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The Public i

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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.

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The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The U.S. Signed this Convention in 1980 but the Senate never ratified it.

ARTICLE 11 [CONCERNING WOMEN'S LABOR RIGHTS]

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
 - (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
 - (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
 - (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
 - (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
 - (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;
 - (f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.
2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:
 - (a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;
 - (b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;
 - (c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;
 - (d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.
3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

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Lilly Ledbetter, Hilda Solis, and *The Employee Free Choice Act*

By Helena Worthen



Helena Worthen, novelist and playwright, became active in her American Federation of Teachers local in California and pursued that involvement in workers' rights into a position as Associate Clinical Professor of Labor Education in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois.

THAT THE EARNING POWER OF A WOMAN on the job is less than a man's is pretty general knowledge. Right now, women earn about 78 cents for every dollar a man earns. The Institute for Women's Policy Research calculates that this adds up to \$210,000 less for women over a 35-year, full-time work life. Obviously, this impacts what a woman can give her children, to say nothing of retirement security. The bill that President Obama signed on January 27, the *Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act*, addresses a particularly cruel 2007 decision by the Supreme Court that said the deadline for filing a charge of discrimination in pay is 180 days from the first paycheck. Ledbetter didn't even realize that the men around her at Goodyear were making more than she was until she'd received 19 years worth of such paychecks. Now, the deadline is 180 days from each discriminatory paycheck; every new paycheck is a new act of discrimination.

The comparison between men's and women's wages matches women with full-time jobs to wages of men with full-time jobs. Full-time work is getting more rare. What replaces full time jobs is part-time jobs, mostly in retail,



Oh, so that explains the difference in our salaries!

service, and care work like child care and home care. A hard-to-measure number of these jobs drop into the informal economy. People get paid in cash, nothing is in writing, no payroll taxes get taken out and there's no workers' comp, to say nothing of benefits.

You may have heard people say, "The best economic stimulus is a union." This is especially true for women. In simple terms of dollars, women in unions make a median \$809 per week compared to non-union women who make \$615.

But many people in unions will say that it's not actually the money that is most important—it's that fuzzy thing called 'a voice.' If you have a union, you have representation, meaning that it's someone's job to take your side and understand your experience of your job, and, if it comes to that, defend you and if possible protect you. This means protecting you against not just unfair practices at work but also more general threats, like unsafe working conditions including overwork or exhaustion and discrimination. For women who may not have had practice successfully defending themselves, the experience of representation can come as a revelation. This experience is often sufficiently profound to make an otherwise uninvolved union member decide to become an activist.

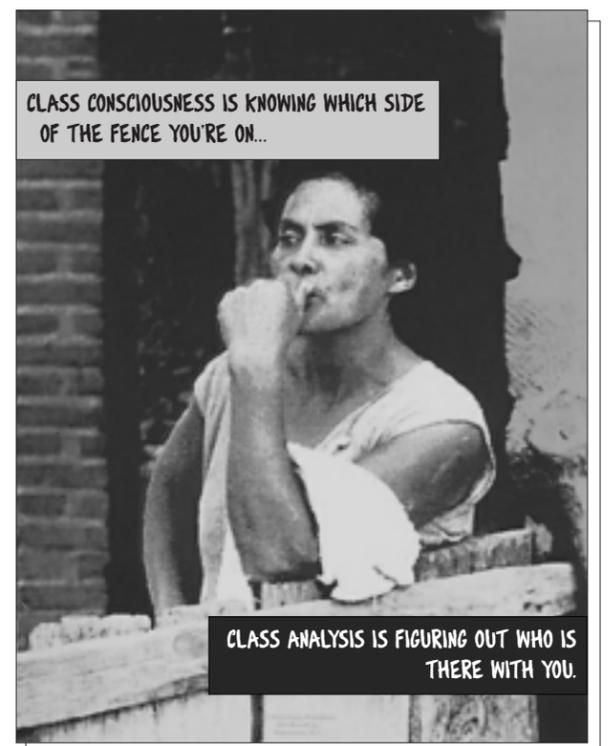
In fact, this experience is often cited by women who tell the story of how they got involved in their unions. They'll tell the story of how a problem at work developed, became complex, became something they couldn't resolve themselves and eventually brought them into conflict with their employer. That moment of confrontation is also a moment of clarity.

In my experience as a labor educator, many such problems have to do with attendance—missing work to take a child to the doctor, taking a phone call at work from a family member, or sometimes the exhaustion that comes from doing too much overtime. An example that comes to mind right away is a woman who cleaned office buildings at one site from 11PM to 4AM, then went home and slept for 2 hours, got up and sent the kids to school and then went and cleaned a different building—for the same cleaning company!—from 9AM to 2PM. This insane schedule allowed her to see her kids at breakfast and dinner, but it was killing her. One day she fell asleep on the job and her employer, in the process of disciplining her, discovered that she was actually working two different jobs. They accused her of lying and fired her. Luckily, she had a union representative who not only got her job back but got her work consolidated into one job plus back pay for the overtime she had been doing. The money was nice, she reported, but what really mattered was that someone was on her side.

So why doesn't everyone form unions? Despite a recent study by the AFL-CIO that said that 78 percent of people favor "legislation that would generally make it easier for workers to bargain with their employers for better wages, benefits, and working conditions," only 7% of private sector and 12% of public sector workers are in unions. One reason is fear. Companies fire people who try to organize unions. A good report on this put out by Human Rights Watch is called *Unfair Advantage*. For many people, especially these days, a bad job is better than no job.

Of course, the official policy of the United States, since 1935, has been that unions are a good thing. Here is the actual language of the law, the *National Labor Relations Act*.

It is declared to be the policy of the United States to "eliminate the causes of certain substantial obstructions to the free flow of commerce and to mitigate and eliminate these obstructions when they have occurred by encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining and by protecting the exercise by workers of full freedom of



association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment or other mutual aid or protection."

That law is still in effect—although you'd never know it. Employers violate the spirit of this law, as well as its letter, all the time. One of the problems is that although the NLRA says that employers and unions have to negotiate "in good faith," nothing forces them to do so. There is no effective process and no penalties worth mentioning.

But another proposed bill, the *Employee Free Choice Act*, is in Congress right now. Passing it was part of Obama's platform, and our newly confirmed Head of the Department of Labor, Hilda Solis, is in support of it. It allows for majority sign-up, meaning that if a majority of the workers sign cards saying that they want a union, they get a union, period. Perhaps more important, it provides for mediation followed by binding arbitration so that workers, who in the past have sometimes gone years with a union but no contract (remember the Heartland Human Services workers in Effingham—mostly women), will get a contract within 120 days. Perhaps most potently, it allows for up to \$20,000 in penalties per violation for things like firing workers for union activity—plus triple back pay for any worker so fired.

Stay tuned. If the *Employee Free Choice Act* passes, we're likely to be looking at a very different world of work, especially for women.

