

Under Lock & Key



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PUBLICATION OF THE MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MINISTRY OF PRISONS

Prison Banned Books Week 2024: A United Front for Knowledge

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

There are 65 organizations who have signed on to the 2024 Prison Banned Books Week campaign. What unites us is a belief that there is good in lifting the restrictions on literature that U.S. prisoners have access to. Without having asked all of the participants, we'd wager that we all agree that by understanding the past and understanding the ideas of others, that people can better understand our present and act on it in a way that benefits humynity overall. There are certain ideas that we may take from the Age of the Enlightenment that we all share.

Finding Truth in Books

Where many of the organizations in this campaign probably disagree with us is in seeing that each piece of literature has a class character to it. As part of our world view as Marxists, we recognize that, in a class society, there is class character in everything that humyns create.

There is an adage that the truth is hidden in books. But as we've discussed before, not all

books are true or based in materialist science.(1) In a sense, we go to the library and read books to bury the lies within books and all around us. We must understand different arguments and ways of thinking in order to see their accuracy or fallacy.

Rather than think of the "marketplace of ideas" where a bunch of people bring their individual thoughts to compete with others (the individualist view), we see a war

between two main class positions in the realm of ideas (and elsewhere) — that of the bourgeoisie vs. that of the proletariat. There is a reason why prisoners are the most restricted readers in this country, and why New Afrikan, Indigenous and Chican@ literature are targeted as "Security Threat Group" material.

Cultural Revolution

If there is one phenomenon that defines Maoism, it is the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in China (1966-1976) and the lessons learned from it. But wait, didn't they like burn books and punish

academics during the GPCR?

In essence, the GPCR was an unleashing of almost a billion people to participate in the war between the proletariat and the bourgeois lines in politics and production. Not only that, this was a people that were more than 90% illiterate before the liberation of China by the Communist Party in 1949.

"My conclusion... was that China had made greater progress in liberating masses of people from illiteracy and bringing millions some knowledge of scientific and industrial technique than any nation had

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I\$rael Assasinates Hezbollah Leadership, Millions Mourn

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

28 September 2024 - Protestors gathered across the world to mourn the killing of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, a founding member and leader for 32 years of Hezbollah (the Party of God) in Lebanon.(1) We know some readers in U.S. prisons will be mourning as well. Nasrallah was the strongest anti-imperialist voice among world leaders for a generation. And the recent killings of Lebanese and Palestinian political leaders have been significant victories for I\$rael, at least in the short-term.

Over 1,000 people have been killed, including Hezbollah's top leaders, and 6,000 injured by a series of attacks by I\$rael on Lebanon in the last couple weeks. These included exploding pagers and walkie-talkies, as well as massive bombing strikes. Amidst these attacks, the Communist Party of Lebanon has called for national unity to focus on fighting I\$rael, at a time when Lebanon faces its own crisis in government. They pledged to not let I\$rael (and the United States, we'd add) separate the struggle of Lebanon in support of the Palestinian struggle.(2)

Hezbollah, however, has been

the lead party defending Lebanon and Palestinians from I\$rael for decades. They have proven there is still a progressive role for bourgeois forces to play today, even in our highly-developed imperialist world.

Nasrallah had a clear analysis of U.S. imperialism:

"America itself is the decision maker. In America, you have the major corporations; you have a trinity of the oil corporations, the weapons manufacturers and the so-called 'Christian Zionism.' The decision making is in the hands of this alliance. 'Israel' used to be a tool in the hands of the British, and now it is a tool in the hands of America."

The Samidoun Palestinian prisoner solidarity network commented on Hezbollah's role in the liberation of political prisoners of I\$rael:

"Sayyed Nasrallah's leadership and struggle was also directly connected to the prisoners' movement and the liberation of the prisoners of the Zionist regime. From the liberation of Khiam prison by the victorious Lebanese resistance in 2000, liberating the torture dens of the occupiers and their collaborators and turning it into a museum of honour for those who struggled and sacrificed there, to the repeated prisoner exchanges achieved by Hezbollah, the Lebanese Resistance, including the 2004 prisoner exchange, which liberated 400 Palestinian prisoners as well as 23 Lebanese, five Syrians, three Moroccans, three Sudanese, one Libyan and one German-British prisoner jailed by the Zionist regime. These exchanges, in which Sayyed Nasrallah himself played a major role, illustrated once again that the only viable mechanism available to liberate the prisoners in occupation jails is to liberate the land and to achieve an exchange."(3)

Hezbollah arose from the 1982 I\$raeli occupation of

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Christian Zionism Tablet Propaganda Help Keep Support for Palestine Small

by Triumphant of Texas
T.E.A.M. O.N.E.
October 2024

i enjoyed comrade Grim's article on Christian Zionism and the prison tablet propaganda in ULK 86. i wanted to comment a little since Grim asked for comments from TX comrades.

Comrade Grim was spot on with what was said about the ideas and ideals driving Christian Zionism generally and as it manifests itself in the prison tablet space.

Regarding the group Grim mentioned by name, Real Vida

TV, i was able to work closely with Real Vida while organizing on behalf of Texas T.E.A.M. O.N.E. At the time their line on solitary confinement was that they saw it as torture and that it should be shut down in its totality. This matched Our own line on solitary confinement and Real Vida was willing and did assist us in spreading Our message, connecting us with interested groups and opening their platform up to us and our supporters. At the time it was only an audio radio show, not a podcast, and there were no tablets. They also acted as communication assistants

helping us make important contacts with each other from plantation to plantation as we organized a state-wide hunger strike against solitary confinement. All this is to say that at the time we had a working relationship, regardless of their Christian Zionist beliefs.

However, this changed after Operation Al-Aqsa flood. Personally speaking i couldn't even listen to the garbage they were spewing let alone look past it. Ties were severed. To me the question of the Third World proletariat and the Palestinian nationalist struggle far outweighs the U.S. prisoner class-

based struggles.

They're the most reactionary manifestation of the christian prison ministries and also one of the most popular. A lot of their videos are widely discussed afterwards and i've had more than a few disputes and even fisticuffs surrounding the B.S. they spew. The cold truth is that as MIM(Prisons) says, not all prisoners are swayed by this garbage. But the Palestinian struggle has unearthed the reactionary, patriotic amerikkan spirit among the lumpen here. What i observe is that only the

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What is Under Lock & Key?

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

Fighting the injustice system is just one part of the anti-imperialist struggle, and it is important that comrades do not lose sight of the connections to the larger battle. We welcome support and collaboration from those who are focused only on prison issues, but we also challenge them to see the importance of carrying out their work as part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy.

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

What is United Struggle from Within?

United Struggle from Within (USW) is a MIM(Prisons)-led mass organization for former and current U.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 Amerika's criminal injustice system with proletarian justice. The bourgeois injustice system imprisons and executes a disproportionately large and growing number of oppressed people while letting the biggest mass murderers – the imperialists – roam free. Imperialism is not opposed to murder or theft. It only insists that these crimes be committed in the inter-

est 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.prisonersupport.org. 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 need-less 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.



Rejecting "community" and Centering Palestine

by Fred of The Dawnland Group
October 2024

Organizations in Occupied Turtle Island organizing under the label of Palestine solidarity take various tactics and ideological positions. A great portion of these efforts are negative, representing leftist organization-building and guilt-soothing for populations who benefit from imperialism.(1)

Still, there is much to be appreciated in Palestine solidarity organizing. The fact that as a class, U.S. workers are wedded to imperialism as a labor aristocracy(2) does not mean that select individuals and segments of the same class, such as youth, immigrants and members of oppressed nations, don't have a righteous impulse to rebel against genocide.(3) Further, drawing the line between practicing manufactured discontent to gain social capital (for example, peaceful, permitted and policed "solidarity" marches, or gathering social media clout) versus genuine rebellion (involving significant self-sacrifice) can be a difficult strategic question and a complicated moral matter. It's the job of communists to answer these questions, drawing those who can be allied in a united front under the leadership of the global proletariat.

In the United States, only small percentages of the country ever will protest for progressive causes, and usually only a few thousand people are liable to turn up at anti-imperialist protests, if we're lucky. But even this small size of protest crowds can be confusing. We see large events put on in the name of helping Palestine and, ignoring the lack of ideological unity required for such crowds, perceive that there is a strong movement against genocide here. To move how? Against which genocide? You'll find that the larger the event, the less likely it is for such questions to be answered.

Let's examine one specific way this numbers game is lost among the U.S. left. A very common protest narrative goes something like this: X city/institution is partnering with Israel. That partnership uses funds which could otherwise be spent "on our community" (healthcare, jobs, public resources). Therefore, we must divest from Israel and invest back into "our community". The messaging behind agitational work tells the organizers, audience and onlookers at protests the purpose and goals of the work: they represent the ideology pushing our practice forwards. Here, this oft-repeated messaging about

divestment explains that everyone should join the cause to reclaim what is theirs from an immoral misappropriation.

This narrative about redirecting resources away from genocide and towards "community" can be found in endless settler-left slogans such as "build more schools, not bombs!" or "money for jobs and education, not for war and occupation!" All such ideas revolve around the mythos of the Amerikan "community": a fictitious multi-national concept in which, abstracted from the violence at the base of the Amerikan colony and the national conflicts therein, we can imagine harmonious and communal ways of life involving sharing our resources. This imagination goes back to the root of settler consciousness in Occupied Turtle Island which imagines a "Thanksgiving" where the colonists shared food with the First Nations rather than poisoning, raping and murdering them by the millions.

An almost identical narrative is wielded by referencing the "tax dollars" spent on Palestine-solidarity campaigns' targets, begging Amerikans to rise up against a supposed misuse of money which is otherwise rightfully owed to them. This relies on the same conceptual basis as a "community." If we believe this narrative then absent specific policy mistakes (such as funding Israel) there would exist the basis for peaceful redistribution of the spoils of genocide and imperialism, and this would be a righteous redistribution. At the base of these common yet mistaken ideas are 1) a genuine impulse towards fascism by U.S. citizens who wish to become even more wealthy compared to the Third World, and 2) ignorance regarding the source of global wealth disparity to begin with.

We cannot resolve #1, the fascist impulse among a majority here, without overturning imperialism and settler-colonialism entirely. To address #2 however, we can study how "communities" in Occupied Turtle Island are literally built and sustained off of genocide, slavery and imperialism, especially regarding the "average jo." There are two main groups in the United States: the settlers and the oppressed nations. Euro-Amerikan settlers have been a consistently reactionary group for the past five centuries as their life here is founded on slavery and land theft.(4) They are the numeric majority of the U.S. population and have consistently subjected the First Nations, New Afrika and the Chican@ nation with

oppressive, genocidal campaigns.(5)

These oppressed nations on the other hand vacillate between progressive and regressive tendencies depending on proximity to the spoils of imperialism. Independence movements among oppressed nations represent a progressive impulse wishing to sever connections with U.S. imperialism, whereas participation in DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) initiatives, reforming political parties and redistributing wealth to the oppressed nations represent an integrationist trend which serves to either enlarge the (petty-) bourgeoisie of these nations at the expense of their oppressed masses or incorporate swaths of the nation into the capitalist-imperialist world system.(6) Overall there are substantial parts of oppressed nations here who still face genocide while other portions steadily receive a bit more of the imperial pie.

To the extent that anyone here enjoys it, the First World lifestyle includes housing, food, medicine, transportation and extensive leisure-time bought from the blood of indigenous peoples and manipulation of global labor prices which underpay workers in the Third World and deprives them of basic necessities.(7) An over-accumulation of profits in the United States has led to excess money supply and higher domestic wages: the surplus available to create a complacent consumer base beyond the settlers alone.(8) This is why wages here are approximately 10x normal wages in Palestine. Thus while some U.S. workers suffer under national oppression, they are almost all economic oppressors of the Third World.(9)

So if we convince the majority here that they are actually impoverished through imperialism, or would be enriched through its end, we are misrepresenting the facts and tarnishing the cause of Palestinian liberation. When imperialism inevitably falls, internationalist forces in the imperial core will probably be encircled by fascism: citizens here attempting to cling to lifestyles and social roles which can no longer exist, led by whichever elements of the bourgeoisie can rally them around new extractive outlets to replace old imperialism. The faster we can pull away from self-interested economic thinking here, the faster we will eventually construct socialism. The more here who search for their own best interest through the fall of imperialism, the

Prisoners Reaching Students on Palestine

by MIM(Prisons)
November 2024

This past summer, we gathered commentary from our readers on the student uprising against the genocide in Gaza, which is now expanding across the region. These articles were used in a pamphlet that many USW comrades received, and were all printed in *Under Lock & Key 86*.

Comrades on the streets distributed the pamphlet and *ULK 86* to students (and non-students) in a number of regions across the country. We attended rallies and speaking events, visited the remnants of encampments and shared publications at conferences.

In general, the response was enthusiastic to the articles written by prisoners, especially regarding solidarity with Palestine. Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support (AIPS) maintained a presence at Socialism Conference 2024 which took place in Chicago during the end of August. Over 100 copies of *ULK* were handed out at the conference, while also agitating against prisoner repression.

At a New York hacker conference, audience members eagerly grabbed copies of the Palestine pamphlet at a talk on prison surveillance. The speaker exposed most of the issues we discuss in our Prison Banned Books Week articles. Ey also exposed how Securus has a patent to use the phone numbers of prisoner contacts to track their spending data. And Securus already provides location data to Correctional Officers by phone number! We hope comrades can understand why we're sticking to snail mail. This also happened to be the only talk at the conference where the speaker shouted "Free Palestine!"

At a southern California Palestine solidarity event comrades were able to give out

ULK 86 to a large group of students and noticed that others would grab a copy on their way out. Reactions were mostly positive with one criticism being that it may have been too tough on the students. This was presumably referring to the critique written by an outside comrade involved in the student movement.

Comrades have communicated with a number of student groups to solicit responses or statements for this issue of *Under Lock & Key*. While at least one group expressed interest, we did not get any reports from students on the ongoing legal struggles and political repression they are facing for this issue. It is clear more work is needed to strengthen a connection between the prison movement and the student movement. But progress is being made.

Decades ago, *Under Lock & Key* was a section in the newspaper *MIM Notes* put out by the original Maoist Internationalist Movement and its party in the United States. For a time, MIM distributed newspapers on the streets at 20-30 times the amount they sent to prisoners, and their paper came out every 2 weeks. Since MIM(Prisons) launched *Under Lock & Key* in 2007, it has always been a primarily prisoner newsletter. Though in the past we've estimated our online readership to be bigger. A couple years ago we set the goal of distributing as many newspapers on the streets as we do in prisons. While not quite there, *ULK 86* was by far the closest we've gotten to reaching that goal.

If you want to help expand *ULK* distribution on the street, send us \$55 in cash or postage stamps with a return address and we'll send you 100 copies of the next *ULK* we print. *ULK* currently comes out at the beginning of November, February, May, and August. ■



longer such a task will take.

United front work in the imperial core on behalf of the global proletariat will involve grappling deeply with the labor aristocracy and the settler nation. We must investigate this majority's interests as they unfold in street protests, unions, universities and even prisons. We shouldn't reject them wholesale: we should condemn their economic gluttony while simultaneously uniting those who will commit to fighting on the behalf of the international proletariat. We must educate each and every Amerikan who

will listen about how their wealth comes from genocide and how their lives will change when imperialism finally falls.

Having rejected the fantasy of an abstract, multi-national Amerikan "community," we could instead support the many progressive causes belonging to the oppressed nations here who have suffered under genocide like Palestine. But such campaigns must be specific in their slogans and selection of organizing base, as well as how to relate to those with varying proximity to imperialism.

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U.S. Continues Illegal Funding to Zionist Terrorists

by MIM(Prisons)
October 2024

As we go to press, the prospects of an inter-imperialist war loom heavy once again. The upcoming U.S. presidential election contributes to the uncertainty as various forces posture and attempt to exert influence. What is clear is that U.S. imperialism is set on backing its Zionist outpost in the Levant (Middle East) while the majority of the world stand in opposition, and even most Americans want their government to stop sending arms to Israel.(1)

Despite public opinion, the imperialists are offering no presidential candidate that will slow aid to Israel. Military aid also continues despite the United

State Antony Blinken and other top Biden officials rejected the findings of the agencies even though they're considered the two foremost U.S. authorities on humanitarian assistance. Blinken's decision allowed the U.S. to keep sending arms to Israel. Under U.S. law, the government is required to cut off weapons shipments to countries preventing the delivery of U.S.-backed aid. Days after receiving the reports, Blinken told Congress, quote, "We do not currently assess that the Israeli government is prohibiting or otherwise restricting the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance."

"On [24 September 2024], the Council on American-Islamic Relations, CAIR, called for Blinken's resignation, accusing him of lying to Congress."(2)

operations in response to recent attacks."(4) This came in the midst of increased attacks on Lebanon and the killing of the leadership of Hezbollah.

"Most of the aid — approximately \$3.3 billion a year — is provided as grants under the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program, funds that Israel must use to purchase U.S. military equipment and services. ...U.S. aid reportedly accounts for some 15 percent of Israel's defense budget. Israel, like many other countries, also buys U.S. military products outside of the FMF program."(3)

Israel gets 78% of its arms imports from the United States. (3) This circulation of capital into the U.S. economy is one reason why the imperialists won't offer an anti-war candidate. Meanwhile, family members in Gaza send photos of bombs and military equipment used against them stamped with "Made in USA".

