

The *Public i*, a project of the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, is an independent, collectively-run, community-oriented publication that provides a forum for topics underreported and voices under-represented in the dominant media. All contributors to the paper are volunteers. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to submit articles or story ideas to the editorial collective. We prefer, but do not necessarily restrict ourselves to, articles on issues of local impact written by authors with local ties.

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), to post a story to the web site (<http://www.ucimc.org>), or to contact one of the editors.

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TWO GREAT MAYDAY WEEKEND EVENTS ON SATURDAY, APRIL 28

**The Recent Resurgence of Socialism and Populism
What Is Happening in Latin America?**

1-3 pm at the Illinois Disciples Foundation, corner Springfield and Wright Streets.

Featuring:

Martin Sanchez, Consul of the Government of Venezuela in Chicago.

Maria Silva, Urbana resident from Ecuador.

Rev. Mike Mulberry, Urbana resident, on the struggles in Oaxaca.

A Bread and Roses Event sponsored by Socialist Forum, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the U of I

Solidarity Forever!

A Mayday/Workers' Memorial Day Celebration Party

3pm-7pm at the Independent Media Center, Downtown Urbana Post Office Building, 202 S. Broadway

Fun, food (*BYO* alcohol), music benefitting our newly created "Jobs with Justice Coalition." suggested donation \$10/\$5 minimum

Performances by:

Anne Feeney, renowned rabble-rousing song writer and singer

Paul Kotheimer, our favorite local bard

Other great local bands

This event is in honor of the campaign for the eight-hour day (Haymarket in Chicago 1886) and those who died to make the eight hour day a reality, as well as for workers who have died on the job-site.

Contact: David Johnson 356-8247 or unionyes@ameritech.net

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The *Public i* wishes to express its deep appreciation to the following sustaining contributors for their financial and material support:

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Published by the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

April 2007
V7 #3

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1984



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Structured Cruelty: Learning to Be a Lean, Mean Killing Machine

By Martin Smith, USMC, Sgt., ret.

Martin Smith is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War and a graduate student in History at UIUC. He can be reached at send2smith@yahoo.com

I will never forget standing in formation after the end of our final “hump,” Marine-speak for a forced march, at the end of the Crucible in March, 1997. The Crucible is the final challenge during Marine Corps boot camp and is a two-and-a-half day, physically exhausting exercise in which sleep deprivation, scarce food, and a series of obstacles test teamwork and toughness. The formidable nine-mile stretch ended with our ascent up the “Grim Reaper,” a small mountain in the hilly terrain of Camp Pendleton, California. As we stood at attention, the Commanding Officer made his way through our lines, inspecting his troops and giving each of us an eagle, globe, and anchor pin, the mark of our final transition from recruit to Marine. But what I recall most was not the pain and exhaustion that filled every ounce of my trembling body, but the sounds that surrounded me as I stood at attention with eyes forward.

Mixed within the repetitive refrains of Lee Greenwood’s “God Bless the USA,” belting from a massive sound system, were the soft and gentle sobs emanating from numerous newborn Marines. Their cries stood in stark contrast to the so-called “warrior spirit” we had earned and now came to epitomize. While some may claim that these unmanly responses resulted from a patriotic emotional fit or even out of a sense of pride in being called “Marine” for the very first time, I know that for many the moisture streaming down our cheeks represented something much more anguished and heartrending.

SOLIDARITY OF THE DESPISED

What I learned about Marines is that despite the stereotype of the chivalrous knight, wearing dress blues with sword drawn, or the green killing machine that is always “ready to rumble,” the young men and women I encountered instead comprised a cross-section of working-class America. There were neither knights nor machines among us. During my five years in active-duty service, I befriended a recovering meth addict who was still “using,” a young male who had prostituted himself to pay his rent before he signed-up, an El Salvadorian immigrant serving in order to receive a green card, a single mother who could not afford her child’s healthcare needs as a civilian, a gay teenager who entertained our platoon by singing Madonna karaoke in the barracks to the delight of us all, and many of the country’s poor and poorly educated. I came to understand very well what those cries on top of the Grim Reaper expressed. Those teardrops represented hope in the promise of a change in our lives from a world that, for many of us as civilians, seemed utterly hopeless.

Marine Corps boot camp is a thirteen-week training regimen unlike any other. According to the USMC’s recruiting website, “Marine Recruits learn to use their intelligence... and to live as upstanding moral beings with real purpose.” Yet if teaching intelligence and morals are the stated purpose of its training, the Corps has peculiar way of implementing its pedagogy. In reality, its educational method is based on a planned and structured form of cruelty. I remember my first visit to the “chow-hall” in which three Drill Instructors (DIs), wearing their signature “smoky bear” covers, pounced upon me for having looked at them, screaming that I was a “Nasty Piece of Civilian Shit.” From then on, I learned that you could only look at

a DI when instructed to by the command of “Eyeballs!” In addition, recruits could only speak in the third person, thus ridding our vocabulary of the term “I” and divorcing ourselves from our previous civilian identities.

Our emerging group mentality was built upon and reinforced by tearing down and degrading us through a series of regimented and ritualistic exercises in the first phase of boot camp. Despite having an African American and a Latino DI, recruits in my platoon were ridiculed with derogatory language that included racial epithets. But recruits of color were not the only victims, we were all “fags,” “pussies,” and “shitbags.” We survived through a twisted sort of leveling based on what military historian Christian G. Appy calls a “solidarity of the despised.”

We relearned how to execute every activity, including the most personal aspects of our hygiene. While eating, we could only use our right hand while our left had to stay directly on our knee, and our eyes had to stare directly at our food trays. Our bathroom breaks were so brief that three recruits would share a urinal at a time so that the entire platoon of sixty-three recruits could relieve themselves in our minute-and-a-half time limit. On several occasions, recruits soiled their uniforms during training. Every evening, DIs inspected our boots for proper polish and our belt buckles for satisfactory shine while we stood at attention in our underwear. Then, we would “mount our racks” (bunk beds), lie at attention, and scream all three verses of the Marine Corps hymn at the top of our lungs. While the DIs would proclaim that these inspections were to ensure that our bodies had not been injured during training, I suspect that there were ulterior motives as well. These examinations were attempts to indoctrinate us with an emerging military masculinity that is based upon male sexuality linked to respect for the uniform and a fetishization of combat.

After the playing of Taps, lights went out. At which time, a DI would circle around the room and begin moralizing. “One of these days, you’re going to figure out what’s really tough in the world,” he would exclaim. “You think you’ve got it so bad. But in recruit training, you get three meals a day while we tell you when to shit and blink,” he continued. The DI would then lower his voice, “But when you’re out on your own, you’re gonna see what’s hard. You’ll see what tough is when you knock up your old woman. You’ll realize what’s cruel when you get married and find yourself stuck with a fat bitch who just squats out ungrateful kids. You’ll learn what the real world’s about when you’re overseas and your wife back in the states robs you blind and sleeps with your best friend.” The DIs’ nightly homiletic speeches, full of an unabashed hatred of women, were part of the second phase of boot camp, the process of rebuilding recruits into Marines.

