



Inflation: Commissary Prices and Bank Failures

by Mica of MIM(Prisons)
March 2023

For many months we've been hearing some grumbings from our readers about sky-rocketing commissary prices. Last issue we put out a call for more reports on this price inflation. But this inflation is not unique to prisons, and in recent weeks we've seen its impacts on the imperialists with a number of banks in the United States and Switzerland failing.

The cycles of boom and bust, which lead to instability, are inherent to capitalism and how it works. While the imperialists have adapted in many ways to keep things going, they can never solve these problems or prevent these cycles.

Commissary prices

One comrade wrote in to report on the different pay rates in Pennsylvania prisons ranging from 19 cents to 51 cents per hour. Ey wrote to say,

"since the prices of commissary has gone up due to inflation I think that all prisoners with jobs should be given pay rate raises to help with the new higher costs of living in the prison population. It is much harder to keep up with the financial strain. ...I know that out in society whenever the cost of living goes up due to inflation so does our income and of course I am referring to low-income peo-

ple — people on Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security(SS) or struggling on Welfare. Well in prisons we don't make anywhere near what is made on SSI or SS or even Welfare for that matter."

A comrade from Utah wrote:

"At the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis President Trump warned us against price gouging but that never stopped the jail system. The criminal injustice system put people in jail for stealing but then they turn around and steal from the same people they accuse of stealing. County jails are full of homeless people, drug addicts and indigent people who have limited means or no family or friend to help provide those means, yet the canteen prices for commissary are outrageous. These same products can be bought at the Dollar store.

"For example, items such as V05 shampoo, which you can purchase at the dollar store for \$1.25, commissary price is \$3.99. One ramen noodle can be purchased for \$0.25 at the store, will cost you \$1.19 in commissary. Also a 10 pack of SweetNLow costs \$0.99. For generic denture glue it's \$7 in commissary compared to \$1.25 at the Dollar store. The list goes on and on. Is that not price gouging?"

"Prisoners are forced to accept it. They have no choice. They have to pay it or go without. Hygiene and medications they desperately need. My question to you — how do we change this and stop jails from stealing from prisoners?"

Price gouging or extortion is common in U.S. prisons where the state allows private companies to come in and prey on prisoners and their families with legally enforced monopoly pricing systems.

A comrade in New York responded to our call with some of the price increases seen there since July 2022: Syrup from \$2.45 to \$2.75, cold cuts from \$0.75 to \$0.85, chips from \$1.02 to \$1.18, onions from \$1.45 to \$1.85 and graham crackers from \$1.96 to \$2.33.

Most price increases in New York seemed to be in the 10 to 20% range. As a member of the Incarcerated Individual Liaison Committee, this comrade wrote the Deputy Superintendent about the troubles they were having with getting items on the commissary list. They responded in September 2022,

"The commissary contract

allows the vendor to bid items and the price is allowed to rise (or fall) based on the real world. They are not required to lose money. Our stocking situation reflects the real world supply chain issues and inflation."

The comrade told us,

"the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has raised the commissary buy limit from \$75.00 to \$90.00 to compensate for the inflation and changes to the package from home/vendor program that was implemented last year (2022)."

Unlike in the free world, not only do prisoners face limits on how much they can earn but also on how much they can spend.

Inflation is Real

Above, the NYSDOCS refers to the "real world" as being the cause of the rising prices in commissary. The fact of the matter is that inflation rates in the United States have been higher than we've seen in many decades for everyone. The Consumer Price



Inflation scenes before the liberation of China from imperialism. Stacks of near-worthless paper money hang from a bicycle, and fill the hands of shoppers.

Index (CPI) in December 2021 had increased 7% year-over-year, and in December 2022 it was 6.5%. That means over two years the inflation rate is around 15% for all consumer goods. In this context, the price increases in New York commissaries look pretty typical for the economy overall. That does not mean that this is inevitable, it is only inevitable in the type of economy we live in.

And it is only if we are slaves to the capitalist market forces that we must accept these price increases on necessities for some of the poorest people in this country. Even capitalist countries use subsidies to alter the market.

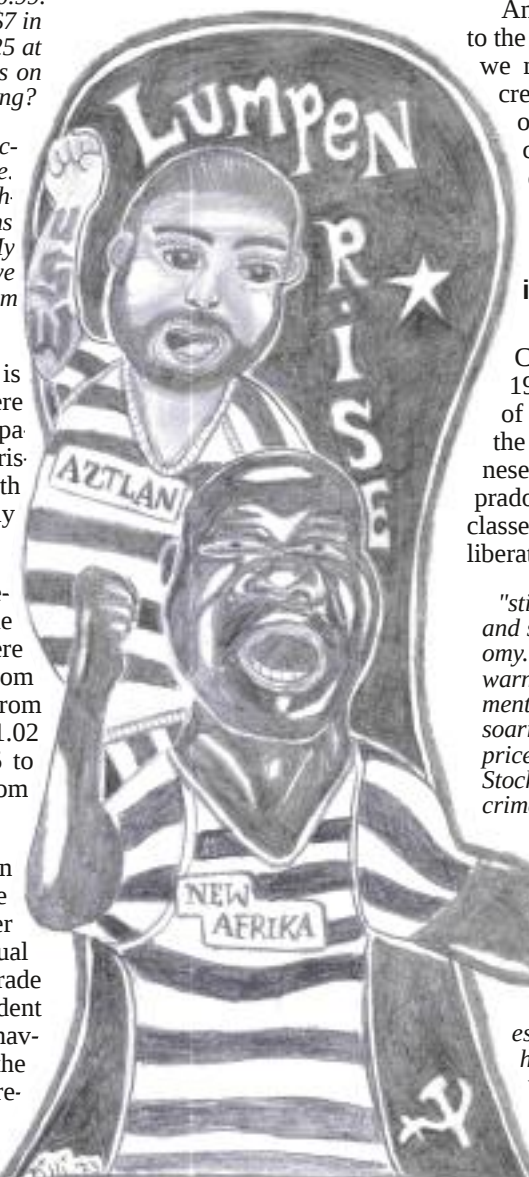
Socialist China had no inflation

The Communist Party of China seized state power in 1949 after over two decades of people's war waged against the imperialists and their Chinese lackies among the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord classes. Immediately following liberation there were speculators

"still trying to manipulate prices and stirring up waves in the economy... who ignored the repeated warnings of the People's Government, gold and silver prices kept soaring, pushing up all other prices. So on 10 June 1949 the Stock Exchange — that centre of crime located in downtown Shanghai — was ordered to close down and 238 leading speculators were arrested and indicted. The 1,800 gold and silver coin peddlers were released on the spot after being enjoined to lead a more honest life. At one stroke, the headquarters of speculation vanished forever from Shanghai."(1)

Unfortunately that

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YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.



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

What is 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.S. prisons. We uphold the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and work from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat.

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

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

While our organization focuses on prisoner support, we believe that there is a

dire need for Maoists to do organizing and educational work in many areas in the United States. We hope people are inspired by our example around prisons and apply it to their own work to create more Maoist cells and broaden the Maoist movement behind enemy lines.

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

1. Communism is our goal. Communism is a society where no group has power over any other group.

2. Dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary. In a dictatorship of the proletariat the formerly exploited majority dictates to the minority (who promoted exploitation) how society is to be run. In the case of imperialist nations, a Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat of the Oppressed Nations (JDPON) must play this role where there is no internal proletariat or significant mass base that favors communism.

3. We promote a united front with all who oppose imperialism. The road to the JDPON over the imperialist nations involves uniting all who can be united against imperialism. We cannot fight imperialism and fight others who are engaged in life-and-death conflicts with imperialism at the same time. Even imperialist nation classes can be allies in the united front under certain conditions.

4. A parasitic class dominates the first World countries. As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM Thought has expanded through materialist analysis, imperialism extracts super-profits from the Third World and in part uses this wealth to buy off whole populations of so-called workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new sector of the petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy; they are not a vehicle for Maoism. Those who work in the economic interests of the First World labor aristocracy form the mass base for imperialism's tightening death-grip on the Third World.

5. New bourgeoisies will form under socialism. Mao led the charge to expose the bourgeoisie that developed within the communist party in the Soviet Union and the campaign to bombard the headquarters in his own country of China. Those experiences demonstrated the necessity of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class struggle does not end until the state has been abolished and communism is reached.

6. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was the furthest advancement toward communism in history. We uphold the Soviet Union until the death of Stalin in 1953, followed by the People's Republic of China through 1976, as the best examples of modern socialism in practice. The arrest of the "Gang of Four" in China and the rise of Khrushchev in the Soviet Union marked the restoration of capitalism in those countries. Other experiments in developing socialism in the 20th century failed to surpass the Soviet model (i.e. Albania), or worse, stayed within the capitalist mode of production, generally due to a failure to break with the Theory of Productive Forces.

On Prisons & Prisoners

MIM(Prisons) seeks to build public opinion against America'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.S. citizens are criminals – accomplices and accessories to the crimes of U.S. oppression globally until the day U.S. imperialism is overcome. All U.S. citizens should start from the point of view that they are reforming criminals.

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

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.S. 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.S. 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 personal 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 needless conflicts and violence within the U.S. prison environment. The oppressors use divide and conquer strategies so that we fight each other instead of them. We will stand together and defend ourselves from oppression.

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

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

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

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

How to join the United Front?

- Study and uphold the five principles above.

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

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

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

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

The Struggle Against Cop City in Atlanta



by singlespark of Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support
April 2023

Since 2021, the city of Atlanta in conjunction with its police force and local developers and contractors, has been trying to bulldoze a significant part of the remaining forest in the city and construct an urban warfare training center for police officers. The forest, which formerly contained a slave labor camp and then a state farm ran on prisoner labor, has been the site of occupations, sabotage of construction equipment, protests and raids by the police. Recently, the cops murdered an activist staying in the encampment defending the forest, while revolts in downtown Atlanta and confrontations with police at the site of the forest have resulted in arrests and terrorism charges for dozens of activists. The movement has racked up several victories already, including delaying the construction of the training center by several months and driving several contractors off the project entirely. But the struggle continues. At press time, the forest faces clear-cutting for the initial stages of construction.

Background

Atlanta is a rapidly and brutally gentrifying city, with a nominally Black elected leadership but a housing and economic policy that has displaced thousands of lower income New Afrikan residents. Cops have been used to harass New Afrikan tenants out of public housing to facilitate redevelopment, rent has spiked well above the already bloated national average, and the arrival of movie production companies (facilitated by tax breaks and other favors) has been a major motor of gentrification across the city.(1) The elected leadership of the city is in a bind – they have to deliver economic growth and good jobs, and get re-elected by appearing to stand against police brutality and white supremacy, but are constrained by their own commitment to capitalism and inability to confront the real power structure of the city, which, as we will see soon, is mostly unselected.

Like most Amerikan cities, Atlanta saw a weeks-long uprising against the police following the murder of George Floyd in 2020. In Atlanta, also like other Amerikan cities, local cases of police brutality added extra impetus to the protesters and their demands. The murder of Rayshard Brooks in June of 2020 led to a revolt that burned down the Wendys he'd been killed at (see: "On the Tragic Death of Secoria Turner" from ULK 71) (2), the resignation of hundreds of police officers and even the trashing of the offices of the state police. Local lumpen organiza-

tions saw a temporary truce and occupied the Wendys site with arms against rumors of white militias seeking to march near the site of Rayshard Brooks' death. In the wake of these and similar events police and correctional forces nationwide are facing difficulties filling their ranks and reeling from their abject failure to contain the disturbances of 2020, when over sixty thousand (3) National Guard troops had to be called out to back them up. The need for Cop City is itself a sign of weakness, paranoia and poor morale of the police force.

The Campaign in the City Council

In 2021, after the rebellion, the Atlanta City Council met in secret to arrange two land deals in the South Forest, the largest expanse of forest remaining in the Metro Atlanta area. One was to give a movie studio CEO, Ryan Milsap, a swathe of public land to bulldoze and build a large movie production studio on. A second was to give another large chunk of land to the Atlanta Police Foundation, a private nonprofit that gathers money from some of the largest businesses in the region and funds policing initiatives. The APF was to construct a mock city out of concrete, similar to U.S. Military urban warfare training sites, to prepare police to prevent another 2020 from happening. (4)

The Atlanta Police Foundation (APF) is interesting all on its own. It's entirely private, with unclear finances and no accountability to the public. It's staffed by former national security officers, real estate investors and retired police; and it has enacted several large-scale programs around the city by itself such as building a center for a massive surveillance network across the entire city which allows footage from thousands of cameras the foundation has installed to be reviewed at one location. The APF has also built up a house renovation program that buys cheap real estate in New Afrikan neighborhoods, remodels it and gives it to police recruits to live in. All of this is done with money donated by corporations ranging from Coca Cola (who did drop out of the Foundation after pressure from activists) to Norfolk Southern. To repeat: large capitalist firms are directly funding, with no public oversight, the extension of massive surveillance networks, police colonization of New Afrikan ghettos, and the construction of a training center intended to make cops more proficient at urban warfare.

The APF is best understood not as a slush fund or a shady organization behind the scenes, but as a de facto shadow government that actually runs the city on behalf of

a mostly white bourgeoisie.(5)

Activists uncovered the land deals and organized protests and a campaign to persuade the city council to not approve the projects. After months of rallies, lobbying and canvassing, the Atlanta City Council voted in late 2021 to allow the project to proceed. This outcome, which many of the activists involved in the campaign predicted, marked the first defeat for Stop Cop City. The coalition that managed this campaign, DARC (Defund Atlanta Police Department, Refund Communities) dissolved among accusations that the local chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) had tried to take over the campaign and use it (and its failure, which they banked on) as a recruiting tool. The DSA's plan was to allow the campaign to fail instead of criticizing it openly, with the hope that its failure would radicalize people into their organization. Commenting on this, a local communist wrote "the notion that working class Atlantans, people who live their entire lives in the trenches of the city's class war, require a civics lesson to be radicalized is self-evidently chauvinistic." (6)

The Campaign in the Weelaunee Forest

Parallel to the campaign against the city council and continuing after it had been defeated, a growing and mostly anonymous group of people calling themselves "forest defenders" were ramping up their activity. Some engaged in tree-sits in the forest, others established gardens or engaged in mutual aid projects and free concerts, and others routinely sabotaged construction and surveying equipment preparing the forest for the project.(7)

At one point members of the Muscogee (Creek) tribe from Oklahoma, who lived in the South Forest before being expelled during the 1820's, returned to the forest, conducted a stomp dance ceremony and shared the forest's pre-colonial name: Weelaunee.

Several times, crews hired by Ryan Milsap to start demolishing the forest ahead of official permitting were driven out after direct confrontation by forest defenders. Outside the forest, protests against contractors, politicians and business-people involved in the project routinely escalated to vandalism and provoked repression from the police. In one case, a protest in East Atlanta Village was attacked by cops as it was ending, but the heavy-handed tactics of the police resulted in all 17 arrests being dismissed and thousands in restitution paid to those targeted. One

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FREE JV!



by MIM(Prisons)
March 2023

The state has once again kidnapped the comrade Jose Villarreal (JV) on trumped up charges. After over a decade in the deepest dungeons of Pelican Bay State Prison's Security Housing Unit, JV was released to the streets in January 2017 following the historic California hunger strikes and the Agreement to End Hostilities (AEH) between the largest lumpen organizations in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) at the time. This is the second time JV has been arrested since eir release. In addition, ey has faced armed raids by the pigs at eir place of residence.

The first arrest following eir release from Pelican Bay was on 2 August 2020 from an incident where JV may have saved someone's life, but was charged as an accomplice instead. Eir arrest this winter was almost completely fabricated, with no basis in reality. And due to having been a certified member of a "Security Threat Group" (STG) in Pelican Bay ey faces gang enhancements on both sets of charges. Gang enhancements are a way to punish the oppressed for free association with others in their nation.

While the circumstances of the 2020 arrest are suspect, as are any when a revolutionary leader is targeted, the 2022 arrest is based on fabricated testimony rather than an actual incident. This testimony is coming from someone who presented emself as a revolutionary Chican@ nationalist. If the 2020 incident was a setup, then JV diffused it by eir righteous actions in a dangerous situation. Perhaps the state learned its lesson and decided it must fabricate charges in a he-said/she-said case.

In the six years since eir release from CDCR, JV has become most well known for eir radio program *Free Aztlán* on Poor News Network's KEXU 96.1 FM in Oakland, California. Over the years JV featured Chican@ authors, researchers, artists and activists of many stripes. They advocated for the "kids in cages", the migrant field workers, prisoners, and even did a series on the abuse of young people in spiritual movements targeting Chican@ nationalists. Ey was a regular promoter of the book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán* and the struggles for national liberation around the

globe. JV also was apart of *Aztlán Press*, which published the second edition of *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*.

On the last episode of *Free Aztlán* before eir recent arrest, JV hosted the public announcement of the founding of the Communist Party of Aztlán (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Eir track record of advocating for national liberation, and eir support of the foundation of the Party in particular, is clearly behind the state's machinations to imprison JV once again on trumped-up charges.

While MIM(Prisons) recognizes CPA(MLM) as a fraternal organization, it is no secret that we promote a cell structure strategy of organization. We've received push back on this in the form of calls for a centralized organization, a movement that spans the country, and a center for training and developing scientific leadership. These are some of the things the CPA(MLM) felt that *Aztlán* needed. They felt a party was needed to combat/compete with the parties that now mislead the masses under bourgeois political lines.

JV's connections to various projects, and the connections between different chapters of the Republic of *Aztlán* are public record on the internet. We do not promote this form of organization. We see the hybrid of online and irl (real life) organizing to favor the strengths of the state over the weaknesses of the masses.

Lest we need reminding, the repeated targeting of JV exposes the lengths to which the state will go to suppress even a young emerging movement like CPA(MLM). JV has been tireless in eir work in the Chican@ community to promote positive change. No proletarian court would convict em of a crime. A socialist justice system would uphold JV as the best-case example of what someone can make of emself after decades in an oppressive, abusive, torturous prison system. ■

Chinese and U\$ imperialists Saber Rattle on the International Stage

by Badgreen of MIM(Prisons)
April 2023

On 7 March 2023, China's new foreign minister Qin Gang, in his first public appearance, delivered denunciations and warnings that "conflict and confrontation" with the United States is inevitable if the U.S. imperialists do not change their course.(1) Before becoming China's new foreign minister, Qin Gang was an ambassador to the United States known for his non-confrontational and diplomatic approaches to his job.(2) This new public statement marks a clear shift in tone from the diplomatic and cautious reputation that Qin has built as his time as ambassador. On the National People's Congress in Beijing, Qin has said the following:

"If the United States does not hit the brakes, but continues to speed down the wrong path, no amount of guardrails can prevent derailing, and there will surely be conflict and confrontation."(3)

Alongside these comments, Qin has condemned the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" of the United States which he claims is sparking discourse and a new cold war in Asia and seeks the containment of China as a country.

