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The National Guard deploy at the St. Paul Republican National Convention to protect democracy from its people.



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What Is SAIC Doing In UI's Research Park?

By Paul Mueth

A SCIENCE APPLICATIONS INTERNATIONAL COMPUTING (SAIC) corporate spokesperson said in the journal, *Business 2.0*, "We are a stealth company. We're everywhere, but almost never seen." Indeed, they were there when pardoned felon Admiral Poindexter began the Total Information Awareness (TIA) project and SAIC received some of those early development contracts. TIA has been nominally ended but the data mining techniques, fundamental to NSA and other government surveillance largely contracted to SAIC, go on full speed ahead. Retroactive immunity for the "telecoms" just passed by Congress is extremely important for SAIC and its kindred corporations who deal with the flood of data from the illegal links to the many networks involved.

Tim Shorrock's recent book, *Spies for Hire: The Secret World of Intelligence Outsourcing*, points out that SAIC is almost fully a creature of the government: 90% of its revenue comes from federal contracts. Further, he asserts "the agency (NSA) is the company's largest single customer and SAIC is NSA's single contractor." Shorrock closely examines SAIC and a variety of entities that compete and cooperate on activities once solely governmental functions. He estimates that 70% of the current intelligence budget goes to contractors and argues persuasively that, even more than ordinary corporate influence over government, intelligence functions in the private sector to undermine democratic control of foreign policy, covert and overt.

One of the places where SAIC isn't seen, of course, is at Congressional hearings. Yet, SAIC's board has always had many CIA/NSA/DIA alumni, among its past directors: ex-US Secretaries of Defense William Perry and Melvin Laird; ex-directors of the CIA John Deutch, Robert Gates; Admiral Bobby Ray Inman (ex-director of the National Security Agency); other retired military staff including Wayne Downing (former commander in chief of US Special Forces) and Jasper Welch (ex-coordinator of the National Security Council). Duane Andrews, longtime SAIC executive, till he joined Qnetiq, (UK's privatized DARPA equivalent, think James Bond's Q) was then Sec'y of Defense Cheney's director for strategic defense policy. Andrews remains close to Vice President Dick Cheney, his former boss at the Pentagon. In a 2002 interview with *Government Computer News*, he listed Cheney as his hero.

SAIC was an early arrival to Iraq, joining the corporate bonanza. The corporation received multiple contracts, including one for \$15 million to work on an independent media network. After six months, \$82 million was spent, with nothing to show for the loot. Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele, veteran investigative journalists, point out in their *Vanity Fair* (March 2007) expose on SAIC, "Washington's \$8 Billion Shadow," the high irony of handing over this task to a corporation hired the previous year by Rumsfeld's Office of Strategic Influence to be "involved in a Pentagon program designed to feed disinformation to the foreign press". In concert, SAIC received a five-year "information" contract for \$300 million in 2005 from Special Operations Command "to promote its message overseas." It is interesting to note that the forged letter purportedly from Habbush to Hussein confirming al-Qaeda-Iraq connections, which Ron Suskind discusses in his new book, *The Way of the World*, would have been fabricated right around the same time period.

SAIC has some disastrous failures in what one might think should be their forte: systems integration of computer systems. Operation Trailblazer designed to provide integrated access to info and more, apparently for the whole Intelligence Community (IC), was scrapped after more than \$240 million was spent over two years. They were, nevertheless,

awarded a contract for the follow-up system, called ExecuteLocus, for more than a third of a billion dollars.

On a smaller scale, a contract for the FBI's software Virtual Case File was ended after five years, with no effective product. The network technical aspects were contracted to DynCorp in 2005. It's perhaps the case that the bureau is still using widely INSLAW Corp's program called PROMIS, said to have been illegally appropriated by Reagan's Justice Dept. Another peculiar snafu for SAIC was their loss of more than \$120 million dollars for not being able to fulfill their contract for a security system at the Athens Olympics. One can help but wonder about the real reason for the abrogation of the contract.

Despite their well-connected BOD and various federal "rainmakers," SAIC drops a lot of lobbying largesse around DC. In the second quarter of this year, they spent over \$800,000 on this activity. Some of this expense could have been related to the "telecom" immunity part of the FISA "reform." Several years ago a tax deductible outlay was to spend \$30,000 to sponsor a golf tourney at one of the several trade associations SAIC is party to. (It's not certain whether Tom Delay got an invite or not.)

Pernicious to democracy, incompetent in some ways, one can apparently add corruption to the list of SAIC flaws. In the last few months SAIC has been in the business news headlines. FEMA has had to suspend their procurement for Project TopOff, a national disaster drill study, because of allegations of improprieties in the contracting process. In a False Claims Act trial, SAIC was found guilty of 77 false statements and conflicts of interest regarding their more than ten year old contract with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The corporation was fined \$6 million. As last year SAIC posted a return on revenue of 11.9 percent on at least \$8 billion, the fine (less than 1/2% of net profits) can be hardly a slap on the wrist.

In the ten percent of activities that are not governmental, SAIC has decided to compete with oil industry heavy weights Haliburton and Bechtel, in the realm of oil production, pipeline and refinery control mechanisms. If you read the American business press, you might find that SAIC is the aggrieved party vis-a-vis PdVSA, Venezuela's Oil Company, in having some of its systems nationalized. In the Latin American press, there were allegations that

Satellite Spy Program Fails to Meet Privacy Concerns

New questions are being raised about the Bush administration's controversial satellite surveillance program, known as the National Applications Office. The Department of Homeland Security says it will proceed with the first phase of the program despite objections it doesn't comply with privacy laws. The satellite program is designed to provide federal, state and local officials with extensive access to spy satellite imagery to assist with emergency response and other domestic security needs. But critics say the Bush administration hasn't created legal safeguards to ensure the program won't be used for domestic spying. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, a new report from the Government Accountability Office says the Homeland Security Department has failed to address the privacy and civil liberties concerns.

SAIC participated in the managerial strike against PdVSA (rank and file workers were locked out), designed to destabilize the populist anti-corporate government. This was the year prior to the coup against Chavez, applauded by the Bush gang and the *New York Times* before it failed. The story, in English, of the accusation of internet industrial sabotage can be found by searching for Hector Mondragon, Colombian activist and his translator Justin Pordur. Given its covertness, it is extremely difficult to establish the nature and full extent of this gambit.

So what is this fiscally and politically corrupt corporation doing on south First St. at the UI's Research Park? In just what way is this enterprise related to the mission of a land grant public university? We know that SAIC has recently signed an agreement with Adaptix to work on Deep Green, a project to assemble a state-of-the-art battlefield control system. Is Deep Green intended to run on BlueWater, IBM's new water-cooled supercomputer that's being built on UI campus? Are there "experiments" in local corporate offices that involve remote control of Predator drones firing Hellfire missiles?

The several individuals I have spoken with who have worked at the local SAIC unit have been bound from speaking of their work by confidentiality agreements, as are a large percent of SAIC employees. There has been a long standing rumor that Operation Stockpile, computer simulation of nuclear explosions, might be one of the projects that SAIC is conducting on this campus. These virtual nuclear tests undermine the spirit of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as the Bush gang skirts the letter of the treaty. Of real concern here is the manner in which SAIC activities could be pernicious to our safety and that of millions of lives, as well as a threat to the spirit of democracy and academic integrity within this community.

You Could Be A Terrorist!

[...] The House of Representatives passed legislation that targets Americans with radical ideologies for research. The bill has received little media attention and has almost unanimous support in the House. However, civil liberties groups see the bill as a threat to the constitutionally protected freedoms of expression, privacy and protest.

HR 1955, *The Violent Radicalization Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007*, apparently intended to assess "homegrown" terrorism threats and causes is on a fast-track through Congress. Proponents claim the bill would centralize information about the formation of domestic terrorists and would not impinge on constitutional rights.

On October 23, the bill passed the House of Representatives by a 404-6 margin with 23 members not voting. If passed in the Senate and signed into law by George W. Bush, the act would establish a ten-member National Commission on the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism, to study and propose legislation to address the threat of possible "radicalization" of people legally residing in the US.

www.truthout.org/article/the-violent-radicalization-homegrown-terrorism-prevention-act-2007.

Restoring Champaign's Safety Net for the Poor

By Randall Cotton; Photos by Allyson Ilardi



WOULD YOU VOTE for a tax increase if you didn't know what it was for? If you live in Champaign, this is exactly what you'll be faced with on Election Day unless you read on. You may regret voting "No" once you understand what's at stake.

INSCRUTABLE LEGALESE

On Election Day, November 4th, Champaign voters will be asked to vote on the following referendum: Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for City of Champaign Township be increased by an additional amount equal to .02% above the limiting rate for levy year 2007 and be equal to .0550% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2008?

Unless you educate yourself beforehand, just the first four words will be enough to throw you off (what's a "limiting rate", let alone a "Property Tax Extension Limitation Law" or "equalized assessed value"?). Yet, it's crucial to understand and make an informed vote on this referendum. A "No" vote will neglect Champaign's already threadbare safety net of last resort for the city's poorest, most vulnerable citizens.

Though it's far from clear in the referendum's wording, the increase requested is quite small—about \$10 for a home with a market value of \$150,000, the approximate median home value in Champaign. By comparison, the same homeowner would pay about \$3300 in property tax overall.

