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\*\* See, Nicholas Shaxon, "Treasure Islands," for confirmation...

**CAPITALISM IS ORGANIZED CRIME** \*\*



The real gangsters don't have to get their hands dirty—they have police and courts and prisons to do the dirty work for them. They don't have to run drugs or guns or illegal gambling rings—they run everything else. They can afford to let us choose between politicians, so long as the political system itself enforces their privileges. Some of us can join their ranks if we're enterprising enough, as long as we participate in their racket and play by their rules. Sure, rivalries play out between different gangs, but nothing threatens gang rule. If the mafia took over our entire society, would it be any different?

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# Despite Increased Production, Employment and Earnings Data Show Long-term Economic Decline in Champaign-Urbana Region

By David Green



David Green lives in Urbana, and can be reached at davidgreen50@gmail.com. He is a weekly contributor to News from Neptune, heard on WEFT radio and seen on UPTV.

RECENT ECONOMIC DATA (until the most recent) show decreases in unemployment. Such reports are uninformative if not deceptive for at least three reasons: First, decreases in the rate of unemployment are largely attributable to a decline in labor force participation since its peak prior to the recession, in late 2008. Second, a focus on unemployment since the beginning of the current recession obscures a long-term decline in employment—relative to population—over recent decades. Third, emphasizing unemployment rather than production and earnings data obscures long-term trends regarding productivity, profits, wages, and inequality.

These trends belie what little optimism can be manufactured from trivial and unstable employment gains. Employment and earnings of the median (middle) earner and household have suffered from long-term decline; barring radical or at least rational political measures, there's no reason to predict a brighter economic future for most of us.

These observations generally apply to the nation as a whole, and can be characterized by local data, which highlight the difference between worker productivity and total production on one hand, and general prosperity on the other. The Champaign-Urbana Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is a geographic definition used in data collected by the U.S. Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). All the data below are accessible at government websites.

The C-U MSA includes Champaign, Ford, and Piatt counties. Between 1990 and 2010, its population grew from 203,000 to 231,000, or 14%. During that same period, the number of employed grew by 5%. Employed workers as a percentage of the entire population decreased from 52.5 to 48.5; in current terms, this means over 9,000 fewer jobs. There are currently nearly 112,000 jobs in the C-U MSA, but this number was first surpassed in April 2000, over 11 years and 20,000 residents ago.

Decreased unemployment rates currently reflect decreased labor force participation more than job creation. In March 2010 there were over 111,775 jobs and a 9.2% unemployment rate, while in March of this year there were 111,930 jobs, and a rate of 7.8%. Over the past year, lower unemployment rates primarily result from nearly 2,000 discouraged workers dropping out of the labor force, a perspective regularly omitted from newspaper articles on the job market.

Nevertheless, data over the past decade show increased worker productivity, lower collective compensation, and growing economic equality among workers and households. From 2001 to 2009, the gross domestic product of the C-U MSA, which includes both private and government investment and spending, continued to grow steadily, from \$6.2 billion to \$7.5 billion in constant 2001 dollars. This reflects an overall 8-year absolute increase of 21% in output concurrent with a population increase of less than 10% and a numerically stagnant labor force—a steady increase in the productivity of local workers.

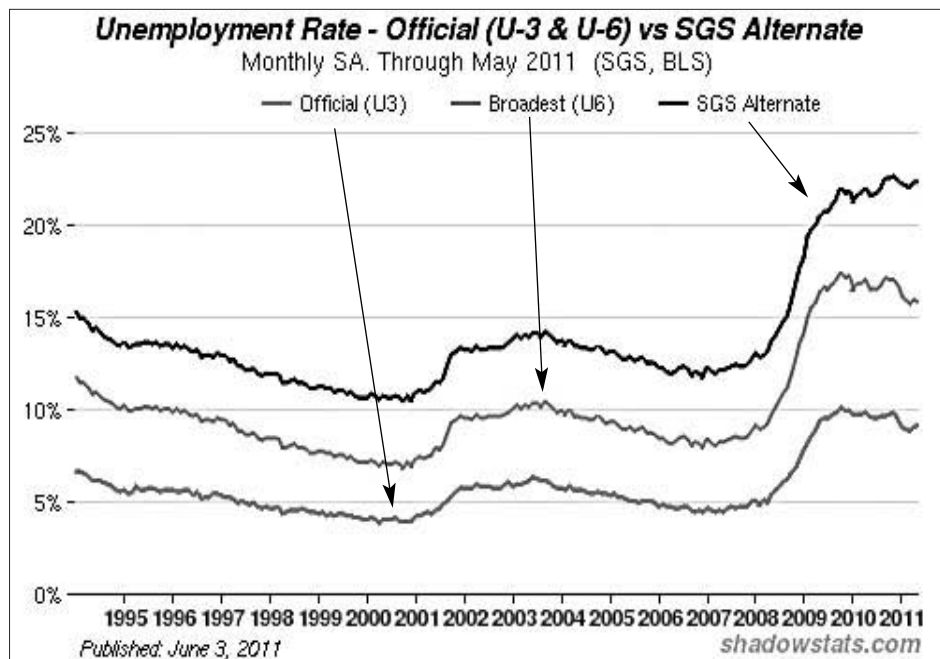
By two measures of compensation, it's clear that earnings do not reflect this increased output. Per capita income, which reflects the average income of all residents in the C-U MSA, decreased by 2.7% when adjusted for inflation. In 2001, each resident earned on average \$34,600 in 2009 dollars, while in 2009 only \$33,700 in current (2009) dollars. While output grew steadily in real terms, total earnings and purchasing power declined.

Second, median household income declined even more rapidly during this eight-year period, from over \$48,000 in 2001 (in 2009 dollars), to under \$44,000 dollars in 2009 in current (2009) dollars. This entails an 11% decrease in the real earnings of households at the middle rung of the income ladder.

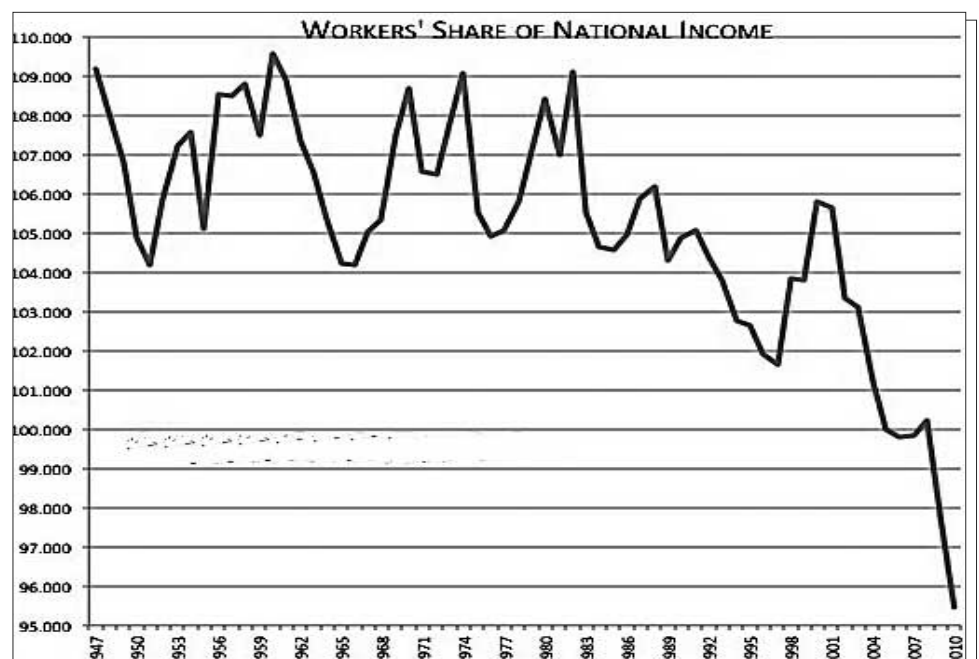
Throughout the vicissitudes of the bubble economy, tri-county workers continue to expand the per capita real output of all residents. Fewer workers as a proportion of the population are employed to produce this output, leaving more unemployed. Well over half of all households are rewarded with lower total incomes, while the vast majority at best break even. All economic rewards accrue either to the top 20% or fewer of local households, or to non-residents who are beneficiaries of corporate profits and/or management earnings.

If management salaries and corporate profits increased at a rate that reflected increases in worker productivity, then all workers' earnings would also increase at that rate if those increases were fairly divided among them. In neither case is this true. Moreover, high unemployment and lower earnings constitute a vicious cycle of desperation and lowered expectations.

These realities are the result not of markets but of public policies. Those policies address issues such as trade, taxation, financial regulation, labor organizing, the minimum wage, and more. But it's clearly not in the interest of the beneficiaries of these policies for the majority of the population to understand either the realities or the policies. From the media to academia, economics has to be made to seem more technical or mysterious than it really is; or, conversely, that the health of our economy is somehow captured by the rate of unemployment and the month-to-month trend. Meanwhile, the data show that our economy is one of legalized theft.



US "Official," broad, and SGS unemployment rate, 1995–2011



Worker's Share of National Income 1947–2010



# Letter From a Native Peace Activist to an Israeli Naval Officer

By Robert Naiman



Athens—As a passenger on the upcoming U.S. Boat to Gaza, I read with interest the account in the June 16 issue of the *New York Times* of Israeli military preparations to confront the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. A top naval official told foreign journalists: “We will do anything we have to do to prevent a boat from breaking the blockade.”

On the other hand, the *Times* reported that Israel’s navy said it will do everything it can to avoid close contact with activists on board the freedom flotilla.

Moreover, the Israeli naval officer conceded he did not believe the flotilla would contain arms. The naval officer further conceded some [sic] on board the ships were peace activists.