One day after, on 8 March 2023, U.S. ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel made a response to Qin's claims that China should not be surprised at all that Washington and its allies are deepening military ties in reaction to China's aggression:

"You look at India, you look at the Philippines, you look at Australia, you look at the United States, Canada or Japan. They [China] have had in just the last three months a military or some type of confrontation with every country. And then they're shocked

... Continued from p. 3 ... **Cop City**

of the general contractors of the project, Reeves + Young, dropped out after another direct protest at their offices and after several of their vehicles were sabotaged in the forest. It should be noted that not all interactions between construction workers and the forest defenders were hostile — when crews from the local power company showed up to do maintenance on a line in the forest, they worked around a garden that forest defenders had planted instead of destroying it.

Throughout late 2021 and 2022 this back and forth continued, with coordinated Weeks of Action bringing hundreds of people into the forest and a fluctuating smaller body of activists building and defending the forest in the interim.

Raids and the Murder of Tortuguita

Different police agencies routinely entered the forest and raided it repeatedly. Last May, following a Week of Action, cops came into the forest and smashed up a lot of protest infrastructure that was on the ground. Activists retreated to the trees, continued confronting work crews and burning equipment that was left unguarded at night. A statement issued after one of these incidents read "if you build it we will burn it." In December of last year another raid resulted in the destruction of more shelters and 6 people

that countries are taking their own steps for deterrence to protect themselves. What did they think they were going to do?"(4)

Emanuel responded to Qin's claims that the Americans' Indo-Pacific strategy is not in fact containment of China but a "deterrence" of China's aggression in the previous months. In the past three months, Chinese ships harassed the Filipino navy;(5) conducted military drills near Taiwan and fired missiles (those missiles landed on Japan's territorial waters);(6) and have had border skirmishes in the Himalayas with India.(7)

The Indo-Pacific Strategy of the U.S. imperialists

The Indo-Pacific strategy of the United States was a particular target of Foreign Minister Qin's condemnations. The Indo-Pacific strategy is a political-economic program launched by the Biden administration which has highlighted the economic importance of the region of Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific. In the program, the U.S. imperialists also highlight the "aggressive forces" of the Indo-Pacific region — namely China and the DPRK — which the program claims furthers destabilization.(8)

"The United States is an Indo-Pacific power. The region, stretching from our Pacific coastline to the Indian Ocean, is home to more than half of the world's people, nearly two-thirds of the world's economy, and seven of the world's largest militaries. More members of the U.S. military are based in the region than in any other outside the United States. It supports more than three million American jobs and is the source of nearly \$900 billion in foreign direct investment in the United States. In the years ahead, as the

region drives as much as two-thirds of global economic growth, its influence will only grow—as will its importance to the United States." - *The Indo-Pacific's Promise (The Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States, February 2022).* (9)

This pamphlet of the U.S. imperialists lays a clear plan for the shape of things to come. The question is whether the U.S. imperialism can defeat rising new star Chinese social-imperialism who is also looking to pierce their fangs into the region.

Qin Gang has made the claim that this strategy of the United States is the Southeast Asian version of the NATO; asserting China's position parallel to that of the USSR and the countries of India, Japan, South Korea, and Australia as the NATO alliance which plays the part of Western Europe.

We see these particular trends among today's big imperialist powers as incredibly worrying due to the similarities to the political-economic contradictions among the imperialist forces of the early twentieth century, which resulted in the first World War.

One difference/advantage that Amerikkka always will have over China or Russia is battle hardened experience. The Amerikkkan empire have been at war (against other imperialist powers during the two world wars and against colonies fighting for self-determination alike) for nearly all of the 20th century. While China and Russia have had some military conflicts with other nations during their post-socialist capitalist restoration era (namely in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe respectively) these little post-capitalist restoration wars

and initial tree clearing has begun. The murder of Tortuguita, however, has dramatically raised the temperature of the struggle. The City council has already started walking back some of their plans for Cop City, and support for the movement and criticism of Mayor Dickens for being involved in it, has swelled.

It's also important to remember that without the resistance the whole forest would be gone and Cop City would be half-built already. Dare to struggle, dare to win.

For Rayshard Brooks, for Tortuguita, and for victims of poverty and police violence in Atlanta whose names we know and those we don't, we say:

Stop Cop City!

NOTES:

- (1) Cde. KM Cascia, Red Clarion "The White Left is Building Cop City" March 2, 2023.
- (2) Greyhound, "On the Tragic Death of Secoria Turner" ULK 71
- (3) Alexandra Sternlicht, forbes.com "Over 4,400 Arrests, 62,000 National Guard Troops Deployed: George Floyd Protests By The Numbers"
- (4) Crimethinc, "The City in the Forest: Reinventing Resistance for an Age of Climate Crisis and Police Militarization" Crimethinc, April 11, 2022.
- (5) Cascia, "The White Left Is Building Cop City"
- (6) Ibid.
- (7) Crimethinc, "The Forest in the City: Two Years of Forest Defense in Atlanta, Georgia" February 22, 2023.
- (8) Alex Binder, "Manuel 'Tortuguita' Terán's Independent Autopsy Report Released at Press Conference" March 13, 2023.
- (9) Kiara Alfonseca, ABC News "DeKalb County releases autopsy in 'Cop City' protester Manuel Teran's death" April 19, 2023.

Today

The movement is mostly evicted from the forest for now,



are nowhere near the level of experience the United States have had against Nazi Germany, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. Cracking down on Chechnyan "terrorist" cells in Eastern Europe by the Russian Armed Forces, or beating up revolting farmers/ethnic minorities on the countryside by the so-called "People's Liberation Army" is a cakewalk compared to the genocidal wars Amerika waged throughout the 20th century.

Saber Rattlings in Taiwan

After Taiwan's president Tsai Ing-Wen met with U.S. house of representative speaker Kevin McCarthy, the so-called "People's Liberation Army" of China began conducting military drills in Taiwan waters.

Taiwan's modern history began with the losers of the civil war in China. The Kuomintang (the nationalist party - KMT) of China fled from the people's wrath and the Communist Party of China (CPC), which had overthrown the KMT's bourgeois dictatorship, replacing it with a proletarian one. The KMT fugitives have massacred the indigenous people of Taiwan, and began the nation building project sponsored by U.S. imperialism. For many years Taiwan actually held the legitimate position recognized by the international community as "real" China. With the restoration of capitalism in China, the KMT of Taiwan actually seeks to cozy up to the social-imperialist CCP and takes a "moderate" stance on Taiwan independence affirming that Taiwan is still Chinese while the Taiwanese nationalists of the pan-green alliance and the Democratic Progressive Party take a more harder stance on Taiwanese national identity.

After president Tsai Ing-Wen's meeting with the U.S. imperialists in Los Angeles, China began a 3 day long military exercises on the doorsteps of Taiwan. With precision air strikes designed to intimidate the Taiwanese government, and a naval blockade, the so-called PLA have certainly flexed their muscles on the front. (10)

The official statement from the Chinese military reads as follows:

"The theater's troops are ready to fight at all times and can fight at any time to resolutely smash any form of 'Taiwan independence' and foreign interference attempts." (11)

On 10 April 2022, Taiwan detected 91 flights by Chinese bombers as well as multiple fighter jets. (12)

Capitalism-Imperialism Makes Inter-Imperialist Conflicts Inevitable

The Indo-Pacific strategy recognizes the economic importance that the region of Southeast Asia and the Pacific holds not only for the United States but also for the imperial core overall. China also recognizes this. Under capitalism, where labor in itself is a commodity, the cheap labor and the immense surplus value that the world imperialist system plunders from Southeast Asia is invaluable to China as a new rising imperialist power.

Qin Gang proclaimed warnings that the actions of the U.S. imperialists will cause a new cold war. We at MIM(Prisons) say that the social-imperialist forces of China and the United States are creating the precedence for a new world war (see: "China's Role in Increasing Inter-Imperialist Rivalries" in ULK 60) as the nature of capitalism-imperialism makes it inevitable for the great imperialist powers to eventually battle over and reorganize their respective neo-colonial turfs/territories. (13)

If fascism arrives in the United States (see: "Capitol Seizure Demonstrates Need for New Democracy" in ULK 72), then the communists and the revolutionaries will have their duties and work to do just like always. If inter-imperialist conflict breaks out and a new world war enters in our world, then we will have our duties and work to do to as well. The nihilism of impending crisis is common here in the belly of the beast. But Marxists recognize these developments as the inevitable playing out of the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system. Periods of great conflict are when qualitative transformations happen, and this is a good thing. It is our role to understand these changes so that we can move things in the interests of the world's majority.

NOTES:

1. Nectar Gan, 8 March 2023, China's new foreign minister warns of conflict with US, defends Russia ties, CNN.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Brad Lendon, Marc Stewart, 8 March 2023, Exclusive: China's attacks unite region against Beijing, US ambassador to Japan says, CNN.
5. Brad Lendon, 13 February 2023 2022, Philippine Coast Guard says Chinese ship aimed laser at one of its vessels, CNN.
6. Brad Lendon, 4 August 2022, China fires missiles near Taiwan in live-fire drills as PLA encircles island, CNN.
7. Ibid.
8. The White House Washington, 24 September 2021, Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States.
9. Ibid.
10. Ben Blanchard Yimou Lee, 10 April 2023, China ends Taiwan drills after practicing blockades, precision strikes, Reuters.
11. Ibid.
12. Huizhong Wu, 10 April 2023, China military 'ready to fight' after drills near Taiwan, ABC.
13. Wawimawo, February 2018, China's Role in Increasing Inter-Imperialist Rivalries, Under Lock & Key No. 60

Support Incarcerated Citizens of ECI Mobilizing to Improve Conditions

by a Maryland prisoner
April 2023

16 March 2023 — Here at Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI), we have implemented the below program. We turned in over 200 copies to the Governor of Maryland, state delegates and senators. We also sent copies to the Commissioner of Corrections and the Warden. We are still sending copies out on the compound to have brothers do their part.

We have been met with a few obstacles but we still are struggling against intel (they're like Prison FBI, Gang Task Force, etc.), they started going in to cells searching for these papers. They even complemented the organization for our resistance (even though they're trying to lock us up). After the people heard about intel and their continued and increased oppression some brothers got discouraged and actually returned some of the copies. It broke my heart to see such cowardice in men. But the sacrifices of those that came before us motivates me to keep pushing.

I want to thank MIM and all the comrades involved with MIM that helped me learn from the materialist method. This form of re-

sistance I took was a page out of MIM's book and I appreciate it. But what we need here at ECI for there to be change is outside support. So if you comrades are reading this or are listening. Please contact these numbers and write these addresses in order to bring about change more quickly.

Delegate Charles Otto, 309 Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Governor Wesmoore, 100 State Central Annapolis, MD 21401-1925

Senator Mary Beth Carozza, 316 Jame Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

Commissioner of Corrections, 6776 Reistertown Road Baltimore, MD 21215

Eastern Correctional Institution, Warden Bailey, 30420 Revells Neck Rd. Westover, MD 21890

Call warden, call jail: (410) 845-4000, fax (410) 845-4059

R.I.P. Eddie Conway!

We Request

We the incarcerated citizens of ECI feel we are not being treated as we should and we want change. Incarcerated yes, but we are still human beings. The conditions we are forced to live in are inadequate to say the least. The opportunity for rehabilitation is insufficient and because this is the case recidivism seems inevitable. As such, a place built on the pretense of rehabilitation becomes a concentration camp. It becomes a place where people are waiting to die. Our recreation has been reduced, our meals have gotten worse. Along with these there are many more things we want changed, but here below we highlight the ones we deem most important.

Request #1. Educational Opportunities

We request access to college education along with training in trades that will serve us when we return to society. We also ask that proper tutoring be provided to those that struggle in certain subjects. It must be understood that lack of education played a major role in our bad decision making that lead us to prison, so it only make sense that education play a role in our rehabilitation.

Request #2. Employment

We want jobs for all able-bodied incarcerated citizens. We also ask that we be paid minimum wage for these jobs. Please understand that many of us were the sole provider for our family, so to not grant us this request may result in our family turning to criminal activity to pay bills out of desperation.

Request #3. Programs

We want programs that address our individual needs. For we understand that every incarcerated citizen isn't locked up for the same crime. Therefore we believe each individual should be programmed off his individual crime and sentence. This is the only way to properly rehabilitate us.

Request #4. Medical

We ask for faster response to our sick calls. Every time we are told to put a sick call in by the time we get called for it, the issue is worse off or it has spread. We are asking for a switch in medical protocol. By this we mean to proper test to be ran based off the patient's feeling. The issue may need an X-ray or MRI. These things should not wait until the problem worsens in order to carry out these minor procedures. We demand that our health issues to be paid close attention to because the lack of attention may result in an unnecessary death of an incarcerated citizen.

Request #5. Psych/Therapy

We want proper psycho analysis to be done on each incarcerated citizen in order to understand his actual mental problems. For we understand that our actions are a result of our mental workings so if we act in a manner that is unfitting it is the result of our brain work. We do not wish to be doped up on psych meds that will only have us 'Zombified'. We want actual treatment that will identify our problems so we can work on them. We understand that therapy is important to health

and to deny us this tool is to deny us our right to be healthy.

Request #6. Sanitation

Our sanitation time is not enough to thoroughly clean the tiers the way that is needed. Our showers contain black mold and no matter the day our tier is not fully clean. This is not the workers fault it is because the shortage of time. What we want is an extended time period for sanitation workers, an increase in sanitation workers. And to do so by hiring workers from that tier. This we understand is a matter of health and not to address this matter is to disregard the health of the incarcerated citizens of ECI.

Request #7. Hygiene

We demand more than one wash day out of the week. We shower everyday but do not possess the amount of clothes we need to sustain good hygiene throughout the week without washing our clothes more than one time. We want C-shift laundry men to be hired to do the workers clothes so that they won't be in the way of general population's clothes. Also we want weekend wash days to be added. We are asking for soap and soap powder to be distributed weekly to those who need it. We understand that there is a such thing as welfare commissary that will provide these things but to meet the qualifications one must show proof of no income for months in order to receive these benefits when the effects of not showering or washing are immediate.

Request #8. Recreation

We request mixed recreation; top and bottom together. The separation limits our yard and gym access to only 3 times a week. Along with this limitation is an extended period of time where we have to sit in the cell dirty. By this I mean if we choose to participate in all 3 days of gym/yard there will be a day where we are either last or first and the top will have second rec. So that will mean that we will have to wait a minimum of 6 hours and 30 minutes before we shower depending on what yard we have. This in turn will limit our gym/yard to 2 days if we don't want to sit in the cell dirty. Not to mention the negative health effects from sitting in the cell for that long without a shower. (Example: people breaking out into rashes).

Request #9. Visits

We demand that in person visits be once a week. This will increase our opportunities to see our families. The majority of us cannot get our families to make the trip without scheduling a day around it because of the 4 hour journey it takes to get to ECI. Increasing the visit to once a week will increase our family's availability. We also ask that for those families that are 4 hours away be given an extended visit of 2 hours. Lastly we ask that the process to acquire visitation be less difficult for us and our families. Being able to see our loved ones is vital to our mental health and it plays a major role in the way we act.

Request #10. Food

We request that our menu be changed to food we deem desirable. We want food that free peo-

ple would eat. Fresh food that's nutritious. We are also asking for portions fit for grown men, because the time in which we eat and the quantity of food we eat leaves us hungry waiting for the next meal. So we request a change.

Request #11. Dietary Sanitation

The kitchen is infested with roaches and mice that leave urine and feces all over the place. And because of this we demand that pest control come once a week until we have a pest free kitchen. There should be no reason this kitchen pass inspection with this infestation. As such we demand change.

Request #12. Grievance

We request that our grievances be dealt with separate from the state prison administration. We believe that our grievances are being swept under the rug and disregarded at times. As a result of this we don't trust the administration. So we ask that our grievances be handled by an outside non-profit civil rights organization.

Request #13. Maintenance

We request that the maintenance of our housing units be maintained. There are times our sink or toilet may leak, or it may not work at all in the cell. And with these incidents there are too many times we have requested for things like that to be fixed and it would take weeks. Understanding these small things can tum into large things through the accumulation of bacteria and mold etc. we request that four men in each housing unit get trained in the field of plumbing and maintenance in order to maintain livable conditions for the incarcerated citizens.

We the incarcerated citizens conclude this request list asking one more question, "would you want to be housed under these conditions?" We want change because we want to change. Help us change. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The incarcerated citizens of ECI ■

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 types of activities did your cell participate in that contributed to USWs mission?
- What campaigns did your cell participate in/promote last month?
- 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?



The State of Aztlán 2023

by Communist Party of Aztlán
February 2023

Introduction

Revolutionary greetings Raza! The future of our nation relies on us all knowing the political standing of our people and for Chican@ groups and orgs. It's essential that we keep our finger on the pulse of the people to closely follow our strengths/weaknesses in order to push our movement forward. A national liberation struggle exists in stages. Without knowing what stage we are in, we cannot respond or struggle to meet the demands of a given stage. For those reasons the Communist Party of Aztlán (CPA) has conducted this study and is releasing this Report of the State of Aztlán 2023.

Many years have transpired since a true materialist analysis has been given on the nation. There has been "statements" given by various Chican@ groups but none with political lenses. Political line is key for all that we do as revolutionaries, from our organizing food drives to giving a political analysis. Our political line is our foundation, without a correct line all of our work remains "in progress." Every project or scientific study done amongst the Chican@ masses becomes efforts in perpetual transition or revision. Although we can expect all matter to remain in motion and in need of adaptation to given responses, we can also limit the need of playing Whack-A-Mole because of an incorrect line. For this reason Maoism plays a key role not just within the national liberation movement of Aztlán, but within the International Communist Movement (ICM) as well.

Our Moral Compass

The Chican@ nation today is engaged in a War for Independence. Make no mistake that within the folds of all the vicarious trappings that a capitalist society can muster there exists a war, a low intensity war but a war nonetheless between Amerikkka (aka the White nation) vs. Aztlán. This war is for the national liberation of our nation. We want land, we want freedom, we want to form our own government that is socialist in nature. But don't get it twisted, as we used to say in the Barrio, We are communist revolutionaries who understand that the innate contradictions within capitalism and thus imperialism demands that we strive for a communist future if we are truly for equality of all humyn beings.

