we're left with is kids trying to supervise slave prisoners they're afraid of and that has a

domino effect. Without adequate staffing, the maintenance begins to suffer, food service suffers. Because they don't feel safe, it's created a circular problem.

Access to healthcare is more limited than ever and mental health counselors are afraid to come in the dorms. Understaffing has led to more slave prisoners being stationed in temporary holding cages, going extended periods without food, water or even bathroom visits. Often we're left in those cages to urinate and defecate on ourselves. If the situation persists, lives will continue to be at stake. It's just a matter of time before we see casualties among the staff and slave prisoners.

Urban street tribes have filled the power vacuum. The G.D.C. estimated it housed 15,000 tribe members; nearly a third of it's total population. In the five previous years, authorities said tribe members were responsible for 1,700 assaults in Georgia industrial slave plantations. The pandemic has only made the situation worse, as COVID-19 continues to spread throughout the slave plantations. Recently 24 slave prisoners tested positive for the virus; 3,100 have been infected

so far, 88 have died. Another 1,482 staff members have test positive and two died from the virus, according the the G.D.C Those figures are likely 10 times below the actual number of infections, according to a recent study by the Center of Disease Control & Prevention.

I believe (the G.D.C.) is tolerating levels of chaos we have not seen in the last 20 years. The scale of the problem is so great that federal interventions is necessary and warranted. (Side note, the Department of Justice continues investigation into Georgia prisons.)

Please family, friends and those on the inside report on what is happening inside the walls of Georgia Department of Corrections prisons. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced in September a state-wide civil investigation into conditions at facilities across the state. The DOJ investigation is focused on determining whether state prisoners are reasonably safe from physical harm at the hands of other prisoners. DOJ is also investigating whether the state offers reasonable protections for LGBTQIA prisoners from sexual abuse by corrections officers and

other prisoners. If you or someone you know has information that could raise awareness to this cause, submit tips to:

Email: community.georgiaDOC@usdoj.gov.
Mail: Dept. of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20530

MIM(Prisons) adds: This comrade's report echoes what is being reported from Alabama from prisoners organizing there (see "Alabama Prisoners Demand Freedom" on facing page). Georgia is one of the five states with a higher incarceration rate than Alabama, and of course both are in the Black Belt south. Prison systems across the country are crumbling and failing. It is our purpose to support those who are trying to organize for change amongst this chaos. These contradictions create opportunity for change.

If you did not receive a copy of the JFI petition to the Department of Justice that we mailed out with *Under Lock & Key 78*, write us to get copies and use them to organize a collective voice in your prison. It is only by independent, collective organizing that we can stop these unnecessary deaths and abuses. ■

CoreCivic Abuse Coverups

by Gonzo of United Struggle from Within
August 2022

We have a lot of issues at this facility, especially with mail delivery delays (policy states the facility has 48 hours from arrival to deliver mail and 72 hours for packages; both can take over a week) and with unnecessary censorship. The Colorado Department of Corrections' administrative regulations are clearly laid out regarding mail, but this facility often misinterprets or outright ignores those policies.

BCCF is a private-owned (CoreCivic) prison, and despite having a Private Prison Monitoring Unit (PPMU) assigned to monitor the facilities compliance, they more regularly choose to cover for the administration, for whatever reason, instead of holding them accountable in any way. In fact, the former head of PPMU at this facility recently "retired" from DOC and was hired by CoreCivic to a lucrative, high-ranking position (Chief of Unit Management) at this very facility. No potential for conflict of interest there, right?

The grievance procedure is a complete joke around here. Each step of a grievance can take up to 2 months to receive a response, although denying that any issues exist is hardly any sort of helpful response. By the time a DOC employee becomes involved, several months have passed and either they are lied to by facility staff, or they lie to the prisoner. Either way, nothing is done about any real problems.

In my 8+ years at this prison, I have experienced a variety of changes, including now having the third warden in that time frame. In the past year — about the time the current Chief of Security and Warden, and shortly thereafter, the PPMU/Chief of Unit Mgmt., arrived — the level

of violence here has skyrocketed. During most of my time here this place had remained largely peaceful, if mismanaged to some degree, however, now that new "security protocols" have been implemented (such as creating two "compounds" from the one, making one dangerously understaffed compound the "High-security" compound), drugs have flooded this facility, despite all incoming mail being photocopied. We can't even get photos from family anymore. The rest of Colorado DOC facilities are going through "normalization." This private prison is only normalizing drugs, anger, and violence. With no programs and very limited rec, things will only get worse here.

I constantly encourage everyone around me who will listen to file grievances and write letters to public officials. Even if they do not solve issues in and of themselves, they create and build a record of the abuses at a particular prison, or in a state's system. "Keep your copies!" Tell family and friends about all of the problems, change public opinion of "us" by being responsible, educated citizens who expect accountability from our government just like everyone else. When something is broken, government just pours more of its stolen money into the problem, never fixing anything (but getting more powerful in the process). We need to expose to the public what a waste the prison system is — in financial and human capital — and discourage anyone from supporting the expansion of such a broken system.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We agree with this comrade's strategy. We should not have false illusions about reforming the system through grievances or exposure, but we also must come together and practice diligence and build our skills in fighting abuses. By doing so we can build towards real solutions. ■

Shut Down Prisons with No Air Conditioning During Dangerous Heat Wave as Global Warming Advances

by a Virginia prisoner
August 2022

Have you ever opened the door to a hot oven and felt dizzy and overwhelmed from the intensity of the heat hitting you in the face? That is how it feels for people incarcerated at Augusta, Nottoway, and Buckingham Correctional Centers every summer, but especially during the current heat wave sweeping the country.

But get this: prison staff at these facilities do not experience excessive heat conditions because the areas in which they work and frequent — the control booths, school areas, medical department, education department, administration offices, etc. — are all equipped with air conditioning (AC).

While the U\$. and other parts of the world, like Western Europe, are experiencing unprecedented deadly heat waves, people trapped in prisons, jails, and detention centers not equipped with AC in the areas where they housed are suffering exponentially from these sweltering conditions.

For instance, if it is 100 degrees for those of you on the outside, the temperature is always several degrees higher for those of us confined in prisons not equipped with AC. With the lack of AC, poor ventilation, substandard medical care, unsafe drinking water, big slabs of concrete that trap heat, antiquated sewage systems that regularly back up

and spew raw sewage into the cells and housing units, and the persistence of COVID-19 which is still spreading and infecting people at these facilities, all of these conditions on top of record high temperatures create unbearable conditions that are tantamount to the kind of cruel and unusual punishment prohibited by the eighth amendment to the U. \$. constitution. Sick and elderly people confined under these conditions suffer the most.

So, is there a need for an intersecting movement for prison abolition? The short answer is "Yes," because when environmentalists talk about how climate change is caused by the burning of fossil fuels, and how the impact of this is felt most by people in Third World countries least responsible for climate pollution, the ways in which climate change impacts people in confinement are often left out of conversations about climate justice. This is a blind spot that will cause incarcerated and detained people to suffer and die in silence and invisibility during future heat waves.

Of course, I believe prisons in general should be abolished and demolished, but right now, due to the immediacy of the current situation, we need prison abolitionists and climate justice activists to unite, and once united, collectively raise your voices to bring awareness to this issue and demand change to prevent the needless suffering and death of incarcerated human beings amid

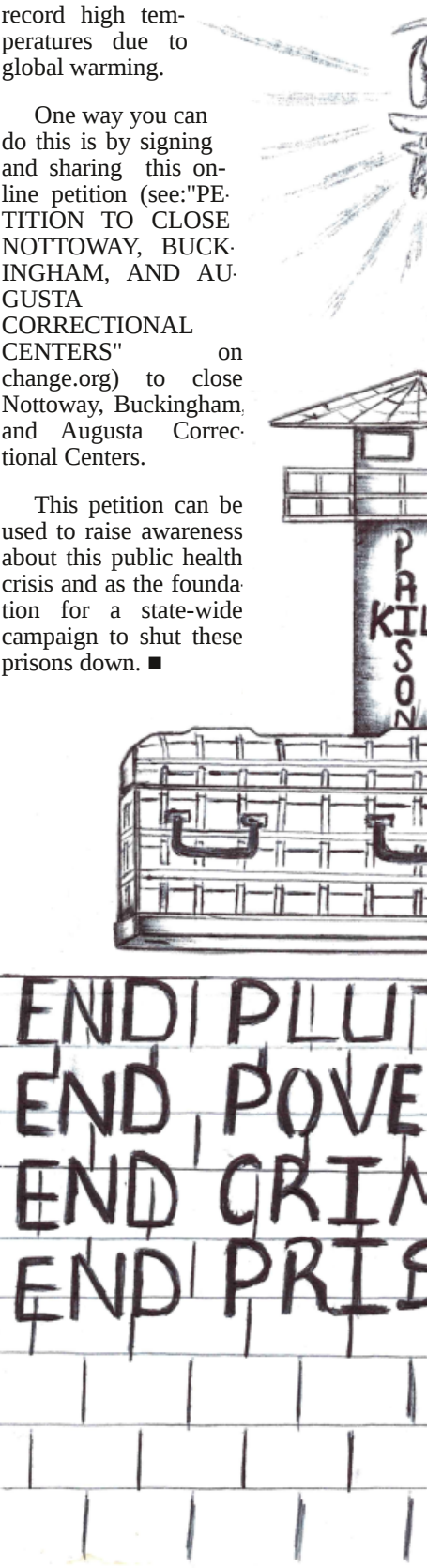
record high temperatures due to global warming.

One way you can do this is by signing and sharing this online petition (see: "PETITION TO CLOSE NOTTOWAY, BUCKINGHAM, AND AUGUSTA CORRECTIONAL CENTERS" on change.org) to close Nottoway, Buckingham, and Augusta Correctional Centers.

This petition can be used to raise awareness about this public health crisis and as the foundation for a state-wide campaign to shut these prisons down. ■

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.



Alabama Prisoners Demand Freedom

by Singlespark of Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support
October 2022

Since Monday, 26 September 2022, Alabama has struggled to keep its prisons operating as prisoners across the state have not been performing work in their facilities until their demands for reform of the parole system, sentencing, and oversight are met. Organizing around this campaign began back in June among prisoners and their families, after years of protests and litigation over the escalating brutality of the Alabama Department of Corrections failed to make the state budge.

In the state of Alabama, prisoners manufacture license plates, furniture, and clothing while maintaining the prisons themselves by working in the kitchen, laundry, or doing yard and road work. Without this work the prisons are dramatically short-staffed and can barely even keep prisoners fed. Meals being served to prisoners in recent weeks are basically slices of bread and cheese, a powerful indication of the willingness of the state and its employees to run the basic infrastructure prisoners need to survive.

