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The opinions are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the IMC as a whole.

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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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Comments on *Public i* articles may be emailed to print (at) ucimc.org. Send the email with the word "comment" in the subject line.

6th ANNUAL UNITY MARCH!



WHAT DO WE WANT?

End Poverty in Champaign County! • Health Care & Housing as Human Rights! • End the Criminalization of the Poor!

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?

SATURDAY
October 3, 2009
12:00 PM

- ★ Kick off at the Champaign City Building
- ★ Rally at the Champaign County Court House
- ★ End at the U-C Independent Media Center

* Bring donations (blankets, bedding, non-perishable foods) to benefit Safe Haven

SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS

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519 E. University, Champaign

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Campus Faculty Association (CFA)

The Natural Gourmet
2225 S. Neil, Champaign; 355-6365

Progressive Asset Management, Financial West Group
Socially Responsible Investing

Jerusalem Cafe
601 S. Wright St, Champaign; 398-9022

The AFL-CIO of Champaign County

That's Rentertainment
516 E. John, Champaign; 384-0977

AWARE, the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort
Meetings every Sunday at 5pm at the IMC

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1001 S. Wright St., Champaign, 344-8283
www.uigeo.org

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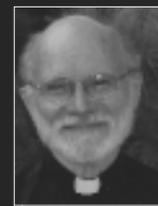
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Saturday, October 3, 12 Noon... See Back Page For Route Information



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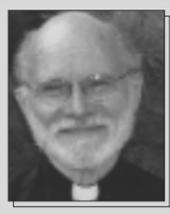
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Champaign, A City With NO SOUL

By Tom Royer



Father Royer is Pastor of St. Mary Church, Champaign.

I RECENTLY RECEIVED A LESSON in Champaign City Government 101. On August 13 the Safe Haven Tent City came to St. Mary at my invitation. It was a simple act of kindness for the homeless. They could pitch their tents on our parish property. It was a minimum of hospitality. The neighbors would not complain, as had been the case when they were camped at the Catholic Worker House on Randolph Street. At St. Mary I am the only neighbor and I am not complaining.

But the city official in charge of the zoning code would have none of it. He said we must evict the homeless because their tents

were in violation of a city code. If I did not, the city would slam us with fines up to \$750 per day for each day the violation continues.

I responded with a letter noting that at St. Mary we were following another and more important code. It is the code found in the sacred scriptures of many different faiths. It is this: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

This is spelled out in my religious tradition in "the works of mercy." Giving shelter to the homeless is a work of mercy. The city wants to interfere with my parishioners' practice of religion on our church property. In offering simple hospitality to the homeless, we wish to reverence the humanity of those without a safe place to sleep. The human person is of greater importance than the city code.

In addition I noted that "under Illinois' Religious Freedom Restoration Act Illinois municipalities are prohibited from enforcing

their zoning laws which impose a substantial burden upon religious institutions and their exercise of religion." The city's response to this was that a challenge to their application of the city code would have to be addressed in court.

The result has been that the illegal tents have been removed and our guests have been sleeping on the floor in the parish center. In this case being indoors is not necessarily an improvement. Having fifteen to twenty people sleeping in one large room offers no privacy. At least tents provide privacy and a place to stash one's gear. But at present there is a measure of safety, a most important issue for the homeless.

I think there is some benefit to me to have been bullied by the city officials about the tents. It is a small experience of the way that the poor endure insult and injury, even great harm, by official policies day in and day out.

In a recent op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, Barbara Ehrenreich writes that it is almost illegal to be poor. She notes that "city officials boast that there is nothing discriminatory about the ordinances that afflict the destitute" when they are caught engaging in the ordinary "necessities of life, like loitering, sitting, lying down, or sleeping." She concludes that "in defiance of all reason and compassion, the criminalization of poverty has actually been intensifying as the recession generates more poverty."

Whatever legal problems we may have at St. Mary, I suggest that there is a serious problem at city hall. It is a lack of soul. City officials are in denial about the indignity and misery that many local citizens suffer. Responsible city officials should get their heads out of their code books and seek solutions to the very real and increasing problem of homelessness.

Safe Haven Member Back In City Court

By Brian Dolinar



ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, Jesse Masengale returned to city court for two tickets issued to him by Champaign police this summer. A member of the Safe Haven community, Jesse was present when Champaign police showed up on June 8 to videotape the "tent city" that had been set up on the property of the Catholic Worker House. He was subsequently given two tickets for obstructing and assaulting a police officer.

A Champaign city attorney has offered Jesse a plea bargain, a tacit acknowledgement that at least half of these charges are bogus. The assault charge will be dropped if he pleads guilty to the obstructing charge and agrees to three months of court supervision and 100 hours of community service.

Witnesses say that Jesse had tossed his cell phone to a friend to take pictures when the police began to detain him. This was interpreted by police as an attempt to hit officer Gregory Manzana in the head—assault with a cell phone.

The second charge of obstructing justice was for Jesse's trying to stop police from videotaping.

Jesse said he could accept the plea bargain, but that it "doesn't make it right." He plans to seek advice from his attorney Bob Kirchner, after obtaining the video and police reports, on how to move forward.

Another continuance was granted and the next court date is: October 14 at 9:45 AM in Courtroom L.

[See a full account of the incident on June 8 and a statement from Safe Haven at: ucimc.org/content/cu-tent-community]

POSTSCRIPT: ANOTHER DAY AT THE COURTHOUSE

Every visit to the courthouse, I am always surprised by the sheer brutality and callousness of the criminal justice system. Also in city court the day of Jesse's hearing were four

inmates from the Champaign County jail. When they were brought into the courtroom, they were dressed in striped orange jumpsuits and wore shackles on their wrists and ankles. As they entered and exited, they shuffled their feet back and forth, unable to take full steps. All four were African American. The image of a chain gang could not help but be evoked.

One of them, a 50 year-old woman, had spent five days in jail because she missed a court date. She initially had received a ticket for throwing trash into someone else's dumpster. She tried to explain that her husband had a stroke and she could not make the court date. She began crying. Her husband was with her brother while she was in jail and she was concerned for his health. Judge Holly Clemons interrupted her and proceeded with routine affairs, taking a moment to read instructions to others who were in city court that day.

When the judge returned to the case, the woman again tried to inform her of the situation. The Judge curtly said, "Not now." Indeed, maybe Judge Holly Clemons hears these stories every day. But this is the scenario that judges are faced with given a bloated criminal justice system that locks up its citizens for the most frivolous offenses.