One of the challenges that Aztlán faces today is in not enough groups or orgs raising the Communist banner. Today the Communist Party of Aztlán, Republic of Aztlán and ROA Brown Berets are the only unapologetically Chican@ Communist orgs repping communism proudly and openly.

Of course we believe that a communist world will not arrive today or in our current lifetime. Today we struggle for a socialist government, where state power is in the hands of the have-nots and led by a proletarian political line. This proletarian political line, the goal of which is a communist future, remains our moral compass.

Historical Materialism of Aztlán: Energy with incorrect line

In order to understand the development of the Chican@

Movement we must first describe a brief political overview of the movimiento. Marx taught us that *historical materialism* can help us gauge a phenomenon to then respond to it in a way which pushes a given struggle forward. We can learn from history in order to transform the future. For a true materialist analysis of the Chican@ Movement, let us look to the last wave of Chican@ resistance of the 1970's.

Although there were groups that developed, such as the August 29th Movement, which were essentially communist, the Chican@ movement of the 1970s was for the most part a cultural nationalist formation. A collection of Chican@ groups and orgs that mostly sought better schools, jobs, and housing while fighting discrimination, police brutality and an end to Chican@s in Vietnam. Despite the great energy behind these movements, a push for a socialist government was not yet a topic on the Chican@ "kitchen table" for most groups. Reforms were at the helm.

Besides the student group MEChA, the largest formation was the Brown Berets. The Brown Berets has chapters across these false U.S. borders, it was militant as far as mobilizing against the state, particularly against the pigs and instilling a Chican@ nationalism throughout the Barrios. And yet the Brown Berets of the 1970's had a political line that could not lead to Aztlán's liberation and were actually not a socialist organization. They fought to reform the system not replace it with socialism. In fact the Brown Berets of the 1970's had not one chapter that was openly communist, not a single one openly striving for a socialist government and not a single chapter studying Maoism. This should not surprise us because the inherent flaw in cultural nationalism is that it is reformist in nature and its "Lucha" leaves the settler colonialist economic superstructure intact and merely swaps culture. Brown Capitalism is fine to the cultural nationalist so long as a Brown Massa replaces White Massa on the plantation.

The essence of our oppression lies not simply in a greedy settler who don't like our skin tone but loves our land, but in an economic system that enriches a minority at the expense of the global majority. A system that strips every drop of humynity from the conscience of a people in order to enrich a few. Capitalism teaches that profit is more important than humyn life.

The 1970's taught the movement great examples of how to organize in the barrios, how to create a Chican@ student movement and resist the U.S. colonizer military. Many lessons are gleaned but it also taught us that resistance without targeting Capitalism is like having a new sports car without gas, it looks great, and has lots of potential but it cannot drive us to the liberation highway, or out of the driveway for that matter.

The 1970's Chican@ Movement had the energy but it lacked communist ideology at the helm. Had the Brown Berets, MEChA and other Chican@ groups of the 1970's been Communist-led, Aztlán may have launched a strong Socialist revolution given the other struggles of the times with the Panthers and others within these false U.S. borders

and internationally.

Some correct line; not enough energy

Today's Chican@ Movement exists and has slightly recovered from the U.S. government's efforts to neutralize all resistance to colonization. The vanguard of the contemporary Chican@ Movement has identified Maoism as the leading line in the world today. No other ideology has advanced Communist thought as far as Maoism.

We see Maoism leading the struggles today in India, the Philippines, and sprouting in barrios within the U.S. Empire itself. Maoism has blossomed in Chican@ hearts like no other time in our nation's hystory.

Maoism taught us that a new bourgeoisie develops within the Party itself. This is a great lesson for today's Chican@ Movement as it would have been for the 1970's. It reminds us that despite a leadership of any type the possibility exists of a leadership to become corrupt even after a socialist revolution. Many can see this truth play out today in the leadership of their own groups. In the case of both the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin and in China after Mao's death this proved true.

The publishing of the book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán* in 2015 was akin to a nuclear missile being launched on the United Snakes. If we look at the political landscape of Aztlán pre-2015 and post-2015 we see a dramatic shift take place within the Chican@ nation. Pre-2015 Chican@ groups, especially the Brown Beret formation were still simply service groups working on reforms, toy drives, free lunches and coat drives. The language was of "Viva la Raza," "Stop Police Brutality" and "Stop School to Prison Pipeline" which are all good campaigns. Post-2015 1,000 of the *Chican@ Power* books had been sold and distributed to people inside and outside prison. Revolutionary nationalism became a term that Chican@s re-popularized. Many Brown Beret groups began studying the *Chican@ Power* book with some making it required reading for new recruits. Many Brown Berets began to identify openly as socialist and communist. Slogans such as "Free Aztlán" became popularized in Aztlán. The idea of secession and independence was revived in Aztlán. The *Chican@ Power* book was republished by Republic of Aztlán in 2021. Chican@ press, radio and other media was developed promoting Maoism and independence. Online Maoist groups were created for the Chican@ nation. Online Maoist study groups were developed for specific Brown Beret formations in various states. In 2022, the first Communist Party of Aztlán was founded and announced live on the FM dial on an East Oakland Chican@ Maoist Radio program/ YouTube channel called *Free Aztlán*.

As Materialists we cannot make an analysis subjectively. We can only come to a conclusion after reviewing the data from tests in the field. A review of the above developments helps lead us to our conclusion.

The *Chican@ Power* book is political ideology created for Aztlán. Chican@ Maoism, it's



what was the missing link, the igniter. The political line that the Chican@ Movement never had in a book written by and for Chican@s.

The Chican@ nation has made a leap in consciousness, a development has taken place and the state is responding. It is responding by sending in its agents to employ COINTELPRO tactics to leaders of today's movement. But it is also inserting agents amongst us to bourgeoisify our revolutionary momentum. These agents will have a group that claims to be revolutionary encouraging its members to vote in the imperialist elections for a U.S. President. That is no longer a revolutionary group, it is a branch of the Democratic Party.

The Chican@ Movement is at a crossroads. There is a revival with some energy. The political ideology exists and cadre have been trained that can push the momentum forward. At the same time we see the state employing a counter intelligence offensive on Aztlán to push it back. Security is needed now more than ever as the state begins to neutralize certain figures. We suspect imprisonment but they will also want to go past that to curtail any bigger leaps in our movement. We suspect the state will assassinate a key figure in the Chican@ Movement. What the state doesn't know is our leaders realize and walk toward this possibility willingly from the first act of resistance against colonization. If leading the raza onto a real push of liberation means risking one's life, it is an easy choice. In the spirit of Mao, I would say to

die for the raza is heavier than Mt. Popocatepetl.

Conclusion

Chican@ Maoists need to separate the wheat from the chaff, as Mao said. It is apparent what groups are infiltrated by state agents. It's important that these revisionists not influence the movement.

More study groups need to be launched pushing the correct line. Develop prison outreach because as the lucha heats up, members of your groups will be imprisoned.

Highlight that revolutionaries do not vote for imperialists. The Democrats have long infiltrated "grass roots" orgs to bring them into the fold and they continue today.

We need to continue teaching the next generation in order to keep that drum of resistance beating in the hearts and minds of our youth. Each one, teach one.

Our beautiful movement continues to develop. Do not let the many lives that have been sacrificed be made in vain. When they assassinate one of our leaders use it to push the struggle forward. When they imprison one of our leaders highlight this injustice and use it as a teaching tool for all freedom fighters. When they target and harass, agitate and propagate. ■

The Road to revolution is painted Brown. Dare to struggle, dare to win!

Viva Aztlán libre y socialista!

On Indigenismo and the Land Question in Aztlán

by Xipe of Communist Party of Aztlán
March 2023

VariegatedCrot0n on Reddit: this was posted on reddit.com in response to the announcement of the founding of the Communist Party of Aztlán (see: "On the Founding of the Communist Party of Aztlán" from *ULK 80*) I've been researching the debates on Aztlán & Chicano nationalism. It seems to me the line of the League of Revolutionary Workers (ML) and the RCP-USA, and the rest of the NCM (New Communist Movement emerging from the late 1960s) in support of Chicano nationalism (see: "Review of RCP Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America" on prisoncensorship.info) was inherited by MIM and now continued by MIM(Prisons). The entire conception of Aztlán and Chicano nationalism has some serious problems, that I hope MIM(Prisons) reckons with sooner, but I think they have been very invested in this idea for quite some time now.

As I understand it, Chicano nationalism draws heavily from Indigenismo — an ideology of the settler colonial Mexican state that says that all the inhabitants of Mexico are indigenous, all are Mestizos, and so on. Such an ideology is fundamentally anti-indigenous as it seeks to indigenize Mexican settlers. The conception of Aztlán is similar — it is a land claim based on the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo — land taken from Mexico during the Mexico-American war. It's worth noting that the treaty itself distinguishes between Mexican settlers in this territory and Indigenous "savages".

While it is true that a section of the colonized proletariat of the America is from Mexico, I am convinced that they are not members of an oppressed Chicano nation. They are more often members of Indigenous nations in Mexico displaced from their homelands.

Chicano nationalism is ultimately a form of settler nationalism. It expresses the class interests of mainly Euro-Mexican settlers against Euro-American settlers. It disguises the legitimate claims for decolonization by op-

pressed indigenous and African nations in Mexico and the American Southwest, by pretending that all Chicanos are descendants of ancient Aztecs. It is extremely unfortunate that this ideology has taken hold in America's prisons by people who are not connected to Aztec/Nahua people, culture or elders.

I'm not an expert in this, I'm still learning much about it. But I'm just letting you know that the issue is a lot more complicated than it seems from the outset. There's lots of liberal carry-over on reddit where I see people lumping all POC together and assuming they are revolutionary. Which is just not the case.

Xipe of the Communist Party of Aztlán responds:

On Indigenismo

Chican@ revolutionary nationalism has often been misunderstood. Our belief is that this is due to the Chicano Nation not meeting its responsibility in addressing a correct political line to the ICM (International Communist Movement) on the one hand and in the ICM's mostly incorrect analysis of the social forces within these false U.S. borders.

To be clear the CPA does not draw heavily on indigenismo — which is steeped in metaphysical trappings. We draw heavily on materialism. As materialists we recognize that not all inhabitants of Mexico are indigenous — although according to Jack Forbes most are! What's more we disagree with your understanding that Chicano nationalism believes all are "mestizos" in Mexico, the CPA(MLM) believes that the term Mestizo is actually a label deriving from the colonizers agit/prop that strips Chican@s of many features of nationhood. "Mestizo" is anti-materialist, that as Jack Forbes suggests, is better suited to describe many of the European nations such as Italy, Sicily, etc.

Our analysis overstands that the inhabitants of current day Mexico are a combination of bloodlines that include indigenous, Spanish colonizer, African and others. And yet blood quantum don't define a nation. We draw from Stalin on the national

question for what defines a nation and we thoroughly address this in the book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*.

On Land

It seems to many that the political line of some Chican@ cultural nationalists is interpreted as the political line of the entire nation, this is incorrect. Our stance on land does *not* simply derive from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, although we certainly cite this treaty in much of our agit/prop surrounding our struggle for national liberation. To rely simply on the colonizers treaty to validate our struggle for national liberation is akin to anti-imperialists within these false U.S. borders simply relying on the U.S. Constitution to validate its anti-imperialism. Although one can use the imperialists' words and articles against them, we are not reformists who simply want our class enemies to re-word a document or follow its own law. We want a complete transformation of society and to free the tierra! Our lucha for land is for a Chicano Socialist Government not for permission from the colonizer to own acres of land under an imperialist rule.

Those who confuse Chican@ revolutionary nationalism with the settler need to study the development of nations, specifically the book *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*, which includes the political line of the CPA when it comes to a nation. We ask those who are curious on our line to read the Chican@ Red Book (*Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán*).

Even if the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was never written our national liberation movement would be just. Chican@s developed in what is now the "U.S. Southwest" as surely as Africans developed in what is now Haiti to become Haitians. Our line is not anchored in us believing we are descendants of ancient "Aztecs" — although some actually are! We overstand that the term "Aztlán" was used 50+ years ago within the Chican@ movement as a rallying cry and point of unity for Chican@s of the time and we see the relevance of using it in our struggle today. ■

Commend Comrades in Indiana on Censorship Victory

by MIM(Prisons)
March 2023

Comrades in Indiana have recently celebrated a victory in our campaign against censorship. One comrade in particular diligently appealed repeated arbitrary and illegal incidents of censorship of mail sent to em by MIM Distributors. Ey regularly reached out to us and other organizations, and a comrade on the outside provided support in appealing these incidents on behalf of MIM Distributors. After about a year of censorship of anything with anti-imperialist political content, this comrade received eir first issue of *Under Lock & Key* this month. We have also been able to send em other political books and get *ULK* to others.

MIM(Prisons) wants to recognize the comrades in Pendleton Correctional Facility for their ef-

forts and consistency. Victories will not be easy, and often they are few and far between. But with consistency the struggle continues, and as the oppressed are the vast majority of the world, that struggle is destined to win.

In most cases, our mail is censored for completely illegal reasons. Here are some reasons given by Pendleton in the last year for censoring our publications:

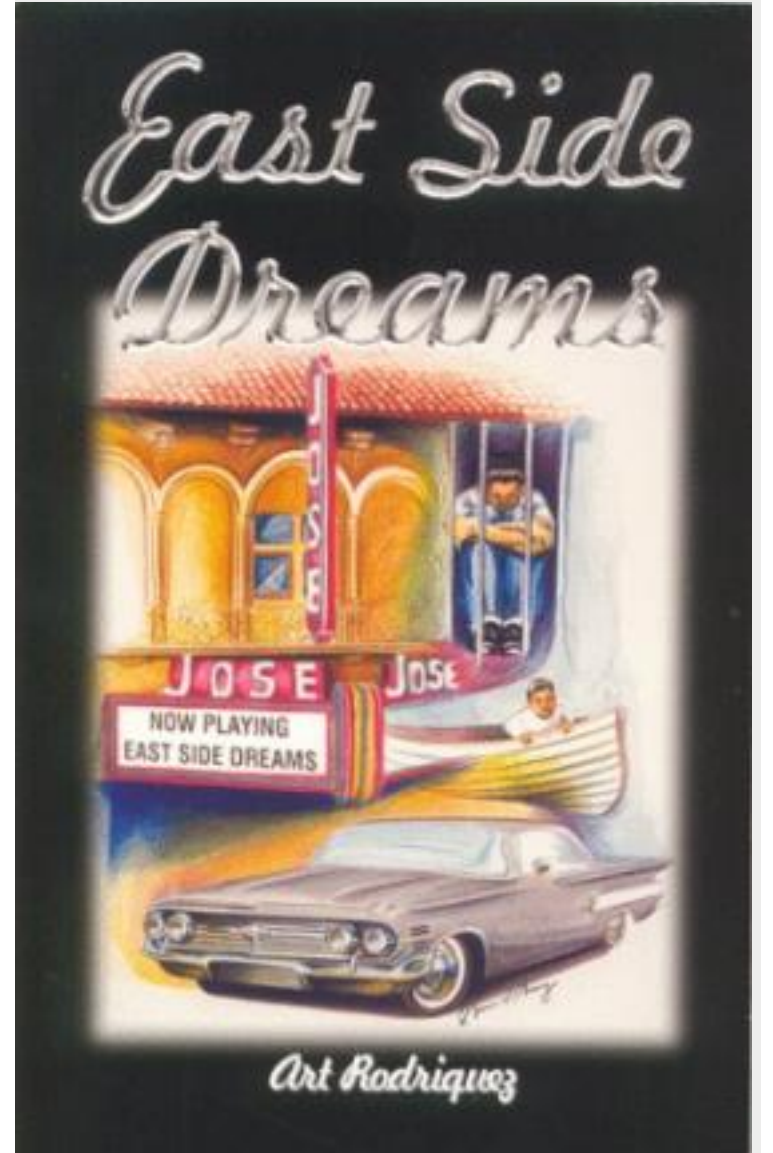
1. "5PT STAR ALL SEEING EYE 5" - not only does this make no sense, there was not even a star on the page cited
2. "STG: AMERIKKKA"
3. "HATE SPEECH"

Many Amerikkans are offended by that spelling, or when we say that they are not exploited

by capitalism, or that they are a nation built on white supremacy, or that they they are committing atrocities against oppressed nations. But to censor something because you find it offensive is illegal in this bourgeois democracy that we live under. As our readers know, nothing MIM(Prisons) has ever written promotes hatred of other peoples or mistreatment of peoples because of who they are.

Often, when our mail is censored it is because someone finds it offensive. Therefore, consistent appeals to higher levels of government can work to have the existing laws enforced. But other times the state is behind it. This was the case in our biggest censorship battle of 2022 against the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (see: "Illegal Censorship in TX Persists as Resistance Grows" in *ULK 79*). They had

Book Review: *East Side Dreams* by Art Rodriguez



by Pilli of Republic of Aztlán
February 2023

In my research of Chican@ novelists and storytellers I stumbled upon this book by California Chican@ author Art Rodriguez.

What grabbed my attention initially was that the Author was also an ex-prisoner, as a youth he spent time in Juvenile Hall and the California Youth Authority (CYA) and specifically in Preston School of Industry where I also did a stint in as a rebellious youth.

The cover art was interesting, it was done in the genre of "Aztlán-realism" which is a style developed and coined by California prisoners which focuses on the social reality of the Chican@ nation rather than bourgeois vomit art. Aztlán realism displays our reality while raising consciousness. Rordiquez really delivers in his cover art by showing a one time landmark of San Jose, Califas which is the Jose Theater. The Jose Theater was a theater in downtown San Jose frequented by Chican@ lumpen youth. In the 1960's the author states movie tickets were 50 cents and that up until the 1990's tickets stood at a buck or two. Poor barrio youth had an alternative to the streets at an affordable price.

The author also shows an incarcerated Chican@ on the book cover, again, a true depiction of Aztlán: colonized and imprisoned. Although the story "East

Side Dreams" is a childhood story of the authors' life in San Jose, Califaztlan and Rodriguez could have chosen to depict bikini-ied wimmin on a local sports team to warm up to the local Chican@ petty-bourgeoisie who would rather pretend that captivity is not part of Aztlán's social reality. Rodriguez brings Chican@ mass incarceration front and center which is refreshing.