But the naval officer asserted these peace activists were naive because “extremists will set the tone” if Israeli commandos board the ships. He claimed Israel needed to enforce the blockade indiscriminately to defend against weapons imports by future flotillas.

I would like to ask some follow-up questions of my friend in the Israeli navy, who thinks me naive.

If you concede we are peace activists who are not carrying weapons, what’s the urgency to confront us with force? Why not let us proceed to Gaza unmolested? Does it pass a “straight face test” to claim it would set a terrible precedent binding the Israeli government to let us pass, having conceded we are peace activists who are not carrying weapons?

If you are concerned “extremists will set the tone” if Israeli commandos board the ships, isn’t

it wholly within your power to prevent this outcome, by not ordering that Israeli commandos board the ships?

Furthermore, if you concede we are peace activists, doesn’t that mean that you concede that we are not “extremists”? Peace activists aren’t “extremists,” are we?

If you concede we are not “extremists,” but are concerned “extremists will set the tone,” doesn’t that argue against blocking our communications, or arresting and holding us incommunicado, or confiscating our communications equipment, as happened to passengers on the flotilla last year? Again, avoiding the outcome that

“extremists will set the tone” is wholly within your power.

When I visited Ramallah in 1986, I heard a story quite relevant to the present impasse. At that time, the display of the Palestinian flag was forbidden in the West Bank. A pattern was established: when Palestinian youths wanted to confront the occupation, they would hoist the Palestinian flag. Soldiers would come to disperse the demonstrators, demonstrators would throw rocks at the soldiers, soldiers would respond with weapons, often with live fire. Often demonstrators would be seriously injured or killed in these confrontations, provoking more demonstrations and more military crackdowns not only on demonstrators, but on the overall population, with curfews, school closings, and so on.

One day, there was a new Israeli military commander for the Ramallah area. I don’t know this commander’s background. But I imagine him older, a reservist perhaps, with a wife and children, maybe even a little bit sympathetic to young Palestinian demonstrators and their desire to be free. This commander tried an experiment: what



would happen if, when I get the report that Palestinian youths have hoisted the Palestinian flag, I don’t send any Israeli soldiers there?

What do you think happened? The Palestinian youths would hoist the Palestinian flag, and they would wait for the Israeli soldiers. When the Israeli soldiers never arrived, the demonstrators would get bored, declare victory, and go home. No rocks, no shooting, no violence, no killing, no injuries, no curfew, no schools closed. Of course, there was a downside to this policy: the prohibition on public display of the Palestinian flag was not

enforced. But, as it turned out, enforcement of this prohibition was not important to “Israeli security.”

Eventually another commander was rotated in, the new commander was not so enlightened, and “things went back to normal.” The Palestinian flag was hoisted, soldiers came, rocks were thrown, demonstrators were shot.

This story illustrates that Israeli military officers have the opportunity to use good judgment and common sense in evaluating which actions they should take to “promote Israeli security.” Taking extreme actions in response to demands for Palestinian freedom does not make Israel more secure.

The logic of taking extreme actions in response to protest is seductive: if we show we are tough, people will stop resisting us. But to think that this logic will work is, dare I say it, naive.

What was the result of the Israeli military attack on last year’s flotilla? Did peace activists say: the Israeli military is tough, we better not send any more flotillas? The result was that peace activists said: we should send a larger flotilla of ships.

After the attack on last year’s flotilla and the resulting international outcry against the attack and against the blockade, the Israeli government announced the blockade would be eased, and since then more goods have been let in to Gaza. Exports from Gaza remain largely blocked, restrictions on Gazans’ travel to the West Bank and East Jerusalem for work, study, and medical care remain, imports of construction materials remain largely blocked. Restrictions on Gaza’s farming and fishing remain. Unemployment in Gaza is now among the highest in the world, the UN reports.

But consider those restrictions on Gaza that were eased: either those restrictions were necessary for Israeli security, or they were not.

If those restrictions were necessary for Israeli security, then Israeli government officials endangered Israeli security by removing them, simply because the world was complaining. Will any Israeli official stand up and claim this?

If those restrictions were not necessary for Israeli security, then for years Israeli officials maintained restrictions which were not justified by security concerns, because they wanted to punish the population and could get away with doing so, because international protest was not sufficient.

Their removal shows that Israeli government claims that restrictions on Gaza are necessary for Israel’s security cannot be taken as writ. Organizing flotillas and other forms of international protest against the siege of Gaza is therefore a *mitzvah*, an obligation. People of conscience around the

*Continued on page 10*

## Ex-Cop Charged With Second Count In DUI

By Brian Dolinar



ON JUNE 22, 2011, former Sheriff’s Deputy Travis Burr was charged with a second count of obstructing justice related to a DUI he received last summer. Burr was fired after his involvement in a three-car accident on a country road outside of Sadorus, a small town south-west of Urbana-Champaign. This latest charge appears to be a sign that the State’s Attorney is taking this case seriously after many delay tactics by Burr’s attorneys.

State police arrived at the scene of an accident on August 14, 2010 that occurred at approximately 6:00 p.m. According to police reports obtained by the *Public i*, Burr had rear ended a white van that stopped in front of him and his friend Timothy Griffin subsequently rear ended Burr’s car. Police performed a breath alcohol test on Burr

who blew a 0.192 (state minimum is 0.08). Griffin had a breath alcohol content of 0.176 and pleaded guilty to DUI in October 2010.

Individuals who receive their first DUI in Champaign County typically lose their license and have their case resolved within six months. Burr hired attorney Mark Lipton who filed several continuances, including one in November 2010 claiming he was waiting for a booking video (Judge Klaus expressed his surprise that such video existed, but still granted the continuance). Burr also applied for a special alcohol monitoring device on his car—permitted in Illinois on first DUIs—which allows him to continue driving.

In February 2011, Burr fired his lawyer and hired attorney Walter Ding who filed motions for a new judge and a special prosecutor, then withdrew his request for a replacement of judge a month later, and

saw his motion for special prosecutor denied. On June 3, Ding filed a second motion for a special prosecutor, pointing out that Burr was the witness for the State’s Attorney in two cases, one of them a murder case. An angry Judge Klaus referred the case to Presiding Judge Tom Difanis who denied the motion, saying that it was the State’s Attorney’s determination to ask for a special prosecutor.

The second count of obstruction of justice was apparently retribution for several months of stalling. In the original police reports, an officer claims a witness saw “a person had come to the crash scene and removed a cooler from the rear of Burr’s truck, as well as an additional person came to the scene and removed what appeared to be a can placed in a can holder from the interior of Burr’s truck.”

The *News-Gazette* covered Burr’s initial arrest and WCIA reported on his dismissal,

but none of the local mainstream news media has followed up on the story.

In related news, ex-Champaign police detective Lisa Staples is serving an 18-day sentence in the Champaign County jail for her second DUI.

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# Champaign Farmers Market

By Marti Wilkinson



FRESH PRODUCE, AWARD winning barbecue, and a Prosperity Garden run by the Boys and Girls Club are amongst the attractions that residents can enjoy at the Champaign Farmers Market on Thursdays from 3PM to 7PM. Located on a city parking lot behind the Champaign Police

Department, the market brings opportunities for socializing, learning about local issues, and eating well to a part of the community, which has been neglected over the years. Champaign residents, neighbors from surrounding towns, and all their dogs are encouraged to mix and mingle over the variety of sights, sounds and tastes found there.

According to market manager, Wendy Langacker, the market was started by the North 1st Street Association, a group of business owners who wanted to have something to encourage economic development in the area. One way to do this was to bring more people to the area, and they decided that a farmers market could do just that. Unlike traditional models of urban renewal which historically displace people within an area, this effort seeks to respect and build on the



Champaign Farmer's Market

history of the neighborhood and the people who live there. This approach aims to be mutually beneficial; bringing more customers in and offering valuable goods and services for current residents.

The Champaign Farmers Market developed as a "bare bones" project, and a lot of the resources are geared towards meeting the needs of the area. For instance, Langacker runs her office out of her home, and one of the first things the market invested in was a machine that would accept Link cards. Nicole Bridge, from the Boys and Girls Club, also commented on what the market website refers to as the "Double Value Program," by which a Link card holder can purchase twenty dollars worth of fresh produce for ten dollars. Since processed food often tends to be less expensive than fresh produce, this enables individuals of limited means to partake in the farmers market on a more equitable level.

The connections between the market and the Prosperity Garden expand the impact of both efforts. Bridge, who works with kids from the Boys and Girls Club, said, "A lot of my kids hate [fruits and] vegetables, don't eat them, or just eat strawberries." Recognizing this, one of the goals for the

Prosperity Garden is to expand the horizons of participants. Bridge noted that the participants have been doing a good job of both weeding and mulching the garden. Organizers and participants in the Prosperity Garden hope to start selling fresh produce at the market as it becomes available. Next to the garden, a structure is being built which will offer cooking classes and demonstrations to market patrons and members of the Boys and Girls club. It is expected that construction will be complete before the current season ends.



The prosperity garden on 1st Street

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# I Hate Malcolm X

By Ray Morales

"I HATE MALCOLM X." These are the words that circulated in my subconscious. And to be honest, the extent of my knowledge of his contribution was scant. But I knew that I hated him. So a week prior to his birthday, I was in dismay when I saw some friends from Lambda Theta Phi post up on their Facebook page that May 19 was his birthday and that they were encouraging people to circulate more information about him. I actually had to restrain myself before I conveyed my dissatisfaction directly to any one of them. I thought so lowly of him that I had Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* on my Netflix Instant Queue for weeks, if not months, without touching it.