Eventually, the woman pleaded guilty to charges of littering and obstructing justice. When police showed up to serve a warrant for the missed court date, she apparently had given a wrong name and was written a second ticket. The woman wanted to contest this charge, but said she would "just let it go." She was ordered to pay a combined \$360 in fines, plus court costs. The woman did not have \$150 to bail out of jail on a \$1,500 bond. Perhaps taxpayers will have to pay the cost of jailing her again because she cannot afford the fines.

Again, the criminal justice system is one of the few remaining social service agencies left to deal with poverty, although its methods are the most inhumane and irrational.

Food Not Bombs Returns To C-U With The Really, REALLY Free Market

RRFM will be Saturday, October 10, 3PM-5PM followed by FNB from 5PM-7PM, at the southeast corner of Westside Park in Champaign.

The Really, Really Free Market (RRFM) movement is a non-hierarchical collective of individuals who form a temporary market based on an alternative gift economy. The RRFM movement aims to counteract capitalism in a non-reactionary way. It holds as a major goal to build a community based on sharing resources, caring for one another and improving the collective lives of all. Markets often vary in character, but they generally offer both goods and services. Participants bring unneeded items, food, skills and talents such as entertainment or haircuts. A RRFM may take place in an open community space such as a public park or community commons.

The movement has emerged in diverse places such as Wilmington, Raleigh, Greensboro and Greenville, NC; New York City, Reno, NV, Cottage Grove, OR; Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Lancaster and Pttsburgh, PA; Austin, Grand Rapids and Detroit, MI; Belfast, NY, Tallahassee, FL; Richmond, VA; Cincinnati and Dayton, OH; Indianapolis, IN; San Francisco... and NOW here in C-U!!

So bring something to share! Anything at all! And then enjoy a free dinner with Food Not Bombs.



Champaign-Urbana Residents Hold Vigil For Public Health Insurance Option

by Robert Naiman, and photos by Grace Giorgio



ON SEPTEMBER 2ND more than a hundred members of MoveOn and the Campaign for Better Healthcare held a vigil at the Champaign County Veterans Memorial in Urbana to push for health care reform. Participants shared their stories of suffering resulting from the current system to show that people in east central Illinois urgently need a real public health insurance option. More than three hundred similar vigils were held nationwide the same day.

Jim Duffett of the Campaign for Better Health Care noted that in many areas of the country there are just two health insurance companies to choose from. In these places, without the creation of a public health insurance option, there is no way to inspire meaningful competition that has any chance of translating into improved options for consumers. Health care reform that includes a strong public health insurance option will help lower skyrocketing health care costs and expand coverage to millions of Americans.

The public sector actually provides health insurance more efficiently than the private sector. Medicare's administrative costs are equal to about 2 percent of what it pays out to providers. For private insurers the ratio of expenses to payments is typically over 15 percent. Currently the government pays for about half of the country's health care—almost all of which is actually provided by the private sector—through programs like Medicare and Medicaid.

On September 9th, President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress on the Administration's proposal for health care reform. President Obama's plan would offer a public health insurance option to provide those currently uninsured and those who can't find affordable coverage with a real choice. It appears that inclusion of this public health insurance option is like offering Medicare to everyone who wants it. And a proposed amendment by Representative Dennis Kucinich, supported by many Democrats and some Republicans, would allow individual states to go further and create their own systems of public health insurance for all.

President Obama's plan would also ban insurance companies from excluding people from coverage based on "pre-existing conditions"; prohibit companies from dropping coverage that has already been purchased when people are sick; cap out-of-pocket expenses; eliminate extra charges for preventive care; ban insurance companies from charging higher premiums to women; and eliminate the "donut-hole" gap in coverage for prescription drugs.

The President's plan is outlined here: www.whitehouse.gov/issues/health_care/plan/.

Many of us would prefer a simpler solution than the President's plan—Medicare for All. The existing Medicare program itself is a public health insurance system. Medicare is even universal in who it covers too; it includes every American over the age of 65. The simplest solution



Healthcare for ALL

to providing affordable, quality health insurance to every American would be to drop the age restriction on Medicare and extend it to all Americans. Unfortunately, most people who work on health insurance reform don't see Medicare for All as politically achievable right now.

Every day that we wait to pass health care reform with a public option, more people in Illinois are denied life-saving medical treatment, dropped from their insurance coverage, or buried under medical bills.

For more information, and to get involved:

Campaign for Better Health Care, www.cbhconline.org/index.html
MoveOn, <http://pol.moveon.org/passhealthcare/>



The demonstration at the County Courthouse

Champaign County Health Care Consumers' Forum

by Marya Burke

ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009, I attended a Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC) community meeting to examine issues being raised around health reform and to consider what it means in Champaign-Urbana. We were welcomed by CCHCC Board Chair, Lisa Dixon, and information presented included the following:

- National Health Care Crisis Overview: Yadira Montoya, CCHCC Hotline Coordinator
- Local Perspective on the Uninsured: Al Mytty, Director of Payer Contracting, Carle Foundation Hospital
- Health Insurance Basics and CCHCC Health Reform Analysis & Principles: John Ramsbottom, CCHCC Health Care Access Task Force
- National Health Reform and Medicare: Anne Gargano, CCHCC Medicare Task Force Organizer
- Brief Overview of Legislative Process: Nick Gainer, CCHCC Health Care Access Task Force
- Single-Payer Health Reform Legislation: Dr. Anne Scheetz, Co-chair, Illinois Single-Payer Coalition & Member of for a National Health Program
- America's Affordable Health Choices Act and Other Health Reform Bills: Claudia Lenhoff, CCHCC Executive Director
- Opportunities for Action Now: Gainer
- Question & Answer
- Wrap-up and Take Action: Lenhoff

At the start of the meeting, the Champaign library auditorium was filled with around 100 or so people, others stood by in the hall. Interestingly, the majority of attendants appeared to be over the age of fifty and were balanced closely between women and men. It seemed likely to me that the vast majority present currently had health coverage, many through Medicare.

Several presentations focused on clarifying our current situation nationally and locally. The gaps in coverage under existing plans and the costs in the lives of those who have no coverage were brought home with numbers and, chillingly, in Lenhoff's statement that, "we have had clients die due to lack of access to care." Ramsbottom, pointed out that, "unless we get an itemized bill directly from the medical facility, [the majority of individuals] don't really know what these services actually cost." If knowledge is power, then this gap represents a significant imbalance in individuals' ability to make decisions about their medical care. This leaves us with a system riddled with opportunities for privileging profit over people and reduced opportunities for accountability.

