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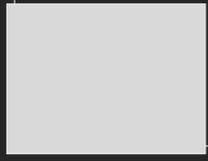
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# CRISIS IS BUSINESS

**"EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A STANDARD OF LIVING ADEQUATE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS FAMILY, INCLUDING FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSING AND MEDICAL CARE AND NECESSARY SOCIAL SERVICES, AND THE RIGHT TO SECURITY IN THE EVENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT, SICKNESS, DISABILITY, WIDOWHOOD, OLD AGE OR OTHER LACK OF LIVELIHOOD IN CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL."**

—Article 25,  
**The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights**



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## Statement By Safe Haven Tent Community

*This document is a collective effort of the Safe Haven Tent Community and its supporters!*

A small tent community has formed in Champaign, and with it, a growing constituency of support from the citizens of Champaign County. The Safe Haven Tent Community (SHTC) arose in response to a practical need for a livable solution to the housing crisis in the local area. The members of the group and their supporters aim to address the housing problem from the position of people living in homelessness. This group has banded together out of the need to provide respect, security, and wellbeing for each other.

The community began in a vacant lot adjacent to the Catholic Workers' House's back yard. The group organized itself following a series of discussions among the members of the provisional tent community, as well as the workers, committee members, and volunteers at the Catholic Workers' House. The group is comprised of a handful of individuals who camp together out of friendship and concern for each other's safety and well being. The SHTC provides a safe, temporary community-oriented space for the people of this city on an abandoned piece of land.

There are resources available to the homeless in Champaign County that deserve appreciation and recognition. However, some of the area shelters have lengthy waiting lists, some lack enough space to accommodate families, and some, at times, are unsafe. The SHTC has been creat-

ed, in part, in reaction to the inability of the county to supply enough resources to local shelters.

SHTC provides a relative safety for the homeless. Living without shelter on the streets is a constant struggle. Our homeless women and men risk their campsites, their possessions, and their lives by being alone out on the streets. They are denied their dignity and respect by having to hide in public spaces. Their campsites and living spaces, once discovered, are often removed or destroyed.

However, camping in the city, as an alternative to being on the streets alone, is considered illegal. This creates a dilemma not only for the community at large, the city government, and the service providers, but also for the people who live in tents. Dismantling the SHTC, amounts to denial of safety and security to individuals because of their socioeconomic status. People would still have to camp in the city but would be alone and more vulnerable to hardships and would have to negotiate with the city alone rather than collectively. Homeless people are citizens too and their safety needs to be protected.

The Champaign County SHTC will continue to operate as an autonomous decision-making body in order to refine a sustainable living practice. The group's members make decisions as a collective in roundtable discussions and live by the bylaws following the precedence set by Dignity Village, a sustained tent community based in Portland, Oregon.

The project has recently become public because of an



SHTC attends the rally against state services budget cuts

encounter with the Champaign Police Department. A network of affinity and solidarity from the Champaign-Urbana Community has become a key component of the SHTC's endeavors. There is a hope within the SHTC that support for the existence, continuation, and improvement of this project can be generated, not only from the Catholic Workers' House, but also from efforts in the larger community of Champaign County. There are institutions, collectives, special interest groups, and individuals working on the housing issue in Champaign, whose involvement and assistance would make a difference to the vitality of the TC.

### Incident Report, submitted by SHTC on Monday, June 11th, 1:30pm

On the night of June 8, 2009, Leigh Estabrook, a member of St. Jude Catholic Workers House Steering Committee, contacted the Residential Volunteers of the House to inform them that the Champaign Police were coming to investigate the nature of complaints made by the neighbors about late-night disturbances. In response, Jesse Masengale, a homeless man staying at the SHTC, contacted the officer, who had previously called Leigh, to further inquire into the situation. He was warned that the Champaign Police were going to stop by later that night. The officer informed Jesse that his intention was to "make sure there was no loitering or camping on any of the properties adjacent to the Catholic Worker House (CWH)."

Hoping that the Champaign Police Department would be willing to engage in an open and honest dialogue, and maybe even lend a sympathetic ear to the situation, SHTC decided it would speak with the officer and ask for his advice, as to where the community could legally relocate. Jesse called the officer, told him the SHTC would like to talk, and then informed him of being at the CWH. No permission was given to any officer to step foot on the property. Two officers showed up on foot around 9:10 p.m., with bright flashlights and a video camera. Initially, they stayed on the parking lot directly south of the two houses that are part of the CWH.

It was immediately clear that there wasn't going to be any dialogue. The two officers shined their flashlights into people's faces and scanned the edges of the property with the video camera, as if investigating a criminal activity. "We simply wanted to talk rationally and discuss our options as to where we could sleep legally that night," said a member of the SHTC. The first thing one of the officers did was to call out by name, a member of the SHTC, a well-known friend and guest of the CWH because of his status as a "sex offender."

Then they asked who called. Jesse spoke up. They asked him his age. Jesse answered 22. Then Jesse

simply asked, "Where can we go to sleep tonight?" Ignoring the presence of females in the group, the officer with the camera asked, "Why haven't you tried the Times Center or Salvation Army?" neither of which accepts women. There were several different responses to the question because each person had their own particular reasons why they didn't or were unable to seek assistance from local shelters. Then Jesse said, "Some of us don't have that option." The officer ignored the conversation and began to film some of the personal belongings of another homeless man who was not part of the SHTC but had placed his belongings on the property east of the parking lot.

The officer in charge stepped on the CWH's property and continued to film. Kenny Bishop and Chris Watson, two residential volunteers, asked the officer why he was proceeding onto the property and questioned his arrogant and demeaning attitude. The officer was then asked if he had a warrant to be on the property or to film the property without consent to a video search. Chris Watson then stated that the CWH did not consent to the video search of the property. The officer who was video taping claimed he was given permission and "can do what he wants." In response, Jesse stood in front of the camera, blocking the lens with his hand, while others questioned the legality of the officer's actions.