The prisoners' demands are not centered on overcrowding or the fact that Alabama doesn't pay its prisoners anything for their labor, or specific acts of brutality by correctional officers, as galling as all of that is. Instead, they

are targeted at the parole and sentencing systems, which have led to "more people coming out in body bags than on parole," in the words of outside organizer Diyawn Caldwell of prisoner advocacy group Both Sides of the Wall.(1) The prisoner's demands are:

- Repeal the Habitual Offender

role.(2)

The sentencing and parole systems in Alabama have always been bad and have been getting worse in recent years. In mid-October while prisoners in some facilities were still refusing to work, the Alabama parole board granted two paroles out of 124 cases, a rate barely above one

mands 'unreasonable' while also admitting that the building of two new mens' prisons (with misappropriated COVID-19 relief funds) would meet the DOJ's demands to end overcrowding.(5) Regarding parole and the basic fact that the state is putting more and more people inside with longer and longer sentences with no end in sight, she had nothing substantial to say.

The warehousing of predominantly oppressed nation men, with no opportunities for rehabilitation or release is why we charge genocide against the U.S. criminal injustice system (see: "We Still Charge Genocide: Will The Real New Afrikans Please Stand Up!" from ULK 76). Alabama is part of the Black Belt south, with 26% of it's overall population being Black/New Afrikan. Yet, 54% of prisoners were New Afrikan across the state in 2010! (6) Alabama is in the top 6 states in the United States for overall imprisonment rates, with most of those states being in the Black Belt.

Caldwell discussed the despair prisoners in Alabama feel because of the lack of opportunities in Alabama prisons:

They've taken all the exit and second chance options away from these men and women in Alabama. There's no hope for parole because the parole board is practically denying everyone and sending them off [with] five [more] years with no explanation, even though these men and women meet the set criteria that has been established.

They practically have a living death sentence, if they don't have an EOS date, so all the hope is gone. They have nothing to strive for there, they feel like they're not worthy of a second chance, they're not given a second chance. And no one has any type of trust or hope in them to come out and reintegrate into society and be a stand-up citizen.

People incarcerated in Alabama face excessive force from correctional officers, a high risk of death, physical violence and sexual abuse from other prisoners and are forced to live in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, according to the DOJ.

The prison authorities have responded to the work refusal by cancelling all visitation, cutting programming back to nothing, and serving next to no food. The Alabama Department of Corrections is one of many prison systems across the country struggling to function without enough people to run its operations. While prisoners are the primary people to suffer under these conditions, this also indicates a contradiction in the United States use of prisons to control large populations that could offer opportunities for change. As *Under Lock & Key* goes to print, the prisoners have faced the state of Alabama down for three weeks. We will continue monitoring the situation and try to extract lessons for the rest of the country. [see p. 14 for updates] ■

Notes:
1. Jessica Schulberg, "Alabama Prison Strike Organizer: 'They're At War For Their Life And Freedom,'" Huffington Post
2. Julia Conley, 28 September 2022, "Demanding Broad Reforms, Thousands of Inmate Workers on Strike at Alabama Prisons", Common Dreams.
3. Katie Benner and Shaila Dewan, 3 April 2019, "Alabama's Gruesome Prisons: Report Finds Rape and Murder at All Hours", The New York Times.
4. Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, "Justice Department Files Lawsuit Against the State of Alabama for Unconstitutional Conditions in State's Prisons for Men"
5. Howard Koplowitz, September 2022, "Striking Alabama inmate workers' demands 'unreasonable,' Ivey says", al.com
6. Alabama Profile, 2010, Prison Policy Initiative.

Law immediately.

- Make the presumptive sentencing standards retroactive immediately.
- Repeal the drive-by shooting statute.
- Create a statewide conviction integrity unit.
- Mandatory parole criteria that will guarantee parole to all eligible persons who meet the criteria.
- Streamlined review process for medical furloughs and review of elderly incarcerated individuals for immediate release.
- Reduction of the 30 year maximum for juvenile offenders to no more than 15 years before they are eligible for parole.
- Do away with life without pa-

percent. Whether this was conscious retaliation or just the day-to-day brutality of the system is unknown at this time.

An investigation initiated by the Justice Department under the Trump administration identified horrific overcrowding (182% of capacity) and neglect that has led to some of the highest rates of homicide and rape among prisoners in the country.(3) Following this investigation, the Justice Department then took the extraordinary step of suing the state of Alabama over the conditions of its men's prisons.(4) According to prison organizers, nothing has changed in the almost two years since the lawsuit.

Because of the prisoner participation across the state, the government wasn't able to ignore it like they normally prefer. Governor Kay Ivey called the de-

Show Proof to Build Unity Against CDCR Divisions

by USW27 of United Struggle from Within
October 2022

Revolutionary Greeting comrades,

Many young soldiers have heard of comrade George, a Black Panther leader (see: "History [and Myth] of a Comrade Should Inspire Us" on page 15 of this issue), revolutionary prison writer, and organizer who was assassinated in August 1971 in a California Penitentiary in San Quentin.

It's time! Wake up comrades! The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) is a tool of racist repression for Black & Brown people in the U.S. prison system. CDCR has made serious mistakes in splitting the prisoner populations (50/50 yards/EOP/GPline/SNY/GP) political and social prisoners. CDCR has realized their mistake and in the process of trying to correct it at whose expense? you and I. So CDCR will once again go back to their reactionary tactics oppressing the masses.

Comrade George gave us a strategy to combat CDCR false ideology: "When I am denied or corrected, I always understand, but rage on, all on the principle that the ideal must be flung about,

that the oppressed mentality must first escape the myth, the hoax, that repression is the natural reaction to a collective consciousness of the commune." And just know that ideals cannot be killed with violence, racism has always been employed as a pressure release for the psychopathic destructiveness evinced by a people historically processed to fear.

The revolutionary is outlawed!

You can't understand my pain but me. I've used every tool in the kit to stay sane over these last 11 years in prison. I am alive and learning for real. The only way CDCR can maintain its power is to create differences on these yards and cause a diseased mind and feed it drugs. Comrade wake-up. What's the problem? If you not a disruptor or agent provocateur, show proof and let's start building this collective unity. That's the only way we can combat CDCR tactics of repression.

AFW on the move.

A California comrade provides more background info: California has been phasing out its protective custody (P.C.) yards for the last few years. CA prisons started eliminating the P.C. yards on the lower levels and due to the high rate of violence this caused, it is taking longer than expected

to phase out the higher levels (lifers).

CDCR is well aware of the common practice of separating sex offenders from general population prisoners. The cruelty sex offenders face in prison is the very reason CA opened the P.C. yards 2 decades ago. Sex offenders are regularly beaten, murdered, and as hypocritical as it is, raped in prison.

However, over the years a lot of general population (G.P.) prisoners have requested protective custody and once on the P.C. yards, these G.P. prisoners continue their abuse of sex offenders. The result is that according to CDCR, P.C. yards are more violent than G.P. yards (if anyone believes that) and so CDCR is now requiring sex offenders to house with the gang members that everyone knows, especially CDCR knows, sex offenders need protection from.

I think CDCR is intentionally creating a violent environment for whatever reason. CDCR is not ignorant that this new policy will and already has resulted in the murder of a lot of sex offenders. Since the policy began 3 years ago, the gangs have murdered sex offenders on every yard the prison has forced them to house on and yet CDCR continues to push for the complete elimination

of protective custody. This is obviously a deliberate action to increase violence.

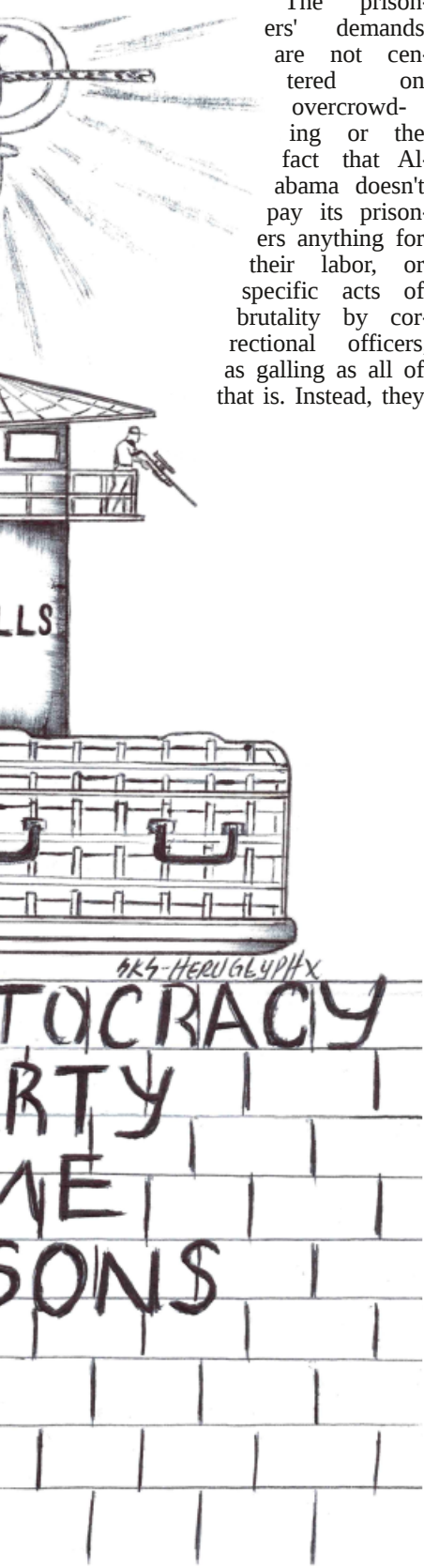
Dozens of lawsuits have already been filed, but few if any will bear fruit due to the Prison Litigation Reform Act, which basically is legislation designed to erase a prisoners constitutional right to sue the prison. Furthermore, most prisoners have no legal skills whatsoever and are forced to litigate against professional lawyers. So the chance of any of the lawsuits asking the court for a right to safe housing of winning that right is very small.

I will eventually litigate the issue and I will win.

MIM(Prisons) adds: We've printed a number of articles in the last couple years about this integration plan creating violence. It's not just about sex offenders, many have gone to Special Needs Yards in recent years for a number of reasons, including political ones.

While most seem to agree that the CDCR is creating more violence, injuries and deaths among prisoners, few have tried to explain why. One thing that has been happening on the SNY, and now the integrated yards, is the creation of new prison gangs, many of which have been fostered by CDCR po-

Continued on page 13...



by MIM(Prisons)
October 2022

The main purpose of this article is to start a series of articles akin to the "Ongoing Discussion on Organizing Strategy" series which started among USW comrades.(1) The series has been productive on maintaining a two-line struggle within the USW and the overall prison movement, and delves deep into the many questions raised in organizing behind bars. We hope to bring that energy of discussing strategy and tactics of Maoist organizing behind bars to that of political line both inside and outside U.S. prisons. These bad ideas aren't dividing line questions (such as the labor aristocracy question or the class nature of the Chinese Communist Party in 2022) that MIM(Prisons) struggle with other communist organizations through polemics. Rather, these are day-to-day bad ideas and attitudes that many people take up within the communist movement (even good comrades). They enforce liberalism during line struggle, and stunt scientific thinking. Let's begin.