The Champaign City Township's share of overall property tax is tiny, at about three tenths of one percent.

Champaign City Township Supervisor Linda Abernathy has said the additional funds would allow her to help reverse drastic cuts that had to be made in a financial aid program for the poorest of the poor called "General Assistance." This state-mandated program is the primary function of Abernathy's office. It provides financial assistance to Champaign residents who are living in abject poverty (less than \$3000 in annual earned income), who are unable to qualify for any other state or federal aid. The maximum monthly aid under this program is typically around \$200, though currently the maximum is \$150 in Champaign, due to the lack of funds. In fact, the funding shortfall is so serious that Abernathy had to completely cut off more than half of the program's clients last year, a desperate situation that prompted the pending referendum.

CHAMPAIGN'S CRITICALLY FRAYED SAFETY NET

How did things get to such dire straits? There is a long and complicated history here, but it's mainly due to a combination of three conditions.

First, the Champaign City Township property tax levy is artificially low—radically lower than comparable townships in the state. For instance, while Champaign's levy stands at 3.5 cents per \$100 assessed value of one's home ("assessed value" is essentially 1/3 of market value), Urbana's rate is about 5 times higher, at 19.3 cents. Among all comparable townships in a 100 mile radius of Champaign, Bloomington City Township is probably the most similar. Bloomington's levy is 23 cents per \$100, which is over 6 times higher! Champaign City Township's profoundly inadequate tax levy is a legacy of years prior to Linda Abernathy's tenure as Township Supervisor and it's regretably been stuck there ever since, due to property tax caps.

The second contributing factor is that in recent years there has been a significant jump in demand for "General Assistance" in Champaign City Township, largely due to Abernathy's efforts to better serve the poor by being more receptive and helpful, fulfilling campaign promises made when she originally ran for the office in 2005. For a while, Abernathy was able to meet the previously hidden need using reserve township funds, but as those funds dwindle

dled, the artificially low property tax levy began to severely strangle General Assistance funds.

The third and most consequential factor in the current predicament is the enactment of PTELL, the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (commonly known as "property tax caps") at the county level back in 1996. PTELL acts to set hurdles that must be cleared to enact property tax rate increases. In the Township's case, PTELL's hurdles are prodigious. Not only must any increase in the township's property tax levy be approved by voter referendum, the wording on the ballot may not provide any indication of the levy's actual purpose. It may only indicate the magnitude of the increase in a strict, pre-determined boilerplate format imbued with technical jargon. The upcoming referendum's arcane wording is expressly dictated by PTELL.

A YEARS-LONG BATTLE

Since PTELL requires that the voters be asked for a tax increase with no justification and using perplexing technical language, it shouldn't come as a surprise that a prior attempt to pass a property tax increase referendum for the Township failed decisively. In November 2006, voters were asked to decide on an increase of 5 cents per \$100 of assessed value, which would have fully funded the General Assistance program (the upcoming referendum only asks for 2 cents per \$100 in the hopes that the lower figure may pass). Since the failed referendum, there have been efforts to educate the community about this issue.

Through the efforts of local citizens, an advisory referendum was put on the Primary ballot earlier this year to educate and directly gauge the support of Champaign voters regarding the restoration of General Assistance aid to the poor. The referendum read:

Shall the voters of the City of Champaign Township ask the Township Trustees to restore the level of general assistance funding by actively pursuing any and all means



GA would help the poorest of the poor

available to them in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals, children, families and adults living in extreme poverty in our Township?

This passed with 71% in favor, showing that when Champaign voters are told what they're voting for, they are in support of restoring General Assistance. Earlier this month, the 5th annual Unity March focused attention on this issue, as citizens gathered at the Township Supervisor's office and then marched through downtown Champaign to raise awareness of the upcoming referendum.

NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

The need for General Assistance will likely become even more urgent in the coming months. A sharp increase in local unemployment coupled with ongoing hikes in the price of essential goods such as food, energy and utilities as well as rising foreclosures and an overall deteriorating economy will likely intensify the need for aid to the most needy. The hope is that the combination of a lower requested tax increase, in combination with a years-long effort to

educate and survey the community will finally result in at least a partial repair of Champaign's tattered last-chance safety net for the most impoverished among us.

CU Citizens March to Pass the Township Poverty Referendum

It was a beautiful day for the fifth annual Unity March on Saturday, October 4, 2008, an event organized by Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice. This year's march was dedicated to passage of the coming Township referendum on the ballot this election day, a measure that would raise funds to help the poorest of the poor in Champaign. A diverse crowd of approximately 150 people marched to stamp out poverty.

The march kicked off at the Township office in Champaign. T-shirts were passed out that read on the back, "Freedom From Extreme Poverty is a Human Right." They were made to promote The Faces of Poverty, a documentary video made about the Champaign Township showing on television this month.

Several members of the Champaign Township Board were present, including Mayor Jerry Schweighart, Michael La Due, Karen Foster, Tom Bruno, and Gina Jackson.

A long procession of marchers walked up Randolph, went through downtown Champaign, and met for a rally in Douglass Park. As the crowd assembled on a hill in the park, they chanted, "Whose park? The people's park." En route, marchers passed by the Catholic Worker's House and the Times Center, two other places where the poor receive assistance but which remain largely hidden in our community.

Aaron Ammons led the crowd in chants such as, "We've got money for war, but can't feed the poor" and "Get up! Get down! Anti-racists in this town."

After the march, free food was provided in the park annex. A check-in list at the front door was signed by 130 people who stayed around to eat pizza, fried fish, and cupcakes.

Thanks to all the sponsors of Unity March V: AWARE, Radio Liberacion!, Prairie Green Party, Central Illinois Jobs With Justice, School for Designing a Society, Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting, Central Illinois Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Channing-Murray Foundation, University Coalition of Trades and Labor Unions. Additional thanks goes to the iHelp student volunteers from the University of Illinois.

The Face of Poverty will be aired by City Government Television. CGTV is carried on Insight Communications' cable channel 5.



Unity March in downtown Champaign



Listening to speakers at the rally

Patrick Thompson and Martel Miller Arrive At Settlement on Eavesdropping Charges

By Brian Dolinar



IN NEGOTIATIONS THIS SUMMER, Patrick Thompson and Martel Miller arrived at a settlement in a civil suit against local authorities claiming their civil rights had been violated when eavesdropping charges were leveled against them in 2004 for videotaping the police.

In June 2005, Thompson and Miller filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court against Champaign, Urbana, and Champaign County. The complaint contained three major components: 1) Patrick Thompson had been racially profiled by Champaign police in three traffic stops in late 2003. 2) Martel Miller had his Fourth Amendment rights violated when Champaign police illegally seized his videotape and equipment. 3) Assistant State's Attorney Elizabeth Dobson had maliciously prosecuted Miller and Thompson on charges of felony eavesdropping.

Those named in the original suit included Champaign City Manager Steve Carter, Champaign Police Chief R.T. Finney, Deputy Chiefs John Murphy and Troy Daniels, Sgt. David Griffet, Officer Justus Clinton, State's Attorney John Piland, and Assistant State's Attorney Elizabeth Dobson.

In a series of events that led up to the eavesdropping charges, there were several questionable traffic stops. Thompson was stopped by Champaign Police in October 2003 for an alleged seat belt violation. In December 2003, Thompson was sitting in his car in a parking lot waiting to merge into traffic when Champaign Sgt. David Griffet approached him and asked what was in the cup he was drinking from, apparently suspecting it was alcohol. Thompson answered that he was drinking tea. Although he was allowed to go, Thompson says he was followed by several police cars and later stopped by one of them. He was given a warning ticket for having a license plate light out, an illegitimate claim according to Thompson. He entered a formal complaint for what he said was a case of racial profiling.

In January 9, 2004, a meeting took place between City Manager Steve Carter, several members of the Champaign police command staff, Patrick Thompson, and John Lee Johnson, then still alive. Despite Johnson's support of Thompson, the complaint was dismissed. In a letter dated February 5, 2004, Steve Carter wrote:

"After reviewing the information from our meeting and the police reports, and after conferring with the City Attorney with regard to the legal arguments made by Mr. Johnson, it is my decision to uphold the decisions of the Chief. As to whether the

stops were racially motivated, I do not feel that there were facts presented to support this allegation [...] Finally, neither the fact that you were not ticketed for the alleged seat belt violation nor that you were issued a warning ticket for the equipment violation seems to indicate racial bias."

Exhausting the complaint process, Thompson took direction action, teaming up with long-time friend Martel Miller to videotape police encounters with African Americans. After notifying authorities of their intentions in a letter dated March 26, 2004, Thompson and Miller hit the streets collecting video footage. As early as June 2004, Champaign police moved to shut them down. Indeed, Thompson captured video images of Assistant State's Attorney Elizabeth Dobson watching him with her own video camera.

On August 7, 2004, Champaign police seized Martel Miller's camera and tape without arresting him and without a warrant. On August 10, the State's Attorney filed charges against Miller, but Judge Heidi Ladd refused to agree to a warrant and instead issued a summons for him to appear in court. On August 23, Miller was formally indicted on two counts of felony eavesdropping, an dated law that was never enforced—that is, not until two black activists started videotaping police. The following day, August 24, Thompson was arrested on charges of home invasion and sexual abuse, and held on an exorbitant \$250,000 bond. On September 2, 2004, Thompson was charged for the first time with eavesdropping and Miller was hit with a third charge.

