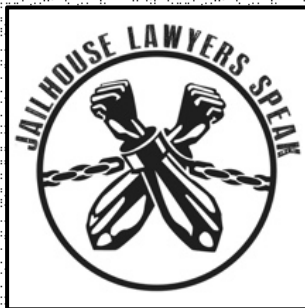
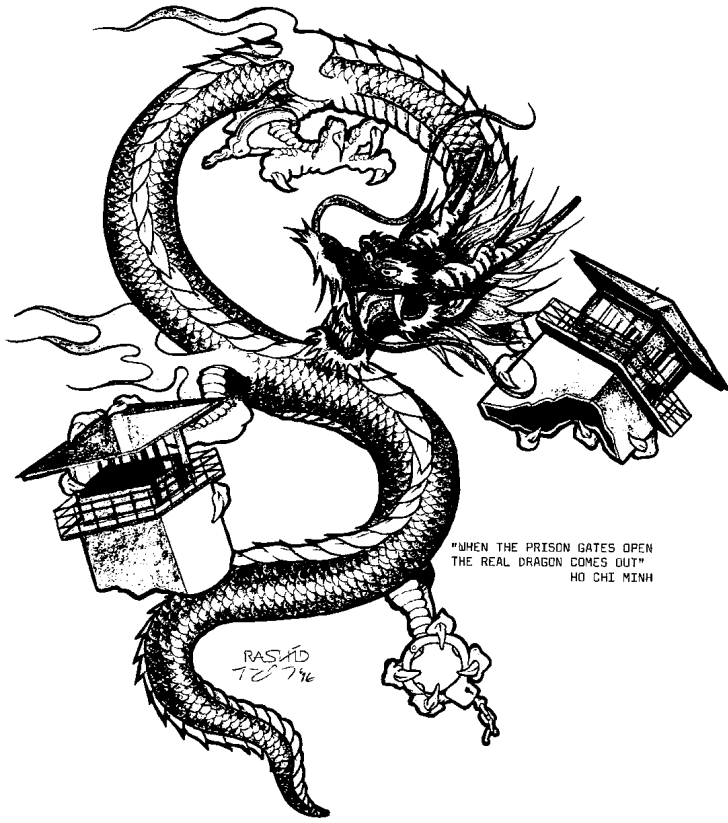