After two verbal attempts to stop Jesse from blocking the camera, the officer jokingly asked his partner, "Would this be considered obstructing a peace officer?" As Jesse continued to be in the way of the camera, the officer snapped into frustration, turned off the camera, and grabbed Jesse by the arm and pulled him onto the adjacent property. While he was being detained, Jesse told everyone "to stay together and not let the officers push them around." The same officer said, "What now? I'm pushing you" and he gave a light shove to the small of Jesse's back.

Wanting to document the behavior of the officers, Jesse said to Chris, "Take this; it has a camera;" he got his cell phone from his pocket and threw it to Chris who caught the phone. The other police officer said to his partner, "Oh, did you see that? He threw that phone at my head; that's assault." The officers became more aggressive, taking out their batons as they put Jesse in an arm-bend using one of the batons. Jesse did not once resist the officers or show any force that would make such aggression necessary. Chris followed Jesse and the police to record the actions of the officers who kept telling Chris to get back and that he wasn't allowed to follow them; they also threatened him with a ticket. One of the officers came towards Chris with his baton ready to strike. After Jesse was in the patrol car, the baton-wielding officer apologized and clarified that following an officer too closely implied a threat.

After watching from a distance, some of the witnesses started off in the general direction to look for Jesse, Chris, and the officers. They were informed by an observer, who eats regularly at the Soup Kishtchen, that the car was parked at Central Illinois Bank parking lot, two blocks from the house, and that the officers had one of the two men already in custody. Members of the SHTC and CWH, along with friends, arrived at the parking lot to voice their concern and provide witness to the situation. Chris had requested to speak to the officers' sergeant concerning the legality of the video recording.

At this point, the officers stopped being aggressive and quickly performed a city arrest for Jesse, charging him with assault and obstructing a peace officer. They gave him a notice to appear in court on the 28 of July at 9:00 a.m. in Court Room F.

The officers did nothing to help or advise our homeless community.

Inquires can be directed to [cu.tenshtcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:cu.tenshtcommunity@gmail.com)



## Mahomet Seymour Teacher Union Struggle

By Neil Parthun



Neil Parthun is a Social Studies teacher at J. W. Eater Jr. High School in Rantoul.

On June 11, the Mahomet Seymour Education Association (MSEA) held a press conference to gain public support for their opposition to Mahomet Seymour teaching staff being asked to perform medical and health services as a condition of their employment, instead of these services being provided by medically licensed personnel.

At the start of the 2008–2009 school year, MSEA attempted to discuss mental/medical protocols and procedures with the school board and building administration. Some of those procedures could include catheterization, insulin injections, and diapering. The district has consistently refused to bargain the issue with the union.

This failure means that the district is not following best practice on the issue and may possibly be violating the law. The Illinois Department of Health Care and Family Services Handbook for Local Education Agencies is very clear that only licensed nurses can perform the procedures that Mahomet teachers are currently required to do. The Illinois Nurse Practice Act states, “A registered nurse shall not delegate any nursing activity requiring the knowledge, judgment and skill of a licensed nurse to an unlicensed person, including medication administration.” Best practice is to have a nurse provide medical procedures and services.

It would also be best practice for the district administration to openly bargain the issue with MSEA, since this issue relates to a condition of worker employment. To achieve these goals, MSEA has filed a grievance against the administration.

Approximately 25 MSEA members and concerned citizens addressed the school board at the June 22 meeting. Each speaker demanded that the board negotiate and not procrastinate any further, in order to get a health policy in place that respected MSEA workers and gave children the best medical service possible from licensed professionals. However, the school board notified all in attendance that the board’s legal counsel advised them not to discuss the medical service issue until the grievance process had run its course.

Second grade teacher Pam Halm summed it up, “The teachers in our district have been hired to teach children of all ages and all abilities with all sorts of needs. Our doors are open to all children because we believe that all children can and will learn. This entire medical issue really boils down to making sure a licensed, qualified person is performing these procedures on our students. We have a full-time school nurse. If she is unable to provide the medical services that our students require, then additional nursing personnel should be hired. This is not about teachers and aides not wanting to go the extra mile for students. That already happens every single day here in Mahomet. Teachers and aides should be teaching, and nurses should be providing medical services.”

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## Foreclosures Lead to Homelessness for Many

From National Low Income Housing Coalition

WASHINGTON—June 26, nearly 80% of homeless service and advocacy agencies report that at least some of their clients became homeless as a result of a foreclosure, and one in five estimate that more than 40% of their clients became homeless because of a foreclosure. These data are among the results of a nationwide survey of local homeless providers conducted by national housing and homeless organizations and released as a joint report by the National Coalition for the Homeless, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, and other national organizations.

The report, titled Foreclosure to Homeless 2009: The

Forgotten Victims of the Subprime Crisis, will be released at a press conference on Friday, June 26. Details are below.

The findings of the report are based on the survey responses of 178 local homeless service providers from all regions of the country. Respondents were asked to report the numbers of their clients who became homeless as a result of foreclosure, as well as about the coping strategies of families and the services and protections available to evicted families at the state and local levels.

The report also examines related factors that contribute to foreclosures and homelessness, including health care costs and whether or not the family has access to legal assistance. In addition, policy recommendations that

would assist both homeowners and renters facing foreclosures are provided. An appendix lists survey questions and the names of local service providers that responded.

“The results of this survey make clear that foreclosures are a major factor in the increase of homelessness in the United States,” NLIHC President Sheila Crowley said.

Sponsoring organizations of the report are: National Coalition for the Homeless, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, NLIHC, and the National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness.

### THE PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY POTLUCK

**Sunday, July 5 & August 2 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, and given the dismal state of Illinois' government and economy, 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. Additionally, we will have to pressure government at all levels to support an economy “for and by the people,” rather than for and by the already extremely well-off. 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.



## Community Leaders Speak Out On Toto Kaiyewu Case

by Brian Dolinar



Oluwatofunmi "Toto" Kaiyewu

A press conference was held at the Independent Media Center on June 25, 2009, where community leaders spoke out about the police shooting of Toto Kaiyewu, a medical student from Carbondale. When Kaiyewu, who is black, was passing through Villa Grove, a former "sundown town," his car was deemed suspicious and followed by a local cop. A chase ensued that ended with police gunning him down on I-74.