State's Attorney John Piland told the *News-Gazette* (Oct. 17, 2004) that the eavesdropping charges were filed at the request of the Champaign Police Department's command staff. The police, he said, wanted the charges kept against Thompson and Miller to bring them to the table for a conversation.

City Manager Steve Carter refuted Piland, saying "R.T. was consistent from early on that we were interested in having the charges dropped." Chief Finney stuck to this script, telling me in 2007 that he knew nothing about plot to charge Thompson and Miller, and that if he had known he would have put a stop to it.

An affidavit from Elizabeth Dobson refutes Finney's claim. According to Dobson, on August 9, 2004, she met with command staff at the Champaign Police Station to discuss charges against Thompson and Miller. Dobson states that Chief Finney's concern was that Champaign "not be the first or only police agency alleged as the victim

of the Eavesdropping offense." Chief Finney, Dobson claims, wanted the University of Illinois Police Department to go along with the charges. After UIPD refused to participate, the prosecution still went forward.

In the following weeks there were several public screenings of Citizen's Watch, the video produced from Thompson and Miller's footage, and editorials in the *News-Gazette* criticizing Piland's handling of the case. The phony eavesdropping charges turned out to be a great embarrassment for local authorities. Piland eventually dropped the charges against Miller, and after a new State's Attorney was elected in November 2004, eavesdropping charges against Thompson were also dismissed.

The federal suit filed by Thompson and Miller managed to withstand challenges by an army of city, county, and private attorneys. Yet despite the egregiousness of their actions, legal immunity still protected many of the public officials. The suit originally asked for more than a million dollars in compensation, but in the end the settlement was far below that figure. Although there was not a confidentiality agreement, Thompson and Miller asked that the dollar amount not be made public.

A settlement in this case indicates that local authorities were unwilling to take the stand to defend their actions in 2004. The full extent of their conspiracy to send Patrick Thompson and Martel Miller to prison will remain unknown.

PATRICK THOMPSON WINS SMALL CLAIMS CASE AGAINST FORMER ATTORNEY

In a small claims case local black activist Patrick Thompson filed pro se against his former attorney, Harvey Welch, a judge decided that legal malpractice had been committed and ruled in Thompson's favor. Thompson says he is donating the \$3,000 in attorney fees that Welch must pay back, to Champaign Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justices who helped raise funds for his legal defense.

In a 2006 trial, the second of three trials, Welch had called only one witness and Thompson was found guilty on charges of home invasion and sexual abuse. The conviction was overturned due to "ineffective assistance of counsel" and in a trial that took place in May 2008, Thompson was found not guilty of the charges.

As the judge in the small claims suit said, this case was "a rather unusual situation."

CODE PINK

By Antonia Darder

CODEPINK IS BRINGING THOUSANDS of women together to struggle for peace, even if it requires civil disobedience. The organization is working around the clock, to educate the public about the costs of war and its affect on the world and our lives. Their expressed purpose is to help redirect the energy, money and time spent on war toward our common good—education, healthcare, job training, alternative energy development, and deficit reduction.

With slogans like Raise a Rukus, Make-out Not War, and A Million Knockers for Peace, the group has taken the streets by storm, working tirelessly to bring attention to the issue and stir dialogue about the need for fundamental change in this country. They took their special brand of organizing to the Republican Convention in St. Paul last month, calling for peace, while protesting the Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin's pro-war and pro-drilling position.

As the women marched in crowns, sashes and pink clothing, the police surrounded the women and began to push them up onto the sidewalk and against a metal fence. The women were told to clear-out or be arrested. In a symbolic gesture of civil disobedience—asserting that free speech cannot be caged and that all of Ameri-



ca is a free speech zone—four of the women crawled under the fence. Police immediately arrested them.

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of the women's peace group, praised those arrested. "We are proud of the CODEPINK women who did civil disobedience to show their outrage at the Bush and McCain policies and the nomination of Sarah Palin," With banners reading "Palin is not a woman's choice" and "End the occupation now," CODEPINK women proclaimed, "We are ready for a peaceful world."

Shock Doctrine: Disaster Capitalism in Latin America

Auditorium, Smith Memorial Hall
805 South Mathews Avenue, Urbana
Wednesday, October 29, 7:30pm.

Naomi Klein, Award-winning journalist, regular columnist, for *The Nation*, *The Guardian* and, *The New York Times*.



Bye, Bye To Freedoms Of Protest And The Press

By Belden Fields



A MOST REMARKABLE THING happened in St. Paul before and during the Republican National Convention. Prior to the convention, the St. Paul police and federal agents raided locations in which journalists were making preparations to cover the planned demonstrations. One of the groups raided was I-Witness video, an independent

media group that uses video to protect civil and human rights. After the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York, videos shot by I-Witness Video were used to get charges dismissed against about 400 people who had been falsely accused by the NYPD.

Obviously, the authorities did not want this to happen again. During the 2008 Republican Convention, over forty journalists were arrested in the streets as they tried to cover the demonstrations and the behavior of the police. Among the protestors were Amy Goodman and two staff members of her *Democracy Now* team. Initially, the two staffers were charged with the felony of inciting to riot. Amy, who left the convention hall when she heard of the arrests of the other two, was charged with a misdemeanor when she tried to get the police to release the two staff members.

The felony charges were first reduced to misdemeanors, and then on Friday, September 19, the city of St. Paul announced that all charges against the arrested journalists were being dropped. This was after over 62,000 people signed a petition drawn up by Freepress to drop the charges. It was also after the London office of Amnesty International called attention to the fact that “some of the police actions appear to have breached United Nations (U.N.) standards on the use of force by law enforcement officials,” calling for an investigation of police actions against both demonstrators and journalists.

The repressive force demonstrated at the 2008 Republican Convention is the latest instance of a progressively escalating use of force to suppress demonstrations of opposition to major economic and political institutions. I am convinced that it began in 1999 with the demonstrations by a variety of groups, including organized labor, against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle. There the police used excessive force, but the establishment media, when it reported what happened in the streets at all, tended to leave the impression that violent elements among the protestors were responsible for all the violence. This was an important impetus for the foundation of an independent media network, of which the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (UCIMC) is an integral part.



While the Denver police and other security forces at the 2008 Democratic Convention used considerably less force against demonstrators and so far as we know did not arrest members of the press, the above tee-shirt produced by the Denver Fraternal Order of the Police reveals an aggressive anti-democratic police mindset that was obviously shared in hugely magnified dimensions by their fraternal officers in St. Paul during the Republican Convention.

The IMC movement is an international one. When the G8 Summit (the wealthy and more powerful nations) took place in Genoa, Italy in 2001, there was an IMC in place in that city. Journalists and people who went to Genoa to demonstrate against the G8 were in the IMC's locale when the Italian police and security forces broke in and violently attacked them.

In 2002, the World Economic Forum was held in New York City. Once again there were demonstrations. The police and other security people had managed to infiltrate the organizers and use the tactic of “proactive” arrests, i.e., arresting people who had not yet done anything illegal, to assure that they would not. This is, perhaps, an apt analogy to the doctrine of “preemptive war” that George W. Bush would introduce in the international arena a year later.

The following year, the 2003 Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA) meeting Miami in was a turning point in the organization of repressive responses to demonstrations against the meetings of economic and political elites. First, the amount of money spent, and the number of participants in the effort, were massive. There were about 2,500 armed officers. Armored personnel carriers were introduced. \$8.5 million dollars for the effort came from anti-terror federal funds from an appropriation bill passed by Congress to rebuild Iraq!

In other words, the mission was no longer demonstration or crowd control, or dealing with civil disobedience; it was now part of the war against terrorism. So, when Amy Goodman asked the St. Paul police chief how journalists are to cover demonstrations or protests without getting arrested, is it a surprise that he would answer “you would have to be embedded with the police?” This is, in fact, how it began with the U.S. invasion of Panama and exists now in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of us remember that the rationale offered for embedding at that time was that it was to protect the journalists from the enemy. So are the police now seeking to protect the journalists from the nasty demonstrators?

There was heavy AFL-CIO presence at those Miami demonstrations. The organization had rented an amphitheater in which it held a counter-rally to the FTAA meetings. It also wanted to deliver its objections to the “free trade” being promoted by the FTAA to the FTAA. In both instances, the repressive forces were an obstruction. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney sent a protest letter to Attorney General John Ashcroft (see sidebar). In it he called for a federal investigation of civil rights violations and for the resignation of Miami Police Chief John Timoney, who had also been a leader of the forces in New York and Philadelphia, and who was the architect of this new militarized approach which casts people who demonstrate opposition as potential or real terrorists.

This coincided, and not just incidentally, with a new strategy being developed at the federal level. That is, the Department of Homeland Security's adoption of a “fusion” approach, i.e., using money allocated by the Congress to fight terrorism for the creation of centers of data intelligence and communication linking state, local, and federal law enforcement departments, as well as private intelligence and security contractors, to deal with “all crimes and hazards.” These centers are now spread all across the country and appear to be an integral part of the repressive apparatus that confronts dissident demonstrations.

