

The Public

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EDITORS/FACILITATORS:

Marya Burke
 Brady Collins
 Glynn Davis
 Brian Dolinar
 davep
 Belden Fields
 Bob Illyes
 Paul Mueth
 Neil Parthun
 Niloofar Shambayati

The Public i

Urbana-Champaign IMC
 202 South Broadway
 Urbana, IL, 61801
 217-344-8820
 www.ucimc.org



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PRECARITY.



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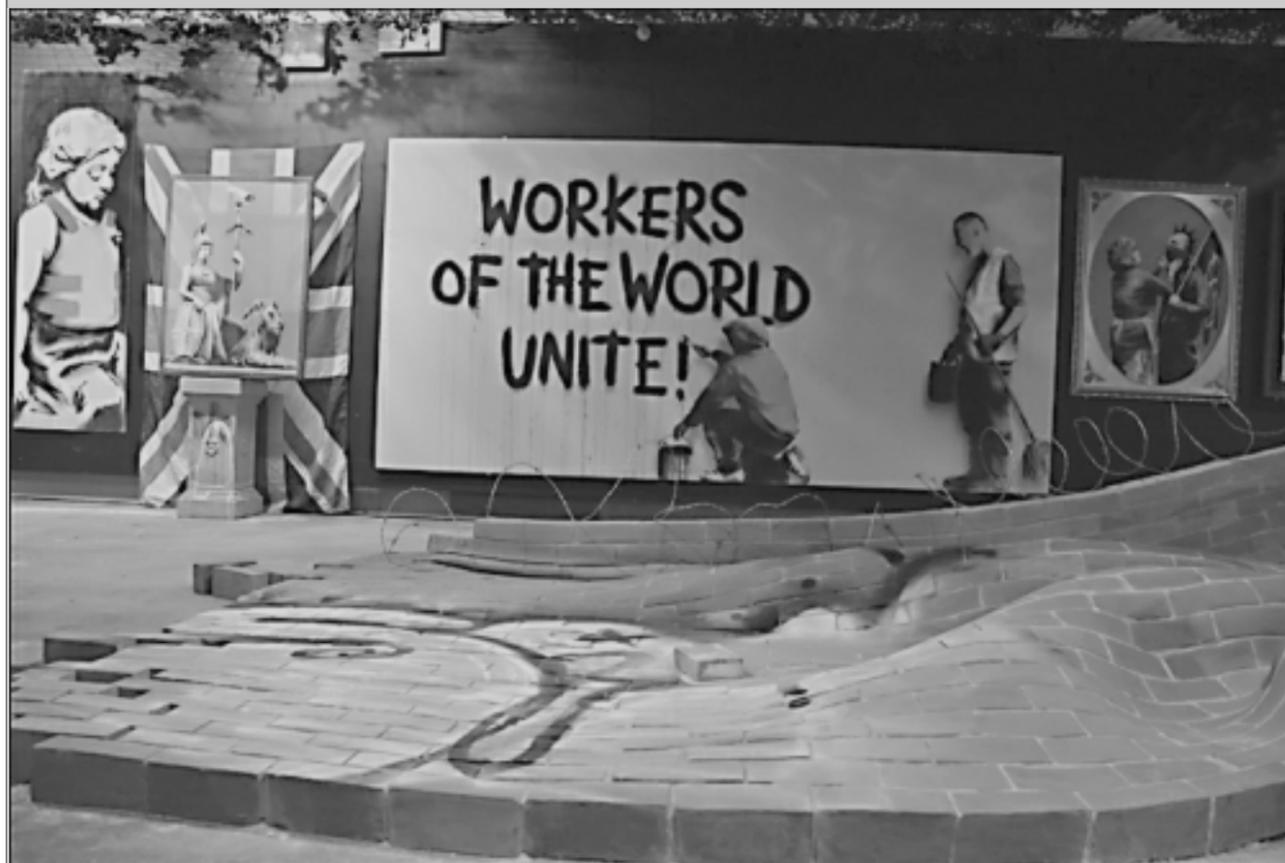
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The Public

Published by the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

August 2009
 V9, #6

BE REALISTIC... DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE!!



—Installation by Internationally Renown Graffiti Artist Banksy



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24 Hours In Gaza

By *Martin Smith*

Martin Smith is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War and the International Socialist Organization.

I FIRST WANT TO THANK THE C-U COMMUNITY for their support of my participation in the Viva Palestina delegation. There is amazing local solidarity for justice in Palestine, and many people gave generously to make my trip possible.

The Viva Palestina delegation, led by British Member of Parliament, George Galloway and former Green Party Presidential candidate, Cynthia McKinney, negotiated one bureaucratic obstacle after another from Egyptian authorities. The convoy finally left for the Rafah border crossing after several days with some of its supplies barred from getting through.

The delegation of solidarity activists was allowed to enter Gaza on July 15 with truckloads of desperately needed humanitarian supplies—but under the condition that the convoy leave again within 24 hours.



Delivering medical supplies

On Thursday morning, we began with a tour of the destruction. Everything and everyone was targeted. Mosques were destroyed and graveyards shelled. In fact, you will find none of the minarets common to most mosques throughout the Middle East, because they were all bombed. Destruction of religious institutions is a war crime.

We saw shelled hospitals and burned out ambulances rotting away in ruins—all part of the detritus of Gaza. There has been little reconstruction because the over two-year siege by Israel has made materials scarce. Basic medical supplies, pencils, and even footballs are forbidden from entry.

Pictures of the destruction of the American International School in Gaza have been shown around the world. We were all shocked at this example of the extreme, savage brutality of the Israeli government. It's important to note that while this destruction of the American school was deplorable, there were several Palestinian schools, even elementary schools, likewise bombed into rubble.

Civilians were targeted. We saw holes and pockmarks in many concrete apartment dwellings where the Israelis had



Martin in front of the destroyed American Int'l School



Kids playing amidst dumpsters

shot shells into civilian quarters in what is also classified by International Law as a war crime. White phosphorus, illegal when used against civilian targets, was used here, just as it was by the US against the people of Fallujah.

One picture shows children playing near refuse piles as seen from our bus tour. Gazans have no services, such as trash disposal, amenities that we take for granted in the US.

We drove through the northern part of Gaza in the area of Jabaliya where the worst destruction was evident. Where other parts of Gaza had partially wrecked buildings and remnants still standing, this entire working-class area was almost completely leveled. We witnessed the ruins of a concrete factory, a stone and building factory, and a juice factory. The attacks destroyed not only buildings, but people who were at work there as well. Israeli targets included people and their means of livelihood.

All around we saw graffiti like, "Steadfast, we will not give up despite the siege," on almost every small storefront and apartment dwelling. Gaza graffiti comes in four kinds. One is for electioneering and political campaigns. Another marks where a particular political faction has control, such as, " Hamas resisted for the protection of the city." We also saw "Al-Aqsa Brigade" and "Freedom Fighters Brigade." A third type marked where a martyr had given his or her life. One announced, "Here is the mother of a hero."

The final category includes political and social messages. We were moved by the power and will of Gazans to endure and struggle, as captured in these art forms of grassroots resistance with slogans like: "Unity is a bounty and a blessing to the resistance"; "The strength of our community is the hallmark of our civilization"; "Jerusalem will always be the capital of Palestine"; "Resistance and struggle is the way to victory"; "Our future is bright"; "With patriotism and unity, we will move forward"; "Make your voice heard"; and "A commitment to martyrs, refugees and our Jerusalem."