One example of this was when Joma Sison repeatedly refused to acknowledge the national contradiction as principal in the United States (see the article "The difference between Mao Zedong and Joma Sison" on our website), and communists refused and still refuse to criticize due to his historically integral role in the People's War in the Philippines.(2) Communists don't look at personal laurels or prestige when it comes to criticism; everything and everyone that partakes in bad practice and bad beliefs is targetable for criticism. If the Sison defenders said "historically and currently, the United States' principal contradiction has always been class and is currently class" then perhaps there will be more legitimacy for line struggle and discussion albeit it still being a chauvinist and revisionist take. However, what does Joma Sison being a historically great revolutionary leader that rectified the errors of the Communist Party of Philippines in the 60s-70s have to do with the fact that the current United States' society has devel-

Now if a former neo-nazi prisoner who joined the United Struggle Within brings up how the white workers are the masses, then bringing up his past identity as a neo-nazi would be more relevant in criticizing this individual comrade to the correct line from an incorrect one since his past practice as an Amerikan First World lumpen could influence his current politics. Ultimately, bringing up his past errors (or victories even) is only a small part of criticizing the comrade, and ultimately it's the combating of that idea and political practice that will be the final nail in the coffin of getting rid of that bad line from that comrade's thinking and most importantly the overall movement. A part of this problem contains in identity politics, which leads to the next point.

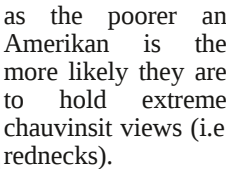
Identity politics has been a hot topic among communists with some seeing it as non-antagonistic with Marxism and with many joining the conservative reactionary bandwagon of fascists ranting about "woke" culture and post-modernism. The classic Amerikan value of pragmatist empiricism (the idea of the only way to truly know anything is through directly experiencing it) is antithetical to Maoism, and it is our stance that post-modernism and identity politics can be looked at it the same or adjacent manner in terms of philosophy. The Maoist doctrine of cadres learning from practice and the masses learning revolution through waging revolution can become Amerikan pragmatism if we aren't careful.

It is an important Maoist doctrine that post-modernism and pragmatist-empiricism are both unscientific capitalist garbage that poisons the masses. It is another Maoist doctrine that the masses under oppression will go to the current superstructure of the enemy (capitalist philosophies, capitalist institutions, the capitalist state, etc.) during times of oppression. When communists have failed the masses of the United States for 400 years by supporting the white workers and putting the national contradiction beneath white worker interests at

The communists have failed in Afghanistan with Soviet revisionism, so the Afghan masses went to the existing superstructures within the semi-colonial, semi-feudal nation such as Jihad instead of people's war. Instead of lambasting the Afghan (or in this case the Chicano, First Nations, and New Afrikan) masses, perhaps communists should get their heads out of their asses, and try to appreciate why Jihad/pragmatist-empiricism as an idea (despite its reactionary content) is so popular among the masses(see "Islam as Liberation Theology" from *ULK 48*) in the first place.(3)

One interesting thing we see as a Maoist prison cell is that identity politics tend to be less popular among prisoners which perhaps shows that the oppressed nation labor aristocracy might go for identity politics for its liberation far more than the oppressed nation lumpen who might go for conspiracy theories or capitalist boot-strap mentality which we see more popular among prisoners and less with the student activist types that concern themselves more with identity politics. This leads to the third point.

Identity politics isn't the only bourgeois idea that the masses hold from the current capitalist superstructure. There are other ideas such as patriarchy, homophobia, pulling one-self up by the bootstraps, voting for the lesser evil, superstition, conspiracy theories, and religion just for starters. When the masses show these tendencies, many communists throw them into the enemy camp and treat them as if they were enemies. For example, a communist student activist type might walk up to a Black Hebrew Israelite and the topic of anti-semitism could pop up. The communist university student will call



Instead of this method of finding out who our friends and enemies are, most communists consider friends as people who have the correct takes on an xyz issue most people don't even care about and enemies as people who hold reactionary views. One source of this ideology is how Amerikan culture promotes individual thinking and behavior as the mover of history rather than class struggle. With this mindset racism is a problem started by individual Amerikans thinking and behaving racist and will end when individual Amerikans cease thinking and behaving racist. The Maoist method on the other hand sees that racism is a problem that was brought to inception by remnants of feudal European aristocrats (a class of people) stealing this land at gunpoint and trickery from what would become the modern First Nations, and enslaving what would become modern New Afrikans and militaristically invading the Mexican nation's land, solidifying what would become modern Chicanos all for the various Amerikan classes' interests (whether that be the big capitalist class, the small business owning capitalist class, or even the common Amerikan worker).

Continued on next page...

Wanna Start a Non-Profit? Publish a Book? Read This

by a Florida prisoner
October 2022

I'm currently in the process of trying to start a non-profit organization to shed some light on the corruption that's currently taking place in the Florida Department of Corrections and I was hoping that you guys can connect me with some people or provide me with some material to assist me with laying the foundation of this non-profit organization that is guaranteed to last for generations to come. I'm actually currently writing a book that goes into depths about some of the things prison officials have been doing to prisoners in Security Housing Units and I'm planning on using the book as the face of the non-profit. It's just hard finding people to assist me with this organization, which is why I'm reaching out to you guys in hopes that you guys can assist me with this matter, because it's time the people of society become aware of what's currently taking place in the Florida Department of Corrections.

MIM(Prisons) responds: We want to express solidarity with this comrade's mission to expose oppression in prison, that is one of the goals of the independent institutions *Under Lock & Key* and prisoncensorship.info, that

have been consistently exposing this abuse across the country since 2007. We also agree with the focus on what is going on in the SHU/Ad-Seg/solitary confinement torture units that our movement has campaigned to end for decades.

We want to respond to this comrade publicly though to discuss some points of how to effectively expose these atrocities, and more importantly how to effectively stop them.

We also want to address everyone who has written us for help with or just plans for starting a new non-profit, and everyone who has written to us about their new book they want help promoting. We've received countless letters of both types in recent months. So we want to make a couple things clear.

If you wrote a book and you haven't been doing it as part of your study with us over the years, we're not going to publish it, we only publish Maoist literature. Similarly, we aren't going to promote the book you already put out, we only promote Maoist literature.

If you're trying to start a new organization, first we will refer you

to our congress resolution from 2011, that reads in part:

"We only work to build two organizations at this time: MIM(Prisons) and USW. The only organizing group we run for prisoners is the USW leaders group, and even that is mostly done through Under Lock & Key for efficiency and to reach the masses with info on USW work.

"There are only a few conditions that would merit launching a new prison-based organization: [in short, you disagree with MIM(Prisons) cardinal principles, you are migrating an existing lumpen org to become a revolutionary org, or you are building a single nation org]"(1)

This resolution is targeted more towards independent revolutionary organizations. The comrade above, and many others, write to us about starting non-profits. In short, and in general, non-profits use institutional money to fund jobs for people to do reformism who might otherwise fight for real change. Now, we will admit some non-profits do good work. You will see us cite the work of groups like the Prison Policy Initiative and the Human Rights Defense Center/Prison Legal News over the years. In fact, HRDC does a lot to expose the Florida

DOC, so we must ask our comrade from Florida, why not just work with HRDC? Why waste all that effort to create a new group that has the same goal when it's so hard to find supporters? It could be that your strongest supporters already have an org.

Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in the the mid-1800s, commented on how Amerikans create a new organization for everything. Probably something about our crass individualism in this country. This is being amplified today with the internet, where individuals can create online persynalities that feign to be projects or organizations. In these cases they often rely on the cult of persynality, and sometimes become actual cults.

We must question the motivations of people sometimes. Do you want to end oppression, or do you want to create a project that is yours? If you want to end oppression, what do you think the thousands of other organizations out there all got wrong that you need to form a new one?

The only way we will be effective in real change is to unite more forces, not by dividing into more and more little cliques and narrowly-focused non-profits. And

while we can ally with and find useful the work of some non-profits today, we must grow the Maoist movement to be able to do the things they do under Maoist leadership to have a greater impact.

We know most of our readers just want to reform the prison system. If that's where you're at politically, by all means, join a non-profit. And we are happy to ally with you in battles against things like censorship and solitary confinement. But we know, based on our study of history, that only by completely overthrowing imperialism and building socialism through constant class struggle can we ever hope to end the oppression that certain populations face today in Amerikan prisons. We do not promote books or build organizations that hide this fact. And we work to win over reformists to the revolutionary road through struggle against the state and demonstrating the limitations of efforts that do not actually seek to build power to overcome imperialism. ■

*Notes:
1. MIM(Prisons) 2011 Congress Summary and Resolutions*

... Continued from previous page

The Maoist solution is for these national contradictions to be resolved through the oppressed nations overthrowing Amerika through revolution. These historical events of Amerikan land conquest, slavery, and genocide were also crucial in acting as primitive accumulation for global capitalism-imperialism in general not only for Amerika. There is no modern day South Korea, Japan, Au\$tralia, I\$rael, Saudi Arabia, Kanada, and so on without Amerikan slavery, Amerikan land conquest, and Amerikan genocide. Therefore proletarian dictatorship must be established to resolve this contradiction as well as overthrow of Amerika. But because of individualist Amerikan culture, national chauvinism is something treated with tone and etiquette led by student youth tired of their parents' old backwards ways. This leads to the fourth problem.

4. The Sub-Culture Problem

Many newer generation communists have begun their politics through the internet. The original MIM was one of the first communist parties to have a website and put credence in the importance of the internet. It certainly is a politically important tool if it's a major way youth are becoming interested in Lenin, and how all the imperialist governments partake in it in different ways from the FBI surveilling political internet forums to the Chinese Communist Party banning entire social media outlets. However, what the old MIM didn't predict is that communist groups on social media aren't the ones that primarily influence kids to read Mao Zedong and study the Black Panthers. Communist groups are far outshadowed online by memes, twitch streamers, tik tok spheres, instagram pages, internet forums, and the likes when it comes to converting kids to communism than communist organization internet presence. This has given rise to the problem of communism becoming more akin to a sub-culture talked about on social media sites like twitter and reddit than a political movement. Dif-

... Bad Ideas

ferent political stances from Maoism, Trotskyism, all the way to Stirnerite Anarchism cease to become guides to action, but a thing to put on your bio. Various people's wars and nations at war become more akin to fandoms for TV shows to obsess and argue over rather than a movement to popularize and create awareness for. Political line ceases to become a belief and action that one takes, but a take one has so they can get on the algorithm. Line struggle turn into flame wars with no purpose of uniting with others, but exist only to express one's individual self for the cathartic feeling of having the correct line.