You see, I've probably listened to the "I Have A Dream" speech so many times that I could not help but regurgitate fragments or use similar metaphors during speaking opportunities. I had also heard many of Malcolm's speeches. It was about two years ago when I read "Great Speeches by Malcolm X" (or something like that). Talk about a serious awakening! I listened to find a brilliant scholar intertwine legitimate gripe with hate and anger. Even having felt that same ire and rage, I still felt distant from him. I could not bring myself to condone the vitriol. After listening to those speeches filled with explicit condemnation of people (white or Jewish) as a whole made him a far cry from anyone that I aspired to emulate.

So, when I saw my friend Aaron Ammons and a few others from Ubuntu, an initiative of the Afro-American Studies Department, organized an event on May 19 to commemorate Malcolm X's legacy, I was again taken aback. However, I thought to myself, let me attend this event with an open mind to hear these scholars con-

tribute in a meaningful way to the definition of Malcolm. I was looking for insight into his life and why they thought he was an important figure.

The event consisted of a few clips, followed by critical analysis of the new biography by Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, along with a reading of one of Malcolm's speeches from his book about MLK's March on Washington. I sat quiet the whole time and tried to internalize everything.

The role of Islam in Malcolm's progression was discussed along with why he was never fully embraced by America. It was then that I heard first hand the discrimination that Aaron's son Jelani had experienced at school because he is a Muslim. When Osama Bin Laden had been executed by Navy Seals, Jelani's peers had turned to him to inquire how he felt about that circumstance. Apparently, they had to know on what side he stood—Islam or America. It broke my heart to hear the words of bewilderment uttered to his father. Having seen him grow from a young boy to a future leader of America, I could feel a piece of his humanity lost when he was estranged by his own friends and colleagues in that way. And I became more convinced of the reality that Islam assuredly played a role in Malcolm's rejection in the United States.

Another thing I learned was that Malcolm X parted with the Nation of Islam due to the infidelities of the Prophet Elijah Mohammed combined with his awakenings from his trip to Mecca. The net result was a philosophical fracture with those who nursed and cultivated Malcolm's religious awakening.

Lastly, I learned that MLK's March on

Washington was a farce from Malcolm X's vantage. He iterated how the US government had staged the whole scene simply to prevent Black America from exploding. MLK was utilized to get every single Black person to calm down. My world was shattered. A man who I had studied as a rhetorician was immediately cut down to the lowest form. And I was strangely okay with it.

I returned home that night resolved to watch the three-hour Spike Lee saga knowing full well how tired I was. It didn't matter. I was wide awake with each scene, from Detroit Red working as a pimp, to Malcolm X speaking at the press conference podium after being silenced by the Nation of Islam. It was then that I realized his words about the assassination of JFK ("The chickens came home to roost") were not so much a condemnation of JFK and America as much as they were a direct intellectual assault at the Prophet Elijah Mohammed and the Nation of Islam. Having done this myself and mistakenly enraging the wrong people for being so misguidedly poignant with my words, I could immediately understand Malcolm in a way that I never had.

I further learned that, after he parted with the Nation Of Islam, his disposition towards whites, Jews, non-Muslims and the world was dramatically different. It was as if he had a second epiphany. He was no longer beholden to the rhetoric of the organization. He was a human being with his own mind and able to draw his own conclusions. I quickly thought how leaving NYC to go to school and my comfort zone had given me the same space. All the norms that had been subconsciously imparted were all challenged at various junctures. Many remain. But there were

more than a few that were glaring flaws such as the prolific use of the word N\*\*\*a and B\*\*\*\*. You simply can't imagine what it's like to be in The South Bronx at home, on the block, on the train or wherever I was and to not hear those words at least every few minutes either from my own mouth or those around me.

I started to think about what all this meant. MLK went from being an icon to a farce. Malcolm had gone from being a hate monger to a serious thinker.

Many people do not know this, but over the years I repeatedly challenged members of the U of I College Republicans, *Daily Illini* and the *Orange & Blue Observer* staff, among others, to come on my radio program, *The Show*, after seeing or hearing them make some vitriolic speech. Each time, they ran. I extended invitations so many times that I got tired of hawking them and gave up. And yet, it was I who was labeled the "angry minority" or fear monger. I had simply longed for someone of a seemingly contrary position to sit across from me on the stage as they had with Malcolm to sharpen my intellectual wits and let listeners decide for themselves.

For that reason, at a ripe old age of 30, I finally realized that we have all been hoodwinked. We have all been bamboozled and brainwashed. One of the greatest advocates for human rights has actually been painted in a manner far from his intellectual contribution. And for that reason, I say to you, as I have said to many others, I will not succumb to the same fate as Malcolm X whose image has been tarnished, or MLK whose legacy has been whitewashed. In fact, history will be kind to me, for I intend to write, direct and YouTube it.



# Wanted!: Empire, Dead or Alive

By Jodi A. Byrd and Manu Vimalassery



Jodi A. Byrd is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma and an Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies and English at the U of I.



Manu Vimalassery is a Chancellor's Post-doctoral Fellow in American Indian Studies at UIUC, and an Assistant Professor of History at Texas Tech University.

WHEN PRESIDENT OBAMA STEPPED from the Oval Office into a live broadcast to announce the killing of Osama bin Laden this past May 1, by 'beltway' estimates of American political conversation, he had reached an important way-station in his presidency and launched his re-election campaign. With this move, Pres. Obama considerably silenced perennial Republican muttering about effeminate Democratic foreign policy with an assassination plan touted as "surgical," offering a by-now familiar version of liberal Democratic machismo. No less, his announcement slightly muted, for a moment, the racist backlash and anxiety about his presidency as a "Manchurian candidacy" anchored in a Black, African, or Islamist worldview fundamentally at odds with the alignments of power in the contemporary U.S. (an image which, in mirror-form, a sprinkling of the President's stalwart "progressive" supporters continues to maintain).

Against the perception of bin Laden's killing as a historical event of prime magnitude, one that sutured some of the felt grievances left raw and festering in American society since 9/11, a closer look at the details of the assassination reveals fundamental continuities. For, just as 9/11, and its aftermath, occurred in a long historical trajectory, and not in a vacuum of social time, the killing of bin Laden, in its rhetoric and mechanics, brings to mind earlier operations in the U.S. Amidst the ghoulish celebrations in the streets, public conversation over bin Laden's killing largely missed such continuities, or the missed opportunities to capture bin Laden and pursue a case in domestic or international courts. In fact, the U.S. quietly dropped all charges against bin Laden on June 17th, amidst a Friday afternoon news vacuum, to little discussion in the press or commentariat.

One space in which bin Laden's killing did generate considerable conversation about historical continuities was among American Indian nations, political organizations, and critics. As news about the operation against bin Laden came to light, the words "Geronimo—E KIA [Enemy Killed in Action]" were broadcast as part of the larger story, words that garnered strong responses from Indian Country. Who was being referred to as Geronimo, why, and who made this choice? Geronimo was a Chiricahua Apache war leader and continues to be one of the best-known historical examples of armed struggle against U.S. expansion and settlement on American Indian lands. In his case, he was fighting against the establishment of Arizona and New Mexico territories, and the power of Mexican and Texan authorities, over his community's homelands, from the 1850's through the 1880's. After his 1886 surrender to the U.S., he was held as a prisoner for the remainder of his life, and was buried in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where his community was relocated, held at large, as prisoners. Rumors abound that members of the Yale secret society Skull and Bones, including Prescott Bush, raided Geronimo's grave and stole his skull.

In a letter to President Obama, Jeff Houser, chair of the Fort Sill Apache Tribe of which Geronimo was a member, wrote, "... to equate Geronimo or any other Native American figure with Osama bin Laden, a mass murderer and cowardly terrorist, is painful and offensive to our Tribe and to all native Americans." Before asking the president for a formal apology, Houser continued, "What this action has done is forever link the name and memory of Geronimo to one of the most despicable enemies this Country has ever had. This fact is even more appalling when examined in light of the United States House of Representatives February 2009 Resolution that honored Geronimo for 'his extraordinary bravery,

and his commitment to the defense of his homeland, his people, and Apache ways of life.' Now a little over two years later your Administration has further immortalized his existence by linking him to the most hated person in recent American history." The Fort Sill Apache Tribe was joined by other nations and tribes, groups like the National Congress of American Indians, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Native American Journalists Association, and descendants of Geronimo, in calls for an apology. Intellectuals and activists also took note. On her blog, *American Indians in Children's Literature*, and in the *Wall Street Journal*, Debbie Reese (an assistant professor in American Indian Studies at UIUC), paid attention to representations of Apaches as savages in U.S. children's literature, and to the impacts of these representations on Native children.

Though the news cycle has moved on, it may be useful to reflect on this moment a bit more, as a way to understand the directions at stake in U.S. power, specifically U.S. imperialism, both in its impacts on Native lives and communities, and elsewhere in the world. This "epochal moment" resonates in spaces such as the United Nations, in contemporary politics taking place over historical Apache homelands, in moments of passing on and transition in Black radical politics and culture, and in environmental policy. The codename slip-up makes clear that bin Laden may be dead, but imperialism as a way of life continues to animate the U.S.