Reading East Side Dreams brought back so much memories of my own childhood. Cruising around and hanging out with the homies, picking up and just being a Chican@ youth is all there. It's very clear that Rodriguez didn't concoct his stories from being raised in some ivy league prep school. He could have been one of my childhood homies, especially when he writes:

"Driving during 1966, sometimes the guys borrowed a car from someone or would take a car without permission. That's what I would do occasionally."

The lumpen continue in this tradition of "taking" without permission on a small scale. The lumpen may "take" from other lumpen, especially here in the Snakes where lumpen are not the lumpen of the third world and thus have more material items at hand. But this sentence reveals some truth — the lumpen will not ask permission. It is a "ballsy" lot who are most likely not to ask for

Continued on page 10...

system-wide bans on certain materials that we were sending in across the state because they want to prevent peaceful organizing. This is an example where bourgeois democracy is not so liberal, when even talking about a peaceful protest in prisons becomes illegal. And while we face censorship on the outside, those inside face being thrown in torture cells, and violence by staff or other prisoners.

The connection between free speech and association and this

ability to protest and organize power is why we prioritize censorship as a campaign. It's not just because those of us on the outside are being censored, it's a strategic decision as far as what battles help create the space necessary for the organizing that we need to change the world.

So we encourage comrades to be diligent in fighting censorship, especially of political materials. And we will do our best to support you in those battles. ■

Texas History: Plan de San Diego or Juneteenth?

by MIM(Prisons)
May 2023

Last year prisoners in Texas took the opportunity of the declaration of a federal holiday on Juneteenth to launch the Juneteenth Freedom Initiative (JFI), triggering a repressive response from the state prisonrats at the TDCJ (see: "TDCJ's Repression of it's Political Prisoners Leads to Devastating Effects Among the Wider Prison Population" from ULK 80). The JFI campaign said:

"As you may know, Juneteenth has now been made a federal holiday in amerika. On this day many will sing the praises of Our oppressors or otherwise negate the reality of the lumpen (economically alienated class), that according to amerika's 13th amendment We are STILL SLAVES. While We do not wish to nullify the intensity of the exploitation and oppression that New Afrikan people held in chattel slavery faced, We must pinpoint to the general public, those upcoming generations of youngsters looking to follow Our footsteps, that to be held in captivity

by the state or feds is not only to be frowned upon but is part and parcel with the intentions of this amerikan government, and its capitalist-imperialist rulers. We say NO CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH until the relation of people holding others in captivity is fully abolished!!"

The Juneteenth Freedom Initiative put forth demands and calls for action including:

**End Solitary Confinement!
End Restrictive Housing
Units(RHU)!**

End Mass Incarceration!

**Transform the prisons to
cadre schools! Transform
ourselves into NEW
PEOPLE!**

The history of utilizing Juneteenth to fight the torturous long-term isolation cells in U.S. prisons didn't start last year with the campaign to shut down the RHU. At the 2011 Juneteenth celebration in Berkeley, CA, MIM(Prisons) did an extensive outreach campaign in support of the first round

of historic hunger strikes to protest the SHU in California (see: "PBSP SHU D-Corridor Hunger Strike" from ULK 21). These we see as proper ways of honoring the spirit of Juneteenth, which is a holiday that was kept alive for over a century by the New Afrikan nation before the United States took it as its own.

In his 2022 book on the history of Texas, historian Gerald Horne points out some holes in the story of Juneteenth being paraded by the bourgeois Liberals of the Biden regime. He points out how the Emancipation Proclamation did not really extend to the territory of Texas that remained beyond the jurisdiction of the Lincoln government. Texas was an independent state of Euro-settlers claiming territory from Mexico in 1836. Texas remained its own country until 1845 when it joined the United States. By 1865, Texans were strongly considering rejoining Mexico, which was temporarily under the rule of the French puppet Maximilian in order to maintain the system of

slavery. While this did not happen, slavery continued in many parts of Texas for many years after the historic date known as Juneteenth. According to one source, "two-thirds of the freedmen in the section of country which I travelled over have never received one cent of wages since they were declared free..." Horne cites another source saying "the freedmen are in a worse condition than they ever were as slaves." (Horne, p.457) Texans were determined to hold on to their slaves until the U.S. government came in to compensate them for their "property."

Some fifty years after so-called emancipation, the war continued to wage between the newly coalesced white oppressor nation and the oppressed nations in the region of Texas.

"However, given the dialectic of repression generating resistance — and vice versa — it was also during this same period that Jack Johnson, the heavyweight champion from Galveston, was forced into exile in order to elude spuri-

ous charges and wound up in Mexico City during the revolutionary decade. There he sought to establish a beachhead against Jim Crow. It was also then that the monumental "Plan of San Diego" was crafted, which was said to involve retaking the land seized improperly by the U.S. during the war of aggression of the 1840s and establishing in its stead independent Black and Indigenous polities." (Horne, p.565)

In 2017, USW comrades launched a campaign to commemorate the Plan de San Diego each August, as the military operations carried out in southern Texas by units of 25 to 100 men against the Euro-settlers reached their high point in August and September of 1915. If you want to commemorate this revolutionary history this August, write in and ask for copies of the Plan de San Diego flier to use for outreach and get more ideas for how to honor that history. ■

NOTES:
Gerald Horne, 2022, *The Counter-Revolution of 1836: Texas Slavery & Jim Crow and the Roots of U.S. Fascism*, International Publishers, New York.

CENSORSHIP: A Guide For TDCJ Prisoners

by a Texas prisoner
March 2023

What's good to all my Sisterz and Brotherz on the inside. My name is Motivation. I am a certified paralegal incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. I was moved to write this article because I've experienced TDCJ's arbitrary and unconstitutional censorship under Board Policy — 03.91 (BP-03.91), and I've also witnessed the same with other men on my unit. Therefore, I've filed a §1983 civil complain. See *Linzale Greer V. Bryan Collier, et al., 4:21-cv-03976*. So, if you are a TDCJ inmate and you are experiencing improper denials because the TDCJ claims the material contains a sexually explicit image, then here's some information to guide you on defending your rights and legally combating BP-03.91.

Know the Policy

First and foremost, find out what the policy is and how the policy defines a "sexually explicit image." This is easy. Just go to the law library and request BP-03.91(rev.5). For those of you who may not know, BP-03.91 was revised on 25 June 2021 by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, and the revision expanded the definition of a sexually explicit image. It essentially bans any image which depicts sexual behavior and/or is intended to sexually arouse. This means TDCJ inmates cannot possess or receive by mail any image deemed sexually explicit. In my view, this is unconstitutional because BP-03.91 is impermissible and vague, over broad, and unreasonable on its face and as applied.

You have the right to appeal

Secondly, whenever the mail room denies material, you shall be provided a sufficient notice in writing and a detailed reason for the denial. You also have the right to appeal the denial to the Director's Review Committee (DRC) and the DRC shall render its decision within two weeks after re-

ceiving the appeal. However, if the material has been previously banned by the DRC, then the denial will be non-appealable. I don't agree with this practice but the reality is, this is what the TDCJ does. Keep copies of all documents for your records.

Exhaust all available remedies

The Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) requires prisoner's to "Exhaust all available remedies" within TDCJ before filing a §1983 civil complaint. What this means in some cases is that you must file a step 1 and step 2 grievance before you can go to court. Remember you must exhaust only "Available remedies" and need not exhaust "unavailable remedies." In my opinion, there are no available remedies within the TDCJ grievance procedure concerning mail room censorship because the grievance office routinely returns inmate grievances and states that the issue is not grievable. Also TDCJ grievance procedures states that inmates may not grieve matters for which other appeal mechanisms exist. Nevertheless, you should still file a step 1 and/or step 2 to be on the safe side. Now, if your step 1 is returned because the issue is not grievable then, you do not have to file a step 2 because there are not available remedies. You can now go straight to court.

Legal Research

Another vital tool is conducting legal research. This is where you roll up your sleeves and get down to business. This will be your prerequisite before filing suit. I didn't have anyone to hold my hand during my legal research process or to help me file my suit. I can admit that legal research is an arduous task, but more importantly, it's vital before filing a complaint. However, to point you in the right direction, here's some relevant case laws that will be important to your fight against TDCJ:

• *Turner V. Safley, 482 U.S. 78 (1987)*

• *Thornburg V. Abbott, 490 U.S. 401 (1989)*

• *Guajardo v. Estelle, 543 F. Supp. 1373 (S.D. Tex. 1977)*

• *Guajardo v. Estelle, 580 F.2d 748 (5th Cir. 1978)*

• *Guajardo v. Estelle, 568 F Supp. 1354 (S.D. Tex. 1983)*

• *Guajardo v. Tex. Dept. Crim. Justice, 363 F.3d 392 (S.D. Tex. 2004).*

The Guajardo cases specifically applies to TDCJ's correspondence rules. It will give you historical and present insight on the promulgation of BP-03.91, and how to legally proceed to challenge it in federal court. You should also get very familiar with the PLRA because it controls prisoners litigation and the types of relief we are entitled to. The federal statute can be found at 42 U.S.C. 1997e and 28 U.S.C. 1915A9c). If you need additional case law, just ask the law library to shepardize the above cases for you, and you will find more jewelz than you can use.

Filing a §1983 Civil Complaint

After doing all of the above, your next step is to file a §1983 Civil Complaint. You can file it in either state or federal court depending on your situation. However, because you will be complaining of First Amendment violations under the U.S. Constitution, you should file in federal court. Federal court has jurisdiction over federal law. But again, depending on your case and the facts of your case, sometimes filing in state court is the better route. You will have to research this issue to decide which route fits you.

You can get two §1983 civil complaint forms from the law library. One is for you to send to the court and the other is for your copy. Remember always keep copies of everything you send to the court. The most important part of filing a complaint is stating sufficient facts, which is

"enough facts to state a claim to relief." If you do not state enough facts, there's a chance your complaint will be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.

If you can get an attorney to file your complaint that will be great. However, the reality is, the vast majority of prisoners are left to litigate pro se. So, do your homework and learn the law.

My Last Wordz

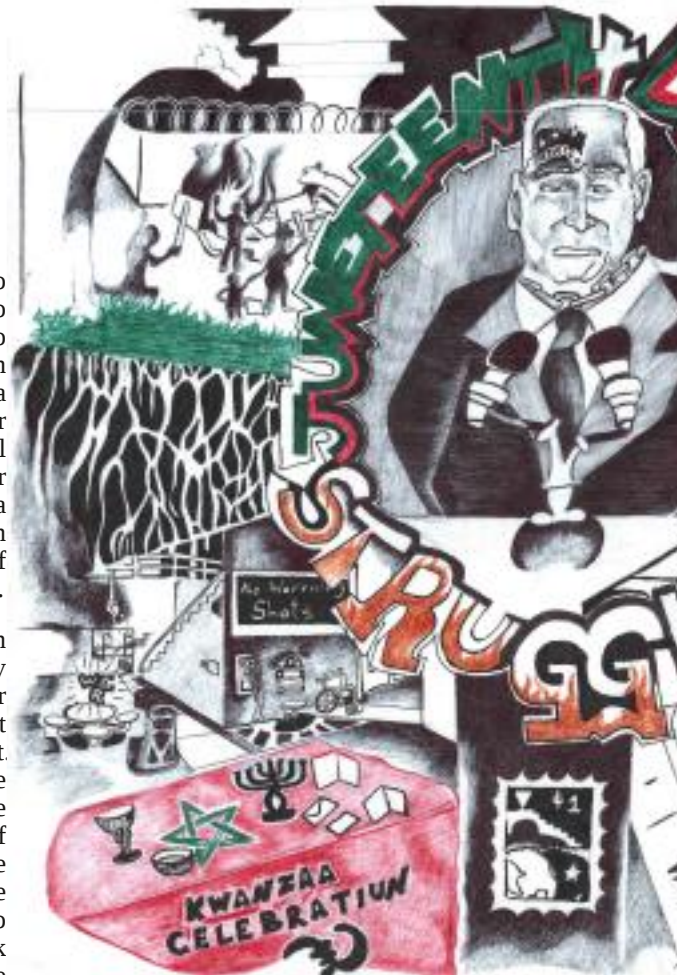
So, to all my Brotherz and Sisterz that are willing to legally fight the arbitrary censorship system nationally, I tip my hat to you all and wish you courage, patience, and persistence. Also, for those of you who are in the process and those that have already begun the process of litigation, WE are not doing this just for Us. WE are more on the front line for the voiceless and the ones that may not have the ability to STAND UP. So, I ask that WE ALL DO OUR BEST AND NOTHING LESS! Stay Blessed No Stress!

Sincerely,

Motivation Equalz Elevation

MIM(Prisons) adds: We have a more extensive guide to fighting censorship that is applicable for all states that we send to anyone facing censorship of our correspondence or literature. We print the above as a concise summary with some specific info for Texas.

This is also part of an ongoing campaign among Texas prisoners to fight the rewritten BP-03.91



mentioned above. One of the lawsuits around this campaign is *Martinez v. TBCJ, et al. #3:21-CV-00337* (see: "Update Regarding the Lawsuit on BP-03.91 Policies" from ULK 78). The judge has since denied to issue summons to each member of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. This is being appealed. The plaintiff is requesting more support from prisoners in TDCJ in the form of affidavits and/or unsworn declarations. These affidavits/declarations will help make the argument for a statewide injunction of BP-03.91 and can be sent to MIM(Prisons) to forward to the plaintiff. ■

Document Prison Abuses

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

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

Ad-Seg Drives Self-Mutilation, At Least 6 Dead in 60 Days

by Choper
February 2023

What I consider to be the most important topic since my last report is death. There have been 6 deaths that I've seen in the last 60 days here at the Bill Clements Unit. Keep in mind, I never leave my cell so for me to see them means it took place within the 40 or so cells I can see. There were a couple more we didn't get confirmation on whether they died or not, but I find it strange that no check of vitals or attempt at resuscitation were made.

Of the suicides/dead bodies I've seen "carted off" so to speak two in particular bother me. One, because I spoke to this person every day and watched as they took all his property and left him in an empty cell and actually laughed at requests for crisis or suicide prevention. He was taken out of cell with dried blood across the waist line and burnt to a crisp from the fire inside his cell. They interviewed me as part of investigation, and I tried to explain the

a father, and my friend. Now he's dead. Would he be alive if he were not locked in isolation in Ad-Seg? Yes. Period.

The second one that bothers me is the guy behind me and over one cell who tried to cut his hand off they say. When he was cut and howled for help, they went thru a lengthy process of running a team spraying 5 cans of gas in increments and running in and whopping his ass until he bled out. I didn't time it, but 18 minutes is what word is on the pod.

A third they say cut his own head off. I don't know what to say about that other than they took the body out.

In addition to the suicides there are an alarming number of us cutting and self-mutilating and hurting ourselves. Some do it to purge. Some do it to get out of cell as it's their only option to exit the cell alive, and some don't know why.

We are/were husbands, sons, brothers, fathers, etc. who committed a crime and were sent to prison. Neglect, abuse, and further were not part of the sentence yet that is where we are. We're fucked up back here! That's what I'm trying to tell you. We need exposure and HELP!

The very instant you take me out of this cell and I breathe the air in hallway or at medical, normal feelings and behavior returns. But on the wing in the cell is pain and suffering.

Note we have not had our hour out of cell or time in outside rec yards not once this year and only once in last 120 days did some of us get rec.

Food is still in my mind one of the most important issues. While over 50% of our meals are Jonny Sacks, consisting of one peanut butter and jelly accompanied by a 2" x 2" piece of

food loaf. The occasions when we do get trays of cold food I still measure it and it only fills a coffee cup partly. The measuring spoons they use apparently aren't slotted spoons so we get spoon fulls of water. Today I measured with my tablespoon: 3 tablespoons of main course gravy and what looked like cat food, 2 tablespoons of black eyed peas, 2 tablespoons of green beans and a small piece of cornbread. That's it! Filled my coffee cup half way and didn't begin to fill my tummy. Other than holiday trays we haven't seen a dessert on a tray in over 8 months. This is not the diet they request funding for, nor the diet they report to our people that they clam to be feeding us yet it is what we get.

MIM(Prisons) adds: In a recent book on the history of Texas prisons, Robert T. Chase reports in the 1940s that the:

"...near ubiquity of self mutilation had "spread" across the prison system. "Many men had cut off their fingers, mutilated their feet and cut the tendons of their legs in hopes of getting shipped from this institution" [Darrington]... The prisoners claimed that they could not "stand the beatings of the guards and took this way out to keep from being killed in the fields by the guards."

As described this was largely in response to the brutality prisoners faced when working in the fields at that time, a practice that is no longer the norm. Today the most brutal conditions prisoners face are usually in solitary confinement. The torture has shifted from primarily physical to primarily psychological. Yet this response of self-mutilation as a way to escape continues.

Solitary confinement is a form of torture used for political repression and social control. This comrade's report highlights the inhumanity that it brings. The deaths from suicide and beatings is only secondary to the deaths from K2 and fentanyl. We have continued to work to bring exposure to these issues while supporting those organizing against them. The campaign to shutdown the Restrictive Housing Units and all forms of long-term solitary in Texas is an ongoing and high-priority campaign. Texas holds the largest number of people in solitary of any state, and a higher percentage of its prisoners are in solitary than most. ■

NOTES: Robert T. Chase, 2020, *We Are Not Slaves: State Violence, Coerced Labor, and Prisoners' Rights in Postwar America*, University of North Carolina Press, p.79-80.

The Faux-Democracy of the U\$A

by Frosty
January 2023

I'm listening to an N.P.R. news report. An "African-Amerikkkan" woman is ruefully recounting the January 6th, 2021 right wing attack on "our" democracy. I wanted to laugh and cry that this sister was so lost that it was pitiful. So many confused and deluded people, even at this late hour, don't know that Amerikkka has never been a true democracy, in the way that most people have been led to believe. Amerikkka has assassinated more legitimately elected leaders, around the world, than all other states combined. They have installed dictators who starve the children, and propped up those colonial and neo-colonial police states so that the First World can live like royalty on the stolen labor and natural resources of those Shanghai-ed and enslaved societies. Throughout the past century, these overthrown dictators always seek refuge in the U.S. or Britain. *The rats always run back to the nest.* (From Baby Doc, to Jair Bolsonaro, the Shah of Iran, and many more.) That is not what truly civilized, freedom and justice-loving democracies do. That is what Nazi police states do.