Those who addressed the media charged racial profiling. They included (from left to right) Patsy Howell, reading a statement from the Muslim American Society, Tracy Parsons, who called the actions of the authorities "deplorable," Erma Bridgewater, long-time community activist, and Aaron Ammons of CU Citizens for Peace and Jus-

tice, who called for changes to make this "more than just another black male killed by the police."

This response came the day after a coroner's inquest ruled the death was a "justifiable homicide." When independent media members moved to interview jurors after the inquest, they were interrupted by Vermilion County Coroner Peggy Johnson who told jurors they did not have to talk to the media. I insisted that jurors have a right to talk to media and he was subsequently escorted out of the building by Sheriff Patrick Hartshorn. Asked if he would like to see a press badge, the Sheriff said, "I don't care if you have a press badge." In 2007, I was kicked out of a press conference without explanation by Champaign Police Chief R.T. Finney.

A public screening of videos from the Villa Grove squad car and with officers involved will be held at the IMC in July.

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The Odyssey Project in Urbana-Champaign is sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council, the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, the Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities, and the University of Illinois.

## Tiller Memorial at Federal Courthouse in Urbana

By Brian Dolinar



On Saturday, June 6 at 10 a.m., a memorial was held at the federal courthouse in Urbana to correspond with the funeral of Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kansas and similar memorials that were held across the country. On Memorial Day, Tiller was gunned down at his church by an anti-abortion activist in what many are calling a vicious act of domestic terrorism. In Urbana, a group of approximately 25 people gathered to honor Tiller and take a stand for women's reproductive rights.

Growing up in Wichita, I remember the summer of 1991 when Operation Rescue kicked off its so-called "Summer of Mercy" by protesting Dr. Tiller's clinic. Tiller had become a lightning rod for the movement for his providing of late-term abortions. At the church where my now wife (who was then and remains pro-choice) was attending, youth were being recruited to lie down in the road and block traffic along Kellogg Avenue.

Two of my close friends received abortions from Dr. Tiller. After he was killed, one of them wrote, "I love Dr. Tiller. He was an angel, a warrior, a zen-like human who cared about people—women especially. He performed my abortion when I was 17 and it saved my life. Dr. Tiller saved my life and the lives of countless women by helping them help themselves. Blessings to him and his family and all of us who care about Reproductive Justice." Lisa is now the mother of two beautiful children and lives in Washington D.C.

Another friend of mine who had an abortion from Dr. Tiller is currently a jazz critic for NPR, has written two books, and is a free spirit who divides her time between Brazil and Colorado.

I still have many friends and family who live in Wichita. My mother recently told me the story of how when she worked at a local jewelry store, Mrs. Tiller used to come in to have her jewelry cleaned. One of my mother's co-workers refused to wait on Mrs. Tiller.

My mom also told me the story of Mary Logan, more than 90 years old, who grew up with my grandfather in a

small coal mining community in southeast Kansas and was a high school teacher in the Wichita public schools. She had a young George Tiller as a student and said, "He was one of those kids I wish I had a whole room full of." Throughout the years, he called to check in with her. He was, she said, "just perfect in every way."

Others at the memorial in Urbana had their own stories to tell. Ashley Price, who was nine months pregnant, came to show her support. She told me:

"I'm nine months pregnant. In fact I'm due on Monday and I've always been pro-choice. I'm pregnant with a girl. I want her to have the same choices I did. She was a chosen pregnancy and the only reason why I haven't needed an abortion is because I have had adequate access to contraception. I think abortion rights are tied to all reproductive rights. There are forces in this society that want to limit how and where a woman can birth. I'm planning a home birth which is not exactly legal in this state. It's legal for me to give birth at home, but it's not legal for a practitioner to be at my birth. But we still do it."

Kristin Ehrenberger just completed her first year of medical school and complained about the lack of training in abortion procedures. She wore a white coat to the memorial and explained why:

"I came as a medical student because I didn't want the medical establishment to be unrepresented. There are in fact students, doctors, nurses, and other people who see abortion and similar procedures as legitimate, entirely legal, and, unfortunately, sometimes necessary medical procedures. I want the community to see that, which is why I wore my white coat. I didn't want us to be invisible."

I also spoke with Heather Ault, an artist and graduate student, who organized the event. I asked what compelled her to call people together. She said:

"I was contacted by a friend who asked if there were any vigils in town for Dr. Tiller's death. I didn't know of any, others didn't know of any. So I thought, well there's no reason why I couldn't just step forward and get something organized. I emailed some folks and that just snowballed. Before I knew it we were having this vigil today. I'm just



The Tiller memorial at the Urbana Federal Court House

learning this week about Dr. Tiller's life. It's amazing to me how much of a hero he was to so many people within the medical community, within the social justice community. He touched so many women's lives all around the world. It's an inspirational story. I think he deserves to be honored. We want to share our prayers and our thoughts with his family. We want to let people know that this is an injustice we need to be aware of and talk about."

There was an officer from Homeland Security assigned to the memorial which took place with no incidents.

At least 45 vigils were reported to have been organized in 24 states.

Prosecutors have still not decided whether Tiller's murderer, Scott Roeder of Kansas City, will be charged with a hate crime or an act of domestic terrorism. A judge raised his bond to \$20 million after he made threatening statements to the Associated Press.

# Low Income Housing: Affordable For Whom?

By Esther Patt



Esther Patt is Coordinator of the Tenant Union program at the University of Illinois and has volunteered for the last 30 years at the Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union advocating better housing policies for low-income tenants.

Whether advocating relocation assistance for displaced tenants, providing services to homeless families or working on any anti-poverty effort, one reality will surely be the biggest road block. Most “affordable housing” is too expensive for low-wage workers.

More than one of every eight households in the county has income below the poverty level; yet only 19% of those households receive any help with the cost of housing. Is it any wonder that every day more than 400 Champaign County residents are homeless and close to half of the homeless are children?

Many well-meaning people seem to think that homelessness is primarily caused by substance abuse or mental illness. Not so. The leading cause of homelessness is the insufficient supply of affordable housing for the working poor. To afford a cheap two-bedroom apartment in Champaign-Urbana, a household must have an income of at least \$26,000 which is 47% above the poverty level for a family of three. More than one-third of households have incomes lower than that.