*On Identity,
On Revolution*

An essay by

komrade underground



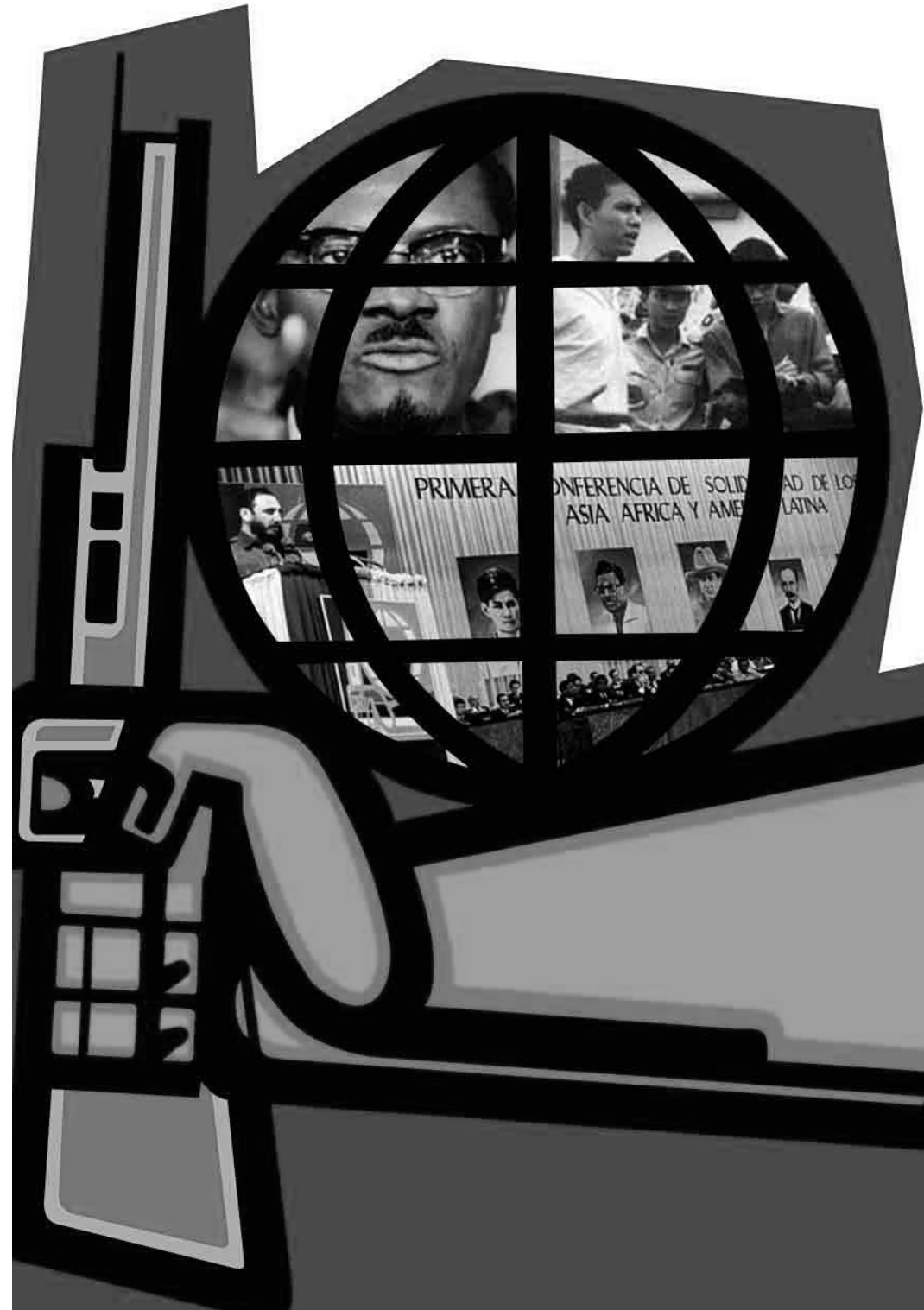


Original writing by komrade underground,
May 2021

Artwork by:
Jose H. Villarreal, Kevin Rashid Johnson,
and @cemicool_draws

Formatted and Printed by Nightowl Zine Distro
Font: Calisto, size 14, 1.15 spacing

Anti-copyright
Free for all prisoners



On Identity, On Revolution

“In reality, who am I?” — Frantz Fanon

The summer is upon us, and Mother Earth is already lighting fires. We see the uprisings in Colombia, the massacre of poor indigenous people, by the imperialist dogs and fascist pigs. We see the sacrifice of our people, the oppressed, fighting a militarized force, backed by the power-hungry US government. We see the people of the third world, in solidarity, together, fighting back. Fighting the oppressor, literally fighting for their lives and here in Amerikkka, many are asking, how do we show solidarity?

The summer is upon us, and the bombs are flying. The Gaza strip, the most militarized, open air prison in the world—is on fire. Palestine, in a war against the oppressive Zionist Israel (another fascist state backed by the united snakes), since before I was alive. A war for self-emancipation, self-determination, and most importantly a literal war for freedom and life. And again, here in the so-called united states, we wonder, how do we show solidarity?

*The answer is, we must also fight. Fight the oppressor. We must fight the most militarized spaces in the so-called united states. We must begin our attacks on the carceral state. Jailhouse Lawyer Speaks, has put out a call to all the true abolitionist and freedom fighters in this wicked country, to stand in solidarity with the comrades, freedom fighters, and abolitionist, who are held captive by the empire. To fight the beast we must light the match of abolition and actively fight the carceral state. Organize, agitate, prod the beast, and this time, be prepared for the beast to prod back. Fires are being lit all over the world, the third world, by our people—the oppressed. I stand in solidarity with my ancestors in Colombia. I stand in solidarity with my spiritual-revolutionary ancestors in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and in solidarity I ask you to choose to fight, this summer on **Aug 21** and **Sept 9**. Fight the injustice system of the united states. Fight for the most oppressed ppl in Amerikkka. Fight with fire and revolutionary love. Let's fight alongside of Colombia, Palestine and all oppressed ppl of the world.*

The summer is upon us, so let's heat this shit up!