In speaking with many of the volunteer translators, I asked them what they wanted Americans to know. Mohamad Aldada, who lives in Jabaliya said:

I hope that peace will spread among our country in order that we may live as the whole people among the world and have our rights. I had 17 neighbors killed during the war, including 10 who were in one house, and they were mostly women and children. During the bombing, we were scared, and now we have so many children suffering from psychological pains. Whenever they hear a loud noise, they cry out, "A bomb! A bomb!" and start crying.

In fact, a recent study found that 73% of Gaza children are suffering from behavioral disorders due to the Israeli war, and there is a significant deterioration in the psychological well being of children living in the Gaza Strip. Mohamad continued:

We had so many martyrs that we buried. When there was a martyr, the sheik informed the neighborhood by chanting from the mosque, and we then prepared a public burial. From everywhere, Israel was so brutal and savage. We had funerals every day, so many funerals. It was like hell. Darkness was all around, even during the day. The streets were empty, and no one could work. The bombs surrounded us.

Mohamad added that in northern Jabaliya at Beit Lahia, near where he lived,

The people now practice their daily life, because there's nothing to be afraid of from the U.S.-made bombs, tanks, F-16s and helicopters any longer. They aren't afraid because so many of their family members were killed. They feel like they have nothing left to fear. People prefer to practice their daily life as if it was before the war. They are not afraid because so many of their family members were killed. They feel like they have nothing left to fear.

Another translator, Mahmoud Elhajjar commented:

The last war on Gaza was beyond description, it is hard to describe the situation when you are near to death, the whole areas are burning around you and the sky is full of different kinds of Israel's fighter planes hitting everything that moves. So what I would like to say and what I would like Americans to know is that we live in a tightened deadly siege. We need for all of the free world, and especially the Americans, to increase the pressure and their efforts more and more to break the intolerable siege. We, as Palestinians, just want to live in peace, nothing but peace.

After the tour we went to a special meeting of family members whose children have been detained and are in Israeli jails. We put a face to one of the detainees via a picture a man shared with us of his son.



The scars of war on a civilian's house

After we delivered the supplies to the hospital, we returned to the hotel for a final ceremony of thanks and salutations. The day had been so busy that it was difficult to fully grasp the import and meaning of the past 24 hours. I can say that I never felt sadness throughout the day. In retrospect, I wonder why my emotions felt buried, stunted, and cut off from the day's events. I believe it is because of the surreal mixture of life in Gaza—a people who continue to struggle and resist amid a landscape of rubble and carnage where most would have long ago given up. The Palestinians I met did not want pity—they wanted peace "so that we may live as the whole people among the world and have our rights." The people I met did not want us to feel anguish, they instead requested allies in the struggle for justice. The courageous and welcoming Palestinians in Gaza have no need for misery, they want a Movement to demand the Boycott, Sanction, and Divestment from Israel. They deserve our solidarity, our support, and our spirited resistance.

For more on Viva Palestina, please go to <http://www.vivapalestina-us.org/>



Vigil for Reform at Tamms Supermax Prison in Southern Illinois

By Conrad Wetzel



INCARCERATION AT THE TAMMS SUPERMAX was approved by the Illinois legislature in 1998 as a short-term, one-year “shock-treatment” program for men in other Illinois prisons, who cause harm to guards or other inmates. However, Tamms has become a warehouse of human rights disasters.

Over one-third of the original prisoners have been in Tamms in total solitary confinement for the entire eleven years. They

Tamms, whether their condition is caused by solitary confinement or other illnesses, often do not receive adequate treatment.

Rep. Julie Hamos of Evanston has proposed House Bill 2263, also endorsed by Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, which seeks to end indefinite sentences of solitary confinement at Tamms and establish clear criteria for deciding who should be transferred there. The bill will establish the following:

1. Prisoners can only be sent to Tamms if they assault (or attempt to assault) guards or other prisoners, escape from custody, or otherwise seriously disrupt prison operations.
2. Prisoners must be told why they are being sent to Tamms and be given a fair hearing.
3. Prisoners will not remain at Tamms for more than one year, unless transferring them back would endanger the safety of staff or other prisoners.
4. Prisoners with a serious mental illness will not be sent to Tamms.

Vigils for Reform at Tamms Supermax Prison were held in a number of Illinois communities on Thursday, July 16. The Champaign-Urbana vigil was held outside the First Mennonite Church in Urbana. Large banners were raised at the corner of Springfield and Lincoln avenues, designed

by Esther Portnoy of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and beautifully colored by children from the local Mosque. The banners read: “Long-term Solitary Confinement Is Cruel.”

Prayers were said for improved treatment of the prisoners, for the families of the prisoners, and for the safety of the law-enforcement officers; brief speeches were made on the need for these reforms; and the names of the 245 prisoners currently incarcerated at Tamms were read aloud.

The spouse of one of the inmates at Tamms was present with their two daughters.

To learn how you can become involved in reform at Tamms Supermax, visit: www.juliehamos.org/tamms.

Unilaterally Punitive

By Joseph Dole

Joseph Dole is an inmate at Tamms, and recipient of books from CU Books to Prisoners Project. This essay won 2nd prize in the 2009 Prison Writing Contest sponsored by PEN.

THE UNITED STATES IS UNIQUE in the world for its overzealous love affair with life without parole sentences (LWOP). It is one of the few western countries to have LWOP sentences and the only country in North America to have them. Even the other western countries that do have LWOP sentences reserve them for only the most extreme circumstances (e.g. acts of treason or serial murder). In contrast the U.S. uses this sentence prolifically, currently having almost 35,000 people serving LWOP. More embarrassing is the fact that we are the lone, adamant, upholders of the right to sentence juveniles to die in prison, which the rest of the world views as barbaric.

There is a near universal consensus in the international community that it is immoral and reprehensible to execute or incarcerate a juvenile for life without parole. The U.S. Supreme Court, acknowledging these views, finally abolished the death penalty for those under 18. Unfortunately we are still one of the last holdouts who currently have juveniles sentenced to die in prison by way of LWOP. According to a study by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in October 2005, only 4 countries have juveniles serving LWOP: Tanzania has one, South Africa has four, Israel has seven, and the U. S. (the “land of the free”) has over 2,200. Even this number is deceiving though as it fails to take into account the thousands more who have sentences so long that they constitute LWOP (e.g. 100 years at 100 percent).

There are numerous calls to abolish LWOP sentences for juveniles worldwide. The U.S. stands unabashed against them all. In 1989 there was the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 37(a) of this Convention provides, “Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release shall be imposed for offenses committed by persons below eighteen years of age,” and Article 37(b) states, “detention or imprisonment must be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period.” Throughout history no other human rights treaty has been ratified by so many so quickly. To date 191 out of 193 countries have ratified it. The U.S. and that other stalwart protector of human rights, Somalia, are the only two to refuse to do so. In 1992 the United States became a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This prohibits LWOP sentences for juveniles. More recently the United States was the lone opposition (176-1) against a resolution in

the U.N. General Assembly calling to “abolish by law, as soon as possible, the death penalty and life imprisonment without possibility for release for those under the age of 18 years at the time of the commission of offense.”