ON KILLING

The process of reconstructing recruits and molding them into future troops is based on building a team that sees itself in opposition to those who are outside of it. After the initial shock of the first phase of training, DIs indoctrinate recruits to dehumanize the enemy in order to train them how to overcome any fear or prejudice against killing. In fact, according to longtime counter-recruitment activist Tod Ensign, the military has deliberately researched how to best design training for teaching recruits how to kill. Such research was needed because humans are instinctively reluctant to kill. Dr. Dave Grossman disclosed in his book, *On Killing*, that fewer than 20 percent of U.S. troops fired their weapons in World War II during combat. As a result, the military reformed training standards

so that more soldiers would pull their trigger against the enemy. Grossman credits these training modifications for the transformation of the Armed Forces in the Vietnam War in which 90-95 percent of soldiers fired their weapons. These reforms in training were based on teaching recruits how to dehumanize the enemy.

The process of dehumanization is central to military training. During Vietnam, the enemy in Vietnam was simply a “gook,” “dink,” or a “slope.” Today, “rag head” and “sand nigger” are the current racist epithets lodged against Arabs and Muslims. After every command, we would scream, “Kill!” But our call for blood took on particular importance during our physical training, when we learned how to fight with pugil sticks, wooden sticks with padded ends, how to run an obstacle course with fixed bayonets, or how to box and engage in hand-to-hand combat. We were told to imagine the “enemy” in all of our combat training, and it was always implied that the “enemy” was of Middle Eastern descent. “When some rag head comes lurking up from behind, you’re gonna give ‘em ONE,” barked the training DI. We all howled in unison, “Kill!” Likewise, when we charged toward the dummy on an obstacle course with our fixed bayonets, it was clear to all that the lifeless form was Arab.

Even in 1997, we were being brainwashed to accept the coming Iraq War. Abruptly interrupting a class, one of numerous courses we attended on military history, first aid, and survival skills, a Series Chief DI excitedly announced that all training was coming to a halt. We were to be shipped immediately to the Gulf, because Saddam had just fired missiles into Israel. Given that we lived with no knowledge of the outside world, with neither TV nor newspapers, and that we experienced constant high levels of stress and a discombobulating environment, the DI’s false assertion seemed all too believable. After a half-hour panic, we were led out of the auditorium to face the rebuke and scorn of our platoon DIs. It turned out that the interruption was a skit planned to scare us into the realization that we could face war at any moment. The trick certainly had the planned effect on me, as I pondered what the hell I had gotten myself into. I also now realize that we were being indoctrinated with schemes for war in the Middle East. Our hatred of the Arab “other” was crafted from the very beginning of our training through fear and hate.

Almost ten years since I stood on the yellow footprints that greet new recruits at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, I express gratitude for my luck during my enlistment. I was fortunate to have never witnessed a day of combat and was honorably discharged months after 9/11. However, joining the military is like playing Russian Roulette. With wars raging in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the likelihood of military action against Iran, troops in the Corps today are playing with grimmer odds. In these “dirty wars,” troops cannot tell friend from foe, leading to war crimes against a civilian population. Our government is cynically promoting a campaign of lies and deception to justify its illegal actions (with the complicity of both parties in Washington), and our troops are fighting to support regimes that lack popular support and legitimacy.

DEGRADATION OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

With over 3,100 U.S. troops now dead and thousands more maimed and crippled, I look back to the other young men I heard sobbing on that sunny wintry morning on top of the Reaper. The reasons we enlisted were as varied as our personal histories. Yet, it is the starkest irony

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Resistance IS NOT Futile

by David Enstrom



Dave Enstrom is a longtime resident of Champaign. He was a bricklayer until 1980. Currently he is a bird biologist with the State of Illinois and occasionally teaches courses at the University of Illinois.

Forty years ago as the Vietnam War was raging opposition and organized resistance to the US military was growing rapidly. The military draft provided the focus for protest and resistance. Young men and their families were forced to examine the morality of that war with intense clarity. Each boy had to decide whether to allow his government to conscript him into the military and place him in kill or be kill situations.

In the past few years I have heard some prominent political figures that avoided the military draft during the Vietnam War either apologize for it or deny doing so. But tens of thousands of draft-aged boys resisted the draft during that war and millions of others in the country aided and supported them, helping to bring conscription to an end in 1973 and the war to a close in 1975. In the current political climate it is essential to remember, claim, and celebrate this victory.

A variety of methods were used to avoid compulsory war 'service' during Vietnam. Many boys secured a military position, often through connections, that assured

them an assignment far from the war. Others petitioned for an exemption on the grounds that they were conscientious objectors, although few were granted CO status. Some simply refused induction. Many of these were prosecuted and about five thousand were sentenced to prison. With the help of anti-war counselors some young men contacted anti-draft physicians who fabricated medical records to gain their clients permanent 4-F (unfit to serve) draft status. Boys also inflicted real injuries on themselves, or kept themselves in a constant state of poor health (for example remaining drastically under weight), in order to fail draft board physicals.

A tragic number of young Americans evaded the military by leaving the country. Between 1965 and 1973 about 100,000 American boys fled to the safety of Canada and other countries. Even more hid from their local draft boards somewhere in the United States. The most common means of escape was simply to go to college. In 1969, when the U.S. was drafting boys into the military at a rate of 28,000 per month, I entered Knox College, receiving 2-S status and a four-year deferment. Many of my generation chose the 2-S option, and as a result there was an unprecedented spike in the admission of young males to college between 1965 and 1969. The inherent unfairness of 2-S was soon addressed, and the first draft lottery, which prioritized

boys for the draft based on date of birth, was held in December of 1969. By 1973, the draft was politically and militarily untenable and Congress allowed the draft authorization to expire. The Pentagon had learned that colonial wars are difficult to fight with an army of draftees.

Americans need to remember, or learn, the history of the Vietnam era. Young people in particular need to understand that conscription mechanisms are still in place and that a new draft could be activated quickly. Registration with Selective Service is still mandatory and federal law provides stiff penalties for non-compliance. Most Americans understand that failure to register bars a young man (only males register) from federal programs such as student loans. However, most may not know that under the law a fine of up to \$250,000 and a prison sentence of up to 5 years can be imposed for failure to register. Thus far, our wary federal government has prosecuted violators rarely and very selectively. However, forty-one States have laws that add penalties for non-compliance with the Selective Service Act. In Illinois, a young man must be registered with Selective Service in order to obtain state student financial aid and must prove that he is registered in order to obtain an Illinois drivers license.

I carry a burden of sorrow for the Americans of my generation who were swept away and sacrificed to that terrible national

mistake, the war in Vietnam. I am sorry as well that many Americans are currently caught up in the violence of our latest military adventure in Iraq. Thus far, our government has been able to maintain its war effort by liberal use of the National Guard and aggressive military ad campaigns. This may soon prove inadequate. Iraq is more than this generation of soldiers bargained for. Recruiting and retention rates are falling and the military is resorting to unfair deployment policies to maintain its numbers in the field. In his State of the Union speech Mr. Bush called for the creation of an army of "civilian volunteers", i.e., mercenaries, to shore up the war effort.

This is ultimately an appeal for a more focused and urgent opposition and resistance the current US effort to control other peoples through military force. Heroism from all of our citizens is called for and, in my view, heroes seldom carry weapons. Thirty-seven years ago the actions of protest and resistance of the American public forced our government to stop its prosecution of an unjust war. In the present crisis we lack the focusing power of imminent conscription that loomed over our young men during the Vietnam era. We must instead find our focus solely in reason and justice. And we must find a way to bring that passion and resolve to our fellow citizens.