Sadly, our nation’s love affair with home ownership plays a big role in causing homelessness. Given a choice between spending \$15,000 to pay the down payment for one family to buy their first house or to subsidize rent for a lower income family for 4 years, most government officials will choose the down payment. Home ownership programs help revitalize neighborhoods, eliminate blight, and provide real housing stability for program participants.

## THE POOR AND MIXED INCOME HOUSING

The catch is that the local families helped with down payment assistance usually have annual incomes of \$35,000 or more while the households needing rent subsidy earn half that amount or less. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses the term “low-income” to describe households who earn 80% of the area median income. For a family of three in Champaign Coun-

ty, that’s \$45,000 a year.

What about all the hard-working people who make only \$14,000–\$16,000 a year at their full time jobs? Where do they live?

The tiny supply of housing for the poor has been shrinking at the same time that the need has grown. Approximately 1,300 households in Champaign County receive rent subsidies through the Section 8 program. That includes the people who were forced to relocate from the 340 units of subsidized housing, both public housing and privately-owned buildings that have been demolished in the last fifteen years. The replacement housing for these apartment complexes is called mixed income housing and affording rents for even the “low-income” apartments requires an annual income of about \$26,000.

For example, Crystal View Town Homes, now under construction to replace Lakeside Terrace Apartments in Urbana, will have 7 market rent apartments, 35 apartments that are affordable to households earning 60% of area median income, 25 apartments for families at 50% of area median and 7 apartments for those with income at 30%. These percentages translate into dollar amounts of annual income—\$33,750, \$28,000 and \$16,875 respectively.

Since most apartments in Champaign-Urbana are affordable for people who earn \$28,000–\$33,750 why are federal, state and local tax dollars, including federal tax credits for the developer, being poured into this project? The same question can be asked about the other tax credit housing complexes in our community. Oakwood Terrace, Douglass Square, Towne Center, Prairie Green and Rainbow Apartments are all considered low-income housing, but a single mother with two children would have to earn at least \$13.00 an hour at a full-time job in order to afford rent at any of these places.

The only real community benefit of these tax credit, mixed-income housing complexes is that the owners are prohibited from discriminating against people because they use Section 8 housing vouchers to subsidize their rent. The same 1,300 households in the local Section 8 program whose rent would be subsidized at any location they choose, make up close to half the residents of the tax credit apartment complexes. Without a Section 8 voucher, no poor family could afford the rents.

It would be a lot cheaper if the government would just ban discrimination against people on Section 8 and not

waste tax-payer money on subsidies for developers who charge the same rents as dozens of landlords who get no subsidies. When local government officials add up the number of affordable housing opportunities for very low income households, they usually double-count, adding the 1,300 Section 8 vouchers in use to the number of so-called, low income apartments that are being rented to people with those Section 8 vouchers.

## THE REAL NEED

For more than 20 years, housing advocates have been saying we need “minimum wage” housing. In other words, housing must be developed that is affordable to people who earn minimum wage and are among the 89% of people in their income range who have no Section 8 voucher and cannot get any other type of subsidized housing.

In the next couple of years, the Housing Authority is going to ask the cities of Urbana and Champaign to be part-



ners in redevelopment (which means demolition) of the last two public housing complexes for families in Champaign County. Dunbar Court is a 26-unit complex in Urbana where Wright Street ends just south of Bradley Avenue. Joanne Dorsey Homes is a 67-unit complex at the intersection of Bradley and McKinley which was totally rehabbed with tax money fifteen years ago. The Housing Authority will say this housing is obsolete, that concentration of low income people in one complex is bad and both complexes should be redeveloped as mixed income housing.

Isn’t it time that we ask why local tax dollars and federal tax credits are going to private developers to build replacement housing if the only poor people who can afford the new housing are people whose rent is already subsidized with tax dollars? Isn’t it time to demand that government funding for affordable housing be used to help the people who can afford no housing at all?

# Alternative Solutions Without Reliance

By Laurel Nobilettes



Laurel Nobilette is an alum of the University of Illinois who lives at the Catholic Worker House in Champaign

Recent closures of Autumn Glen and Gateway Studios brought a festering situation to Champaign-Urbana’s socio-economic surface. Former residents of these housing complexes, unexpectedly rendered homeless, learned of the dire circumstances which the existing homeless community has been facing. Champaign-Urbana lacks adequate resources to assist episodically, periodically, or chronically homeless individuals. Serious deficits include lack of emergency shelter, especially for women, children, or couples, inadequate medical and legal help, and outreach programs that will connect those in need with the appropriate services. With impending budget cuts on the state and fed-

eral levels, services may no longer be available to meet demand.

The Urbana Champaign Continuum of Care, a cooperative amongst Champaign County, the cities of Champaign and Urbana, and area social service providers, developed a ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness, planning to provide the homeless with “access to a coordinated array of housing options and supports that will enable them to sustain safe and decent shelter” by 2014. However, UCCC is behind in meeting several of their goals, including those set to assist two-parent households and female-headed households. This ten-year plan offers more immediate, short-term solutions, but continues to work within the framework of a consumer capitalist system that perpetuates and criminalizes poverty. Efforts become nullified as such initiatives cannot survive within this political or economic environment.

Now we are amidst an economic crisis, and an increasing number of people are

being pushed into poverty and out of their homes. Capitalism is no longer the panacea, and our government is proven more and more inefficacious. Rather than depending on the state to remedy the housing situation, concerned citizens have begun establishing grassroots movements in Champaign Urbana.

The Safe Haven Tent Community, a self-organized group of homeless men and women, has created a safe, affordable, and dignified alternative. Despite opposition from the city zoning commission, which has deemed the community illegal, residents continue to demonstrate their right to have their basic life sustaining needs met.

The People’s Housing Authority, born out of the First People’s Potluck at the IMC, works to improve issues surrounding housing in Champaign Urbana, and participates in direct actions that prevent homelessness, like protesting evictions.