An April 2024 Pew Research poll showed much lower opposition to sending military aid to Israel among Americans than other polls, but its breakdown by age reflected who is out in the streets, and who is putting their bodies on the line to stop the genocide here in the United States. While 45% of 18-29 year olds opposed U.S. aid to Israel according to Pew, this number decreases with age, getting down to only 22% of Americans 65+.(3) This conflict between the young and the old has been reflected in the anti-

imperialist movement for decades, and we see this as the principal contradiction within the American nation where class contradictions and the contradictions between male-bodied and female-bodied people are generally not antagonistic.

The military-industrial complex (MIC) ensures politicians represent economic interests by massive investments in lobbying:

"Lobbying expenditures by all the denizens of the MIC are even higher—more than \$247 million in the last two election cycles. Such funds are used to employ 820 lobbyists, or more than one for every member of Congress. And mind you, more than two-thirds of those lobbyists had swirled through Washington's infamous revolving door from jobs at the Pentagon or in Congress to lobby for the arms industry."(5)

Weapons manufacturers have bigger budgets than those in charge of the wars, and more influence than any other industry. In 2020, Lockheed Martin received more money from the U.S. government than the budgets of the State Department and the Agency of International Development combined. Meanwhile, more than 75 percent of the top foreign-policy think tanks in the United States are at least partially funded by military contractors. These weapons manufacturers are also deeply involved in Hollywood movie production. This is why we think it is misleading to use terms like "prison industrial complex" or "non-profit industrial complex". The size, influence and importance to the U.S. economy of military production is not comparable to such theories.(6)

According to statistics gathered by the National Defense Industrial Association, there are currently one million direct jobs in arms manufacturing compared to 3.2 million in the 1980s.(4) But we all benefit indirectly in this country, and the east coast dock workers agree:

"Dating back to World War 1, the ILA was always proud to note that 'ILA Also Means Love America' when it came to its 'No Strike Pledge' in handling U.S. military cargo at all its ports," said ILA President Harold Daggett, who served in the U.S.

Navy and saw combat duty during the Vietnam War. "We continue our pledge to never let our brave American troops down for their valour and service and we will proudly continue to work all military shipments beyond October 1st, even if we are engaged in a strike."(7)

While it is not clear exactly what the U.S. strategy is for Israel right now, two things remain true: 1. Israel is an outpost for U.S. interests in the Levant (which is rich in fossil fuels), and 2. weapons production is a key prop to the U.S. economy by continuously increasing the circulation of capital.

France announced it has ceased any military aid to Israel to be consistent with their calls for a cease fire. The United Nations called on Israel to withdraw its military from Palestine and Lebanon and evacuate settlers from lands occupied since 1967 (124 countries voted in favor, 14 against, 43 abstained). Weeks later, Israeli troops fired at 3 UNIFIL positions in southern Lebanon, injuring a number of UN peacekeepers. Countries continue to join the International Court of Justice case against Israel, including Chile, the Maldives and Bolivia most recently. Meanwhile, Nicaragua, an early signatory, has just cut off diplomatic ties with Israel.

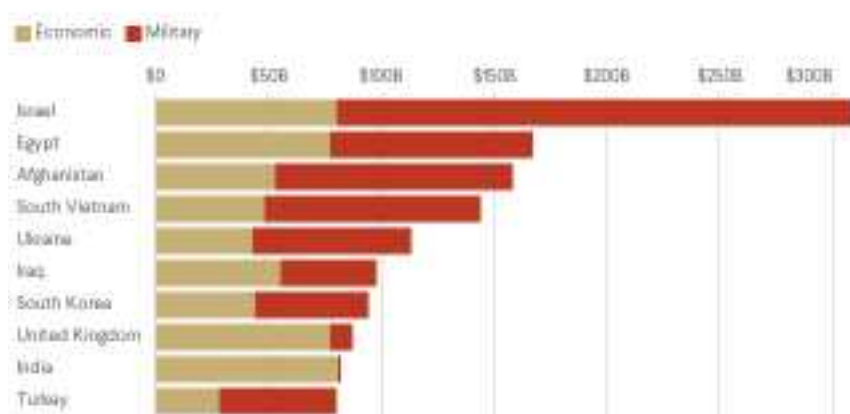
Israel has killed an estimated 8% of the population of Gaza after one year of war and displacement.(8) ■

Notes:

1. a June 2024 CBS poll had 61% opposing sending weapons to Israel and 37% who wanted an end to all military actions in Gaza; a majority of Americans have consistently opposed sending arms to Israel since 7 October 2023
2. Democracy Now!, 26 September 2024, U.S. Gov't Agencies Found Israel Was Blocking Gaza Aid. Blinken Ignored Them to Keep Weapons Flowing.
3. Jonathan Masters & Will Mellow, 31 May 2024, U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts, Council on Foreign Relations.
4. Laura Kelly, 26 September 2024, Israel says it secured \$8.7 billion military aid package from US, The Hill.
5. William D. Hartung and Benjamin Freeman, 9 May 2023, The Military Industrial Complex Is More Powerful Than Ever, The Nation.
6. Wiawimawo, April 2016, The Importance of Militarism Under Imperialism, and Why Prisons Aren't So Much, Under Lock & Key 50.
7. International Longshoremen's Association, 25 September 2024, press statement.
8. Ben Norton, 13 October 2024, Global South denounces genocide in Gaza, Nicaragua breaks relations with 'fascist' Israel, Latin America supports Palestine, Geopolitical Economy Report.

Israel Is the Largest Cumulative Recipient of U.S. Aid

Total aid from fiscal years 1948 to 2024* (constant 2022 dollars)



State's own laws.

"ProPublica has revealed USAID and the State Department's refugees bureau both concluded this spring that Israel had deliberately blocked deliveries of food and medicine into Gaza, but U.S. Secretary of

State received at least \$12.5 billion in U.S. aid as of May 2024. (3) And as the 2024 fiscal year comes to a close, they just announced another \$8.7 billion in military aid to Israel in an aid package that also includes \$17 billion to "reimburse U.S.

... Continued from p. 1

Beirut. MIM founders organized to oppose that 1982 occupation at a time when MIM was just emerging.(4) The war in 1982 also forged the Joint Leadership, in which the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine joined forces and attempted to further unite the Palestinian liberation movement away from conciliation.(5) During the 2006 war between Lebanon and Israel, MIM condemned RCP=USA, various alt media, and the U.S. state department for attacking Iran and Hezbollah using gender.(6) In 2024, the imperialists are circulating clips of Nasrallah making comments calling for punishment for adultery and homosexuality. We salute the "Queers for Palestine" in the United States who recognize the children being bombed in Gaza and now Lebanon are a lot more gender oppressed than any of us are here in the belly of the beast.

The history of the anti-imperialist united front in the region is beyond the scope of this article. But the region has certainly demonstrated the expediency of uniting classes on the basis of national liberation to fight imperialist occupiers. Hezbollah has remarked in the past that their alliances are closer to some Marxist groups than certain Islamist groups. This shows the emptiness of those in the imperialist countries who want to pit Marxism against Islam on principle. Nasrallah also wrote that Muslims have the duty to provide charity support to any Palestinian taking up

... Nasrallah

armed struggle — Marxist, nationalist or any other shade.(7)

A Hamas spokesperson responded to the death of Nasrallah saying that it will not make Israel any safer:

"Is Israel's problem with armed groups with limited agendas that can be eliminated by killing their leaders, or with peoples who have rights that they have been striving to achieve for decades and have not stopped or surrendered despite the killing of many leaders? Has any resistance group disappeared after the assassination of the leaders?"(8)

Despite these recent losses by the oppressed nations in the Middle East, Hezbollah won the war with Israel in 2006, killing as many soldiers as Israel did without all the civilian deaths caused by Israel in Lebanon. Just as the war on Gaza, one year out, has not been an easy victory for Israel, further escalations

into Lebanon will certainly not be either. Hezbollah and Ansar Allah (Supporters of God) in Yemen continue to be the front line of the struggle against genocide in Palestine and against U.S. imperialism in general. ■

You can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill the revolution!

Notes:

1. The New York Times, 28 September 2024, Protesters Mourn Nasrallah's Death Around the World.
2. Omar Deeb, 25 September 2024, Transcript of interview on SSawt al-Shaab Radio.
3. Samidoun, 28 September 2024, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah: The martyrdom of a great international revolutionary leader of our era.
4. MIM, 2007, Substantial Hezbollah book appears finally.
5. Interview of Habash and Hawatmeh on the Joint Leadership and PLO (Draft Translation)
6. MIM, 2006, Six percent of Americans support Hezbollah's side in Lebanon
7. Nicholas Noe ed., 2007, Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, London: Verso, p. 269
8. Tom O'Connor, 27 September 2024, Hamas Warns Killing Hezbollah's Nasrallah Will Not Make Israel Safer, Newsweek.



Communists among protesters mourning the murder of Nasrallah by Israel in Sidon, in southern Lebanon

Again on Gender Waged Against New Afrika and Palestine

by LeninII of United Struggle from Within
August 2024

Dear Top Brass At U.S. Navy (Mr. Omnipotent Administrator),

You guys bicker about sexuality, abortion, gender issues, and whatever non-stop. Let me fill you in on your rape revenge fantasies and myths. Just ask the Florida Department of Corrections for my essay on sexual privilege in amerikkka. They have it in my central file in Tallahassee.

I quote Eldridge Cleaver in *Soul on Ice*:

"The Omnipotent Administrator conceded to the super-masculine menial all of the attributes of masculinity associated with the body: strength, brute power, muscle, even the beauty of the brute body. Except one. There was this single attribute of masculinity which he was unwilling to relinquish, even though this particular attribute is the essence and seat of masculinity: sex."

The Omnipotent Administrator said "I will bind your rod with my omnipotent will, and place a limitation on its aspiration which you will violate on pain of death."

See ULK 85 "Rape Revenge Fantasies Fuel Genocide in Palestine."

From the Supermasculine Menial ■

Black August 2024

ZIONIST REPRESSION: Hamas Leader Assassinated, Activists/Journalists Targeted in First World

18 October 2024 - Statement by Palestinian prisoners' movement: The Prisoners' Institutions, the National Prisoner Movement in Occupation Prisons, and the freed prisoners at home and abroad mourn to our great people the martyr and national leader Yahya Al-Sinwar (chair of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas), who ascended as a martyr after a life full of struggle and giving until the last moment of his life.

In a statement, the institutions said, "Today, we mourn, on behalf of the prisoner movement in the 'Israeli' occupation prisons, our companion in imprisonment and leader who dedicated his life to the freedom of his land and people. He is the prisoner, the freed, the martyr, and the martyr whose body remains held, alongside hundreds of martyrs in the cemeteries of numbers and the occupation's refrigerators."

The Prisoners' Institutions pointed out that Al-Sinwar spent more than 23 years of his life in the occupation's prisons, with his first arrest in 1982, followed by his arrest in 1985, and then again in 1988. He was sentenced to four life terms by the occupation and remained imprisoned until his release in the Loyalty of the Free (Wafa' al-Ahrar) exchange deal in 2011. Today marks the 13th anniversary of the Loyalty of the Free Deal, in which the martyr Al-

Sinwar was among those released.

the Palestinian diaspora, Arab community and international activists for Palestine that are resisting these countries' support for the occupation. Thousands of activists in North-America and Europe have been arrested, their houses raided or imprisoned. Palestinians in various countries have received deportation orders for their political activism. In Germany, a ban has been implemented against the slogan "from the river to sea, Palestine will be free".



The Prisoners' Institutions emphasized that the martyrdom of Yahya Sinwar will not deter our people from continuing the path of struggle for their freedom, the freedom of their land, and their right to self-determination.

The institutions also called on our people, wherever they are, to rise in support of the blood of the martyrs and the suffering of the prisoners in occupation prisons, who are facing systematic and unprecedented levels of killing and torture since the start of the ongoing war of genocide.

Glory to the martyrs of Palestine and freedom to the prisoners

Samidoun.net: On October 15, the United States and Canada sanctioned Samidoun in an attempt to repress political organizing in support of the Palestinian people's struggle against genocide, colonialism and occupation, and the more than 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners that are being tortured and killed by the Zionist entity.

In the US, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced the sanctions, while the Canadian government has listed Samidoun as a "terrorist entity" under its criminal code.

These decisions come at a time when the Zionist entity continues its genocide and massacres in Gaza, all of Palestine and Lebanon with full support from the US, Canada and the European Union. It is a coordinated attempt by the enemies of the Palestinian people to stop every form of solidarity with the Palestinian people and political organizing efforts to end Israel's genocide, crimes against humanity and occupation.

Our response to this designation is clear: we will keep struggling to stop the genocide, stop imperialist support for Israel, until the liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea.

Besides sending weapons and money to the Zionist entity, imperialist powers are repressing

...In Arabic, the word "Samidoun," means those who are steadfast. We use this name to refer to the Palestinian prisoners, who remain behind bars, struggling for freedom. Today we affirm that we shall remain steadfast and committed to the Palestinian people, until victory, return and liberation.

electronicintifada.net: British counterterrorism police on [17 October 2024] raided the home and seized several electronic devices belonging to The Electronic Intifada's associate editor Asa Winstanley.

Approximately 10 officers arrived at Winstanley's North London home before 6 am and served the journalist with warrants and other papers authorizing them to search his house and vehicle for devices and documents.

A letter addressed to Winstanley from the "Counter Terrorism Command" of the Metropolitan Police Service indicates that the authorities are "aware of your profession" as a journalist but that "notwithstanding, police are investigating possible offenses" under sections 1 and 2 of the Terrorism Act (2006). These provisions set out the purported offense of "encouragement of terrorism."

...Although his devices were seized, Winstanley was not arrested and has not been charged with any offense.

...The vaguely worded provisions relating to "encouragement of terrorism" would clearly violate the First Amendment of the United States Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech, however the United Kingdom lacks similar constitutional protections for freedom of expression. ■

Let Marcellus Khaliifah Williams's Life Guide Us To Action

by a comrade October 2024

Marcellus Williams, also known as Khaliifah ibn Rayford Daniel, was murdered by the amerikkkan state of Missouri on 24 September 2024. He was a proud Muslim New Afrikan, a poet, an advocate for Palestinian children, and a prison imam at Potosi Correctional Center. Despite a vast quantity of evidence showing that Williams did not commit the crime of which he was convicted

The state nevertheless passed the decision, with the approval of the Supreme Court, to murder him in cold blood.

Williams was convicted in 2001, by a jury consisting of 11 white men and one New Afrikan. According to *Al Jazeera*, a New Afrikan juror was improperly dismissed from the jury, with the justification that they would not be objective.

Let The Memory of Marcellus Khaliifah Williams, A New Afrikan Poet and Revolutionary, Reaffirm Our Commitment to the Struggle

Prosecutor Keith Lerner said that he had excluded a potential Black juror because of how similar they were, saying "They looked like they were brothers."

In a country that supposedly grants everyone the right to a "trial by their peers", the fact that a New Afrikan on trial for the murder of a white woman was not allowed a jury of his peers — of New Afrikans — makes it clear that amerikkka cannot be "reformed" into "accepting" the New Afrikan nation, no matter how much surface-level anti-racist rhetoric is in the media nor

how many bourgeois New Afrikans are elected to positions of power. For skewing Williams's jury towards white men the judge would owe blood debts to the oppressed nations and the proletariat far greater than any average criminal under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Ey was right about one thing — a jury of New Afrikans, of Williams's peers, would have been more likely than a jury of white men to consider his innocence. That is why more than half of the people with death sentences in the United States are Black or Latin@ according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

Williams's conviction, for the murder of a white woman, shines clarity on why it is necessary to have a proper analysis of the gender hierarchy in the First World. The trope of a New Afrikan man murdering or "raping" a white woman has been used to stir up the most vile representations of national oppression ever since New Afrikans were imported as a permanent underclass and oppressed nation, from Emmett Till to Marcellus Williams. The rapidity at which the criminal injustice system will commit atrocities against New Afrikans accused of violence against white women makes it clear that the question of "gender oppression" is far more tied up in national and class oppression than pseudo-feminists would have one believe. Since time immemorial, the oppressor-nation men and

Continued on page 10...

"Williams was convicted of first-degree murder, robbery and burglary in 2001 for the 1998 killing of Felicia "Lisha" Gayle, a 42-year-old reporter stabbed 43 times in her home. His conviction relied on two witnesses who later said they were paid for their testimony, according to the Midwest Innocence Project, and 2016 DNA testing conducted on the murder weapon "definitively excluded" Williams."



Black August Honored, UFPP Implemented

by a Federal prisoner September 2024

I have received two much-needed documents from you: "How to Form an Effective Study Group" and the "Revolutionary 12 Step Program" during the holy month of Black August. During Black August (B.A.) there were three young neophytes who also embarked on the journey of Kebuka (remembrance) by studying the works and examples of ancestors, comrades and many of the beautiful souls that sparked the momentous flow of resistance.