SECOND BIRTHDAY BASH! TWO YEARS IN THE POST OFFICE!

UCIMC General Membership Meeting, Cinco de Mayo, May 5, 2007, 8 p.m.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



Letter to the Publici

Dear PI,

I was disappointed to see in your March issue an unbalanced and unscientific article by Ayanna Qadeem attacking the new HPV vaccine. Although Qadeem cites many statistics, most are simply irrelevant to her case that the costs would exceed the benefits. The bottom line is that once phased in the vaccine would prevent about 2500 painful premature deaths from cervical cancer every year in the U.S., at a cost of probably less than about \$100,000 per life saved. (The cost of the vaccine would be much less than the current list price when it is offered in large-scale programs.) That's not expensive by the standards of other domestic public health expenditures. Furthermore, as a genuine preventive method, the vaccine is much preferable to cancer treatments (surgery, chemotherapy) which can have very serious side effects.

Qadeem also raises speculations about possible serious side effects of the vaccine. In one case, the claim that the trace amounts of aluminum (tiny compared to the amounts in many antacids) might cause Alzheimer's disease is simply false. Other speculations about possible ill effects are unlikely to prove significant, since the clinical trial was ended due to the 100% success rate against targeted viral strains coupled with the lack of any detected adverse effects. Beneficial side effects are much more likely, since even non-lethal cervical cancer creates major problems. Furthermore the vaccine protects against strains which cause 90% of all genital wart cases. Genital warts create major dangers in pregnancy, and the open sores they create are believed to facilitate the spread of HIV and other STDs.

Qadeem scrambles other facts. The vaccine has been confirmed to be fully effective for at least five years, and counting. She says instead that "at best, immunity has been slated for 5 years". She warns that the vaccine should not be used by pregnant women. Since the current plans, as she states, are to give the vaccine to 6th graders, that's unlikely to be a major problem.

If Qadeem had ever had to watch, as I have, a loved one die young of a cancer whose treatment (or prevention) was introduced just barely too late for her, I do not believe she would so easily dismiss thousands of cancer victims as not worth saving because they are "so rare".

Michael B. Weissman is a Professor of Physics at the Uof I



How Does the Criminal Justice System Work in Champaign County?

By Marti Wilkinson



On March 13, 2007, members of the community showed up at the Urbana Civic Center to learn how the criminal justice system works. A panel comprised of Sheriff Dan Walsh, States Attorney Julia Rietz, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum, Associate Judge Richard Klaus, and Director of Court Services Joe Gordon shared what their duties are and how they do them. After their speeches, the participants selected written questions to answer. The only parts of the evening offering anything fresh and new were the cookies served to the people who attended.

During the lecture portion of the event State's Attorney Julia Rietz talked about how her office considers individual factors in making decisions on what criminal charges to press when a law is broken. Without revealing any names she mentioned receiving a phone call from a concerned father who wanted to see his daughters' abusive boyfriend get the book thrown at him for using his child as a human punching bag. Later in the conversation this same father pleaded for leniency on behalf of his son who got behind the wheel of a car drunk and killed somebody. She presented this as an example of how she is expected to engage in prosecutorial discretion.

This particular aspect of her job is one that considers the history of a defendant. For instance, if a person goes to a local store and steals a bottle of liquor chances are that person will be charged with a misdemeanor, provided that there is no other criminal history. Then if the person pro-

ceeds to commit the same crime again and again the end result will ultimately be a felony charge due to the person becoming a threat to society.

On the surface level this makes sense to me. After all if a person is given a chance to become a good citizen and blows it, then there is certainly reason to pursue the punishment approach. It is unfortunate that some of the choices made by the State's Attorney's office do not match her words. I have to question the decision Ms. Rietz made in 2006 when she decided to not pursue heavier charges against Jennifer Stark who killed a young man while she was driving down the street and downloading items to her cell phone at the same time. Considering that this was her fourth moving violation in two years it would certainly seem reasonable to presume that Ms. Stark was not rehabilitated in her habits and it resulted in a loss of life. As it turns out the only conviction that Ms. Stark received was a guilty verdict for improper lane usage. Apparently, the State's Attorney came to the conclusion that this individual poses no real threat to society.

Additionally, it begs the question of what to do when the people who are expected to uphold the law are the ones who break it. In 2005, an Urbana Police officer named Kurt Hjort was accused of raping a woman while on duty. Hjort resigned as a result of the investigation and no charges ever got filed against him. After the panel discussion ended I approached Ms. Rietz and asked her about the case and she stated that her office holds each and every officer accountable for crimes that are committed.

Considering the alleged rape occurred in 2005 and Ms. Rietz took office in 2004 it's a bit of a contradiction. She also stood firm in her decision to allow William Alan Myers, a former guard at the Champaign County Jail, to accept a plea bargain to charges associated with his decision to use a Taser on a restrained inmate and his later falsification of the reports of the incident. In return he gets two years probation and no jail time. Now exactly how did Myers end up being held accountable for his crime?

When Rietz was questioned after the panel discussion she became defensive and made it quite clear that she did not wish to discuss the matter. She mentioned that Myers will have to live with a felony conviction and the loss of his pension. Neither would she discuss why her office did not prosecute Myers when two other people brought forth allegations of inappropriate Taser usage.

All it took was a simple question for Ms. Rietz to become defensive and somewhat confrontational. As an elected official in a public office she is in a position where what she does will be scrutinized and questioned. Members of the public have a right to ask questions, and the public has a right to get answers delivered in a reasonable and intelligent manner.

My suggestion to Rietz is she that she either works on developing a thicker skin or reconsiders what she does for a living. As long as she is in office there are people who will question what she does and who will not be afraid to approach her with these inquiries. That is a basic part of her job and it's not left up to prosecutorial discretion.

One Person Can Make A Difference: Cindy Sheehan in Urbana-Champaign

The following is excerpted from a talk given by Cindy Sheehan at the University of Illinois on March 1, 2007. It was recorded and transcribed by Shara Esbenshade.

Before my son was killed, I disagreed with the war and I disagreed with George Bush—I never voted for him. My son was not for the war. But he knew his duty. Not like George Bush, who went AWOL from the Texas Air National Guard. Not like Dick Cheney, who got five deferments from going to Vietnam. And I don't think it's wrong for anybody to have gotten out of Vietnam. But when you get to be in power and you start your own illegal and immoral war and then other people's children are dying—that's what I have a problem with.

Casey knew his duty. He went over there and he was there five days and he was killed. When Casey was killed in a war that I disagreed with, in a war that his father disagreed with, in a war that his brothers and sisters disagreed with and that he disagreed with, I knew that I had to do something. It was too late for Casey but it was not too late for millions of other people in harm's way. It was not too late for our soldiers. It was not too late for the people of Iraq.

The Iraqis did not have weapons of mass destruction. They did not have anything to do with 9/11. Iraq was devastated by twelve years of sanctions. Some of our soldiers told me they met Iraqi soldiers that were wearing flip-flops and had rusty weapons. This is the country that George Bush lied us into an invasion of and the occupation of. I want to tell you something: it has not proven how strong America is; it has proven how weak America is. An insurgency in a small country that was already harmed by twelve years of sanctions is holding off the US Army, the US Air Force, the US Navy.