Dr. Scheetz emphasized that, "Medicare is a single payer, government run program" and argued that significant health care reform could be accomplished simply by expanding what is actually covered under the program and by removing the age requirement for participation. The presentation from Scheetz was perhaps the most

overtly passionate of the evening. She argued for Medicare for all not simply on the basis of its inherent justice in its universality, but also for the efficiency of such a system. Sharing her own experiences as a physician, she argued that she has much more freedom and discretion to act in the best interests of her patients under Medicare because "I don't have to call anybody up to get permission or beg to get something covered." Completing her presentation, Scheetz repeated call for Medicare for all was applauded.

Speakers were up-front about their own opinions and worked to present all sides fairly by referring directly to documented information on the various options. The favored option across all the speakers was offering Medicare for all; however, they maintained a commitment to presenting multiple perspectives by addressing the specific representations of current House and Senate legislative proposals.

As is perhaps typical of community information events, media coverage was high at the beginning. There were two camera operators with large video cameras, one with a big still camera, and two using smaller video cams. After about twenty-five minutes, there were only the small video camera operators, and by the end, only the CCHCC operator remained. The audience itself was rapt throughout the presentations and speakers answered a variety of questions from the group. As time ran down, Gainer

gave information about how to get involved. Lenhoff challenged all of us saying of Congress, "They need to hear from you," she was answered with nods and murmurs of approval all around the room and the meeting closed with people filing around the table with information on how to do more.

For additional information consider visiting the following:

<http://www.healthcareconsumers.org/>
www.ilga.gov
www.thomas.gov

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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.



Clout And The Fight For A Real Public University

By Julien Ball

PRESSURE ON UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS Chancellor Richard Herman and President B. Joseph White to resign over the ongoing admissions scandal reached new heights on September 14 as the Urbana-Champaign Senate, primarily a faculty body, passed a resolution by the overwhelming margin of 98–55 calling for “the need to a timely transition” in both the positions of Chancellor and President of the university. Earlier in the month, Governor Pat Quinn had replaced all but three members of the Board of Trustees. All but two members had resigned, while another was reappointed after offering his resignation.

Last spring, the University of Illinois became a symbol for the worst of our state’s corruption when the *Chicago Tribune* revealed that top university officials and trustees had intervened in the admissions process on behalf of students from families with connections to high-ranking political and university officials. The practice was so widespread that the university created a separate pool of applicants, dubbed “Category I,” for prospective students with clout. Some students in this pool of applicants were even admitted after they already had been rejected through the normal admissions process.

The scandal reaches into the upper echelons of the university administration. Heidi Hurd, former dean of the Law School, Lawrence DeBrock, Dean of the College of Business, President B. Joseph White, Chancellor Richard Herman, Associate Provost Keith Marshall and a number of university trustees all intervened on behalf of under-qualified, politically connected applicants.

Their intervention was often far from subtle. In one instance, a college dean wrote to the Admissions Director urging him to admit a particular student. “Given his father’s donor status, I may be asking you to admit him. We are about to launch a huge campaign, and we can’t be alienating big donors by rejecting their kids.

In what amounted to an affirmative action program for the rich and powerful, Category I students overwhelmingly came from elite, affluent high schools. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, half of the 616 Illinois students who received preferential treatment from 2005 to 2009 graduated from just 22 high schools. Meanwhile, at least 668 Illinois high schools had no clouted applicants at all.

Among the least connected were stu-

dents from Chicago Public Schools (CPS), who are disproportionately African-American, Latino and poor. CPS, the state’s largest school district, has about 19,000 graduating seniors each year. Yet only 25 were placed on the clout list over five years. In comparison, Highland Park High School, located in one of Illinois’ wealthiest northern Chicago suburbs, and which graduates roughly 425 per year, merited 30 clouted admissions.

While university officials are bending over backwards to make sure that the sons and daughters of privilege have easy access to our university, most of us haven’t been so lucky. While the university brags that they “only” raised tuition by 2.6 percent for incoming freshmen in the ‘08-’09 term, this increase comes after a decade of skyrocketing tuition costs, putting a four-year degree out of reach for many working families. In 2008–2009, the base tuition rate for incoming freshmen was \$9,242 per year, a 43 percent increase from the 2004–2005 academic year, when tuition stood at \$6,460.

Meanwhile, during a recession in which more working families are struggling to pay for a college education, the University

of Illinois denied a record 130,000 financial aid applications for the 2008–2009 Term. And because of budget cuts, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is telling recipients of the Monetary Assistance Program (MAP), the largest financial aid program in the state, which serves 145,000 low-income students, to expect just half of their funding in Fall 2008 and none of it in Spring 2009.

Furthermore, while affirmative action is alive and well for the elite, African-Americans and Latinos remain underrepresented in the student body, comprising just 12 percent of the campus in a state where African-Americans and Latinos represent more than 29 percent of the overall population.

If administrators and legislators who appropriate state budgets refuse to treat the University of Illinois as the public institution it purports to be, not all students are accepting this state of affairs. Members of the GEO are fighting for a fair contract. On September 9, 2009, in one of the biggest rallies in Champaign-Urbana for quite some time, 250 students rallied for a fair contract outside the Levis Faculty Center.

GEO Struggles For A Living Wage And The Future

By Rich Potter



Rich Potter is a doctoral candidate in the Institution of Communications Research at UIUC. He is currently the instructor of a course in International Communications and a member of the GEO.

WHILE THE ONGOING ADMISSIONS SCANDAL at UIUC has brought mainstream attention to the administration’s misplaced priorities, labor activists have long been familiar with the contradictions. It doesn’t surprise Peter Campbell therefore, to know that the Chancellor approved using \$300,000 of discretionary funds to provide scholarships so that twenty-four well-connected but mediocre and undeserving students could attend the law school. “The administration might have chosen to improve wages, contribute more to health care, or expand childcare options. Instead, they extended privileges and considerable financial resources to the politically well-connected. And now they’re spending half a million dollars in legal fees to deal with the blowback.” Campbell, a Teaching Assistant in the department of Communications and the Communications Officer of the Graduate Employees’ Organization (GEO), spoke during the GEO’s Rally for a Living Wage on September 9th.