Thus, it was not surprising that the following year, 2004, the repressive force that confronted demonstrators at the Republican National Convention in New York was just as forceful as that faced by the FTAA protestors in Miami. A record number of arrests were made, over 1800, but 90% of the charges were dropped, indicating how baseless they were. It was after those arrests that the videos shot by the I-Witness project were used to prove the falsity of the charges in 400 of the cases. This undoubtedly is why this year the federal and city security forces raided I-Witness Video before they could film the police responses to the demonstrations at the Republican Convention in St. Paul, and why over 40 journalists who indeed tried to cover those demonstrations were arrested.

It is, of course, good that there was such an immense protest across the United States and abroad of the arrest of journalists, and good that the charges were dropped. But the repressive apparatus of the capitalist, free-trading state

AFL-CIO PRESIDENT JOHN SWEENEY'S LETTER TO ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN ASHCROFT:



John Sweeney

Excerpts

Our right to deliver this message in a safe environment was systematically thwarted by police in Miami. Thousands of officers were deployed to guard the FTAA Ministerial—an international trade summit hosted by the Bush administration....The police intimidated participants in Thursday's peaceful rally and march by denying access to buses, blocking access to the amphitheater where the [AFL-CIO] rally was occurring, and deploying armored personnel carriers, water cannons and scores of police in riot gear with clubs in front of the amphitheater entrance... At the conclusion of our peaceful coalition march against the FTAA—which was cut off from access to its full permitted route—police advanced on groups of peaceful protestors without provocation. The police failed to provide those in the crowd with a safe route to disperse, and then deployed pepper spray and rubber bullets against protestors as they tried to leave the scene. Along with the other peaceful protestors, AFL-CIO staff, union peacekeepers, and retirees were trapped in the police advance. One retiree sitting on a chair as crowd tried to disperse was sprayed directly in the face with pepper spray. An AFL-CIO staff member was hit by a rubber bullet while trying to leave the scene. When the wife of a retired steelworker verbally protested police tactics, she was thrown to the ground on her face and a gun was pointed to her head. As the unprovoked sweep continued, police arrested retirees, union members, and other peaceful protestors on false or trumped-up charges and with unnecessary violence... Many of those arrested were held overnight without cause, only to be released the next morning when charges were dropped.

has had its way. It showed that it is willing to beat those who demonstrate opposition to the policies of political/economic elites off of the streets, to levy false criminal charges against them, to use violence against them, and to arrest journalists who try to expose their actions to the public. 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 is creating a climate of fear and tension to discourage people from exercising their constitutional and human rights.

The U.S. government, working with private corporations, has not hesitated to violently overthrow foreign governments elected by the will of the people and to participate in the installation of brutally repressive regimes that better respected the interests of U.S. political and economic elites, (e.g., in Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Chile, 1973). What we now see clearly is these elites, including both government agents and private surveillance and security contractors, using violence justified by a perpetual “war on terror” to strip U.S. citizens and workers of their rights as well. This needs to be clearly exposed and stopped.

To see a video of the armed raid on their house, just google “Hyperborea: Police Raid and Detainment of I-Witness”.



1968/2008: Making Power for Change

By Antonia Darder



FOR THE LAST DECADE, we have been witnessing a promise of resurgence in political activity, from small youth walk-outs to protests against the global giants—the World Trade Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Renewed anti-war and peace efforts and massive immigration demonstrations have sent thousands to the streets to protest infringement of their rights.

But the street demonstrations at the Republic National Convention showed signs that a new wave of protest and civil disobedience has finally taken root in the U.S. The arrests of over 800 people, including dozens of independent journalists, illustrate the extent activists are now willing to take to struggle for change. Yet, none of this should be seen as an aberration. Instead, it bears witness to the unwillingness of people across the country to support business as usual, given the state of democratic disability we currently face.

In the U.S. today, the negative consequences of neoliberal economic policies are devastating. The concentration of wealth and power is staggering. The Bush administration has spent over \$650 billion on the war in Iraq, without an end in sight. We face unparalleled pollution of our waters and fields. There is unprecedented surveillance of the population and an alarming consolidation of the mainstream media. The U.S. incarceration rate is the highest of any industrialized nation. Poor racialized populations across the country are experiencing the resegregation of their communities. Federal economic safety nets for the poor are all but extinguished. Forty-five million are without health insurance. The disappearance of jobs in the last decade has left millions unemployed, with current unemployment rates hitting recession. Meanwhile, corporate welfare is on the increase, with an unbelievable \$700 billion federal proposal to bailout the wealthiest financial institutions in the nation.

These issues signal the need for fundamental political change. But change in today's world seems especially difficult given the manner in which corporations, as well as both public and private institutions, remain entrenched in political processes of narcissistic proportions that obstructs democratic life. It is this pathology of power that, with its elitism, arrogance, and privilege, justifies and rationalizes foreign and domestic policies of domination and exploitation in the name of democracy and national security. And as such, it arbitrates aggression as a worthy and legitimate strategy in the preservation of the status quo. The result is the perpetuation of conditions that reproduce human suffering and whole-

sale disregard of those who pay the greatest price for the excesses of capital.

POLITICAL ORGANIZING IN THE 60'S

One of the most important lessons of the 60's comes from the overwhelming political activity that was generated across class, race, and gender lines. The 1968 Democratic National Convention erupted in violence when activists protesting the Vietnam War were brutally attacked by Chicago police. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized the Poor People's Campaign March on Washington. Cesar Chavez and the farm workers union led protests against the exploitation of the growers. The Black Power demonstration of African American athletes who raised their black-gloved fists as a symbol of "Black Power" at the Olympics was televised around the world.

That same year, Chicano students and activists, shouting Chicano Power! protested educational inequalities in East Los Angeles. The American Indian Movement was founded in protest of federal treaty violations. The Young Lords took over buildings in Chicago and installed food programs and other services. The Third Liberation Front, a coalition of Asian American, Latino, Black, and Native Americans, mounted the longest university strike in U.S. history. Women activists protested the Miss America pageant, tossing bras, girdles, nylons and other articles of constricting clothing in a trash can.

What loosely united the protests of these very distinct communities was their explicit call for a change in the way power and wealth were distributed and a call for self-determination. It constituted an unprecedented coming together of people from across the country. But not all supported these efforts. For the Establishment, the civic involvement and dissent of millions was viewed as dangerous—and a phenomenon to be stopped by any means necessary.

It is not surprising, then, that when King was assassinated in April—a few days prior to the Poor People's national march on Washington—civil rights activists saw this as a ploy to quell dissent. Two months later, when Democratic presidential candidate Robert Kennedy (thought by many to be committed to the poor) was assassinated, it was felt as a blow to those who still embraced electoral hope for change. And in August of the next year, the murder of journalist Ruben Salazar was seen as a plot to extinguish an important voice for the Chicano Movement. Nevertheless, these efforts persisted, as movement organizations continued to demand change.

DRAWING ON A FORGOTTEN LEGACY

Today, we live with many of the forgotten legacies of the 60s. With a close eye on the era's unprecedented civil unrest, we can't help but to wonder about the manner in which FBI surveillance and counterintelligence worked to stifle democratic participation and wither the trust of people in one another. Similarly, we are left to contend with the long-term effects of social and economic injustices upon poor communities of color and other working class people. The distortions created by these conditions have left many unsure of our capacity as a people to, once again, speak truth to power.

The current political chaos also makes it evident that a government wishing to transcend its historical crimes against humanity must stop its denial. Official government denial of wrongs has played a key role in preserving inequalities of all stripes. What also cannot be overlooked here is that it is always in the interest of the powerful to conceal the ruthless machinations of power that produce its advantage. By the same token, it is in the interest of the oppressed to expose the inequalities of power and social injustices that impact their lives and communities.

Hence, to counter the daily acts of disrespect and humiliation engendered by racism, power, and privilege requires that the powerful suspend their denial. If we as a nation are to undergo a process of political reconciliation, the illegitimacy of governmental and corporate excesses must be confronted. Such a process is especially necessary to a society built on the genocide, slavery, and exploitation of oppressed populations. Breaking out of the fog of historical

Ruben Salazar (1928–1970)



Ruben Salazar was a reporter for the Los Angeles Times and news director for the Spanish language television station KMEX. On August 29, 1970,

Salazar was covering the first Chicano Moratorium March, organized to protest the disproportionate number of Chicanos killed in the Vietnam War. The peaceful march ended with a rally at Whittier Park. The rally was disrupted by LAPD officers and L.A. County sheriffs who, in full riot gear began to gas and club the crowd. By the time it was over, 150 people were arrested and three had been killed; including Salazar who was shot in the head at short range with a tear gas projectile while seated at the Silver Dollar Bar. A coroner's inquest ruled the shooting a homicide, but the police officer involved, Tom Wilson, was never prosecuted. Many believe the homicide was a premeditated assassination to silence a strong voice of the Chicano community. This year, a postage stamp to commemorate the life of Salazar was released. Incidentally, the sanitized bio on the post office website fails to mention that Ruben Salazar was murdered by a law enforcement officer. Such are the unacknowledged crimes that continue to erode the fabric of U.S. political life.

denial is the only path to creating honest and sincere political communion. Anything short of this simply functions to preserve the pain and grief of historical injustice.