Prior to B.A., I was invited to a think tank class where the serious minded men here can

come into a space to talk, think and reflect on solutions to problems that plague the prison population and society at large.

After attending a few of the sessions I realized the class lacked a starting point to build and grow on.

However, I shared the 12 Step Program with the facilitator, and the brothers all agreed that the layout was a great format and that the five principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons enumerated on page 2 of *ULK* should be the pillars that hold this class.

Thanking you for all the tireless work that's being put in. ■

Prisoner Solidarity In September

by LeninII of United Struggle from Within September 2024

[We print this on September 9th, the anniversary of the Attica rebellion and the Day of Peace and Solidarity for members of the United Front for Peace in Prisons across the United States.]

Last year myself and various comrades within the anti-prison movement came under heightened political repression during Black August and Bloody September well into October. The Palestinian National Liberation after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood seemed to keep the war games intact against us prisoners/revolutionaries.

The Stop Cop City activists and myself have been branded as

domestic terrorists by the U.S. empire and are facing the new type of political persecution greenlit after September 11, 2001. I quote Obama: "We do not use drone strikes to punish people but to eliminate those who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the American people." It was said in a cleverly written and well executed speech, and also layered very carefully.

The Supreme Court says the only question to ask to a case like this is whether the speech "transcends the bounds of freedom of speech which the constitution protects."

How far can the phrase "imminent threat" be stretched? We are the domestic guinea pigs. Security Threat Group (STG) units all over the empire have war

plans that move into operation mode in Bloody September, prison activists and deemed leaders will be hid inside the various control units that pockmark the penal landscape. Get ready.

This is that season again. There is no need for Congress or state legislature approval. The authorization for use of military force is a unilateral decision by executive power. Beware the drone strike for rebels and those in their reach. Beware the raid for rebels and those in their reach. Beware the heightened political prosecution/assassination of the Republic of New Afrika. This is a defense of the state's right to wage war against New Afrika. ■

Prison Banned Books Week 2024

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

Prison Banned Books Week 2024 (PBBW) was September 15-21. This year the campaign focused on how companies selling tablet services to the state have exacerbated the problem of censorship in prisons. MIM(Prisons) is one of dozens of organizations participating in PBBW. You can view the full list at prisonbannedbooksweek.org, where you can send letters to your legislators and letters to the editor to call on prisons to allow donated books from organizations like ours, as well as free digital books through local libraries. Also look for #prisonbannedbooksweek on various social media platforms. You can now follow us on Mastodon.

Each day of PBBW we published stories related to censorship in prisons. Censorship in prisons has been at the heart of what we do since day one and is a daily struggle for us and for our readers, as we must fight for our First Amendment rights in this country.

We hope this campaign encourages people to support our Free Political Books to Prisoners Program with donations, to engage in activism and legal advocacy in support of prisoners receiving a variety of reading materials, and that it spreads awareness about the growing control of information that these state/corporate partnerships are bringing to our lives.

Our Books Program

While the MIM Free Political Books to Prisoners Program actually began in 1988, our organization formed in late 2007, taking over the duties of the MIM Prison Ministry. This work involves publishing a regular newsletter for prisoners and corresponding with prisoners through the mail, in addition to sending other forms of literature.

As we celebrate 17 years of

existence, we approach the 200,000 mark for the number of pieces of mail we have sent to prisoners over those years. For all that mail our overall confirmed censorship rate is only 6%. However, 73% of our mail is never confirmed received or censored. This is some combination of prisoners never writing us back, mail being illegally censored and mail just being lost. While the percentages of each are certainly in that order, we have no way of knowing what the actual breakdown is of the fate of that 73% of mail we send out. For the 27% of mail that we can confirm, 4 out of 5 items do make it to their recipients.

About 40,000 pieces of mail we've sent are letters to prisoners, while over 6,000 are books and zines by other authors. The remaining almost 150,000 pieces of mail are literature that we publish, the majority of it being our newsletter *Under Lock & Key*, but this also includes many *MIM Theory* journals, *Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán* and various other pamphlets and study packs.

Interestingly it is the other books and zines that are censored at a higher rate (8.2%) than our own literature and letters (both less than 6%). The fact is that books and magazines do face a higher level of scrutiny than newspapers and letters, and are often censored for superficial reasons like the condition of the book or the publisher of the book not matching the sender, etc.

Anyone can browse through the incidents of censorship of our mail on our website. Numerically, *Under Lock & Key* accounts for most of our censorship, since that is most of the mail we send to prisoners. After *ULK*, you'll see that some of our most censored pieces of literature in the last couple years are: *Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression, and the Long Attica Revolt* by Orisanmi Burton, *Power to New Afrika* by Triumphant,

Revolutionary 12 Step Program by a USW comrade and our very own *Fundamental Political Line of the Maoist Internationalist Movement*. You'll note that most of the reasons given for these books are clearly politically motivated, claiming the literature will cause disruptions and riots, even the 12 Step Program, as we reported in *ULK 78*.

Another common appearance on the list is, ironically, our Guide to Fighting Censorship in Prisons, which we send to any prisoner facing censorship at their facility.

You'll also see in the list of censorship the occasional overturned decision. This is due to the persistence of our comrades inside as well as our volunteers on the outside who appeal as much of the unreasonable censorship as they can. This is one of many tasks that we could use your help with.

Prison and jail systems across the country continue to move to digitize letters to read on tablets, and restrict books from more and more sources, under the guise of fighting drugs. While drugs have not decreased, our problems getting mail to prisoners have increased, as you'll read in the series of articles found over the subsequent pages of this issue. ■



Getting Mail Continues to be Struggle in IN

by an Indiana prisoner
September 2024

Over the last month I have made several requests to the mailroom staff McCann and Internal Investigator Mason Kierznowski about *ULK 86*. After over a month of waiting McCann said that Investigations and Intelligence (I.I.) was reviewing it.

Well, tonight I finally received it. They were holding onto *ULK* and *Prison Legal News* from last month. I know if I wasn't on top of it they would have discarded it. I told Mason K. that he was clearly in violation of the correspondence policy. You cannot hold onto one's mail for weeks without giving a confiscation slip.

Prior to all this, something bad happened indicating that they are out to harm me.

On 22 July 2024, while under a lockdown I was taken to an upper level secluded shower area to shower. I was left in this small stainless steel shower with no ventilation. I could not breathe. After yelling, screaming, and kicking to be let out of the torture coffin, I was finally let out. I almost died.

Then the officer cuffed me up and gave me the order of "let's go." I went down the flight of steps and into my cell so I could get to my inhaler and fan.

The officer filed a class B offense of "fleeing & resisting" when he claimed he gave me a command to stop and I never heard him tell me this. [MIM(Prisons): This comrade also sent us copies of written statements from others affirming that the C.O. did not order em to stop.]

On 9 September 2024, the same person that dismissed the frivolous conduct report on your letter for allegedly being laced with drugs, found me guilty. This is a serious offense. She took my commissary and phone for 30 days. I lost my job and my place in line for the honor dorm. I will be forced to stay where I am, which is a 6' by 9' cell that is close to isolation conditions.

It's a sad situation comrades. I cannot give up. They are beating me down. I have to keep pushing on.

Everyone is counting on me. The reports on Pendleton in *ULK 86* were awesome! I have supporters in you all. ■

Dozens of Postcards to Support IN Prisoners

by Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support
September 2024

As we approach the end of Prison Banned Book Week we are pausing our campaign, which has been going on over the last couple months, to support prisoners in Pendleton Correctional Facility, Indiana. Supporters should stop gathering signatures and mail out any remaining postcards [by the end of September]

It was reported to MIM(Prisons) that 6 prisoners were threatened with drug charges, and torture in long-term isolation, for mail received from MIM Distributors. The mailroom claimed smudges of ink (that were obviously from the printer) were indications that the mail was laced with drugs. Of course, subsequent testing of the mail proved there were no drugs on them. This type of treatment has earned Indiana state a grade of D for their mail censorship, not an F because most letters do get through as does some literature.

In response to these threats, comrades in Anti-Imperialist Prisoner Support (AIPS) and other supporters hit the streets with a postcard campaign. We told people about what was going

on, and asked them to sign a postcard and mail it to the administration. The postcards called out the political repression and demanded that it be stopped. Dozens of postcards were mailed to the Pendleton Administration, from near and far away, over the last couple months.

In the midst of the postcard campaign we received news that the threats had seemingly been dropped. But censorship has continued and a lawsuit is still being pursued. One of the comrades targeted at Pendleton says:

"I have not received *Under Lock & Key 86* mailed out [1 month ago]. I've written the mailroom 2 times now and as of today have not received it." [see update in article above]

Ey did receive our article on the postcard campaign, which has been copied and distributed around the prison. Ey says:

"Thank you all for bringing this injustice to light!"

Thanks to the comrades on the outside who supported this campaign. We are declaring this phase over, but will continue to report on the happenings in Indiana prisons.

Outreach Report

In one locale, over 35 petitions were collected alongside distributing *ULK 86* directly to passerbys. There was substantial immediate enthusiasm for discovering a publication written by prisoners, especially regarding solidarity with Palestine. Each persyn AIPS met was interested both in receiving a newsletter as well as signing a petition to mail.

AIPS also maintained a presence at Socialism Conference 2024 which took place in Chicago during the end of August. Here, over 100 copies of *ULK* were handed out and dozens of postcard petitions were signed by those interested in the struggle of prisoners. It was also encouraging to see those on the outside were interested in learning about the abuses and injustices prisoners face, either through attending panels hosted at the conference or by talking directly with passerbys.

While there was no negative reception, no recipients in either location were familiar with *ULK* or MIM(Prisons). Only very few recognized the MIM name from prior exposure. It is indicative of a low tide in the movement here

that most are completely unfamiliar with anti-imperialist prisoners. This represents an opportunity and responsibility to publicize our work and recruit more volunteers.

Among this small sample of the public, found tabling in busy urban areas, at local leftist events, or at the aforementioned conference, there were multiple people who were very enthusiastic about the newspaper and our work in spite of lacking all prior familiarity. This welcome enthusiasm also resulted in some "pig questions": those which, if AIPS answered publicly, would inevitably feed valuable information to the pigs (in other words, agents of the state). The size of a political group, their location, and their leadership structure are examples of questions unnecessary to answer in order to work with others. That information only helps enemies who wish to study, surveil or even infiltrate anti-imperialist organizations. And we don't say this to pretend that we are a big organization but rather to encourage people to do the work that they see as the most correct.

AIPS comrades encountered some popular confusion about

MIM(Prisons)'s line on (non)exploitation of prisoners. Some people thought MIM(Prisons) was fighting against the for-profit prison system. Most prisons are not private. And even companies like JPay, Securus, and GTL that are profiteering off prisoners are making very small amounts of money compared to the cost of running the criminal injustice system, which the Prison Policy Institute put at about \$182 billion. MIM(Prisons)'s actual line is that prisons are an immense cost to Amerika: a cost sustained for the purpose of social control, especially for the national oppression of First Nation, New Afrikan, Boriqua and Chican@ liberation movements. In the end, this cost is worthwhile if Amerika is able to prevent the masses of oppressed nations from fighting for autonomy in land and resources. But still, the benefits yielded are not profits in terms of capital but the containment and suppression of the internal semi-colonies within the United States. Imprisonment is a form of absolute immiseration that we think of in the realm of genocide rather than exploitation. The suppression of rebellious groups helps the settler Amerikan nation maintain its position on top. AIPS incorporates this understanding in our prisoner correspondence and campaign work. ■

Florida Censors Whatever They Please

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

The Florida Department of Corrections has been on a censorship tirade, which serves as a nice compliment to their habit of banning books.(1). The FDOC has a rule (Section 15 of 33-501.401) which authorizes the impoundment or rejection of any publication which "depicts how to make an instrument to apply a tattoo ... describes tattooing techniques ... or contains a tattoo pattern or photograph ..."

ULK's have been censored because certain pages "Could be used as tattoo patterns." That is, the FDOC has the right to censor any publication which contains anything which could possibly serve as a pattern for a tattoo, and whether it could be a tattoo pattern is up to their discretion. Their censorship "rules" say "censor whatever you want!"

Not a single one of our publications has ever listed tattoo patterns. We print the art that prisoners send us, and images that help express the articles they accompany. We have a recommendation for the FDOC: prisoners could use their cell bars as tattoo patterns. How about you

remove them?

In the last four years, of all the prison systems where we've sent 10 or more books, Florida has the highest rate of censorship at about 30% of books or pamphlets (excluding our newsletter and letters to prisoners). Meanwhile only 26% of books we've sent to Florida in that time have been confirmed received by the prisoner. The week before Prison Banned Books Week, JPay returned some articles we printed and mailed to a reader after many publications we sent were censored. JPay enclosed FDOC censorship forms in each envelope that were not filled, therefore not providing any justification for returning our mail. We give Florida a grade of D for their mail policies and practices. They are one of the worst, but not as bad as states that block any piece of mail we send in.

We will continue to be censored so long as we reveal the oppression in the United States. We will fight it until the oppressed have been liberated. ■

1: Patricia Mazzei, 22 April 2023, "Florida at Center of Debate as School Book Bans Surge Nationally", *The New York Times*

MO Ad-Seg Means No Books or Tablets

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

Missouri now has the strictest paper literature policy ever implemented in a state prison system. People can ONLY obtain paper literature by purchasing it themselves, in consultation with their prison caseworker, with money drawn from their own commissary account from a small selection of "approved vendors." We're finding that many of our subscribers in Missouri cannot receive *Under Lock & Key* because they have not paid for it.

Missouri is now contracting with Securus to serve all mail digitally on tablets. Their contract includes a 1% administrative fee on "all payments received by the contractor for all products and services provided under the contract." However, not all prisoners have tablets, and some are anxious to get the privilege of paying \$0.25 to send emails to family.

Below are reports from Missouri prisoners in August 2024.

A comrade at Crossroads Correctional Center wrote: Censorship is real here at Crossroads Correctional Center. They are trying to find ways to stop *Under Lock & Key* newspapers from coming to Crossroads any way they can. Most of the time they have no real reason to stop it. It's hit or miss. And me and the brothers

really really need the info and good news that you bring knowing that the fight is still on.

They stop our catalogs, they stop our books. It's hard with this K2 taking our young minds and no one really there to push the fight. Most of us find our fight to be few in numbers.

Here in the hole, they keep our tablets from us. Every prison except for Crossroads Correctional Center has tablets. They charge us \$0.79 a stamp and really force us to buy them knowing that's the only way to reach our families seeing that they won't give us our tablets in Ad-Seg. Emails only cost \$0.25 on tablets.

They won't let us order reading books or magazines in Ad-Seg either, saying we have to be on the yard to order books/magazines.

MIM(Prisons) adds: It is criminally absurd that people being tortured in isolation are deprived of some of the few things that can keep them sane in such conditions like reading material.

A comrade at Jefferson City Correctional Center wrote: I've ordered books with donation checks to free services. At first they denied them in May due to "No free books." I fought that and paid a donation. Then their excuse was "wrong order month." They proceeded to deny (in March, July, November) the free book services with donation payments. Then I sent \$400 to a bona fide vendor on the precise month of orders. Now they're saying we can't have books in Ad-Seg and that I have to send them home and my people won't be able to send them back to me once I'm out of seg (if I ever get out).