The GEO, which represents over 2,700 Teaching and Graduate Assistants (TAs and GAs) on the UIUC campus, is a local chapter of the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT). The GEO has been in negotiations with University administrators over the terms of a new contract since April 21. “On the first day of bargaining we presented a comprehensive proposal to the administration,” said Kerry Pimblott, the GEO’s lead negotiator. “Ever since, they’ve been stalling. They spent months trying to force unnecessary ‘ground rules’ on us, and they didn’t even offer a proposal until August 11th, just four days before our contract expired.” Although graduate employees have been working under an expired contract since August 15th, negotiations have not accelerated. In fact, the GEO asked for the federal mediator to return for their most recent negotiation session. Nonetheless, GEO members are certain that the only way to get justice at the table is to

organize and mobilize on campus. Hence the Rally for a Living Wage, which brought out over 250 students, faculty supporters, and fellow labor activists from allied campus unions.

The focus on living wages stems from a major discrepancy between the administration’s rhetoric and policy. The Office of Student Financial Aid says that, for a single academic year, the minimum cost of living for a graduate student in Urbana-Champaign is \$16,086. Currently, over 50 percent of TAs and GAs at UIUC make less than that amount. Worse yet, the cost of living figure doesn’t include over \$1,000 of fees and health insurance costs. Since the minimum salary for a TA or GA working a 50 percent appointment is \$13,430,* many graduate employees are almost \$4,000 short of getting by. For many students, especially parents or internationals who cannot take a second job off campus, the only option is to go further into debt. According to Campbell, “The current economic crisis is partly the result of unsustainable levels of consumer debt. It doesn’t seem like the administration should want to contribute further to that problem.”

GEO members, however, are not organizing strictly out of self interest. “We’re very aware that we’re not alone in this fight. All workers deserve a living wage and decent benefits. We certainly hope that the awareness we raise and whatever gains we achieve will benefit our allies in the Campus Labor Coalition,” said Pimblott. The coalition includes locals from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Association of Academic Professionals (AAP), the Campus Faculty Association (CFA), the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Machine Operators (IATSE), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

“The administration is taking advantage of the economic crisis to argue that they don’t have the money to provide grad employees with a living wage, and they’d be happy to use that argument for all of their lower-paid workers, but it really doesn’t hold water,” said Campbell, who points out that the UIUC budget was increased by 1.1% this year. Moreover, the money they were asked to hold in reserve last year has been released, the endowment performed better than many universities and has recovered much of the value it lost, while tens of millions of dollars in federal

stimulus funds are still available. “At the Board of Trustees meeting they highlight the positives, but at the bargaining table they tell an entirely different story.”

Nor is the GEO negotiating for purely monetary benefits. “That’s what really puts the lie to the administrators’ arguments,” said Pimblott. “They say they don’t have the money, but they won’t even work with us on non-monetary issues.” For example, the administration’s proposal would make the university’s own human resources office the sole adjudicator for any discrimination grievances. “In essence, the administration is saying that if grad employees feel they’ve been discriminated against for reasons of race, gender, age, or a host of other categories, then the employer, and not an impartial body, should decide the case,” said Campbell. “It’s the fox watching the hen house.”

Pimblott also points out that the issue goes beyond the local. “Across the country, public universities are adopting a corporate model. The priority is shifting from knowledge to revenue generation.” One result of this shift is that there are less full-time, tenured professors and more part-time, adjunct faculty. According to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), during the previous decade the number of full-time, tenured faculty members at public research universities fell from 34.1 to 28.9 percent of the total faculty. During that same period, part-time, contingent employment rose, with the percentage of graduate employees within the faculty climbing from 37.5 to 41 percent. At UIUC, according to Campbell, 23.1 percent of all course hours are taught by graduate employees. “We’re clearly not just fighting for a handful of extra bucks. We’re doing our part to counter a historic shift toward cheaper sources of labor. This is about the future of the United State’s publicly funded higher education system.”

For more information about the GEO and the current state of negotiations, go to: uigeo.org

*University assistantships are classified according to the number of hours worked. A 50 percent appointment corresponds to 20 hours of work per week and is the most common level of appointment. Workers in some departments, however, are granted only 25 or 33% appointments.



Af-Pak Escalation Not The Change We Need

By Paul Mueth

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE REGION affords great cover for ongoing misrepresentation by the administration, representatives, think tanks, and the media. All spin, “simplify” and generally distort the war on terror/al-Qaeda as currently conducted mainly in Afghanistan/Pakistan. Unresolved colonial borders that divide the Pashtun peoples are part of the legacy of previous British occupation. Divide and conquer colonial policies, historic trade routes and other factors have produced a region composed of Pashtuns, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and many more, speaking a mix of languages (Dari, an Iranian tongue is 2nd to Pashto, though bi and tri lingualism are not uncommon) that overlap and coincide in a kaleidoscopic tapestry. A large part of the problem with the variety of groups lumped together as Taliban is arguably rooted in the disenfranchisement of mainly Pashtuns on both sides of the border, the Durand line drawn by the U. K., apparently with a 100 year expiration clause.

Occasionally something clear and frank is blurted out. Chomsky in a recent address at United Nations General Assembly Thematic Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) cites then Secretary-General Jaap Scheffer, informing a NATO meeting in June 2007 that “NATO troops have to guard pipelines that transport oil and gas that is directed for the West,” and more generally have to protect sea routes used by tankers and other “crucial infrastructure” of the energy system. Tariq Ali in a monograph titled *Mirage of a Good War* (also a chapter in his latest book) writes, regarding another talk by Scheffer, “That Washington is not seeking permanent bases in this fraught and inhospitable terrain simply for the sake of ‘democratization and good governance.’ Scheffer at the Brookings

Institution in February this year commented that “a permanent NATO presence in a country that borders the ex-Soviet republics, China, Iran, and Pakistan was too good to miss.”

Chomsky’s *New Military Humanism, Lessons from Kosovo*, is a book length study of the way humanitarianism is used to justify armed intervention when real-politick is the real motive. Much of the discourse regarding Af-Pak is a further illustration of this tactic.

THE ‘TERROR’ LINE REVISITED

Junior partner to the US imperial project, Scheffer, has been replaced by a Dane, Rasmussen, who might stick to the more ‘legitimizing’ rationales of the US/NATO project. He has repeated the Scheffer line about preventing the region from becoming “grand central station for terrorism.” The global war on terror frame has never been popular with the European publics and many in the leadership, not that they want any bahnhof for al-Qaeda to be un surveilled and unchecked.

The Obama administration on the record disdains the Global War on Terror (GWOT) frame, preferring Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) as its euphemism for covert and overt actions abroad. Recently counter-terrorism Chief, John Brennan, a top CIA aide to George Tenet during most of the Bush administration, has announced a “global war on al-Qaeda” as its war. However, the rhetorical drumbeat of the al-Qaeda role continues and, worse, the conflation of it with all the various Taliban and other groups in the region has escalated.