Who am I? I have so many answers to this question. Then, at the same time I have no answers. One thing I do know is that most days, my contradictions speak louder than my affirmations. Some days I identify with my beliefs, and ideologies; other days, I'm a gangbanger from an Afro-Caribbean/Latin American hood—policed by militarized gang unit SWAT teams—in the so-called united states. Both these answers are true. Both of these people are me. I'm not very good at writing about myself. The mirror is so hard to face when you are as confused as I am, confused as to where I fit in this movement, this world revolutionary struggle.

I'm confused about the color of my skin, confused about culture and race, confused about how loud I should be, what I should write, how radical I am. These confusions make the mirror harder and harder to look at. But, I wanna try. I have been pushed and motivated too by a lot of comrades to write this reflection. I used to be so much better at writing, but this past year I lost that touch, that skill, that dear friend. I remember I used to love to write. It was my refuge. This past year, however, I had hundreds of pages, years' worth of poems and ideas and notes stolen from me by the pigs—probably now attached to some computer file in a federal building somewhere.

Since this loss, my writing feels frantic. My pen hand anxious. I feel anxiety in each word, wanting to get it out: my thoughts and my ideas, my story. I'm fearful that

when I finish this piece, the thought police will swoop in and add this to their collection—my collection, of me. So, I apologize if you have ever loved my writings, and now feel like this is not me. Because it is me, years later, having served over a year in solitary confinement right now, with no end in sight. After being placed on strip (that is when the pigs take all my clothes and property as a punishment), after losing a partner, after losing my mind a few times. After being sprayed with a few bottles of chemical agents. After losing comrades, after gaining and meeting comrades, after finding love again. After losing and changing so many of my philosophies, and gaining new perspectives. And even after wrapping a sheet around my throat. I'm going to try and write about all of this.

It will probably be a series of blogs and essays and conversations. I'm even thinking that I will have to flush every word that I write down the toilet, every single day. I'm worried that I will no longer have this tomorrow. Will it even exist? Will it ever get transcribed? Will anyone ever know who I am? Does it even fucking matter?

This essay is about me—the contradictions I face. The things I am learning. This is the bloody savage in the mirror. This is not going to be a chronological account of my life, but a very scattered view. And hopefully by the end, you, I, we have a picture of who I am. But please don't hold your breath, because we might be even more confused at the end of this piece than we were at the beginning. So walk with me.

So, who am I? Let's try this again. I am an anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-white supremacist gangbanger. I am a radical politicized prisoner, organizing and fighting the beast with every breath. I am an Abolitionist. A supporter of the Black Liberation New Afrikan struggle. I am a Third World, Brown, Latin American, mixed, Colombian revolutionary. And maybe after a year in the hole, I might be the lightest shade of brown acceptable, but I know after 33 years, no one has ever told me that I was not Brown, or asked me to stop saying that I was, or that I am. I'm going to end this with something that I have to remind myself of constantly: just like everything else in the carceral state, even the mirrors inside tell lies.



taking up more space than anyone fucking needs, that every word that I've written was a lie, that if the comrades see you now, you will get exposed, that you are an impostor that never needs to write another word or do another interview. That you need to just go back to gangbangng, because you might just be everything you claim to hate. The movement does not need your voice. And this vortex in my head continues deeper, and darker with every thought. I was at a point in my life ready to give up everything I was working towards, because I did not want to take up space where I didn't belong. However, before I do anything rash these days, I bring my ideas to some comrades who I hold dear that have helped me form my radical ideas, and who have constantly supported me; as well as bringing these thoughts to my partner who is a Black New Afrikan and Afro-Caribbean revolutionary comrade. And I was bombarded with so many questions to help figure this out. This "Who am I? Where do I fit in?" Questions about my ideas of race, color, culture, political views; questions about Latin American xenophobia in the so-called united states, the Latin American diaspora and indigenous cultures. Some comrades expressed the same conflictions, and some just told me to shut the fuck up. Or even one time: "I have never looked at you like a white boy, stop tripping." And all of them wanted me to write this. To write this down. I don't know if this is what they were expecting, or if even it makes any sense. I don't know if I've figured any of this out.



Have you ever felt like an impostor? I never knew what impostor syndrome was up until recently. I've felt like I was a liar in my skin. My skin. So let me back up. I was born to a non-English-speaking Colombian mother and a liberal hippie Irish white father in Los Angeles, California. My whole life I was raised around my Colombian family—a huge family. Some undocumented, some married into this “Amerikkkan dream” to eventually leave the so-called united states again, but all Colombian as fuck, whatever that means. My white father always made sure that I knew I was ethnically Latino, to be proud of that culture. That is, up until the divorce, an extremely ugly battle that pitted me and my sister against each other, forced to pick sides.