In day-to-day real life, communism might be becoming less and less pariah'd in the eyes of the average Amerikan; but communism itself is becoming more and more revisionist, more and more toothless, more and more a pop culture joke, and more and more a harmless icon of a once revolutionary movement that became hijacked by the bourgeoisie after its death, as Lenin spoke of. We took 20 steps forward and a million steps back when it comes to fighting against anti-communist culture leftover from the red scare era. Turns out Amerikan individualism was far more of an obstacle in making Maoism popular than the legacy of McCarthyism.

We shouldn't throw away the internet with the bathwater as it indeed took a certain part in making the oppressor nation Amerikan youth become interested in revolutionary politics, but we should also be acutely aware of the sub-culture problem. A single New Afrikan, Chican@, or Indigenous member of the masses understanding the Maoist concept of reform and revolution and practicing to boycott the elections while not calling themselves communist nor wearing red armbands is 100 times more valuable to us in spreading popular support against imperialism than 300 college students with a Stalin portrait in their dorm rooms who thinks the white worker is a friend.

Conclusion

Many of these problems can only really be solved through the development of our movement as a whole. Even writing and publishing this article in *Under Lock & Key* can only do so much. Our dedicated prisoner comrades who read this will certainly be influenced, and perhaps they will get more insight as to the problems of the "activist" scene that they will be adjacent with once they get out; but when it comes to student youth abandoning Liberalism or the masses on the street taking up scientific thinking, it is up for the MIM (and not just the prison ministry) to develop and go to the masses as Mao said. For our readers and supporters outside, we challenge them to set up geographical MIM cells or work with MIM(Prisons) to develop the modern MIM. For our readers and supporters inside, we list these problems of the movement to stay sharp and aware once they get released. ■

*Notes:
1. starting in ULK 73, prisoners write in for a copy of the full series
2. MIM, Applied internationalism: The difference between Mao Zedong and Joma Sison.
3. Wiawimawo, January 2016, Islam a Liberation Theology, Under Lock & Key No. 48.*

SUBMIT WORK REPORTS

All USW cells are encouraged to submit monthly work reports to the USW council. Work reports should be one to two paragraphs. Use these questions as guides for your report:

- What activities/campaigns did your cell participate in that contributed to USWs mission?
- What Serve the People programs did your cell operate?
- What were the responses from the masses and USW recruits to this work?
- What questions came up? How did you answer them? Or do you need help answering them?
- What lessons did you learn in the last month?
- What are the most pressing issues that are of concern to the masses in your location?
- What organizations/services have you recently found useful in your work (include contact info)?
- What successes have you achieved in the last month?

A Letter to My First Love

by a Federal prisoner
October 2022

When we first met, it was truly love at first sight. i was a young, wild, Gangster Disciple... and unfortunately i was a parasite.

You walked into the room, and... you began to speak. i will never forget your first words: "Dare To Struggle! Dare To Be Free!"

Our eyes were fixated on each others. It was like you were talking directly to me. i was captivated by the things you had to say. i was overwhelmed by your Divine Inner-G! You sent chills throughout my body, but the message i still didn't quite understand.

So you walked over and put your arms around me... and whispered in my ear: "Free The Land."

The way you walked, and the way you moved, intrigued me. Your pride in being Black was intoxicating for sure. From that moment on i knew that i had to have you... because you were just too much for me to ignore.

So We began to date casually, and... you let me know that if i were really ready to step up and be your man, then i had to let go of my gang-banging mentality. i had to go from Gangster Disciple to Growth and Development. i had to learn what knowledge of the self meant. i had to take time and learn the New Afrikan Creed. i had to learn all about FROLIAN, which you called The Three Phase Theory.

i couldn't believe how committed to change you were. You told me you had a plan, and i recall smiling at you and asking, so what is this plan? But you had this intense look on your face... the most serious look i had ever seen. Then you took me out west with you to Oakland, and... you introduced me to Comrade Huey P.

I will never forget his words of wisdom. He taught me that to give my life for The People is the greatest honor of all, and that it is better to die on my feet then to live on my knees. He told me that We are at war, and... that the price of freedom ain't free.

This motivated me, because, all my life i was willing to die over a color or for which way a person wore their hat. i recall asking you why you think i was so willing to do this? And... you replied, "N'dugu, Willy Lynch taught you that." i was sickened to my stomach, and i couldn't understand how this could be. So you took me back to The Land—Chicago—and introduced me to The Chairman of the Black Panther Party.

Chairman Fred Hampton was a flame thrower, very charismatic... truly something to behold. i will never forget what he told me: "i am a Revolutionary! i have given my life to The People!"

All the things you were showing me, made me rise in love with you even more. Especially when you taught me about the bravery of 17 year old Comrade Johnathan Jackson, and... when you let me read your personal Prison Letters from Comrade George.

You taught me about Queen-Mother Assata Olugbala Shakur. And... how the Black Liberation Army liberated her from kkkaptivity and got her to Cuba. You taught me about how this racist system tried to murder Comrade Mumia Abu Jamal, even though they KNEW he wasn't a shooter.

You gave me the lessons of Comrade Geronimo Ji Jaga, who went to prison for 28 years for something he didn't do. You showed me how this fascist system will do anything to neutralize to the 21st Century Voices Of Total Empowerment... the same way they dropped the bomb on MOVE!

You gave my life purpose and meaning, and for that i will never put anything above you. i honor you on our anniversary, Black August, but every single day i will show you that i love you. i just wanted to write you this letter, my first love: The New Afrikan Liberation Struggle! ■

Conquering My Demons

by USW36 of United Struggle from Within
October 2022

"(We) MIM Should not excuse behaviors that could have been avoided with asexuality. It must weigh the costs of being non-sexual." - MIM Theory 2/3

Transforming the criminal mentality into a revolutionary one means also fully confronting bourgeois culture, morality and its justification for the existing society, i.e. bourgeois rule. This bourgeois mentality also includes things that aren't necessarily "criminal" but definitely constitute crimes against others and from a proletarian perspective and for our aims is at the very least counter-productive if not counter revolutionary. Sadly, as Wiawimawo stated, due to us being products of this decadent society we all enter the Revolution with some amount of sickness. Some suffer from drug addictions, some selfishness and extreme individualism, others idealism, patriarchy or even out right misogyny, e.g. "Fuck a Bitch" or other forms of sexism. Most "criminal" lumpen glorify gangsterism and are quite infatuated with gang culture even when pretending to be about unifying the block.... But regardless, we all enter the revolutionary process with ways of the "old society" especially since it hasn't gone anywhere.

The above quote is from a Comrade who ultimately died due to a lifetime battle with drugs. Yet this is a quite Revolutionary and apt quote and this comrade's life is also apt for this discussion as it shows no matter how advanced we become and even how authentic our walk, we will always be confronted not only with the broader bourgeois society and its fucked up music, culture, morals, world out-look etc etc *ad nauseam*. We still are likely to have to confront and check our own bourgeois demons. But the above quote could be applicable to revolutionary Walkin' in general if any of our behaviors could be avoided simply by avoiding self-indulgence if our goal is truly revolution then we should practice abstinence in that regard whenever possible.

I personally have never came to jail sober and have done all manner of anti-social behavior "under the influence" since I've been in prison I've yet to get drunk. For me this was so stark it was no choice at all. Additionally other counter-productive behaviors were also not so difficult for me to conquer or at least consciously struggle against. Yet for all my talk I was quite chauvinistic and I'd say misogynistic in actual practice and this is something I've struggled with since I was in elementary.

There was a time when I rationalized my misogynistic behavior — I've now come to believe this had a lot to do with my inability to conduct consistent communist practice — however, I'm now quite clear that this is simply lumpen and its kissing cousin petty bourgeois personification and practice and furthermore serves only to strengthen counter revolution.

I am not too hard on myself for this late transformation how-

ever — every single day in this decadent society we have to swallow, weigh, witness or consciously wrestle with all manner of bourgeois bullshit. Life may be good but this world is truly a nightmare. In these death camps, in a real concentration camp, in slave quarters, in an immigration caravan, in dark alleys and hallways thrash out this imperialist dominated world what people must go through especially when there's no real struggle to resist and defeat this oppression (as proven by amerikkka's nuclear bombs) even shadows get burnt... yes shadows were literally burnt into the ground.

Yet I'm now quite clear on my need to confront this as it is simply another tool the state can use to divide, dismiss or exploit real revolutionary work. This always makes me think of focusism, its attraction is "to go out on a high note"... I understand this quite well. I also think this is why lumpen and petty bourgeois youth in the semi-colonies often have a hard time with revolutionary ideas, party's and practices as all they know is immediate release, this in addition, is why so many Rev's succumb to self-obsession or self indulgence's. But once I accepted this is simply lumpen/petty bourgeois bullshit behavior it was easier for me to confront it as any good homie, friend and especially "comrade" should know s/he is not only a reflection of the community, party, professed ideas etc he/r can also undermine, expose or bring harm to he/r person, community, or just their ideas which for a revolutionary communist must be unacceptable.

I speak in general terms because specific failures, flaws, addictions or internalized petty bourgeois (wanna be big bourgeois) bullshit isn't new to the movement and once I realized how destructive (counter-revolutionary in fact) my failure to totally transform and practice my all too parroted "self discipline" — something as stated I'm quite adamant about "Walkin my walk"... Yet I gave the enemies a free tool to use against me and against us — again I do know why for some foicism is a "natural release"... working w/ ideas and for "long-term goals" especially in isolation of an active movement has been the death of many good Rads and whole collectives especially where self-discipline requires we police things that we once considered quite natural or even which

is common practice for others but the state has made it taboo for us.

I read an article in *The Abolitionist* (Summer 2022) where a captive was released and days later his parole agent came to place an electronic monitor on his ankle which he knew would be a condition of parole, but still days later after she placed the "E.M." on him she called and explained he will be allowed out the house 6:00am-10:00am and this should be plenty of time "For you to handle your business". I couldn't help



but think how after 10:00 it would be unlawful to walk to the corner store or park, to go to school, work, to date, build community ties etc etc and how his actions will be a reflection of larger class forces and struggles where if he failed it would set back the opportunity for someone else to be released on "E.M." supervision and to succeed he would need all the self-discipline in the world not to look out the window at 11 see a friend or interesting person come outside to talk and walk with them to the corner...I imagine all the lawful things a Jew in Nazi Germany or slave in amerikkka was forbidden.