MAKING POWER

For those who organize and struggle tirelessly to confront the denial of the powerful, the power we must seek cannot be given to us, but rather it is power that we must make together through our labor. The legacy of activism in the 60s confirms that we can only make political power through our collective development and participation in organizations, within and across the communities we wish to transform. In concert, our work for social justice requires that we return to the collective labor and serious solidarity of past social movements. To move toward a change that redistributes wealth in society also requires that we refuse to adhere to power that speaks apologetically in public, while privately preserves the oppressive structures of privilege and hierarchy that reinscribe human suffering.

If we are determined to build a democratic society for a new era, we do well to learn from the past and to harness the passion of our histories of struggle. As such, we must choose to govern through an ethics of human dignity and a firm commitment to challenge the dominion of any group over another. By so doing, we come to embrace all life as, indeed, precious and worthy of love and respect.

EPILOGUE

My evolving political understanding of the events of 1960s began as youth, contending with the civil rights movement, the assassination of John Kennedy, the burning of Watts, and the death of Malcolm X. When I started community college, I began to connect my own personal history with the conditions that produced the events of 1968—the entrenched and unrelenting economic inequalities and racism of the U.S. The events of the 60s were my initiation into political consciousness. As a young single mother living on welfare in the 70s, the events of the 60s served as a catalyst and foundation for the development of my politics, my art, and scholarship. Their underlying message of self-determination and collective action has remained central to my conception of political work, my scholarship, and my solidarity.



For more information: www.coldsnap.org/rnc8.org



Headlines From the DNC: A Kinder, Gentler Police State

These stories are excerpted from the Denver IMC site. If you would like to read the full story, please go to the link provided



Iraq Vets Against the War address demonstrators

Convergence Center Being Raided by Denver Police

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1042

Happening right now

The Convergence Center for activist coordination and planning, etc. is about to be raided by the Denver Police Department. Two people have been arrested, another is being detained, reports from the inside say that the police are attempting to get a warrant to raid the entire location and carry out more arrests.

Show your support: 4301 Brighton Blvd. Denver. It's at 38th & Brighton.

Police Fail to Obtain Warrant for Convergence Center Search

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1054

Channel 9 News has quoted an activist who states that police tried, and failed, to obtain a warrant to search the Convergence Center.

[excerpt] "Matt Kellegrew, an activist who says he watched police arrive at the building, says officers tried to get a warrant, citing wooden poles and bricks found out-



Street medic treats a reporter for tear gas

side as weapons. Kellegrew says officers grew angry when a phone call seeking that warrant was fruitless."

Police Block Veterans' Access to DNC in Largest Protest to Date

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1073

DENVER, Colo.—A little more than an hour before Sen. Barack Obama made a surprise appearance at Pepsi Center to conclude the evening at the Democratic National Convention, his campaign had an exchange with Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

Approximately 100 IVAW members were determined to push Obama on his stance on troop withdrawal. Leading a grueling three-hour-plus long march of an estimated 7,000 demonstrators towards the Pepsi Center late in the afternoon, IVAW hoped to deliver a folded flag and a letter calling on Obama to endorse the three main goals of unity: immediate withdrawal of American troops, full veterans benefits, and reparations for the Iraqi people.

The march was met with a line of more than 100 Denver Police Department officers clad in riot gear and armed with batons and pepper ball guns at the intersection of Market and 17th Streets. The police refused to let IVAW or the thousands of antiwar demonstrators closer to the convention. After long moments of contention between the demonstration and the police, finally one IVAW representative, former U.S. Marine Liam Madden, was allowed to cross police lines to meet with representatives of the Obama campaign.

As Madden left on his mission, it seemed as if more than 50 IVAW members were prepared to engage in non-violent civil disobedience and likely arrest. Less than 10 minutes later, at approximately 7:40pm (CT), an announcement was made by IVAW to the crowd, indicating that Obama had endorsed their three points of unity, causing the crowd to uproar in applause. [...]

Brief Report Back of 8/25 Anti-Capitalista March

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1052

The anti-capitalista march gathered Monday evening around 1800 at civic center park, and by 1830 they were organized and marched out of civic center Park onto Banock street. There they advanced a half block before encountering a line of riot police. The storm troopers were

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

well armed, with CO spray tanks (it looks like a red fire extinguisher), four foot clubs, bean bag guns (which looked like grenade launchers), tear gas, pepper ballguns (remember that girl that was murdered by the police at the 2004 Red Sox victory? That same type of gun), and full riot gear.

With the bloc advancing, the first two rows linked arms and shouted "who's streets!" "Our streets!" and "No justice! No Peace!". There was good morale and momentum, which broke when the bloc got within five feet of the police. The storm troopers then sprayed clouds of CO spray into the anti-capitalists who had no weapons or armor of any sort. The police also attacked reporters on the scene, targeting their cameras and bulbs.

The protestors recoiled, causing an accordion effect where the bloc was pushed forward into the attacking police, before breaking into a falling back towards the middle of the park. there were a few who were running, but a few well minded affinity groups rallied the bloc with shouts of "Walk! Don't run!" and "Slow down! Face them!". The bloc regrouped quickly, but not very organized. There was a discussion of forming a wedge, which gave way quickly to the typical arm linked formation in rows. [...]

Post Columnist Notes Accusation Against Protesters Unfounded

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1154

The innuendo and slander against protesters have been piled deep as the trash left by the Dems at Invesco. To date, few of the lies have been publicly challenged. There are a few exceptions, however; Denver Post Columnist Susan Greene has attempted to set the record straight concerning one false accusation. She also comments about the police state impression left on a youngster visiting Denver during the DNC.

[excerpt]13[Denver Police spokesman Sonny] Jackson—the man paid to provide accurate information—told me



Black bloc and police faceoff

Tuesday that officers were getting 'spit on' by protesters. Three days later he acknowledged he 'couldn't verify' any spit 'for certain.'

"It may have been just a rumor,' he admits."

National Lawyers Guild, DNC People's Law Project Criticizes DNC Court Procedures

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1093

Denver—The National Lawyers Guild DNC People's Law Project (PLP) criticizes the procedures that created a high risk of accused persons waiving their rights without access to lawyers or an adequate understanding of their cases.

ABC News Staffer Pushed Into Traffic, Jailed By Police

colorado.indymedia.org/node/1091

[excerpt] DENVER (AP)—An ABC News producer covering the Democratic convention was pushed into traffic by a sheriff's deputy on Wednesday and then arrested, the network said.

Asa Eslocker was arrested on charges of interference, trespass and failure to obey a lawful order.

Authorities said Eslocker repeatedly had been told to stop blocking a sidewalk and an entrance to Denver's Brown Palace Hotel. He wasn't arrested until three hours after the first warning, police said.

ABC said Eslocker and a film crew were trying to photograph senators and donors for a story on the role of corporate lobbyists and wealthy donors at the convention. The network said video of the incident shows a deputy



Police attack demonstrators

telling Eslocker that the sidewalk is owned by the hotel, then pushing him into traffic.

"We expect to see that kind of thing in Myanmar, not on the streets of Denver," ABC spokesman Jeffrey Schneider said in a written statement.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Headlines From the RNC: Little Baghdad On the Mississippi

These stories are excerpted from the Twin Cities IMC site. If you would like to read the full story, please go to the link provided



Troopers on the march

Bruce Nestor of the National Lawyers Guild Called For a Probe Into Police Conduct.

Bruce Nestor: "What happened in St. Paul, Minnesota from—really going back to the infiltration and surveillance two years, but from September 1 to September 4, 2008—had happened in any other country, that's the type of coverage and description of it we would have read. And I think that you can either be for or against that political repression, depending where you fall on the political spectrum, but that is an objective description of what happened and of the political content of why people were in the streets, why people were demonstrating, and the polit-



Resistance is futile

ical nature of the response that was organized by the \$50 million gift by the federal government. It was a targeted abuse of force and of security forces to suppress political activity, to scare people from coming out into the streets."

More than 800 people were arrested during the four-day convention.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Fascistic New Normal in St. Paul

twincities.indymedia.org/2008/sep/fascistic-new-normal-st-paul

August 29, St. Paul, Minnesota. Police in full riot gear raided the "RNC Welcoming Committee" (which described itself as "an anarchist/anti-authoritarian organizing body preparing for the 2008 Republican National Convention") This raid, referred to in the media as a "pre-emptive strike," marked the beginning of a weekend of terror and intimidation brought down by the state on activists, organizers, protestors, and journalists throughout the four-day span of the Republican National Convention.

Leading up to the anti-war protests planned during the convention, police raided several houses in the St. Paul-Minneapolis area, surrounding them, and breaking down doors. The police told people to get down on the ground and shoved guns in their faces in the middle of the night while they were sleeping in their beds. Over the course of the weekend, five people were arrested in these raids, at least 100 were put in handcuffs and then questioned by police. At the Welcoming Committee's convergence center, the police photographed people and held them for over an hour—no arrests were made, but materials were confiscated and the police issued a fire code violation.

Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, the FBI, Minneapolis and St. Paul police, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and other agencies were involved. Police confiscated normal household items claiming they were going to be used for illegal activities. They searched through the houses and the welcoming center, taking computers, laptops and video cameras.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

BREAKING: RNC 8 Charged With "Conspiracy to Riot In Furtherance of Terrorism"

twincities.indymedia.org/2008/sep/breaking-rnc-8-charged-conspiracy-riot-furtherance-terrorism

In what appears to be the first use of criminal charges under the 2002 Minnesota version of the *Federal Patriot Act*, Ramsey County Prosecutors have formally charged 8 alleged leaders of the RNC Welcoming Committee with Conspiracy to Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism. Monica Bicking, Eryn Trimmer, Luce Guillen Givins, Erik Oseland, Nathanael Secor, Robert Czernik, Garrett Fitzgerald, and Max Spector, face up to 7 1/2 years in prison under the terrorism enhancement charge which allows for a 50% increase in the maximum penalty. [...]