They're making up arbitrary

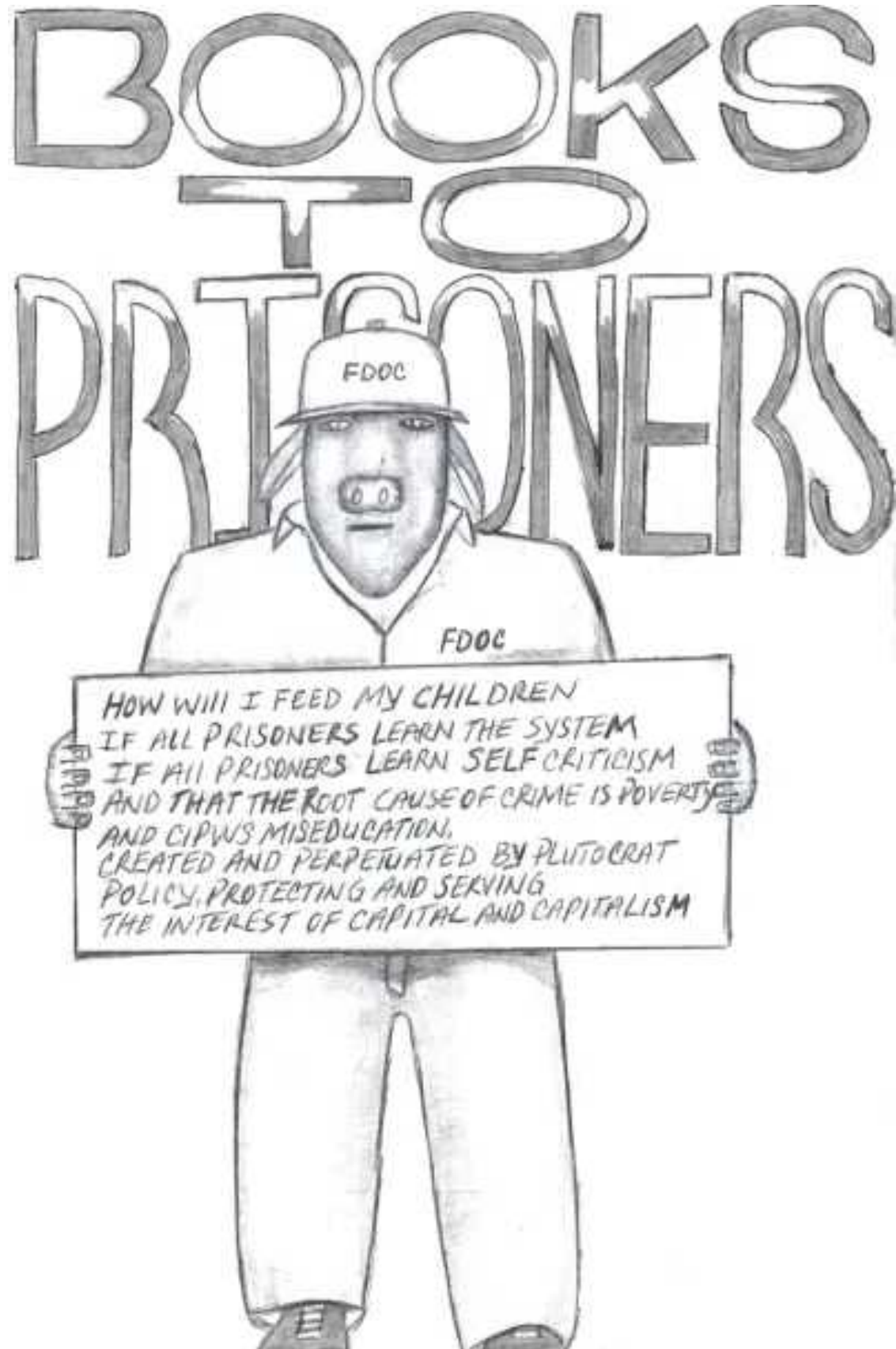
rules on the premise of punishment and denying educational and recreational books to long-term segregation people.

I had the check approved per the Functioning Unit Manager, and approved with Business Office. Now I'm unable to get them cuz property denied them.

I'm on hunger strike now at 7 days, 21 meals. No medical has attempted to assess me, they're denying legal access (property paperwork) and staff don't do rounds. If possible, I need assistance with legal. I'm filing on medical for neglect/deliberate indifference. I'm working on the \$1983 in the mail but if ya'll can help or put me into contact or on a list of pro bono/after win lawyers it would be much appreciated.

Another Jefferson City prisoner wrote: This prison policy infringes on my right to receive free religious material, which is considered "special mail, and can never be censored." Prison officials took the regular mail, now books, magazines, and newspapers that were free, saying that drugs are coming in through the mail! That is the worst lie I have ever heard. It is a fact that drugs are being brought in by the prison staff themselves, not the other way around. I am here to help fight this injustice, let me know what you need me to do.

MIM(Prisons) adds: Unfortunately, now that this new policy is already in place we will need a concerted campaign and likely a lawsuit to reverse course. As the comrade above says, if any lawyers want to get involved, we can help facilitate. It's hard to give Missouri a grade until we get a clearer picture of how this new policy plays out, but we might have to give them an F. ■



Steel and Concrete

by an Indiana prisoner
October 2024

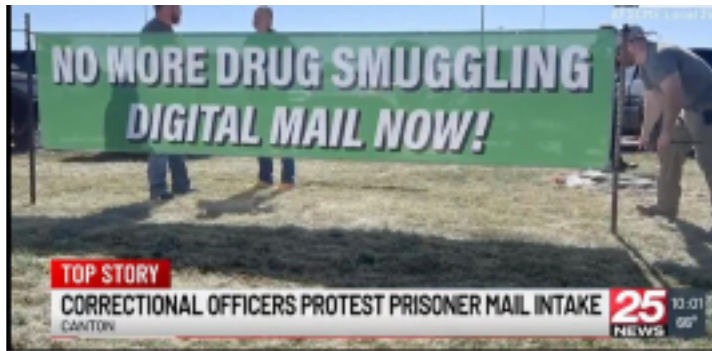
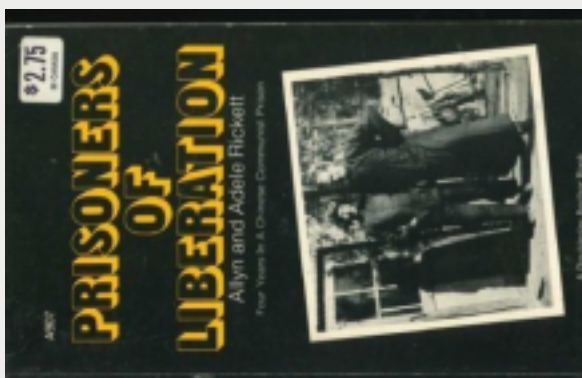
Without any
Bias
Honestly
Look at the social construct of unjust justice
And what do u see
I could say there's nothing I see
But broken promises and shattered dreams
Or so it seems
From the depth of the penitentiary
Steel and concrete is all there is
For me to see
But this ain't about me
Not specifically
See
The steel and concrete
Is only
The surface
Look beneath
And I'll find purpose
that's tryin' tirelessly
2 overcome its life changin' mistakes
Or are they truly
Just the breaks of the slum
Where the conflicts
Of life reside
The ones that come from
The quote-un-quote
Wrong side
That side
Where they movin' pack after pack

Around the clock
None stop on the block
Chasin' greenbacks until u get them racks
Greenbacks on top of greenbacks
Racks from the other side of the tracks
Where the so-called killers kill
And the drug dealers deal
Where the so-called robbers rob
And the Grinch of Christmas steal
Murders and thieves
Are societies stereotypes of an unwanted
Community
A Community that only wants equality
With an opportunity
Instead of bein' misunderstood
Fathers, sons, daughters, sisters
Brothers and mothers
This racially biased society
That don't see any good
In this community of poverty
U and me
Are the ones usually forgotten
And not accepted by society
As if we can't change for the better
U and me
What a shame on society
for turnin' its back on a community
That's a result of steel and concrete. ■

The MIM(Prisons) Free Political Books to Prisoners program is not a charity, it is part of our strategy for changing society. We're in this together. Therefore, we ask those who request more than the free ULK subscription to engage with the movement first. Here are some ways to get involved:

- discuss articles in ULK with other prisoners & send us a summary of your thoughts and questions
- recruit others to subscribe to ULK
- submit a report on organizing efforts at your prison, successes and failures
- submit artwork and poetry on topics in ULK
- send donations of stamps or cash

Also request our introductory letter to USW for more information on USW organizing. We do not supply fiction, religion, or academic books. See example titles below.



150 Illinois Correctional Officers and their families lined the street outside the Illinois River Correctional Center in Canton to demand digitizing prisoner mail

Do Not Stop Our Mail to IL Prisoners

by MIM(Prisons) October 2024

On 5 October 2024, about 150 people organized by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3585 picketed to call for an end to paper mail in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). Another protest is planned for October 17th.

The plague of drugs in U.S. prisons is real, and it has continued in states where digital mail has been implemented. The claim of this "labor" union that staff are being poisoned is not real. In neighboring Indiana, a number of prisoners were threatened with isolation in torture cells for mail that we sent them that was accused of being drug-laced. Further testing proved they were not. Meanwhile, there have now been a number of cases of prison staff across the country claiming extreme medical crises from contacting prisoner mail, following similar claims by street cops, that have never been substantiated by medical professionals. It's interesting that this "labor" union is willing to stand out on the street and picket for a policy that would give Correctional Officers a monopoly on bringing paper into IDOC facilities.

Even much of the pro-labor union movement in the United

States will agree that cops aren't workers, or the oppressed, but rather are the oppressors, regardless of the question of surplus value. And Marxism has always excluded the employees of the state from the proletariat in any country. So it is of little surprise that the AFSCME would be pushing this reactionary policy to eliminate education, resources and community connection in prisons, even if it risks the very safety of their own members.

MIM Distributors submitted the protest email below to Illinois DOC Director Latoya Hughes. We encourage others to send emails or make phone calls or send letters (especially if you are in Illinois). There are more suggested scripts available from campaign initiators working with Midwest Books to Prisoners.(2)

You can contact Director Latoya Hughes at:
latoya.hughes@illinois.gov
312-814-2121
Illinois Department of Corrections
1301 Concordia Court
P.O. Box 19277
Springfield, IL 62794-9277

Notes: 1. Madison Porter, 5 October 2024, Canton prison workers protest how inmates receive mail, 25 News.
2. For more materials on this campaign you can access Google docs here: bit.ly/IDOCmail

Dear Director Hughes,

I have recently been made aware that several Illinois legislators are calling for an immediate cessation of non-legal paper mail being delivered to people incarcerated in the IDOC. Our organization sends paper mail to thousands of prisoners across the country and we object to this effort to abridge our First Amendment rights to speech and association, as well as those of the people in your prisons. We will be sharing this letter with our members and supporters, especially in the state of Illinois.

Books, newspapers, and other printed materials are a crucial source of information, education and growth for people locked in prison. Letters can be a rare thing to look forward to. Our organization runs study programs, conducts surveys and regularly sends forms to prisoners to get updates on their status. All of these programs rely on prisoners receiving pieces of paper that we send them so they can fill out the forms and return them. The impact of blocking such mail would be massive.

We have been watching the spread of alarmism around drug-laced mail, and have even had such baseless accusations made against our mail! Of course testing proved the accusation false, just as it did in the recent incident at Shawnee, where the testing by Marion Fire Rescue came back false. We've also seen multiple cases where staff have claimed to have gotten sick from handling mail which have been proven to be impossible claims multiple times now. The benefits of education and community connection are proven to help ensure staff safety far more than these imagined risks of being poisoned. Policy should be fact-based and should not succumb to rumors and fear-mongering

Again, I am writing this email to clearly state my complete opposition to any and all proposals to halt mail delivered to incarcerated people, and urge you not to move forward with this proposal.

Sincerely Concerned,

MIM Distributors

No Used Books in Menard, IL

by an Illinois prisoner September 2024

I am a prisoner at Menard Correctional Center in Illinois. There is a ban here on used books. All books have to be new, and any organization that sends free books to prisoners can't send them to Menard.

The other issue at Menard is the restrictions on the tablets. There is no phone or any access to reading case law on the tablets. Instead they offer streaming, music, game center, GTL podcasts and GTL newsfeed, and old movies and television. None of this is any help to prisoners here at Menard.

MIM(Prisons) adds: There is nothing in Illinois DOC Publication Reviews Directive that requires books be new, so

this appears to be specific to this facility. Correctional Center maximum security facility has been notorious for long-term isolation, abuses over the years, practice of adding on books to punishment, segregation is all too common in this country where people are punished and not reformed.

Companies like Tel*Link (GTL) (a Securix, CenturyLink Communications, Technologies Group, Commissary Group) hundreds, if not thousands, of free books available on tablets from Project Gutenberg meaning these books majority 95+ years old. It's a little surprise that they are lacking in practical information that prisoners in Illinois

... Continued from p. 1

ever done in so short a time.

"...By 1960... about \$2,600,000,000) was devoted to education and science, or fifty percent more than the direct budgetary military expenditure...."

"In 1960 United States expenditure on education at all levels was less than four percent of the national income, or slightly less than the \$18,000,000,000 Americans spent for alcoholic beverages and tobacco.

"In 1957 Premier Chou En-lai

... Knowledge

had estimated illiteracy the whole country 1960 the percentage reduced... to about twenty-four percent cities."(2)

By 1979, three years the GPCR, illiteracy to 30%.(3) Yet the known in the United States shutting down schools attacking professor things were central student struggles on across China. And in the



Burying Lies

by SKS Heruglyph of USW October 2024

Meet me at the library, that's where we bury lies. That's where we kill CIPWS miseducation; that's where we grow wings and fly. That's where we find essential self. Where we turn into suns, and rise that's where they hide truths and keep us mentally colonized. They kept the slaves from learning to read, the easiest way to keep them, dehumanized. They, the CIPWS, is doing the same to prisoners, if we don't open our eyes, and realize, that fighting CIPWS censorship is the same as burying lies. ■

struggles there were factions taking up positions and political fighting against each other. Students were challenged hierarchical roles university and the methods of study, always having the There are even dozens of cases of Red Guard religious books as attacking reactionary this was not a effort by the state happening in prisons schools across the United States today, the so-called "free". We can see the critiques of the student movement United States today "right to an education used to silence protest U.S. arms being used genocide in Palestine

Books, Rule

Help Spread Free Books to Prisoners

by MIM(Prisons) September 2024

We hope those who read our series of articles for Prison Banned Books Week have been both angered by what is going on inside U.S. prisons and inspired to action.

MIM(Prisons) is in a period of growth, after some setbacks. In recent years we've gradually reinstated each of our 3 different levels of correspondence study courses for prisoners. Just this summer we put out a long-planned Reference Guide that contains historical timelines, maps and a glossary to provide background for many of the things we talk about regularly. We've released the Revolutionary 12 Steps Program and Power To New Afrika, both written by prisoners, in the last couple years. We continue to put out Under Lock & Key every three months. And we've updated a number of other study packs

and resources. And we do it all out of our own pockets and volunteer time. So if you can spare some money or some time to support us it can go a long way.

By the time this series of articles reaches most of our readers, the holiday season will be approaching. In that spirit and inspired by all this talk about banned books, we are pledging to mail out more books this winter than any other winter in the 2020s so far!

Please see our website for ways to donate and other ways to help out. Outside supporters can help us make this happen by sending cash or stamps, helping acquire in demand books like dictionaries, Black Panther Party, or Marxist classics, or by volunteering in various ways. All of the new publications listed above have been censored in certain prisons, even the Reference

Guide was censored in Michigan's Thumb Correctional Facility for being more than 12 pages long! So continued campaigning and legal support is much needed.

Prisoners can help us get more books out by taking the steps to join our Serve the People Free Political Books to Prisoners Program. Get others to sign up for a subscription to ULK or become a distributor of ULK in your prison. Let us know what organizing work you are doing, what your local study group is discussing, what questions are coming up for you and your comrades. By doing these things you can receive books to help with your local work and studies. We have books on Black/New Afrikan studies, Chican@ studies, First Nation studies, gender, economics, history of Chinese socialism, the Soviet Union, books by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and more. ■

The United Front

Interestingly, after praising Chinese literacy in the quote above, Edgar Snow quotes a U. S. Library of Congress staffer stating that the Chinese concept of education "is not distinguishable from indoctrination, propaganda and agitation."(2) This is where we would again stress the class perspective, and how propaganda is in the eye of the beholder:

"Westerners perceive Chinese education under Mao as "propaganda," because it encourages values and goals

accepts.

Allyn and Adele Rickett wrote about their experience as prisoners in China for providing intelligence to the United States Government. This is one of the best accounts of the Chinese socialist approach to education/re-education. They were imprisoned during the early years of the revolution and witnessed the change in approach, partially due to changing conditions (the new government had been established and prisoners were less rebellious) and partially due to lessons learned. "By 1953... the authorities acknowledged that their former overemphasis on suppression had been a mistake."(5)

Their description of staff at their prison sounds unbelievable to a U.S. prisoner:

"he always seemed to have time to listen to the troubles of one or another of the prisoners or to do countless little things which showed how serious he was in looking out for the welfare of his charges."

At first Allyn Rickett thought this was a bit of a propaganda show, but this incident changed his mind:

"I looked through the crack in the palisade built around our cell window to obstruct the view. There was Supervisor Shen patiently going along the line turning every article of the prisoners' clothing to make certain they would be dry by the time we were to take them in after supper."(6)

Regarding censorship, the Ricketts also compare the news in China over time and to the American press:

"Publication of news is determined by its usefulness in increasing the people's social consciousness and morality and furthering the Communist Party's program for the development of the country. Therefore the content of the news is limited to what the authorities feel will serve these ends.

"To our mind, no matter how sincere in their purpose the authorities may be, in violating the principle of the right to know they are taking a dangerous step. ...One of the most encouraging recent developments in China has been a liberalization of this concept of a controlled press [written in 1957]

"...Our experience in living in and reading the press of both countries has led us to the conclusion that the Chinese today are still receiving a clearer picture of what is happening here than the American people are of what is taking place in China."(7)

Ten years later the GPCR will begin and "big character posters" were promoted as a way for the masses to express their grievances against Party officials, or other issues they faced. The Chinese experiment in socialism was unique in how it regularly attempted to open up mass participation in ideological struggle and in organizing society as far as could be tolerated without creating chaos. And even then there was some chaos, which is what the GPCR is usually criticized for.

The press is a battleground for class struggle. In a condition where all the books were bourgeois, the socialist government had a lot of work to do to catch up. And this was done largely in face-to-face study groups, whether on campuses, on farms or in prisons.