Amerikkka exploits and sanctions the world so its unlawful to aid Cuba, to encourage oppressed people to keep their resources for themselves, to disrupt military supply chains or even expose what the government is doing to the public. On 22 August 2022, KPFA Radio's "Letters and Politics" had a canadian Marxist scholar on who the host asked "isn't it an advancement that we have a better life thanks to capitalism?" (this was the gist) The Marxist scholar replied "Yes" (even under the new mode of production we don't want to lose those "freedoms") and conceded this as advancement. Yet I contend both the host and this

Rad suffered from self-deception. I think Huey's "intercommunal" line was bullshit — to say nations don't exist — but capitalism has infact now transferred and transposed the class struggle from core countries to exploited countries largely on the global south so whole countries live the bourgeois life to one degree or another, and the proletariat is now largely confined to their own powerless "nations."

So for so many others they make do with left over bourgeois scraps. I saw a documentary a while back about how the U.\$ was sending its plastic and metal scraps to the Third World as part of its neo-liberal deals with them — just as now Biden can promise less greenhouse gas from U.\$ corporations "in amerikkka" but will never say they can't offset this by reckless disregard for the oppressed nations. Part of the question to the canadian Marxist was also a statement that slavery is no more "thanks to capitalism" to which the Marxist agreed, hence his statement we don't want to lose those "freedoms" but slavery very much exists outside of the "shiny city on the hill", outside the gate they root through U.\$ trash like pigs looking for mushrooms, women still are very much oppressed and yes slavery, I repeat, still exists. Yet they're always judged by the standards of the exploiters and defenders of the city gates who gladly lower the drawbridge for the returning army with its war booty.

I stopped drinking because I get drunk and have no inhibitions, no fear and no rationalizations. Likewise I wrestled with self-indulgences "because they were denied" and I too have absolutely no

respect for the enemy. Even when drunk I've never intentionally hurt anyone I loved, never fought my friends, never stole from loved ones etc, but not so for a perceived enemy, or if I felt I deserved something, or revenge was called for. All this was obviously before I became a revcom. But I know where it all came from and what it represents, its lumpen/petty bourgeois sentiments struggling with social, dictates that "I'm nothing," "We're nothing," "You can't have," "You don't deserve," etc etc. But I know, because I couldn't control it, I'd have to leave it alone. So now I've arrived rather late, at a similar conclusion of another thing I must deny myself due to how it can never be a resolvable contradiction (for me). I think it was Jesus who said (according to grandma's bible) that if your right eye causes you to sin cast it out. If a revolutionary could paint the mystical soul it would be a macabre creature... stitched and re sewn on wings, scars, busted knuckles etc etc.

I am quite clear on a few things and the utter failure of capitalism-imperialism and its rule is one of those things that I have much clarity on. Will I slip up? will it be as easy as alcohol for me? will the enemy be able to conspire against me? will there ever be any normalcy in my life? will it always be ad hoc salvaging? will revcoms ever beat back lumpen/petty bourgeois culture and ideas to be the undisputed voice for the semi-colonies? I may never know these things we may not like all the answers to those things, but I'm quite sure there's millions of people who like me will never forgive this system for what not only it's done to the world or ourselves but the choices and contradictions we've been forced to wrestle with due to its rule and its utter disregard for our humanity will never be forgiven and whose dogged focus is to bring about a Revolutionary Communist World.

Amerikkkan media feels compelled to state each and every time election talk is brought up that it's the "Big lie" to claim it was stolen and to be unequivocal about Putin and Russia's invasion as to the cause of the war in Ukraine and to be clear on the need to support Ukraine's effort to win the war, it makes sure it always says it was a coup attempt on Jan 6 and that Amerikkka is a democracy. All this because truth

Continued on next page...

The Dwindling of Power

by a Pennsylvania prisoner
October 2022

Democracy is an illusion of the mind that misleads the blind.

Who are they fooling? What are we doing? What are we actually pursuing? They're talking about equality and we dying in the trenches. Starving on the sidelines.

Aches and pains while the rich is completely full, staring out of the skyline. How do we rise above the equation?

A broken nation with no vision. Our only dreams is to have bricks of cocaine in the kitchen. Oh, and residue on the dishes. How can this be a democracy and the homeless got bread and water on their wish list? And the rich got the poor on their diss list. And you want me to turn christian so I can be like my ancestors praying for a "white" Christmas?

When the symbol of the church represent a white supremacist. A blonde hair and blue eye'd lie... Naw. I'll take my chances with the Revolution. These hungry kids got thirty round drums and they're shooting. And Black Lives Matter protest turn into looting? This is not the rise of amerika— We are living in the days of its ruins. ■

The Common Colonial History That Led Us Here

by a Florida prisoner
July 2022

For Afrikan people in the United States, captivity began in Afrika when we were captured and confined in slave forts like the Gold Coast's Elmina and Goree Island's "House of Slaves". From those colonial forts we left Afrika in chains and shackles through the "Door of No Return" and we were transported to America in the bowels of slave ships. Afrikans were dropped off in various places around around the world, and what is now referred to as North America, in chains and colonized here to work as slaves on the plantations of the settler-colonies of European imperialists.

As slaves we were chattel owned as private property, becoming the first commodity that gave rise to a global colonial-capitalist system. Slavery was absolute captivity with complete deprivation of life. The only means by which Afrikans could seek freedom was by revolt or escape, which is something we've struggled to do since our first initial capture from our homeland.

Colonizers' plantations were forced labor camps where Afrikans slaved in the fields and were housed in hovels and fed slop. We were forced to work day in and day out, suffering severe beatings and some of the greatest acts of cruelty to force our submission. *If* we escaped, we were hunted and tracked by slave catchers with guns and bloodhounds. Once caught, we were brought back to the plantation from which we fled. Escaping slavery was a crime that was punishable by flogging and lashing, branding, mutilation and death. After 13 of the settler-colonies within North America consolidated into the "United States," slavery was expanded to new territories as the colonizers continued stealing more Indigenous land, or killing them, like the case in the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico. It continued to reap the filthy lucre of the dirty business of the flesh-peddling slave-trade and the human trafficking of slavery until slavery was finally abolished after the Civil War — an intra-conflict between two rival settler-colonialist groups — the Union versus the Confederacy. With the abolition of slavery, Afrikans ceased to be formally held as slaves, but we remained colonial subjects all the same as colonialism continued to rule and

regulate every aspect of our lives through the brutal exploitation of our labor through sharecropping, peonage and court-leasing.

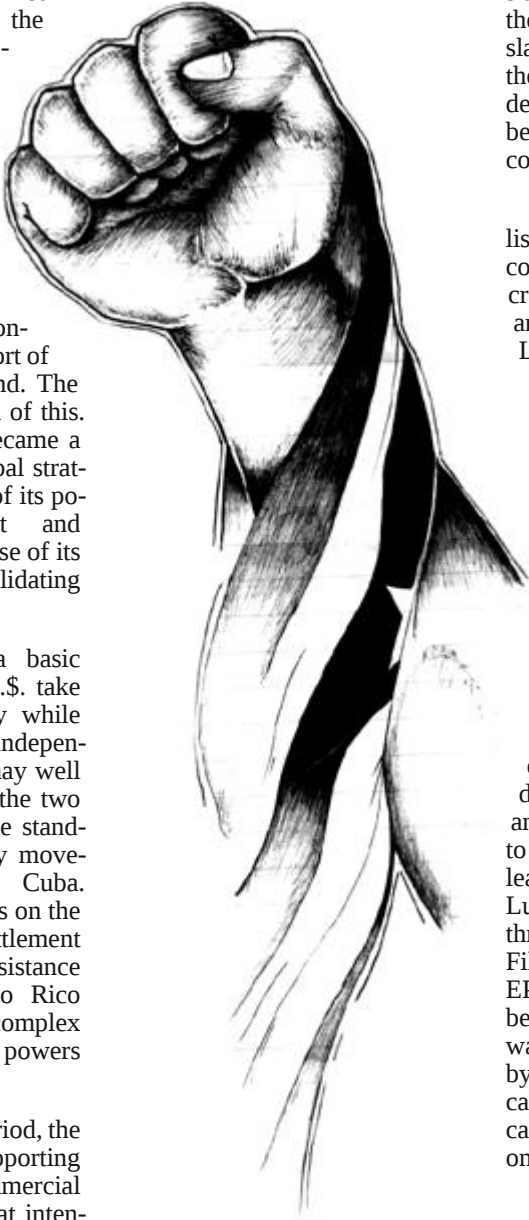
As we have seen, U.S. administrators — Republican and Democrat alike — asserted their right to interfere directly in the domestic affairs of countries in Central America and the Caribbean for the sake of "national interest". One island nation, however, remained under permanent Amerikan control. Puerto Rico became part of the United States as a result of the Spanish Amerikan War. In July 1898, in retaliation for the sinkage of the U.S. vessel Maine in Cuba, Amerikan troops disembarked in Puerto Rico, instigating the country's first act of European-style colonial expansion. The island thus became the pawn in a war between Cuban patriots and Spanish garrisons. It had not expected military occupation, quite the contrary, Spain had already agreed to grant Puerto Rico autonomy and to devise some sort of "house rule" for the island. The U.S. invasion changed all of this. Suddenly, Puerto Rico became a crucial factor in U.S. global strategy — not only because of its potential for investment and commerce, but also because of its geopolitical role in consolidating U.S. naval power.

But there remains a basic question: Why did the U.S. take Puerto Rico as a colony while helping Cuba achieve independence?? The difference may well reside in the histories of the two islands. There was a large standing armed insurrectionary movement against Spain in Cuba. Puerto Rico, however, was on the way to a negotiated settlement and could present less resistance to outside forces. Puerto Rico thus became caught in a complex struggle between major powers and Cuba's insurgents.

During the colonial period, the island had served as a supporting military garrison and commercial center for Spain, roles that intensified as the slave trade reached its peak in the 1700's. Sugar production became the predominant agricultural enterprise. There were also small farmers, jibaros, rugged individuals who cultivated staple crops and helped maintain a diversified economy. Because of this, the slave population always remained a minority.

After 1898 residents of the island had no clear status of our land. In 1917 they were granted citizenship in the U.S. due to W.W.I. In 1947, nearly half a century after the invasion, Puerto Rico was permitted to attempt self-government. In 1952 the island was granted "commonwealth" status within the United States. Puerto Rico at this moment is the oldest colony in the world.

The 13th Amendment to the U.S. constitution, often believed to have formally abolished slavery, simply limited slavery, making it a punishment for crime, and that punishment was imprisonment.



Therefore, slavery became a penal servitude and prisoners became "slaves of the colonial state". Prisons became slave labor camps and being sentenced to prison was to be forced to do "hard labor". It was a sentence of forced labor in addition to a term of imprisonment. This was where

the term "hard labor" came from. As a direct result of black codes developed specifically for our people, Afrikans were arrested for petty violations of those codes (other ethnic groups of minority also: Latinos) and sent to prison where we not only toiled in slave labor camps and worked in chain gangs, but were also contracted out to private companies to work for railroads, mines and mills.