Institute for Women's Policy Research, <http://www.iwpr.org/Media/InTheNews.htm#Jan29>
Other figures from www.cpgwi.org/gradereport.pdf and www.afl-cio.org

Unfair Advantage is at <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2000/uslabor/>



Champaign County Board Approves Committee to Study Jury Selection

THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT VICTORY Thursday night, February 19, 2008, for those fighting for reform of the criminal justice system in Champaign County. By a unanimous vote, the Champaign County Board appointed the Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection.

The committee, made up of citizens, board members, and local criminal justice officials, is intended to address the racial disparities documented to exist in Champaign County. For several years the Courtwatch study conducted by the League of Women Voters has shown that while African Americans make up 56% of defendants, they represent 7% of the jury pool.

The 16 members of the committee include: Pius Weibel, Matt Gladney, Presiding Judge Thomas Difanis, State's Attorney Julia Rietz, head Public Defender Randall Rosenbaum, Courts Administrator Roger Holland, Joan Miller of the League of Women Voters, Aaron Ammons, Patricia Avery, William Brown, Lorraine Cowart, Brian Dolinar, Deloris Henry, Barbara Kessel, Jenny Putman, and Patrick Thompson.

While speaking in support of the Advisory Committee, County Board member Steve Beckett also defended his proposal to cut two committees the Transportation Committee and the Justice and Social Services Committee, the very committee that oversees the jury Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection. This was a cost cutting measure that had to be made in tough economic times, he claimed.

Belden Fields expressed his shock over the proposed cuts. He pointed out that the chairs of both the committees, Matt Gladney and Lorraine Cowart, are minorities and this would send the wrong message to African Americans.

I spoke to remind the County Board of the recent deaths in the county jail. Without another check on the criminal justice system, there is the prospect of a law suit that could drain the county of money for legal defense or a costly settlement. There is currently a law suit pending for the death of Janet Hahn in 2007, claiming that she received poor medical treatment at the Champaign County jail for her diabetes and died as a result.

Beckett responded by saying that members of the public were "inadvertently misrepresenting" his proposal. In collaboration with the League of Women Voters, Beckett also a Law Professor at the University of Illinois provided students to help conduct the Courtwatch study. Now that his own study has shown that gross inequalities exist in the jury selection process, he has been forced to address the issue.

Already, the right-wing *News-Gazette* has editorialized against the Citizens Committee, commenting that the "extreme views" of some of its members would keep them from working in a "cooperative fashion" (2/26/09). In attempt to further slander the committee, the newspaper brought up that some of its members had been "charged or currently face criminal charges in Champaign County."

It is now up to the Citizens Committee to find out a way to ensure that defendants will have a "jury of one's peers."

A Mother's Trust

By Kimberlie Kranich



"I TRUST YOU, KIM, and there's a lot that goes with that."

That was the response I received from Karen*, the mother of the kids I take with me on adventures.

These are the same kids who sleep over at my house, who cook meals with me, who dance joyfully to gospel and blues and 80s music, who've met my girlfriend and with whom I have kept in touch since they moved away a few years ago from the neighborhood we shared.

I called Karen last week and told her that something was bothering me. I was worried that I might have betrayed her trust in me by posting photos and videos of the kids and me on our outings on my blog without directly asking for her permission.

I called Karen the same day I received an email from some friends of mine who asked me to remove some video I had posted of them dancing on You Tube. I had sent them the link, and although they loved the video, they did not want it made public and asked me to remove it. I did and apologized for not asking them in the first place. I could have made the video private and only given them access to it but for some reason I did not. And although their names were not on the video and the video had only been viewed 14 times, making it likely that no one but them and me had actually viewed it, that wasn't the point. I had not asked. I want to be a friend they can trust. And this was not a good way to keep their trust.

So after this experience, I decided not to assume anything. I decided not to take any chances on betraying Karen's trust in me with her children. On numerous occasions I have taken pictures of the kids on our excursions and have made photo albums and given them to Karen. A week ago, I had printed out one of my blog posts about an adventure with the kids and me and gave it to her. Still, I never actually asked if I could post the video and pictures I took of the kids on-line.

I called Karen and told her of my concern and why it was bothering me and offered to show her all of my blog postings that included pictures and video of the children and said that I would remove any and all of them if she did not approve.

I told her that I asked my brothers' permission before posting video and photos of my nieces and nephew and should have asked her permission. Karen listened patiently as I explained all of this.

Her response was, "I trust you with my kids. And there's a lot that goes with that. My kids really care about you."

I love these kids. I know that the love that's in me would move through me in an instant to remove them from harm's way even if it cost me my own life.

I had to choke back tears of joy. I recognized in her words the profound love that is part of trust and I recognized how both her children and I were the recipients of her trust and love. Had this happened a few years ago, I might have been too absorbed in my own relief to receive what she was offering me. Not this day. I was a sponge sponging up her deep love for her children and her trust in them that led to her trust in me.

Other people's children have been a significant part of my life since I started babysitting in the 7th grade. I have an intuitive wisdom about how to be with them that I believe is a gift from God. I often prefer the company of children and old souls. My grandparents were and are three of the people I have loved most dearly.

Yet I can worry about the potential judgments of adults against me because of racial differences, and even more so, because of my sexual orientation and all of the stereotypes that go along with it. Now that I have a girlfriend, it is hard not to see the love and closeness we express for each other.

And it is deeper than that. I weep inside every time Karen tells me that she trusts her children's intuition about people. It simultaneously taps in me an unhealed sadness from my own childhood and a profound joy that these children have their mother's trust.

I have their mother's trust, too, and what a profoundly loving gift that is. Thank you.

*Karen is not her real name.

IMCFest 2009 & the Boneyard Arts Festival, April 17-19

At the IMC

IMC Fest 2009 is a celebration of nearly a decade of the independent media movement in the twin city area. The festival will be composed of almost 30 of the areas favorite performers from various genres, an art show, local speakers, belly dancers, fire spinning, improv, and much more. Preliminary schedule available at: <http://www.imcfest.org/schedule-events>.

What's more, this year's fest will be happening in conjunction with the Boneyard Arts Festival (<http://www.40north.org/events/festival.html>) Several local artists will have work on display during the festival.

Recommended Blog

There is now a blog devoted to labor and the economic crisis by *Public i* contributor John Reimann. You can read his blog at: www.iww.org/en/blog/1411

Pages to Pennies Spring Book Sale April 3-5

IMC Building (Downtown Urbana Post Office)

Friday 4 - 8 pm

Saturday 9 am - 6 pm

Sunday 11am - 2:30 pm

(bag sale 1- 2:30 Sunday)



SHARE A MEAL



WITH COMMUNITY SHARES

On Tuesday, March 10, 2009, you can support the UCIMC and other Champaign-Urbana non-profit organizations by enjoying a meal with family and friends. On that day, participating restaurants in Champaign-Urbana will donate a portion of their proceeds to support our work and the work of other non-profits in our community. Pledge cards provided at each restaurant will allow you to direct a portion of the proceeds to the UCIMC or any Community Shares of Illinois member organization of your choice.

