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Under Lock & Key - The Gender Issue  
January 2009, No. 6  
MIM (Prisons)  
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<http://www.prisoncensorship.info>

Review by Jennifer A. Gann

ULK #6 "The Gender Issue" provides some correct statistical analysis of gender oppression in the U.S. empire, with the front page article "Rising Incarceration Rates of Women and the Destruction of Family and Community in Amerika" (pp. 1 & 11).

While historically, the majority of prisoners have been men, indicative of class and national oppression, "the 4.8% increase in the incarceration rate of women, as compared to 2.7% for men" demonstrates a disturbing trend of increasing gender oppression toward women in Amerika. This could be a backlash of the Patriarchy in response to feminist demands for gender equality.

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Additionally, "Black women [are] incarcerated at nearly 4 times the rate of white women and more than twice the rate of Hispanic women." This parallels the class and nation oppression experienced by male prisoners. However, the disparity in the incarceration rates for women are indisputable evidence of the added factor of gender oppression faced by women under the patriarchy of U.S. imperialism.

In spite of this, in "The Gender Issue" (pp. 1 & 9), "MIM(Prisons)" sees First World women and men as mainly oppressors, not oppressed, when it comes to gender. "While the article makes some valid points concerning the relative gender privilege and the 'gender aristocracy' of First World women, as compared to oppressed nation women in the Third World, it's absurd to categorically state that First World women are 'mainly oppressors, not oppressed.' Particularly where

rising incarceration rates and sexual violence toward women in the U.S. flatly contradict this!

Furthermore, MIM (Prisons) admits that "it's clear that First World men have more gender privilege and power than First World women," (p.9). Thus, it is the men who bear the brunt of the responsibility for national oppression in the Third World under U.S. imperialism. The 'gender aristocracy' are merely their accomplices, which doesn't negate the fact that the majority of First World women still suffer gender oppression under patriarchy. This is proven by the statistics, where "In the general population 97% of sexual violence reports are women victims and the perpetrator is generally male (around 98%)."

Ultimately, ULK #6 "The Gender Issue" is a disservice and a slap-in-the-face to revolutionary feminists, by focusing on the "extreme example of the 'gender

aristocracy' outdoing men in gender oppression" — such as Lynndie England, Hillary Clinton, and Sarah Palin (see e.g. "Palin Demonstrates Gender Privilege in Amerika", and the Lynndie England photo, pp. 1-2) —, rather than focusing on the gender oppression suffered by the majority of the world's wimmin.

While I generally agree with most of MIM(Prisons') political line and work, particularly in regards to prisoners, the ridiculous attempt to portray oppressed nation men, (many of whom are admittedly misogynists and ~~sex~~ists!), as the "real" victims of gender oppression is a mockery of the Wimmin's Struggle against patriarchy, sexism and gender oppression all over the world.

Viva las Amazonas! — J.A.G.

### Reference Notes

"Gender Oppression in US Prisons",  
ULK #1, November 2007, p. 1.