We became the new slaves in a new convict lease system that was created by colonial capitalism so that it could acquire a steady supply of cheap labor to exploit for the greatest profit without paying for that labor because we were slaves of the state. After enduring the captivity of forced chattel slavery, Afrikans began to endure the captivity of imprisonment under colonialism. We went from being slaves on plantations to convicts in prison.

Colonialist law was established and created to protect the colonial system and primarily criminalize and punish Afrikans and other colonized peoples — Latinos.

During the Black Revolution of the 1960's, the police arrested and jailed Afrikans such as Fannie Lou Hamer for "civil disobedience". They arrested Huey P. Newton and Geronimo Pratt on trumped-up charges. At that time the voices of Puerto Ricans to be recognized as a nation joined hands with the Black revolution in the struggle against the U.S. empire. Oscar Lopez, Alejandro Torres, Antonio Camacho, and many more were railroaded to prison. The FBI assassinated leaders like Malcom X, Dr Martin Luther King Jr., Fred Hampton through COINTELPRO. In 2005, Filiberto Ojeda Rios, leader of EPB "Eercito Popular Boricua" better known as the Macheteros, was assassinated in Puerto Rico by FBI agents. Those who were captured and thrown in prison became political prisoners and prisoners of war.

At the height of the Black Revolution, the CIA flooded Afrikan colonies (to the United States Puerto Rico is considered another Afrikan Colony) with heroin from the golden triangle in southeast Asia where it had long worked to finance its covert operations against China at the same time the U.S. was waging a war of imperialist aggression in Viet-

nam. With this process of narcotization our communities fell completely under control and influence of drugs: the illegal drug business and drug traffickers began a deadly epidemic of addiction. The war on drugs was escalated by Ronald Reagan with the beginning of the crack epidemic, started after the CIA flooded the Afrikan community with the drugs from Central America, funding dirty wars against Nicaragua. It led to increased militarization of the police, tougher drug laws, and the greatest prison build-up in history. Afrikans and Latinos became the main casualties of that war.

As prisoners, we are just bodies that fill cells in prisons, situated in economically depressed rural areas, producing jobs for settlers.

Today, Amerika has the largest prison system in the world. More Afrikans are now convicts in prison in 2022 than they were slaves on the plantation in 1852, and hardly have any more rights than we had when we were slaves.

Crime simply provides the justification for locking us up behind the razor-wire electrified fences. Imprisonment is an integral and indispensable part of the colonization and of Afrikans and Latinos in the United States. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, my father a black Puerto Rican and my Mother a white Puerto Rican; as colonial subjects we have always been captives of Colonialism.

The imprisonment in the U.S. will only end when we throw off the chains of colonial-capitalism and free ourselves from the rule of the colonizer.

We, all minorities, Blacks, Latinos, etc need to come together under the same line of thinking — I encourage every one to educate yourself, know your history, know your past, know your culture. It doesn't matter how dark the color of your skin is, what state or country you're from, in prison there's only two uniforms — the prisoners and the guards — remember always which one you wear. The only way to beat this monster is by uniting, and come together as one body. ■

ALL Power to the People!

... Continued from p. 9

... Show Proof

lice gangs and work hand-in-hand. This seems to be part of a larger strategy to displace the big four lumpen orgs that have historically dominated the G.P. yards and at least some of which have been staunch in their refusal to work with the pigs. These four lumpen orgs were behind the largest prison hunger strikes in history to protest the torture happening in CDCR's Security Housing Units.

As we've always said, "We Want Peace, They Want Security." And most often the two are at odds, where the state uses violence and chaos as a form of social control and securing it's power over the prison masses. That said, the integration offers an opportunity for the prison population in CA to unite along once deep divisions, and we call on comrades to build the United Front for Peace in Prisons based on the 5 principles. ■

... Continued from previous page

is important. One of my favorites is Ben Fletcher who is a petty bourgeois radical who says it's right to defend Ukraine simply because it's unlawful. I wish I could search his writings talks etc but I'd wager dollars to donuts he has never said arms should be shipped to Palestine to defend against or push out Israeli troops, not even New Afrikans should arm themselves to fight back when pigs kill us nor although he says he said it was wrong to invade Iraq etc I'd bet he never said Iraqi's should be aided to kill U.S. troops or he or any "leftist" in KKKville should support the counter-insurgency I'd bet had he and his ilk done so it would've had an effect on secular forces so now only Islamists are given a voice and many even long for the klan to return.

The labor aristocracy and

... My Demons

other layers of the bourgeois here are quite in lock step. The only questions are which bourgeois party will win elections or steal them. We are looking at fascist forces, wars, possible world wars, environmental devastation, national oppression and we daily witness the consequences of what having a shining city on a hill entails and what it forces on others to do to survive not being a part of the in crowd, but this is no one's concern and misleaders like the media or "Labor Leader" Ben Fletcher can only parrot Democratic or anti-Republican talkin' points and even so called communists or at least "Marxists" can not see beyond bourgeois

horizons.

For these reasons we must shore-up our ranks and connect with the broader proletariat movement. As its quite clear we will be in the wilderness for sometime, only practice and work will forge us ahead and conquer our bourgeois and lumpen demons. We can not be idle, not in

I'm quite sure there's millions of people who like me will never forgive this system the choices and contradictions we've been forced to wrestle with due to its rule and its utter disregard for our humanity

prison, not school houses, not under capitalism-imperialism. They're not idle. Steel sharpens steel. Proletariat morals and practice forever taken to a new level. These last paragraphs are not a misstep; I contend we defeat our demons when we keep bourgeois morality clearly juxtaposed to proletariat morality and ideology. They currently are running laps around us here in amerikkka. Most people can conceive of "the end of the world"

California Move to Digitize Communications Impedes Civil Rights (after FL Just Did)

by Mkejj Sihd-El
October 2022

The truth has finally come out from the darkness and into the light: people housed within social isolation by the U.\$.

criminal justice system are not considered persons protected by the U.\$.

Constitution, international agreements against torture, or Human Rights. States across the United States are actively deploying systems and protocols that suspend persons held in custody, in social isolation from Amerikan society, away from the protections of law, due process and order.

The criminal justice trend is to eliminate prisoners' freedom to use and access Postal Services. It's like the U.\$.

Postal Service has entered into a private agreement with the criminal justice system to deny mailing services of the traditional sense from all imprisoned.

Correction departments across the U.\$.

have engaged in concerted acts of sedition, substituting systems disguised as fun helpful tablet gadgets and video visitation programs for actual social interactions. Gone are the

days of free assembly/press/congregation and religious exercise. Now persons are free to shut up, and be retaliated against for even hoping to benefit from the protections of the U.\$.

Constitution's freedom of speech.

Even the freedom to grieve against the state has been frozen. In California it is being done under the departments decision to cease classical mailing processes for email services made available by the Global Tel Link security corporation (see: "CA Extorting Money from Prisoners" in *ULK* 78). CDCR is planning to phase out all traditional mailing services in exchange for heavily restricted online access.

The move by CDCR involves outsourcing labour facilities and redirecting institutional service agreements to security bonds controlled by state agencies outside of the department's jurisdiction, for example, the Department of Health and Human Services. The moves are being made under the cover of darkness, better yet the cover of claims to public safety, and the Center for Disease Control acts as

the shelter. All in the name of mental health and hospitality for Amerikans with disability? From prisoners of circumstance to residences of outpatient facilities too doped out of their minds to even know the value of a traditional letter.

CDCR has began phasing out traditional mailing services using its Inmate 602 Grievance Procedures, institutions have eliminated traditional answering and mailing procedures for residence. Not only does the department rely on a new SOMS computer scanning system that forecloses any original writings and supporting information attached to an Inmate grievance, but it is enforcing computer software coding, by way of its Global-Tel Link tablet emails, that requires California prisoners to email grievances. This last part connects to the criminal justice system in the late requirements of U.S District Courts in California for \$1983 Civil complaints filed by prisoners be done via email. If an individual can't even write a simple complaint any longer, it begs to question what is the U.\$.

standing in justice?

Technological advances are all good and all, but are the residence of these penal institutions still citizens of the United Snakes of Amerika? Or does their custody lie somewhere else?

It is important that the public be aware of this very serious dynamic between themselves, the state and those in custody of state agencies like CDCR. The state is allowing for those in the custody of CDCR to be stripped of their civil rights and it all is being done in the name of the people, under the color of law. Silence is not an answer to the claims set forth against the people.

MIM(Prisons) adds: *Prison Legal News (PLN)* just reported some interesting stats following the Florida Department of Corrections completing its move to digitizing all regular correspondence. They found that 1% of the contraband found by the Florida DOC was through routine mail. Meanwhile, in July 2022, the Legislative Finance Committee noted that after New Mexico shifted to digitized mail there was zero effect on the amount of drug use in their prisons.(1) These sta-

tistics back up what we've been reporting on anectdotally for years — that mail restrictions and visitation shut downs have had no impact on the influx of drugs into prisons across the country.(2)

According to *PLN* prison systems and jails in 27 states have switched to digitized mail. With California gearing up to follow suit, it seems the tides have shifted in that direction.

Like body cams, some prisoners have asked for digital grievance systems so the C.O. you submit it too can't just drop it in the trashcan. Otherwise, we agree with this comrade's concerns. Social isolation is a violation of basic humyn rights and humyn needs. Visits, phone calls, letter, photos and cards are a must for any system that hopes to rehabilitate. ■

Notes:

1. Kevin Bliss, 1 September 2022, *Florida Now Digitizing Incoming Mail for State Prisoners*, *Prison Legal News* September, 2022, page 48.

2. A Texas Prisoner, March 2021, *TDCJ: Your Staff are Bringing in the Drugs, and it Must Stop*, *Under Lock & Key* No. 73.