Even if Amerikkka could be a democracy — which it never can — it would not be "our" democracy. Judge Roger B. Taney declared as much in 1857 or so. Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist reiterated this, in 1987 or so. It is now 2023. It's time to wake up. Marcus Garvey clearly stated, in 1923 or so, what most people still have not heard: The first piece of toilet paper was invented in 1786 or so. It was called "The United States Constitution."

In 1940 or so, a lot of Amerikkkan leaders, at the highest levels of U.S. government and industry, supported Adolf Hitler. The antics of ex-President Donald J. Trump and many U.S. leaders of government and industry (and *many millions* of oppressor nation Amerika alongside their oppressed nation allies) proved that, in 2021 — and for the foreseeable future, I'm sure, — the status quo shall remain!

Truly, the most productive years of my life were the 9 years

that I lived on various "Indian" reservations and on "hippie" communes, which modeled much of our lifestyle on First Nations' (Lakota, Diné, etc.) beliefs, and some African and Gaelic beliefs. There was the occasional Taoist or Buddhist, but we all realized we are all guests in our First Nation sisters' and brothers' home.

I gave up on Amerikkka in the early '90s. I wanted my kids' mom to come away with me to Indonesia or somewhere in the South Pacific (Fiji, the Solomon Isles), but she would have none of it. She still believed that the U.S. was a good country; like so many naive "dreamers" today. I honestly believe that many migrants who come to the U.S. are not seeking freedom; they're seeking *money*, and are probably loaded down with contraband they've stolen from someone else, or are on the run from justice. The rats always run back to the nest.

I used to think that if Africans made significant cultural and economic ties to First Nation sovereign communities, that, by now we could have established our own sovereign communities; but *very, very few* Blacks that I broached the subject to would even consider living around a "bunch of poor ass Indians," and struggling to build a community from scratch, when there's a McDonald's right around the corner. Besides, the Alaska and Wyoming wilderness is not Stacey Adams and Cadillac-friendly. I guess it was just too big of a sacrifice to make for the honor and love of our children. We don't want to empower the police state, but who can live without Tangueray and Louis Vuitton?!

If the U.S. would switch the military/police/prison budget over to health and education, and give the paltry health and education budget to the pigs and politicians, Amerikkka could quite possibly be a good country. Maybe even a *great* country! But after 500 years of this shit, I'm not gonna hold my breath. Like I said, Amerikkka has destroyed every nascent, true democracy that opposes white supremacy. ■



conditions. It doesn't give me the warm fuzzy feeling that they will improve. I'd hate to think he died for nothing. He was a good man,

Staff Bring in Fentanyl-laced Drugs, Killing Prisoners, but Anti-Drug Publications Like ULK Not Allowed

by a Texas prisoner
February 2023

This letter is to inform you of the denial of publication of your *Under Lock & Key* here at Hughes Unit. I am sending you my copy of the denial from 8 November 2022. There was one other denial but I do not have the denial form available, as this document was thrown out during our recent shakedown on 1 January 2023. The denial forms and other colored documents were taken without confiscation papers as the shakedown team ran through our pod. We have had so many deaths on our unit within the last year and more than ever just in 2023. The deaths are caused and created by the laws bringing in K2 laced with fentanyl for sale to the prisoners.

This dope is stopping hearts

on the first drag of smoke, others are choking on their own spit. This drug is so addictive that cellies are fighting for the last stick of K2. One fight on 8 Building lead to one cellmate beating his cellie to death for dope. WTF!!

All these deaths have warranted the top ranking TDCJ representatives to show up all at once. We had Huntsville, Texas laws 50 deep walking in locking this unit down, along with all regional representatives, warden and majors from other units, and top dogs like Brian Collier and other Officials of the State of Texas.

Why are we being punished for what the laws are bringing in? Shouldn't they be shaking the laws down, instead of us?

So anyways, I really appreci-

ate all the newsletters and information you have sent but I believe we are at a standstill until I begin receiving articles from you again.

22 March 2023 a comrade at Stiles Unit reports similar conditions: The regional people have been here constantly for about 2 months now trying to change the protocol here, they've even brought their own guards from other units. But these guards say that they do not like it here cause there is no structure, and no protocols in place for a change here. A lot of them say they want to be on the first bus out of here.

They have been meetings about all the suicides that they have been having here, the hangings, drug abuse, etc. Well that in itself starts with the corrupt guards that they're hiring here cause they feel

like they are not making enough money, so extra money sounds good to them.

14 February 2023 a comrade in Bridgeport Correctional Center: I was placed here due to the Heat Lawsuit as I am under the Heat Restriction. I have noticed that 70% of the people here are under 35 years of age, and have no medical issues that would qualify for any of the Medical Restriction that TDCJ uses to be placed on Heat Restriction. I would say that most are here for protection cuz they would not make it on an ID unit. But we have people in TDCJ with health conditions, like myself, that need to be here.

We have a blatant problem with K2 and most if not all have been caught with the K2 but nothing seems to happen to them. Either

these people don't want TDCJ to know or they just don't care.

MIM(Prisons) adds: Last year we released our *Revolutionary 12 Step Program* written by a USW comrade. Since then we've been distributing many copies every month to prisoners across the country. We've also been working to train those interested in running their own programs where they are. We encourage comrades in Texas to get a copy of the pamphlet and begin looking for ways to implement a program where they are to combat this plague of deaths.

It is truer than ever that fighting drug abuse in prisons is an integral part of fighting the abuse and oppression of the U.S. prison system. ■

Book Review: "Power to New Afrika — Essays by Comrade Triumphant"

by Pilli of Republic of Aztlán
February 2023

This zine offered a breath of fresh air in terms of political line coming out of the concentration kamps. Imprisoned New Afrika (like Aztlán and other oppressed nations) has plenty of rebels, those rising up or conscious that we stand on the side of the people against the pig. The anger and defiance is as strong as ever, but ideology that is strong and stuffed with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is what is often lacking from the prison writings of today. *Power to New Afrika* is another gem that contributes to filling this void.

Looking at this zine through brown lenses, I agreed with the assessment that it was after the assassination of Martin Luther King that the Black vanguard attempted to steer the Black movement onto the next stage of resistance. We of the Republic of Aztlán have also made a similar assessment recently from the data/chat that tells us the state is planning to assassinate a key figure of the Chicano movement, and our assessment was the same where we feel that the Chican@ vanguard should use this to take Aztlán to the next level of resistance.

On page 10 in the zine, the writer discusses the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PG-RNA) and how since 1968 at their birth they have been attempting to obtain land "legally," but a report is cited from a memorandum sent to the FBI director at the time in 1970 J. Edgar Hoover from Special Agent in Charge in Jackson, Mississippi which is titled "Counter Intelligence Operations Being Effected, tangible results (Republic of New Afrika)":

"Since March 1968... the RNA has been trying to buy and lease land in Mississippi... Counter intelligence measures have been able to abort all RNA efforts to obtain land in Mississippi."

COINTELPRO is real. When I read this I thought of every doofus who has ever asked me the absurd question: "do you REALLY think COINTELPRO is fucking with us?" I've found that the more liberal on the spectrum the less they believe in a COINTELPRO, the more radical you are the more you know how real it is. The fact

TI@ Tacos trying to run for a colonizer position in Washington DC or as state governor, while claiming to be revolutionary. The Tom compradors have suckers believing in their foolishness, but the truth is simple — one cannot be considered a revolutionary while aspiring to be, or supporting a U.S. President or governor. U.S. imperialism is the enemy of the world's majority and in this case, the Trojan Horse tactic will not work.

This zine addresses the battle of ideas that I feel apply to the Chican@ Nation as well. In this writing, the author writes of the "war for the New Afrikan mind" which goes on to describe "independence vs integration" really being a historical dialectical materialism versus post-modernist philosophy. This truth needs to also be embraced and thought by all Chican@ cadre today as well. This political line really amounts to life or death to Aztlán. One nourishes and builds the nation, the other poisons and destroys it. One political line wants to burn the plantation down and the other wants to defend it.

It is a misnomer to entertain the notion of Brown, Black, Red, or Yellow "Amerikans," for the word Amerika is but the name of the white-nation. This zine really unpacks this for the reader particularly, for the Black Nation; but it is mostly applicable to the Chican@ Nation as well.

The slave system is addressed in this zine as well and rightfully so. One cannot give an analysis of colonialism in the U.S. without understanding how the slave system and subsequent "paper" abolishment of slavery play into the role of semi-colonialism today.

What we should understand is that by using the so-called abolitionment of slavery as a bargaining chip, Amerika was able to at once overthrow the Confederacy while continuing white supremacy by other means. Today we see the same internal struggle within the white nation being carried out by other means via Republican vs Democrat squabbles using the oppressed nations' wants and aspirations as bargaining chips while at the same time keeping white supremacy intact.

It was refreshing to read how the author describes how a revolutionary nationalist must be a socialist. For the Chican@ Nation this is also true. A revolutionary nationalist is a socialist or communist in most cases. We overstand that capitalism and imperialism specifically is the source of our despair.

Another great point raised in this zine was on page 37-38 where the author discusses the contradictions among the people, and specifically discusses the most influential orgs for New Afrika of the time (1907-1925) being the NAACP, Garvey's UNIA, and the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). According to the author, the ABB was founded by "proletarians," and thus had the leading line being led by Black Marxists. Ey goes onto say:

"ABB and the UNIA were both highly successful in organizing the broadest masses of our nation as well as linking our struggle concretely with the international anti-imperialist struggle. For this reason we say that they advanced our people further than the NAACP, but they didn't enjoy the same fame or support on the popular front. This of course is due to their class make up and the fact that the integrationist aspect as always, is aligned with the empire's agenda. Thus, the colonizer controlled popular front has and will always lend credence to those people and groups, and ideas that in the final analysis, run counter to the interest of our nation."

This is deep. Big lessons to be gleaned here. For one, the NAACP was and continues to be a group of Black compradors who have worked on reforms, although good deeds do help people on a small scale, the work of liberal orgs like the NAACP also corral people into having faith in the empire and promoting the idea of working within a capitalist system will free people from oppression. This accounts to creating more supporters of empire. For this reason orgs like NAACP for Black folks, or National Council for la Raza (NCLR) and their kind for Brown folks, are simply the labor bureaucracy for bourgeois politics and thus are promoted widely by the U.S. government and its propaganda media arm. Meanwhile, real revolutionary orgs like the Republic of New Afrika, the Republic of Aztlán, the Communist Party of Aztlán (Maoist) or MIM(Prisons) will not be given Hollywood style commercials nor be invited to the White people House in Washington, D.C. anytime soon to sing x-mas carols around the tree (not that anyone wants to). The point is that Tomism is rewarded and the Uncle Tom orgs of all stripes are given resources to become popular and the real ones are smothered like a baby in the crib to use Lenin's quote.

The mostly unconscious masses (and oftentimes self-proclaimed "communists") often erroneously connect popular with correctness, or numbers in an org as correct political line. This is very wrong. The colonizers work hard to make this so. When we hear on the news about Amerikkka pouring billions into its war machine, understand that a part of this is promoting these Chican@ or New Afrikan Uncle Tom orgs that tell its members to vote for an enemy political candidate.

This zine is now required reading for members of our organization. Free New Afrika! Free Aztlán! Free the land! ■

Power to New Afrika available to prisoners for \$3 or work trade, free on our website



that the Feds in their own words admit to sabotaging RNA efforts like legally purchasing land tells us that even "legal" efforts are not safe if the state feels you're a threat.

On page 11 the author correctly identifies the principal contradiction within the New Afrikan nation being between the political force of independence versus political forces of integration. This is also true for the Chican@ nation. Internally, we struggle with getting free and the Ti@ Tomas' struggles to keep serving massa on the plantation. We see these

... Continued from p. 7 ... **Eastside Dreams**

permission, we will witness this during a future civil war I'm sure.

The author reveals he is the product of a Mexican migrant father and a white mother who met at a dance hall in the Barrio in East San Jose. As a result he hints at the national oppression that came with this union. For example, his mother's white father (who was ironically raised himself by his white mother's Mexican migrant boyfriend) who would tell Rodriguez' white mother Mildred not to go to the dances because he didn't want her to interact with the "bad people" (these were Chican@-Mex dances). Sadly though, Rodriguez does not analyze this and unpack why this national chauvinism ("racism") exists or how it affected him and his homies growing up amidst it. This reveals that Rodriguez's choice of either not wanting to "take his book there" (political courage), or not having the political consciousness to crack that open for us all to see.

It was nice to read about his mom opposing her father and siding with Rodriguez's migrant father, eventually marrying him, having children, and even learning Spanish to communicate and to nurture Spanish in her chil-

dren. As appealing as this biography was to me in depicting barrio life, I must say the parts describing being in the concentration kamp was more interesting to me.

Rodriguez describes a scene where he's being taken out of Juvenile Hall by a "Chican@ guard" who reveals information to him whereas the white guards were menacing to him. It was interesting that Rodriguez objectively identifies the pig as a Chican@. Most would not, our mistreatment and oppression likely would have many identify the pig as many things but not Chican@. It is true that people identify as they please; a person can assimilate but without knowing what they identify as we can also identify what we perceive them to be (i.e. a blond hair, blue eyes white man or a New Afrikan womyn, etc.). We may not be right, but it's our initial perception. A pig can be a Chican@ or a Chican@ traitor; but a Chican@ nonetheless.

It would have been nice to read a more political take on this book, but it was enjoyable to read a Chican@ novelist who does not bend to subjectivity in his novel and I look forward to review his other books available. ■

The Blind Politics of "Justice"

by a California prisoner
March 2023

The Governor of California has decided to rename San Quentin "Prison" to "Rehabilitation Center." This is just one more appeasement given to the millions of Californians who have suffered the injustice of incarceration. Politics has no more place in the justice system than religion has in government. However, the injustice system remains more political than the legislative branch.

Governor Newsom's play at "restorative justice," AKA rehabilitation for "some of the less dangerous criminals," is as false as his smile. For instance, the old lady that was hypnotized as a child by Manson to commit a murder of someone famous has been granted parole (found suitable for release from prison) no less than 15 times by a board of experts in evaluating that kind of thing (Parole Board). However, Governor Newsom, who is not an expert, has taken it upon himself to deny (veto the Parole Board's decision) each and every time!

That is only one instance that this two-faced politician has denied parole to people. This makes clear that Newsom's notion of rehabilitation is purely symbolic.

Nothing more than the smile; handshake of Satan himself.

Funny, this morning on the mainstream news, Mike Pence is accusing the Manhattan District Attorney of politicizing the law for charging former President Trump. Funny, politics in the law? How can a prosecutor have so much power to arrest a former President of the United States? Funny because these same rich assholes gave that enormous power to prosecutors and police and judges when it was used to arrest the poor man. But now that it is used to arrest the rich man, it is politics?! Did these rich people really think that if they built a monster that the monster could be controlled? Did they really think that the injustice system would only be applied to hurt and kill poor people?

Pence and Trump should not be surprised now. Politics have always been part of the law for the poor man. Despite the image of a blindfold on Lady Justice, the proletariat knows all too well that the law is political. Now the injustice system monster will show its ugly belly to anyone and everyone because that is how much power the pigs have been given.

Perhaps now we can see what California Governor Newsom's

motivations are in pretending to abolish prison. Is he afraid of the monster he created? We all heard him say on T.V. that he is tired of paying the trillions of dollars his prison industrial complex eats up.

His notions of restorative justice are a little misplaced though. Rather than educate prisoners he should be defunding his prison system monster and putting the trillions back into the community — after all he can't have his cake and eat it too. But that seems too much to ask of the Devil. He already said his rehabilitation is only for some and "not the more dangerous criminals."

Anyone with half a brain knows that the real cause of crime is poverty. Poverty caused by the trillions of dollars going to the police and prisons and not to the community.

MIM(Prisons) adds: We agree that all prisoners are political. The state paints itself as being an arbiter of blind justice as this comrade states, when in reality it is the tool of one class to use against others. That is why real change requires changing the state from the hands of the bourgeoisie to that of the proletariat, not just shifting tax money around from prisons to more social services. ■

Revolutionaries Hijacked by Capitalism

by Melo x
January 2023

"That is to instill a psychological sense of self-worth, without actually altering the material conditions that actually cause the lack of self-esteem in the first place, nor do they attempt to alter the conditions" — Comrade Triumphant, Power to New Afrika

I agree with Comrade Triumphant. I would just like to add a little and ask a question. This quote — if I'm not mistaken — speaks to those Black bourgeoisie who led the masses to believe that pro-Black capitalism was progress. It is said that the achievements and rewards gained from jobs, hustles and labor wins the respect and dignity from their peers and society. That status in society is what the people seek and this is what instills that psychological sense of self-worth. But before they reached that status they had a lack of self-esteem because of their lack of material goods. They were comparing themselves to those that had and recognized that they themselves had not. So in comparison, they were less than because they had less than.

Once wealth and status is accomplished the conditions that created the "lack of" in the Black Nation remains, therefore continuing its destructive effect on the people of that nation. This destruction is both on the objective and subjective level: the people's revolutionary spirit gets hijacked by Black capitalism. Individualism gets promoted instead

of unity because of the competition that comes along with it. We then see ourselves as enemies fighting over crumbs at the lower levels of this capitalist society. Now those that make it out of the poor communities ride high on their psychological sense of self-worth and disregard their communities. They get big-headed and become bourgeoisified. And the only time they reach back is either training the people to be entertainers, drug pushers, or funding politicians who favor reform — from which we all know are just tools of pacifying the people.

This is a major problem with trying to revolutionize the people. First because we must show that we can produce in a capitalist society. Nobody wants to hear from someone who has no money how to run their lives. So the revolutionary may start with intentions on gaining influence and persuading the masses to revolutionize, but if to do so they must participate in the same thing that extorts from the people — that's a contradiction and a bit hypocritical. Not to mention it's a slippery slope. That psychological sense of self-worth becomes a high, then the Black capitalist begins to chase that trying to stay relevant. And to do so — more money must be made, more material things must be bought, and more of our brothers/sisters/friends from our own nations and other oppressed nations of world imperialism will be exploited and manipulated as a result. So my question is how to do that without

falling victim to embourgeoisification: the desire to have, so once the proletariat has, how does he not become bourgeoisified?

Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons) responds: The premise presented here by Melo X is that nobody will listen to someone without money, so we must make money to succeed at revolution. Ey goes on to assert that to succeed at making money traps us in a life of chasing money. I would challenge both of these premises.

The first premise is one that i've heard many times. I've even received feedback from the masses that i was not presenting myself in a way that garners respect. There are countless organizations that use the dress up approach to get respect in the hood. The Black Panthers even did this to an extent with their uniforms and black leather jackets. Many thought this looked cool. But they did not present themselves as having wealth, they were mostly kids, often with no job, no hustle, living in cramped conditions. They merely presented themselves as being organized, disciplined, powerful.