I just got back from Turkey yesterday. I travel around the world and I want to tell you one other thing George Bush has done to us. He has made us pariahs in the world. The world hates us. They do not only hate George Bush but they hate Americans and I say, "You know we are trying to get him out of office, we are trying to end the war." They say, "Why did you vote for him in 2004? Why did you elect him again? It was bad enough in 2000, but why did you elect him again?" We have to end this war and the Bush presidency to get some credibility back in the world.

I was appalled at a meeting with two Iraqi gentlemen who were telling what was going on in Iraq. Turk after Turk got up and said, "We are proud of the insurgency. We are proud and you people in Iraq give us hope." And that broke my heart because we are so hated and our soldiers are so hated and the only reason they are is because of George Bush, because we invaded an innocent country.

Dick Cheney, "Doomsday Dick," went all over the world saying, "No options off the table." So they're saying to stop Iran from getting one nuclear bomb, they might nuke them! And who has the most nukes out of anyone in the world? And who is the only country that has ever used a nuclear bomb on innocent people? America. And now we are talking about it again. We are a rogue state.

Some say "Well if you don't love America why don't you leave it." I don't leave America because I love it. That's why I travel 27 days out of the month to motivate people. About 70 percent of this country disagrees with the war and wants the troops to come home. When I sat down in Crawford, Texas, it wasn't even 50 percent. But what we don't see is 70 percent of America out on the streets. If just one percent of those people got out on the street demanding all of those troops home, Congress would have to listen to us. George Bush will never listen to us. We told him on November 7, "We disagree with you and we disagree with your war." And what did he do? He turned around and sent more troops. He will not ever listen to us. That is why you and your congressional district should demand that Congress end the war by cutting the funding.

Everyone says, "you have to vote for funding to support the troops." The 21,500 troops they're sending for the surge will not have body armor until summer. What are they supposed to do? Dodge the bullets and the shrapnel until summer? Is this supporting the troops? Is it supporting the troops when we pay Halliburton to clean their water and Halliburton does not clean their water? Is it supporting the troops when Walter Reed is falling apart? Is it supporting the troops when you cut back on VA benefits? The ultimate not-supporting-the-troops is sending them to Iraq in the first place. The only way we can support them is to bring them home.

I also care about the people in the Middle East. Every day our troops stay in Iraq it becomes more unstable and the hope for putting it back together again gets farther and farther away. It's not going to happen when our troops are there. 87% of the people of Iraq in the last poll said they wanted the troops out. I want to tell you something: it is their country. It is not our country. People always ask me, "What would you do with Iraq?" It does not matter what I would do with it, I am not an Iraqi.

Before my son was killed, on February 15, 2003, I saw millions of people all over the world go out and protest the invasion of Iraq. And what did George Bush say? "Well that's nice but I don't have to listen to 'focus groups.'" I thought if he calls millions of people a focus group, what is he going to call me? A flea on his butt? So I thought my voice was not going to make a difference. Why should I go out? Why should I go out and hold signs in the rain and the cold? Why should I go out of my little sphere of influence? Because I did not believe that one person could make a difference.

But when Casey was killed, I thought to myself, I have to try to make a difference. And if I do not make a difference, at least I can die trying. And I just thought how could I face my grandchildren, Casey's nieces and nephews, and say, "You know your grandma she just gave up, she didn't try." I want to be able to say, "Your grandma did everything she could to rectify the problem that killed your uncle Casey."

After that point, I couldn't not do something. So I started working soon after Casey was killed and that was about sixteen months before I went to Crawford, Texas. I decided on

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August 3, 2005 that I had had enough. Fourteen marines were killed in one incident. I



Myths About U.S. and Torture Today

By Barbara Kessel

Barbara Kessel is a retired senior activist, currently working on the issue of torture and human rights through the Interfaith Alliance and A.W.A.R.E.

Myth #1. The U.S. Government has a legal right to pursue torture as a means to get information out of people it deems to be terrorists because we are under attack.

Reading the Geneva Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment articles, you would be struck by how absolute and unconditional they are in their prohibitions. It is also striking how many ways that the Bush Administration has tried to weasel out from under all the conventions of international law using new definitions and other legal devices

Torture is defined in Part I, Article 1 of the General Assembly of the United Nations resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984 as follows:

Article 1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity....

The Bush Administration redefined torture as "pain equivalent...to that...associated with serious physical injury so severe that death, organ failure, or permanent damage resulting in a loss of significant body function will likely result." You might have the impression from the mainstream media that this definition has been challenged out of existence. It has been challenged, particularly by the military and by Congress, but it still serves to guide those who do the torturing.

From the beginning of its War on Terror, the Bush Administration claimed that people it seized were not "prisoners of war," a term used in the Geneva conventions, but "enemy combatants" and as such were exempt from any part of the Geneva Conventions. While the Geneva Conventions began in 1864 to deal with prisoners of war, they have evolved to cover anyone in state custody of any kind. This too is a "fudge" definition.

The next and most serious attempt to escape prosecution of our agents, guards and torture specialists for war crimes was to send prisoners to secret prisons, often in places with vague jurisdictions, such as Guantanamo Bay, which is in Cuba but is under our control as a U.S. naval base. Other possibilities have been places with governments infamous for torturing their own citizens, such as Syria, Jordan and just now, Ethiopia.

Article 3 of the Conventions reads "No State Party shall expel, return or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture."

"Extraordinary rendition" is another legal fiction. "Extradition" occurs when one country asks another country to turn over a wanted person and there is a hearing or trial first. "Ordinary rendition" occurs when two countries mutually agree on an exchange with no legal hearing. "Extraordinary rendition" is a fancy-sounding, legal-sounding term for kidnapping. The numbers are unknown, of course, but in November, 2006 ABC News reported it had obtained a European Parliament draft report of 1,245 CIA secret flights into European airspace.

Article 2 of the Conventions which states that "an order from a superior officer or a public authority may not be invoked as a justification of torture" has led to the go-around of having private contractors do the torturing ("Blackwater made me do it.") or CIA agents (What CIA agent? I cannot reveal the identity of a covert...).

At Abu Ghraib, the General in charge of that prison had

been told by Military Intelligence to stay out of the section where the torture was instituted. Brigadier General Janis Karpinski was shown the famous photographs for the first time by the commander of the Criminal Investigation Division. She reported in a *Democracy Now* interview: "My first response was 'Where is the military intelligence in all of this?' And seeing one of the contract people in some of the photographs, I said, 'Why are the translators in any of these photographs?' And I was told, 'Ma'am, those aren't translators. Those are contract interrogators.' So, it was my first time not only seeing the pictures, but the first time I was receiving details of contract interrogators actually working out at Abu Ghraib."

Finally the Bush Administration declared that the President had the right to do whatever he deemed necessary in the War on Terror.

Those who put together the Geneva Conventions had thought of that as well. Article 2, 2 states "No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture."

Myth #2. The Geneva Conventions are set aside. As the interrogators arriving at Abu Ghraib were told, "The Geneva Conventions are off."

While it is obvious to any casual observer that war crimes are seldom punished and there are many other countries who engage in torture besides the U.S., we are by far the most influential.