Liberal Democratic support for the war in Afghanistan, though eroding of late, has reprised the Bush administra-



tion’s invocation of women’s rights as a justification for the US actions on the ground. Afghan women’s organizations,

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Civil Rights In L’Aquila

By Mark Enslin



SHARING WINE, pasta and birthday cake in a log cabin in the mountains of central Italy this past June among artists, actors & friends, we visitors from Illinois heard

the name “Katrina” spoken often throughout the evening. It was a shorthand for how these survivors of the April 6 earthquake and its continuing aftershocks around the city of L’Aquila felt about their treatment by the Berlusconi government.

L’Aquila, about an hour east of Rome, was the epicenter of a strong earthquake that had devastating effects, not only on the old buildings of ancient villages in the area, but also on recent structures that were not sturdy enough to withstand the tremors. Three hundred people died in the quakes of those days, and many more were made homeless, forbidden to return to houses that might not appear damaged, but were

riven by dangerous structural flaws.

Four months later, many still could not return home and were living in tent cities administered by volunteers and the Civil Police. We met one tent city administrator, a prison guard from another city who had heeded the call for help. People at the camp ate in mess halls and suffered the decisions made for them by the government. Friends and family members (including ourselves) had to seek permission to visit. A priest and a volunteer psychologist told us about their attempts to offer psychological services, which they said were not always welcomed by the survivors.

Our visit occurred a couple of weeks before the meeting of the G8, which had initially been scheduled to take place in Sardinia, but, in a controversial move by Berlusconi, was relocated to the National Academy of the Finance Police on the outskirts of L’Aquila. The official rationale was that it was a gesture of solidarity with the survivors, and also that the move would save money on security costs for the visiting heads of state. The last time Italy hosted a G8 meeting, in Genoa (soon after the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle), protests were met with heavy police raids and attacks, giving rise to widespread charges of police brutality, lack of respect for civil rights, and the death of a protester.

The unofficial reasons for locating G8 in the dis-

aster area was that the area was already under tight control, and interference against the G8 could be spun to make protesters appear callous. The success of this strategy was reflected in NPR and CNN reporting that Berlusconi’s stated aim of calling attention to the plight of L’Aquila residents apparently failed as they were nowhere in sight. This misinterpretation framed Berlusconi’s deliberate distraction as a humanitarian effort.

Before we arrived, we were not sure what attitudes would be among the survivors. Those at the party said they opposed the G8 and were in favor of protests in general, but they didn’t feel up to staging any themselves. Still, the further clampdown on civil liberties that resulted from the transplanting of the event to L’Aquila were recounted with bitterness.

What survivors told us was that they were more concerned about their grievances with the conservative Italian government, and worried that their problems would continue after the entourages left town. L’Aquila was a university town, but today the university is destroyed. A former professor of psychology joined me on the porch later in the evening still fuming four months after the events, to explain how the government had flown over the area in helicopters and decided on 30 sites for tent cities. Survivors were arbitrarily assigned temporary dwellings regardless of their preferences, breaking up communities that might otherwise have provided mutual support. “Katrina.”

Anger also stemmed from information that contracts from the government for

rebuilding were awarded to some of the same companies that had built the destroyed buildings in the first place. This

Continued on next page



A resident walks past L’Aquila City Hall





2008 Racial Profiling Numbers Released By IDOT

By Brian Dolinar



ONCE AGAIN, RACIAL PROFILING numbers were released by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) with no coverage in the local media. When I notified a journalist for the *News-Gazette* of the latest figures, he told me they covered the story several years ago. Racial profiling is apparently no longer an issue. Yet it became national news this summer when African American Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. was arrested for breaking into his own home. Locally, a young medical student, “Toto” Kaiyewu, was racially profiled by a police officer in nearby Villa Grove, followed, and led on a police chase that ended with police fatally shooting him on I-74.

This is the fifth year that statistics collected by IDOT have shown that minorities in the area are being racially profiled, yet no action has been taken by any of the local police departments. Due to legislation forwarded by then Illinois Senator Barack Obama, police departments throughout the state are now required to record detailed information from routine traffic stops and submit it to IDOT. It is then given to researchers at Northwestern University who compile the statistics and come up with what they call a “disparity index” indicating where racial profiling occurs. A ratio of 1:1 suggests that minorities and whites are pulled over equally given their percentage of the population according to census figures. The average disparity index throughout the state of Illinois is 1.10, rates being slightly higher for minorities.

Perhaps the most alarming information for 2008 shows that the disparity index for the Champaign County’s Sheriff’s Office jumped to 1.59 in 2008, up from 1.27 in 2007, and 1.02 in 2004 when IDOT began collecting the statistics. Despite efforts to reach him on the phone, Sheriff Dan Walsh would not respond to phone calls. An elected official, Walsh should explain this significant increase.

For Urbana police, the figure was 1.49 (1.47 in 2007) and for Champaign police, who have a much worse reputation, it was 1.43 (1.34 in 2007). For the University of Illinois police it was 1.37 (1.36 in 2007). The highest rate of racial profiling was in Rantoul, a city to the northeast of Urbana with a growing population of Black and Latino residents, where the figure jumped to 2.02 (1.83 in 2007).

These might seem like just numbers, but closer examination reveals certain patterns. In Urbana, there were 2,194 whites stopped and 1,831 minorities—a difference of only 363 stops, although minorities are only 30% of the population.

In Champaign, among so-called “consent searches” where police ask to search an individual’s car, there were 20 whites whose cars were searched, in comparison to 38 minorities who were searched—32 African Americans and 6 Hispanics. Almost twice as many minorities had their cars searched.

Champaign County Sheriff’s deputies conducted consent searches among 4 white drivers and 10 minorities—9 African Americans and 1 Hispanic. Here, there were more than twice as many minorities searched for contraband. The ACLU of Illinois has called for an end to all consent searches because blacks and Hispanics turn out to be the ones most frequently targeted.

Asians, long regarded as the “model minority,” drivers were more likely to be given warning tickets than blacks or Hispanics. Among 631 stops of Asian drivers, the University of Illinois police issued 491 warnings. Both blacks and Hispanics were given citations more than half of the time they were stopped.