So call today and make your reservations! It's an easy way to make a difference and to support valuable non-profits serving local community needs.

The UCIMC will host:

Siam Terrace 367-8424 Dinner
212 W Main, Urbana

Other participating restaurants include:

Luna 356-5862 Lunch and Dinner
116 N Chestnut, Champaign

Kennedy's 384-8111 Lunch and Dinner
2560 Stone Creek, Urbana

For more information, visit <http://www.share-a-meal.org> or email nicole@ucimc.org

'Unofficial' Is Back, Like a 'Hungry Ghost'

By Andrew O'Baoill



FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, I've run what I've termed, tongue-in-cheek, a one-man campaign against the 'Unofficial St. Patrick's Day' event. In reality, no campaign can be a one-person affair; if it is, you're already losing. I've received financial support from the University (who

have their own motives). More significantly, I've had the moral support and intellectual guidance of my colleagues across a range of social and political movements here in the community and further afield which has reassured me that my sense of pain and outrage is valid and reasonable. I've, thus, come to understand how stereotyping disempowers those objectified. Most importantly, I've come to realize the ways in which this issue is similar to challenges faced by other ethnic and cultural groups, as well as the important ways in which it differs.

Most of the time, when we see criticism of 'Unofficial,' it is in terms of the danger binge-drinking represents to those engaged in it, or annoyance at these uncouth, undisciplined students, interfering with the regular operations of the university and the community. While I too am concerned about any physical endangerment, these aspects have never been my primary concern. The notion of a Fools' Day, a chance to break free of the rules and strictures of day-to-day life, is an old one, and can provide an opportunity to up-end social norms, representing, on the face of it, the social mobility and practical critique of authority we might otherwise desire. University of Illinois students, though, are not generally among the most disadvantaged in our society. To what extent is this an example of the already-privileged exerting that privilege to exempt themselves from the rules that bind others? Is the city's timid response based on the fact that this event's main promoter is a prominent local businessman?"

Reflecting on 'Unofficial' as an example of cultural stereotyping at the University, I have found myself doing so in the shadow of that most blatant example of racism and cultural appropriation, the "Chief." As I write this, window displays in campus-town stores juxtapose these two "traditions" in a disturbing montage of arrogance and presumptuous racism. At the same time, it is more than a truism to note that there are important differences between the two acts of appropriation. The expansionist history of the United States involved the killing of many Native Americans, as well as the destruction of much Native American culture, whereas that same expansion provided many opportunities for Irish immigrants. There are few individuals on campus who identify as having Native ancestry, while many individuals claim at least some Irish ancestry. The 'Chief' was officially sanctioned as a symbol of this campus, while university authorities have taken various steps to discourage and suppress 'Unofficial' events.

These points speak to the special context of the 'Chief' and suggest why it became such an important issue on this campus. None of the points, however, negate the problematic nature of the Unofficial event, such as it is. I have learnt, too, that it is important to avoid turning these experiences into a competition, where a group 'wins' by being more put upon—this benefits nobody, and prevents us from learning from the common ways in which different forms of stereotyping, appropriation, and prejudice each act to erase the humanity of individuals and groups.

Further, as is so often the case, the so-called mitigating factors of the 'Unofficial' event lose their sheen when examined in any detail. I've had many people claim "I'm Irish too" as a defense for some prejudicial remark. These people are, almost invariably, many generations removed from their immigrant ancestors. They don't speak with an Irish accent, and, rarely if ever, practice any Irish customs.

Their Irishness is a cloak to be put on or taken off as convenience dictates, and is generally musty from lack of use, lying forgotten in a dark closet of the mind until pulled out with a rhetorical flourish.

I'm proud of my heritage, of Irish literary culture and scientific accomplishments. I'm happy when someone's questions allow me to boast about our beautiful landscapes. I'm glad that many people are able to feel pride in a connection, however tenuous, to my country and my people. But it would be more than charitable to describe a one-dimensional identification of Irish culture with drinking as tokenism.

We can quibble over the reasons for this stereotype. Many will point to the role played by advertising campaigns, most notably that of Guinness. Perhaps less well-known is the history of imagery of the Irish—how we have so often been portrayed as sub-human, irrational, not in control of our actions. While being seen as poets and raconteurs is, on one level, a neat reclamation (a positive twist on decidedly negative prejudices), on another level, it traps us within the bounds of those same images.

In the case of 'Unofficial,' we have an event created and promoted by bar owners, for commercial purposes, which further reduces *Irishness* to a single concept: "Drink until you're Irish," say the T-shirts; "Unofficially wasted." Any sense of reclamation undone, the implications—never subtle enough to be connotations—are painful, upsetting.

And so, it's helpful—nay, important, necessary—to have the tools of critical reflection, and bonds of fellowship with those who can engage us in dialogue. I'm grateful, therefore, for my fellow activists who have assisted me in my personal and intellectual growth, providing emotional support and enabling me to engage productively with this issue.

Tuition Waiver Proposals Scrapped In Face of Grad Student Protests

By Kerry Pimblott



OVER THE PAST MONTH, graduate students at the University of Illinois have engaged in a concerted struggle to halt proposed changes to the campus tuition waiver policy. Under the current system, graduate employees working between 10 and 26 hours per week automatically receive a tuition waiver. However, at a labor-management meeting in January, the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO)—a union representing 2,700 graduate workers across campus—was made privy to a series of recommendations developed by University administrators aimed at radically transforming the manner in which tuition waivers are distributed.

Under the new recommendations, graduate students on 25% appointments (10hrs/week) would no longer be eligible for a tuition waiver and the minimum tuition generating appointment would be fixed at 33% (13hrs/week). Deans of schools and colleges would also be empowered to impose caps on the total number of assistantships that departments could offer. In addition, private donors and corporations that fund research positions would be

expected to cover the cost of graduate employee tuition in addition to salaries. Finally, students in professional degree and terminal Master's programs would be barred from attaining waiver-generating appointments altogether.

If implemented, these recommendations threatened devastating consequences for the quality and accessibility of education at the University of Illinois. Over six hundred graduate employees currently hold assistantships of less than 33% and would be severely impacted by any effort to eliminate tuition waivers. Cash-strapped departments—particularly in the Fine and Applied Arts—would be forced to either continue offering 25% assistantships without a tuition waiver or increase their basic tuition-generating appointment to 33%, resulting in an overall decline in the total number of positions offered. For graduate employees who rely upon the availability of assistantships as their main source of income, these changes would put their continued presence at the University in serious jeopardy. To make matters worse, decreasing the total number of assistantships would result in larger class sizes and workloads for faculty and graduate employees, undermining the overall excellence of undergraduate instruction at the University.