The point that Triumphant was making in that article is that we can present and assert power in ways that are not how capitalism teaches us to do so. And in fact we must assert power in these ways in order to actually meet our real needs, as Melo X recognizes.

The second premise, that chasing money is a trap has a lot

of truth to it. It is often a necessary evil. But not because we need to be rich for the masses to follow us, but because we must fund our projects. We must demonstrate to the masses how to be effective. A strong mass-based movement should have diversified sources of resources coming from the masses themselves because they see its effectiveness. Our mass base in prisons has been growing in the form of financial support over the last few years, which we see as a success. Yet most of our funding comes from comrades working at jobs outside.

Having to work is about survival and basic functioning in our society. If you don't have stable housing and basic needs met, it is hard to be consistent in organizing work. For most of us at this time, working is a necessary evil. And it will eat up a lot of our time and energy. As such it will affect our consciousness as well. But it is not so addictive that we will become slaves to the dollar. We should all strive to find ways to get the money we need for our own sustenance and the sustenance of the movement in a way that best allows us to serve the people. In a high-cost, highly monetized society this is a challenge that we must approach strategically.

If you are an individual just trying to do good for your people in this society, yes you will most likely become bourgeoisified as you succeed in this society. It is by putting politics in command,

using Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as our guiding ideology, that can keep us from failing into that trap.

SunWukong of MIM(Prisons) adds: Another aspect of gaining respect from the masses is through mass line. We can learn from history on this aspect — namely the Black Panther Party's (BPP) serve the people programs and the Communist Party of China's (CPC) people's war. Whenever the Chinese communists first entered a village and started setting up a base area, it surveyed the material needs and subjective wants of the local masses. Many of these problems included backward irrigation methods and agricultural practices that have been used in China for centuries, and because many of the Chinese communists came from an academic/intellectual backgrounds, they were able to gain knowledge of more "modern" and developed agricultural methods of the advanced imperialist countries. Once the mass line is set up, the peasants would even offer their sons and daughters to the People's Liberation Army to fight for the revolutionary cause. Green fatigues and red stars didn't have much cultural aesthetic clout in semi-feudal China, but it was the implementation of the mass line and building the proper relations with the masses that gained the CPC so much respect to where peasants were fine with their kids joining a guerrilla army. ■

Notes: (1) Triumphant, August 2022, Power to New Afrika, MIM Distributors.

... Continued from p. 1 ... Inflation

Bond prices are at the heart of the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and others. Socialist China didn't issue bonds, because they didn't take on federal debt.

Prior to liberation, in 1935-37, the Chinese currency was pegged to the USD. As a result, when inflation spiked in the United States, that inflation was amplified in China. In *ULK 79* we discussed the current inflation crisis in Ghana (see: *"A Look At the People's Struggle In Ghana: How Capitalism Exploits"*). Because Ghana does not control its currency and does not keep out foreign currency and speculators, their currency (the Cedi) is manipulated by the imperialists. This is true across the Third World, where inflation will continue to be felt much more harshly than it is for us here in the belly of the beast.

The other problem in countries like Ghana is the foreign debt. Inflation is playing a big role here, as the USD becomes more expensive compared to local currencies, larger and larger portions of the money supplies in exploited countries are going to pay the same interest rates on loans from the imperialists. Debt forgiveness in these countries needs to occur to protect the lives of millions threatened with starvation today.

According to the World Food Program, "An expected 345.2 million people [are] projected to be food insecure in 2023 — more than double the number in 2020."⁽⁵⁾ The recent increase in famine is mainly in the poorest, exploited countries, and triggered by a combination of inflation, war and climate change.

We know there is enough food in the world to feed everyone.

The problem is capitalism cannot be efficient enough to distribute it to places where super-exploitation occurs. And super-exploitation is necessary to maintain profit rates. Without positive profit rates, capitalism grinds to a halt.

When socialist China had actual shortages in essentials, they would ration them instead of increasing prices and making the problem worse. Then they would focus on increasing production of those essentials (rather than decreasing production like the capitalists do when there's no profits to be had).⁽⁶⁾ Contrast this with prisoners (and everyone else) in the United States who are now paying higher prices for food and other essentials because the commissary is operated on the capitalist market. The anarchy of production under capitalism means we constantly have too much or too little of various goods as individuals decide what to produce based on their own profit interests. And this is particularly noticeable when the economy starts to slow down or shows volatility as it has been lately.

Socialist China focused on production to manage and drive the economy, whereas imperialist United States focuses on money supply to do so. In socialist China the banks were merely a tool to manage and allocate resources to manage production for the people's needs.

Why Banks are failing

As mentioned above, Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) had a big problem due to the value of its federal bonds dropping in value. They had bought the bonds when interest rates were much lower, so as the Fed continues to increase interest rates these old bonds drop in value. They cannot cash in the

bonds until their term is due and they can only sell them at a loss. Some big players began pulling their money out of the bank, perhaps related to this knowledge. Soon SVB could not cover the deposits they owed people. The U. S. government has stepped in to cover it, and now the FDIC is covering infinite deposits if your bank fails, instead of the previous limit of \$250,000. This is another sign of the willingness of the imperialists to throw newly printed cash at the problem.

One interesting point here is that federal bonds are a "safe" investment. SVB didn't fail because of garbage mortgage-backed securities as happened in 2008. So the financial system is failing firms that play it safe this time around. In addition, according to the FDIC, SVB was not in the worst situation.⁽⁷⁾ In other words, other banks in the United States have worse balance sheets than SVB and will fail if there is a run on their money. "The total unrealised losses sitting on the books of all banks is currently \$620bn, or 2.7% of US GDP."⁽⁷⁾

The biggest failure this year, at the time of this writing, was the 165 year-old bank Credit Suisse. Meanwhile the market is jittery around many large imperialist banks with stock prices seeing big dips and credit default swaps (CDS) spiking in price. CDSs going up means other institutions are not confident these banks can pay off their debts and are charging more to insure bonds from these banks. The differing interests of these major financial institutions are beginning to show on the markets as they bet against each other.

Conclusion

Prisoners are on some of the most fixed budgets of any population in this country. In order to get their basic needs related to



Chinese production could focus on meeting need during the socialist years.

nutrition, hygiene and outside contact, prisons need to increase pay rates and limits on how much money prisoners can spend and receive from the outside. In some states these reforms have already occurred, and this is in the interests of the commissary companies, which the prison systems want to keep satisfied.

The solution to the bigger economic contradictions playing out now is obviously replacing capitalism with socialism. The report from socialist China cited above succinctly explains why this is the case. Capitalism doesn't just put profit over the need of people and life on this planet, capitalism actually requires profit to function. When profits dry up, as we're seeing some evidence of right now, capitalism can't produce what

people need. Of course, we're also seeing various forms of state intervention to ensure that this does not happen by providing more money and creating profitable situations using the central banks. But these contradictions continue to exist, and different interests are acting in anarchic ways, so that state intervention cannot always work as it does in a socialist economy. ■

Notes:
1. Peng Kuang-hsi, 1976, *Why China Has No Inflation*, Foreign Languages Press: Peking, p.23-24.
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Stock_Exchange
3. Peng, p.28.
4. Peng, p.30.
5. World Food Programme, "2023: Another Year of Extreme Jeopardy for those Struggling to Feed their Families."
6. Peng, p.37
7. Michael Roberts, 21 March 2023, "Bank Busts and Regulation", *The Next Recession*

Filing Suit Against TDCJ Staff for Setup

by a Texas prisoner
February 2023

When I first got to the Michael Unit about 8 months ago I was placed on safe keeping for my protection but I'm still considered General Population (G.P.) because we still get all the regular privileges of G.P. prisoners we are just housed separately.

Anyway I get here and there are no showers, no rec, no day room, no TV, and no phones on this section. We had to sit down multiple times in large groups in order to get administration to force the C.O.s to just give us showers. Oh and mind you that they are housing medium and high security prisoners on the same section as P4 and P5 prisoners. We are not supposed to be housed amongst each other at all.

Well staff aren't doing anything about getting what we are supposed to have. After about 60 days I started initiating I.C.S.s, or "use of force", causing ranking C.O.s to come down and force regular C.O.s to do their job. We kept getting Johnnies for food with basically nothing in them. Then they started to feed half of us and the rest we had to force them to feed us.

So because I orchestrated all this sitting down and standing up for all our right (yes, I initiated this behavior to buck the C.O.s), I was assaulted. We set fires, flooded, and basically forced the wardens to fix our problem but it only lasted so long before we would have to do it again.

We finally got them to start leaving all the doors open 24/7 so we could run our own showers and day room rec and forced them to put in phones. Then they brought the tablets T.D.C.S. sys-

tem wide. So I believe that the administration on this unit has orchestrated the assault on me that occurred on January 31, 2023.

So let me explain exactly what happened leading up to this assault seven days prior.

A prisoner set a fire in his cell and attempted to kill himself through smoke inhalation. I got the pickets attention after the prisoner passed out. I ran in and dragged him out of the cell and put out the fire. About six days later they moved me into the cell the prisoner tried to kill himself in. So the next day they moved some prisoner into the cell with me. I only weigh 110lbs. This offender weighs 190lbs, 30lbs over the 50lbs weight difference limit per housing policy. That's two violations already. Next I was talking to my family via tablet two days later. Then, bam, I get blindsided and the prisoner assaults me. I wind up with 5 stitches above my right eyebrow, 3 staples in a gash on my head, and 2 in another gash on my head. They rushed me to the hospital.

When I got back, a Lieutenant asked me to write a witness statement for an Offender Protection Investigation (O.P.I.). My statement was: "My life is not in danger. I do not want to file an O.P.I." They filed it on my behalf anyway and placed me in another building with no light and brought my property the next day. The next day, they moved me back to the same cell with a new cellie, another major violation because I was still under O.P.I. status, supposed to be in a Restrictive Housing Area by myself until I saw the Unit Classification Committee. On 8 February 2023, I was moved again. I had basically nothing of what was in my

cell and they did not even inventory any of it. I lost stuff that meant a lot to me that is irreplaceable because of sentimental value. They also "lost" my state ID somehow.

So I am filing a §1983 Civil Claims Suit again TDCJ Michael Unit Administration as a whole because I believe this was all set up... for me to get hurt because the U.C.C. major said, "We have to ship you to cover our ass because we fucked up."

I filed my step 1 on and got it back. Today I'm filing my step 2.

This is my first civil suit. I am asking for any material to help me in winning this suit. As of right now prisoners are helping me with what they can and said that I need to get a copy of the Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook but I don't have the resources nor funds to purchase one. I am not the first offender this has happened to on this unit but I do want to be the last. I am going to do everything in my power to ensure it does not happen again.

I have been fighting for prisoner rights for seven years now and they finally broke the last straw with me. I'm going to war with this pen. To the courts.

Here on 12 Building we are still setting fire and flooding everyday. Please help us.

MIM(Prisons) responds: Much respect comrade for what you are doing on behalf of Texas prisoners in the face of state violence and repression. We have placed an order for you for the Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook. We do not offer legal assistance ourselves, but encourage you to continue to report on your organizing efforts here in *Under Lock & Key*. ■

South Carolina RHU Targets Leaders for Isolation, Repression Against Policy

by a South Carolina prisoner
March 2023

Pursuant to *South Carolina Constitution Article I, § 1*, All political power is vested in and derived from the people only, therefore, they have the right at all times to modify their form of government.

Pursuant to *S.C. Const. Art. I, § 2*, The General Assembly shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government or any department thereof for a redress of grievances.

The South Carolina Department Of Corrections Current Mission Statement quoted as follows:

"Protect the Public, Protect the Employees, Protect the Inmates"

Current SCDC policies, procedures, and practices serve to create an environment in direct conflict and opposition with their "Mission Statement". Furthermore, SCDC's "Mission Statement" should be expanded to include educational and rehabilitative goals. The entire system needs to be restructured to meet all the needs and goals effectively and efficiently. "Protection" is just one of the many needs.

The current course that the SCDC leadership is following is

constantly creating a "hostile and dangerous" prison population. Continuing in this direction can only lead to disaster. This system has experienced more violent conduct and behavior in the past 12 years (remember the 2018 Lee riot) than in all the years prior, and with the current administration in place, and no incentive to promote good behavior, we can only expect the cycle to continue. [editor: the author does not provide a source to support this claim]

Security Detention (S.D.)

Pursuant to SCDC policy *Op-22.38, Restrictive Housing Unit § 9.4*:

"The inmate is identified as a high-risk security threat group member and has committed a level one (i) disciplinary offense, or is believed to be in a leadership position within a security threat group and has coerced another inmate(s) to commit any acts or behaviors listed in Sections 9.1-9.3 of this policy..."

As of 12 August 2022, I myself as well as many others were taken out of the general prison population and placed in Segregation ("RHU") and reclassified as a Security Detention ("S.D."). No one committed a level (i) offense or any disciplinary offense nor were we given a 48-hour notice informing us that we have a classification review for "S.D.", per SCDC policy *Op-22.38, § 9.7 and 9.4*. SCDC Deputy Director Dennis Paterson is targeting so-

called gang members, religious leaders, anyone that confidential inmates ("C.I.'s") inform them about.

Majority of the affected prisoners are being punished for the same offense(s) twice. I myself from 2010-2017 was held in RHU as a validated STG-SD. The DDO have me as well as others back in segregation for the same thing. We haven't committed no level 1 offense or any disciplinary infractions. So where is the evidence to support this violation?

Pursuant to *Sandin v. Conner*, 515 U.S. 472, 484, 1155. ct. 2293, 132 L. Ed. 2d 418 (1995):

"the Supreme Court declared that prisoners have a liberty interest in avoiding confinement conditions that impose "atypical and significant hardship on the inmate in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life"..."

Also see *Burnette v. Fahey*, 687 F.3d 171, 180 (4th Cir. 2012); *Incumaa v. Stirling*, 2015 U.S. App. Lexis 11321; *Wilkerson v. Goodwin*, 774 F.3d 845, 854 (5th Cir. 2014).

SCDC is constantly targeting gang members, religious leaders, and prisoners who have influence. SCDC either sends these prisoners out-of-state to private prisons, placed them in segregation as Security Detention, transfer them to other institutions, or SCDC also goes as far as to put

Continued on next page...

Colorado Prison Censors New Afrikan Literature

by a Colorado prisoner
February 2023

In another quest to deny me my mail and books I guess you guys sent some material they say had too much tape. They wouldn't tell me other than that they send it back, so could you please take the tape off and send it back to me?

And also, I have another bone to pick with these motherfuckers — they deny me all my Black Author Books (Donald Goines, Sister Soulja, Iceberg Slim) because they say it contains too many cuss words. Whereas we can have all the James Patterson, John Grishams, and the white authors where they talk about killing and raping women, but that's fine. We can get that sent in no problem, but a Black author saying "shit", "motherfucker," or talking about drugs we get those books rejected simply by them looking at the cover of the book.

The white authors talk about raping and killing 100 women; the officers have no problem with that. I even asked the mail guy to give me a list of authors we can and can't get. He says no there's too many authors. That's bullshit. They're violating my First Amendment rights. If I was some kind of way I could sue the shit out of their ass, I would.

MIM(Prisons) adds: We often put sticker tabs on *Under Lock & Key* to keep it folded for mailing. This is what the Colorado DOC is objecting to. We have mail rejected by different prisons for staples, for labels, for manila envelopes, we even had a letter rejected for stickers once because it had a postage stamp on it! It's all political as this comrade points out with the books that are rejected and not. ■

Halting OGOM Distribution Until DRC is Challenged



by MIM(Prisons)
February 2023

For years we have offered the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ's) Offender Grievance Operations Manual (OGOM) for sale to Texas prisoners. As we've reported previously, the manual has been removed from all Texas law libraries (see: "*TDCJ Upholds Censorship of their own Grievance Manual*" from *ULK 77*). The OGOM is a crucial reference for prisoners to understand and utilize the grievance process to address staff abuse and misconduct. Yet the TDCJ has deemed it illegal for us to mail it to fellow prisoners at their own cost.

Of the many copies we've sent to Texas prisoners in the last two years only one was confirmed received. A third were confirmed to have been censored by the TDCJ. The rest are of unknown fate because almost everyone we sent the OGOM to never wrote to us again.

Since we have been told by the TDCJ countless times that they will not allow us to mail

their own manual to prisoners (and since this has not proven an effective organizing tool — almost everyone we send it to never contacts us again) we are not going to mail this publication again until someone can successfully challenge the decision by the TDCJ.

We did have one comrade who requested the OGOM on the premise that they will file a lawsuit once it is censored. The OGOM we sent was censored in November, appealed, and denied by the Director's Review Committee on 6 February 2023 with the justification of "in contradiction with BP-03.91". The comrade should be prepared to go to court now that the appeals process has been exhausted per the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA). We will report any updates on this battle in *ULK*.

UPDATE: As we go to press in April 2023, the last OGOM we mailed out was received by the prisoner who ordered it. We are glad to hear it. But for now we are sticking with our decision above. ■

New Lawsuit Against San Mateo County's Prison Mail Surveillance System

by Grim of United Struggle from Within
March 2023

The Bay Area is the latest site of our all out legal war against digital-mail prison profiteer Smart Communications. San Mateo County, located on the peninsula between San Francisco and San Jose, instituted the Mail-Guard system used by Florida-based Smart Communications in late 2021 in its county jail. The county had the second lawsuit to date brought against it for its use of the system. The first was filed last fall, which alleged (validly I'm sure) exposure of private communications between attorneys and their clients to correctional guards.

The new lawsuit filed last week by an extremely influential legal coalition including the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Social Justice Legal Foundation and Columbia University's

Knight First Amendment Institute aims to get a judge to declare the mail system has violated its subjects' First and Fourth Amendment rights. Ultimately the aim is to order the county to stop using it and purge all retained electronic mail records. Record requests by San Jose-based civil rights group Silicon Valley De-Bug have shown scanned mail is retained and able to be accessed by jail staff for seven years according to the contract, even after a person has been released from jail.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is an exciting addition to the legal team involved in the assault on this totalitarian surveillance system. Formed in 1990 by John Gilmore, John Perry Barlow and Mitch Kapor, this international non-profit digital rights group based in San Francisco, CA got its original financial backing from Mitch Kapor and Apple co-founder Steve Woz-

niak. The EFF has handled (and won) many high profile cases against companies like Google and Facebook, but its most famous case (its first, that also led to its creation) preserved forever in historical hacker lore, happened in early 1990 against the U.S. Secret Service for its illegal raid/search and seizure operation of Steve Jackson Games. This was one case of many happening at the time across the United States against alleged hackers spurred along by a state and federal task force code-named Operation Sundevil.