In a 185 to 1 vote (again U.S. v. the World) in December of 2006 the U.N. again took up a resolution calling to abolish LWOP for juveniles. The U.S. State Department's defense of this position was that it's mostly a matter of state law and that the juveniles, some as young as 13, were “hardened criminals who had committed gravely serious crimes.” Regardless of the fact that brain research has shown that a person's brain doesn't fully mature until the mid-twenties, how hardened of a criminal can a 13 year-old be? What was he doing, sticking his mother up for breast milk as a baby? Maybe robbing the cookie jar as a toddler? The ignorance of the State Department is astounding when you consider that close to 60% of these juveniles serving LWOP have no prior convictions.

Approximately 10 percent of the 73 kids age 13 or 14 who were sentenced to die in prison were sentenced for crimes where no one even died. In one instance no one was even injured. More than a quarter of juvenile lifers were not the actual perpetrators of the crimes, but were rather found guilty by way of accountability or felony murder statutes, in the classic “getaway driver is just as guilty” reasoning.

Rather than seeing a decline in the use of LWOP sentences we've seen an expansion. LWOP sentences are more prevalent overall and those for juvenile offenders are now used three times more often than 15 years ago.

Part of this love affair with LWOP sentences is due to the shortsightedness of the anti-death penalty movement. (The death penalty is another issue the U.S. stands steadfast in support of). In their rationalization of the lack of need for a death penalty, they push LWOP as the “perfect alternative.” A couple of decades ago only a handful of states had LWOP sentences. Now almost all of them do. As has been shown time and again, our criminal justice system is broken and more than 100 people have been put on death row for crimes they were later found to be innocent of. In Illinois,

more people were exonerated from death row than executed when former Governor Ryan finally had enough and called a moratorium. People sentenced to LWOP (there are over 1,400 in Illinois alone) went through this same broken system, but without the added safeguards afforded to people sentenced with the death penalty. Thus it is much more difficult for a lifer who was wrongly convicted to get his conviction overturned; ergo many more innocent people are almost definitely serving LWOP sentences than were sentenced to be executed. This is especially so since there are many more people sentenced to LWOP than to death each year.

The courts have amazingly decided that sentencing a juvenile to LWOP does not violate the 8th Amendment right against cruel and unusual punishment. The hypocrisy of many LWOP sentencing schemes and court rulings is glaring. Take Illinois as an example again: Article 1, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution specifically states, “All penalties shall be determined both according to the seriousness of the offense and with the objective of restoring the offender to useful citizenship,” and part (d) of the purposes of the Illinois Code of Cor-



rections is likewise to “restore offenders to useful citizenship.” Nevertheless, in 1978 the Illinois legislature passed a law making all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Prior to this a life sentence allowed for parole eligibility after 11 years. The Illinois Supreme Court has ruled that a LWOP sentence does not violate the Illinois Constitution due to the “fact” that an offender still has a chance (theoretically at least) to get out of prison by way of clemency from the governor. Unfortunately this is not realistic in today's tough on crime rhetoric, inflamed fear mongering, political world. No governor with political aspirations (which is all of them) will risk granting clemency and being painted as a bleeding heart liberal, soft on crime, or even worse, be blamed for letting someone out who reoffends upon release.

Compared with the rest of the world, the United States incarcerates more of its citizens per capita than anyone else, and for much longer than any other industrialized country.

Continued on next page



Tasers, the Upside and the Downside

By Ellen Baranowski



Ellen Baranowski is a member of Champaign Federation of Teachers and member of Coalition of Citizens Concerned about Tasers.

CURRENTLY, 14,200 OUT OF 17,876 state and local law enforcement agencies in the U.S. possess tasers (2009 figures). In Champaign County, the Sheriff's Department has them for use anywhere in the county and in the two jails. The cities of Urbana and Champaign do not currently have them, but the Champaign Chief of Police will be discussing his request for acquiring ten tasers with a City Council study session sometime in the future.

JUSTIFYING THE USE OF TASERS

Law enforcement executives maintain that tasers reduce injuries to their officers and save the lives of suspects who would otherwise have been shot with guns. A variety of reports bears out the claim of reduction of injuries to officers by comparing the statistics from before and after the use of tasers. A "prospective field study", (reported on in the AMA review of research on tasers, June, 2009) illustrates the possibility of saving lives of suspects. The Dallas Police Department activated tasers 426 times from Nov. 2004 to January 2006. "All suspects who were subdued by this means were evaluated by paramedics, the jail intake nurse, or a PD tactical physician. One subject in the "excited delirium" state (high elevated body temperature - 107 degrees in the ER) collapsed and died after two standard discharges. No other suspect had an injury requiring treatment other than simple first aid. In 5.4% of the deployments the Taser was deemed to have clearly prevented the use of lethal force. That would be 23 people who were spared the gun, which kills 50% of the time that police officers use them. Doing the math, that would mean that one person died proximate to tasing while 11 - 12 people were saved.

The report ends with an important caveat: "The use of a comprehensive training program likely contributed to the strong safety record in this study, as well as the fact that police personnel knew all Taser applications would be strictly evaluated for compliance with established departmental use-of-force policies." (AMA Report, June, 2009).

ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ABUSE

Without such oversight for police compliance, tasers are easy to abuse. For instance, they have been used to torture prisoners in jails. Four incidents in the Champaign County Jails came to light in late 2005 as a result of guards "turning in" their superior. A year earlier, a college student brought in for disorderly conduct at a bar, was tied to a chair, hands and feet, with a spitting hood over his head and tasered several times. He filed complaints with the Sheriff and the FBI, but there was no corrective action. Then the exact same procedure happened again with a different prisoner, but this time guards reported their superior. The Sheriff acted as if he had never heard of such behavior before.

The death of over 400 people in the U.S. has been "proximate" (shortly after) to the use of tasers. This phrase must be used because the scientific research does not yet exist, which would show the number of taser shots that cross a threshold into lethal territory. Many people have encountered their death proximate to tasing with multiple or prolonged taser shots. The research on what taser shots to the chest did to people who turned up dead from cardiac arrest has yielded mixed results. More will be done. Research needs to happen on why so many of the dead proximate to tasing are in a category known as "excited delirium." This could be, as Taser International claims, that these people are on their way to death in any case, with their elevated body core temperatures; or it might be that there are better methods that could be used to preserve their lives.

There is a completely different type of downside to the theory of tasers saving lives: somewhere between 80% and 90 % of those dead proximate to tasing were unarmed! It is a fairly unusual case (and outside of policy) in which police use guns on individuals who are not in possession of a weapon on their person. It could be that the police are choosing the taser in situations where they have the gun option, but in our county (Champaign), the use of force policy of the Sheriff states that police are not to use tasers with someone possessing a weapon unless that policeman is covered by another police officer carrying a gun.

The biggest downside to tasers is that they are increasingly used around the country at use-of-force levels below #5 and #4; they are also used against "active resisters" (#3) and "passive resisters" (#2), which includes anyone who does not comply with orders readily or gives the officer "backtalk." Each police department in the country is free to craft its policy for placing the taser situationally. The police officer is then bound by the department policy, not by any law.