In fields like Social Work and Library and Information Science, graduate employees were particularly concerned about the recommendation that students in terminal Masters and professional degree programs be prohibited from attaining tuition waivers altogether. Without access to waiver-generating appointments, the cost of graduate study in these fields would skyrocket, forcing students to pay out-of-pocket or leave the program. Inevitably, in all of these cases, working-class students and people of color would be disproportionately impacted with advanced degrees becoming the preserve of the wealthy few—a clear contradiction of the University's supposed land-grant mission and diversity initiatives.

With these concerns in mind, graduate employees across campus mobilized to challenge the recommenda-



tions and demand a voice in the decision-making process. Within a matter of days, over 1,000 people had joined a Facebook group devoted to counteracting the proposed changes. Through the site, graduate students were able to share information about the recommendations and their potential impact on specific departments. Students began contacting Department Heads, Deans, and administrators en-masse, demanding accountability and greater transparency. Elected officials from the Graduate and Professional Affairs Committee held administrators' feet to the fire by raising the concerns of their peers in various venues. Concerned faculty—many of whom were learning about the recommendations for the first time—also began expressing their fears about the unforeseen consequences of implementing such proposals in departments that are already underfunded and overextended.

These organizing efforts converged in a public forum facilitated by the GEO on February 11th at the YMCA. Over

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The Objectification of Women In War Zones

By Evelyne Accad

"Children here find refuge in their hopes to die. The fact that death is equated to life is horrifying me. How are we going to deal with this generation in the future, how can we talk about life?"

—Message from Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, working in the Palestinian Balata camp during the Israeli raids, March 2002

THIS QUOTE FROM AN EMAIL MESSAGE I received from Nadera, an extraordinary woman I met in Istanbul several years ago, who works with and for women in Israel and Palestine, very much sums up the place we have reached in our present world: millions of children around the world hope to die, their lives offer them only despair, injustices are the order of the day... The situation in the Middle East, which has been left to fester since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 continues to degenerate. It led to the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 by Israel and to the subsequent massacres of Sabra and Shatila in the Palestinian camps that left upwards of 2,000 Lebanese and Palestinian civilians dead, women raped, children massacred. Another war against Lebanon and the Hezbollah by Israel took place in 2006 and seemed like a repetition of all the horrors that had taken place previously. Women in war zones pay the highest tribute to the violence that prevails. How can it go on like this? How can we go on living in such a world?

As I watch the news from year to year, month to month, the tanks and heavy artillery against the major cities of Palestine, against the camps and the civilians, I am reminded of so many war events that stuck in my memory: 1991, the first air raids of the US forces against Iraq, 1982, summer in Beirut, my sister in West Beirut, spending most of her nights in the shelter, Israel bombarding by air, land and sea, civilian targets, an urban center, and innocent victims, most nights filled with the sounds of shells crushing, detonating, burning, with the Beirut sky going up in fires, flames, explosions and lights, the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian camps, the bodies of women, children, old people, young people, their throats slit, their stomachs open, blood flowing in the earth, holocaust repeated by the victims of the holocaust. And then Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon again, and all the other places on our poor earth, plagued by our Post-Modern world violence, places it would be too long to enumerate. The problems have reached proportions beyond words. Today, I feel a sense of urgency and doom I had not felt then.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the situation which has considerably deteriorated over the last few months is in a state of chaos and degradation beyond words and women's condition is one of utter desolation.

In a series of extraordinary reports, the latest published in July, Human Rights Watch has documented atrocities "committed by gunmen and warlords who were propelled into power by the United States and its coalition partners after the Taliban fell in 2001" and who have "essentially hijacked the country".

The report describes army and police troops controlled by the warlords kidnapping villagers with impunity and holding them for ransom in unofficial prisons; the widespread rape of women, girls and boys; routine extortion, robbery and arbitrary murder. Girls' schools are burned down.

"Because the soldiers are targeting women and girls," the report says, "many are staying indoors, making it impossible for them to attend school [or] go to work."

"Two girls who went to school without their burqas were killed and their dead bodies were put in front of their houses," she said. "Last month, 35 women jumped into a river along with their children and died, just to save themselves from commanders on a rampage of rape. That is Afghanistan today; the Taliban and the warlords of the Northern Alliance are two faces of the same coin.

Following the occupation of Iraq, no one sees or hears voices or faces of Iraqi women, almost nobody in the mainstream media talks about the raping of Iraqi women following the occupation, and no one talks about violence against women in Iraq after Saddam. Ironically, faces and stories of women were revealed when needed in order to serve the state apparatus. The structural discrimination, double standard, and favoritism to Israel has kept separate the continued violence against Palestinian women and

Palestinian people, camouflaging their historical and philosophical underpinning.

The best example of the manipulation of 'woman object' through power is the case of Afghanistan. The Taliban regime, extremely repressive towards women, was put into place with the support of the USA in their struggle against the USSR. Subsequently, the war of Afghanistan, committed to fighting Al-Qaida's "terrorism," all of a sudden saw itself invested with another objective, that of the liberation of the Afghan woman oppressed by an obscurantist Islam. The choice of this objective was above all meant to win "enlightened" world opinion. No sooner had the victory been won than the war objective was forgotten and a regime strongly and classically patriarchal, just as repressive towards women, was put into place without any qualms.

This betrayal is all the more scandalous because the emancipation of women in Afghanistan has a long history. Afghanistan is the space for a patriarchy with very strict, rigorous norms; at the beginning of the twenties, under the influence of a reformist king and a few intellectuals, legislation was adopted which, in all of Islam, was the most progressive in terms of women's liberation. This reform provoked a reactionary revolt in 1924 led by clerics, then the uprising of 1928, followed by the king's abdication. There is, without a doubt, an ancient struggle for the emancipation of women in Afghanistan, which was picked up by the communist regime in the eighties; and the USSR intervention in Afghanistan covered itself with the same excuse. Reaction to this emancipation started with the Mujahedines in 1992-96, and continued with the Taliban, supported by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but also by the USA. The politics of the Taliban has been violently anti-feminist and anti-women, especially after they seized power in 1996.

Other connections to be made when one talks about the present world situation, globalization, women living in war zones, terrorism, etc., are the women who die from ill-treatment or murder by men every year in the US. It amounts to more victims than there were on 9/11, even though this continuous massacre is not considered war. Violence perpetrated against women by men, an international phenomenon, is not considered a violation of human world ethics, even though it is a war which has gone on for centuries. The reason given is that such violence has been lost in the sands of time. Today we ought to consider the terror committed against women on a world scale as a violation of international law, a war against humanity. (MacKinnon)

Women become objects which power manipulates on the political scene. This manipulation can take various forms (social, legal, symbolic, etc.), and follow multiple objectives. It can try to obtain political support from the population itself being manipulated (here meaning women), or the support from other sectors of public opinion (men for example). In past decades, several authoritarian regimes have adopted political positions favorable to women in order to bring them over to their side, while repressing 'political' opinion expressed mostly from the male side of the population.