Steve Jackson Games was raided due to complete incompetence by Secret Service personnel who thought a handbook for a role-playing game by Steve Jackson Games called "GURPS Cyberpunk" was actually a handbook for computer crime, sort of a hacker's version of the Anarchist's Cookbook. The win-

ning of this case started EFF's promotion and defense of computer and Internet-related civil liberties.

While the case against San Mateo County's use of Smart Communications mail system has not been decided yet, we the imprisoned lumpen can only hope that the plaintiffs which number 5 prisoners at San Mateo County Jail, several family members, and Oakland-based artists collective ABO Comix, pass up on any instantly gratifying concessions offered in settlement like what happened in the *Ashker* settlement in the aftermath of the California Hunger Strikes and see this lawsuit through to its glorious conclusion.

MIM(Prisons) adds: We have published a series of articles in recent years addressing this new trend in complicated digital mail systems that just make communi-

cations with the outside world more difficult and more censored. Across the board the main reason given for these systems is to prevent drugs from entering prisons. A recent report from a comrade in Hughes Unit in Texas on the continued rise in fentanyl deaths from K-2 brought in by staff (see *"Staff Bring in Fentanyl-laced Drugs, Killing Prisoners, but Anti-Drug Publications Like ULK Not Allowed"* on page 9) reiterates the hypocrisy of this claim. Meanwhile Hughes Unit remains one of the biggest censors of mail from MIM Distributors in the state of Texas.

We appreciate the focus of these organizations on the importance of connection to family and community and welcome them in the battle against Smart Communications, JPay and other digital mail vendors profiting off of prisoners and their families while imposing a surveillance state on all of us. ■

Gone Astray

by Comrade Tatum
January 2023

Ain't got no time for that Jamaa drama,
let's squash the squabble, squabble,
and fight for more Black Power.
Wasn't Huey & the Panthers a perfect example?
I guess not cause it's still Black on Black in this very hour.
We suppose to be brova's,
showing mad love to one another,
know what I mean Kaka?
But instead i'm emptying this four-five,
all in ya head wit nuffin but lead "Bye-Bye"!
I guess we said fuck the movement, HUH?
let's keep on adding to Black problems.
But didn't George say to the people a promise?
I guess most of you saying promises are meant to be broken.
George, Jonathan and for Bobby all day in vain,
haven't you caused enough heartache and pain
we all should be a damn shame,
but never mind all that,
let's remind the younger mwenzi's why Jamaa came.
Long Live Da Black Guerrillas ■

A Black Thought

by a Florida prisoner
April 2020

Relegated to Amerika's black belt blackballed
As black guards and black sheep in societies appalled
By me, a black god fallen from the black sky
A black swan while in flight who has forgotten how to fly
A black king riding mighty upon a black panther's back
As his throne because his throne has been plundered and sacked
My scepter a blackstoned black fist of black power
A black bishop prophesying spitting fire until the hour
A blacksmith doof the ascension of black slaves overriding the black box
The black moor educated in the school of hardknocks
In blue rage and black redemption a black leader of our days
Trained in zulu speak to strike aside the black's chains
A black mamba moving swiftly across the plains of Kemet
Protecting youthful black diamonds from oppression's strong net
I am George Jackson a black guerilla in the mist
A blacksmith forging iron amongst societies blacklist
I am Assata, an "extreme" black radical
The black messiah that J. Edgar Hoover couldn't capture
Relegated to Amerikkka's black bottom blackballed
As black death and black gangstas in societies appalled
By me, a black pearl risen from the black sea
The black child who in birth has remembered how to dream ■

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.

CDCR Freezes Elderly Inmates in Retaliation of Grievance Campaigns

by AV Brown Berets
February 2023

I am writing you today in response to an article you published in your Winter 2023 edition of *Under Lock & Key*. It's true grievances don't work, but it's not just in Nevada (see: *"Nevada Prisoners Call Strike Over Food, Abuse and Solitary"* from *ULK 80*) where this is the case — it's also here in the California Department of Corrections (CDCR). They have become callous and adept in covering up their wrongs; or find some minor significance in order to deny or just throw out our grievance and hold their green line even when they know that it's a heinous act, which one of their own is committing.

Such is the case here at California Medical Facility (CMF) where C.O. Clark has been subjecting god awful pain and suffering on an aging population by running a gulag with temperatures in the high 30's and low 40's throughout the night. Pouring rain and broken windows are in every dorm. C.O. Clark insists on turning off the heater and running the swamp cooler full-blast all night long which has had a detrimental and highly damaging effect on my sciatica. I have spoken to him on numerous occasions but all my talking, explaining, and pleading falls upon deaf ears. What he is in fact doing is operating a gulag here at the California Medical Facility and freezing out the senior/aging population.

... Continued from page 12

propaganda on prisoners' names so that violence can come upon them. SCDC administration has a habit of setting rules, and then applying them in ways that are in complete contradiction to each other.

Security Detention inmates have no access to basic life necessities such as:

- Proper hygiene products (only state issue hygiene)
- Adequate bed lining (only a thin mattress, 1 blanket, 1 sheet)
- Cells are never clean
- No telephone use
- Mail is limited and censored
- No adequate food or nutrition

This man is a sadomasochist who finds pleasure in inflicting physical and mental pain on the prisoner/patient population simply because he can. I assert that it's all in retaliation for grievances made last year against Sgt. Perez and Sgt. Huston which I used in support of my thesis of abuse by CDCR under the Color of Law here at CMF in a paper to Solano C.C. in my ENGLISH004 class with Professor Therriault which earned me an A in this course.

All this has resulted in causing me horrific amounts of pain. It's a tragedy that a man like this should be allowed to wear a badge and be given so much power and authority to torture human beings and unleash such sadistic punishments on a graying population of prisoners/patients such as those of us here at the California Medical Facility. The true guilt and culpability lies with his superiors who are fully aware of his actions and legitimize his narcissism/tyranny. I say this because he has been 602ed for his cruelty of freezing-out the population but staff either cover it up or condone his actions through never acting on said 602 (i.e. Grievance Log #349915/filed 1/9/2023). Both him and his superiors need to be held accountable for their disgraceful actions.

I write this in solidarity with my brothers in Nevada: you are not alone in this struggle. And we also have been dealing with oppression and marginalization by Euro-Amerikan subjugation being subjected to through the so-

called self-help groups such as RISE run by LSA (Life Support Alliance). It's all the same oppressive conditions which are a result of the constitutional based involuntary servitude issue (all which is used with bias) that the legislature and repressive justice system refuses to address. This is negatively effecting the lives of ALL incarcerated people.

MIM(Prisons) adds: We received a series of grievances and responses from multiple comrades at CMF regarding this issue of the swamp cooler being used to freeze out prisoners. The response from Reviewing Authority D. Hurley was that this never happened. The comrades then submitted grievance petitions to the department documenting staff "reporting deliberate false information (DOM §31140.6.1)."

The USW campaign to "Demand Our Grievances are Addressed" began in California and continues in California and in many states across the country. The question is can the imperialist United States ever provide a functioning grievance system to the people it holds in captivity? The majority of the people being of the oppressed nations occupied by imperialism means the ability to abuse with impunity is part of the ongoing repression of those who have fought for freedom from U.S. imperialism for hundreds of years. The fight for grievances to be heard, as is the fight for national liberation, is a fight to end these oppressive conditions. ■

them for fear of a future rebellion or attack. When it comes to people in prison in this country, there is no end to the oppression.

I myself demand to be released from segregation due to no evidence to support Deputy Director of Operations' (DDO) allegations to S.D. me. Per SCDC's own policy:

"If an individual has been validated as an STG member, but has not committed or been implicated in any disciplinary infractions or STG activities, that individual would typically, although not always, receive a classification of Validated-GP... If an individual has been validated as an STG member, and has committed disciplinary infractions, that individual would typically receive a classification of Validated-SD..."

... SC RHU

- No proper medical treatment
- No proper mental health treatment
- No rehabilitation
- Employee's are verbally and physically assaultive
- PREA Violations (Excessive strip searches, frisks, etc.)
- Constant cell searches and things taken
- No adequate ventilation (No heat or air)

The list can go on...

Is it not ironic that when the United States is victorious in war, the first thing they do is provide aid to our "enemies"? We do everything we can not to oppress

ULK 80 Responses on Sex Offenders, Pedophiles, Gunnas and Gangstas

by Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons)
April 2023

In most issues on of *Under Lock & Key* we try to address response letters to the previous issue. These articles serve as a forum for ongoing conversations within our movement. One of the topics that came up in different forms this time is the question of who are our friends and who are our enemies, who can we form a united front with? This is a question of utmost importance. In *Under Lock & Key 55* we focused on the question of allying with reactionaries (like white nationalists) and outcast groups (like sex offenders), so i encourage comrades to read that issue for more on these topics.

One of the questions we tackle in our intro study program is how to assess whether a group of people are friends or enemies. I'm gonna lead here with the controversial claim that i can see a much stronger argument for why gang members are enemies of the revolution than sex offenders. We have regular letters coming in about how prison gangs are agents of the pigs, flooding the masses with deadly drugs to keep them in a stupor, and then vio-

lently attacking our comrades who stand up for themselves and don't succumb to the plague of drugs. Of course that's not all lumpen organizations and conditions differ in different places. But i've never heard of sex offenders doing that.

In my response to Slaughter below i draw parallels between peoples' attitudes towards sex offenders and drug dealers. The fact is that both have been used as political pawns to dehumanize groups of people and get votes through fear-mongering. The use of fear-mongering around pedophilia has surged in recent years, with reactionaries linking it to fear-mongering against transgender people. While it's somewhat acceptable to hate trans people, it's more acceptable to hate pedophiles, so people like U.S. House Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-GA, are waging a campaign of pegging the Democrats as pedophiles for supporting gender-affirming care for trans youth. This campaign began in recent years with "Save the Children" marches funded by reactionary think tanks. While the marches were largely populated by QAnon reactionaries, some of

our comrades have been taken in by the campaign. So there is some truth to what Slaughter says below about hating pedophiles being a unifying thing beyond politics. But this does not mean it is "not political." It just means that fear can be used to motivate all kinds of people, and it demonstrates how subjectivism can not be our guide if we hope to achieve our goals of a world without oppression, which Slaughter shares with us.

Slaughter writes: This is a response to the article in *ULK 80*, (see: "Gender, nation & class divisions — Discussion of *ULK 79*" in *ULK 80*) by a California prisoner with response by Wiawimawo. I cannot refrain from commenting on this situation within the prison, that is, the common nature of prisoners in general and their attitudes towards sex offenders, and the possibility of organizing any productive work with them in the form of a untied effort.

I've had to let the implications of what this comrade was saying resonate for a little bit because it sounds to me as if he is attempting to justify the sex offense of a prisoner unfortunately stuck with that tag on them and pass it off as if its the same thing for everyone else comes to prison for and/or has involved themselves with. The author seems to say that crimes of sexual nature aren't serious offenses in the broader masses of the population. He says that its not a crime to have sex, which I completely agree with. But here's the thing, when it comes to prisoners who are convicted of say, murder like myself, and prisoners who are convicted of sex crimes. To a certain degree sex crimes are dismissed as frivolous...

Many prisoners, like myself, have children (a daughter) who is young, no older than 10-15 years old. And if our child were victimized by a person who is a full grown man, then the outrage that the parents will have towards the perpetrator will be malicious and even murderous in nature ... It's one of the few unforgivable crimes that most people in and out of prison simply cannot overlook. Killing, as a result of the dynamics of oppression, along with robberies, blackmarket sales of weapons and drugs, assaults using weapons, and other violent crimes are seen as something of a necessity. People do not have sex with underage boys and girls because they are oppressed. They cannot say they are pedophiles as a result of the dynamics of oppression. Pedophilia is a mental illness that any rational society, primarily a utopian, would not tolerate and want to be eliminated. There can be no comparison, in my opinion, between New Afrikans unifying with neo-Nazis and prisoners convicted of typical felonies unifying with prisoners who prey on children for sex. To compare is the thesis *ad absurdum*.

Now I ought to be clear and let everyone know that, having been locked up for over a decade now, and having come in the system at 18 years old, and as a re-educated Rightist, I at one time held an extreme bias towards sex offenders. During my re-education, however, I eventually rid myself of all bias from the nature of certain peoples' crimes (sex offenders) to other races that are clearly not my own. To be sure, the world I envision is one in which national boundaries no longer exist, a



world without passports or visas or immigration quotas. True globalization in the human sense, in which we recognize that the world is one and that human beings everywhere have the same rights. A world in which the riches of the planet would be distributed in an equitable fashion. The goal for me, aligned with all my comrades who have nothing to lose but our chains, is *communism*.

At the end of the day, however, there is not a way for me to regard a pedophile in the same sense as I regard myself. It is a moral standpoint that is separate from all politics and I think I can speak for all of us when it comes to that point in itself. It is extraordinarily difficult to stand comfortably next to a pedophile, even if our political aims are synchronized.

These very well *are* potential allies, my comrades; though we also must look at the end results and distinguish if we will accept pedophilia in our commune, society, world. In my opinion, it sets a dangerous precedent to repress the nature of a person if it means attaining a significant end because once the end is reached the repressed nature of a specific person will once again appear on the scene and be in need of dealing with. One thing I've taken note of in great revolutionary movements is the tendency to repress a certain aspect of a group to meet future ends, and then once they are met, the fight continues among the party because the characteristic a certain group appear in conflict with the overall standing of the ends which were attained. WE overthrow the oppressors and then regress into civil war. Please correct me if I have understood incorrectly. In this way there are consequences for the deliberate unity of elements that would make for complications before the judgement seat of reason.

... As much as I hate to believe it, I don't think there will be an opportunity for unification with pedophiles and forcible rapists. Why? Because, again, these are actions that are universally condemned. Actions that inspire murderous revenge and untold malice. When it comes down to it, I simply speak, as someone who was molested by the dad of someone I befriended as a youngster.

Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons) responds: Slaughter, you are not alone. As mentioned in the original article, doing this work we are well aware of the high frequency of child abuse and child sexual abuse victims among those in U. S. prisons. There is research demonstrating how such trau-

matic experiences as youth can have all kinds of affects on a person's health later in life, including engaging in various behaviors that can lead to being targeted by the injustice system.(1)

Your position on this topic is clearly informed by your experiences, and your position is understandable. Yet the issue we take with your essay on this topic is you offer no solutions. Do you subscribe to the purification solution mentioned in the original article? Lock them all up for life? or worse?

Consider the parallel story: Someone i knew succumbed to drug addiction, and i watched them deteriorate. I was young and it was the most horrible thing i had seen or could imagine. I took up a strong hatred for drug dealers, even began hanging out with others who did so as well. I knew of people who used extreme violence to attempt to purify their neighborhoods of drug dealers. I still find our approach understandable, but recognize its futility. I also came to recognize how the ideas of those i was hanging around fed into the oppression of the state. Thankfully, i came to realize these things soon thereafter. Now i work with former drug dealers and provide them support on a weekly basis.

One comrade wrote us last week to decry a different article in *ULK 80*, the one on Tookie. Ey saw Tookie as someone who just changed eir tune when they had no other choice left. This is a real phenomenon. We get all kinds of people writing us, many of them desperate for any kind of assistance. At the same time, we think it is an error to say that just because someone never served the people before going into prison that they cannot be for the people after. Such a position we call metaphysics, as it sees things as unchanging, it sees people as having an essence that is eternal.

Now, your argument is that Tookie did what ey had to do given eir conditions of oppression, and a pedophile did not have to do what they did. Okay, i see the distinction you are trying to make, but wouldn't our comrade above say the same thing about Tookie. I grew up in South Central, and i didn't become a gang-banger, I became a revolutionary. So there.

The poem, "The Government is a Rapist" by a Michigan prisoner reads:

"The sex offender registration doesn't show them.

The government is a rapist, a

Continued on next page...

The Government is a Rapist

by a Michigan prisoner
February 2021

THE BREAKER OF SPIRITS, THE BOOGIE MAN CREEPS,
TIP THROUGH THE NIGHT WHILE EVERYONE SLEEPS.
TAKE THIS ABUSE, SHUT UP AND SIT,
GIVE US A LOLLIPOP AND HOPE WE FORGET.

CAPTURE THE SPIRITS, MESS WITH THE MINDS,
GO OUT IN PUBLIC LIKE EVERYTHING'S FINE.
A HOT BLOODED THIRST FOR THE SOULS TO EXPLORE,
ACTING LIKE THEY'RE THE GOOD NEIGHBORS NEXT
DOOR.

JUVENILE JUSTICE, GET TOUGH ON CRIME,
KILL THE BLACK YOUTH WHILE THEY'RE STILL IN THEIR
PRIME.
LIFE FROM THE FLESH, WATCH THE SOUL PASS,
VAMPIRES DON'T SUCK BLOOD FROM A GLASS.

THE CONCEPTION OF EQUALITY, FLEES AND ABORTS,
JUDICIAL GENOCIDE LIES INSIDE THE COURTS.
THEY MAKE LEGAL, THAT WHICH WAS A SIN,
THE LOLLIPOP KIDS GET FAKED OUT AGAIN!

RAVISH OUR COMMUNITIES, LIKE GARBAGE IN THE BIN,
NOTHING RISING UP BUT THE DUST IN THE WIND.
CROOKED COPS SEPARATE THE BLOOD FROM THE KIN,
CORRUPTION IS A CANCER THAT HAS GROWN FROM
WITHIN.

WE ALL FACE EXTINCTION, READ BETWEEN THE FACTS,
STAND YOUR GROUND LAWS ARE AIMED AT THE BLACKS.
THE DANCE OF INJUSTICE, PREYS ON OUR NIGHTS,
DO THE STANKY LEG AS THEY SPIT ON OUR RIGHTS.

KIDNAPPED AND SHACKLED, JUSTICE DENIED,
MILK CARTONS DON'T EVEN KNOW WE'RE ALIVE.
SLAVERY IS BACK! BLACK LIVES ARE SOLD,
ALL THE INNER CITIES ARE MANAGER CONTROLLED.