Prison Legal News
P.O. Box 1151
Lake Worth Beach, FL 33460

Free Alabama Phase 2

by MIM(Prisons)
October 2022

The Free Alabama Movement has declared their recent organizing (see p.9) a success, with over 15,000 prisoners participating and prodding response from the governor during the campaign season.(1) They have announced the next phase of their struggle for reasonable paths to parole and release. It involves the drafting and proposal of a state bill. The Alabama Legislature opens on 3 March 2023, and prisoners have planned to launch a campaign to promote and support the proposed bill at that time.(2)

Following the recent actions, a damning report came out substantiating the prisoners demands:

"July 2022 was the deadliest month on record in Alabama prisons. Thirty-two people died in Alabama prisons in July — the most since at least January 2000, the earliest month for which data is available online. More people died than were granted parole that month."(3)

The Free Alabama Movement concludes in their recent statement:

*"On September 26, over 15,000 people stood up for freedom in the Alabama prison system. That's 10,000+ new soldiers, warriors and generals to the ranks who had **never** participated in a shutdown before. Most of them didn't know they would be challenged by the ADOC at the core of our most basic human need: food. This is a real struggle against a system that is well funded and has been in existence for over 100 years. We gotta act like we want freedom, and move with the understanding that that will be a test of your will and spirit to achieve something great.*

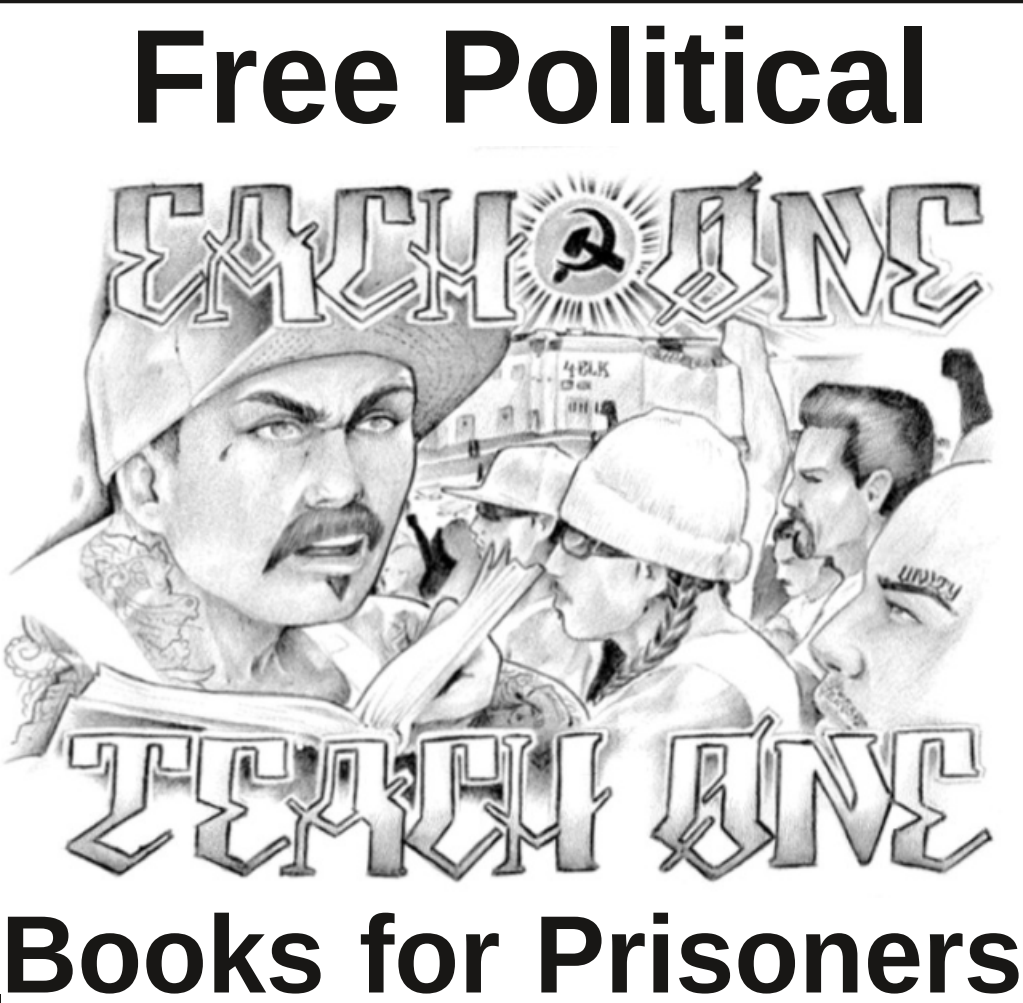
"Understand the mission brother and sisters. A call has been made for us to stand again. We cannot miss our assignment and expect change.

"Dare to struggle, dare to win."(2)

Notes: 1. Free Alabama Movement, 23 October 2022, "Fifteen Thousand Stood Up on September 26, 2022".

2. Free Alabama Movement, 24 October 2022, "A Path to Freedom".

3. Evan Mealins, 18 October 2022, "July was the deadliest month on record in Alabama prisons. Here's what we know", *Montgomery Advertiser*.



Books for Prisoners

The MIM(Prisons) Serve the People Free Books for Prisoners Program enables political education by providing free political and reference books to people behind bars in the United States.

The MIM(Prisons) Books For Prisoners program is not a charity, it is part of our strategy for changing society. Therefore, we ask for an exchange of political work for literature. If you want to request free books you need to send us some work (articles, artwork, poetry, report on a study group you formed, etc.) or report on organizing work that you are doing.

You can also obtain the titles listed to the right by sending the money donations listed. If your facility rules allow it, please send stamps or have an outside supporter send us cash. Many comrades have people on the outside who contribute stamps and money on their behalf.

Below is a list of topics that we cover:

- Revolutionary Communist theory from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao
- History of the Chinese Revolution
- Political economy of imperialism
- National liberation movements in the United States
- Organizing and strategizing

Literature we recommend for starting out:

- The Fundamental Political Line of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons - \$6
- Introduction to the labor aristocracy - \$3
- Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism - \$8
- China's Cultural Revolution: Before and After - \$2
- Defend the Legacy of the Black Panther Party - \$6
- Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlan - \$10
- Power to New Afrika - \$3
- A Revolutionary 12-Step Program - \$3

The following issues of MIM Theory are also available from us for \$5 or work trade:

- MT 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism
- MT 4: The Failure and Success of Communist Development
- MT 5: Diet for A Small Red Planet
- MT 6: The Stalin Issue
- MT 8: The Anarchist Ideal and Communist Revolution
- MT 9: Imperialism and Psychology

- MT10: Labor Aristocracy
- MT 11: Amerikkkan Prisons on Trial
- MT 12: Environment, Society, Revolution
- MT 13: Culture in Revolution
- MT 14: United Front

Some must-read books from our required study program for MIM(Prisons) recruits:

- Fundamentals of Political Economy by Shanghai Press - \$15
- Settlers: The Mythology of the white proletariat by J. Sakai - \$12
- study pack on Labor Aristocracy, Mass Base of Social Democracy by HW Edwards - \$12
- study pack on MIM Theory 10 - \$1
- Imperialism and its Class Structure by MC5 - \$10
- The Chinese Road to Socialism by Wheelright and MacFarlane - \$7
- The Political Economy of Counter-Revolution in China: 1976-1988 - \$12
- Strategy & Tactics study pack (based around MIM Theory 5) - \$2

History [and Myth] of a Comrade Should Inspire Us

by USW51 of United Struggle from Within
August 2022

This year marks the 51-year anniversary for the fallen comrade, BGF founder/leader, Black Panther General/Field Marshall and Dragon of Ho Chi Minh. This year also marks the 52 year anniversary of his alter ego, the man-child, snatched away too soon, Jonathon Jackson, whose brave revolutionary effort at only the age of 17 to free his older brother George Jackson from a legal lynching, can only be viewed with awe. Their stories of determination inspire the question of why the revolution has been snared, and to seek a newer and more improved method for the revolution that we new soldiers, guerrillas, and political scientists plan to usher into the near future.

This month of August (Black August) is dedicated to the fallen soldiers who bravely gave their lives to improve the quality of living of not only the Afrikan Amerikans who belong to the original man, but also to educate ourselves about the correct ways of living that the history of antiquity has provided us with. It is a time to internalize those lessons in a way that would help us to bridge the racial gaps and get us to do away with our class masters and black, brown, red (a variation of brown), yellow and white could live in a world that is free from the trifles that have destroyed humanity.

George Jackson was a very strong, intelligent, courageous, and dedicated brother whom the history books should teach us more about. For many, George's career as a shining revolutionary leader ended about as quickly as it began. However, those exist outside of the mainstream corporativism politics know well that George lived and existed as a legend long before the Soledad Brother case that would make him famous.

George Jackson entered the California penitentiary system in 1960 with an indeterminate sentence of one year to life, for the conviction of a service station robbery that resulted in the theft of \$70.00. Though the evidence was in his favor, his court appointed attorney convinced Jackson that if he would only plead guilty to a lesser offense that he would receive some light county time. However, through a change of hands, his deal that was promised would result of his conviction and an indeterminate sentence that then in California would prove often times volatile because it was up to a parole board if you ever went home. A system that was heavily racist and extremely dangerous, proved to be fertile grounds of an indeterminate sentence of one to life, becoming life or in George's case the death penalty.

The author of 2 classic pieces of Black literature that could be used as a treatise of sorts, George laid out the harsh realities of California's prison system. The atmosphere was so openly racist that whites were even working hand in hand to kill Black and Mexican prisoners, even though ironically enough, just like in Texas some Mexicans would make alliances with racist organizations and join in killing Blacks. Through these activities George felt the need to organize what he called "the chief of staff" and that

chief of staff that organized to combat the killing of Black prisoners would later on become what is now known as the Black Guerrilla Family, a revolutionary group that George attempted to align to the revolutionary movements not only in Amerika, but also in Cuba and other Third World nations. In a nutshell George agreed with International Communist Solidarity.

An avid reader, George transformed himself from an adolescent, rebellious street gangster, to a revolutionary leader and prison activist whose knowledge about history, economics, and politics, would make college professors marvel at his intellect. But this is also part of the larger reason why he was never paroled. You see, the sentence that George had, at the most allowed for a convict to do 2 years and then be paroled, but it was this political insight at a time were Black male expression was denied. Not only Black male expression, but at a time when George found communism, Amerika was trying its best to

but feared him.

George was loved and respected by the Black prisoner population and became their teacher and leader. Even the most racist whites respected George because to them he was a man who was totally straight. All while others would murder mouth and sell wolf tickets, George was as good as his word. If he made a statement of some kind, it would always be followed by action. George formed a political education class and through that he gave his comrades the revolutionary platform that would transform their Black criminality into a Black revolutionary mentality. He also taught martial arts at a time where martial arts was outlawed in prison.

His commitment was so great that during a prison protest that led to some white inmates trying to actually lynch a Black demonstrator under the order of racist cops, when George saw all of these white guys about to push this brother off of a 30 ft. tier, he

main segregated from each other, a so-called "mistake" took place and 7 Blacks and 8 white were led to the rec yard where predictably a fight broke out. The officer's job is to give a warning shot. However, officer O.G. Miller with a military background, southern upbringing, and racist attitude shot and killed 3 Black prisoners in cold blood. One of the dead was George's close friend and mentor W.L. Nolen. Three days after these killings the Monterey County Courthouse, over prison radios, announced that these killings were justifiable homicide. In less that 30 minutes later anger would turn into redemption as 25-year-old officer Mills was beaten to death and thrown over a 30 ft. tier with a note in his pocket that said "one down 2 to go."