The cause of women tends to become today, and this is very remarkable, one of the main ideological values of the institutions of Empire. One can see it in the politics of the United States, but also in other institutions that call themselves international. Globalization as it is understood by imperial economic organizations (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc.), but also the United Nations) tends to, with the best intentions in the world, manipulate women just as it manipulates the poor. Women are made to think that no matter how weak or poor, everyone can consume and acquire needed goods with whatever means they have—in other words, with whatever price they must pay for such transformation, i.e. additional impoverishment. This is one of the worst aspects of globalization in its frightening paradoxes (see Jeanne Bisilliat, 2003). The ideology of globalization conceives women as the most open to the myth of consumerism, the central myth of the American way of life. Under this ideology, women become phantasmatically invested with the capacity to transform societies, to become the defenders of Western values and civilization. In contrast, Islam, (as formerly Communism) reputed to

be masculine in their attributes, are considered to be poles of resistance to "modernity."

The main target of the women's political movement today is the masculine management of the world, the will and efforts to militarize to the extreme, and to promote everything that is military. The militarization of any approach to problems within civil society (that of drugs for example), means that women's voices are reduced to silence.

Evelyne Accad is an Emerita Professor of French at the U of I and a native of Lebanon.

The Library Loses a Patron.

By Anne Phillips, a Librarian at the Urbana Free Library

A regular user of The Urbana Free Library died last week. We weren't surprised when the first notice appeared in the paper – we knew she had been ill and we had not heard from her recently, whereas once she had been one of our most persistent callers. Though I had spoken with her so many times, I knew very little of her story and was thus anxious to see the full obituary.

That came the next day. Just one sentence had been added: There will be no services.

Our relationship with this woman was not all sunshine. She was often querulous and impatient; she frequently asked for telephone numbers and had an aggravating habit of quickly losing the slips of paper that she wrote them down on. I know I'm not the only staff member whose heart sometimes sank upon hearing her voice. Still, we actually like to serve her: We're happy to be at a resource for those who seem to lack them. We knew she was often alone and as the calls started coming from a hospital room as often as from her home, we knew her health was deteriorating. A note of fear crept into her voice. She always said thank you and sometimes called me "dear."

The last time I heard her voice it was close to Christmas and she called to arrange pick-up of a gift she had for our Homebound Services Coordinator. It was, she assured me, a wonderful gift, a gift worth a special trip.

We're very protective of our patrons here; their right to privacy is paramount. But this woman's story has already been lost. Let us at least give her a name:

Bettina Chapman, 1937–2009
Rest in Peace

Erma Bridgewater



On February 26, 2009, Erma Bridgewater was the recipient of the Distinguished Community Services Award given to her at a Black History Month event held by the Muslim American Society. Born in 1913, Erma graduated

from the University of Illinois with a degree in sociology and was Director of the Douglas Community Center for 24 years. She remains an active volunteer.

The night's events also included talks by Carol Ammons and keynote speaker Imam Johari Abelmalek, and a performance by Ron Hanif Bridgewater and his jazz band.



The History and Significance of Women's Achievements In Sports

By Neil Parthun



WHEN DISCUSSING THE HISTORY of the women's movement and its achievements, people often forget the contributions of sports and women athletes to the social and political emancipation of women. Sport was and remains a way for women to achieve positive life skills, ensure physical health, and rebel against oppression.

From the late 1800s, sport was a way for women to gain a measure of freedom in a society that greatly inhibited their social choices. Of course, the advent of women emancipating themselves through sport was very harshly criticized by the male dominated society. For instance, the 1878 edition of the *American Christian Review* showed a diagrammed downfall for any woman who engaged in croquet.

1. A social party
2. Social and play party
3. Croquet party
4. Picnic and croquet party
5. Picnic, croquet and dance
6. Absence from church
7. Imprudent or immoral conduct
8. Exclusion from the church
9. A runaway match (more croquet)
10. Poverty and discontent
11. Shame and disgrace
12. Ruin

Many women saw sport as directly intertwined with the growing suffrage movement. The activity that these women saw as their means to establish some freedom was bicycling. In the late 1800's, leading suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton stated, "Many a woman is riding to suffrage on a bicycle." Susan B. Anthony continued with more detail about how bicycling and suffrage were meshed together for women: "Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel."

The early feminist movement saw equality in the field of play as one of the fronts by which women could assert their equality to men. While the general society stated that women could not handle the rigors and physicality of sport, Elizabeth Cady Stanton dispelled this myth by arguing, "We cannot say what the woman might be physically, if the girl were allowed all the freedom of the boy in romping, swimming climbing, playing ball."

More cracks came to the myth of male superiority in the 1920s through the efforts of many female athletes. In 1922, Sybil Bauer broke the world (read: men's) record for the backstroke. In 1926, Olympic medalist Gertrude Ederle was the first woman (and sixth person overall) to swim the English Channel. She swam the Channel two hours faster than any of the men who had previously achieved the feat.

While women athletes were shattering male records, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) had refused to allow women's athletics. The AAU had been at the forefront of social conservatism and alleged that women athletes would likely be lesbians or have loose sexual morals. The AAU succumbed to public pressure in 1924 and allowed women's athletics with the establishment of a women's track and field organization.

The patriarchal status quo was reeling when Mildred Ella "Babe" Didrikson hit the sports scene. She won three medals in the 1932 Olympics and excelled in multiple sports, with her primary sport being golf. She dominated the sports that she played. But such dominance and achievement brought sexist backlash. Critics slimed Didrikson by calling her "mannish" and that she "could not compete with other girls in the very ancient and time honored sport of mantrapping." The allusions to lesbianism and that talented female athletes lacked femininity would be hallmarks of criticism that women athletes would face. Yet, Didrikson did not yield to such criticisms that she needed to appear more feminine and continued to

hone her vast talents. She was unapologetic about her athletic prowess, even when confronted by the media who routinely criticized her looks because they could not criticize her ability. When a journalist asked her, "Is there anything you don't play?" Didrikson quickly responded, "Yeah, dolls."

While women athletes faced discrimination in their sporting activities, it was even worse for African American female athletes. Althea Gibson was the daughter of sharecroppers and grew up in Harlem during the Great Depression. Despite a difficult family environment and academic troubles, Gibson excelled in table tennis. Activists in the community quickly introduced her to the Harlem tennis courts and assisted her training. She was prohibited from playing in tournaments because tennis was a segregated sport. It was not until former #1 tennis player in the world, Alice Marble, wrote a scathing editorial stating, "Miss Gibson is over a very cunningly wrought barrel, and I can only hope to loosen a few of its staves with one lone opinion. If tennis is a game for ladies and gentlemen, it's also time we acted a little more like gentlepeople and less like sanctimonious hypocrites.... If Althea Gibson represents a challenge to the present crop of women players, it's only fair that they should meet that challenge on the courts." Gibson was subsequently given entry into the 1950 US Championships.