THE VIPER OF INJUSTICE, SULFUR TO THE SPARK.
TRAP LITTLE BABIES AS IT HIDES IN THE DARK.
JIM TO THE CROW, OPPRESSED ARE THE YOUNG,
BITTER TO THE TASTE IS HIS NAME TO THE TONGUE.
(TONGUE)

THE GOD OF THE HEAVENS, DOESN'T KNOW THEM,
THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION DOESN'T SHOW
THEM.
THE GOVERNMENT IS A RAPIST, A CRIMINAL AT LARGE,
A FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE THAT HASN'T BEEN
CHARGED.■

Sincerity, False Leadership and Funding Sources

by a Texas prisoner
March 2023

Life is about growth and change. A constant change is needed, or even the small pleasures that we enjoy begin to lose their excitement. Even though I don't agree with a lot of changes, well the ones that aren't progressive or geared to help us go forward, I still understand that their presence is needed. You see, revolution as a necessity only begins to make sense to those who have the keen insight into atrocities that make revolution a necessity. The problem we encounter is communicating this to the overwhelming majority, and those people are willing and even oftentimes unwilling participants in the progression of the things that make revolution truly a necessity.

The problem is also in how revolution is perceived. Most people equate civil disorder, small riotous acts such as killing police, kidnapping government officials etc. as the revolution itself and this is not the case. Revolution is all about complete change of society as a whole — a violent overthrow of a class dictatorship by another. In some ways, many small revolutions take place each day, but they are not what we need to move forward in good shape. Revolutionary change, to mean anything, must start with the individuals changing themselves. Without that sort of progressive conduct

we cannot begin to show others the benefits of our ideals.

Another problem is that the revolution has been hijacked by non-progressive puppets who act under the guise of a revolutionary progressive apparatus. This is much like what deteriorated the power of our progressive leaders of the yesteryears. The new left of the 1960s misled the Black Panther Party. They encouraged the Panthers to miscalculate revolutionary steps and also by convincing the Panthers that they alone were the vanguard party placed too heavy a burden on its members causing them to make mistakes and also going against the central tenant of communism — from each according to ability and to each according to its needs. Another issue was that their support was only monetary and as Malcolm advised us before "money brings advice. Since it's their money that will eventually carry our movement, it's their advice we will be listening to. Eventually a Black group will end up having a white brain controlling it."

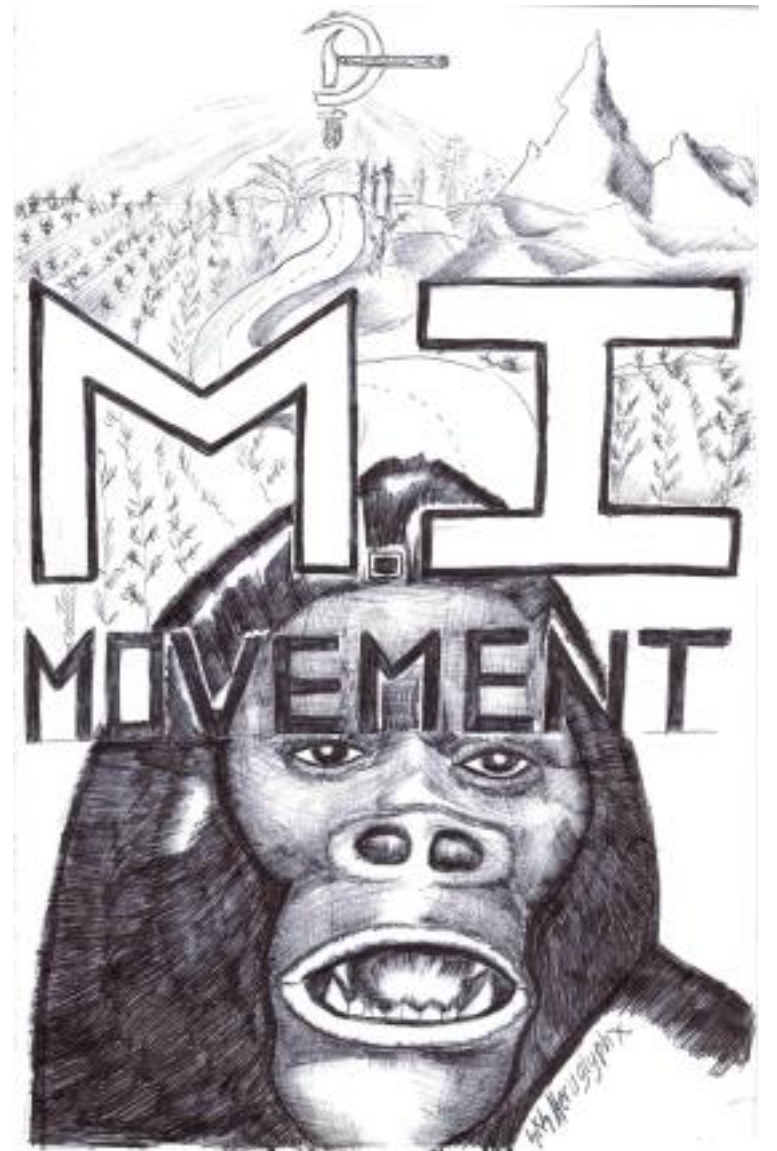
So the Panthers became the puppet group of the new left, while those who truly waged the battle sat back and got a lot of beautiful brothers and sisters killed and in the end they withdrew their support. A similar thing is occurring now, only this time, since revolution has taken

on a new character tone, message, and the leaders appear more dressed up and cute rather than the rugged edge that was characteristic of the yesteryears' soldiers, the picture has become even more foggy and harder to slice through the deception of Oligarchs.

Another problem is that we don't own the media outlets, newspaper firms, or even the schools that teach us the absurd and outrageous lies that pacify the brain and hinder revolution. Affirmative action helped us to send more and more blacks to college and to create HBCUs (historically black colleges/universities). But the more educated we become the more dangerous we become, and so even more efforts to conceal the truth have been created.

Basically what I'm leading up to is the fact that as revolutionaries — whether cultural, economic or spiritualist — there is so much work to do. If we let those whose political economic interests do not match ours at the bottom of the rung continue to tell us how best to revolt or change the world then we will continue to lose. What they are really doing is letting the powers that be know how we are coming that way all efforts to forestall our movement will happen before we get to make our moves. The people who have ad-

Continued on page 16...



... Continued from last page ... ULK 80 Responses

criminal at large,"

The poem is an analogy, but it's also literal. Not only are most child abusers never caught and convicted, those who are among the people in charge are almost never convicted. As is true with most crimes, the most egregious perpetrators get off scott-free because they are the ones making and enforcing the rules. This is where we are sympathetic to the argument made by the California prisoner that targeting S.O.s in prison is just an emotional outlet for other prisoners to have a scapegoat to feel better than. What is a plan to end the sexual abuse of children that doesn't let most abusers get off scott-free and keep doing what they're doing?

The Chinese revolution reformed brutal landlords to join society as productive members. People who robbed, starved, tortured, killed and certainly raped people. Now not all can be reformed. But this was the default approach to all people after the Communists seized state power, to give everyone an opportunity to reform and get on board. Some of the former oppressors just went along to save themselves and became problems later on as you allude to. Yet, the Chinese prisons were very good at getting people to undergo thorough self-criticisms. They did not just let people apologize and get off the hook. See the book *Prisoners of Liberation* by Allyn and Adele Rickett. This is what we mean by offering solutions.

It's worth considering how peoples' views would be different in such a society that was adequately addressing peoples' needs and questions of justice. I'd argue that we will see far fewer people resorting to vigilantism in order to feel justice is served in such a system, and that the popular views that all sex offenders should die, or all drug dealers

should die, would whither away as the presence of drugs and sexual abuse also whither away

You spend some time on the California prisoner's claims in *ULK 80* about all sex being outlawed. This is another point of unity we have with you and we did not defend these claims. Even in our belief that all sex is rape, we apply proletarian morality to justice. And in many cases after the seizure of power by the communists in China, proletarian morality meant the death penalty for former landlords and oppressors of the people. But the death penalty alone does nothing to end economic exploitation or child sexual abuse.

As we said in the original article, we see all people in the imperialist countries as reforming criminals. The worst criminals are not in prison, they are running the prison, the military, the country. But as a group, those in prison have also committed some significant crimes, despite some being completely innocent. If we require everyone to be righteous communists from birth, as the critic of the Tookie article seems to imply, then we will never succeed.

It's striking that you don't see a parallel between nazis and pedophiles. We argue in the original article that there are less antagonistic contradictions with pedophiles. How do you argue to the contrary? Nazis generally believe that the current system of national oppression, imperialism, should be more extreme and more oppressive towards the majority of the world! Including the genocide of whole peoples! What crime could be worse than this? That said, as we also discussed, some nazis in prison reform to take up anti-imperialism. But we do not say that nazis as a group are allies because some individuals reformed and denounced their

anti-people fascist ways.

When you talk about the unbridgeable divide you refer to the outrage of the parent of a molested child, and an inability to stand comfortably next to a pedophile, these are subjective reactions. Understandable, absolutely, but subjective. In the first lesson of our intro study course we have comrades analyze a topic that is very emotional for them and sort out the subjective stories and the hard facts. This is a useful exercise to help us understand the world and transform it.

Another comrade responding to the self-criticism i wrote in *ULK 80* around the "Gunnas Stop" article (see: "Commentary on Gunnas Stop" from *ULK 80*) criticized the prisoner who wrote in for being understanding of sexual acts towards prison staff:

"Those who wrote in support of Gunnas are in the wrong. They miss the whole point, it's not about sympathy for the enemy, it's about oppression. Communism is the goal, get that: communism — not the trading of one oppression for another. Page 2, point #1: read that shit, live that shit, teach that shit — equality against the oppressor is one thing, a legit thing, becoming the oppressor? What?! Communism doesn't have room for those who wish to become oppressors themselves, you feel like that, then you're the enemy too. Page 2, point #1, understand that shit: frustration at being oppressed is natural, it's needed, this is war; but don't you dare assume that once the power is taken from the oppressor you can fill the role — never that — then you're the enemy."

We aim to end all oppression, and do not aspire to oppress others. However, it's not that oppression is never used by communists, as that is exactly what the dictatorship of the proletariat is — it is a state, a tool used by one class to oppress another. We do think the comrade above is correct in terms of combating "murderous revenge and untold

malice" by the communist camp. The Chinese communists did not kill every last landlord as they came to power. They acted objectively, applying proletarian morality, which is informed by the subjective feelings of the masses but in a way that works towards a practical shared goal of transforming material conditions.

There is no apolitical morality as you argue. We must deal with child sexual abuse politically as we do with all crimes against the people. We must figure out how to transform our society to eliminate these crimes, or else they will keep happening. The fascist strategy of purification gets us nowhere.

You say pedophilia is not a result of the dynamics of oppression. I'd challenge that. There are many cases of people abusing children seemingly as a direct result of the abuse they suffered as children. In addition, the sexualization of power and of young people in our culture certainly has an affect on humyn behavior in our society. Attacking this culture and supporting victims are two ways to combat the problem of child abuse. Bourgeois science suggest there are disorders in the brain that cause pedophilia, but like any psychological diagnosis under patriarchal capitalism we are holding out for evidence that these "disorders" still exist in a world where people don't have power over others.

Your assessment of divisions after a revolution is very astute. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the furthest advance of socialism we've seen to date, was based on the idea that a new bourgeoisie arises with in the party. So this is not just about old enemies rising again from the ranks, but the internal contradictions of the system creating new enemies as well. This reiterates that it is idealist to believe we can build an ideologically pure party before waging revolution. Dia-

lectics is the concept that their are always contradictions within a thing, and things are always changing.

Revolutions are won by uniting disparate forces on a common goal. One tool we use to address this issue is the united front. The united front allows separate parties with separate interests to act towards a common goal. It also includes mass organizations, with less developed political lines. The communist party is the proletarian pole, providing proletarian leadership in the united front.

People in the communist party must carry themselves as communists. Even here, we must not be too idealistic, no one is perfect and we are all products of our conditions. But anti-people crimes certainly would not be tolerated within the party. The united front allows for the party to lead and unite with other forces and organization that may not always work in the interests of the people. The united front allows for the party to be critical of our allies when necessary to show the masses there is a better way.

We must put politics in command. With politics in command we can sort out true comrades, allies and enemies. With politics in command we can win over potential allies and sometimes even win over individual enemies. People who have committed crimes against the people and do not recognize them as crimes are people who have not gone through the necessary self-criticism to be called true comrades. We are all products of this world (and victims of it) and we are all self-determining beings. That is the duality of humyn reality. It is up to us whether we struggle with the parts of ourselves that reflect the oppressive system we are in and transform them into something to better serve the people. ■

NOTES: 1. Nadine Burke Harris, 2018, *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity*.

IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN MARYLAND PRISONS

Prisoners organizing at Eastern Correctional Institution are organizing around 13 reasonable demands around conditions and rehabilitation. The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services has responded with political repression. Comrades are asking for outside supporters to call the warden and state officials to express support for their campaign. See p. 5 for contacts and more background info.

SHUT DOWN VA PRISONS WITHOUT A/C

Virginia prisoners continue to lead a campaign to shut down Nottoway, Buckingham and Augusta Correctional Facilities due to the lack of Air Conditioning in these prisons and the extreme heat conditions being worsened by climate change. They have an online petition on change.org and have comrades on the streets rallying people behind this campaign. Get in touch to get involved.

STOP CENSORSHIP OF POLITICAL SPEECH IN TEXAS

The Owolabi suit has entered the courts. Comrades on the inside, keep appealing, and if you can take legal action. Comrades on the outside can join our ongoing 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.

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 ULK's 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, 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. Remember, you need to send them out to the administrators and politicians yourself.

If your state is not currently covered by the grievance campaign, volunteer to re-write 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 AND 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. Sep-

tember 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 justice 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.

COMMEMORATE THE PLAN DE SAN DIEGO

Write in to get copies of fliers to share and ideas for how to organize and commemorate this revolutionary history this August. See p. 8 for more info.

CREATE ART AGAINST IMPERIALISM

We need good art to promote the campaigns and messages of ULK in each issue, on fliers, and on our website. Pick an article or campaign in this issue and create art that depicts it, and submit it to MIM(Prisons). If you don't already have our revolutionary art guide, write in to get a copy.

... Continued from p. 15 ... **Sincerity**

vised us before sometimes become our enemies as well. Why do you think Elijah Muhammad was so adamant about "his" ministers not saying anything about JFK? It was because those same people he called the devil is who financed his program. So he allowed Malcolm to say what he said with no warning (even though he advised all other ministers), that way Malcolm's fall from grace was ensured.

Even this newspaper *Under Lock & Key* doesn't escape scrutiny. There is no published material that is anti-government that escapes censorship. So how big is your commitment to change? Because a lot of what is published as it relates to issues pertaining to Blacks and "our place" in revolution, or how we are "supposed" to move forward seems like the same advice by the new left to the Panthers. Am I making an indictment? No, however, being as aware as I am and considering how aware you are supposed to be, I must wonder if your commitment is sincere. Especially since we are in the belly of the beast and could suffer the same fate as our fallen comrade George Jackson under the same pretextual designs by each state to prevent the disciplined practice of revolution.

As a show of your commitment, since I'm questioning it, I would like this to be printed, not to offend you but to ask brothers and sisters to question their own sincerity as well. If our commitment is not cemented by the events that we must actually

change, then we are letting people co-opt our direction and that cannot happen unless they can prove with facts that their direction is more beneficial and helpful. But if that were the case wouldn't we be a lot more further on that issue and all issues in general?

— *Galaxy Ruler Universal Sole Controller Allah*

MIM(Prisons) responds: We agree with this comrade about the central role played by funding sources in the path (and splitting) of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP). And it is fair to say we have not offered a concrete solution to this. The Panthers raised funds from the masses by selling their newspaper and doing other fundraisers, as do we. The Panthers also got funds and resources from local businesses as they asserted political power in areas like Oakland. It was largely the legal repression of the state that pushed the Panthers to start branching out into their fundraising efforts among wealthy Amerikan celebrities and such.

In practice the BPP was the vanguard of its day, with other oppressed nation formations trying to follow suit and white student/

youth groups offering support. The BPP correctly encouraged similar formations and leadership to develop for other nations in the United States. Yet there did develop a line that the Black revolution here on occupied Turtle Island is the vanguard of the revolution globally, a line some promote to this day. While the oppressed of the world understandably put great hope in this internal force for revolution in the belly of the beast, we understand today that revolution comes from the periphery and works its way to the core. A successful revolution from within the United States

...it is healthy to question the sincerity of MIM(Prisons) and whoever you choose to work with.

is conceivable, but not before many successful revolutions elsewhere bring the socialist camp to a point of strength in the world again. The BPP itself reached its peak in part due to international alliances that cooled as struggle against the United States cooled internationally.

We also agree with this comrade that it is healthy to question the sincerity of MIM(Prisons) and whoever you choose to work with. Not to the point of paralysis, that it prevents you from working with others. But the only way we will succeed in offering effective leadership is if we receive thoughtful critique from an educated populace. That is why we are always attempting to teach how to think along with what to think. The bigger problem we

have today is that there is no revolutionary leadership recruiting mass followings. People aren't being misdirected by the funding of revolutionary organizations, they're being misdirected by the funding of non-profits and social media platforms. At its peak, the BPP had an operating budget over \$9 million in 2023 dollars(1), but even that would be nothing for the imperialists to double. Not to mention the measly MIM(Prisons) budget. Therefore, the need to address the risk described by this comrade is real and important in the longer term.

Are we sincere? committed? Hell yeah! But intentions are only a starting point. The only real measure is effectiveness. And effectiveness is no easy measure either. In our underdeveloped conditions it'd be easy to say that nothing is effective, which is why we must study other times and places to learn what effectiveness looks like and how to achieve it. The BPP of 1968 was looking

pretty effective, but they did ultimately fail. "How much of that was avoidable?" and "how could it have been avoided?" are the key questions for us to attempt to answer. These are questions this comrade's letter brings to the fore.

In another letter this comrade says we must ensure people are not committed merely to advance their own careers. We agree, and we do have an answer to that, which is anonymity. We intentionally discourage the promotion of cults of personality, we even try to prevent people from publicly taking credit for the things they've done as individuals. We are one body, that takes credit for what we do as a body, and we struggle to prevent splits and offshoots. ■

Notes:
1. Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, 2013, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, University of California Press: Berkeley, p. 392.
2. Get our study pack "Defend the Legacy of the Black Panther Party 50th Anniversary Edition" for \$6 stamps or cash or work trade for more analysis of the BPP

**MIM(Prisons)
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