We are signatories to the Geneva Conventions and there are several other treaties and conventions that make up International Law on Human Rights, which always includes a ban on torture. It is only "grave breeches" that are cited for punishment and that punishment can include death. Heads of state and individuals carrying out the state policies have been tried before: German and Japanese war criminals were tried in Nuremberg and Tokyo right after WWII and in the 1990's tribunals were created for war crimes committed in Rwanda and the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

A suit was filed in Germany this past November, 2006 against Donald Rumsfeld, along with George Tenet, Alberto Gonzalez and others. It was filed by 11 survivors of Abu Ghraib and one from Guantanamo; the star witness was to be General Janis Karpinski (demoted to Colonel), former military person in charge of Abu Ghraib, to the effect that she saw a memo on a bulletin board describing tortures, with a signature of Rumsfeld and the handwritten note: "This must happen." The criminal investigation was stopped before trial, but it illustrates the point that it can happen, and that any country is entitled to try war criminals from another country under the conventions, as Spain did Pinochet of Chile.

Serving notice that the U.S. government is in trouble under international law, the United Nations Committee Against Torture issued a "sweeping rebuke" in May of 2006 against the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, the secret overseas CIA prisons, the transfer of prisoners to countries known for torture, and the use of what it called "cruel and degrading interrogation techniques." (*Boston Globe*, May 20, 06). The panel found that the policies of the Bush Administration were at odds with the commitments of the U.S. under the global Convention Against Torture treaty in 1994, signed by the U.S.

Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen who was first held incommunicado in a terminal of New York's JFK airport before being transported to Jordan and Syria for torture, remembered an Immigration and Naturalization Service agent telling him, "The INS is not the body or the agency that signed the Geneva Convention... against torture." ("Nick Turse on the Bush Planetary Lockup," www.tomdispatch.com, Nov. 2, 2006). This shows a remarkable awareness and sensitivity all up and down the line that torture and rendering people to be tortured is an

international crime and as such it is to be carried out in utmost secrecy.

Myth #3: Torture is a highly effective method of getting life-saving information. (We've seen it on TV).

Absolutely and categorically untrue... and the people telling us this are the military and the non-military interrogators who have used it. Apparently there was a great deal of fighting about this behind the scenes when the policies were first being formed in March/April 2003 with the military fighting to keep the U.S. out of the torture business. This came out in Senate hearings of July 2005 (Armed Services subcommittee - chaired by Sen. Lindsey Graham) where judge advocate generals (JAGS) and the Army's top lawyer testified about their somewhat ineffective opposition to the Justice Department and the Dept. of Defense.

Recently, this subject has come out of the security-classified closet: a delegation went to meet with the producers of the very popular TV show featuring torture, "24." First was Brigadier General Patrick Finnegan, Dean of West Point, who wanted to say that their show was totally unrealistic and they should do a few shows illustrating that torture training their cadets who all watch "24" and think that it does portray reality. Tony Lagouranis, a former interrogator at Abu Ghraib said in a television interview (*Democracy Now*, Feb. 22, 2007): "Well the problem was that when we were interrogating in Iraq in 2004, we were being told that Geneva conventions didn't apply. So we didn't have training that informed us what to do anymore, because we were taught according to Geneva Conventions. So people were getting ideas from television." When asked whether torture worked, Lagouranis said, "In my experience, no. I saw torture in Iraq. I even employed some torture methods. In my experience, it doesn't work. I think you are going to get false intelligence when you employ torture methods." The FBI interrogation expert who was at the meeting said that he would not want anyone like Jack Bauer (the star of the show "24") in his organization. "They are untrustworthy and tend to have grotesque other problems."

So what do you do instead? Read about U.S. Marine Major Sherwood Moran, a legendary interrogator of the Japanese in World War II, legendary because of his effectiveness. In his classic text, *Truth Extraction*, Moran formulates the basic premise of "truth extraction"—know their language, know their culture and treat the captured enemy as a human being. "

As for the overworked example of the "ticking time bomb," Moran says that it does not work that way. First of all, very few if any prisoners are likely to have decisive information about imminent plans, but if they did have

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Twenty First Century Socialism In Latin America: What Is Happening In Venezuela and Ecuador?

Featuring: Martin Sanchez, Consul of Venezuela in Chicago, and Maria Silva, Ph.D student from Ecuador

A "Bread and Roses" event sponsored by Socialist Forum and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Illinois

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 1 PM ILLINOIS DISCIPLES FOUNDATION (northwest corner of Springfield and Wright Streets)



War With Iran?

By Shara Esbenschade and Kumars Salehi



Shara Esbenschade is a junior at Uni High. She is a member of the Anti-War Anti-Racism Effort and several other groups working to end the war in Iraq and to prevent a war with Iran.



Kumars Salehi is a junior at University Laboratory High School. He is an aspiring screenwriter and budding political activist. He is a first-generation Iranian-American.

"IT'S NOT IF.... THEY'RE DOING IT."

The United States has a history of interfering with Iran's development. In 1953, the United States collaborated with Britain to overthrow the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh, and put the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi back into power. His rule quickly became a dictatorship. After the Iranian seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979, the United States froze \$12 billion in Iranian assets, which have still not been released. In 1995 President Clinton, under pressure from Congress and the pro-Israel lobby, imposed a total embargo on trade between Iran and U.S. companies, and the following year Congress passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act that imposed sanctions on Iran's trade with non-U.S. companies as well. Although the European Union denounced it and declared it void, it blocked some needed investment for Iran.

Today, the United States government claims to be concerned about Iran's alleged efforts to make nuclear weapons. President Bush named Iran a threat to the U.S. during his "Axis of Evil" speech in January of 2002. The Bush administration's official position is that a nuclear-armed Iran is not acceptable.

Western intelligence agencies say that Iran's nuclear program has serious technical problems right now and, if it gets no outside help, is at least a couple years away from being able to develop actual nuclear warheads. Since the Israeli Air Force set Iran's nuclear program back several years when it destroyed Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981, the Iranian program has moved to underground, more dispersed, and harder to find sites. This means that the U.S. would have to use mini nukes to actually reach Iran's nuclear development sites, if they were to attack.

When asked about how he plans to deal with Iran, president Bush has repeatedly stated that all options are on the table, including those nuclear options. In 2005, the U.S. revised its Doctrine For Joint Nuclear Operations to include preemptive use on states with no nuclear weapons. The administration has denied that the U.S. is currently preparing for war with Iran, but a look at the facts suggests we are on the brink of one.

Journalist Seymour Hersh reported in 2005 that the U.S. Central Command, the main unit of the American Armed Forces whose jurisdiction is the Middle East, has been requested to revise the military war plan so that it will allow for maximum air and ground space in Iran. But the Administration has been conducting secret reconnaissance missions inside Iran since the summer of 2004, and has been flying unmanned armed vehicles into Iran from Iraq since

2003, a couple of which have crashed in Iran. According to Hersh, these incursions have reportedly found hardly any new information and the Iranian government has formally denounced them as illegal. Meanwhile, the U.S. could launch covert missions into Iran. In 2005, Hersh reports, president Bush also "signed a series of findings and executive orders authorizing secret commando groups and other Special Forces units to conduct covert operations against suspected terrorist targets in as many as ten nations in the Middle East and South Asia," which, Hersh explains, will allow these operations to be run without the legal restrictions that are imposed on the CIA.