While the world had its eyes focused on the civil rights movement in the South and African Americans like Jackie Robinson breaking the color line in baseball, Gibson's entry into professional tennis broke tennis's color line. Gibson dominated professional tennis by being the first to win a Grand Slam tour as well as back-to-back-to-back doubles titles at Wimbledon and the US Open in 1956, 1957 and 1958. From 1956 to 1958, Gibson was ranked in the top ten players of the world and achieved the #1 ranking for 1957 and 1958. Gibson's monumental success struck a blow to both racial and gender based discrimination.

As women achieved the right to control what happened to their own bodies in *Roe v. Wade* and were fighting for equal access to higher education with Title IX, this struggle was aptly reflected in sport. On Sept. 22, 1973, Billie Jean King took on Bobby Riggs in "The Battle of the Sexes." King routed the sexist Riggs and gave further enthusiasm to the movement for gender equality. King continued the struggle for equal rights by establishing the Women's Tennis Association and in 1973; her organization got the US Open to be the first professional tournament to offer identical purses to the male and female winners. She also supported women's right to choose by being profiled in *Ms.* with the title "I Had an Abortion."

As sports have entered the last 25 years, women athletes have continued to struggle for equal treatment in society. During the 1980s, Martina Navratilova overwhelmed competition and used her social status to speak out about social justice issues, primarily acceptance of homosexuality. Navratilova was an open lesbian athlete and often gave her partner a prominent seat in the family seating area during events. As an out and open athlete, Navratilova helped to foster acceptance of the LGBT community as well as equal rights for women.

In the last decade, the two most memorable faces of the intersection of sports and the women's rights movement are the 1999 World Cup Women's Soccer Team and the Williams sisters in tennis.

During 1996, that women's team successfully led a strike, with mentoring from Billie Jean King, to ensure that the women's team received equal compensation to the men's team. In 1999, this team won the Women's World Cup and gave the world the immortalized picture of Brandi Chastain celebrating scoring the winning goal. When asked about the importance of their win, the US National Team Coach stated, "They had an impact on America's consciousness, on women's sports, on women's voices." The success of these women athletes on the international stage inspired numerous girls and women to get involved

in sport and gave them female role models of what they could achieve.

Venus and Serena Williams are synonymous with the pinnacle of tennis performance. Much like Althea Gibson, the Williams sisters honed their skills on the public tennis courts of Compton, California with the help of their father. Through their dedication and hard work, they have become positive role models for women everywhere.

Through sport and other forms of resistance, women have gained numerous rights in the struggle toward full social equality. Women gained a monumental boost with the establishment of Title IX in 1973. Title IX gives women equal opportunity and equal access to educational programs and activities. It has given women and opportunity to overcome discrimination in academic programs, but also in sports. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, before Title IX there were 1 in 27 high school girls playing sports. The ratio is now 1 in 3. The involvement of women and girls in sports has had many positive outcomes. Studies have shown a correlation between such involvement and higher grades in school, better self esteem, less early pregnancy and drug use, and higher graduation rates.

While women athletes have made vital contributions toward gender equality that have positive impacts on athlete's lives on and off the field, there are still battles that need to be fought: swimsuit issues that sexualize female athletes, photo shoots that promote an unhealthy and dangerous style of beauty, and *Maxim*-style articles that cheapen women's sports into simple ogling festivals of attractive female athletes. These are dangerous for women's physical and mental health. Similarly, this is also dangerous for men. These images create a sexualized stereotype of women athletes. Sexualized imagery of athletes does not promote an appreciation for athleticism or the sport being played, but rather treats women as things to be objectified. Often, the most talented women athletes will not be the ones focused on by the media, but rather it is the athletes deemed "most attractive" that receive the attention. Many of the talented players are deemed "too mannish" and "not feminine enough" for widespread appeal by mass media. Other studies have shown that these sexualized images negatively impact the interest level of males and females to the sport being represented.

There is also the struggle for acceptance of gays, lesbians, transgendered and queer players on teams. There have been more open lesbian athletes like Martina Navratilova than there have been male athletes. Sport should be an open place for all players, no matter their sexual preference, to be able to hone their skills and enjoy play.

As struggles remain on the forefront, it is important to remember the valiant struggles that have gotten us this far both in politics and sport so we can have motivation and vigilance to continue the fight for social justice.

For further information about contributing to the struggle of women and sports, check out the Women's Sports Foundation and the academic work of Prof. Pat Griffin.

"Transforming Power": Tenth Annual Graduate Symposium on Women's and Gender History

March 5-7, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Levis Faculty Center, 919 W. Illinois Street, Urbana
Keynote Address: Thursday, March 5 at 7:30PM

Roderick A. Ferguson, University of Minnesota "My Man Bovanne: A Black Feminist Critique of Black Power and the Institutionalization of Movement Politics"

Spurlock Museum Knight Auditorium, 600 S. Gregory Street, Urbana



Deconstructing Obama's Rhetoric on Palestine

By Niloofar Shambayati



IN HIS JANUARY 22 CEREMONY to announce the appointment of George Mitchell as the special envoy to the Middle East, President Obama spoke to the urgency of a lasting ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and made a commitment "to seek two states living side by side in peace and security." Both

goals are laudable but the language employed is disingenuous and dishearteningly reminiscent of past declarations.

The speech offers a pledge to Israel, advice to the Palestinians, and a justification of the American position for the rest of the world: "Let me be clear: America is committed to Israel's security. And we will always support Israel's right to defend itself against legitimate threats... no democracy can tolerate such danger to its people... neither should the Palestinian people themselves, whose interests are only set back by acts of terror." The President, then, demands that Hamas "recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and abide by past agreements, if it wants to be "a genuine party to peace." A fair demand only if it were asked of Israel as well.

Mr. Obama portrays Israel as a victim of aggression who, by protecting its people against rocket throwing Hamas, is championing the democratic values that they share with the West. He then implies that Palestinians don't appreciate the benefits of democracy because they seem to have rallied behind Hamas. In one sentence, he ignores two obvious facts: Israeli democracy applies largely to its Jewish population, treating the Palestinian citizens as second class; Palestinian democratic aspirations and experiments have repeatedly been crushed by deliberate Israeli and American actions (these assertions will be discussed in future articles).

In reality, the threat to Israel's security is the direct consequence of Israel's occupation of Palestine. Both al-Fatah and Hamas have committed themselves to a two-state solution to the conflict, in accordance with the national aspiration of the Palestinian people and spelled out in the National Reconciliation Document of 2006. In addition, Hamas has demanded on several occasions that Israel end its military operations in Gaza and the West Bank in return for a stable truce, but Israel insists on receiving an unconditional recognition of its right to exist and continues to expropriate land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, rendering a two-state solution unviable.