The ideas of the old system must be surpassed, but not erased. Marx showed how different economic systems gave birth to subsequent systems, and how the ideas evolved to reflect those new systems. This is all important to the understanding of humyn history and to the development and continued advancement of humyn knowledge. ■

- Notes: 1. Melo X, August 2022, Are Ideas in a Book Materialist?, Under Lock & Key 79. 2. Snow, Edgar, 1970, Red China Today. Random House: New York, pp.229-231. 3. MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT POSITION PAPER ON VIOLENCE, PART II, 26 August 1992 4. MC5, November 1999, Myths About Maoism. 5. Rickett, Allyn & Adele, 1973, Anchor Books: New York, p.235. 6. Ibid., p.236-7 7. Ibid., p.331



Red Guard different political lines, each other. Enging the in the traditional without answers. documented ds burning means of ideas. But coordinated te as is ons and ited States land of the parallels to e Chinese in the ay where n" is being sts against sed for a

which contradict the goals of capitalism. These values and goals taught in China during the Cultural Revolution were consistent with the building of socialism. Education in Western nations is not perceived as "propaganda" by those who, consciously or not, agree with the goals of capitalism/imperialism and patriarchy. Similarly, advertising for capitalist products, while recognized as very influential on people's opinions and actions, is not perceived as "brain-washing" by those who benefit from capitalism and have therefore decided to tolerate it."(4)

The totalitarian control of corporations like Global Tel*Link, JPay, and Securis over what prisoners read, write, listen to and communicate with people outside is a good example of what our society



More Books Available for Work Trade

Analyzing the North Carolina Ban List

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

A North Carolina prisoner writes: Dear comrades, I've enclosed a banned book/publications list put out by our prison.

I can't get or make copies. Nobody can help me with copies. North Carolina prisons want all non-legal mail sent to Phoenix, MD for electronic scanning that takes up to two weeks to be done. Yet legal mail, books and newsletters are sent to the prisons themselves. Any idea what a burden that is? Our people got to remember two different addresses. Organizations have to mail us letter replies to one address and books to another.

This prison blocks almost all sexual mags, even non-nude, even though NC-DAC policy approves such books. Not Harnett Correctional Institution.

Notice the date? This is the banned book list I was given in June 2024. Any book past a year is supposed to be re-reviewed. They aren't.

Analyzing NC Ban List

Some famous titles on the list include *Where the Crawdads Sing* and the often-censored in U.S. schools, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Other notable items include multiple self-help books, including ones specifically for prisoners preparing for release, and prisoner resource lists. There are multiple legal resources on the list, one our comrade mentions. And there are books like *Gender Studies, Qigong and Tai Chi*, and an astrology book that can't possibly violate any rules. Clearly censored for its political content is *Our Enemies in Blue*, a critique of policing.

Under Lock & Key is the second most censored newspaper in North Carolina, after *The Final Call*, which appears 14 times on the list (it also comes out a lot more frequently than *ULK*). Both are clearly censored for political reasons.

The book list that this comrade received in June 2024 is dated 10/06/2023. Since October 2023, the following items have been rejected by NCDPS: *Under Lock & Key 82* and *ULK 84*, and a comrade reported not receiving *Under Lock & Key 85*. A prisoner

appealed *ULK 82*, was denied, and then MIM Distributors appealed and it was removed from the Master List of Disapproved Publications. Most states have a central administrative office that oversees the local mailroom decisions to censor, so it is always worth appealing to these offices. There are no rights that you don't fight for. Years ago many comrades went further and engaged in lawsuits over the mail in North Carolina, which seems to have brought improvements in their practices in recent years.

By our count, at least 100 of the 480 items on the ban list contain sexual content, most of them containing pornographic photos. While this comrade points out that sexual content is not a reason for banning per the law, North Carolina Department of Adult Corrections policy Chapter D 0.0109(f)(11) does prohibit "Sexually explicit material which by its nature or content poses a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the institution, or facilitates criminal activity." It is not clear how any of the materials in question fit this criteria. Curiously, right after the release of this ban list, *Under Lock & Key 79* was censored for the reason "naked woman's breast", which just isn't true at all, but should also not have been allowed by their own rules.

The only topic to rival pornography on the ban list was "street novels." We counted at least 100 examples on this list (we did not look up every title so these are likely undercounted). Most likely these are censored for (f)(10) related to promoting "gang activity."

The third most common topic on the ban list appeared to be tattoo-related, with at least 20 examples. Other themes that appeared more than a few times, in order of frequency, included: art, history of famous criminals, cars, guns, survival, hacker, legal, and martial arts. Unfortunately we have no real information on the literature that was not put on the ban list to compare to.

According to the PEN America Index of School Book Bans, there were 58 books banned in various school districts across North Carolina in 2023. While the news reports more on

banned books in schools, we can see that banning literature is much more frequent in prisons. And while the titles on these two lists appear to have no overlap, the motivation behind most of the banned literature seems to be an effort to not expose people to books that depict things the censors don't want them to do.

North Carolina's Overall Rating

Overall, we have to give North Carolina a decent grade of C+ on their mail policies and practices.

It's unacceptable that almost every issue of *Under Lock & Key* seems to either be censored, or at least not delivered to some subscribers in NCDAC. This includes the recent example where they censored *ULK* for art depicting actions that their department describes in their own rules. However, some subscribers in North Carolina have received every recent issue of *Under Lock & Key*. There has been a major improvement since 2012-2017 when censorship was so rampant in North Carolina that we couldn't even get a letter in telling a prisoner what mail we've sent them.

And yes, the multiple addresses are a burden as our comrade says. Pennsylvania has three! You can see our list of mail censored in North Carolina prisons over the last couple years and see that even when newspapers and pamphlets were sent to the facility they were sometimes returned stating, "This facility DOES NOT accept friend and family mail directly." And there were times where mail printed on 8.5"x11" paper was returned from TextBehind stating: Refused "TextBehind, INC does not process privileged/legal mail". It is clear these systems are confusing to all involved.

Assuming those were honest mistakes, there hasn't really been any censorship of books or pamphlets from MIM Distributors in recent years (just our newsletter), including some of our most censored literature in other states. And this would not likely be the case if it weren't for the prisoners who fought censorship with appeals and lawsuits less than a decade ago. ■

building towards a movement of New Afrikan liberation, or towards an overturn of the amerikkkan empire and its justice system, not only would Williams's life have likely been saved (as he would have been granted a true trial by his peers), but the lives of many others convicted (wrongfully or not) of crimes that pale in comparison to the crimes against humanity committed by the First World bourgeoisie and its lackeys would have been saved as well. Any justice for Williams can only be attained when we feed this righteous outrage into such systematic solutions.

Many of the narratives from supporters surrounding his death would have the reader believe that the *only* reason he was undeserving of death was his lack of culpability. Undoubtedly, the murder of an innocent man is something that will tug at the heartstrings of many, and can be used as an agitational opportunity. But as communists, we recognize that the use of the death penalty by the bourgeois state, and especially a jury of euro-amerikans deciding the fate of a New Afrikan, is *always* murder. So too are the deaths of New Afrikans at the hands of the police; so too are the deaths of the Third World proletariat by starvation, natural disaster, or oppression by paramilitaries serving as U.S. attack-dogs. Whether or not Williams was guilty of his crime, whether or not the hundreds of others on death row are innocent, the system will never prosecute those who uphold the world order that leads the oppressed into a life of crime, will never order the lethal injection of those

Tennessee Book Ban a Mystery

by a Tennessee prisoner
September 2024

I am lucky this far to have received my mail [including many newspapers, study packs and books from MIM Distributors], but the tablets are soon to arrive. As far as books go, I am unable to order any as there seems to be some type of mystery in that realm. No books until further notice, and nobody appears to be able to guide you in the proper direction.

Their goal seems to be to stop the flow of contraband into the prison. Yet, there seems to be more of it than food on your tray. People are falling out and sent right back to the place they came out of to be back in the same shape they left in: on drugs. They appear to do nothing about the problem. A person on drugs can walk right past an officer and he acts as if he doesn't see him. The smell of something on fire stays in the air. You are forced to sleep in a room with unbearable smoke fumes in the air. All they want is for the alarm to not go off. Smoke bailing out of some buildings; isn't that something.

Yes, we're going to have to accept the tablets because they can solve the problem of unbearable conditions - or so they say!

MIM(Prisons) adds: Despite word from prisoners in Tennessee that there are new restrictions on books coming in, we have not been able to confirm the new rules. We have heard from other Books for Prisoners programs that they have stopped sending books to Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Corrections' website hosts the Inmate Mail policy dated 8 December 2023, which states:

"Printed materials may be received by inmates in an unlimited amount, provided they

are mailed directly from the publisher(s) or recognized commercial distributor."

Despite some censorship, and mail gone missing, MIM Distributors has been able to deliver books to TN prisoners prior to December 2023. And lately our biggest problem has been with Tennessee rejecting manila envelopes because they think they might harbor drugs!

As we've reported in Texas and elsewhere, drugs in prisons have risen to all-time highs, despite Covid-19 restrictions on visitations and new digital mail policies. And science has proven that drug addiction is a product of bad living conditions. So not only are prison staff bringing in drugs, they are driving prisoners to use them through their repressive and alienating conditions.

UPDATE 28 September from a TN prisoner: I'm currently being held at Morgan County Correctional Complex and I need your help/advice. Excluding religious books, I'm only allowed to receive 5 books, from only 3 vendors that prison officials have chosen! How can I further my education if I'm only allowed to receive 5 books? I'm working on my pending criminal and civil cases, and of course I'll need more than 5 law books, but with this restriction, that's not possible! This restriction is under the guidance of Warden Shawn Phillips who can be reached at (423) 346-1300.

The comrade included documentation showing the only approved vendors to be: Abebook.com [sic], bookshop.org and 21st century Christian bookstore. And apparently prisoners can give books to mailroom to be thrown away in order to receive additional books! ■

Document Prison Abuses

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

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

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women both have been spurred into action by the suggestion of a New Afrikan acting violently towards a white woman; Williams's case is no different.

"From 1930 to 1985, the white courts not only executed Black murder and rape convicts at a rate several times that of white murder and rape convicts, it executed more Black people than white people in total."(2)

Hours before ey was executed, the Supreme Court reviewed Williams's case, and denied the request to halt or delay his execution. This is despite millions of signatures on a petition, and a great deal of social media activism around the case. The righteous anger of millions was not enough to save Williams's life. True radicals, not reformists nor revisionists, need to look past the idea of incremental reforms, of politely asking the amerikkkan state to consider the humanities of those it has deemed worthless. If the time and energy that had been put into the (nevertheless righteous) cause of petitioning for Marcellus Williams had been put into studying, organizing, and

with the blood of millions of oppressed-nation proletarians on their hands.

Williams was a devout Muslim and served as an imam for those in prison. The topic of religion has been covered many times before in

Continued on next page...

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?

Analyzing the Pennsylvania Ban List

by MIM(Prisons)
September 2024

Here we analyze a banned literature list from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

The state of Pennsylvania holds around 40,000 people in its prisons, compared to 30,000 in North Carolina. Yet Pennsylvania has only 398 currently banned titles compared to North Carolina's 480. The Pennsylvania list is not refreshed each year, with some items being banned as far back as 2012, so it seems that overall North Carolina bans more books/publications. Across Pennsylvania school districts there were 186 banned books in 2022/2023 school year. Again, we see that prisons are banning more literature than schools are.

There is a lot of overlap between Pennsylvania and North Carolina's lists. Pennsylvania seems more aggressive in banning sexual content, which accounted for at least 130 of the 398 titles on their list. (Note: On both lists we do not have reasons for the censorship, and we did not confirm the actual content of each item.) Unlike North Carolina, we did not see any "street novels" or "urban fiction" on the Pennsylvania list, so this was the biggest difference, perhaps accounting for the shorter list. Street novels rival pornography on the North Carolina ban list.

The Pennsylvania list also differs in that it lists titles that were permitted after being reviewed. There were 664 titles that were listed as permitted, giving greater insight into how they implement their rules.

Like North Carolina, tattoo books/magazines were often banned, along with topics like art, guns, hacking, drugs and martial arts. Pennsylvania had more prisoner advocacy related materials on their ban list (like *Prison Health News*), as well as newspapers that cater to prisoners. They also had more reference books and business related books for some reason (like *Legal Forms for Starting and Owning Your Own Business*). The obvious political motivations of censorship come through in items like *Stop Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color and Trans People of Color*.

While North Carolina seemed to only target *The Final Call* and *Under Lock & Key* there is a much broader list of newspapers that have certain issues banned in Pennsylvania. At the top of that list are *The San Francisco Bayview*, *Workers World*, and *Under Lock & Key*. Other than *Under Lock & Key* itself, there were no other items on the ban list that MIM Distributors distributes to prisoners, though some were on the permitted list. This mostly conforms with our records that show *Under Lock &*

Key is almost the only thing that has been noted as censored or not received in recent years. The one item that shows up on our list a couple times for Pennsylvania censorship is our Maoist Glossary. As mentioned elsewhere, most of our mail is never confirmed received or not.

Digital Mail Makes Physical Mail Harder

Censorship is challenging to track in the state of Pennsylvania. By law, authorities are required to send us notice of any censorship when it does occur, but in practice this is uncommon if not rare. The overwhelming majority of our censorship cases in PA consist of mail simply disappearing in the system. What makes tracking censorship so challenging is that this missing mail includes letters that we send prisoners detailing the history of mail we've sent to them and when we sent it. Sometimes we have to resort to mailing the cellmates of the prisoners we were trying to contact. It's amazing how well anger at the police can be communicated just through handwriting.

The fact that Pennsylvania seems to be quietly censoring our glossary aligns with the fact that their tablets provided through GTL do not offer any dictionaries among the 8805 titles available. Only 112 books are free on those tablets. These numbers are from Freedom of Information Act research by prisonbannedbooksweek.org, which also reveals that PA has a contract for \$50,000,000.00 with GTL that includes kickbacks for "all annual revenues for music, e-messaging, games, lobby deposit fees and ebooks up to \$4,350,000" at 22.5%. While kickbacks are interesting, note that at best the state is getting about 8% of the money back that they are giving to GTL to run their prison tablets. State bureaucrats are motivated to balance budgets, but it's not like the state is making money on this deal. It is only GTL that is walking away with profits, not the state, and definitely not the families of prisoners who are paying exorbitant fees for these services. The comrade who sent us this ban list wrote:

"I bought this GTL tablet model number TG0802 in January of 2019 for damn near \$160.00. But since ViaPath took over GTL a year ago or so, the price has dropped down to \$80. But these are refurbished tablets. When I get released I will send it back to the company via the form paying only shipping and handling. Then you get a brand new one without

all the D.O.C. settings and restrictions on them... Every song I bought will be on it too."

It is nice that they have an option to allow you to keep your purchases after release from prison, but we wouldn't recommend keeping a tablet with a cellular data receiver, camera, GPS and microphone on it from Global Tel*Link after your release.

Thanks to the new digital mail system, Pennsylvania DOC now has three different addresses to send mail to requiring one to identify the type of mail as either General Incoming Correspondence, Photographs, Publications, Photo Books, Official Documents, Original Transactional Documentation, Legal Mail (which can be either "For Attorneys" or "For Courts/Court Entity"), or Miscellaneous.

ROOM Full of SO-CALLED BANNED and/or CONFISCATED BOOKS

No inmates allowed
MAIL/PROPERTY ROOM
WE HAVE NO BOOKS HERE ASSHOLE!!



OFFICER, NONE OF THE INMATES HAVE BEEN GETTING ANY BOOKS, DO YOU HAVE ANY idea why?

TX Bans Book Cuz It's Effective

by a Texas prisoner
September 2024

As a person who has been the target of long-standing censorship campaigns, I would like to give my voice to the discussion around censorship in this time of organizing against this tool of counter-insurgency.

Recently, in Texas' prison system, an anthology that speaks to the torture of solitary confinement was censored. The reason given is that it purportedly contains content that threatens the security of the prison by encouraging prisoners to engage in disruptive behavior such as strikes, etc. I took part in this anthology and to be clear there is not any language speaking to the disruption of the prison system. There is language that speaks to the dismantling of long-term/indefinite solitary confinement, which is illegal in many places, is considered torture internationally, and which the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) itself admits may cause harm or damage to the mental health of the affected

person. So the thinking of the thought police is that it is a threat to security to speak out against torture, but it is not a threat to security to maintain torturous conditions. What sense does that make?

York Times, speaking to the experience of solitary confinement in Texas, particularly how it is in prisons designated for women. Al-Jazeera and NPR featured interviews on the book and the experiences of Texas solitary confinement. Advocates continue to build momentum and public opinion against the use of solitary confinement, and it is upon this back drop that when *Texas Letters Volume 2* appeared, it was censored throughout the state prison system.

This is a move tyrants use to quell social discourse; to control the narrative and therefore evolution of the system never comes. This is a move to quell any form of resistance. Even that which is peaceful becomes a "threat to the security of the institution", those who take part in such actions become "threats to the security of the institution" people known for "organizing and influencing other inmates" and therefore are confined in solitary confinement or held in said confinement if already there.

This process of events is no surprise. It is a reflection of the practices coming out of the highest level of government in the state, directly a representation of the tyrannical regime Greg Abbott desires and runs himself.