On December 10, 2010, the Obama Administration announced that it would add its support to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, making it the last member nation of the United Nations to accede, after the conservative government in Canada, the other holdout, announced its own support in March, 2010. On the face of it, the announcement heralds a change in a positive direction for both North American governments, as they fall into line with the rest of the world's nation-states' willingness to recognize rights for indigenous nations living within their borders. The Declaration, however, is strictly advisory, and contains no binding enforcement mechanisms. Read in line with other major developments at the UN, including the US announcement that it will boycott the next UN Conference on Racism, and US moves against Palestinian attempts to gain recognition as a member nation within the UN framework, the picture that begins to emerge is one of underlying continuity with longstanding U.S. international policy. Work on the Declaration began in 1982. Having held out so long, the U.S. may have inadvertently contributed to what may ultimately be the most powerful impact of the Declaration: decades of debate and organizing among indigenous peoples around the world, especially around defining indigeneity and indigenous politics, which have proven central to the development of a global indigenous politics, one which has the potential to redefine the concept of "nation" away from the nation-state framework underlying the United Nations.

Geronimo and his fellow Chiricahuas, fought the establishment of Arizona and New Mexico territories over the space of their own homelands. Drawing upon a centuries-long history of resistance against, and strategic collaboration with, Spanish imperialists and Mexican settlers, and other Apaches, Comanches, and Puebloan communities, for Chiricahuas, the imposition of U.S. power over their lives was an episode in a much longer history. Not so, from the perspective of the U.S. With their detailed knowledge and

ability to fight along both sides of an international border that they did not recognize, but used to their own military and economic advantage, Chiricahua war groups, though small in number, drew a massive institutional response from both the U.S. and Mexican militaries. Upon his surrender, Geronimo, and his fellow fighters, were exiled to coastal Florida, where a small group of the men were held at a prison in Pensacola. Their families, alongside relatives who were living on the Warm Springs Reservation during the fighting, who did not participate in military resistance against the U.S., were held at Fort Marion, near St. Augustine, in over-crowded conditions with poor sanitation, for over a year. Many of the elders in the community, and most of the infants born in captivity, died during their time there, and tuberculosis ravaged the survivors. Many of the adult men held in Fort Marion had actually served in the U.S. Army as scouts, on previous campaigns against Indian communities. On learning of plans for their release, spurred by indignation from humanitarians, but perhaps even more so, by rising costs, the territorial governor of Arizona wrote indignantly to the President, "Arizona has rendered her holocaust to this humanization sentiment."



Geronimo

On June 2, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, a leading member of the Black Panther Party, passed away. He was a target of federal counterintelligence, and served 27 years in prison on a false murder charge, a charge which federal courts eventually vacated. Imagine, for a moment, the words "Geronimo—E KIA" telegraphed on his obituary. Ji Jaga Pratt, who eventually left the U.S. for Tanzania, as a Black nationalist, Pratt's politics were oriented against the maintenance and reproduction of the U.S. social order. Geronimo Ji Jaga's moment was one of revolutionary possibility. We might reflect on his life and legacy, and the vast gulf between that revolutionary possibility, and the realignments of imperial power marked by the ascension of the Obama Administration, as it begins to roll out its 2012 campaign season.

This might also be a moment for us to remember pushback against invocations of the Bronx as "Fort Apache," the use of the Incredible Bongo Band's song "Apache," and early rappers, like Cochise, taking on names of Apache and other American Indian resistance leaders, in the early years of hip hop culture. At this point in time, when a type of hip hop provides the baseline for contemporary marketing, amidst the accelerating commodification of space, daily life, and bodies, in contemporary New York City, hip hop's birthplace, we might remember earlier invocations of solidarity and critique, which, even with their appropriative dimensions, open possibilities of different vantage points on continued imperialism, than the ones evoked by the recent branding of Osama bin Laden as Geronimo.



## On Civil Unions with Kevin and Brandon Bowersox-Johnson

By Marti Wilkinson



RESIDENTS IN ILLINOIS now have the opportunity to apply for and be joined in a civil union, which recognizes a legal commitment between two adults who wish to have the same rights and privileges afforded to married couples. However, this type of recognition currently only exists at the state level. In the case of same sex partnerships, the new civil union law is a step forward in the fight for marriage equality. For Urbana residents Kevin Bowersox-Johnson, and his husband, Brandon Bowersox-Johnson, the new law made it possible for both men to be united by Judge Ford in a civil union on June 3, 2011 at the Champaign County Courthouse. In an email interview, both Kevin and Brandon answered some questions for the *Public i*, on how the new law has changed things for their family, as well as couples throughout the state of Illinois. Additionally, the Bowersox-Johnson's shared some thoughts on how the new law will be beneficial to people in Illinois.

According to both men the ceremony gives their family, which includes son Garrett, recognition at a state level. Kevin also serves as the President of The UP Center of Champaign County, which provides resources for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and ally (LGBTQA) community. The website ([/unitingpride.org/](http://unitingpride.org/)) includes a list of LGBTQA friendly businesses, churches, and organizations. Kevin and Brandon note that, along with churches that are willing to perform civil unions,

couples can contact Jennifer Dobson at the Champaign County Courthouse (217-384-3707 option 9), to arrange to have a union performed by a judge. A civil union license can be obtained at the Champaign County Clerk's office at the Brookens building in Urbana.

The website for the Champaign County Clerk ([www.champaigncountyclerk.com/](http://www.champaigncountyclerk.com/)), offers information on how to apply for and obtain a civil union license. Currently, civil union licenses are offered at a lower price than marriage license. When asked about this discrepancy, the Bowersox-Johnson's responded that the pricing was a result of an oversight of a law that the county clerk's office can charge for different services. Soon the price will be the same as that of marriage licenses, and both men expressed the belief that the fees for civil unions should be equal.

When asked about the main hurdles facing marriage equality, Kevin and Brandon wrote, "It's important that people apply the same language, rights, and responsibilities on things in order for equality to exist. Therefore, by naming our union a Civil Union rather than a Marriage, we are automatically set apart from step one. Secondly, we need federal recognition. By being recognized at the Federal level, we are able to be granted all the same rights and responsibilities that opposite-sex couples have. At this point, in time for those united in Illinois, we can file our Illinois State Taxes together, but still not our Federal Taxes. This complicates things not only for us, but for employers, tax accountants, and other professionals having to sort out the differences."

In the event that the federal government does end up recognizing same sex unions, Kevin and Brandon don't anticipate having to undergo another civil union. They believe it's most likely that their union will be grandfathered in, and recognized as a marriage. Currently though, there are challenges that people joined in a civil union face because of the differences in state and federal recognition. As a result, the Bowersox-Johnson's recommends that any couple consult with legal professionals to make sure that both individual and couple needs are met. Some of these measures include medical power of attorneys and wills. For opposite sex couples who may consider a civil union, it is still recommended that both parties consult with an attorney regarding federal and state rights. The state of Illinois does not discriminate between same sex and opposite sex couples who wish to join in a civil union.

When asked what they would like for people to understand about civil unions and marriage equality Kevin and Brandon had this to share, "We are both very excited to be united and recognized by the state of Illinois. However, we also recognize that this is a good first step to true equality. We'd like to take a deep breath to cherish this moment before moving forward with our advocacy towards true equality. Congratulations to all those in Illinois who have been civilly united."

## ACLU of Illinois Turns to US Department of Justice for Help Reigning in Consent Searches

By William Brown

THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES Union of Illinois filed an administrative complaint on June 7<sup>th</sup> and asked the U.S. Department of Justice to launch an investigation into "the substantial racial disparate impact caused by Illinois State Police (ISP) consent searches of Hispanic and African American motorists." Data collected and reported over the past several years demonstrate that ISP troopers are more likely to ask Hispanic and African American motorists for consent to search their vehicles, but are more likely to find contraband when consent searching a car driven by a Caucasian motorist.

A consent search often occurs when a law enforcement official lacks probable cause or even reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is afoot, yet nonetheless asks a civilian for permission to search their vehicle or person. The ACLU complaint points out that motorists' consent is not truly voluntary, often involving a degree of coercion. Illinois State Police data indicate that more than 95% of motorists grant consent when asked. The search is often intrusive and publically humiliating, and because the search is initiated based on the subjective hunch of individual police officers, consent searches are inherently susceptible to bias. In 2009, the latest year with publically available data, Hispanic motorists were 3 times more likely than white motorists to be consent searched, but white motorists were 3 times more likely to be found with contraband.

In the 60-page complaint to the Assis-

tant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division and the Chief of the Special Litigation Section, the ACLU of Illinois requests the U.S. Department of Justice require the ISP to bar all consent searches - a step that the ACLU of Illinois and other civil rights groups have urged the past two Governors to take without a response. Gov. Pat Quinn has asked the state police director to review the issue, according to Quinn spokesman Grant Klinzman.

"Years of data make clear that consent searches by the ISP are conducted in a racially disparate manner," said Harvey Grossman, legal director for the ACLU of Illinois. "Because of the inaction of state officials we are compelled to ask the federal government to protect motorists of color in Illinois from being subjected to unnecessary, invasive and racially discriminatory searches." Grossman said the ACLU decided to ask the Department of Justice to intervene because it would be quicker than a court case, and because the agency's civil rights division has taken an active role under Obama.

Traffic stop data collection at the state level began in 2004 and was to expire at the end of 2007, but a 2006 act extended the time period and required the data collection to include whether or not contraband was found following the search, in order to better measure the police "hit rate," or the times they guessed correctly that something would be found in a search. Gov. Quinn signed a law in 2009 that further extended the collection period to 2015. One of the most publically dis-

cussed results of the traffic study is the minority stop ratio, which is derived from an estimate of minority drivers in a community based on US Census data. The stop ratio compares the "expected" number of stops by race and ethnicity to the actual stops in order to measure bias. The consent search measure used by the ACLU, however, does not depend on any motorist population estimates—it is simply the percentage of all drivers stopped of a particular race who were asked for consent to search. Other data collected in the traffic study includes the time, duration, reason for stop, outcome (e.g. citation or warning), and a location code or police beat.