Palestinians continue to be subjected to humiliation, poverty, unemployment, indefinite imprisonment without trial, and violence. They are also helpless witnesses to the rapid loss of their land to illegal and hostile Israeli colonies, road blocks, Israeli-only roads, and recently the Wall of Annexation. Whether President Obama admits it or not, an unconditional commitment to what Israel considers to be vital to its security can only perpetuate the injustices done to the Palestinians. A disturbing example is the cutting off of the fertile Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank, allowing only the long-time residents who carry Israeli-issued papers to remain in the area and evacuating the others. Israeli officials maintain that this area cannot be returned to the Palestinians because this would expose Israel to attacks from Arab countries as well as al-Qaeda-type groups.

THE WEST BANK

According to Israeli Peace Now, the population of the Israeli colonies in the West Bank increased from 139,974 in 1996 to 261,879 in 2006, 270,000 in 2007, and 285,000 in 2008. The number of new structures in settlements and outposts grew by 69 percent in 2008 over the 2007 figures. The daily *Haaretz* reports that these increases far exceed the natural Israeli population growth (%1.6) and are more than double the growth rate in any region of Israel. The Israeli government spends at least \$560 million a year on subsidies, infrastructure and education for the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, in addition to the off-the-record military cost of controlling the Palestinians. Why all the trouble if in near future these illegal Israeli settlements are to be evacuated? Why protect the militant settlers who commit various crimes against the Palestinians and their property, when it's known that they have pledged never to leave and call their populating efforts "the most important Zionist endeavor of our generation, the settlement of Judea and Samaria"? The answer seems to be that Israel has no intention of returning any of the settlements it has financed and built. The Israeli

Transcendence

By Kumars Salehi

The older I get, the more it seems our world's been a failure

How could a world filled with unhappy people

Ruled by the most soulless of us be anything but?

Our money is a joke, and now the joke's on us

Our media is a joke, and there's nothing funny or excusable about

Israel's institutionalized genocide, ethnic cleansing in Palestine

Who does Israel think is watching? And who do they think they're kidding?

Truthfully, they're fooling no one, except for the people of the most powerful country in the world

A people who won't hold their leaders accountable for their crimes and the crimes of those they support

Whose ignorance, complacency and egocentrism stands in the way of rising up

Against Capitalism

Against Imperialism

Against Zionism

In our history classes we're told how they said, "Never again."

But the greedy, the zealous, and the silent masses

Have been letting it happen again, and again since long before we were born

The victims have become the killers

Maybe that's how the world began

But that's not how the world should end

information and human rights organization, B'Tselem, maintains that, eventually, about 40% of the West Bank would be permanently annexed to Israel. What would be the fate of the Palestinians living in these areas? Perhaps they will be moved to a cramped Palestinian state in the Middle of the West Bank or sent to Jordan and Egypt to live among their 'fellow Arabs.'

EAST JERUSALEM

The colonization of East Jerusalem has been progressing more blatantly. In 1980, against all international laws, Israel's parliament declared that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel." Israel continues to reject any compromise in this regard while Palestinians insist on establishing their capital in East Jerusalem. A *Washington Post* investigation reveals that the Israeli government and private Jewish groups have been moving Jewish residents into Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. The *Post* also refers to a report prepared by the Israeli State Attorney's Office and published in the newspaper *Yedioth Aharonoth*, which concludes that almost every major ministry has assisted in the construction, expansion and maintenance of illegal settlement outposts. In addition, intimidation and unavailability of legal documents are used to expel Palestinians from their homes and work places. Even as George Mitchell is holding talks with Israeli officials, the Municipality of Jerusalem is in the process of evicting 1500 Palestinians from their homes, under the pretext that their residences were built without Israeli permission. What an irony to demand that the occupied people apply for legal documents from their illegal occupiers.

THE WALL

The Annexation Wall, which Israel and the U.S. refer to as a separation wall to presumably protect Israel, is another obstacle to the creation of a viable Palestinian state. The Wall unjustifiably cuts through the West Bank and robs many Palestinians of their gardens, orchards, and the source of their livelihood. Discussed widely in Israeli media but ignored in the U.S. is the common understanding that Israel is intent upon annexing this 12% strip of fertile land under any final status agreement with the Palestinians.

AN HONEST BROKER

In order to have a real change in the U.S. policy, leading to the establishment of a viable Palestinian State and the security of Israel, we need to demand that the new administration become an honest broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and end America's unconditional support of the state of Israel. The long-term interest of all the parties involved, including the American people, depends on the U.S. playing this vital role.

President Obama must dissociate himself from any plan which offers the Palestinians a truncated state, consisting of isolated cantons with little or no control over vital natural resources. We should demand that the President's mantra of change apply to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lest the conflict outlives his presidency with yet more tragic consequences.

Bill Ayers At Allen Hall

Bill Ayers, school reform activist and distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is coming to Allen Hall. He is founder of the Center for Youth and Society and founder and co-director of the Small Schools Workshop. He has written extensively about social justice, democracy, and education. His interests focus on the political and cultural contexts of schoolings.

- Sunday, March 8. *The Weather Underground*—The Oscar-nominated documentary about Bill Ayers and the rise and fall of this radical movement.
- Monday, March 9 Opening Program—*Yes We Can: Reflections on Campaign 2008*
- Tuesday, March 10 *Fugitive Days*
- Wednesday, March 11 *Education for Democracy*
- Thursday, March 12 *The New Activism*

All events begin at 7 p.m. and take place in the Main Lounge of Allen Hall, 1005 W. Gregory, Urbana.

Film Screening: *Allah Made Me Funny*

The movie follows the lives of three Muslim stand up comedians as they try to dispel stereotypes about Muslims in a humorous manner. There will be a free showing of the movie at 100 Gregory Hall at 6:30PM on March 6th that is open to the Public. There will be an interfaith dialogue after the completion of the movie. This event is cosponsored by IMC, First Mennonite Church, Muslim Students Association of Champaign-Urbana, and the Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center.



Alex Rodriguez: Steroids and Sexism

By Neil Parthun



THERE ARE MANY REASONS to be disappointed in Alex 'ARod' Rodriguez. While many sportswriters and pundits at ESPN have spilled gallons of ink and use hours of airtime flagellating Rodriguez for his alleged lies and steroid use, they have missed a crucial and not yet condemned act perpetrated by ARod—his deplorable and overt sexist treatment of Sports Illustrated journalist Selena Roberts who broke the story about Rodriguez's steroid use.

In order to understand the ARod steroid scandal, one must be aware of some history. In 2003, the owners, Commissioner Bud Selig, and the Major League Baseball Players' Association (MLBPA) agreed to conduct anonymous testing of players to see how prevalent the use of performance enhancing drugs was in baseball. The agreement stated that if more than 5% of the players in the sample tested positive, Major League Baseball would institute a testing policy with punishments for positive tests. If fewer than 5% of the players tested positive, there would be no testing policy. Any players that tested positive in this survey were to suffer no repercussions and their names were to remain anonymous. This should have been the end of the story.