Other successful movements include:

- Mad Housers, Atlanta—construct huts and donate free of charge
- Homes Not Jails, San Francisco—advocate for the use of vacant and abandoned buildings by the homeless through adverse possession or squatting
- Dignity Village, Portland—a self-organized tent community
- Catholic Worker Movement—offers houses of hospitality to the homeless, working on principles of personalism and personal responsibility

Further organization within the homeless community is essential to humanize a dehumanized population, allowing the oppressed to shed victimization and empower themselves. Community building helps construct small-scale social support networks, necessary for the decentralization of government. Groups can work to challenge a system that denies them, reconstruction of an inclusive society.

# Autumn Glen: A Teacher's Perspective

By Neil Parthun



Neil Parthun is a Social Studies teacher at J. W. Eater Jr. High School in Rantoul.

The families who lived at the Autumn Glen apartment complex in Rantoul had their lives totally upended after being forcibly removed from their homes. The residents of Autumn Glen paid an extra fee in their rent to pay for the gas bill. While the landlord took the money from the tenants, the landlord never paid the gas bill. The gas was shut off due to

non-payment. The gas shutoff allowed the city to declare the building uninhabitable and the tenants were removed from their homes.

While I've been involved with housing issues prior to this, the Autumn Glen crisis hit me personally because at least two students I taught lived in Autumn Glen. On one of my last visits to Autumn Glen, I was alerted that the landlord had chosen not to pay other bills as well. Garbage overflowed out of dumpsters and into the parking lot. Grass was knee-high. As I navigated this nightmarish scenario, I went to an apartment to speak with Ora—a mother of a student I taught. In our two-hour conversation, I learned that the landlord routinely had problems fixing the building and the tenants faced safety problems due to the deteriorating conditions. She was very adamant that the tenants dutifully paid their bills yet they were the ones losing their homes due to the landlord's choice not to use the rent fees for their purpose. Because the landlord chose not to pay the bills, Ora and her family were losing the place that they had called home for the last fifteen years. Ora and her family have been pinballed around and are still looking for permanent housing because affordable housing has been rapidly decreasing for low-income families.

Another student I taught and her family have experienced similar circumstances. The family temporarily lived in a hotel and are still looking for permanent housing as they move from home to home of friends and relatives willing to take them.

The stress and upheaval of forcible removal, especially when the tenants were not at fault, is something almost beyond comprehension for most people who have not had direct experience of it. The palpable fear, anxiety and anguish that Ora felt were very clear as we sat in her living room talking about what she was going to do. I couldn't even begin to imagine the emotions her son was dealing with as he, not only had to worry about tests, grades and homework, but also about where he was going to be living once Autumn Glen closed.

The housing crisis very clearly impacts the classroom. Between frequent absences due to consistent moving in search of housing, incomplete assignments, the understandable lack of attention/focus when in attendance and acting out with negative behaviors as an outlet to deal with these complex emotions, student success is extremely compromised. Having worked with other students facing housing precarity, I have seen how it can negatively impact their willpower and self-esteem to believe that they can successfully achieve goals. Academic success is already hard enough without having this extra stress compounded on them.

The housing crisis will continue to impact communities and have unseen consequences like their children's education being attacked. The already very limited services to aid the displaced are being stretched past their limits and the need for assistance has been called "tremendous" by the Community Service Center in Rantoul.

As a fellow activist in the housing struggle stated: "Our working class brothers and sisters...can do everything expected of them and still their wellbeing as well as that of their loved ones is at the mercy of a system that puts profit and property before human need."

## Food Not Bombs

From Wikipedia

CU Food Not Bombs serves a FREE meal to anyone and everyone in Champaign's Westside Park, on the corner of State St. and University Ave., every Saturday at 5 pm. All are always welcome.

### FIRST PRINCIPLES

Food Not Bombs is an all-volunteer global movement that shares free vegetarian meals as a protest to war and poverty. Each chapter collects surplus food that would otherwise go to waste from grocery stores, bakeries and markets, sometimes incorporating dumpster diving, then prepares community meals which are served for free to anyone who is hungry. The central beliefs of the group are:

- If governments and corporations around the world spent as much time and energy on feeding people as they do on war, no one would go hungry.
- There is enough food in the world to feed everyone, but too much of it goes to waste needlessly, as a direct result of capitalism and militarism.
- Vegan food is both healthy and nonviolent.



CU Food Not Bombs offers free meal

Food Not Bombs works to call attention to poverty and homelessness in society by sharing food in public places and facilitating gatherings of poor and homeless people.

Anyone who wants to cook may cook, and anyone who wants to eat may eat. Food Not Bombs strives to include everyone.

### HISTORY

Food Not Bombs began in the early 1980s in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, a city adjacent to Boston, when a group of anti-nuclear activists, who were protesting the nearby

Seabrook power plant, began spray-painting the slogan "Money for food, not for bombs" around the city. The slogan was shortened to "Food Not Bombs", and it became the name of their group. Soon after, they decided to put their slogan into practice. At a meeting of wealthy bank executives who were financing nuclear power projects, the group showed up and started handing out free food outside to a crowd of three hundred homeless people. The action was so successful that the group began doing it on a regular basis, collecting surplus food from grocery stores and preparing it into meals.

In 1988, a second chapter of Food Not Bombs was formed in San Francisco. Nine volunteers were arrested on August 15, 1988. Mayor Art Agnos initiated the first confrontation by using riot police to shut down a Food Not Bombs serving at Golden Gate Park. By the end of the month city police had made 94 arrests. New groups started in Washington D.C., Vancouver, B.C., Long Beach, California and more than 10 other cities. The next summer police tried to drive the homeless from the city. Homeless people started a tent city across from City Hall and invited Food Not Bombs to provide food. Food Not Bombs moved onto Civic Center Plaza and started providing free vegetarian food 24/7 for the next twenty seven days until Agnos sent in the Riot Police driving everyone off the plaza. Conservative Mayor Frank Jordan succeeded Agnos and tension continued between Food Not Bombs and the Office of the Mayor. Jordan made over 700 felony arrests of Food Not Bombs members. With each wave of arrests the local group expanded. With crowds of hundreds of people at each serving, police action was difficult. Members of Food Not Bombs began videotaping police actions in 1989 and using the court system to try to undermine Police efforts.