Consent searches by Champaign and Urbana police have dropped dramatically since the initial year of the study, from more than 150 (Champaign and Urbana combined) in 2004 to only 39 in 2009. However, the University of Illinois police department has increased the use of consent searches, from less than 50 in 2004 to 80 in 2009. In the years 2007-2009 (all the data available so far that shows "contraband found") African-American drivers in Champaign-Urbana and on campus were more than twice as likely to be asked for a consent search, but white drivers subjected to consent searches were nearly twice as likely to have contraband.

### TRAFFIC STOP DATA:

[www.dot.il.gov/trafficstop/results09.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/trafficstop/results09.html)

ACLU of Illinois:

<http://www.aclu-il.org>

ACLU complaint:

[www.aclu-il.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/ACLU%20to%20DOJ%2006-7-11.pdf](http://www.aclu-il.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/ACLU%20to%20DOJ%2006-7-11.pdf)

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



# Last Call to Save Free Speech for People, Not Corporations

By David Roknich



START CALLING THE WHITE HOUSE while you read this, and I'll explain why you need to keep that switchboard well lit. Few people fully understand the greatest threat to democracy today is the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission*. It guaranteed a radical increase in the cost of running for elected office by protecting the right of free speech for corporate money.

In January of 2010, the Supreme Court struck down limits on "electioneering communications" supporting or opposing candidates for office 30 days before primary elections and 60 days before general elections. They argue these limits, established as part of the *Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002* violated the First Amendment and were unconstitutional. Their argument treats corporations as people, and takes bold leaps beyond previous court decisions.

In the wake of the decision, President Obama chastised the court:

This [Citizens United] ruling opens the floodgates for an unlimited amount of special interest money into our democracy. It gives the special interest lobbyists new leverage to spend millions on advertising to persuade elected officials to vote their way or to punish those who don't. That means that any public servant who has the courage to stand up to the special interests and stand up for the American people can find himself or herself under assault come election time. Even foreign corporations may now get into the act.

Obama stated his intention to overturn the decision:

When this ruling came down, I instructed my administration to get to work immediately with Members of Congress willing to fight for the American people to develop a forceful, bipartisan response to this decision. We have begun that work, and it will be a priority for us until we repair the damage that has been done.

At that time, both houses of Congress were comfortably controlled by Democrats, but attempts to craft legislation

floundered in October 2010. The impact of the Citizens United decision was seen in the mid-term elections when a number of dozens of "tea party" candidates won seats. Various corporations and action committees spent millions to install friendly political allies. A record \$300 million was spent in the mid-term campaigns, and the upcoming election in 2012 is expected to break all previous records for spending. Obama himself has set a fund raising goal of one billion dollars for his own campaign.

On January 23, 2010, there was a promise to oppose this trend on the presidential blog:

"In this week's address, President Barack Obama addresses the Supreme Court decision to further empower corporations to use their financial clout to directly influence elections and vows that "as long as I'm your President, I'll never stop fighting to make sure that the most powerful voice in Washington belongs to you."

In 2012, when another third of our Senate and the entire House of Representatives will be decided, the influence of corporate cash will be immeasurably greater. According to Alex Knott of rollcall.com, at least 3 dozen new political action committees "have registered this year as independent expenditure organizations, a designation that gives them the option of using unprecedented types of funds in the 2012 elections." Included among them is Citizens United—the group that took their case against the *Campaign Reform Act of 2002* all the way to the Supreme Court, where important sections were found to be unconstitutional. The court's decision only affected spending supporting or opposing candidates, but stated that "Citizens United has not made direct contributions to candidates, and it has not suggested that the court" should overturn the ban on campaign contributions.

However, at least one federal judge seeks to extend their argument to allow direct corporate contributions to candidates. Ruling in a criminal case in Virginia, U.S. District Judge James Cacheris found that:

"For better or worse, Citizens United held that there is no distinction between an individual and a corporation with respect to political speech. Thus, if an individual can

make direct contributions... a corporation cannot be banned from doing the same thing."

It is disconcerting that our Department of Justice has not yet appealed his ruling. In fact, after some initial rumblings of opposition to the Citizens United ruling when it was first announced, our elected officials have failed to act on it. Polls have found that reversing the decision enjoys bipartisan support with at least 80% of the US electorate.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> District of Illinois, home to Galesburg where I live, I watched Phil Hare, of the Progressive Caucus, get beaten by PAC money spent to oppose him. Signs went up without even mentioning Hare's opponent, Bobby Schilling. Hare still carried Galesburg, where he is well known, but lost the election by a sizable margin thanks directly to the Citizens United decision.

We should ask, why has Obama relented in his opposition to Citizens United decision? When his party controlled both the houses of Congress, why didn't he publicly address them and demand an amendment be sent to the states for ratification?

John F. Kennedy was not afraid to do this in 1962, and the result was a constitutional amendment that overturned the poll tax after decades of frustrated attempts in the House and Senate. Kennedy asked Congress for the 2/3 majority needed in both Houses to send the amendment to the states for ratification. The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment was sent to the states and ratified on January 23, 1964.

We have only one chance to assert that corporations are not people and money is not speech. The time is now, or we will be forever silenced. The use of the bully pulpit by John F. Kennedy, and the speedy passage of the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment shows us the way. Several groups have been circulating petitions urging the passage of an amendment, Public Citizen at citizen.org and "Move To Amend" at movetoamend.org offer similar programs.

Move To Amend has sponsored dozens of Independence Day parties across the country. Declare your independence from money in elections. Phone the President and demand his support at (202) 456-1111 or (202) 456-1414. Find out more at <http://realo.us>.

## IMC Teen Creativity Camp

THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER is hosting its third annual IndyMedia & Arts Lab! The Lab will take place August 1–August 5<sup>th</sup> and August 8–August 12, 2011 from 9–3PM.

Teens ages 10–16 are invited to engage in hands on workshops on radio production, community gardening, painting/art, making musical instruments, computers, and 'zine making. This year's Lab provides affordable extended summer activities that

will empower youths to learn, explore, express themselves, and build confidence in a safe, confidence building environment. The cost is \$150, \$75, or \$0. Cost is determined by eligibility for lunch fee waivers in school.

Lunch will be served to participants. Enrollment is open now but space is limited.

For further information contact Carol Ammons at [carolammons@gmail.com](mailto:carolammons@gmail.com) or at 217.344.8820.

This fantastic opportunity is sponsored by the City of Urbana and Illinois Arts Council—we thank them!

### ABOUT THE UCIMC

The UCIMC is a grassroots organization committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice. We foster the creation and distribution of media, art, and narratives emphasizing underrepresented voices and perspec-

tives and promote empowerment and expression through media and arts education.

To this end, the UCIMC owns and operates a Community Media and Arts Center in the historic downtown post office building, which houses a radio station, media production facilities, bike coop, performance space, gallery, books to prisoners project, art studios, library, meeting space, and partner organizations. Read more: [www.ucimc.org](http://www.ucimc.org).

## Champaign Farmers Market

Continued from page 3

In addition to her role with the Boys and Girls Club, Bridge has been involved with the market since its inception. She finds that the market helps to promote a neighborhood feel within the community. Langacker noted this as well and added that the market is being designed to be a relaxed environment where community members can engage with one another and

develop relationships with the vendors. There is little hustle and bustle at the market. Langacker is careful to encourage a slow and controlled growth of vendors. She encourages new vendors to bring the 'best' of what they have to offer customers so they can build their own businesses and relationships within the community. These efforts are bearing fruit.

Beverly Lacy of Lord and Lacy Famous Kansas City Style Barbecue finds that the atmosphere encourages partnerships within the community. For the last two seasons, the Lacy's have been selling their award winning barbecue to hungry patrons of the market. Lacy enjoys the camaraderie in the community that she grew up in, and says the market offers

potential for people from all walks of life. She describes the market as a group of very friendly people who help each other out like a small, extended, family. It's a family that is always looking for new members. For more information: Go to [sites.google.com/site/farmersmarket-north1st/](http://sites.google.com/site/farmersmarket-north1st/)



# Early History of the School for Designing a Society

By Rob Scott



THE SCHOOL FOR DESIGNING A SOCIETY is a grassroots, non-accredited school for social change that was founded in 1991 following a decade of experimentation with formats of art and teaching in the 1980s. The proposal of the School grew out of an experimental college course

where the idea was to invite participants to articulate desire statements, to research their interests in the current society, and to design, construct, formulate, propose projects, or simply speak in such a way that would not happen otherwise. Almost all of the organizing activity of the school has been in Urbana, Illinois. The originators of the School were motivated by the political necessity for a forum where groups could engage in creative tampering with communication formats in order to trigger social change. The idea was to take art beyond the traditional boundary of the arts and apply it to social structures.

I recently researched the "pre-history" of the school, during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. During the 1970s and 80s, a group of students around music composer Herbert Brün worked together to make experiments in art and activism around the reception of art in society. In a certain way, one such idea was to have a school that would bounce the ideas of art and design back upon the society. In this sense, from the first the six-week pilot school offered in 1993, and even up to the present day, the project has been a proposal to foment social revolution by grounding struggle in a discourse of the arts. The school now lives at the IMC, and this article proposes to share some of its long history.