The police killing of Toto Kaiyewu on April 6, 2009 raised serious questions about racial profiling. Toto was an African American who was first spotted by police at a Super Pantry in Villa Grove, approximately 15 minutes southeast of Urbana. During an interview with Villa Grove

police officer Adam Deckard conducted by Illinois State Police in an investigation that night, he said that he became “suspicious” when he saw a car with Texas plates (Toto was a student in Carbondale, Illinois, but was from Texas). Asked to explain, officer Deckard said, “I’m not trying to be prejudiced, but we have a lot of Mexicans in our town. So sometimes we get Texas plates in our town.” Although Toto was African American, the son of immigrant parents from Nigeria, he was found to be “suspicious” because of the officer’s racist assumptions. There had been recently been large drug busts of Mexican drivers in the surrounding area.

Villa Grove Police Chief Dennis Gire has pointed to IDOT statistics claiming that his police do not racially profile. Indeed, the disparity index for Villa Grove police is only 1.05. Yet Villa Grove was once known as a “sundown town” where for decades blacks were not to be seen after dark. According to the 2000 census, Villa Grove is 98% white. Only 13 minorities were stopped there in 2008. There are simply very few of them in Villa Grove for police to pull over.

Despite the meteoric rise of one-time Illinois Senator Barack Obama, who became the first African American President of the United States, unfortunately the conditions for most blacks throughout the country has not changed. Not everyone can simply share a beer with the police and “agree to disagree,” the conclusion to the Gates scandal which still left the issue unresolved. We can have numbers to show racial profiling is a rampant problem, even headlines in the news, but until the people demand more accountability from their police, the slogans of real change ring hollow.

A full report of the 2008 IDOT study can be found online at: www.dot.il.gov/travelstats/ITSS%202008%20Statewide%20and%20Agency%20Reports.pdf

Civil Rights In L’Aquila

Continued from previous page

raised suspicions that cronyism, rather than safety and relief, was the government’s primary concern.

The simultaneously angry and resigned mood was intensified by other issues on the national scene. One day during our stay, the papers and web were abuzz with news of a short-lived plan to restore Le Ronde, a kind of civilian guard decked out in uniforms strongly suggestive of fascist militias of the 1930s. Layoffs of tens of thousands of teachers sparked more ire. Two of our hosts were involved in the nearly year-long occupation of the University of Genoa, part of a

nation-wide occupation and student strike in high schools and universities in protest in response to the layoffs.

And, as in the US, fear-mongering about immigrants and marginalized Italians treated as immigrants is a widespread tool used by the right-wing coalition as a wedge issue. The effects of this campaign might be seen in the victories of the Right in the recent European Union elections.

Our last day in Italy we saw big protest posters appearing in the train stations that depicted the G8 heads of state somewhat

squashed by a call (in bold-face type) to keep pressure on them about issues of poverty. Amidst the discouragement we encountered, we also saw many signs of resistance and organization, including among the Artists of L’Aquila—signs that the feeling of “they don’t really care about us” might give rise to transformative political action.



L’Aquila tent city

My Quest For A More Informed Future Generation By Brady Collins

“Idle hands are the devils playground”, or some ominous saying of that nature, is a good way to begin describing why I started my blog. However, I do not believe in the imminent physical manifestation of the devil, nor do I consider myself an especially acerbic or patronizing person. What I mean to point out is that I am an adamant believer in civil engagement. I think a pro-active, forward thinking, and socially aware public is a necessity, especially among my peers. As a student at the University of Illinois, I am frequently frustrated as to how uninformed and ultimately apathetic the majority of the student body is to events that affect our lives and shape our future. I am very concerned with a lot of issues happening around the world, be it environmental, economic, or political. I think that the structure of a lot of our institutions and the ways in which we look at the world are outdated and in need of serious adjustment. A new enlightenment, if you will.

The times are a-changin’ and without an informed democracy we will be robbed of our essential rights, to have our voices heard, and to change the world as we see fit. I write about such matters, from local to international, in hopes of increasing positive discussion on campus and on the net. Sometimes crude, often sarcastic, I infuse the entries with my own self-proclaimed witty commentary. Nevertheless, I always strive to make the subjects of my posts relevant. My intentions are not to spark blind and angry debate, but merely raise issues that deserve open discussion. So leave any ideologies at the door, open your mind, your eyes, and maybe you’ll find something you think is important and perhaps we can change it, together. Here is the link to the blog, which I have cleverly titled. “Brady’s Blog.”

<http://bradysblogspot.blogspot.com/>



Anti-Venezuela Spokespeople Misrepresent Reality Of Press Freedom In Venezuela

By Mark Weisbrot

This column was published by The Guardian Unlimited on August 4, 2009.

Update: It appears that the proposed media law referred to in The Guardian debate below is not going anywhere in the Venezuelan Congress; it is not clear that it was ever under serious consideration.

DENIS MACSHANE ATTACKS the British left for defending Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez against an onslaught from the media, “New Cold Warriors,” and right-wing demagogues throughout the world. His rhetorical trick is to tar the left with a new media law currently being debated in the Venezuelan Congress, which he says “would impose prison sentences of up to four years for journalists whose writings might divulge information against ‘the stability of the institutions of the state.’”

Of course this is a bad law. There are a number of bad laws on the books in Venezuela, and in fact numerous countries in the region have “desacato” laws which make it a crime to insult the President. Do MacShane’s targets—he mentions Ken Livingstone and Richard Gott—support such laws? I would bet serious money that they do not. So his main line of attack is misleading if not downright dishonest.

MacShane also misrepresents the reality of press freedom in Venezuela. In fact, there is a much more oppositional media in Venezuela than in the United States, and a

much greater range of debate in the major media. This can be seen simply by looking at the most important media in both countries. In the U.S., for example, not even the most aggressive right-wing commentators such as Rush Limbaugh or Sean Hannity would present the idea that the President should be lynched. But Globovision, one of the largest-audience TV networks in Venezuela, had a show where a guest did just that.

This is not an isolated example in Venezuela. The media there routinely broadcasts reporting and commentary that would not be allowed under FCC rules here. And the vast majority of the media in Venezuela is still controlled by the right-wing opposition. This fact was buried in a footnote in Human Rights Watch’s highly prejudiced and misleading 230 page report on Venezuela. The footnote acknowledged that RCTV, which lost its broadcast license for a long list of offenses that would have landed its owners in jail in the United States, still has a cable audience that is bigger than all of the Venezuelan state television combined.

If the United States had a media like Venezuela’s, President Obama could never have been elected. That’s because the majority of Americans would have believed, as those beholden to some right-wing sources do, that he is a Muslim who was not born in the United States. Think of *Fox News* and the *Washington Times* as the vast majority of the U.S. media—that is the reality in Venezuela, only the media is more political and less accurate than our biggest right-wing outlets.