### POLICE OPPOSITION

During the 1990s a number of Food Not Bombs groups faced opposition from local law enforcement, which dissipated after politicians began to publicly support the group. When volunteers with Boston Food Not Bombs were arrested, city council members came out and served food with the group to show their support. They were never arrested again. In the San Francisco election of 1995, mayoral candidate Willie Brown pledged to stop arresting members of Food Not Bombs. Brown won the election and the Police made only a few more arrests. Food Not Bombs co-founder Keith McHenry was arrested on June 27, 1997 for trying to bring food to a protest at the National Conference of Mayors. In part because of the media attention in San Francisco, chapters began springing up all over the country.



Champaign Park District and Police evict CU Food Not Bombs from Westside Park during 'Taste of Champaign'

Food Not Bombs grew throughout the 1990s, and held four international gatherings: in San Francisco in 1992 and 1995, in Atlanta in 1996, and in Philadelphia in 2005. The 1995 International Food Not Bombs Gathering took place in and around United Nations Plaza in San Francisco at the same time the world was celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (at a historic conference in San Francisco).

Chapters of Food Not Bombs were involved in the rise of the Anti-Globalization Movement in the late 1990s, leading to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation resistance in Vancouver in 1997; the June 18, 1999 International Carnival Against Capitalism; and the so called "Battle of Seattle" later that year, which shut down the World Trade Organization meetings. Food Not Bombs helped start the Low Watt FM Free Radio, the October 22nd No Police Brutality Day, and Homes Not Jails during the San Francisco days.

### FOOD NOT BOMBS SERVES A MEAL IN A PUBLIC PARK.

Today, there are more than 400 chapters of Food Not Bombs listed on the www.foodnotbombs.net website, with about half the chapters active outside the United States. Food Not Bombs has a loose structure: every chapter of Food Not Bombs embraces a few basic principles, and carries out the same sort of action, but every chapter is free to make its own decisions, based on the needs of its community. Likewise, every chapter of Food Not Bombs operates on consensus. Besides collecting and distributing food for free, many chapters of Food Not Bombs are involved in community anti-poverty, anti-war and pro-immigrant organizing, as well as other political causes.



# Afghanistan, a Beautiful Place Now Covered in Landmines

by Margaret Fitzpatrick



Urbana resident Margaret Fitzpatrick teaches at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois. This fall, she plans to begin her Ph.D. in educational policy studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

After 30 years, Champaign native and Gulf War veteran, Shaheen Shorish, still vividly recalls the blood-soaked Persian carpets prominently displayed on the lawns of the royal palace in Kabul in 1978. The perpetrators of the Soviet-backed coup d'état, that unseated recent royal usurper, Mohammad Daoud, and resulted in the slaughter of his entire family, displayed the proofs of their murderous actions with evident pride. In a matter of hours, Afghanistan had become a very unsafe place for everyone living there and the Shorish family was forced to flee. During the events leading up to the 1979 Soviet invasion, five-year-old Shaheen, her Michigan-born mother, her Afghan father, and her brother escaped on the last commercial flight ever to depart from the Kabul International Airport. They fled throughout Europe until they were at last able to return to the safety of their Champaign home.

In the years following the Soviet takeover, many members of the Shorish family's Tajik ethnic group campaigned to sound an international alarm about the globally strategic significance of the precariousness unfolding in Central Asia. After the Soviets were driven out of the region by U.S.-backed Mujahedeen guerilla warriors, the 1996 ascendance of the Taliban briefly seemed to many to be an improvement over the Soviet occupation. Tragically though, the harsh Taliban interpretation of Shariah (Islamic law) soon proved even more divisive and destructive than any previous tyranny. The Taliban's subsequent policies subjected the female half of Afghanistan's population to a reign of gender-based terror, unprecedented in the history of the region or the world. Educated Afghans, such as the Shorish family, did everything they could think of to alert the rest of the world to the misogynistic madness. But, Shorish says, "It was like someone screaming in space with no one listening, no one hearing."

"If the U.S. had been focused on the Taliban, we could have conceivably prevented 9/11, or some aspects of it," says Shorish. "If only the U.S. had understood sooner. . ." she trails off, her brow furrowed in thought.

The most famous Tajik to try to warn the pre-9/11 world of the dangers of militant fundamentalism was the late General Ahmad Shah Massoud, widely revered as "the lion of Panjshir" and credited by many with driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan, thus ending the Cold War in Central Asia. In a press conference televised from Paris in April of 2001, Massoud warned President Bush that if the United States and the West did nothing to rebuild Afghanistan and restore peace, "they would bear the consequences." It appears Massoud's warning fell on deaf ears. He was assassinated by al-Qaeda operatives on September 9, 2001, just two days before the Twin Towers toppled. Shorish surmises that one reason for the U.S. nonresponse to Massoud's pleas may have been because the U.S. was interested in building an oil pipeline through the region.

Shorish's aunt, Dr. Zeiba Shorish-Shamley, was in some ways more successful than Massoud in conveying her warnings to the West, and in obtaining help to fight the Taliban. Her hard-won success was in a small way attributable to the timely intervention of her Washington, D.C. hairdresser.

"It's funny how things get done in politics," Shorish says, recounting the chain of events that led to the Feminist Majority Foundation's assistance. Shorish says her

aunt was at her hairdresser's, complaining that she couldn't get anyone to pay attention to the increasing abuses of the Taliban. In particular, she was concerned that the United States was on the verge of acknowledging the Taliban as a government. This was when the hairdresser said, "Don't worry, I know someone who can help you." The next day the hairdresser spoke to another client, a politician who was concerned with international women's rights. Soon, the politician met Shorish's aunt and introduced her to Jay Leno's wife Mavis, and the Feminist Majority Foundation.

Subsequently, Dr. Shorish-Shamley testified before the United States Congress and the United Nations that rape is a war crime and that the violation of women's rights cannot be tolerated if any lasting peace is to be achieved. Building on the ideals of Dr. Shorish-Shamley and other international feminist scholars, the Feminist Majority Foundation recently launched a new international public educational campaign, exhorting President Obama, Vice President Biden and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton to stabilize Afghanistan and defeat terrorism by focusing on educating and defending the rights of women and girls, rather than by continuing to re-arm warlords.