Recently, ABC News reported that the United States has been waging a "secret war with Iran." The U.S. has been advising and encouraging Pakistani militant group Jundullah, a force of several hundred that has been leading guerilla raids into Iran with the goal of destabilizing the country. They have captured and executed a dozen Iranians already, attacking military and intelligence officers. The U.S. government says the U.S. provides no direct funding to the group, because that would require Congressional oversight, but has maintained close ties with its leader, former Taliban fighter Abd el Malik Regi, since 2005. War with Iran could happen without any public declaration of it from the American government.

As Joseph Cirincione, director of non-proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has said, "a military strike would be disastrous for the United States. It would rally the Iranian public around an otherwise unpopular regime, inflame anti-American anger around the Muslim world, and jeopardize the already fragile U.S. position in Iraq. And it would accelerate, not delay, the Iranian nuclear program. Hard-liners in Tehran would be proven right in their claim that the only thing that can deter the United States is a nuclear bomb. Iranian leaders could respond with a crash nuclear program that could produce a bomb in a few years."

It is not hard to see why Bush 'N' Friends are having such a relatively easy time passing conquest off as self-defense and liberation. The U.S. media portrayal of Iran is as a totalitarian theocracy bereft of free speech, equal rights and opportunity—and most of all, bereft of the ability to change. Our government wants us to think that Iran does not deserve the right to determine its own destiny; its goal is to coax us into believing that the only way that we can be safe and Iran can have freedom is if we invade, nuke some "key places", and smudge some collateral damage statistics. What one does not hear, of course, is that Iran is not synonymous with its President Ahmadinejad. In truth, suggesting the invasion of Iran due to the words and actions of this fellow is startlingly comparable to espousing an outside takeover of the U.S. due to our own president's lunacy.

Iran, like our United States, is a country made up of people, not policies. The Iranian people have been, and still are, making great strides in the areas of free speech and equal rights, areas which Americans have become increasingly comfortable with losing in recent years. Women are gaining power and prominence in both social and political arenas,

and the gradual movement towards a better Iran persists despite the presidency of Ahmadinejad, who is to former president Khatami as Bush is to, well, Clinton (or Carter, if I can be so bold). If our government tries to speed up this gradual movement with an invasion or a nuclear or conventional attack, it will only incite a rage and hostility towards America that will unite the dissenters with the oppressors in an effort to keep the real villains out of their homeland.

The occupation of Iraq has completely failed and we now have a civil war on our hands. There will be no civil war in Iran, only fear, then anger, then hate, then suffering and bloodshed that will take the life of not only innumerable Iranian lives but also those of the boys and girls of the poor, working-class family. All of these lives are equally valuable, but guess which loss will be a greater motivation for Americans to speak out? Thanks to the dehumanization of people of Middle Eastern origin in the American media, the beautiful, rich country of Iran can be turned into a war zone, and, just like Iraq, no one will care until it's too late. Iran is growing, and it will continue to grow. If we stunt its growth with our bombs, we will turn a hopeful, promising nation into exactly what Bush wants it to be: a radicalized, volatile, dangerous state, ready for corporate pillaging.

For the anti-war community out there, it is time we stopped denying the possibility of war with Iran and realized it is already beginning. While we sit and complain about the government's reluctance to provide a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq, a deceitful debacle of even more monstrous proportions is beginning, right before our eyes. The New Yorker's Seymour Hersh wrote, almost a year ago:

"He [a White House military planner] added, 'People think Bush has been focussed on Saddam Hussein since 9/11,' but, 'in my view, if you had to name one nation that was his focus all the way along, it was Iran.'"

Americans can not afford another war financially or politically. The Middle East cannot afford more destruction.



Protesting U.S. intervention in the Middle East.

A war with Iran would be more than an expansion of the War on Terror we are already waging in Iraq; it would draw in other world powers like Russia and Japan and make nuclear war a possibility.

Recently, Iran released the 15 British sailors and marines it had captured and we all sighed a little with relief that no larger conflict arose, but we must now consider how to oppose a war with Iran that is not even made public, for that seems to be the real of path the Bush administration.

We urge those who oppose the current war with Iraq or those who have misgivings about the use of military force in general to act against the coming war with Iran. Phone your representatives and tell them to support HR 770 to prevent an attack on Iran without Congressional authorization. The number for the Capitol switchboard is 866-340-9281. Come out to AWARE's anti-war protests at One Main in downtown Champaign from 2-4 the first Saturday of every month. Most importantly, keep yourself informed. As a former high-level intelligence official told Seymour Hersh, "It's not if we're going to do anything against Iran. They're doing it."

HEALING WORKS

An art show to honor survivors of sexual assault
WHERE: The African-American Cultural Center at UIUC at 708 S. Matthews in Urbana

WHEN:

- Friday April 20th, 5-11pm, with a jazz reception 9-11pm
- Saturday April 21st, 10am-5pm

Part of Boneyard Arts Festival. Open to all.

The Second Annual Champaign-Urbana Prison Arts Festival 20-21 April 2007

All events are *FREE* and are held in the Independent Media Center (in the old Post-Office building in downtown Urbana)

To volunteer, contact Stephen Hartnett: hartnett@uiuc.edu, or 333-1593

Sponsored by the University of Illinois's Center on Democracy In A Multiracial Society

The Peer Ambassadors of the Champaign County Mental Health Center present: 2007 No Dream Deferred Youth Summit!

Saturday, April 21, 11:00-5:00, Illini Union

With a Pre-summit Block Party Kick Off: Friday, April 20, 3:30-6:00

On Park Street in front of the Virginia Theater between Randolph and State Street



Archiving, Narratives, and Creation...

By Cassidy C Browning



Cassidy C Browning is an activist theatre scholar and artist. Browning is now in the M.A. in Theatre program here at UIUC; research interests include Queer Theory and Theatre, Gender Studies, Postcolonial Theory, and Performance Studies

The flood of responses from pro-"chiefers" since the Board of Trustees agreed to retire the racist mascot at UIUC have caused many to think that some sort of archive is necessary. STOP (Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege), a coalition of UIUC students, faculty, staff, and community members from other allied organizations, has decided to take up this project. STOP was also the group that organized the forum, "Race, Power, and Privilege at UIUC" on February 1, 2007, which was attended by thousands of students, faculty, and staff and watched on live broadcast by thousands more.

The STOP Coalition is committed to breaking cultures of silence by encouraging and creating spaces where community members engage and document issues related to racism, power and privilege at UIUC. STOP's plans for the future include (but are by no means limited to) the archiving of media coverage, the resulting online discussions, collecting live narratives, and creating documentaries out of past video footage while participants gain the technical skills to produce their own independent media.

Please visit the STOP blog "Information" entry titled, "Archives, Narratives, and Creation" for more information about this project and how to contribute at <http://stop-blog.typepad.com/stop_blogging/>.

The following are just a few excerpts from preliminary gatherings for the archive. Many are from *The Daily Illini*, the UIUC "independent student newspaper," whose Editorial Staff has repeatedly worked to undermine STOP's projects, including encouraging all students not to attend the forum. These quotes have been chosen to reflect the extreme instances of resistance to STOP's efforts in order to demonstrate why many have felt the need to collect and recognize these opinions. The comments below are a testimony to the hostile climate on campus that must be addressed by the university administration.