In February, George Jackson, John Clutchette, and Fleeta Drumgo would be formally charged for the officers death even though they had no evidence outside of their prison files that labeled them as Black revolutionaries. According to prison offi-

George and Angela Davis became somewhat of a power couple and George appointed Jonathan to be her bodyguard. After being fired from UCLA as a professor, just because she identified with communism, George feared that some right-wing nut might feel like a hero by killing her. It was around this time that the state asserts that Angela Davis provided the weapons that Jonathan Jackson would use on 7 August 1970 when he took a bag full of guns to a courthouse in Marin County and passed the out to 3 prisoners on trial. Calm and cold he stated "alright gentlemen I'm taking over now" and "you can take our pictures, we are the revolutionaries." At the young age of 17 Jonathan had sense enough that the only way he could affirm justice was through a bold act that would take his life.

A year and 2 weeks later on 21 August 1971 prison authorities would concoct the most outrageous story ever invented to justify the assassination of one of our most gifted leaders, George Jackson. The state "asserts" that after a visit with his attorney Stephen Bingham that George had a metallic item in his hair that proved to be a gun that he used to gain control of the Adjustment Center after he said these chilling words "The dragon has come." The absurdity is that when they reenacted this in a court, they affirmed that George's cell was 50 yards away from the visiting room at San Quentin, a highly sophisticated, technological prison. And when they reenacted how it would've taken place they said "the gun wobbled dangerously", meaning that it couldn't have happened that way. At best if George did end up with a weapon he must have wrestled it away from his assassins.

But the kicker is "they say" George had explosives that he intended to blow a 20 ft wall away and escape. "They say" that George ran towards a wall and was shot in his ankle that was immediately shattered, yet somehow he managed to get up and run again and a second shot was fired that entered his back and exited his head. However, what "they say" again proved to be a lie as autopsy proved that the shots that were fired couldn't have come from a high position as they assert, but rather from the ground.

Now why such an outrageous story for this situation? I mean to me, even though I feel very sorry for Georgia Bea Jackson as she lost 2 sons within a year, I still can't help but admit that if he went out as the state asserts, it even more adds to his legend. Killing 5 people in the span of 30 seconds (which is impossible) before being killed is remarkable. But upon investigation, if George would've went to trial and beat his case, he very well may have been released from prison. So instead of us believing in government created conspiracies, we need to question the facts. In love and revolution, may George and Jonathon both rest within the essence, while they continue to live through people like me and countless others.

Peace to those who don't fear freedom. ■



crush this red scare. So his knowledge of capitalist Amerika was that great that prison officials went to the extremes of trying to kill him. Their line to whites was "kill Jackson it will do you some good." However as gifted as he was mentally and intellectually, he was also gifted as a self-trained guerrilla assassin. George practiced a very special bastardized style of martial arts and kung-fu called iron palm and he worked out 6 to 7 hours a day doing 1000 finger tips a day.

Typing laboriously on a prison typewriter, Jackson wrote position papers that dealt with prison life, economics, and the corrosion of Amerika's corporate capitalist culture and circulated these papers throughout prison walls. For his activities, he was first rewarded with segregation, often times with a welded lock. Once that proved to not be enough, he was set up to be killed. But since he was a fierce warrior, often-times even fighting for other prisoners who were the victim of racial assaults, he would fight single-handedly 5 or 6 prisoners and come out on top. At this point the white prisoners and officers hated

began punching, kicking, and knocking those guys off the tier. However, for this, he, not the white inmates, was locked up. It was only later on that prison officials would admit that he stood up for a brother about to be hung.

In 1969, the California parole board who had been stringing George along for years, but who had no intentions of ever releasing him, told him that he was going to be transferred from San Quentin to Soledad and that if he maintained clean conduct for 6 months he would be granted parole. Soledad was a racist penitentiary that stoked the flames between prisoners, and that ignited racial animosity to build to murder. George, as a "class based" revolutionary always strove to get the convict class to see that they could easily overcome their oppressors if they would only unite, because by playing at racism the law would essentially win since it would only be 2 maniac groups at war.

On 13 January 1970 after months of lockdown due to racial killings, a new rec yard was opened. A system where Blacks, whites, and Mexicans are to re-

als, George was blamed because he was the only person who could have done it. Hardly enough in the area of evidence, it finally gave the state the legal pretext to do what they had been trying to do quasi-legally for years. If George was convicted it meant death since he already had life.

When George received visits from his family they would bring his younger brother Jonathan and the two of them would get off to one side of the visiting room where George would do his job as an educator and at the age of 16 Jonathon had a remarkable insight into guerrilla warfare, communism, and uniterian conduct locally and globally. His love for his brother made him grow-up. He saw that they never intended to let his brother go. At a time when most teens are thinking about self-gratification, Jonathon could only think of George. He said "people tell me that I'm too involved with the movement and my brother's case, but I have one question to ask people who think like this, 'What would you do if it was your brother?'".

JUNETEENTH FREEDOM INITIATIVE

End Solitary Confinement! End Restrictive Housing Units(RHU)! End Mass Incarceration! Stop Political Censorship! Transform the prisons to cadre schools! Transform ourselves into NEW PEOPLE!

We are well into phase 2 of this campaign. But it is not too late to submit your petitions to the U.S. Department of Justice. These were mailed out with ULK 78. If you need more copies, just write us to get more.

For phase 3, TX Team One will be collecting statements from prisoners across the country to take to the United Nations if necessary. So stay tuned.

END RHU IN TEXAS

One of the demands of the JFI above is to shut down the Restricted Housing Units (RHU). There is a lawsuit against the TDCJ that is headed to court (see p. 6). As we've seen in other states every effort will be made to keep long-term solitary confinement in Texas under new names, in new forms and with new rules. We must make it clear that torture is never okay! Now is the time to write articles, write letters to other news outlets, make art, hold rallies to agitate for a complete end to long-term solitary confinement in Texas.

STOP CENSORSHIP OF POLITICAL SPEECH

See page 7 for more info on our campaign against the massive censorship of mail in Texas prisons in response to the Juneteenth Freedom Initiative.

Comrades on the inside, keep appealing, and if you can take legal action. A lawsuit has been filed and we are awaiting word from the court. (see p.7)

Comrades on the outside can join our postcard campaign to let the TDCJ know that we oppose this political repression. Help us spread the word, download and print fliers and postcards from our website and go talk to people about what the state is doing.

SHUT DOWN NON-AIR CONDITIONED PRISONS IN VIRGINIA

See p.8 for background info on the conditions prisoners in Virginia suffered this summer. This campaign connects the battle against pollution causing climate change to the interests of the oppressed masses, who want real change.

The comrade working to initiate this campaign has developed a plan with proposed steps and tactics to launch it. If you are interested in helping you can email em directly at uhuruowe76@yahoo.com or contact em by writing MIM(Prisolsns).

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! Share what you got from the newsletter, and how it has impacted your time in prison. We are still recruiting ULK distributors who can receive a small stack of ULKs to distribute at their prison.



WE DEMAND OUR GRIEVANCES ARE ADDRESSED

If you are experiencing problems with your grievance process, such as delays, unanswered grievances, or harassment, you should join this campaign. Petitions are available for AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, KS, LA, MS, MT, NV, NY, NC, OK, OR, SC, and TX. If the state-level petition doesn't bring relief, we now have a new follow-up petition written to hold states accountable to federal requirements.

Write in to get the petition for your state. If your prison's policies allow, give stamps or envelopes to your comrades inside to mail out the petition. 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.

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. Tell us how you used it to help organize others and build group consciousness or how it didn't work.

SEPTEMBER 9TH DAY OF PEACE & SOLIDARITY

Organize locally for the September 9th Day of Peace and Solidarity, to promote the United Front for Peace in Prisons and an end to conflict amongst prisoners. September 9th is the anniversary of the Attica uprising. This campaign was initiated in 2012 by an organization participating in United Struggle for Peace in Prisons and has been taken up as an annual UFPP event, with people committing to participate in prisons across the country.

This demonstration aligns with the UFPP principle to build unity among prisoners who have a common interest in fighting the oppression of the criminal injustice system. Prisoners take the 24 hours to engage in solidarity building and education, ceasing all prisoner-on-prisoner hostilities. The unity building starts well before September 9th for those who are engaging others to participate in the commemoration. See page 2 for more info.

EXPOSE & COMBAT ADDICTION

USW is training its first group of certified leaders for our Revolutionary 12 Step Program. We need more comrades to step up and begin the program of leading independent rehabilitation programs and combating the state's use of drugs to pacify our people.

REVOLUTIONARY ART AGAINST IMPERIALISM

Developing art that is good technically and good politically helps us reach the masses with the campaigns and ideas in ULK. Pick a campaign here to create art for. These are campaigns that we will keep promoting and reporting on. And we need your art to communicate it better!

Rest in Power Shaka At-Thinnin

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)
August 2022

I was just made aware of the passing of Shaka At-Thinnin via the Black August Organizing Committee, of which the comrade was a lead member of. We are losing a generation of New Afrikans right now. The ones who survived the most brutal oppression of the U.\$. injustice system to live long lives.

Of course brutal oppression remains in the U.\$. concentration camps to this day. The torture units that were developed in response to the resistance of brothers like Shaka are still in full operation across most of this country.

The comrades who started Black August responded to this repression with collective self-defense, an immense openness and love for the oppressed, and a sharp discipline. Discipline is one of the tenets of Black August. And it is one that i think we can all benefit from. It can be hard to impose strict discipline when it is not out of necessity or dire circumstances as it was for the founders. But studies have shown that the more you practice discipline the easier it becomes, in all aspects of your life. Little routines, little extra efforts, regaining little chunks of time to put it towards what you care about.

Struggling to spend a couple hours writing to prisoners, or handing out fliers, or studying political economy after working all day for exploiter wages is not as glorious as the struggles of some. Yet it is no less important. Shaka emself spent many evenings writing comrades inside after eir release from prison. I've had people come to me years later and tell me

how a small action, a few words, or a magazine shared really impacted them. You will never know all the impacts you have if you put in work to reach others every day, every week, or even every month.

Shaka did not live to see the liberation of New Afrika, yet eir contribution was still great and continues to inspire us. When i was younger i had read George Jackson's books, and knew the story of Jonathan Jackson, and studied the Attica rebellion. But it was only after meeting Shaka and Kumasi of the Black August Organizing Committee that I got a real understanding of what Black August was about, and what the New Afrikan resistance in California prisons at the time was like. Their work to preserve that history and share it with the world helps sustain the struggle into the future.

In my years in this movement i've had the privilege of meeting many elders of the generation of the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Each one of them inspired me, even if our interactions were brief. What they'd been through and how they responded was a testament to the potential of struggle, and the strategic confidence that we hold in the oppressed majority of the world who have nothing to lose but their chains.

The world is in constant flux. People come, people go. Empires die. The climate changes. And through it all we know that the oppressed nations are the rising force in the imperialist world today. And that force will eventually seize power from the current oppressors and change the course of history.



**MIM(Prisons)
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ATTENTION PRISONERS:

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