The now infamous, recent case in point was the 72-year old woman in Texas who refused to sign her traffic ticket, and when the officer said he might have to taser her, she said "I dare you." Then he did. Children as young as six have been tasered in Florida, where School Resource Officers have tasers. Children, as parents will attest, have a non-compliant tendency. So do the mentally ill, who are getting tasered in hospitals for the physically ill and for the mentally ill, (yes, here in our County too) as well as in jails/prisons and on the streets.

THE NON-LETHAL MYTH

Tasers seem to have become entrenched in American society with amazing ease and speed. How can we get a handle on the situation? Is it possible to move in the direction of the original vision of "protecting life by taser?" Maybe. But first, the myth of the non-lethal weapon that "never killed anyone" (Taser International website, www.Taser.com and the Police Training Institute at the University of Illinois) has to be shoved aside as the advertising hype that it is, coming from the manufacturer of this device, Taser International. For how many decades did the cigarette industry

advertise that "four out of five doctors say that smoking is not harmful to your health?"

This myth has a lethal effect all of its own because it is a sidebar comment in the training that is done by Taser International to police departments. Coroners who have written on death certificates that death was due to tasing or that it contributed to death have been successfully sued by Taser International. Despite protests from the American Association of Forensic Pathologists and the Association of Medical Examiners, this stands as a legal fiction. It is legally impossible to die from tasing, which is why only one of 78 suits for wrongful death against Taser International has been won. This will change only with continuing scientific medical research done independently of Taser International, which has sponsored much of the research to date.

Meanwhile, the relatives and advocates for those dead proximate to tasing are having somewhat better luck with lawsuits against police departments or Sheriffs. There was one filed recently against the Peoria Police Department for tasing a severely autistic young man twelve times. He died. Thus, the police officer can be caught in the middle between the training that does not inform him/her of all the risks involved and what can happen as a result of tasing - a) the wrong person, i.e. an at-risk person who is not threatening the life or safety of another or b) tasing too many times for any individual to sustain.

WHAT CITIZENS CAN DO?

The final piece that needs to change is up to citizens to demand:

- A reasonable use-of-force policy that does not give police the right to shoot 50,000 volts of electricity for five seconds via barbs in the flesh for any transgression at all, but restricts it to situations of violence (#4 and #5 on the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center scale) Amazingly, the placement of tasers at each level of force is totally up to the discretion of each police department (GAO report).
- A public use-of-force policy statement, up on departmental websites, not a document that must be FOIA'd.
- A procedure following a death proximate to tasing that is similar to what is employed for guns. When a person is killed by police gunfire, the police officers are given a period of time off while an investigation is done as to whether the actions taken were proper, and a report is given to the news media.
- Accountability by such means as a Civilian-Police Review Board, so that internal review can be called into question by the public without the expense and agony of lawsuits.

In the process, the police and the public might even learn things, so as to better protect all of us - to save injury and lives.

Unilaterally Punitive

Continued from previous page

An entrance requirement to the European Union is that the death penalty be outlawed in the joining country. Concerning life imprisonment, the Council of Europe in 1995 stated, "A crime prevention policy which accepts keeping a prisoner for life even if he is no longer a danger to society would be compatible neither with modern principles on the treatment of prisoners during the execution of their sentence nor with the idea of reintegration of offenders into society." Both the European Court of Human Rights as well as the German Constitutional Court have held that a term of life imprisonment must include the possibility of release. Both Brazil and Portugal

have banned LWOP sentences. In Spain the maximum sentence one can serve is 40 years. While in Slovenia it's 20 years.

The United States cannot continue to demand compliance with human rights principles and norms abroad while it refuses to apply them here at home. We have an obligation to implement humane principles embraced by the rest of the world for our own people if we are going to admonish other nations about the inhumane practices of dictators, despots, and others (many of whom we all too often support).

In a country where three-fourths of the population describe themselves as Chris-

tians, it is astonishing how few seem to believe in forgiveness and redemption, and how many champion punishment and retribution.

In the words of United States Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, "Our resources are misspent, our punishments too severe, our sentences too long . . . Courts may conclude the legislature is permitted to choose long sentences, but that does not mean long sentences are wise or just . . . [A] people confident in its laws and institutions should not be ashamed of mercy." Well said, too bad few are listening.

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You don't need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The Public i is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you to submit ideas or proposals during our weekly meetings (Thursdays at 5:30pm at the UCIMC), or to contact one of the editors.



A Memorial for Archie Green: A Union Man, Laborlore Scholar, Folklife Advocate and Legend

By Ron Peters

Ron Peters is Professor Emeritus of Labor and Industrial Relations at the U of I, and former head of the Labor Education Program.

THIS PAST MARCH, ARCHIE GREEN passed away. He was 91. Archie collected and catalogued songs, poems, and stories produced by ordinary people that described their work experiences, and their lives as workers. He studied Library Science at the University of Illinois and worked as librarian at the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations through the 1960s. Archie was an energetic and enthusiastic advocate for workers' culture. He coined the term "laborlore" which included all the things workers produced on how they related to their work and community environment.

Archie was fascinated by the stories workers told. He experienced this first hand on work sites. He joined the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, was in the Seabees in the South Pacific during World War II, and worked as a journeyman shipwright in the San Francisco shipyards in the post war years. He was a life-long member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. He combined this experience with his life-long love of country and western music. In the merger of these he searched for and discovered troves of music composed by unnamed workers passed down from one generation to the next.

Archie earned a doctorate in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation was on the songs of Kentucky coal miners and was published in 1972 as *Only a Miner*. Archie went on to have a distinguished teaching career at the University of Illinois from 1960-72 and the University of Texas at Austin from 1975-82. His teaching inspired scores of his students to go out and search for folklore materials, and to advocate for the preservation and advancement of folklore.

Beginning in 1969, Archie lobbied Congress to create the National Folklife Center. In 1976, Congress passed the American Folklife Preservation Act, establishing the Center at the Library of Congress. In 2007, Archie was given the Living Legend Award by the Librarians of Congress at a conference sponsored by the American Folklife Center.

As a scholar, Archie has a long list of publications. His most recent in 2007, *The Big Red Songbook*, features the lyrics of 190 songs included in editions of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Little Red Songbooks from 1909 to 1973. Archie inherited the project from John Neuhas, a machinist and IWW member who died in 1958. Archie vowed to complete the edition.

Archie Green was an effective teacher because he was always learning from his students. In 1973 in Washington, I sat in on a class Archie was teaching for a group of union leaders on labor music. The music he used was on tape as Archie was not a performer. He played a song he had recorded that had been written and performed by a member of the Operating Engineers Union. This union represents crane and heavy construction equipment operators. The song was titled, "Pan Man Joe". A pan man is the operator of a large machine called a pan which scoops up a large amount of earth or rock, and then dumps it in another nearby area. There happened to be in the class, a business agent from an Operating Engineers local. He said pan men were always on good terms with bull dozer operators. Dozers frequently have to push the pan machines through particularly hard ground in order for them to take on an adequate load. If the dozer operator doesn't like the pan man he'll hit the pan's back quite hard with the dozer blade, sometime shaking the pan man off his small seat at the controls. So on construction sites, pan men are usually quite deferential to dozer operators. Archie could take a little

story like this and later fashion it into some larger examples of how different groups of workers relate to each other because of some on-the-job requirement or interdependency. Archie showed an undying curiosity and respect for the experiences of working people as told through their stories. He was a good teacher because he was first a good listener.