See, in Texas, the Governor appoints the Executive Director of TDCJ, the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, and the parole and pardons board. The Director's Review Committee (DRC) is the body that governs censorship inside the prisons. This committee is appointed by the Director. So what we end up with is a DRC of political appointees, appointed by a political appointee, a gang of political careerists, all kissing the ring of the top man, the governor of Texas, all falling in line with his neo-confederate agenda. As such we have a prison system that is over saturated with Christian fundamentalism, stale reforms, faith-based programs, and because any volunteer program has to go through the chaplaincy department there is no secular, dissident voices, programs or activities. All because TDCJ is in the business of cultivating ZOMBIES, those who talk when and how they're told, walk when and how they're told, think when and how they're told. This is considered reform and anything outside of that is a threat to security worthy of censorship.

This type of tyranny should be important to everyone because we should want to stop this sort of government over-reach before it becomes too extreme. Tyranny only becomes emboldened with time and a lack of resistance of its subjects. ■

Under Lock & Key 83 is the only recent issue on the "DENIED" list in Pennsylvania for the reason "Information contained on page 15 speaks of rising up against authority." Yet every recent issue has been censored for some prisoners, showing that this ban list is only a piece of the censorship going on in Pennsylvania. In recent years this censorship is a combination of mail just gone missing as mentioned above, or mail returned and stamped "REFUSED: Go to WWW.COR.PA.GOV", implying that we are not following the mail rules. But when you go to their website, the mail rules clearly state that newspapers go to the facility, and many PA prisoners receive them this way. But alas, some mailroom supervisors disagree with the rules.

Despite all these confusing hoops that prison mail must go through, like elsewhere, drugs are more widespread than ever in Pennsylvania prisons. Rampant drug use and censored books and letters are just two of many indications of the failure of U.S. prisons to do anything positive for society. ■

oppressive priSSon sySStem.

Let Marcellus Williams' death remind all of us that this country's injustice system doesn't care how much people protest, or petition. Ultimately, polite pleas to higher authority will go ignored. The only thing that will keep such high-profile injustices like this, as well as the more covert violence against New Afrikans and other oppressed nations, from happening again, is

freedom from the amerikkkan state, won through struggle and revolution. And we must remember, unlike so many of the liberal activists who took up this cause, that we fight for Marcellus not only because the evidence shows he has a higher chance of being innocent than most people on death row, but because the oppressive and racist amerikkkan empire should not have the right to decide whether a single New Afrikan lives or dies.

Williams' poetry is a beautiful and striking example of proletarian-internationalist art, in how it captures the revolutionary consciousness of New Afrikans in the United States, and in how it draws the link between New Afrika and Palestine. ■

Note: 1. Elizabeth Melimopoulos, 25 September 2024, Why was Marcellus Williams executed? What to know about the Missouri case, Al Jazeera.
2. see MIM Theory 2/3: Gender and Revolutionary Feminism for more on the intersections of nation and gender

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Under Lock and Key, but this case serves as an example of how religion serves as a liberatory force for many in prison — helping them to transform themselves, and to find allies among all those fighting against amerikkka and the capitalist system throughout the First and the Third World alike. Williams' last words were "All praise be to Allah in every situation!!!"; the

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author sees this as an example of why, rather than condemning religion as some pseudo-"Maoists" and chauvinists will do, we recognize religion to be, as Marx explained, the sigh of the oppressed people. Islam brought Williams a sense of comfort and cosmic justice as he headed to his death, without keeping him from organizing and speaking out against the moribund and

On Homelessness: A Growing Site of Lumpen Organizing

by Communist Party of Aztlán
October 2024

The complex issue of dealing with homelessness here in the imperialist center has led to much debate within our party. In our current stage, we are engaged in consciousness building and raising public opinion, while it is our proletarian morality which compels us to struggle against oppression in all arenas. Homelessness is a crisis more serious than fentanyl and yet the capitalist state via its "supreme court" has recently determined that codifying homeless "sweeps" of encampments and criminalizing the homeless for being displaced is their remedy for the economic depression that capitalism creates. Surely communists can think of a far more humynizing solution.

At the same time, our responsibility here in the First World is not to follow the capitalist state around with a rag to wipe up its spills and a dust pan and broom to pick up its litter. We are not brainstorming to create reforms that simply make life in the occupied territories more bearable. We must fight oppression while serving the revolution.

Homeless Have National Oppression to Blame

The capitalist system is ultimately behind all social ills, and it was capitalism that first created a "surplus population", which includes much of the homeless. However, looking particularly at recent rises in homelessness in the so-called United States, we can see how national oppression played a significant role in who became homeless.

During the 1960s and 70s, as the national liberation struggles peaked in the United States, the movement suffered extreme repression from the U.S. government. Death and prison helped Amerika scale down the rise in resistance among the lumpen. As the 1980s arrived, so too did the introduction of crack cocaine to the ghetto streets — and soon followed mass incarceration. It's important to note that during the 1960s and 70s there was not a homeless epidemic and there were no massive homeless encampments in every large city as is currently seen now. While statistics are not good, it's possible that homelessness in the mid 1980s had reached rates that were double what they are today.(1)

Mass incarceration served the state in preventing another wave of revolutionary resistance. "Tough on crime" laws were enacted to curtail any efforts from the movement in the U.S. to regroup and reorganize the lumpen. As a result, the 1980s and 90s saw a mass capture of non-whites not seen on that level since the time of the middle passage. This mass incarceration — or mass kidnapping, to be more precise — led to the disruption and dissolution of the family unit while simultaneously injecting drugs on the scene. This mass kidnapping then led to mass displacement as single parents struggled to stay afloat often succumbing to escapism and criminalization themselves, only to be released to homelessness. Though the massive prison boom did allow for a shift of a significant portion of the lumpen from the streets to cages.

And while it is unclear how today's rates compare to the

1980s, we are currently seeing a record in homelessness since the HUD started a more systematic count in 2007. And this has disproportionately hit oppressed nations again:

"This year's big jump was driven by people who lost housing for the first time, which Biden administration officials say reflects the sharp rise in rent. The largest increase was among families, and the count also finds a significant rise among Hispanics. Nearly 40% of the unhoused are Black or African American [who are only 12% of the general population -editor], and a quarter are seniors. The annual count does not include the many people who couch surf with friends or family, and who may be at high risk of ending up on the street."(2)

We Don't Want Peace with Amerikkka

Homelessness affects all of society in one way or another. Financially, it costs over 2 billion per year for former prisoners who are homeless.(3) If we look at it holistically, homelessness affects everything from mortality rates, healthcare, education, marriages, parenting, divorce, child welfare, the environment, etc. It's unknown how this will affect future generations. What is known is that many of those in the homeless encampments, like most of those in the prison camps, are Brown or Black. This all translates to economic oppression that the oppressed nations face with mass imprisonment, gentrification of their historic neighborhoods and of course being squeezed into homelessness. For those who support the empire, crumbs are flung their way, but for the lumpen who have no interest or intention to contribute to the U.S. capitalist system, an I.V. drip of violence, displacement, threat and trauma is fed to this population. When the United States describes "peace" for Aztlán, it is describing Chican@ capitulation to Amerikkka. To this, we decline, as we don't want peace with Amerikkka, we want to be free. Our efforts to heighten the contradictions to step closer towards our goal of revolution and independence is what should guide us as we move toward our national interests.

The Nature of the Homeless

Marxism taught us that the natural laws can be harnessed in the interests of the masses. Under capitalism there is a whole sector — the lumpen-proletariat, or the First World lumpen in the non-proletarian countries — who are systematically locked out of the production process and whose very lives are sacrificed in the name of profit and seen as castaways of society. The First World lumpen make up the vast majority of the homeless here in these false U.S. borders. Capitalist ideology here in the U.S. has been shaped by a long chain of oppression that has squeezed the colonized internal nations into our current state. White supremacy and slavery helped forge capitalist theory and practice and helped accelerate class development even surpassing Europe in many ways. Indeed, even James Bryce in "The American Commonwealth" documented the early stages of the U.S. petit bourgeois nature of the 1800s when he made several

trips to the U.S. and wrote:

"In Connecticut and Massachusetts the operatives in many a manufacturing town lead a life far easier, far more brightened by intellectual culture and by amusements than that of the clerks and shopkeepers of England or France."(4)



By the late 1800s, Amerikkka became increasingly bourgeoisified in many areas. By the early 1900s, U.S. imperialism would begin to exploit abroad, bringing the blood money back to these false U.S. borders and distributing it to buy off sectors of workers as investments to its future survival. But capitalism can never provide full employment and this means the alienated masses turn to the underground economy to survive. For many ex-prisoners, the underground economy is the only way they can survive. And for the homeless — which consists in large part on Injustice-impacted people — the underground economy is, for some, the only game in town.

When we examine the homeless population in the United States, we find that it is made up of many ex-prisoners(5). The internal semi-colonies are the majority percentage-wise.(6) This highlights the class contradictions within the United States as well. The state has imported European immigrants in their scramble to counter their social reality. The 2022 U.S. Census data shows that the white population in the U.S. would have decreased had it not been for 391,000 white people immigrating to the U.S. from Europe.(7) This approach to maintaining demographics favorable to the oppressor nation is nothing new, of course. Sakai points out how in the decades following the Haitian Revolution of 1791, it became "increasingly obvious that a 'thin, white line' of a few soldiers, administrators and planters could not safely hold down whole oppressed nations" which was the political impetus behind several waves of immigration from Europe in the 19th century.(8)

We can even trace the interconnection and evolution of homelessness and criminalization in the United States from pop culture to the prison gates. In the 1950s, Hollywood movies depicted the classic train riding "hobo" while prisons were filled with chain smoking conmen. Both populations were whiter than meemaw's tuna casserole. Today, both populations are mostly Brown and Black, and yet the revolutionary movement here within the occupied territories have yet to bring us closer to finding a remedy with teeth. Only a remedy that helps the oppressed nations while undermining Amerika will be sufficient in this scenario. While searching for the consideration of homelessness in the occupied territories let us not lose focus of how national oppression ties into the equation, despite Amerika flinging crumbs to a myriad of agencies, case managers, construction companies, advocacy groups and so-called social services.

On the surface it appears as if

the capitalists are using the profits they accumulate through exploitation to help soothe the very social ills that they create. Nothing can be further from the truth, as the Maoist Internationalist Movement's Prison Ministry put it:

"Under capitalism, the anarchy of production is the general rule. This is because capitalists only concern themselves with profit, while production and consumption of humyn needs is at the whim of the economic laws of capitalism. As a result, people starve, wars are fought and the environment is degraded in ways that make humyn life more difficult or even impossible. Another result is that whole groups of people are excluded from the production system, whereas in pre-class societies, a group of humyns could produce the basic food and shelter that they needed to survive. Capitalism is unique in keeping large groups of people from doing so."(9)

Indeed, the capitalists lock entire sectors out of the production process and create social band-aids that do not eradicate this mess. Imperialism creates a network of petty bourgeois jobs for Amerikkans that feed off this population that we call the lumpen but which most know as the "Homeless". The capitalists have devised a way to make the lumpen useful for keeping others busy and paid, while preventing the lumpen themselves from being productive for their own humynity.

The Prison Parallel

As mentioned above, another place we find concentrations of lumpen are the prisons, where they are treated similarly. A recent example of this is in California where the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (known as CAL/OSHA) recently attempted to address climate change and adapting to a rising heat epidemic. The State of California recently created heat standards for California workers. This would include more breaks and cooling and ventilation in all state buildings that respond to climate change. CAL/OSHA excluded California prisons and jails from the new regulations.(10)

The jails and prisons are lumpen centers where prisoners are often subjected to subhuman conditions, torture, medical maltreatment in HELLth care, not to mention outright murder by the state. The heat is also used against those prisoners who challenge the state in general and revolutionary prisoners in particular. Indeed, our Party has heard first hand accounts from some of our members who have been held in the U.S. concentration camps (prisons). Our Chairman himself was held and tortured for a decade in the state's Security Housing Units (S.H.U.) in solitary confinement, so our understanding of the conditions of prisoners is in depth. Some of the accounts we heard were that in the most humid prisons where temperatures in the summer rise to 110°F (43°C) the prison officials will turn on the heaters in the cells, while in the coldest prisons, even where it snows, the prison officials will crank up the air conditioning to make the cells like "ice boxes". One comrade described how at a particular prison they were at, it was so hot in the cell that this comrade would pour water on the cement floor and lay on the floor only in underwear as it was

extremely unbearable. Another comrade described that it was so hot at one Central Valley prison that it felt as if eir "insides were cooking".

Science tells us that excessive heat also increases risk of stroke and other health problems. Those with pre-existing conditions or failing health will have their conditions exacerbated in extreme heat. The excuse cited for excluding prisoners from these new climate related protections was cost. It's too expensive to humynize the lumpen. This points to another example of the lumpen simply being useful at this time to be given the bare minimum to exist another day in dehumynized conditions.

The lumpen are in a precarious position to say the least, here in the United States and in any society for that matter. First World lumpen can have a hand in emancipating humynity here in the imperialist center or end up succumbing to its demise like the old couple who had been married half a century and when one dies the other spouse quickly follows. The lumpen plays a vital role where it can be bought off as foot soldiers for capitalism in its fascist development or as the lumpen developed in Maoist China as some of the fiercest fighters for the revolution in the form of the Red Guards.(11)

Marx hinted at this when he said:

"But capital not only lives upon labor. Like a master, at once distinguished and barbarous, it drags with it into its grave the corpses of its slaves, whole hecatombs of workers, who perish in the crises."(12)

Today, in the First World, most "workers" are in the labor aristocracy and not the slaves of capital that Marx describes here. The lumpen, however, can be seen as "runaway slaves", those who in many ways have cast off the tethers of capitalist society.

It is important that we understand that social control determines the mass influx of planation-like facilities which prisoners in the U.S. are compelled to endure as well as the lumpenization that comes with it. The future of the Chican@ Nation relies on us grasping this and responding in a way that advances Aztlán closer to independence.

Concrete Analysis of a Concrete Situation

The lumpen who mostly comprise the "homeless" within the U.S. are a resourceful bunch who organize in unprecedented ways within these false U.S. borders. In our party's study, we have interviewed dozens of homeless people living in various modes of existence. Some homeless exist as couch surfers living persyn to persyn, some live in cars or RVs, some in cardboard boxes on sidewalks across the U.S., some live in mental facilities, jails or prisons and yet some live in abandoned buildings, parks, creeks and in homeless camps. About 62% of homeless in the general population are "sheltered", while only 50% of former prisoners in the homeless population are "sheltered."(13)

The encampments are of special concern, as they are the most organized of the homeless population. In the State of California, recent numbers show

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... Continued from last page ... Homelessness

the homeless population at 181,000.(14) These are the numbers that could be documented, so we suspect the actual count to be much higher, probably in the range of 200,000, as there are many who live in the shadows and for many different reasons refuse to be counted by the state. It should also be noted that it was in San Jose, California some years back where what some have called the largest homeless camp in the U.S. was found. This camp even had a name that the lumpen gave it — "The Jungle" and this encampment had up to 10,000 people living there, 10,000 lumpen, mostly Chican@s who existed for over a decade as a camp.

It is also interesting that the State of California which is not just a state within Aztlán but currently includes the heart of what the capitalists call "silicon valley" also has huge swaths of homeless people. So much wealth and privilege exists alongside such misery, poverty and hunger in this place where people's lives are reduced to nada if those lives do not build capitalism. This reminds us what we are fighting.

The homeless camps are comprised of lumpen of all ages, including babies and the elderly. There are teens who have lived much of their lives in the camps. Many children are illiterate and relocating from camp to camp or from camp to "flying homeless" (i.e., living on sidewalks or in cars).

The larger and more established camps have a main organizer who acts as a warlord of sorts. These larger camps tend to be organized more on the model of U.S. youth survival groups, which the capitalists call "gangs" rather than lumpen organizations. These main camps have rules and penalties that go with them. The high crimes in these camps are crimes against children, for which the penalty can be a beating and banishment or even death depending on the severity of the crime.

The shot-callers within the main camps have historically been male, although the shot-callers tend to be more permanent while the rest of the community tends to be more fluid, with many relocating regularly or ending up in jail. In our study, all of the shot-callers have been imprisoned in some form, whether that be in county jail or prison.

Those who comprise these main camps "surface" to the streets sporadically for food, showers or to tap into the underground economy by any means necessary. Camp life tends to revolve around food, water and drugs. "Communal" living in the main camps is often injected with drugs. Drug use is rampant in the camps, although not all homeless in the camps are users. Some are sellers who slang dope in the camps making thousands in profits off their fellow lumpen's misery and addiction. The prime drugs of choice in the camps being meth, heroin and crack. The dealers on the streets ensure that the main camps stay flooded with dope.

Most of the main camps are located in creeks, industrial areas, or under freeway bridges and underpasses. Many of the camps have electricity from

stolen generators and power lines. Contrary to what people believe, many of the homeless do not bathe in the creeks even when their camps are in the creek. Many use camping showers or seek showers at community centers or at the homes of friends and family.

The factors contributing to the epidemic known as homelessness have been formulated elsewhere, we know that the heart of the problem remains to be capitalism. We understand that factors like hunger afflict the homeless population and throwing the homeless something to chew on has continued to be done by both liberals and religious conservatives alike and to no avail. As communists, we need to take action that translates to radically different terms and which is more impactful and deep reaching.