"The way the Taliban treat women," Shorish says, "that is not part of Afghan history. That is not part of Islam."

Shorish further says that the impediment to gaining rights for Central Asian women is that they are largely unaware that they have rights to begin with. "If you're not Afghan . . . they're not going to listen to you. So the best way, if they're Muslim, is to say, 'You do have these rights according to the Qu'ran.' . . . The Taliban use religious nonsense to keep women down, so you have to use the Qu'ran to fight that," Shorish says.

Hailing from the ancient, cultured and prosperous city of Herat, Shorish says that members of the Tajik ethnic group to which the Shorish family belongs have always been vocal opponents of the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. With a centuries-old tradition of literature and learning, Shorish explains that the people of Herat were generally too well-educated to be drawn into the misogynistic and genocidal ideology espoused by the Taliban.

"The problem now is that so many people have been raised in a war zone," Shorish says. "They've been taken from their families and sent to Pakistan, where they have grown up in madrassahs, learning nothing but how to fight," and how to justify fighting by misquoting the Qu'ran, she says.

As much as Shorish endorses humanitarian aid for Afghanistan, she states emphatically, "Afghanistan needs to help itself from within. . . Women need to be educated. As soon as women are educated, they can start fighting. And they will. Afghan women are notorious for fighting for themselves and their families. But first they have to know they have rights. Then there will be no stopping them."

Despite the disappointments she has sustained from her father's ancestral homeland and from her own native United States, Shaheen Shorish is a remarkably calm, gentle and grateful woman with abiding tenderness and loyalty towards both America and Afghanistan.

"I'm always grateful to the United States. . ." she says. "It's my home. . . They let us back in, they facilitated our early re-entry (after the coup). . . Because of what I witnessed in Afghanistan, that violence, the lack of government, the sudden secrecy. . . I have always had a strong appreciation for this country's freedoms. I did want to give back and I did enlist in the Navy as my way of paying a debt and as my way of defending the Constitution. I know that does sound old fashioned, but it's something I really believe in."

Commencing July 24, 1990, Shorish began a tour of duty with Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 4 in Sicily, Italy. In early 1991 she was deployed to Bahrain for

Operation Desert Storm, a successful United Nations-led defense of the tiny Persian Gulf nation of Kuwait against an aggressive occupation by its much larger neighbor Iraq.

"I'd like to film a documentary on Afghanistan," Shorish says.

She also hopes to travel there soon, but "that does depend on the stability. . . It is definitely on my agenda, on my to-do list. . . I've not been able to go back since I was a child."

Shorish's final memories of Kabul are dark ones of the coup d'état as experienced by her five-year-old self. "My first memory would be the tank blocking traffic, the tank that appeared out of nowhere. . . my mom said, 'That's a tank.' We didn't know why it was there on the street near us. All hell broke loose and we ran back to our apartment. I remember bombs, gunfire and concussion bombs. Do you know what concussion bombs are?"

"Concussion bombs are set to explode in the air," she explains with an unnerving authority. "They shatter every plate of glass in the area, and they are meant to completely demoralize the population."

Shorish's parents, however, proceeded courageously. Back at the apartment, Shorish recalls, "Our mother covered us with a blanket and put us under a bed. . . Things were on fire everywhere. We had to stay away from windows." While this Michigan woman spent the next 30 plus violent hours keeping her two young children alive, Shorish says that her academic father spent a good portion of the time "speaking into an old reel-to-reel tape recorder, saying the date and what was happening. He had to document it. He needed to document it."

After the shelling ceased and they were finally able to leave the apartment, Shorish says she ventured out with her family to figure out what was happening. She reports that she then saw sights no five-year-old should ever have to see. "We saw so much bloodshed, we saw the bloody carpets, we saw pieces of people hanging from trees. . . Talking about it sounds overly dramatic, but we saw all of that. There were tanks everywhere. There was no glass."

She remembers seeing the courtyard where they had once played, emptied of children, all of the children either dead or having fled. She says that once they saw the bloody carpets and understood that a coup d'état had taken place, they knew they would have to flee, too.

"My parents made a smart decision to get out," Shorish says. "I don't think it mattered what a person's political leanings were at that moment, we were probably going to be killed if we stayed."

While Shorish will never forget this hellish interlude, she says she also remembers and misses many wonderful things about her father's birthplace. "I remember what Afghanistan was like and I feel the sense of loss. It was world-renowned for poetry. It was (part of) the Ancient Persian Empire. There is so much history there, such diverse cultures," she says. "I remember so much greenness, gigantic fruits, deer, honeysuckle. . . It is the land of Rumi, the land of the famous Sufis. . . It is a beautiful, beautiful place, now covered in landmines."

Shorish talks about how valued she felt as a child in Afghanistan, and how much her mother was respected just for being a mother. She says she misses all of that, adding, "I miss peace in Afghanistan more than anything else."



Shaheen Shorish in full Navy gear

## Get Involved with the *Public i*

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.



## U.S. Labor Against the War

By Al Kagan



Al Kagan was one of the original delegates to the founding meeting of USLAW. He is active in the UIUC Campus Faculty Association which is a local union member of USLAW.

*"We are living in an era in which the government has manipulated our nation's fear of terrorism to launch wars, destroy our economic security, undermine government services, erode our democratic rights and intensify racism, sexism, religious discrimination and divisions among working people."*

—From the U.S. Labor Against the War Mission Statement, 10/25/03

Since its founding in 2003, US Labor Against the War (USLAW) has been the most important labor union voice against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the Middle East in general. The organization's premise is simple: our country's serious social and economic problems cannot be solved without addressing US foreign policy and its consequences.

Although the organization was founded during the Bush Administration, the same concerns about the direction of our foreign policy continue under the Obama Administration. Unfortunately, allocating trillions of dollars for war and Wall Street bailouts is a bipartisan approach. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars continue, soldiers and civilians continue to die and be horribly wounded, people continue to be displaced all over the Middle East and elsewhere, and the US Congress continues the funding.