In Memoriam

To honor the life and work of Archie Green, the School of Labor and Employment Relations and other campus units will hold a commemorative program, September 14, 2009, 7-9 pm., in the Wagner Education Center, 504 E. Armory St., Champaign.

The program will include the following:

- *How Archie Taught Us to Learn from Music*—Stephen Wade, Performer Writer and Folk Music Scholar
- *Archie as a Trade Unionist*—Mike Munoz, Pile Driver and Union Activist
- *Archie Green & Establishing the American Folklife Center*—David Taylor, Head of Research and Programs, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress
- *Folk Music and Laborlore: Valuable Lessons for History*—David Roediger, Professor of History, University of Illinois UIUC

"The Fast Sooner Hound," one of Archie's favorite songs, will be performed by Stephen Wade to complete the program

A reception will follow the program. The event is free and open to the public.

Safe Haven Tent Community Goes To Court

By Brian Dolinar



A CROWD OF APPROXIMATELY 20 people showed up in city court on July 28, 2009 to watch the proceedings in a case against Jesse Masengale, a member of the Safe Haven Tent Community. After a group of homeless men and women had organized a tent city on the property of the Catholic Worker House in Champaign, two police officers arrived on the night of June 8 with a video camera to "investigate." When Jesse questioned their intentions, he was detained and given two city tickets.

In court, Judge Richard Klaus read a summary of the two charges against Jesse: obstructing and resisting Champaign Police Officer Erik Bloom from "documenting evidence," when he put his hands in front of a video camera after he was told not to; and

assault for allegedly throwing a cell phone at Champaign Police Officer Gregory Manzana.

According to witnesses on the night of June 8, when officers Bloom and Manzana approached with a video camera, Jesse and two residential volunteers from the Catholic Worker House spoke to them. One of the volunteers told officers that the Catholic Worker House did not consent to a video search of the property. Officer Bloom quickly became disrespectful and said that he had been given permission to be there. This is when Jesse stepped in to block the videotaping.

As Jesse was being detained, witnesses say he tossed his cell phone to one of the volunteers to document the officers who were beginning to get rough with him. The claim by police is that Jesse intentionally threw the cell phone at officer Manzana, thus constituting an assault.

Jesse asked the judge for a continuance until after the results of a grievance he has filed with the City of Champaign, but he would not allow it. The city attorney expressed her intentions to prosecute the case and Jesse pleaded not guilty.

Jesse was given another court date for September 2, 9 a.m. in Courtroom L.

Jesse does not have the option of a public defender. He faces up to \$1,000 in fines and possible jail time if he cannot pay them. It is clear that the local authorities would rather jail members of the homeless community at \$45 a night, than provide them with adequate housing.

The city had the option of dropping the charges, but continues to waste taxpayer money on this frivolous case. Of course, these charges are not only against Jesse, but represent a prosecution of the entire Safe Haven Tent Community for trying to find a

solution to the growing problem of homelessness in Champaign.

Contact Champaign City Attorney Fred Stavins and tell him to drop all charges against Jesse Masengale (#09OV000914).

Phone: 217/403-8765

Fax: 217/403-8755

Or, legaldepartment@ci.champaign.il.us

An article by the Safe Haven Tent Community and an incident report of what happened on June 8 can be found in the June/July issue of the Public i or at the IMC website:

ucimc.org/content/cu-tent-community

Jesse Masengale's next court appearance will be September 2, 9 a.m. in Courtroom L.

THE PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Sunday, September 6, 6-8 PM, Independent Media Center, 202 South Broadway, Urbana

The idea behind the Peoples's Community Potluck, a food-sharing communal gathering to discuss the economic and social problems in our community. The intention is to harness the talents and resources of local organizations and individuals to improve the conditions of working people, unemployed people, poverty-stricken people, and those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Given the sorry state of the economy and government economic policy over the past 8 years, which has been most concerned with the well-being of the very wealthy, organizations and individuals at the grass-roots level are going to have to use social consciences and talents to find ways of supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities because we cannot just rely on the new administration to turn things around. There must be pressure from the bottom up. We envision new local Social Forums as a stimulus for coordinated action and communication for a democratic, egalitarian political-economy. Movement and organizational activists are welcome to come and share their ideas and food with other socially conscious activists.



Ethnic Violence in China: A Conflict Under Wraps

By Brady Collins



Brady Collins is a student and a Civic Leadership Fellow at the University of Illinois, studying Economics and International Studies. The following is his first article for the Public i.

CHINA HAS LOST A LOT OF BLOOD THIS MONTH, and as it continues to dribble red, the rest of the world is straining to understand China's inability to have anticipated and managed the situation. China is rife with ethnic conflict, and the clashes have grown increasingly brutal as the government fails to face the music and attempt to not only ease, but understand the roots of their own ethnic divides.

It is a complex state of affairs, where the majority Hans and the minority Uighurs are dissatisfied and feels that they are both the victim, and the scapegoat. The quarrel is the unfortunate product of a variety of factors that cannot be easily undone. For some time now, the Uighurs have criticized the Chinese government for suppressing their language, culture and religion. More recently, they have argued that the government has created policies that encourage the Hans to migrate to Kashgar, an ancient city where their civilization first began. As the Hans began receiving the more desirable state jobs, the Uighurs were forced to move elsewhere seeking employment. Hence a kind of cross migration occurred. Once fairly separate communities began mixing and competing for the same jobs and houses, expectedly creating a tension that only takes a small spark to engulf in flames.

The Hans have issued their own grievances. They claim that the government gives the Uighurs unfair advantages on college placement exams. The Uighurs, like other minorities, are also exempt from the one child policy that

restrains the Hans. There is a general failure by both sides to find any sort of empathy to decrease their bitter sentiments, a result of the absence of any sort of local policy reform. Their prejudices have thrived under a Chinese government that has not fostered discussion between the two parties. Therefore the Uighurs, a Muslim population and Turkish speakers, are not fully accepted by a largely homogenous society.

The deadliest wave came at the beginning of the month in Urumqi, the capital of Xianjiang, when a group of frustrated Uighur youths viciously attacked a community of Hans. The clash took almost 200 lives, several of which were taken by the government troops' own gunfire as they attempted to intervene. Several days later, the two sides began brutally assaulting each other once again, this time at a factory in coastal China. Again, hundreds were killed, many injured, and the government could only offer an explanation that it was a misunderstanding, the director of

the Foreign Affairs Office comparing it to a quarrel between husband and wife. However, this has proven to be a marriage of inconvenience as uprisings continue to take the lives of civilian non-combatants. Any violent outbreak by one party is quickly justified as a response to another and the aftermath largely consists of pointing fingers and counting casualties.

As the aggressive emotions continue to boil, the Chinese government continues to offer such absurd defenses in order to ease the discomfort their international cohorts and potential business partners. Most recently Beijing has denounced a Uighur activist, Rebiya Kadeer, for traveling to Japan. China's Vice-Foreign Minister, Wu Dawei claims she is one of the reasons for the bloodshed, evidently worried that she might spread awareness of China's oppression of the Uighurs. She has made several statements denouncing her government, claiming that they are responsible for several thousand people disappearing in the Xinjiang region one night without any explanation.