It was either be “Latino” and Brown with my mom and stay in the same hood I grew up in, or it was be white and live with my dad on, what felt like, the other side of the world. I was 10 years old at the time, and chose my mom and my friends. And my dad held that against me for most of my life. We lived well for a year from the money after the divorce my mom got, but my mom's lack of English and lack of an “american education” had her out of a job. We ended up moving to the apartments, which I loved: an Afro-Caribbean and Latin American hood of me and the homies. This is why I stayed, right?

In the hood, growing up within a fusion of Latin American and Afro-Caribbean represented cultures and gangs, I, like so many, considered and believed the

I guess, low-key, I knew this. I can't tell you how many of mi hermanos were anti-Black. So many sounded like white supremacists, their whole family hated Fidel and Che, and the socialistas, comunistas. Claimed their Spaniard conquistador heritage. It was so confusing for me because I had to call them my brothers, but our beliefs were so different. Except for when a race riot breaks out in the prison yard, then *everyone* knows what side they're on. Shit, these days, I don't even know if that term “race riot” is correct. Because in prison, Latinos, no matter what race, have always stuck together. “Mi Gente.” This is what I believed Brown was in the first place. Yet even given such revelations, I still identified as Brown. I supported Black/New African liberation fronts, Black Marxists, and Black anarchists from a Third World Brown struggle standpoint. I was proclaiming to be an internationalist with Third World goals, and a leader in the Brown force movements inside. I was anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-whiteness, with a bunch more anti's to throw in there. But I'm sure you get the point.

Now, at this point I have been held for a year in confinement, a year of repression—this time not for my alleged gang status, but for my radical politics. It has been a year of being trapped in a cell, with maybe 20 hours of sunlight in 13 months. I don't know if it's the mirror on my wall or the mirror in my head that started to whisper that I am not Brown. That I have never been Brown. That I am the same light skin dude

A few years ago, I started to get on Twitter. I started to be invited to radical conversations because of my radical posts. I joined a prisoner-led organization of radical minds and started learning about the revolution in depth. Comrades started to support me in my views and helped hone my radical theory. At this point of my prison sentence, I have already suffered years of torture, physical and mental, by the pigs that run the prisons. Was thrown on SHU units (heightened level of security and surveillance in confinement for extended periods at a time) because of alleged leader position of rank. Studied George Jackson and Che Guevara. Supported the Gaza Strip and Cuba. Was anti-imperialist as fuck. I started to give shape to my ideas, such as “abolition of the prison-industrial slave complex,” but at this point, I also learned that Latin American or “Latino” was not a race. Was not the Brown race that I believed in for so many years. That the “Latin American” identity—created by the European colonizer—lumped tribes, countries, and races together, that left no room for self-determination or meaningful lived experiences within the southern hemisphere of Turtle Island, and the displaced Third World people in North America.

Also, I started to realize that we—the “Latin American” diaspora—are not all on the same side when it comes to political ideologies as well. Where I believed Brown and Latin American meant actively fighting white supremacy, the colonizers and imperialism, I started to see this was not the case for all Latin American folks.

various understandings of Latin American/Latinx, Hispanic, or Chicanx was a race. The so-called Brown race. My whole life, I saw and thought that being Colombian meant being Brown. And when I say my whole life, I mean a whole 30 years of it. In my neighborhood, we all had curly hair, Afros and braids, all spoke broken Spanish that our mothers hated; when the pigs came they would cuff all of us, take all of our bandanas, jump on all of us. And together we formed, or started to believe a form of Brown force. I thought “Brown” meant “Latin-American diaspora.” I thought it meant “not Black, but not white. Just everyone else. Me and the homies.”

Getting locked up a few days after turning 17, being sentenced to life, I did what most young, Latin American, Black and Brown man-children do: join a prison gang. I have always been in neighborhood gangs of young Latin America and Afro-Caribbeans, since I was about 11 years old. So, it seemed like this is what I was supposed to do: join the biggest Latino gang at the time. I was embraced—after a test of heart and a few missions, of course. This is where I started to become radicalized. This is where the ideology of Brown force, a unified Latin American front, started to really set in.