After eight years of the Bush Administration, President Obama seemed like a breath of fresh air. Many in the anti-war movement had grown tired and disheartened after so many years of war with no obvious end in sight. Barack Obama and many Democrats were elected on a hopeful and anti-war platform. But although the Obama Administration has promised to end the Iraq War, very few US troops have come home. President Obama has no plans to fully withdraw; rather there are plans to leave military bases with thousands of US troops. For Afghanistan, the picture is even more grim since Obama has already sent

20,000 more troops, and we can expect more deployments in the future. Afghanistan could easily be Obama's Vietnam. The Soviet Union tried and failed to occupy that country, as did other empires throughout history. The US is not going to win in either Iraq or Afghanistan. The troops will come home sooner or later.

Given these realities, it is obvious that USLAW is still profoundly important. And indeed, the organization has continued to grow. As of May 2009, there are 195 affiliates including national and regional organizations, central labor bodies, large and small local unions, allied labor organizations, ad hoc labor anti-war groups, and workers' centers. USLAW has grown from 149 organizations in 2006 to 195 today, which is an increase of about 31%. Locally, the Campus Faculty Association (formerly the Union of Professional Employees) is a founding member, and two delegates participated in its founding meeting in Chicago. Illinois is well represented with 14 affiliates as of 2008. The parent unions with the most affiliates nationally are AFT, AFSCME, and SEIU.

What does USLAW propose to do, given the grave and complex situation in which we now find ourselves? USLAW advocates a just foreign policy, diplomacy rather than war, global social and economic justice, an end to all US occupations with reconstruction of war-devastated countries, redirecting military funds to the needs of working families, supporting our troops by bringing them home, protecting worker's rights and the human rights of all, and solidarity with workers around the world. In addition, USLAW has worked for justice and organized for change in Iraq and here at home by sending two delegations to Iraq to investigate workers conditions, sponsoring US tours for Iraqi labor leaders, working against the privatization of Iraqi oil, developing a great website resource for activists (<http://www.uslaboragainstarwar.org>), and getting the AFL-CIO to adopt a resolution against the Iraq War.

Is there hope to actually change US policy? Many activists threw themselves into electing Obama and other Democrats. The current Administration owes its election to anti-war voters. Obama would have never won so many primaries unless he successfully differentiated himself from the other candidates through his anti-war rhetoric. Other Democrats did the same for national, state, and local offices. There is a temptation to become tired, frustrated and disillusioned when it appears that Obama is just con-

tinuing the Bush policies with a different public relations façade. But it is up to us to remind them that they were elected for a reason, and the growth of USLAW shows that many are determined to change US foreign policy no matter how long it takes and no matter who is in office in Washington. In fact, we have an opening to do so.

Obama likes to talk about change. We can only get real change by adopting a just foreign policy and bringing the troops home. Organizations like US Labor Against the War are struggling to bring positive change to our country as soon as possible. Those in power must remember that unions still represent millions of workers. A growing number of labor organizations envision a new foreign policy, and they are organizing to change the world.

### UCIMC at American Library Association Conference

The UCIMC will host a table at the 17th annual Alternative Media Reception, Monday July 13th from 7-10PM at Experimental Station, 6100 S. Blackstone Ave., Chicago. Sponsored by the Alternative Media Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) of the American Library Association (ALA), the Alternative Media Reception is an event that brings together small and independent publishers with progressive librarians from around the country. The UCIMC will have a small display highlighting media produced by our working groups, IMC merchandise for sale, and information about donating to our upcoming membership and donation drive.

#### About the Social Responsibility Round Table

SRRT is a unit within the American Library Association. It works to make ALA more democratic and to establish progressive priorities not only for the Association, but also for the entire profession. Concern for human and economic rights was an important element in the founding of SRRT and remains an urgent concern today. SRRT believes that libraries and librarians must recognize and help solve social problems and inequities in order to carry out their mandate to work for the common good and bolster democracy.

## Turkish Teacher Union Activists Arrested

By Antonia Darder



Antonia Darder is a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is long-time Puerto Rican activist-scholar involved in issues related to education, language, immigrant, workers, and women's rights.

When I arrived to Ankara, Turkey on Friday May 29 to speak at an international conference sponsored by the Teachers Union, *Egitim Sen*, I was informed that police forces had launched operations against their parent union, KESK's (the confederation of Public Employee's Union) head office in Ankara, as well as in local branches in Izmir, Istanbul, Van and Manisa.

Thirty-four members of *Egitim Sen* were arrested on May 28, along with several members from the administrative boards of local branches, a member of the executive board, and Gulcin Isbert, the Women's Secretary of *Egitim Sen*. Songul Morsumbul, Women's Secretary of KESK, the confeder-

ation of Public Employee's Unions, was also taken into custody. In addition, documents and computers were seized by the police, without any reason given for this operation.

Education International (EI), the world's largest Global Union Federation and the only union representing education workers in every corner of the globe, condemned the arrests. EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen noted that "The harassment and detention of trade union leaders and activists because of their legitimate democratic activities are serious violations of international human rights law, including the International Labor Organization Convention 87 on freedom of association, which Turkey ratified in 1993." He further asserted that "The rights of workers' organizations can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against both leaders and members, and it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that this principle is respected."

Turkish workers staged a mass demonstration in the downtown square in Ankara on Saturday May 30 in response to the

arrests, denouncing police actions and calling for the immediate release of their union comrades. The fact that all the union members arrested were Kurdish and that there were unofficial reports that the arrests were the result of "suspicion of terrorist connections" was cause for grave concern among the *Egitim Sen* and KESK leadership.

Moreover, given historical tensions in the region and past repression of the Kurdish People's Party (PKK) and other Kurdish political organizations by the Turkish government, there are concerns that the arrest of these Kurdish union members might signal a renewed wave of repression against Kurdish self-determination.

According to Deniz Yildirim, *Egitim Sen*'s International Relations Coordinator, half of those arrested have been released by



KESK rallies in support of arrested public sector unionists

the local courts. Unfortunately, pursuant to objections raised by the local prosecutor to this decision, eight members including the Women Secretary of *Egitim Sen* and the Women Secretary of KESK were sentenced to prison. Currently, 24 Kurdish unionists still remain in custody.