This testimony will undoubtedly attract the international spotlight, and China is anxiously trying to attain a conversation with Japan's ambassador to reduce any distraught feelings. They are pulling for an image that would have us believe this is merely a blip in the radar, that it is not a human rights concern, and more importantly that they have it all under control. But, this does not appear to

be an isolated incident to be brushed off by history. The fight between Uighurs and Hans is very relevant, a devastating result of the economic crisis and intolerance that has now erupted given China's failure to integrate its minorities into a diverse, accepting society.

And so, the situation continues to evolve and the government will spin it how it sees fit, reducing the killing to mere quarreling and hand slapping between neighbors. But, the conflict between the

Hans and Uighurs, like many ethnic disputes, has deep roots and deserves a more profound analysis of historical and cultural differences, geo-politics, and the kind of mediation that can only come about when a government comes to terms with its own internal flaws. These issues are not new skeletons in the closet for China. A bitter history with the Tibetans and the exiled Dalai Lama bears a striking resemblance to the recent unrest, the Tibetan criticisms against the government nearly one in the same with the Uighurs'. A resolution would entail the regime taking a long gaze in the mirror, not to mention an intense redistribution of governmental priorities.

China's heavily nationalized business sector has helped it rest softly on a cushion of bank reserves and foreign government bonds during the current economic crisis. China is certainly viewed by the US and much of the developed world as a necessary ally for their own respective survival. Thus the international community is able to comfortably

ignore humanitarian issues occurring underneath a façade of international business diplomacy. Indeed, it is hard to condemn a country's government for disregarding civil rights when you are in severe debt and in need of a helping hand. Beggars can't be choosers.

This seems unlikely at this point in time because of China's fat wallet and the US's unwavering duty to chase it. At the moment it is only a concern, largely overshadowed by more important political necessities. Still, given President Obama's alleged diplomatic savoir-faire, our future relationship could definitely benefit from a shared concern for internal affairs as well. Obama surely knows a thing or two about how to integrate minorities and organize communities peacefully. The future will remain unknown, but as history shows us this kind of ethnic hatred is best not to be underestimated or ignored. While the President smiles and shakes hands with our Chinese allies, he may want to be checking to see if there is blood on them.

Afghanistan Article Clarifications

By Shaheen A. Shorish

I would like to express my gratitude to the Public i for allowing Margaret Fitzpatrick to highlight the problems taking place in Afghanistan in her article "Afghanistan, a Beautiful Place Now Covered in Landmines". However, there are some inconsistencies within the article that need to be addressed.

To clarify, the article stated that my family and I were on the last commercial flight to leave Afghanistan. While that was true in 1978, flights have since resumed. The statement that the Taliban proved "more divisive and destructive than any previous tyranny" is perhaps careless. While they have proven themselves ruthless oppressors, it minimizes the human rights abuses that occurred during the Soviet invasion and ignores the corruption under President Daoud.

While the "six degrees of separation" network did ultimately lead my aunt, Dr. Zieba Shorish-Shamley, to a cooperative endeavor with the Feminist Majority, it is important to distinguish the fact that she had already established her non-profit organization, WAPHA (Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan) several years prior. Additionally, the Tajik versus Pashtun mentality described by Fitzpatrick I find to be detrimental to the healing of the country.

As for the specific dates mentioned, I was attached to HC-4 in 1991, not 1990, which was the year I joined the Navy. I was deployed for the third campaign of the Gulf War in August of 1992. I appreciate the Public i for giving me the opportunity to bring these issues to light.



Riot police confront a Uighur demonstration

Folk & Roots Fundraiser

Music for the Young and Young at Heart is the theme of the upcoming fundraiser for the Champaign Urbana Folk and Roots Festival. The fundraiser will take place Sunday August 23rd Noon to 8pm at Channing Murray Foundation and the Red Herring Coffeehouse located at 1209 West Oregon, Urbana. Donations will gladly be accepted at the door. The festival itself is scheduled for September 25th and 26th in and around downtown Urbana.

For the latest updates go to www.cufolkandroots.org

Contact Ed Hawkes at: oltime1@att.net, or phone 217-493-4654 for information.

AmeriCorps Positions at UCIMC

We are excited to announce that the UCIMC is hiring for 8 full-time AmeriCorps volunteers starting this fall!

We are accepting applications for: News Media (including the Public i and WRFU) Coordinator, Building Management, Books to Prisoners Volunteer Coordinator, The Bike Project Volunteer Coordinator, Web/Technical Projects Developer, Performance Venue Coordinator, School for Designing a Society Program Coordinator and Gesundheit Institute Program Developer.

The deadline for most of the applications is August 21. All the job descriptions are available at: <http://ucimc.org/content/ucimc-hire-8-state-ameri-corps-fall-applications-requested>.

Contact Nicole Pion for more information: Nicole.pion@gmail.com



The French Left And The 2009 European Elections

By Belden Fields



Belden Fields is a political scientist who has written books and articles on the French Left from the 1960s through the 1980s. He was in France last June during the European Parliamentary elections.

INTUITIVELY, GIVEN THE ROTTEN STATE of the capitalist economy in this period, one might have predicted that the voters in the 2009 election for the European Parliament, the only institution that is directly elected by popular vote in the highly bureaucratic European Union (EU), would have punished the Right for its direction of the economy.

With the sole exception of Greece, European voters did exactly the opposite. A majority of them voted for the Right and against the Left.

THE ELECTION AND ITS RESULTS

Although France has a multi-party system, sustained by a history of diverse ideological orientations and an element of proportional representation in the electoral system, traditionally two parties have been dominant in the past two to three decades. The two dominant parties have been the UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire), the conservative or right-wing party now headed by President Nicolas Sarkozy, and the Socialist Party, now led by Martine Aubry. The Socialist Party has not held the presidency since the two terms of Francois Mitterrand from 1981-1995. The party has, at times, been strong in the National Assembly, and is very strong at the local levels. It has a majority in 20 of the 22 regional councils, and controls many municipalities, including Paris. But it has not been able to translate that strength into control of the national presidency. At the European level, it did exceptionally well in the last elections for the European Parliament, gaining 28.9% of the votes. It should be understood that no party gets over 50% of the votes in these multi-party elections.

But in the European elections in June of this year, the vote for the Socialist Party fell by almost 50% to 16.48%, while Sarkozy's UMP and its coalition partner, the Nouveau Centre, got 27.87% of the vote. The combined percentage of all of the Left, and I am excluding the environmentalist ticket, was only a total of about 29%. The Greens, called *Europe Ecologie* and led by Daniel-Cohn Bedit (known as 'Dany the Red' during the 1968 student uprising for which he served as a catalyst) received 16.28% of the vote and wound up with 14 of France's 72 seats, the same number as the Socialist Party. These elections were a stunning gain for the Greens, as well as being huge success for Sarkozy's UMP that won 29 seats. This is very ominous for the Socialist Party that must face regional elections next year where its majority control at the regional level will be at risk.

WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS?