Cops In Violation of Ordinance Requiring Display of Their ID Numbers

twincities.indymedia.org/2008/sep/cops-violation-ordinance-requiring-display-their-id-numbers

The cops are in violation of an ordinance requiring the display of each individuals ID numbers prominently on their riot gear for tonight's protest on John Ireland bridge, according to a Minneapolis City Council staffer who is observing the protests.

Many videographers, photographers and other observers have documented this violation and their work will serve as grounds for legal action against the police in the near future. [...]

Sheriff Admits That Intent Was To Inconvenience

twincities.indymedia.org/2008/sep/sheriff-admits-intent-was-inconvenience

Outside the jail in St. Paul on the evening of September 3rd, this Ramsey County Sheriff in his statement was asked why the prisoners were being released in undisclosed locations instead of right there at the jail where there was support and would not answer. When asked if it was to inconvenience folks he said "yeah, there you are. Ok?" Watch the video:

www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/09/04/18532904.php



Confronting delegates

RNC Denies Iraq War Veterans

twincities.indymedia.org/2008/sep/rnc-denies-iraq-war-veterans

In the early hours of Monday September 1st a formation of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) marched to the gates of the Republican National Convention. Wesley Davey, a retired St. Paul police officer and Iraq veteran, led the group.

With a permit to march from the Capital building to the RNC location at the Xcel center, the group took the streets at 8:30 local time, arriving at their destination at approximately 9:30. Upon their arrival, Mr. Davey was escorted through the police lines carrying a tri-fold American flag, a document addressing the needs of returning service members, and a copy of the U.S. Constitution to be delivered to a representative of the McCain campaign. [...]

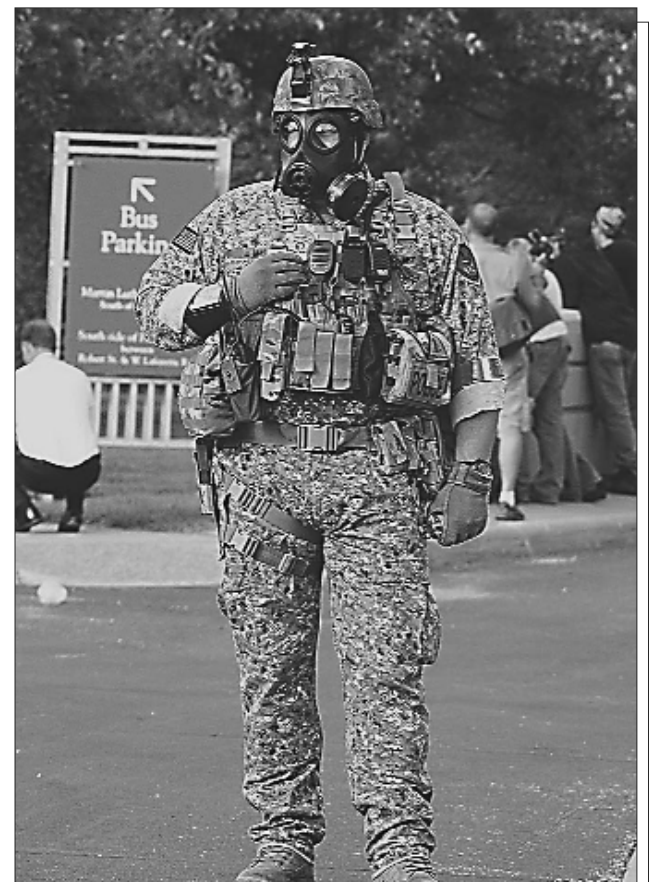
FBI Intel Bulletin #89—Roadmap to Repressing Dissent (2003 edition)

twincities.indymedia.org/2008/sep/fbi-intel-bulletin-89-roadmap-repressing-dissent-2003-edition

This document is five years old, but it does provide the roadmap for the criminalization of dissent—in particular the part about how demonstrators may use the Internet to expose police brutality is quite interesting. (Additionally the concept of 'law enforcement circles' as a restricted clique of privileged intelligence is also interesting.)

Please post all further evidence and documents to TC Indymedia which might be relevant to building a further understanding of how the police policy was carried out, and what the federal role in all this was.

To see the full FBI document go to: www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/linkscopy/FBIbulletin89.pdf



Ready for battle



A Local Legacy of Torture: The Sgt. Burge Scandal

By Neil Parthun



WHEN THE ABU GHRAIB PICTURES surfaced, showing the systematic torture of detainees by United States military forces, the American public was shocked and outraged. Subsequent exposes detailing the horrific uses of waterboarding and the degrading treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay have continued to offend American sensibilities.

While these examples have dominated the media and focused the issue to American torture in foreign countries, citizens of Illinois should know that "interrogation" tactics and methodical torture have had a local presence for decades. From 1973 to 1991, Sergeant Jon Burge of the Chicago Police Department and other officers in Area Two Police Headquarters used electric shock, mock execution and suffocation to elicit confessions from approximately 100 African Americans.

Jon Burge served in the United States military during the Vietnam War as a military police officer where he received training in interrogation. Burge learned of the use of electric shocks as an interrogation technique during his service in Vietnam. It is common knowledge that US forces used field phones to provide electro-shock torture to suspects in Vietnam. Other veterans in Burge's company have reported that they participated in the electrical torture of Viet Cong suspects using hand cranked field phones. A fellow MP serving at a similar time with Burge stated: "It would not take much effort however for someone like Burge to pick up this knowledge, even if he were not directly involved. It's not rocket science."

Burge returned to Chicago as a highly decorated war veteran. He then became a police officer for the Chicago Police Department in 1970. During Burge's first years on the force, he again earned numerous commendations for his work. Jon Burge was soon promoted to detective and sent to Area Two Headquarters as the Commander of the Violent Crimes Unit. Burge's return to Area Two not only marked his promotion but also a return to his neighborhood.

In Burge's youth, the area was 93% white. It had undergone a population shift to 14% white by Burge's arrival as an Area Two Commander in 1972. Many in Burge's community were upset at the "infiltration" of minorities into what was traditionally a white community. Soon after his promotion, Area Two Police Headquarters received the "House of Screams" moniker, due to the systematic torture promoted by Burge and his fellow officers.

Starting in 1972, African Americans began alleging that Commander Burge and fifteen other officers were engaging in the use of electrical shocks via hand cranked field phones, suffocations using plastic bags and typewriter bags, mock executions, and beatings in order to elicit confessions for trial. Courts, judges and lawyers often would not believe the torture victims because there were no marks showing evidence of abuse.

Most of those alleging abuse were poor African Americans and they were accusing middle class white policemen, so their claims were frequently discounted. Prosecutors used the confessions and those alleging abuse were sentenced to lengthy prison terms, some even receiving the death penalty. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, who was State's Attorney when these abuses took place, has denied Burge and his fellow officers tortured. Then, things began to change.

In February 1982, Andrew Wilson killed two police officers after a robbery on the South Side of Chicago. In response, Burge and the Chicago Police engaged in a draconian dragnet to find the killers. As a detective who worked for the Chicago Police said, "It was a reign of terror. I don't know what Kristallnacht was like, but this was probably close... Their idea is you go out and pick up 2,000 pounds of nigger and eventually you'll get the right one." The Police caught Wilson not due to the dragnet but because one of the many innocent African Americans caught up in the dragnet happened to know Wilson had a car that fit the police description. Wilson was brought to Area Two, interrogated, and confessed to the murders of the two police officers.

But during his trial, Wilson alleged that the police had used torture to get him to confess. Wilson stated that he was physically assaulted and received an eye injury. According to Wilson, officers also suffocated him with plastic typewriter bags to make him pass out. He also told how Burge and his subordinates used electric shocks via hand crank field phones to his genitals, fingers and ears. When Wilson was able to dislodge the field telephone wire clips from his ears, Burge's officers handcuffed Wilson to two rings across the room. This positioning caused Wilson to sustain burns on his chest caused by the room's radiator. Wilson was still found guilty and sentenced to prison.

In 1989, Wilson sued the Chicago Police Department for their use of electrical shocks. The People's Law Office represented Wilson in this lawsuit. Soon after the lawsuit started and the torture of Wilson was revealed, the People's Law Office began receiving anonymous letters from the Chicago Police Department. These letters gave explicit details of Burge's torture of African American suspects. One letter stated Burge had a group of "asskickers" who engaged in torture and "weak links" who were not involved in the systematic abuse of suspects.

The anonymous writer also stated that the hand crank field phone and bags belonged to the Sergeant and that Burge encouraged their use. It was also alleged that State's Attorney Richard Daley chose not to investigate complaints against police. The communications concluded by suggesting the names of others who were in jail due to torture. When the Peoples' Law Office spoke with these men, they found out Burge and his fellow officers tortured those men as well. The list of those alleging abuses by the Chicago Police Department quickly ballooned.