## PRE-HISTORY

Herbert Brün described part of the pre-history of the School for Designing a Society in a video made at the 1993 Summer School. He described a time in "the late sixties" when students at the University of Illinois approached Heinz Von Foerster, then Professor of Neurophysiology in the College of Engineering, and requested a course on "heuristics." According to Brün, the students described heuristics as "doing

research stepwise, and having the goal change while we do research. Therefore the result will clearly be a case of a process and not of achievement." Brün was invited to assist in teaching the course, and his first contribution to the class was an assignment that converted the patriotic loyalty slogan "right or wrong, my country!" into a provocation to write statements under the title "right or wrong: my desires." The assignment was to write "desire statements," (declarations of what one wants that doesn't yet exist), to write as many desire statements as one could, and to make them short, so that one could later be asked about them. Brün added: "the concept of feasibility is excluded, you are not supposed to judge whether what you want can be met or cannot be met - you want it, period." The students from the heuristics class initially thought they wouldn't need a full week to produce a list of desire statements. Instead they discovered that the assignment was difficult enough to be worthy of an entire semester.

The milieu in Urbana used Brün's assignment for two decades: not only critiquing the clichés of the current society, but also formulating desires for a different society. In the relationship between Brün and his graduate students, the school was born. Marianne Brün described the origins of the school in a video made in 2001 (by Eric Hiltner—an early member of the UCIMC), just after Herbert's death.

"In 1981, I gave a class at Unit One, at the University of Illinois, called 'Designing a Society.' That class was repeated a couple of times. The idea of it, for me, was to make an analysis of the society we live in, and then look at what aspects of the present-day society, the status quo, we don't want, and what kind of a society we do want. The image of that society [had] two functions: one, a critique of the society we live in, and [two] the beginning of a path to a new society. That was quite successful with the students, and it was then a few students who had been in that class, or close to the class, who started the School for Designing a Society."

This class at Unit One is well documented, but the less known story concerns the milieu as a whole. Susan Parenti spoke about the origins of the school in the same 2001 video.

"We started the school so that (not because), so that our

friends could work together. That's probably the best way to talk about it. For years, in the 1980s, we had been meeting at Cybernetics Conferences. Meeting, in the sense that our friends were across the country. And so, when we would all come together, one of the main topics would be education, social change, and were we doing some project together? We each had our projects here [Urbana], and Virginia Beach, Lansing, and Chicago. In 1984 - 1986, a group of students of Herbert and Marianne Brün's met with Marianne for about three years and we talked about starting a school in Chicago."

For two years, Marianne Brün tried to get foundation grants for that project, which was called the Institute for Global Education in the Systems Age. The grants were rejected, Marianne moved back to Germany, and people re-grouped.

In December 1987, Herbert Brün and the Performers' Workshop Ensemble organized the American Society of Cybernetics Conference in Urbana and titled it, "Creative Cybernetics: Our Utopianists' Audacious Constructions." This was Urbana's first encounter with Patch Adams, a medical doctor who focused on happiness and social change, was invited to the conference as a guest speaker. This was also the first time the Performers' Workshop Ensemble hosted a "Cybernetics Fair" (or "problem jostle").

In this format, participants would sit at one of several tables for a few minutes with others and discuss issues surrounding topics of conversation that were suspended on cards attached to helium balloons above each table. Then a short musical performance or skit would signal participants to change tables, and thus to engage a multiplicity of subjects for discussion. This format would later be used to generate agendas at the first School for Designing a Society in 1993, which hosted its inaugural session at Patch Adams' Gesundheit! Institute project in West Virginia. That project still exists, and Patch Adams now resides in Urbana, Illinois where he continues to support the work of the School for Designing a Society at the Independent Media Center.

# UC-IMC Summer Update

By Austin McCann



## PHILANTHROPIST BEQUEST

The UC-IMC recently received a \$100,000 bequest from the late Dr. Alice Tang, a 'Planetary Peace Promoter' and philanthropist in California. This is the largest single gift received by the UC-IMC and attests to our high national visibility as a model community media and arts center. We are in discussion about ways to use these funds to build our sustainability. We are grateful to Dr. Tang for her generous gift.

## INDYMEDIA IN AFRICA

The UC-IMC sponsored and supported the Dakar Indymedia Convergence, which brought dozens of independent African media makers together in Senegal during the 2011 World Social Forum.

## CITY OF URBANA ARTS GRANTS

The UC-IMC received grants from the City of Urbana Arts Program for two of our most successful, innovative programs: the IMC Film Fest (Sep 15-17, 2011), Children's Arts Fest (Oct 22, 2011), and the Public i's "Poetry for the People" (2010-2011). Sign up to receive announcements of events at the IMC.

## FRESH FACES AT THE UC-IMC

Durl Kruse, our acting Treasurer! Durl is a retired elementary school principal. Since his retirement, he's run as a Green Party mayoral candidate in Urbana and led a campaign to get Instant Run-off voting on the ballot. He was appointed to the UP-TV Commission and Champaign Urbana Cable Commission, and has been active with local groups, such as the Anti-

War Anti-Racism Effort, CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, and the Channing-Murray Foundation.

## UC-IMC ON DEMOCRACY NOW!

Did you see us mentioned on Democracy Now? While interviewing UC-IMC co-founder Sascha Meinrath, host Amy Goodman remembered: "I saw you years ago in Champaign-Urbana, when-it was remarkable [the IMC] took over the post office, bought the post office as a facility for everyone to be able to have access to the [media]... It was remarkable!"

## THE COSTUME CLOSET

Welcome to the UC-IMC Public Costume Closet! Located downstairs, the Costume Closet lets community members check out clothing & accessories for free! Useful for theater productions, costume parties, or merely those in need of "costume therapy," the Costume Closet also offers a weekly Stich & Itch night devoted to textile projects!

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Champaign's Windsor Road Christian Church recently named us a 'community partner,' committing skilled volunteers & funds for service projects at the UC-IMC. Future projects include increasing accessibility and Computer Help Desk support.

## WINTER/SPRING 2011 HIGHLIGHTS

**Urbana-Champaign Mini Maker Faire Makerspace** Urbana's one-day, family-friendly event celebrating the arts, crafts, engineering, music, science, and technology projects and the Do-It-Yourself spirit in our community. **'Poetry for the People' Poetry Slam** The Print working group organized this spoken word event, which included

the poets documented in the film *Louder Than A Bomb* (highlighted at this year's Ebertfest) and with emcee, poet, and organizer Aaron Ammons!

**Prison Arts Festival** A project of UC Books to Prisoners, the Festival featured work from inmates at the Danville prison, guest speakers, and a film screening.

**Midwest Zine Fest** The IMC Librarians & Archivists organized a Midwest Zine Fest gathering of zine-makers, authors, speakers, and musicians and for the purpose of celebrating zines and zine-culture.

**Microtonal Design Unconference** Microtonality is a method for singing out of tune with conventional wisdom. Hosted by IMC's Oddmusic and the School for Designing a Society, the Microtonal Design UnConference included music composition, instrument building, recordings, research, and more!

**IMC-Omnia** IMC-Omnia is a unique recurring project for which we open our 30,000 sq. ft. Community Media & Arts Center to the public for 24 straight hours, making our space and resources available for anybody interested in working on arts or media projects!

## HELP "RE-VISION" THE UC-IMC!

Retreat scheduled for September 2011! Get on our Events listserv for updates! Support the process with a donation!

## SUPPORT US

To make a recurring annual gift, donate here or mail us a check: 202 S. Broadway Ave. #100, Urbana, IL, 61801. Make a commitment to the future of media and arts in Champaign-Urbana: consider becoming a Sustaining Funder.

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# Morocco's Uprisings and All the King's Men

By Emma Rosen, (Previously Published at Al Jazeera—[aljazeera.co.uk/](http://aljazeera.co.uk/))

THOUSANDS POURED INTO THE STREETS of Rabat on Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup> to condemn the death of a protester and to demand an end to the country-wide government crackdown on peaceful demonstrations.

"We are here today to protest the murder of Khaled al-Amari," said a 40-year-old Rabat resident who did not give her name out of fear of the authorities. "But we are also here because we demand dignity, democracy and freedom. This repression must end."

Last Thursday, 30-year-old Khaled al-Amari, a member of Morocco's main opposition group, died after reportedly suffering a severe beating at the hands of police during a protest in the city of Safi. Officers deny that his death was a direct result of police violence, despite eyewitness accounts that he was severely beaten.

Police violence against peaceful demonstrators in Morocco has exploded in recent weeks, in what protesters say is a significant escalation of government repression.

The swelling crowd proceeded from the Old City down Muhammad VI Avenue, many holding pictures of Khaled al-Amari's beaten face. Protesters chanted: "Down with despotism. We want freedom and dignity," and "peace, peace, freedom is coming," as they made their way to parliament. At many points in the march, protesters clasped each other's hands, sat down in the street, or waved peace signs in the air.

"We are demanding democracy and dignity," declared Mohammed Aghmaj. "The police are not being violent today because there was a martyr. But we know they have been violent in the past," he said, referring to the relative calm at the demonstration.

## COERCING PROTESTERS AND JOURNALISTS

The protesters are part of what has been termed the February 20 Movement, led largely by young people demanding pro-democracy reforms and an end to government corruption and repression—as well as an end to poverty and inequality. Launched on February 20 this year, the protests have swelled in conjunction with the so-called "Arab Spring" protests and revolutions sweeping the Middle East and North Africa. Gatherings continue regularly, culminating weekly in coordinated demonstrations throughout the country.

Many believe that the recent escalation in violence is meant to quash mass mobilisations before the July 1 refer-

endum on reforming the constitution. The referendum itself was a concession offered by King Muhammed VI to the February 20 Movement protesters.

"Police have been given orders to break protesters' legs and heads," said Mohamed Elboukili, from the Moroccan human rights organisation Association Marocaine des Droits Humains [Moroccan Association of Human Rights]. "This is a very dangerous situation."

Police violence against protests in several cities throughout Morocco on the past two Sundays have garnered international attention, with several images of police beatings captured on video. "According to the law, police must ask people to leave three times and give time for this," explains Elboukili. "But the police don't do this. They charge and beat people. In our opinion, this does not respect the right to peacefully demonstrate."