What happens when our major media threatens to step over the line and become a political actor? They almost

never do it, but two weeks before the 2004 U.S. Presidential election, the Sinclair Broadcast Group of Maryland, which owns the largest chain of TV stations in the U.S., decided to broadcast a film that accused candidate John Kerry of betraying U.S. prisoners in Vietnam.

Nineteen Democratic senators sent a letter to the US FCC calling for an investigation, and some made public statements that Sinclair’s broadcast license could be in jeopardy if it carried through with its plans. Sinclair backed down and did not broadcast the film.

The Venezuelan media is not so restricted as in the U.S. Of course that does not justify this new proposed law, which is terrible. But neither does it justify the widespread misrepresentation of the reality of press freedom in Venezuela. (Even if this new law were to pass, it would have little or no effect, since it would not be enforced and would probably be ruled unconstitutional by the country’s Supreme Court.) Venezuela is not Colombia, where journalists have to flee the country in fear of their lives when the President denounces them.

MacShane is taking advantage of the fact that after 10 years of media misrepresentation with no significant countervailing force, anyone can say anything about Venezuela and Chavez and it will not be challenged. A group of Latin America scholars recently bought a full-page ad in the Colombia Journalism Review to call attention to outright fabrications by the *Associated Press*.

My congratulations to the British left for not caving to this crude McCarthyism. We need more courage like that in the world.

Af-Pak Escalation NOT The Change We Need

Continued from page 4

such as Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) and Afghan Women’s Mission (AWM) provide an antidote to this ruse. Sonali Kolhatkar, co-director of AWM, and Mariam Rawi, of RAWA, have co-written a critique of the assertion that “the Feminist Majority Foundation has lent its good name—and the good name of feminism in general—to advocate for further troop escalation and war.” This important argument is available on AWM’s website, where one can also view the Women of Afghanistan section of Rethink Afghanistan from Robert Greenwald’s Brave New Films.

Despite the complexities and agonies of this area, citizens of the US need to confront the reality of our role in the region. The legacy of past years of real-politick need to be acknowledged; Bin Laden and Hekmatyar were our CIA’s assets, for instance. The latter was known for throwing acid in women’s faces whilst he was receiving more of our “covert” funds than any other of our Mujahidin. Non-military strategies, as outlined by Rubin, Rashid, and beyond, need to be tried and persistence in the effort must prevail.

SOME DOMESTIC REASSESSMENTS

As the best and brightest were reviewing the southwest Asian situation after the election, a Rand report further demphasized the utility of military escalation. The centrist Council on Foreign Relations published Barnett Rubin and Ahmed Rashid’s article from Great Game to Grand Bargain which begins, “The Great Game is no fun anymore.” and is synopsized thusly, “The crisis in Afghanistan and Pakistan is beyond the point where more troops will help. U.S. strategy must be to seek a compromise with insurgents while addressing regional rivalries and insecurities.” Apparently these counsels were to no real effect. Despite Gen. McCrystal protestations to the contrary, his emphasis and specialty is military, overt or covert, rather than a clear and hold or hearts and minds strategy.

Rubin, of NYU, who is widely assessed as one of the most informed Afghanistan scholars, and Rashid, a Pakistani journalist who knows where the bodies are buried and is the author of *Taliban and Descent into Chaos* (no

peacenik, he was calling for ouster of the Taliban by outside powers prior to 9/11) advocate a grand bargain between regional actors that would deal with their many concerns. This would probably begin with India and Pakistan as the most likely belligerents, but would necessarily include concerns of China, Iran and Russia, as well as the former Soviet central Asian states. Internally, they and others support a strategy that would split various tribal elements, including those who currently throw their lot in with Taliban forces, from any al-Qaeda and more extreme Taliban factions. Steady assured funding for development efforts is advocat-

Let’s Rise Against the War Crimes of US and Its Fundamentalist Lackeys!

RAWA Statement on Massacre of over 150 civilians in Bala Baluk of Farah Province by the U.S. RAWA, May 7, 2009:

“As the US occupiers continue killing our innocent and sorrowed people without regret, this time they committed yet another horrible crime in Bala Baluk village of Farah Province. On 5th May 2009, the US airstrikes targeted people’s homes, killing more than 150, mostly women and children. This is another war crime but Pentagon shamelessly includes Taliban as the perpetrators too and announces the civilian deaths being only 12!

The so-called ‘new’ strategy of Obama’s administration and the surge of troops in Afghanistan have already dragged our ill-fated people in the danger zone and his 100-day old government proved itself as much more war-mongering than Bush and his only gifts to our people is hiking killings and ever-horrifying oppression. This administration is bombarding our country and tearing our women and children into pieces and from the other side, is lending a friendly hand towards the terrorist Gulbuddin and Taliban—the dirty, bloody enemies of our people—and holding secret negotiations and talks with such brutal groups. [...]

The only way our people can escape the occupant forces and their obedient servants is to rise against them under the slogans of: ‘Neither the occupiers! Nor the bestial Taliban and the criminal Northern Alliance; long live a free and democratic Afghanistan!’”

ed; this would go a long way to supplanting the alienation from the corrupt ineffectual central government.

Whilst this perhaps sounds utopian, compare this strategy to the military course with its attendant civilian casualties and other intrinsic problems. Jonathan Hafetz of the ACLU asserts that the military’s incarceration practices are second to “collateral damage” in provoking opposition to continued US-Nato presence.

Unit One Guest-in Residence Brian Tokar September 27–October 1

Brian Tokar is acclaimed as a passionate advocate of grassroots action for global justice and an ecological future. He has been an activist, author and a prominent voice on environmental issues since the 1970s.

He is the author of *The Green Alternative* and *Earth for Sale*, edited two books on the politics of biotechnology, *Redesigning Life?* and *Gene Traders*, and co-edited the forthcoming collection, *Crisis in Food and Agriculture: Conflict, Resistance and Renewal*. Tokar’s articles on environmental issues, emerging ecological movements, global warming, and genetic engineering appear regularly in *Z Magazine*, *Synthesis/Regeneration*, *Toward Freedom*, *Counterpunch.org* and many other publications and websites.

Tokar holds concurrent degrees from MIT in biology and physics, and a Masters degree in biophysics from Harvard University. He is the Director of Vermont’s Institute for Social Ecology. He has lectured throughout the U.S., as well as internationally, on ecological issues and movements.

*The guests of this program live in Allen Hall and, in cooperation with students and staff, attempt to elicit an understanding for the necessity of creative thinking in society. All events are open to the public.



You Got Imperialism In My Sports vs You Got Sports In My Imperialism!