However, the MLBPA failed to destroy the list of 104 players who tested positive. Federal authorities discovered this list during their raid of Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative (BALCO) to gather more evidence in a wide-ranging illegal steroid distribution probe. Alex Rodriguez's name was on the list along with 103 other players.

Sports Illustrated journalist Selena Roberts broke the story that ARod's name was on the 2003 list and that he tested positive for use of the steroid primobolan. Roberts had four sources confirming this information before she went to print. The news that Rodriguez was confirmed as a user of illegal steroids was significant because ARod had previously denied using any steroids or performance enhancing drugs during an interview with Katie Couric on "60 Minutes" in 2007. Public perception was quickly shifting from believing that Rodriguez was 'clean' to suspecting him of cheating.

ARod and his public relations staff quickly went into

damage control and they scheduled an interview with veteran baseball reporter Peter Gammons on ESPN. During the interview, Rodriguez addressed the allegations put forth by Roberts. He stated: "What makes me upset is *Sports Illustrated* pays this lady Roberts to stalk me. This lady has been thrown out of my apartment in New York City. This lady has, five days ago she was thrown out of the University of Miami police for trespassing. And four days ago she tried to break into my house while my girls are up there sleeping, and got cited by the Miami Beach Police. I have the paper here. And this lady's coming out with all these allegations, all these lies, because she's writing an article for *Sports Illustrated*. And she's coming out with a book in May. And really respectable journalists are following this lady off the cliff, and following her lead. And that to me is unfortunate."

Women have fought and continue to fight unfair, unjustified stereotypes and prejudice about their abilities in the workplace. In the past, it was believed that women's emotions prevented them from doing certain jobs and yielding the benefit of things like higher education. ARod's statement used debunked ideas about concerns of whether or not women have the emotional capacity to carry out their job as a professional in order to deflect blame from his own choices that were exposed.

Similarly, Rodriguez's use of the word "stalker" was highly inappropriate. Reporters, both male and female, routinely try to get comments and be in the vicinity of those whom they are covering. It is good journalism, not stalking. The use of this term contains some very loaded gender ramifications. The use of the word "stalker" conjures up the idea of a mentally unstable woman pulled straight out of a film like *Fatal Attraction* and the character that Glen Close portrayed. This sexist imagery was again used to denigrate Roberts' journalistic credibility to absolve Rodriguez of culpability in these allegations.

ARod also stated, "really respectable journalists are following this lady of the cliff, and following her lead" to finish his opinion about the veracity of Roberts' claims. Rodriguez used the gender dynamics of the situation to portray Roberts—a journalist for *Sports Illustrated* and *The New York Times*—as an overly emotional, unprofessional, men-

tally unstable woman that seems obsessed with a young, single man. But nowhere in this rant did Gammons or ESPN interrupt him or question his statements. Gammons and ESPN chose not to defend a fellow sports journalist.

While Rodriguez's blatant sexism was deplorable, it was later confirmed that certain facts in his rant did not conform to reality. While Rodriguez alleged that Roberts had attempted to break into his home, Miami Beach and Coral Gables police have no record of Selena Roberts being arrested, stopped or cited. Likewise, Peter Gammons, who interviewed ARod during the infamous ESPN interview stated: "My first question asked if Selena's story were true, he essentially admitted it was, and I believed she was therefore vindicated."

On February 16, 2009, CNN reported that Alex Rodriguez had called Selena Roberts and apologized to her for his sexist ESPN rant and that the allegations that she was a stalker were unwarranted and not based in fact. Roberts' story has continually been shown to be true. More recent media admissions by ARod state that he did use the steroid primobolan for the period of time alleged by Roberts' in her article.

Rodriguez's statements to the media have continued to be less than truthful. His assertion that primobolan was available over the counter in the Dominican Republic (where he admitted to using it from 2001 to 2003) was found to be untrue. *The New York Daily News* is now reporting that a personal trainer, Angel Presinal, has been connected to ARod as late as the 2007 season. This trainer has been repeatedly connected to the use and possession of steroids and performance enhancing substances since 2001. Presinal's reputation has earned him the infamy of being banned from ever Major League Baseball clubhouse.

As Alex Rodriguez's career and credibility falls apart before our eyes, it is commendable that the public did not fall for his appeals to blatant sexism to blunt allegations of his own illegal behavior. While ARod did eventually apologize for his sexist diatribe and to Selena Roberts, the use of sexism as a means of scapegoating is not acceptable, especially for an athlete with global recognition like Alex Rodriguez.

Tuition Waiver Proposals Scrapped In Face of Grad Student Protests

Continued from page 3

a hundred members of the campus community came together at the forum to discuss their concerns and develop a plan of action. Shortly after, the Provost's Office announced that they were retracting two of their recommendations including the proposal to set the minimum waiver-generating appointment at 33% and the proposal

to render students in terminal Masters and professional programs ineligible for tuition waivers.

This decision is a tremendous success for graduate students and their allies across campus. However, the struggle is far from over. On one level, we are aware that three recommendations remain, each

with potentially damaging effects on the quality and accessibility of education. But, more importantly, the battle over tuition waivers raises critical questions about how decisions are made at the University of Illinois. While administrators agreed to retract two of the most unpopular recommendations, they reserved the

right to develop policies behind closed doors that could radically alter and harm graduate student experience. What we really need is the one thing that administrators will resist giving to us—a seat at the table in the development and implementation stages of all future proposals of this nature.

Juan Cole Discusses IRAQ



"Withdrawal from Iraq and the Future of American Security"

Sunday, March 8, 2:00 pm
Urbana Civic Center
108 E Water St, Urbana

"Iraq's Provincial Elections and What They Mean for Relationships With the U.S."

Monday, March 9, 4:00 pm
Levis Faculty Center, 2nd floor
919 W. Illinois Street, Urbana



Free and Open To The Public



Annual Midwest CW Resistance Retreat and Blackwater Conference

April 24-27

Keynotes by Jeremy Scahill and Kathy Kelly on April 25. The retreat and conference will conclude with a demonstration at Blackwater's Midwest site on Monday the 27th. A joint Midwest Catholic Workers and Clearwater Citizens' Group to Stop Blackwater effort.

For more info:
<http://www.desmoinescatholicworker.org/midwestresistanceretreat.html>

Peoria Chiefs Coming to Native American House

Strengthening relationships with tribal leaders is the goal of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Native American House and American Indian Studies programs in a public presentation scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 6:00 p.m. at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center.

In an event titled "Meet the Chiefs ...," John P. Froman, Chief of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, and Jason Dollarhide, Second Chief, broadly will discuss the Peoria nation's history, services, and programs.