Defiant demonstrators seeking democracy send a clear message against state repression and police violence

Police violence has been accompanied by a crackdown on journalists. Last month, *Al Jazeera* was forced by the Moroccan government to cease broadcast operations in Rabat, with a ban on all land and satellite transmitters. Furthermore, Rachid Nini, editor of Morocco's *el-Massa* newspaper, who has been outspoken against government corruption, was jailed for writing articles critical of Morocco's security services and counter-terrorism law. Amnesty International has condemned the jailing as "a severe attack on freedom of expression." Last Wednesday, dozens of his supporters gathered in downtown Rabat to demand that the government release him.

## THE KING'S "REPRESSIVE TACTICS"

The Association Marocaine des Droits Humains has received reports that police have started paying house visits to protest organisers' homes, telling them they should not attend protests. "Now they are intimidating and watching people," says Elboukili. "The police are making their presence known."

This approach contrasts sharply with police treatment of pro-monarchy demonstrators on Sunday May 29. At midday, a pro-monarchy rally on Muhammad V Avenue in front of the parliament chanted slogans supporting the king, with many attendees holding his portrait. The crowd went undisturbed by police, who hung back leisurely at the outskirts. Journalists were allowed to roam freely, marking a drastic distinction from February 20 Movement protests, where journalists covered demonstrations at considerable personal risk from the police.

One attendee, a Rabat native in his mid-fifties who did not give his name, explained: "This demonstration has a permit, unlike the other demonstrations," in reference to mobilisations of the February 20 movement.

This comes on the heels of Saudi Arabia's invitation to Morocco to join what has been termed the "club of kings," the Gulf Cooperation Council, intended to protect the interests of monarchs against the "Arab Spring" uprisings throughout the region. While Morocco is a constitutional monarchy on paper, in practice, power is consolidated in the hands of the king, who can nominate and dismiss the prime minister and cabinet, dissolve parliament, and levy emergency powers.

Muhammad VI is a close ally of the United States, which exports arms to the Moroccan government, reportedly to maintain its military occupation in Western Sahara. Muhammad VI has attracted praise from the Obama administration for his alleged moderation and embrace of democratic reforms.

"Things need to change in my country," said a 35-year-old Casablanca resident who spoke on condition of anonymity. "This repression makes me fear for my children. We need so many things, we need education and freedom and an end to poverty. The people of Morocco are demanding change. We will not tolerate this repression."

**VIOLENCE** means working for 40 years, getting miserable wages and wondering if you ever get to 'retire...'

**VIOLENCE** means state bonds, robbed pension funds and the stock-market fraud...

**VIOLENCE** means being forced to get housing loans which finally you pay back as if they were gold...

**VIOLENCE** means unemployment, temporary and part-time employment, 400 Euros wage with or without benefits...

**VIOLENCE** means work 'accidents', as bosses diminish their workers' safety costs...

**VIOLENCE** means being driven sick because of hard work ...

**VIOLENCE** means consuming psycho/anxiety-drugs and vitamins in order to cope with exhausting working hours...

**VIOLENCE** means living in a society where the 'poverty of everyday life,' alienation, and the impossibility of LOVE is 'normalized.'

**VIOLENCE** means working for money to buy medicines in order to fix your 'labor power commodity...'

**VIOLENCE** means dying on ready-made beds in horrible hospitals, when you can't afford bribery!

**...PRECARITY IS VIOLENCE!**

- Proletarians from occupied GSEE, Athens, December 2008



# Our World Economy: Three Facts, Two Problems, and Two Solutions

By Michael Brin



## THREE FACTS, TWO PROBLEMS:

1. Growth, as defined by the capacity to produce goods and services is greater than ever before, and continues to increase. This is what we expect of the economy. Often this is all that seems important in economics. So look, it's going great; capitalism works!

## WHY DO SO MANY OF US FEEL NOT SO GOOD?

2. Even as more and more gets made, the production process requires fewer and fewer people. To work, this requires: a very few people with extreme technical skills, social skills, stamina and discipline; a few more with a lesser degree or number of these skills/qualities; and, a moderate number of people with few skills but reasonable work habits. This number is way less than the total population; never mind children, the elderly, or people with disabilities. In fact, one half or more of the world's potential labor force could disappear overnight, and production would likely not drop at all.

This is a big problem. It doesn't matter how much is produced, people left out of the necessary labor force aren't going to earn anything. If they are to survive at all, it will be through family ties, public welfare, private charity, or crime. As production grows, this problem worsens. That's why "growth" doesn't help get rid of poverty. The more we pursue efficiency-reducing labor and improving productivity-the worse things get. We keep needing fewer people and meanwhile require ever more from those few we keep on. What's more, those who are left out are still expected to contribute to the societal infrastructures that support this system; we need your contribution-thank you so much; your tax dollars-or your money or your life!

This problem isn't new; a previous iteration took the form of the Great Depression of the 1930s. That time it was "cured" by World War II. A funny thing about big all-out desperate wars for world domination with huge armies and a lot hanging in the balance: suddenly everyone can be useful! War economies are not consumer economies and not

about maximizing profit. They are about maximizing production and firepower and available fighting personnel. In short, they are about maximizing participation. Wars kill, maim, and traumatize vast numbers of people; and result in all kinds of other harm, no doubt about it. However, they solve the problem of people being left out of the economy in a way peacetime capitalist production doesn't. At least they used to do that. It is not clear that a modern "high-tech" war would do as well; but at least the military is recruiting now, which is more than can be said for anyone else. It would be nice to find a better solution.

3. Most people save too little to provide for their future; yet overall, way too much money is saved! That's right, we keep facing savings gluts. That's when savers put more money into banks, mutual funds, brokerage accounts-you name it-than anyone knows what to do with.

Think about it. Every time you save, you are giving an assignment to somebody else: go make my money perform! Those bankers and brokers need to find something. Wouldn't they look stupid if they apologized and returned your money because they didn't know what to do? If they cannot find productive profit-making enterprises that also happen to want to borrow enough, they put the money into some asset—stocks, housing, maybe gold. For a while things look good; as more people turn to assets, prices will be bid up. This is a classic bubble. Eventually the price reaches a top and then, 'I'm falling!' The price drop is very fast; oh sorry, how could we have known? And sure, there is incompetence and dishonesty behind every bubble, but as is explained above, the root problem is too much saving.

## IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS TO THE TWO BIG PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE SAVINGS GLUT:

So those are three basic facts of our modern capitalist world economy. The first fact seems encouraging. The other two facts are problematic. What are we to do?

Well, we've tried providing easier credit. This hasn't helped. Productive borrowers already have access to more than enough credit, and such a move increases vulnerability to defaults and ever-growing debt for those loosing out in the labor market. (This is not to dismiss some of the

good work recently done by central banks—especially by the US Federal Reserve Bank—but those efforts were directed at stabilizing the credit system in the face of the collapse of the housing bubble, and not at solving either of the two basic problems we are discussing here).

What about lending to the government? That doesn't help either. How can the government service its debts? There are only two ways. One is for the government to collect more taxes. There is no way government spending could increase income enough for the extra tax collections to cover the cost of borrowing, without also raising tax rates. So raising tax rates is one way.

The other mode of lending, open only to our Federal Government and other national governments, is to "print" more money. So what about printing more money (and its partner) inflation? This does reduce everyone's debt load. Some people feel doing this is dishonest, paying back old debts with cheaper currency, but it works wonders for crises caused by savings gluts. Also, once people realize this, they won't expect their savings to perform and so they may choose to spend more. This might even lead to one or two more jobs!

But ultimately we reach a fatal limit. Inflation can solve one of our big problems—the savings glut—but it doesn't do much for most of those unemployed folks. We do hear of workers being called back from layoffs when production booms. But the callback is not a very large part of the total number of unemployed and underemployed people. So what is to be done about the rest—short of going to war?

The solution stares us in the face: hire the "useless" people to do "useless" things (remember, this is useless in the eyes of capitalism)! This is the essence of left-wing Keynesianism: rather than increasing government spending in any old way, direct the increased spending so it will pay people who will never be hired and never be paid by anyone seeking a capitalist profit. The purpose of this public spending is not to compete with the private sector, but to address the aspects of societal survival that capitalism cannot and doesn't want to do. Only by removing the requirement that everyone contribute to profit in order to be able to earn an income will the massive worldwide unemployment problem be solved.

# Jimmy John's Under Fire for Health Risks

By Neil Parthun



WHILE SOME HAVE expressed displeasure with the recent photos of Jimmy John Liataud's hunting of leopards and other exotic animals, another much more

damaging story has fallen under the radar.

In April, a Minneapolis-St. Paul Jimmy John's franchise fired six employees who were members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) for publicizing the fact that they were forced to make sandwiches while sick. While the franchise owner Mike Mulligan said that workers were not punished for taking sick days, it was undercut by the company policy that "mandates one to two disciplinary 'points' for workers who call in without finding a replacement, even if they have a doctor's note. Workers are fired after accumulating six points." Even if they can get a substitute, the employees do not receive paid sick days and have no benefits.

The policy of having sick workers handle food has had dangerous results for the health and safety of the public. According

to the Minnesota Department of Health, there have been "eight outbreaks of food-borne illness at franchises across the Twin Cities area in the past five years, seven of which were due to employees working while sick at the chain." Two of the outbreaks were at Mulligan's stores.

The IWW and the workers attempted to negotiate for paid sick days. When management chose not to discuss the matter, the union went public with protest flyers. For blowing the whistle on this health safety risk, the Jimmy John's franchise fired these workers.