The answer cannot be sought uniquely within France because the Right beat the Left in almost all of the countries of the EU. Part of the reason has to be that the Left is simply not convincing the voting public throughout Europe that they have a program and/or a sufficiently competent list of candidates that can deal with the complex issues, like the economy and immigration. Some of it certainly is a backlash against immigration and the feeling that the Left is too sympathetic with immigrants and their cultures and too soft on crime. Indeed, it is fair to say that the major reason that Sarkozy rose to where he is was his tough law-and-order line on immigrant youth when he was Minister of Interior, and thus head of the National Police. The issues of race and cultural differences have been played skillfully by politicians on the Right throughout Europe.

But there are also issues specific to France. The French Socialist Party has become a bit like the British Labour Party in that it has lost a sense of vision. In the 1970s, while it was still obliged to share the space on the Left with the Communist Party and the former Parti Socialist Unifie (PSU), it was forced to negotiate with them to come up with common programs for substantial change. After the severe decline of the Communists and the disappearance of the PSU, the imperative to define itself programmatically seems to have dissipated. It has relied too heavily upon "party loyalty."

A related problem is that the party has been factionalized around specific personalities. That was even true back in the 1970s and 1980s when I did much of my research on the French Left. It took a very skilled politician, Francois Mitterrand, to both work the party internally and appeal sufficiently to the voters to capture the big prize in French politics, the presidency. But Mitterrand was at once pragmatic and programmatic in his approach to politics, and he was skillful in his maneuvering with the Communists, which he helped weaken (e.g., by joining with the Right in portraying them as racist) after the coalitions were no longer useful to the Socialists. On the other hand, prominent members of the PSU were simply absorbed by the Socialist Party.

Yet another problem for the Socialist Party has been that many of its traditional voters, middle-class people like teachers and other professionals, just deserted it in these elections. Some simply abstained. There was an unusually high 59.35% abstention rate of eligible voters in this election. Polls have found that a disproportionate number of these people were usual Socialist Party voters. But the party was not giving them much except the usual pretty faces to vote for. So, why do it? Why vote at all if you don't like what the others are offering either? The Socialists were not the only ones turning off the voters, however, even on

the Left. A friend of mine who always had voted Communist was in a quandary and asked me, an American, for advice as to whether to vote or abstain. No party seemed to offer anything to the majority of eligible voters.

One party, however, did offer enough to pull some voters away from the Socialists. That was the Greens. One might think that the Greens would be too specifically issue-oriented to have that much appeal. But the French Greens are more than a single-issue group. Rather, they see the ecological approach as a lens that captures a whole host of problems that transcend the traditional right-left cleavages and that transcend national boundaries. Cohn-Bendit himself manifests this. He holds dual French and German citizenship and he has been a German representative to the European Parliament prior to his successfully running for the seat in France. In 2002, he was elected co-president of the Green Parliamentary Group in the European Parliament.

Cohn-Bendit also crosses the Right-Left divide and has compared himself to Obama as a unique change agent. Though he comes out of a very radical left-anarchical past in the 1960s and 1970s and still retains very "left" positions on what we Americans call "social issues" and on immigration, he supported military action in Bosnia and Afghanistan and he has been very open to free markets, including a willingness to consider privatizing the extremely efficient French railroad system. Furthermore, he has maintained very good relations with President Sarkozy himself who both calls him on the phone periodically and invites him to his office. Very recently Sarkozy has even begun to adopt the Green's environmental rhetoric. It is obvious that Cohn-Bendit's "beyond the traditional politics" aura has appealed to a lot of voters, including some more conservative centrists but, unfortunately for the Socialist Party, to some of its usual voters as well. After all, that was just the intention. There was also a bit of the cult of personality here, both because of Cohn-Bendit's very daring actions and image in the 1960s and his charismatic media presence.

While Cohn-Bendit helped to give rise to a kind of French "New Left" in the 1960s, he may now be helping to definitively do in the one remaining sizeable structure of the Old Left in France. Of course, those in the small parties to the left of the Socialist Party, which managed to win 5 seats in the European Parliament, will not shed any tears over that party's demise. But neither will they embrace the triumph of 'Dany the Red' morphed into 'Dany the Free Marketeer.'

Next year's regional elections in France will be particularly significant in framing the ideological spectrum of French domestic politics.

From The Front Lines In Honduras

By Bill Taylor

Bill Taylor lives at the Kalyx Center in rural Piatt County. He has worked since 1988 in solidarity with various Central American groups to improve radio communications. Planning of La Voz Lenca started in 2002, major construction in 2007, and sustaining engineering is ongoing to this day. Contact bill@radiopcp.org

TWO YEARS AGO, A COOPERATIVE effort between our local Primary Communications Project and el COPINH, an indigenous peoples' organization in La Esperanza, Honduras, built a powerful AM radio station to enable the Lenca Mayans to communicate their ideas. Honduras is signatory to an international covenant granting certain rights to native peoples, among which is free speech. It's unusual these days to build a

new AM radio station, but with AM's ability to penetrate into the isolated mountain valleys where many Lencas live, it was the best technology; so el COPINH sought and was awarded a license for La Voz Lenca AM, a one kilowatt station which serves a good part of western Honduras where the Lencas live... and, it's the sister station to WRFU, Radio Free Urbana.

I've been going to La Esperanza every so often to keep the transmitters running and make some improvements, so I had scheduled a trip for this summer... But when I arrived this time late in the afternoon of June 25th, I'm met at the bus station by my friends Justo Sorto and Jorge Ramos. "Have you heard about the conflict?" Justo asks. Immediately, my mind flashes to the internal conflicts that are all too common in community

Continued on next page





Labor In A Crucible

By Ricky Baldwin



IN THE 1880's, THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR constructed a much broader vision of organized labor than the "business unionism" of its craft union rivals that became the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The Knights welcomed unskilled workers, of any race or gender,

into community-wide coalitions addressing various social concerns across the US at a time when AFL unions were essentially guilds of all white men focused solely on making money for their members. But the Knights died a violent death during an early "red scare" following the struggle for an eight hour day.

An increasingly concentrated business class, with support from its friends in government at many levels, brutally attacked the Knights' networks, killing many, jailing more, and bequeathing the field of organized labor to the more conservative unions. Kim Voss points out in *The Making of American Exceptionalism* (Cornell 1993) that organized labor was able to retain a more open structure—and the left politics that come with it—only in countries like England and France where the employers were less well organized and not strong enough to use the state as a truncheon, or not as effectively.

As a result US workers, for generations largely bereft of organizational support for a more solidaristic worldview, largely do not know that almost every country in the world celebrates Labor Day on May 1, marking a fatal event in the struggle for the Eight Hour Day in Chicago—or that Pres. Grover Cleveland began our September Labor Day specifically to distract from May Day.

More seriously, millions of US workers do not know about ongoing labor struggles in their own backyards, much less abroad. Many fruits and vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, melons, citrus) sold in US supermarket and fast-food chains are harvested under the worst sweatshop conditions—sweltering heat, no water or toilets, and rock-bottom pay—sometimes including threats and verbal abuse and beatings. Modern overseers sometimes hold pickers in the fields at gunpoint, lock them in rat-infested camps overnight without running water, even run over them if they try to flee. Citizens as well as immigrants endure these conditions in Florida and the Deep South, and points north—as close to you as Rantoul, where workers housed in cramped and dirty apartments, sometimes without running water or electricity, labor in the heat every summer for agri-giants like Monsanto and others.