Identifying and heightening the contradictions here in the occupied territories of Aztlán while aiding the Brown masses and pushing the national liberation struggle forward on these shores is a key tenet of our party. Homelessness is one of the major fractures within the empire in which the development of resistance is likely, the other

many at the time, the thought of venturing out to the countryside was not inviting. To those truly seeking to contribute to the revolution, the sacrifice of having no running water or indoor plumbing was miniscule. This practice of sending urban intellectuals and professionals to do practical work in the countryside was also done in the Soviet Union from the very earliest days of revolutionary power.

Here in the First World, the lumpen (which includes the homeless population) are a potential revolutionary force that must be tapped. Marx taught us that capitalism prevents us from solving the social ills like homelessness and that only through socialist revolution will we realize this truth. Mao's China solved many social ills amongst the lumpen including drug addiction and prostitution, both of which are activities found amongst the lumpen (homeless) throughout the U.S. and as we begin this work of politicizing the homeless, or of bringing revolutionary culture to them, we are in essence preparing the lumpen for the revolution.

We believe that it is not a question of if we should go to the homeless camps to bring revolutionary culture to the lumpen, we believe that it *must* be

much potential in the lumpen encampments and the enemy knows this.

Marx taught us that the lumpen were indeed the "dangerous class". We agree that there is a certain danger in interacting with the lumpen, just as there is a certain danger of interacting with the capitalist state, not to mention the white settler nation in general. History has taught us that to be colonized is dangerous as well, so we have learned to struggle through generational danger and in many cases to do so armed and ready to resist.

At this stage, we only seek to bring revolutionary culture to the lumpen encampments as we see it as complimenting our efforts to raise public opinion. At the same time, we stand firm that ultimately it will be through armed struggle that Aztlán will be free and the lumpen will play a key role in the national liberation struggle here in the internal semi-colonies. Here we agree with Fanon when describing the lumpen, he said:

"...that horde of starving men, uprooted from their tribe and from their clan, constitutes one of the most spontaneous and most radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people."(17)

As Fanon suggests, the lumpen moves differently. It is not a class which succeeds at town hall debates or boycotts. Hit the lumpen up when it's time to boogie, when violence explodes in the metropole and the capitalist state feels the slugs of liberation, for this is the arena in which the lumpen excels. Forged through oppression, the lumpen will perform on the stage built by the bourgeoisie and their collaborators. But the party must perform as well and the movement more broadly must perform. We must perform agitation and propaganda (agit/prop) and do so well amongst the lumpen.

In "Combat Liberalism", Mao discussed how liberalism prevents people from acting on living up to their obligations as communists. Among other things, he points to failing to show concern for the masses and not engaging in agit/prop. There are many reasons why people practice liberalism. In many ways, some have fallen into liberalism here in the occupied territories. Many within the movement have opted out of reaching back into the lumpen encampments to those alienated not only from labor but from society as well. In this sense, the party seeks to combat liberalism in this field.

Some have wondered what is to be done with the lumpen encampments, "what is possible?" some ask. There is much work to be done. We need our presence felt, we need to become a regular presence in the camps and begin to inject them with revolutionary culture — with art, literature and teatro. We need to gain their confidence and to teach and learn — from the masses, to the masses.

The Chican@ movement of the past never dealt with the homeless in this way, although the homeless epidemic was not in existence to today's levels we must be honest that scant attention was given to the homeless in general. Today's Chican@ movement must do more as the next generation must in turn do more than us and continue to *build*.

The lumpen encampments are

self-governed as the pigs or other state agencies rarely ever go into the camps. We see that there is potential in these zones, especially with their concentrated amount of lumpen. We believe that by focusing our energy on this demographic, it will complete our overall strategy of winning this struggle for national liberation. There is much work to do in these camps, but political education is essential and a stepping stone to developing dual power in these zones.

Let us be clear that any weakening of resolve about the task ahead only helps Amerikkka and hurts the struggle for national liberation. At the same time, our efforts are not to set up re-entry services for the homeless lumpen, on the contrary, our efforts are to set up and recruit the lumpen to serve the people. We are not seeking reforms, nor do we believe in them, rather we agree with the BLA that

"reform of the oppressive system can never benefit its victims: in the final analysis, the system of oppression was created to insure the rule of particular racist classes and sanctify their capital. To seek reform therefore inevitably leads to, or begins with, the recognition of the laws of our oppressor as being valid."(18)

Reform is only tactical in getting the boot off our neck long enough for us to breathe to fight and resist the oppressor nation another day. Likewise, the oppressors laws and kkkourts mean nothing to us, as they are illegitimate to the core, we only navigate them in order to plot the demise of Amerika.

The lumpen encampments, like the prisons, are fertile grounds for resistance. In the First World, we are forced to dig deeper into the social forces to find those who are not bribed by the profits stolen from the Third World pockets. Our efforts today are for the Third World. ■

Notes: (1) wikipedia.org gives a homeless rate of 0.09% in 1990, but mentions this was probably an undercount; it gives 200-500 thousand as the homeless count in 1984, which doubled by 1987 - at the high end this would put homelessness rates at 0.22% and 0.42% respectively; the 2023 rate was 0.19% the highest rate since HUD began gathering data more accurately in 2007
 (2) Jennifer Ludden, 15 December 2023, Homelessness in the U.S. hit a record high last year as pandemic aid ran out, All Things Considered.
 (3) "The Economic Burden of Incarceration in the U.S.", from the Institute for Advancing Justice Research and Innovation", October 2016, George Warren Brown School of Social Work.
 (4) "The American Commonwealth", by James Bryce (1888-1959, Vol II, pp.557-58).
 (5) According to Prison Policy Initiative analysis of HUD data, formerly incarcerated have 2% homelessness rate compared to 0.21% of the overall population. A Harvard Business review article says there are about 5 million formerly incarcerated in U.S.; 2% of 5 million is 100,000; 21% of 350 million is 735,000. Based on these estimates, formerly incarcerated are less than 15% of homeless in U.S. streets.
 (6) about 61% of homeless are oppressed nations according to stats in "Defining and Measuring the Lumpen Class in the United States: A Preliminary Analysis", by MIM(Prisons), July 2016.
 (7) U.S. Census Bureau.
 (8) "Settlers", by J. Sakai (2014, pg. 52).
 (9) "Defining and Measuring the Lumpen Class in the United States: A Preliminary Analysis", by MIM(Prisons), July 2016.
 (10) "Prisons are a Cruel Exception to Heat Rules", by Nicholas Shapiro and Bharat Jayram Venkat, The Mercury News, July 14, 2024.
 (11) Wiawimawo, October 2018, Sakai's Investigation of the Lumpen in Revolution, ULK Issue 64.
 (12) "Wage, Labor and Capital", by Karl Marx.
 (13) Lucius Couloute, August 2018, Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people, Prison Policy Initiative.
 (14) "Newsom Orders Sweeps of Camps", by Ethan Varian, The Mercury News, July 26, 2024.
 (15) "Chican@ Power and the Struggle for Aztlán", by a MIM(Prisons) Study Group, 2015, 2021, pg. 14.
 (16) V.I. Lenin, "Left-wing communism — an Infantile Disorder", Collected Works, Vol. 31, pg. 50.
 (17) "The Wretched of the Earth", by Frantz Fanon.
 (18) "Collected Works of the Black Liberation Army", pg. 111.



being the U.S. prison system. It is our duty to nurture these factors. In order to properly carry out our duties, we need to understand how the lumpen are currently responding to these capitalist assaults on their humynity.

Cultural Revolution

"Due to the precarious stratification of the lumpen, and the imperialists' refusal to let us fully integrate into Amerika, our allegiance to the imperialists is more tenuous. As the lumpen experience oppression first hand here in Amerika, we are in a position to spearhead the revolutionary vehicle within U.S. borders" (15)

Social practice is the remedy which will deliver the Chican@ masses to national liberation. A heightened consciousness nurtured by and forged in the fires of political theory is the vehicle that we have awaited since colonization. As we struggle to rebuild the resistance that we need, the capitalist bribes sway our people to the tempo of their blood stained rhythm, and we listen to Lenin and dig deeper within the people to find those elements that continue to have nothing to lose but their chains. Here in the First World, those elements are the lumpen.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), which took place from 1966 - 1976 in revolutionary China, revolutionary intellectuals were sent from the cities to the countryside to take revolutionary culture to the peasants and politicize them, learn from them, to engage them so that they can take their rightful place in contributing to the revolution. To

done. Our party has begun this task. Lenin describes our task ahead:

"We can (and must) begin to build socialism, not with abstract human material, or with human material specially prepared by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. True, it is not an easy matter, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion."(16)

Although we are not "building socialism" now, we are building the conditions for revolution which will advance us toward socialism. We must take action, social practice amongst the homeless — on their turf. Cheerleading for the homeless in front of City Hall or sliding them a burrito is cute and subjectively fulfilling to an extent, but it moves the lumpen not one iota towards resistance or revolution. Comrades, we must do more than the churches and more than a liberal non-profit. As communists, our role is not to make the lumpen more comfortable under capitalism, rather we must prepare the lumpen for insurrection.

It is important that we work towards transforming the homeless camps into political bases, safe zones with Chican@ cadre in every camp throughout Aztlán. But we should also take our endeavors in this field seriously, as the state has captured or killed Chican@ revolutionaries for lesser ambitions. Amerikkka is deadly serious in its repression, we should be just as serious in our evasion and resistance and utilize a strong security culture as we move through the camps. There is

Continued Discussion on the Stop Snitching Campaign

by Triumphant of United
Struggle from Within
September 2024

i wanted to take this opportunity to lend my voice to this ongoing discussion around so-called "snitching", as this is a serious topic of principle and ideology which affects Our ability to succeed in Our tactical and strategic approaches.

As MIM(Prisons) pointed out, this question was originally raised due to captives organizing around police terrorism inside prisons and other captives refusal to participate in the paper trail aspect of the resistance. However, the issue raised in *ULK 83's* article putting forth the slogan "Stop Collaborating" and the response in *ULK 86*, "Stop Snitching on Pigs", need to be discussed as they all derive from the same source and it needs to be spelled out.

The California Prisoner in *ULK 86* opens by saying "Let's look at this from a practical perspective and not from an ideological one." Then says "Snitching is telling on people. It's giving information on someone else to a higher authority to act on it. We can all agree on that definition."

i begin by stating: NO! We cannot all agree on that. It is a fallacy that telling on someone and snitching is always the same. See, snitching necessitates that We've had some sort of prior bond, or understanding. If your co-defendant "snitches on you" it is different from the old church lady down the street "telling on you." It may produce the same result, but these are two different things. And it is indeed an ideological question, We can't get around that. The co-defendant has an understanding with you, usually an unspoken one that each of you are equally committed to the morals and principles of the criminal subculture, which means no cooperation with law enforcement even if it means saving your own skin. When the co-defendant goes against that they have snitched on you, not only because they told but because they violated your trust by going against a principle each of you swore to uphold. The presence of the betrayal factor and the deceit, the inability to honor a commitment, these are the key factors that represent the phenomenon We call *snitching*. These are indeed universal principles that virtually no one likes when people go against. Regardless of walk of life, We as humyns want to have assurance that commitments will be honored, that sacrifices will be made, and that trustworthiness will be present in those We associate with. It is for this reason real snitching is universally frowned upon.

However, when We bring the old church lady into the equation, she, while frowning upon the Judas in her bible and those who exhibit those same traits in her world, will tell on you for whatever perceived slight or transgression you've committed against her. She hasn't sworn to any principles of the criminal subculture, she has no bond with you other than being a community member, and that bond was broken by you in your antisocial act against her. So she cannot possibly "snitch" on you, even while proceeding to tell on

you. There is a significant difference, and We cannot hold people to standards that they have never acknowledged.

As MIM(Prisons) said, abuses must be exposed by so-called authorities and this goes towards undermining the legitimacy of their authority.

A crooked cop is not an ally to a revolutionary prisoner simply because they are crooked or they bring something in. This question has to really be worked out on a case-by-case basis, but i'll just say that in most cases the crooked cop isn't an ally and the situation is just transactional, there's no understanding either way of the intentions behind either the taking or bringing of illicit things: it's only a transactional relationship like most in a capitalist society. So, to say the pig (the profit-driven crooked cop) is my ally because they bring me phones and dope is to say that i am allowing myself to be bought off by these items. As a NARN i stand on the principles put forth in the FROLINAN Handbook for REVNAT Cadres: Standards 5: "Potential members must have outgrown the lust for coveting things or material goods." And from the Codes of Conduct 4: "No member of the revolutionary cadre organization will place any material commodity above or before the organization, the people, or the NAIM." 6: "No member of the revolutionary cadre organization is permitted to use, produce, distribute, process, fund, or take part in the sale of heroin, cocaine (in any form), LSD, PCP, or any hard drug, nor will they take any pill for the purpose of getting high and no member will distribute such pills or take part in the sale of such pills or other illegal drugs."

i share to illustrate the standards and codes of conduct We should be upholding, even when no one else is, or even when it benefits Us to do otherwise. So if We follow this as spelled out it would limit Our dealings with that crooked pig anyway. We have a mandate to liberate political prisoners and if they believe in the principles of the revolutionary movement, then maybe that rare individual is an ally. But We all know there aren't many who are willing to put their life and freedom on the line to liberate Us, even if they're willing to help Us saturate the pen with distractions. So this says "i am willing, as a crooked pig who is profit driven, to help you distract yourself and others while in prison, but i am not willing to help you get out of prison." i don't think that's a real ally and it's because of the profit motive itself.

This brings me to my next point. The California Prisoner uses the terminology that We all use. "Our struggle." But i think We need to define exactly what "Our struggle" means to us, because it doesn't mean the same thing to everyone at all times. Some think the struggle is for power and influence within the prison, some think it's to tear down all prisons right now, some think it's to reform the criminal mentality in order to produce good law abiding citizens of the corporate states of amerika and all these and other trends coexist to make up what Our struggle objectively is, but what is Our struggle subjectively, to Us? The Dragon pointed this out best

when it was said, that the whole point of the prison movement, the underlying motive for all the actions is to develop the capacity to field a People's Army. i am paraphrasing. So in my experience, and something i lament to cats around although i can't speak for cats here or elsewhere, but those who have "plugs" are not using them for any sort of dissent activities. Those who have plugs and dope are usually those policing the cats doing the dissident actions, whether those actions are paper trial related or organizing direct action.

Rarely is it the cats who have plugs and dope doing anything for the movement, and even when these are comrades with knowledge and experience and proven track records of struggle, while they have access to those plugs and dope their activism and commitment to it either ceases or severely lessens. Why? Because these are not only distractions but are corrupting influences. It is no coincidence that usually the prisons with the least amount of "motion" are those with the highest level of rebel activity and ideological training going on. So although plugs could theoretically be used for a lot of good they are by and large not being used in that way. [MIM(Prisons) adds: This is our experience as well.]

So, while I would agree with the Cali Prisoner about not throwing the baby out with the bath water, i do so largely because We cannot do so anyway. The prison system creates its black market economy through its laws of prohibition. Therefore there will always be some pig somewhere itching to take advantage of the unique economic opportunity to provide distractions and corrupting influences to those that want them and want to provide them. i am not advocating telling on crooked cops, but let me be clear they're not allies to revolutionary prisoners, unless they themselves

support the revolutionary principles We uphold. Let me also be clear that those who decide to tell on these crooked cops, here meaning specifically those who are driven by profit, those acts are not snitching, even though they are telling as explained at the top of this writing.

The two main things that hold the revolutionary prison movement back are gangs/gang mentalities and the drug trade. Therefore, anyone who perpetuates the latter is holding back the movement. On the gang question, there are those who are solid revs and come from this cloth, i am one of them. However, this doesn't change the fact that the introduction of and expansion of gangs, particularly street gangs inside prison, at least in the case of Texas, coincides with the downward slope of revolutionary consciousness and commitment within the walls.

Gone are the days where L.O.'s are built upon revolutionary and progressive principles. Gone are the days of traditional groups spreading knowledge and going at the system. They're only spreading dope, gangsterism, and discord amongst each other. The exceptions to this rule become obsolete within their groups, and the revolutionary prisoners who really stand on revolutionary bizzness are not the cool cats with all the luxuries, they're usually the ones outcast, not liked, shunned, isolated, because everyone wants to be crime bosses in here. In order to bring the proper orientation and programs back to the prisons, revolutionary and progressive prisoners have to make allies and build up institutions to help those who need and want it. It won't be too many who want it, and that's just the sad and true reality we're in these days. Capitalism + dope = genocide.

These MF'ers are preventing us from building the People's

Army and We are talking about protecting them and their interests and that they are allies? Come on homie, what wrong with that picture!?

In the history of the prison movement the most effective tactic of changing conditions has been inmate litigation. In order to litigate you must create a paper trail. How can we do that if we are not filing any complaints? i encourage comrades, those who live by revolutionary codes of conduct to be mindful of exactly how you implore the enemy institutions. Not because it is or isn't snitching, but because, again, Our point is to build a People's Army and We still have to do that even though We complain about the reactionary notions a lot of Our peers have, these are still the peers We have to organize with and among, and therefore like any shrewd politician We must be mindful of the landscape and the dominant ideologies and ideals, even those we disagree with, and navigate the terrain in a way that doesn't neutralize Our effectiveness at organizing people under Our umbrella. We won't be able to build the army if they all distrust Us because they think we are snitches. We won't even have the time or space to argue otherwise because credibility has been lost.