By Neil Parthun



IN THE PAST MONTHS, the American print media stories and the talking head punditocracy have discussed the status of sports in Iraq. The Iraqi National Soccer Team played their first home games since prior to the United States invasion.

Iraq shut out Palestine 3-0 in Irbil and shutout Palestine again in Baghdad. Iraq received even more positive news when they were told that the Kurdish self-governing region of Irbil could begin hosting matches in the Asian Football Federation. Prior to the July 2009 games, Iraq was forced to play their 'home' games in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan, Beirut and Oman that wreaked havoc on training and maintaining a fully professional schedule.

The media reports have been glowing dispatches about the success of "the surge", the US counterinsurgency efforts and the Iraqis taking back control of their country after Obama's orders to 'hand over control.' However, this is not the first time that Iraqi sports have been intertwined with US policy to benefit politicians and imperialism.

In August 2004, George W. Bush attempted to use the Iraqi National Soccer Team in electoral campaign advertisements. In response to Bush's capitalizing on the Iraqi team making the Olympics, members of the team were outspoken about being used to justify the violent imperialism perpetrated by the United States. Midfielder Salih Sadir stated bluntly, "Iraq as a team does not want Mr. Bush to use us for his presidential campaign. He can find another way to advertise himself." An anonymous player discussed the violence plaguing Iraq as a result of the invasion, "How will [Bush] meet his God having slaughtered so many men and women? He has committed so many crimes." Even the head coach of the team at the time, Adnan Hamad publicly said, "The American Army has killed so many people in Iraq. What is freedom when I go to the stadium and there are shootings in the road."

The "shootings in the road" and "slaughter" did eventually decrease. But, while many mainstream politicians and corporate media outlets have attributed the decreasing violence in Iraq to the "surge" and the US counterinsurgency activities, there is an alternative and bloodier theory coming from journalists like Patrick Cockburn. Cockburn argues that much of the violence came from sectarian warfare between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds who utilized death squads to create ethnic enclaves within Iraq. As Cockburn wrote in 2006: "It is strange to hear George Bush and John Reid deny that a civil war is going on, given that so many bodies—all strangled, shot or hanged solely because of their religious allegiance—are being discovered every day... [L]ater, a group of children playing football in a field noticed a powerful stench. Police opened up a pit which contained the bodies of 27 men, probably all Sunni, stripped to their underpants; they had all been tortured and shot in the head... the Shia militias and death squads slaughter Sunnis in tit-for-tat killings every time a Shia is killed." He continued in June 2009: "The Iraqi government announces proudly that in May 2009 only 225 Iraqis died from war-related violence, a

lower figure than we have seen in any month for at least four years. Of course this is far better than the 3,000 tortured bodies which used to turn up every month at the height of sectarian war in 2006-7."

Arguably, the rate of deaths of Iraqis in Iraq has dissipated because the potential victims have already been killed or have fled from the area to avoid being killed. Statistics are somewhat sketchy but approximately 2.4 million people are currently displaced within Iraq and another 2 million are living abroad to escape the violence.

The death squads that fomented ethnic violence in Iraq also impacted another sport in Iraq, baseball. The original Iraqi National Baseball team fell apart amidst the bloodbath of sectarian violence. As Laith Hammoudi discussed with some of the players, the fear of reprisal is still apparent. "Bashar, 28, is the only non-student on the team. The physical education teacher is captain and asked that his last name not be used because he still fears Sunni retaliation."

The team had no cleats, three balls, one bat, no jerseys and old gloves. After the story ran, there were many mainstream media calls for aid, most notably from MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show* which got a bucket of balls, a rule book, donated fitted jerseys, cleats, bats, gloves and a massive amount of support from the public offering assistance. I wholeheartedly support the assistance to the Iraqi National Baseball team and wish them the best in their upcoming tournament in, of all places, another war torn nation facing a US occupation—Afghanistan.

However, it is unfortunate that the public cannot be so stirred to end a brutal, bloody occupation that has killed countless thousand of Iraqis and cannot be so driven to help provide the basics of life to Iraqis after we devastated their country.

According to the most recent statistics, Iraq has 28% of its children suffering from chronic malnutrition, homes have limited access to electricity, only 37% have connections to sewer systems and only 22% of the water plants have been fixed to distribute potable water. Iraqis are in dire need of these basics of life much more so than bats and balls.

While I applaud the efforts of the Iraqi soccer and baseball teams, it is important to remember that these athletes are playing the game for the love of the sport. They should not be utilized to further paternalistic justifications for imperialism for any administration.

Upcoming Amasong Dates

Friday, September 25, time TBA (probably evening), OR **Saturday, September 26**, time TBA (late morning/early afternoon), downtown Urbana: lead a sing-along at the Urbana Folk & Roots Festival.

Thursday, October 22, noon, Urbana: Mills Breast Cancer Institute concert.

Saturday, November 14, afternoon, Champaign-Urbana: workshop with Pauline Oliveros.

Sunday, November 15, 3:00 pm (performance time; call time TBA), Decatur concert with GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Association of Decatur)

Friday, November 20, evening, Champaign: performance at Granny's Porch at the Virginia Theater.

And of course, our winter concerts: **Saturday, December 5**, evening; **Sunday, December 6**, afternoon.

Hip Hop Project: Insight Into The Hip Hop Generation

By Steve Broadnax
Aaron Todd Douglas, Director

Thursday-Saturday, October 15-17, at 7:30pm;
Thursday-Saturday, October 22-24, at 7:30pm;
Sunday, October 25, at 3pm, Colwell Playhouse

The party will get cranking by a deejay in the theatre before dancers, poets, graffiti artists, and emcee B-Boy All Star expose the political, social, economic, and religious truths lived by the hip hop generation.

DIGITAL PRIMITIVES PERFORMING AT THE IMC

Wednesday, September 30, 8:30pm Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center 202 South Broadway, Urbana, IL

\$10, \$6 students

Digital Primitives is a New York City-based collective trio featuring Assif Tsahar, Cooper-Moore, and Chad Taylor who together explore the roots of free jazz by delving into American and African folk, pop and blues. They are touring in support of their second CD "Hum Crackle & Pop" on Hopscotch Records.

The Digital Primitives show will start at 8:30pm with a short set by Ferrocene3, an Urbana-Champaign based improvising trio featuring Jason Finkelman (percussion + laptop electronics), Jay Eychaner (synthesizer) and Nick Rudd (el. guitar).

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Sunday, October 4, 6-8 PM, Independent Media Center, 202 South Broadway, Urbana

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