"As anticipated, Thursday's forum, entitled 'Racism, Power and Privilege at UIUC' yielded little productive dialogue on race issues. Many opinions were voiced, but it turned out to be mainly an extended anti-Chief protest. Little time was placed on ways to cure what truly ails the campus, namely issues of racial insensitivity." [*Daily Illini* Editorial Board's "Future Race Dialog Needs to be Fruitful" published on 2/6/07;]

"In the opinion of many (and I mean many) students on this campus, including almost a dozen of friends I have talked about, not only is STOP definitely not 'decidedly anti-racist,' but in fact this forum has been the most openly, blatantly racist event to plague our campus in living memory. Chancellor Herman should feel ashamed for having not only tolerated, but also condoned this carnival of hatred.

All you STOP agitprop minions succeeded in creating was not pity for your pretenses and faux victimization, but genuine disgust at the bitter demagoguery of the whole "event," and a determination stronger than ever not to allow our rather moderate, welcoming, tolerant campus to be confiscated by the radical, hate-filled discourse of some marginal, mediocre students and faculty, unhappy that their disgruntled mediocrity is not being 'celebrated' according to their 'demands.'" [Online comment posted to the above editorial on 2/6/07 by "Rajeev"]

"As a 1974 graduate of the U of I, I have listened to this for all of the 33 years and more since I graduated. Next to fall will be those universities that have animal mascots, yes PETA will get rid of the Golden Gopher, the Wildcat, the Badger, the Wolverine and more. Texas will not have the Long Horn, Washington State will be charged with cruelty to animals, and the Cougar will be set free, and this will go on and on. The Buckeye will be eliminated by those that love the horse chestnut tree and don't like it being just a mascot symbol." [Joe Weeks' Letter to the Editor titled, "Chief Will Start trend in Losing Mascots" published in *The Daily Illini* on 2/23/07]

"There's nothing new about the substance of the courses offered by the Angry Studies departments [ethnic/racialized studies, gender and/or women's studies, LGBT studies]. That is, there never was any. Everybody knew it. Even the President, the Chancellor, while always being 'nice' to them, always greeting their 'essential contributions,' while knowing they simply represented a waste of resources with no benefit of any nature, be it material, intellectual or spiritual. Giving money to the Angry Studies department was a bit like making up for your sins in other areas, also a bit like throwing a dollar (millions of dollars, in the case of the UIUC) to the drunken homeless, in the name of some diffuse Christian—or secular, whatever—spirit of charity.

What is new now is that the beggars claim to be choosers. They are not happy with the many millions handed over to them, with no reasonable expectations of ANYthing in return. They are not happy with the dozens of courses (ridiculously overlapping, in a carnival of manifest waste and triumphant demagoguery) that they're being overpaid for.

They want more self-multiplying faculty of their own kind. (Insecure on their individual worth, they feel 'empowered' only when they are able to gang up on wor-

thy individuals.) More sinecures. More power. (They are obsessed with ridiculously outdated, ideological theories of power). They want to make their fantasies UIUC policy, they want to dictate to the entire UIUC body when they are supposed to breathe, whether they are allowed to think, and what they are supposed to drink.

The whole charade just got updated from the former tolerated comedy hour status to truly dangerous lunacy. A surgeon's knife would be needed, at this stage, to deal with the tumor. However, given the lack of quality and courage of the people presently in charge at UIUC (the previous Presidents would weep bitter tears knowing the degrees of abject servitude Mr. White voluntarily lowered himself to), I doubt anything will be done to remind the Angry Studies lunatics that they are not (yet) in the charge of the asylum." [Online comment posted to Letter to the Editor "A Holistic Look at the 'Chief' Controversy" on 2/27/07 by "Econ Alum"]

"The damn left wing morons like you who absolutely ruined the once great state. You should be ashamed of yourself and your heritage 'I don't feel safe...' [a quote from Genevieve Tenoso's speech to the Board of Trustees] what a shit you are. Ruining a fine tradition. No one thinks of indians in negative light when they see the mascot you moron, but we do when we see idiots like you spewing your bile. You should crawl in a hole & never show your stupid face again." [Email on 3/13/07 to Genevieve Tenoso from <sfulrath@cox.net> and signed," Scott Fulrath, Ramona, CA.]

"The Seminole Tribe—the richest of all of Indian tribes in the United States have continually endorsed Chief Osceola at Florida State University. It is easy for many columnists and other third-party activists to tell me that I am offending the feelings of Indian sympathizers by supporting the University of Illinois and Chief Illiniwek. I want to see some of these pompous, arrogant, politically-correct campaigners tell Florida State and the Seminole Nation WHY they are wrong!

The Seminoles are a very wealthy tribe—they own several casinos and the own all of the Hard Rock Cafés. I guess by backing Chief Osceola and Florida State University, the Seminoles are telling all of the Indian sympathizers around the country to 'GO SCREW YOURSELVES'

Political Correctness has gone way off the deep end! I am very sorry that the University of Illinois Trustees "sold-out" to the very corrupt association known as the NCAA!" [Email on 3/14/07 to Genevieve Tenoso from <DAC-erny@magellanhealth.com> and signed," David A. Cerny"]

Myths About U.S. and Torture Today

Continued from page 1

it, they would be able to resist torture to run out the clock. Rather it is small and seemingly small bits of information given out in a situation of captive safety that can be assembled into a meaningful mosaic that provide the best intelligence.

Myth #4: it is a shame that we have to use torture and secret prisons, but it is done to a few very dangerous people that had best be kept out of circulation and away from our shores.

In a *Wall Street Journal* article (May 31, 2004) Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Hanson who screened prisoners (60 a day at that time) at Abu Ghraib said, "The vast majority had virtually no intelligence value. It seemed like when something bad happened the infantry would just roll up a dozen Iraqis in the area, most of whom

were not involved...The bad intelligence we got (from these prisoners) gave way to raids on innocent people."

As for the numbers of secret prisons and the numbers of people who might be in them, this is beyond estimate. While Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib are the posters for secret detention and torture, there are rumored to be 20 secret prisons in Afghanistan, perhaps 100 in Iraq, unknown numbers in Central Europe, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and as of April 3, Ethiopia. How many prisoners are in these prisons is anyone's guess. No one in them is ever given a trial (not counting the 10 or so military tribunals at Guantanamo where even the military lawyers quit in protest) and just a handful of people are ever released. Once you are "disappeared,"

abducted and held in secret without charges, known as loss of habeas corpus, anything can happen to you, including death, and no one will know.

Let me leave you with news of two recent pieces of legislation for Americans: the Military Commissions Act, passed in November of 2006 gives the power to the Chief Executive to define and decide who is an "enemy combatant," including citizens of the U.S. "Public Law 109-364, or the 'John Warner Defense Authorization

Act of 2007' (H.R.5122) (2), which was signed by the commander in chief on October 17, 2006, in a private Oval Office ceremony, allows the President to declare a 'public emergency' and station troops anywhere in America and take control of state-based National Guard units without the consent of the governor or local authorities, in order to suppress public disorder."

Film Showing

Showing of the film "The Road to Guantanamo" with discussion afterward at First Mennonite Church, 902 W. Springfield, Urbana on Monday, April 23, 7:00. Co-sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance and A.W.A.R.E.