For this reason, it is not politically correct to tell internal affairs on the crooked pig about profit driven acts, whereas documenting acts of pig brutality where people can see and understand the negative intentions behind the pig's actions and therefore are less likely to side with the pig against you either directly or ideologically, that is an action that is politically correct. Be mindful comrades, and stay focused on the ultimate objective. Don't snitch, and i mean really snitch (betray you honor and commitments) and don't collaborate with the state. ■



... Continued from p. 3 ... Centering Palestine

Connecting progressive campaigns such as those against police brutality, which predominantly affects oppressed nations, to Palestinian sovereignty is a righteous cause. Trying to connect Palestine to the reactionary dissatisfaction of everyday Amerikan workers, especially settlers, is a recipe for fascism and genocide. ■

Notes:

1. A Million Tiny Fleas "The Anti-War Movement that Wasn't" Substack, Jun 13 2023.
2. Cope, Zak "Divided World Divided Class" Kersplebedeb 2012, pg. 9.
3. The Dawnland Group, "A Polemic against Settler Maoism", MIM (Prisons) website, June 2024.
4. Sakai, J. "Settlers: The mythology of the White proletariat from mayflower to modern." (2014). Kersplebedeb.
5. Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, "Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism" June 2017, pgs 96 – 108.
6. Labor unions from oppressed nations integrating with settler and imperialist labor

unions is an important historic evidence of this trend. See: Sakai, J. "Settlers: The mythology of the White proletariat from mayflower to modern." (2014). Kersplebedeb, pgs 152 - 174.

7. Jason Hickel, Christian Dorninger, Hanspeter Wieland, Intan Suwandi. "Imperialist appropriation in the world economy: Drain from the global South through unequal exchange, 1990–2015," *Global Environmental Change*, Volume 73, 2022.
8. Cope, Zak "Divided World Divided Class" Kersplebedeb 2012, pg 200.
9. Undocumented migrants, prisoners, homeless people, and the chronically unemployed lumpenproletariat are generally not economic oppressors.

Is Grievance Campaign Revolutionary?

by Orko of United Struggle from Within
November 2024

I have been a member of USW since 2017. Since then I have contributed zealously, especially the move away from publishing the revisionist ideal of prisoners complaining about prison conditions and their grievances, which served no purpose to the movement other than to teach comrades revisionist methods of resolution to make prisons ideally more comfortable and less punitive.

As I attempt a corrective analysis, I ask is writing grievances and filing lawsuits against prison administrators a revisionist ideal or revolutionary? and if it is revolutionary, how?

I know no revolution that was won through writing grievances or use of the courts! Read Dr. Burton's book *Tip of the Spear* and see how that ideal worked for the comrades in the Attica Liberation Faction (ie. BPP, BLA, W.U. and all). It gets minimum results that require the exhaustion of much energy, study of law and money. *Tip of the Spear* calls for deep analysis of revolution and how it looks when

applied in multiple states and facilities.

I am so disappointed I never received *ULK 83* so I can analyze comrades' analysis of Dr. Burton's book.

Wiawimawo of MIM(Prisons) responds: I don't know of any USW leaders that don't write grievances or file lawsuits. Grievances are tactics. So we agree that no revolution has been won by grievances, just as none is won by maintaining a website. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't do these things.

To further answer your question I'd point you to *Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.* by Mumia Abu-Jamal, or my review of it. In that book Delbert Africa is quoted explaining what happens to people who go deep into fighting their case in the courts:

"They go crazy becuz, Mu, they really believe in the System, and this System always betray those that believe in it! That's what drive them out they minds, they cain't handle that."

As I said, we look at these things as tactics, as opposed to strategy. Though strategically we do believe we are in a stage of legal struggle in this country, we mean that in the broad sense. Legal struggle in the courts is just one form of legal struggle, and not one that we focus on.

So why engage in grievance battles and the grievance campaigns USW has going in various states?

1) To win battles that are more strategic, especially around First Amendment rights to communicate, affiliate and just read. Fighting censorship has always been a struggle we have put effort into because it is a direct threat to our organizing efforts. It's not just about making conditions more comfortable. The most recently added grievance petition was in Indiana, where it has already been used to help get 6-month-old mail delivered. When we distribute the petitions to prisoners we include a cover letter where we state:

"MIM(Prisons) sees these petitions as a good use of our resources because our ability to fairly have our grievances handled is directly related to preventing arbitrary repression for people who stand up for their rights or attempt to do something positive. We support this petition in light of our anti-censorship work and anti-repression work in general."

An outside supporter recently expressed concerns echoing Orko's:

"but if what it ends up being is just MIM(Prisons) helping prisoners get their immediate personal grievances addressed, I don't see how that differs from the work being done by hundreds of other reformist/bourgeois prison advocacy groups, other than that you also offer them Maoist resources"

It is true that people use the grievance petitions for various issues. And an individual using the petition to get some personal issue addressed is not contributing to the prison struggle, nor to

the anti-imperialist struggle. It is up to the comrades on the ground to use the petitions to build an organizing base. In either case, it is a tiny amount of time and resources that we are putting into getting petitions into peoples' hands. When we put in the effort to assemble articles and conduct support campaigns, it will be around issues like censorship, solitary confinement and political repression.

2) To mobilize the masses of prisoners. The grievance campaigns have been utilized by many to mobilize those around them for a common cause. Mobilizing the masses to organize against state oppression is a central task to any revolutionary movement. However, both of the critics above pointed out that just filing grievances and petitions is only teaching people to beg the oppressor for resolutions. It is up to USW organizers to ensure that multiple tactics are employed in any campaign, including tactics that contribute to building independent struggle. As we always say, there are no rights only power struggles.

A longer debate between USW leaders over how to do this has already appeared in a series of articles in *ULK*.(1) As the comrade concluded in that first article, when the masses see the smallest victory as a miracle and are easily pacified by it, leaders are easily isolated by the state, so security precautions are of utmost importance for any sustained effort. The other USW leader in that article argues that without a strong cadre organization to frame such struggles, they will only set the revolutionary struggle back.

There have been many cases where USW comrades report that with a lot of struggle they barely get people to sign a petition or grievance if the leader does all the work to write them up and make copies. In such cases, where the masses must have their hands held to express the slightest bit of discontent, we must conclude that we are not succeeding in mobilizing the masses to take their destinies in their own hands.

3) To appeal to the masses where they are at. In 2022, our Texas campaign pack was one of the top referrals for new subscribers after word of mouth and *ULK*. The grievance petitions are also a tool for recruiting new comrades from the masses. Some will never be interested in anything beyond getting their local grievances heard, others will see the futility in relying on the system and join USW. ■

Notes: 1. see Orientating USW Organizing Strategy in Light of Texas Victory in *ULK* 72, and the 4 articles titled An Ongoing Discussion on Organizing Strategy found in *ULKS* 73, 74, 76 and 77.

How to Get Grievances Heard in Arkansas

by an Arkansas prisoner
September 2024

Sergeants here are *not* doing rounds and when they do they're *not* signing grievances, so my grievances don't get signed and they expire. We have to hold the shower or yard down just to get someone down to sign something. Even that doesn't always work.

The Lieutenants and Captains feel they're too high in rank to sign grievances, and they don't make their Sergeants do anything. My question to you is what do I do? I've wrote it up and all they do is deny my allegation and find it without merit. I have a paper trail on the same issue though.

Also, our due process is being violated at Disciplinary Court. 1) The Serving Officer is refusing our court appearances because she doesn't like us or is trying to get done early; 2) The Disciplinary Hearing Officers are not even trying to see if the prisoner is not guilty. You can't use the camera as a witness but they can to find you guilty. They're putting "staff eyewitness is accepted" but policy states they cannot just put that, they have to list all "evidence relied upon." Finally, policy states you have to sign a waiver if you refuse court, but they're getting away without that.

We can't get a notary here, no problem solver, so most guys end up "bucking" and ultimately they lose. I know Arkansas is a little better than other prisons, but it's not all green down here. We're one of the few states that still do "hoe squad" for free, prisoners *don't* get paid to work in Arkansas. I'm here to fight and spread the word!

MIM(Prisons) responds: It sounds like the people held at Tucker Max Unit have tried a

number of different tactics to get grievances heard and have begun to assess which ones work when and how they might be improved. In that sense, you are in a better situation to answer your question of "what do I do?" than we are.

We can offer some advice for how to approach this problem. All of the tactics you mention above should be on the table. Tactics are things that we must choose day-to-day based on specific situations, and there will not always be a "right" answer. Strategy however, is our overall approach, and this can decide whether we succeed or fail. Strategically, we must rely on the masses to win. In other words, your real strength comes from collective struggle, whether that's holding down the yard or filing 100s of simultaneous grievance petitions to state officials.

As this comrade recognized in their letter to us, there are often no quick solutions. The grievance petitions that prisoners have developed and that we distribute cannot solve the problem of oppression in prisons. They can be a tool in getting state officials to support your ongoing collective struggle.

As the adjacent article reiterates, freedom from oppression can't be won through the courts. The law is a tool of the oppressor. Keeping paper trails is part of the struggle to hold them to their word, which can sometimes be done, and should be done to advance the struggle of the oppressed.

Please continue to send us updates on the struggle there. We will print them on our website and maybe in *ULK*. This is one more tactic to expose what is going on and to share lessons with others struggling in similar situations. ■

Donkeys and Elephants

by SKS Heruglyphx of USW
October 2024

Don't be fooled by Trump, Kamala is no radical, And neither of the two Are pro-worker or pro-people.

Neither of the two will bring change that is fundamental or structural.

Neither the donkeys or the elephants will change the economic substructure from capitalist to socialist, a proletarian nation.

Compatible with the socialized Labor Power production relation.

It don't matter who you vote for, no donkey or elephant will end the wage-slavery, expropriation, exploitation.

No donkey or elephant will stop the slave patrol lynching us, or stop the oppression.

The CIPWs will not just; pack up and go home, leaving all power; to the people out of altruism or on their own volition.

Power will not change hands by voting, Or without war and blood. We must prepare for self defense. True power can only come, with revolution. ■

Censorship on the Streets; Migrants Targetted

by Triumphant of United Struggle from Within
August 2024

Texas attorney general Ken Paxton has sued yet another organization involved in support for immigrants and immigrants' rights. This is the 13th organization Paxton has used his state prosecutorial powers to sue in hopes of shutting down the organizations.

The organization in question here is different than the others in that the other organizations worked more directly at the border, organizing safe houses, and delivering food and water for passing migrants. The 13th organization is called FIEL, a Houston area organization that has been around since 2007,

providing outreach resources for immigrant families and students in the Houston area.

FIEL HOUSTON has been outspoken on social media regarding the immigrant policies and bigotry coming from Texas governor Abbott and Trump. It is the social media posts Paxton is attacking with this lawsuits, seeking to shut FIEL down for purportedly violating a ban on non-profits participating or intervening in political campaigns.

Earlier this year Paxton investigated and brought suit against over a dozen organizations he or his base disagree with, particularly around the immigrant question. His other efforts failed to shut these organizations down.

In the case against FIEL Paxton targets only the group's speech, criminal political speech opposing Trump and Abbott... If allowed to stand immigrant families in one of the most diverse cities in America will miss out on the various programs FIEL offers.

The battle against censorship is an inside outside battle. ■



DON'T STOP OUR MAIL IN ILLINOIS

Illinois legislators are threatening to stop all paper mail to IL prisons! Send protest letters, emails and phone calls.

You can contact Director Latoya Hughes at:

latoya.hughes@illinois.gov
312-814-2121

Illinois Department of Corrections
1301 Concordia Court
P.O. Box 19277
Springfield, IL 62794-9277

see p. 8 for more info

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, IN, KS, LA, MS, MT, NV, NY, NC, OK, OR, SC, and TX. If the state-level petition doesn't bring relief, we now have a new follow-up petition written to hold states accountable to federal requirements.

Write in to get the petition for your state. 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 rewrite the petition to work for your state. Update this campaign - If you participated in this campaign in the past, send us a report on what happened. Tell us how you used it to help organize others and build group consciousness or how it didn't work.

BUILD A UNITED FRONT FOR PEACE IN PRISONS

September 9th is the annual day of Peace and Solidarity, built around the principles of the United Front for Peace in Prisons outlined on page 2. Actions and events on this day should focus on building peace among all who can be united, while abstaining from work, commissary, tablets, etc. The united front is to bring prison-based organizations together for the common interest of all prisoners.

EXPOSE & COMBAT ADRUGS WITHIN

Drugs are being used to control people in prisons across the country. This threat can only be tackled with organized resistance. We began distributing our *Revolutionary 12 Step Program* over a year ago. We need to hear from you if you have tried to implement the program. What worked? What didn't? How can we improve and expand these efforts? You can also write in to get a copy of our *Revolutionary 12*

**CAMPAINS**

Step Program and begin a program in your prison to help those who want to transform themselves to a new revolutionary persyn. We want to support you in combating these dangerous chemicals among the people.

FREE PALESTINE! FREE OURSELVES!

For the last year we have been bringing info on the struggle for land and independence in Palestine to prisoners of the United States. The majority of people held in U.S. prisons are from the itneral semi-colonies. The oppressed nations here face similar relationships to imperialism as the oppressed nations abroad. The struggle for land and independence here has much to learn from what is happening in Palestine. USW leaders have been making this connection in artwork, articles and pamphlets. But as you'll also read in this issue, support for Palestine is not widespread in many concentration kamps. We

need your help in reaching the imprisoned masses and shifting the dialogue. Prisoners, get in touch with your ideas, outreach reports and requests for resources to continue this campaign.

For ULK 88, we want to hear from you about your outreach efforts. Send us notes from your conversations around Palestine. Who supports Palestine and who does not? Why? Send in your reports.

SPREAD ULK IN 2024

Help popularize and improve *ULK* to grow our movement. While we've succeeded in expanding *ULK* on the streets, we have not increased our reach in prisons so far in 2024.

Prisoners sign up to be a distributor and get multiple copies of every issue. Get those who read *ULK* to write in for their own subscriptions.

Outside supporters can also order *ULK* in bulk, distribute it at events and spaces where people will see it. Local distributors funding the *ULKs* they distribute also helps us survive and reach new supporters. Send \$55 and we'll send you 100 papers.

EXPAND FREE POLITICAL BOOKS TO PRISONERS

This issue features our work for Prison Banned Books Week when we pledged to send out more books this winter than we have in 5 years. Outside supporters, see our website to support our Serve the People Programs. Prisoners, get involved to join our Free Books Program. See p.8-9 for more info.

... Continued from p. 1

most politically and socially conscious prisoners side with the Palestinian struggle, and this is the minority.

The tablets play a role in that they have very limited selection of voices and ideas, particularly on this sort of issue. Pando App dominates the landscape and prior to March 2024, when podcasts were uploaded onto all tablets, Pando was basically the only source of entertainment. i have filed complaints concerning discrimination in content that is available on the KA Lite app, which is an education app that has a wide variety of scientific and hard historical factual knowledge, but the prison admin has to allow permission to download content. My complaint came after observing that there

... Christian Zionism

was no content concerning Africa, the Black Liberation struggle, and anti-colonial revolutions. Although these videos have been made by the app creator, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has not allowed us access to the content. i also filed a complaint on the podcast platform for similar reasons but pertaining solely to Palestine.

The final comment is that outside comrades have to begin to get their content on the music and/or podcast platforms. i sent a previous note to MIM(Prisons) on how to do that with the Securus people.

Firewater of USW also responded: Grim, read your article in *ULK* 86. I totally agree with you about the Christian

religion and these "evangelists" supporting mass murder and exploitation around the world. The people at Real Vida are real nice folks, but they are brainwashed and misguided like all Christians. We need to be able to copy what they do only for our revolutionary work.

We need to be doing what Real Vida is doing but like you said the Christian Zionists have a monopoly on these tablets and it needs to be broken up! I was in medium and high security and all we could watch was "Pando App", which is nothing but Christian Evangelists and we have an FYI App that is run by TDCJ and is all Jesus all the time!

TDCJ is run by these Christian Chapels and they oppress other religions such as Muslim, Native American,

Eastern religions, etc. The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) Unitarian Universalists' Prison Ministry said that the "PANDO" App would not allow the CLF to participate. Probably because the PANDO folks are right-wing evangelical kooks and the CLF and UUA are extremely liberal organizations.

Grim is right on when ey talks about the genocide of Turtle Island and the raping and pillaging of Mother Earth's treasures. They love to tout capitalism as the greatest engine of wealth ever created. But it's like Orwell's *Animal Farm*, where the farm animals are ruled by their newly formed governance of PIGS! ■

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www.prisoncensorship.info

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We do not have Jpay, Getting Out, Connect Network or other services where we have to pay for them to digitally surveil our communications. We believe paper mail remains an important First Amendment right and format for education, communication through art, and petitioning the outside world for support.

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

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

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

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

PLEASE GOVERN YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.

FREE SUBSCRIPTION FOR PRISONERS:

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