Along with grassroots political pressure on Jimmy John's and the franchise owners, the fired workers have filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board and hope to get their jobs back. Erik Forman, one of the fired workers reflected on the findings of the health documents saying: "These Department of Health reports definitively show what we already knew—we were fired for telling the truth about food safety hazards at Jimmy John's. We hope that the NLRB will expedite our case because there is no time to lose in bringing healthy working conditions to the fast food

industry."



Jimmy John Liataud: Local boy makes good... and, "Great-White-Hunter"



# Activists Get \$50,000 for FBI & St. Paul Police Raid

By Rochester IMC

## PREEMPTIVE, POLITICALLY MOTIVATED RAIDS ARE EMBLEMATIC OF POLICE TACTICS USED TO SUPPRESS DISSENT

ST. PAUL, MN—THREE ACTIVISTS and their attorneys won a \$50,000 settlement today in a lawsuit that challenged an August 30, 2008 police raid on a St. Paul home in advance of that year's Republican National Convention (RNC). The plaintiffs in the case—Sarah Coffey, Erin Stalnaker and Kris Hermes—are giving most of the award to the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, the Institute for Anarchist Studies, and the formation of a national legal defense fund for political activists. The St. Paul house raid was one of several police actions taken against protesters days before the RNC began, including the search and seizure of a central political meeting space, which is also the subject of pending litigation. "The City of St. Paul and the federal government were forced to pay for their politically-motivated attack on organizers," said Sarah Coffey, one of the plaintiffs. "Rather than spend years in court fighting the government over its political surveillance program, we decided to use settlement money to invest in projects that oppose such repressive tactics." The lawsuit, which was filed in August 2009 and accused the St. Paul Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of violating plaintiffs' First, Fourth and Fourteenth amendment rights, is so far the largest settlement of its kind stemming from the convention protests. "We hope this sends a message to law enforcement officials who would enter homes illegally or suppress political dissent," said Coffey, "there is a cost to their actions."

The raid garnered significant media attention at the time due to an hours-long standoff between 10 activists and residents and a heavily armed police force that had surrounded the duplex. Because the police attempted to raid the home without a search warrant, those inside refused them entry. After allegedly getting verbal authority from a local judge, the police used force to enter 949 Iglehart Avenue and detained everyone inside. The owner, several tenants and activists, including members of the I-Witness Video collective were detained for hours. No illegal items were found, no one was arrested and nothing was visibly seized, although computers and camera equipment were searched.

The search warrant affidavit, which was under seal until a month after the raid in a likely attempt to avoid media scrutiny, relied solely on a confidential informant who made

the claim that weapons were being shipped to 951 Iglehart using the U.S. Postal Service. In a sensationalist move, the police also tried to tie property owner Michael Whalen to a defunct 1970s political group, the Symbionese Liberation Army, in order to bolster the warrant's outrageous claim of arms shipments. However, once inside 951 Iglehart, police discovered that the boxes contained only vegan literature. Unsatisfied, police broke through a locked attic door to enter the neighboring but separate 949 Iglehart, which plaintiffs claimed was the operation's true objective.

St. Paul Police Officer David Langfellow was in charge of the operation as a cross-deputized FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) agent. Langfellow testified during a deposition that although the FBI had been surveilling the duplex for more than a week before the convention, the investigation was not targeting Whalen, the main subject of the search warrant affidavit. Langfellow either was not told or refused to reveal details about the underlying investigation, which plaintiffs speculate had nothing to do with the shipment of boxes.

Plaintiffs' attorneys also contributed a portion of the award to the Impact Fund, which provides money to small law firms and nonprofits for lawsuits involving issues of civil rights, environmental justice, and poverty.

### PUBLIC I ADDENDUM

In the November 2008 issue of the *Public i*, we published an article on the "preemptive" raids made by the FBI and local police officials on both people who were planning protests and on media people who were planning to cover the protests. These raids began after the 1999 Seattle protests against the meeting of the World Trade Organization. During that meeting protesters were attacked by the authorities and the image portrayed in the establishment



media was of police only responding to violent protesters. This image was the catalyst for the creation of the Independent Media Movement, both in the US and abroad.

After Seattle, the Department of Homeland Security began to portray protest planners as potential terrorists. It set up regional "fusion centers" of federal and state policing agencies to counter this "threat." Their violent and often preemptive responses to the 2002 protests against the World Economic Forum meetings in New York, to the 2003 protests at the Free Trade of the Americas meeting in Miami, and then to the 2004 Republican National Convention in Minneapolis reflected this militaristic approach to what they cast as a terrorist threat. Our 2008 article stated: "By linking the response to political demonstrations with the war on terror, and by using violence and trumped-up criminal charges against peaceful demonstrators, it [the federal/local combine] is creating a climate of fear and tension to discourage people from exercising their constitutional and human rights." \$50,000 is a pittance for so profoundly violating people's fundamental rights. But the important thing is that activists fought back and won legal recognition that the government, which is supposed to protect the rights of the people, is indeed a major rights violator.

## Letter From a Native Peace Activist

Continued from page 2

world have an obligation to organize and support such protests until all restrictions on Gaza not directly related to Israeli security - that is, not directly related to suspected arms shipments to Gaza - are removed. Such protests will continue until they are no longer necessary.

I urge the Israeli naval officer to use his influence not only to oppose an attack on the flotilla, but to support the lifting of the blockade of Gaza.

## IMC Hiring AmeriCorps Members To Serve Our Local Community

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED until Thursday, July 14, 2011 for three full time, and two part-time; one year AmeriCorps positions at the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center and partner organizations.

The UCIMC AmeriCorps program works to support social and economic justice in Champaign County by placing members to serve the programs of the UCIMC and its partners.

- Help educate and promote local resources available at the Independent Media Center—Apply to be the Outreach, Volunteer, Membership Coordinator
- Support education for prisoners! Apply to be the Books to Prisoners Outreach Coordinator

- Promote arts and cultural events!—Apply to be the All-Ages Performance Venue Coordinator
- Help the campus and community work together to tackle injustice!—Apply to be the University YMCA Community Engagement Coordinator
- Support high school students getting the resources they need to be self-sufficient!—Apply to be the Housing Authority-Education to Work Coordinator
- Help find volunteers to support youth recreations and activities—Apply to be the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club Volunteer Coordinator

To apply for any of these exciting positions go to: [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)

Full-time AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance of \$12,100; Half-time members receive a living allowance of \$6,050, student-loan forbearance, health coverage, and child care for those who qualify. After successfully completing your term of service, you will receive an AmeriCorps Education Award of up to \$5,550. Start date is tentatively set for August 01, 2011. You must commit to one full year of service. All positions are based on funding availability.

Read complete benefits, job descriptions and how to apply for each positions [americorps.gov](http://americorps.gov)

For general information on the program, please contact Carol Ammons, AmeriCorps Program Director at [carolammons@gmail.com](mailto:carolammons@gmail.com).

### AmeriCorps Open House

Urbana Champaign Independent Media Center will host AmeriCorps 2011-2012 Open House scheduled for July 8, 2011 from 3-5 p.m at 202 S. Broadway Avenue. Come learn about National Service and six AmeriCorps openings for the fall. For more information about AmeriCorps jobs visit: [americorps.gov](http://americorps.gov).

## The Killing of the Silverback By Pat Simpson

*This poem was inspired by the cover of a 2010 issue of National Geographic which carried a picture of the dead body of a silverback gorilla being carried on a stretcher by Park Rangers in Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo. Although the body of this gorilla was not mutilated, gorillas and other wildlife worldwide are often killed by locals not only for meat and skins, but for those body parts that have value in international markets because of their ornamental uses or their role in folk medicine. Of course, damage is done to many other species due to habitat loss and related processes associated with development and population pressures. Notably many park rangers in Africa and elsewhere themselves lose their lives in their efforts to protect wildlife.*

"Oh, the horror! The horror!"  
Conrad let his Kurtz know it  
this bubbling cauldron of bile  
this bitter dirt of endless war  
machetes glinting in the Vulcan sun  
children fussing over rank rifles  
gleaming tall in triumph over dolls  
balls, jacks, even the dull stone  
marbles of aborted innocence.

Worse, the terrible traffic treading  
these ruinous roads to nowhere  
the trade that spreads like wildfire  
licking at creation's naked flanks  
that harvests whole dominions  
that is deaf to the sad symphony  
of dying trills, hoots, and shrieks.

At the end of the line are merchants  
offering a mad magic: the false pull  
of portioned potions, of warped wraps  
demonic delicacies—heads, horns, hands  
stolen for the vanity of wizened old men  
plotting to seed blood-drenched soils  
with more of their fecund foulness  
This is the trail of tears that webs the world  
that catches beauty and neatly quarters it  
that sends it forth to the hungry ghosts  
the gaping ravening maws of civilization.

Today six sad porters lift the body  
of the great silverback up to the sky.  
His chest—a many-musled mountain—  
towers above the makeshift stretcher.  
His attendants walk stoop-shouldered  
weighted not by him but by their failure  
once again to stop the wrecking reach.  
Around them the sorrowing jungle  
closes in on their guilt and shame  
and in its dappled light they plod on  
dreaming a final rout of darkness

**Lies. Lies. And more LIES!!**

**YES... The last generation built the world we live in today, complete with global warming, economic crises, poverty, famines, war, occupations, and the boredom and emptiness of our daily lives.\*\* Now they want to force us into the same mold to repeat the same mistakes. Their schools don't just pass on skills and knowledge, but also obedience, apathy, blind faith, an entire value system based in domination and submission.\*\* Don't let them brainwash YOU!!**

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**\*\* Psst! BTW kids... LIFE just doesn't have to be this way.**

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