Today every inhabited continent is plagued with such Dickensian conditions, which include an estimated 27 million slaves held in physical bondage, among them domestic slaves in the US and Sudan, diamond miners in West

Africa, "carpet slaves" in India, sex slaves in Thailand, and cane cutters in Pakistan and the Dominican Republic. In Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, there are only about 100,000 year-round full-time jobs for 9 million people, mostly in *maquiladoras* supplying US corporations like Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Disney and others in "Free Trade Zones" (FTZ) established under pressure from the US government and the International Monetary Fund.

The Haitian people's ongoing struggle to raise their country's minimum wage—opposed by USAID under Clinton and Bush—has been largely against the allied forces of Haitian businesses interlocked with US businesses and the Haitian military trained and supplied by the US. Between them these groups have essentially held the entire Haitian population in a kind of national debt slavery for 200 years, on behalf of US and other foreign businesses.

Closer to home in Chicago unionized workers in the Congress Hotel went on strike in 2003 because management decided to freeze wages and slash benefits when other hotels were agreeing to pay raises. Broke? Far from it, six years into the strike—making it the longest hotel strike in US history—the wealthy owners have been dumping wads of cash into big renovations at the hotel while paying its housekeepers a little over half what other Chicago hotel housekeepers earn. The chair of the ownership company Albert Nasser lives in Geneva, Switzerland, and New York City, and controls several offshore clothing manufacturing businesses. One of these, Gelmart Industries, was recently involved in a sweatshop scandal involving abusive working conditions.

Also nearby in Effingham, employees at Heartland Human services have been out of work, first on strike then locked out by management, for two years during which management continues to receive funding from the supposedly cash-strapped State of Illinois for services largely not being provided.

The same State of Illinois in the recent past "borrowed" from its workers' pensions and now can't pay the money back (and state employees won't get Social Security either, because they pay into the pension plan instead). Now the state's flagship land grant university, UIUC, announces unilaterally that employees must take a pay cut this year. (It's called a "furlough" but many employees will still have to do the same amount of work, so it is really just a pay cut—and for the others, good luck finding a second job to fill in the random days you may be out of work.) That's while the upper echelons at the university have been busy earning their six-figure salaries pandering to the rich and powerful—tailoring admissions standards and creating cushy jobs.

Managers and politicians have little compunction about promoting such attacks on workers in large part because of

the much-talked-about decline in organized labor and its political implications. More than the declining numbers since the 1970s, labor's recent nadir has its roots back in the violent death of the Knights of Labor and their broader "social unionism," Voss argues. Pres. Ronald Reagan may have infamously fired the PATCO air traffic controllers, signaling open season for three decades of renewed attacks on unions, but their strike had been illegal for years owing to the influence of anti-labor politicians, many of them, like Reagan, endorsed by conservative unions—like PATCO.

The myopic, rightward drift of US labor, albeit uneven, certainly has played a role in aggressive US foreign policy, much of it aimed at ensuring cheap labor for US business. The AFL-CIO has colluded directly with the US government in busting leftist unions in other countries, and less directly US unions often support rightwing politicians—like Reagan—who then go on to undermine working conditions on an international scale. Presidents Cleveland, Reagan and Bill Clinton, marshal of the notorious North American Free Trade Agreement and several Haitian FTZs were just a few examples that labor has lived to regret—barely.

Yet there has always been resistance. A vision of more universal solidarity resurfaces again and again, and each time new ground is gained and defeat is less total, as with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the early 20th century and later the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), both largely but not entirely broken by "red scare" public-private partnerships. Unskilled labor of both sexes and many ethnic groups is now a permanent, unquestioned fixture within the labor movement, although by no means equally. The United Farm Workers, once brutally assaulted by Teamsters, is now a player in the AFL-CIO.

New alliances formed in the "Battle of Seattle" and other resistance against Clinton's NAFTA in 1999 and the Zapatista uprising in Mexico. The trend continues in the recent heartening embrace by once-myopic labor unions for groups like Jobs With Justice community-labor coalitions, United Students Against Sweatshops, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers—who organize farmworkers in the US "sweatshops of the fields"—and US Labor Against the War. Even union protests over the export of jobs in the last ten years have changed in tone from jingoistic "Buy American" rallies to common cause with sweatshop workers.

But there are many divisions, too, for better or worse, and the true test of solidarity is likely to be in the crucible of recent economic disasters, when workers and their organizations will have to choose: wagons in a circle or greater solidarity.

From The Front Lines In Honduras

Continued from previous page

radio, but his next words are electrifying. "Mel Zelaya, our president, has been detained by order of the National Assembly. Tomorrow, there's a huge rally in Tegucigalpa in favor of having a vote to propose changes to the constitution to make it more amenable to the people. Mel is supposed to speak. We're afraid he won't be able to."

The next few days are crazy... Zelaya abducted by the army at 6AM. There is total confusion on the airwaves with conflicting reports telling of Zelaya's death or torture [not true], his whereabouts in almost every country of the Americas, then finally a live interview. A day of total silence follows when Micheletti regime cuts off power to the entire country to silence the media. When the power is restored, stations that had done cutting-edge reporting are playing music or 'soft news.' The huge mobilization in favor of revising the constitution is squelched by the military. The

energy of the people turns into massive pro-Zelaya demonstrations which continue ever stronger and bloodier to this day.

It was intriguing to check out the announcements and advertisements in favor of the coup. While the usual Honduran commercials are very unsophisticated... a claim that the sponsor is the 'best' or 'biggest' or some other superlative, by contrast the coup promos and edicts were on a par with the best U.S. political ads with slick production and psychologically nuanced messages... with the capability of Madison Ave... not Honduran.

So far, the massive pro-Zelaya demonstrators have remained non-violent in the face of brutal beatings, tear gassing and attacks with live ammunition. I know two of the pro-Zelaya leaders, Salvador Zúñiga and Berta Cáceres, and I know their commitment to non-violence is profound, but the Lencas are also proud of being from the tribe of Lempi-

ra, the national hero of Honduras, who led a revolt against the *conquistadors*. I hear people invoking this tradition of standing up to tyranny more and more as the Micheletti regime becomes more and more repressive. How long their commitment to non-violence will hold up is hard to tell. I heard in La Esperanza that there are troops... 30,000 each in Nicaragua and El Salvador... waiting to attack Tegucigalpa with bombs if Zelaya isn't returned to office. This sounds unlikely, but if there are folks thinking that there would be outside support for internal armed conflict in favor of Zelaya, they may feel unjustifiably emboldened to take up arms.

If pro-Zelaya violence does flare up, especially if foreign troops are involved, it may be just the excuse that the Micheletti backers are looking for to start a new Contra War with the goal to destabilize the other left-wing governments in adjacent Nicaragua and El Salvador. It worked in Nicaragua with

Daniel Ortega in power once before. Some of the prime movers of the previous Contra War have joined the Micheletti government: They still have the U.S. base at Palmerola from which much of the Contra War was staged, plus a third brand-new American base in Honduras. So, why not again?

Well, as my month drew on, the work of restoring La Voz Lenca to full power took on more urgency while the technical problems of the old transmitters seemed less and less solvable. Finally, just before my scheduled departure day, a solution appeared. La Voz Lenca AM, one of the few remaining stations bringing a strong message in favor of the restoration of the peoples' president, Manuel Zelaya, to office, is on the air!