The Illinois Supreme Court ruled that defendants received their injuries while in police custody. Juries concluded that constitutional rights were violated and that there was a policy whereby the police were allowed to abuse certain suspects. The City of Chicago even admitted that "savage torture" took place under Burge's command at Area Two. A special prosecutor from the US government said that one would have to be a "chump" to deny that torture took place. But what has come of these admissions?

Due to Wilson's suit and the anonymous letters that exposed "Burge's asskickers" and their systematic torture, Burge was removed from the police force in 1993. Two other officers were suspended without pay. As of 2007, the City of Chicago has had to pay out over \$20 million to the victims of "The House of Screams." Yet, there has been no criminal accountability. No charges were ever filed against Jon Burge or any of the 15 officers accused of the brutality, because the statute of limitations for assault and battery has elapsed. Yet, the officers have not yet escaped prosecution. The US Attorney in Chicago subpoenaed five to ten officers to bring them before a grand jury in June to see if they engaged in perjury and obstruction of justice, by denying their use of torture for decades.

The City of Chicago has spent over \$9 million defending the officers after admitting that these officers engaged in "savage torture." Their costs will continue to skyrocket defending these officers against impending federal perjury and obstruction charges. Mayor (and State's Attorney during the Burge torturing) Daley was outraged when former Governor Ryan pardoned four of Burge's victims and commuted seven others to life imprisonment. Attorney General Lisa Madigan is currently fighting fiercely against those calling for new trials for the 25 victims of Burge torture, who currently languish in Illinois jails. Should these be cases that Chicago should spend money on to defend? Should they even be cases that the City wants to win?

The use of torture, guilty or innocent, is antithetical to American values enshrined in the Constitution. It is antithetical to the presumption of innocence. If we are to say that torture at Guantanamo Bay and other US sites abroad is morally wrong, then we must also apply a similar standard to Chicago officials and those officers who engaged in torture.

Know Your Rights! (The Clash)

By Joe Strummer/Mick Jones

This is a public service announcement
With guitars!!

Know your rights all three of them

Number 1

You have the right not to be killed
Murder is a crime!

Unless it was done by a policeman
or aristocrat

Know your rights!

And number 2

You have the right to food money
Providing of course you

Don't mind a little

Investigation,
humiliation,

And if you cross your fingers

Rehabilitation

Know your rights!

These are your rights

Know these rights

Number 3

You have the right to free speech
as long as you're not dumb enough
to actually try it.

Know your rights!

These are your rights

All three of them

It has been suggested

In some quarters
that this is not enough!

Well?

Get off the streets

Get off the streets

Run!

You don't have a home to go to?

Finally, then

I will read you your rights...

You have the right to remain silent

You are warned that anything you say

Can and will be taken down

And used as evidence against you

In a court of law

Listen to this!

Run

Human Rights and the Struggle for Global Justice

Geoffrey Robertson, Q.C. Founder and Head, Doughty Street Chambers, London and Distinguished Jurist, UN Internal Justice Council

Wednesday, November 5, 4:00pm

Third Floor, Levis Faculty Center

919 West Illinois Street, Urbana



Surveillance: Interviews with Ruth Gilmore and Stephen Hartnett

By *Antonia Darder and Brian Dolinar*

SURVEILLANCE IS AT AN ALL TIME HIGH across the land. In schools, hospitals, stores, theatres, and street intersections, surveillance cameras have become commonplace. The Big Brother we feared in 1968 is now here in 2008, masquerading as homeland security, with a complicit corporate media that conjures the U.S. as the “good guy” on the world stage, irrespective of how many people die, are displaced, or incarcerated at the hands of U.S. foreign and domestic policies.

The passing of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 or simply the PATRIOT Act took things to a whole new level—so much so that our biggest enemies are not Islamic terrorists but our own government’s deception and impunity. The possibilities for surveillance, linked to our heavy reliance on technology, are countless. In fact, the surveillance carried out 40 years ago by the FBI’s COINTELPRO can more easily (and legally) be carried out today by agents of Homeland Security, who now benefit from the protection of the PATRIOT ACT and access to much sophisticated technology that was available 40 years ago.

With these concerns in mind, we asked two prominent scholars working on issues of the prison industrial complex to briefly share some thoughts about surveillance in the U.S.

Stephen Hartnett, Associate Professor of Speech Communications at the University of Illinois

BD: Could you please give us a brief history of surveillance.

SH: Oh, boy! You know we’ve got to talk about slavery if we’re going to do this. Folks need to understand that back in the plantation days under slavery, the populations were strictly divided into house slaves and the field slaves. Surveillance back then took the form of an overseer; a hired, white working-class overseer who, whenever the slaves messed around or tried to do anything would, he whip them on the spot. So surveillance took the form of a pair of eyes watching a body. The punishment was physical. And, the punishment was immediate.

At the end of slavery, with reconstruction, all the slave codes were abolished. And the South had to pass a new series of laws to criminalize the now freed black population, in order to keep their labor cheap. So in the South, they passed a series of laws pertaining to surveillance. For example, over in South Carolina following the civil war it was illegal to spit. So, you could look back at the jail rolls and see tens of thousands of newly freed, former slaves getting arrested for spitting. In North Carolina, it was illegal to walk on public grass. So if it was a particularly nice sunny day and you sat down on the lawn to have your lunch, Bingo, man! Arrested! So surveillance then took the form of using the law to criminalize black bodies.

Following the civil rights movement, the surveillance took a new aspect and now it’s high-tech. Today we have surveillance cameras monitoring black populations. And this is where the drug war comes in. The drug war provided the technological means to use surveillance within the black community. And we know, for example, that the user rates of drugs are equal amongst white kids and black kids in high school. But if there are more police and more surveillance in a black neighborhood than in a white neighborhood, then of course the black kids are going to get busted.

So we’ve reached a new stage of surveillance, where incarceration is a direct consequence of the amount of surveillance in any given neighborhood. And from my perspective, that’s simply a postmodern reflection of those long standing slave codes.

BD: So now on the South Side of Chicago we now have what is known as blue light district.

SH: Oh, yeah! We got blue light districts in Chicago. You know California passed this law called the STEP Law. It actually makes it illegal for groups of four or more to stand on a street corner together, because that counts as a gang. So any gathering of more than four boys on a street corner, they’ll get picked up by the juvenile police and get taken in, fingerprinted, and entered into a gang data base.

I guess that’s another thing folks should know. These databases in California are amazing. What they’ve got now are called Crime Enhancement Laws. If I’m busted, I get say five years. If I’m busted but I have a record of being in a gang, I get an enhanced sentence. But, what we’re finding is that if they get this one kid, and they put the screws on him—they get that kid to talk—he starts naming names and so this database is expanding exponentially. The problem is that a lot of the kids listed on that gang database aren’t gang-bangers. They’ve just been named.

And so this is another form of surveillance; and, what we’re basically doing is criminalizing entire communities, entire neighborhoods.

BD: So it’s all a kind of new Red Scare—a Gang Scare where long lists are developed, as modern day blacklists?

SH: That’s exactly what it is! And the facts are startling! If you look under the Bureau of Justice statistics—this is all available on line—the vast majority of murders in America every year are committed by middle class white men. But those surveillance database are pegging 13, 14, 15 year old Chicano and Black kids in the wrong neighborhoods. So these are the kids getting locked up.

Ruth Gilmore, Director of the American Studies Program at the University of Southern California

AD: What are some issues that you see as key to understanding surveillance in the U.S.?

RG: One of the underlying principals of U.S. political culture is that the U.S. must always have an enemy, which must always be fought and can never be vanquished. That is one of the foundational pieces of U.S. political culture: a perpetual enemy who must always be fought and can never be vanquished. And if we look back to U.S. history, we see that the enemy’s face changes all the time, but that enemy is always there.

The enemy is often foreign, such as every Communist on the planet for 70 years; and, often within the territory, such as Native Americans and people in slavery and Mexicans in the Southwest and Chinese throughout the country and so on and so forth. So the US must always have this perpetual enemy.

Over the centuries of the U.S. becoming the most powerful nation-state in the history of the world, in terms of its military and economic power, it has developed and perfected various systems of surveillance—various ways of keeping an eye on people. And keeping an eye on people in order to identify—and one might call “profile”—and then find certain kinds of enemies.

The level of surveillance in the United States is incredibly deep and it involves all different kinds of social and economic actors. So much so, that there is the kind of machinery of surveillance, such as whatever is taping or listening to our telephone conversation today, cameras at street intersections, the swipe cards and other materials that people use to come and go from work now, that don’t just let one in the door but record that you went through the door. A metal key leaves no record. It just is a metal key that opens the door rather than says who went through the door when.

There are many, many other forms of surveillance which in their constant perfection become an economic sector that in its increased power, lobbies for more surveil-

lance in society, so that they can have grants and contracts to do their work.

Then there’s a way in which ordinary people, the modestly educated women and men in the prime of their life also participate, however unwittingly, in the surveillance society. For example, think about how many of us now wear photo ideas as though they were jewelry. This is extremely symbolic of the way in which we have all become so accustomed to being constantly surveilled in such a way that the surveillance in this society is highly militarized.

AD: Can you contrast surveillance in the U.S. with its practice elsewhere?