Major Agreement Signed With Tomato Pickers!

By Ricky Baldwin



Just four days ahead of a formal nationwide boycott by tomato pickers and their allies, on April 9, 2007, fastfood giant McDonald's Corporation signed a historic agreement with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the grassroots labor association of mostly immigrant farm workers in Florida, accepting CIW demands that exceed concessions made by Taco Bell in March 2005.

After a spirited four-year boycott, Taco Bell agreed to pay a penny a pound more for tomatoes (with the proviso that the extra cent is passed on through growers to farm workers) and to work with the CIW to improve conditions in the fields.

Now, on the first day of the CIW's cross-country "McDonald's Truth Tour"—dubbed "Behind the Golden Arches"—McDonald's has agreed to all that Taco Bell gave up, plus a "workers rights consortium." The consortium is reportedly similar to the one that US Students Against Sweatshops established in 2001 to monitor conditions along the supply chain for school-sponsored apparel, only this one will keep an eye on the fields.

Events in Chicago planned for April 13–14, however, are still on, but the focus has changed. Friday's planned protest at McDonald's headquarters in Oak Brook will be a conference of the groups involved in the campaign. Saturday's planned "carnaval" and march in downtown Chicago will be a victory celebration—and promises to be an exuberant one.

SWEATSHOPS IN THE FIELDS

As previously reported in the *Public i*, the average worker earns 40–45 cents for picking one bucketful of tomatoes, weighing 32 pounds. That's over two tons of tomatoes every day just to reach the federal poverty level—even if you could pick that every day, which you can't. On average a tomato picker can expect to earn about \$10,000 a year. The cost of living in Immokalee is \$18,000 for a single person.

Also, agricultural laborers do not have even the minimal protections of US labor laws covering most American employees. Conditions in the fields approach those in the global south.

At one extreme there have been six federal slavery convictions in the Florida fields since 1997. Sometimes this is so-called 'debt

slavery', where growers promise good jobs, then add on charges at a 'company store' or for transportation to the fields. In one case a grower recruited mostly African American men from a local homeless shelter, then paid them at the end of the week in alcohol, cigarettes and cocaine.

Growers have also held workers in the fields at gunpoint, beat them, pistol whipped them, run over them in trucks, and locked them in squalid labor camps over night—chains across the gates, armed guards, no visitors, nobody in or out after dark.

Organizing in the fields around Immokalee since the mid-nineties, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers has been able to eliminate most of the worst conditions in their area. Workers in Immokalee say the beatings, the gun play, all have stopped. Outside Immokalee, however, many are still working without a net.

QUIEN SIGUE? (WHO'S NEXT?)

The Taco Bell victory, and now the victory at McDonald's, are important for two reasons (besides the obvious historical moment of winning a David-and-Goliath campaign against fast food giants like these). The most

obvious is that tomato pickers in the Taco Bell supply chain saw a sudden, unprecedented leap in wages. After almost thirty years without a raise, wages practically doubled over night. Presumably that will happen now with McDonald's suppliers.

In addition, these wage increases—as well as the improvements in working conditions expected from these two pacts—affect many workers outside the Coalition's direct organizing orbit. Every worker who picks tomatoes for Taco Bell or McDonald's should see these improvements, even if they have never heard of CIW. And the more big bites the workers can take out of the market, the easier it gets to expand the victory to other fields, other growers.

Not only this, but every victory makes the pattern stronger. The Taco Bell boycott campaign also laid the groundwork for the McDonald's Truth Tour, which began last year. The formal boycott of Taco Bell lasted four years. McDonald's gave in before the boycott announcement. After this, how long can Burger King hope to hold out?

Form ore info on CIW and their work: www.ciw-online.org.

One Person Can Make A Difference: Cindy Sheehan in Urbana-Champaign

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often think, what is everybody's breaking point? After the wire tapping, torture in Guantanamo, torture in Abu Ghraib, taking away our right to habeas corpus, the troop surge, hundreds of billions of more money. Now we find out they are funneling money to Sunni groups connected with Al Qaeda in Iran. What is going to make you say, "I can't take this anymore. I am going to get out on the street." I do not want it to be the same breaking point that I had. That's why I am doing this. I don't want another mother to have to fall on the floor screaming for her son before she decides she is going to get out on the street. When the fourteen marines were killed, George Bush said they died for a noble cause and everybody has died for a noble cause. And I thought, "You

know what, I am going to drive down to Crawford, Texas and I am going to ask him what noble cause." And I did not even have a plan after that.

I was at the Dallas Veterans For Peace convention the day before I went and someone said, "Cindy, what if he doesn't meet with you, what are you going to do?" I said, "Well I guess I'll just sit there until he does meet with me." And that spurred the anti-war movement in America. After all the hard work, Bush invaded anyway, and after the elections in 2004 when we worked so hard to beat him with the power of the voting machine, (and like a vampire he can't be defeated) the movement really deflated. I think that sitting down did spur the movement. It was such

a simple thing to do. Anybody knows how to sit down. That's what I did—I just went there and sat down.

When my son was killed I found my passion. I would give anything to go back to April 3 and have my son back, but I can't. I think my great-grandchildren are going to have to be paying for Bush's mistakes. So it is time. The tipping point has occurred and it is time that we get out of our comfort zone, and get off of our couches, turn off Fox news or American Idol, or Dancing With the Stars or whatever else and get out. In fact, know what? Just unplug that TV. Take it out in the backyard and take an axe to it.

I've met a lot of people from Iraq, I've been to Jordan and met with parliamentar-

ians from all different sects: female, male, Sunni, Shia, secular, religious—they all have the same thing to say: Get the troops out of Iraq. When I met with them, they said, "What is wrong with the world? It is like the world does not care. It is like the world does not care that hundreds of thousands of us are being killed. It is like the world does not care that we have no clean water, that we do not have electricity. It is like the world does not care that we are being oppressed." It is time the world starts caring, but the world has to start with you.

Structured Cruelty: Learning to Be a Lean, Mean Killing Machine

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that the hope we collectively expressed for a better life may have indeed cost us our very lives. When one pulls the trigger called "enlistment," he or she faces the gambling chance of experiencing war, conflicts which inevitably lead to the degradation of the human spirit.

The war crimes committed by U.S. troops in Iraq, such as the brutality exhibited at Mahmoudiya in which soldiers

allegedly gang-raped a teen-age Iraqi girl and burned her body to destroy the evidence, are, in fact, part and parcel of all imperialist wars. The USMC's claim that recruits learn "to live as upstanding moral beings with real purpose" is a sickening ploy aimed to disguise its true objectives. Given the fact that Marines are molded to kill the enemy "other" from TD One (training day) combined with the bestial nature of colonial

war, it should come as no surprise that rather than turning "degenerates" into paragons of virtue, the Corps is more likely capable of transforming men into monsters.

And yet as much as these war crimes reveal about the conditions of war, the circumstances facing an occupying force, and the peculiar brand of Marine training, they also reflect a bitter truth about the civilian world in which we live. It speaks volumes

that in order for young working-class men and women to gain self-confidence or self-worth, they seek to join an institution that trains them how to destroy, maim, and kill. The desire to become a Marine—as a journey to one's manhood or as a path to self-improvement—is a stinging indictment of the pathology of our class-ridden world.