RG: The United Kingdom is a good example for comparison. The UK is probably one of the most surveilled societies in the world. I think every square inch of the United Kingdom has a camera trained on it. The whole country is being filmed all the time. Even with that level of surveillance which is not benign, the incidence of criminalization and incarceration there is one-tenth of what it is here. So while surveillance is deep in the UK, its outcome is not the same as in the United States. In the United States, the outcome is very often criminalization and incarceration.

AD: How does surveillance link to undocumented workers?

RG: We all get sort of frenzied up about surveillance and the ways that the politics of fear affects all of our society, all the time. And, certainly, one of the key issues that has captured people’s attention throughout the US these days revolves around the issue of people who are not documented to work. (I will not use the word “illegal” to describe any human being.) But there are so many people in the United States today who are not documented to work and persistently we see government—governmental bodies at all levels—trying to figure out ways to surveil those people. And all kinds of people, who are documented to work, are mistaken if they think that the surveillance of those without documentation is going to secure those with documentation. It won’t.

And the people who are between those not documented to work and those of us who are documented are, of course, all the people regardless of citizenship status, who have been convicted of felonies. They are the people who are the in-between category of folks, without rights. And that in-between category opens us all up for peril. Not because those people have been in prison or had been convicted and now are loose; but, rather, because of the ways in which their citizenship rights have been chipped away—which means that everyone else is next.

Army Unit to Deploy in October for Domestic Operations

Democracy Now! Monday, Sept. 22, 2008

Beginning in October, the Army plans to station an active unit inside the United States for the first time to serve as an on-call federal response in times of emergency. The 3rd Infantry Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team has spent thirty-five of the last sixty months in Iraq, but now the unit is training for domestic operations. The unit will soon be under the day-to-day control of US Army North, the Army service component of Northern Command. *The Army Times* reports this new mission marks the first time an active unit has been given a dedicated assignment to Northern Command. The paper says the Army unit may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control. The soldiers are learning to use so-called nonlethal weapons designed to subdue unruly or dangerous individuals and crowds.

The original article can be found: www.armytimes.com/news/2008/09/army_homeland_090708w/

Get Involved with the *Public i*

You don’t need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The *Public i* is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you to submit ideas or proposals during our weekly meetings (Thursdays at 5:30pm at the UCIMC), or to contact one of the editors.



The Science and Politics of Medical Cannabis

By Niloofar Shambayati



FOLLOWING THE DEFEAT of a medical marijuana bill in 2007, Ray Warren, director of state policies for the Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) adamantly stated that "We are not going to abandon the patients, doctors and nurses who have worked so hard to protect the sick and suffering...Science, compassion and simple common sense say this is the right thing to do. We'll be back."

And back they are with Senate Bill 2865 and House Bill 5938! The Compassionate Use of Medical Marijuana Pilot Program Act was introduced by Senator John J. Cullerton (D-Chicago) and Representative Angelo Saviano (R-River Grove) in February 2008. The Senate bill will be voted on after the November national election. For now, however, HB5938 sits in the Rules Committee.

The proposed legislation "provides that when a person has been diagnosed by a physician as having a debilitating medical condition, the person and the person's primary caregiver may be issued a registry identification card by the Department of Public Health that permits the person or the person's primary caregiver to legally possess no more than 12 cannabis plants and 2.5 ounces of usable cannabis." Qualifying conditions consist of the following: cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, Lou Gehrig's disease, Crohn's disease, agitation of Alzheimer's disease, and nail patella. Doctors may also recommend medical cannabis for cachexia, severe pain, severe nausea, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis (See, www.ilga.gov for full text).

The 33-page-long document contains every conceivable safeguard against potential abuse. Specifically, it includes a sunset clause of three years, during which a maximum of 1200 patients can take advantage of the program. Several Illinois organizations have been involved in promoting the legalization of medical cannabis, through campaigns targeting state and federal legislators. These include the Illinois Compassion Action Network (ICAN), Illinois chapters of Students for a Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), Illinois chapter of National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Law (NORML), and Illinois Drug Education and Legislative Reform (IDEAL REFORMS).

If the bill becomes law, Illinois would be the 13th state to allow the use of medical cannabis. Although this bill has a limited scope and seems experimental, it should be actively supported as the first positive step towards eventually covering over 200,000 potential beneficiaries. According to Dan Linn, the executive director of Illinois NORML, SB2865 had to be written more conservatively than last year's SB 650, if it is to pass the State Senate.

The bill, of course, does not protect individuals from being prosecuted by the Federal government. Data show that such arrests constitute 10% of the total arrests for possession of marijuana. Hopefully, as more states pass legislation in favor of legalization, Washington will begin to feel greater pressure to reverse its draconian policies.

In fact, House bill (HR 5842), the "Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act," which is currently under consideration, seeks to enact legal protections for authorized medical marijuana patients. It will help to ensure that medical marijuana patients in states where medical cannabis legislation has been approved will no longer have to fear arrest or prosecution from federal law enforcement agencies. Advocates in Illinois are already asking our congressional representatives to support the federal bill.

Judges for quite some time have been ruling in favor of the benefit of cannabis. In 1988, in a non-binding opinion, the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) Administrative Judge Francis Young ruled that "Marijuana, in its natural form, is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man. By any measure of rational analysis marijuana can be safely used within a supervised routine of medical care." In February 2008, DEA's Judge Mary Ellen Bittner argued that lifting the government monopoly over distribution of cannabis to scientists and allowing researchers to grow a variety of high quality cannabis is in the "Public Interest." She added that

researchers must have a sufficient amount of high quality cannabis to be able to conduct clinical studies and also to develop cannabis in different forms (such as a vaporized spray) for administering the safest and most effective medication to patients.

In addition to judges, many reputable national organizations of physicians, nurses, scientists, Attorney Generals, several Churches, *New England Journal of Medicine*, and *Lancet* advocate for the legalization of medical cannabis, citing available data and scientific evidence. The Dutch Ministry of Justice estimates that only 0.16% of cannabis users are heroin users. Also, data provided by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration show that the vast majority of people who try cannabis do not go on to use hard drugs. In 1999, a study completed by the Institute of Medicine, at the request of the White House, concluded that cannabis was not highly addictive, was not a gateway drug, and had therapeutic value. It added that physicians should be able to conduct studies on patients who could potentially benefit from cannabis, as well as conduct research on alternative delivery systems. In fact, new research in biology and physiology has shown that the body itself produces cannabis-like substances (endocannabinoids) which homeostatically regulate the working of its various organs. This natural affinity between human body and cannabinoids suggests that further research might find even more therapeutic uses for the cannabis plant than already recognized.

So, why are the politicians still adamant about legalizing medical cannabis? A look at the history of criminalization of cannabis provides clues into the manner in which political interests have so far trumped scientific evidence. Until the late 1930s, cannabis was commonly used medicinally to treat a variety of ailments. It was also used among blacks in the South and Mexicans in the Southwest. Hence, cannabis became a convenient target for The Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs which after the end of Prohibition was in danger of being dissolved. Authorities managed to erase cannabis as medicine from folk memory, by replacing the use of its scientific name with marijuana, "a dangerous drug used to contaminate the mind of the white youth and subvert the American culture."

As part of his Machiavellian politics to crush the anti-war and civil rights movements, Richard Nixon created the DEA and pushed the Controlled Substance Act of 1970 through the Congress. The Act placed marijuana in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Schedule which consisted of highly addictive and dangerous drugs which have no accepted medical use. The goal was to intimidate the activists and create a rift in the opposition. Despite several legal challenges, marijuana remains in the same category along with LSD, heroin, and crack cocaine!

Over the years, the majority of legislators have ignored the power of scientific evidence and the will of the people, supporting instead a fear-based politics predicated on racism, class inequalities, and maligning dissent. Fortu-

HELP PASS THE ILLINOIS MEDICAL CANNABIS BILL

- Contact State Senator Michael W. Frerichs and urge him to vote yes on SB 2865
Springfield Office: (217) 782-2507
District Office: (217) 355-5252
- Call Naomi Jakobsson at (217) 373-5000 to urge them to vote yes on HB5938
- Call (202) 224-3121 and urge Tim Johnson to vote YES on HR 5842.

UIUC chapter of SSDP urges everyone to participate in a letter-writing campaign on Monday, October 20th at 6pm in room 215, Gregory Hall (Armory and Wright) on UIUC campus. Contact Ashley Barys for more information: abarys2atillinois.edu

Online petitions: <http://www.mpp.org/states/illinois/>
More information: www.illinoisNORML.org;
www.IllinoisCAN.com; www.idealreform.org.

Calvina Fay's [Drug Free America Foundation and Save Our Society from Drugs (S.O.S.)] recent power point presentation at the Midwest Security and Police Exposition at www.ideoa.org/downloads/Midwest%20Security%20&%20Police%20Conference%202008.ppt

Sources: Mary Lynn Mathre's Reefer Madness: the Illogical Politics of Medical Marijuana, online at www.medicalcannabis.com; Robert Melamed's Harm Reduction-the Cannabis Paradox, online at www.harm-reductionjournal.com/content/2/1/17; Dan Blum's Smoke and Mirrors, The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure; Mathre (ed.), Cannabis in Medical Practice: A Legal, Historical and Pharmacological Overview of the Therapeutic Use of Marijuana.

nately today, two-thirds of Americans believe that the use of medical cannabis should be legalized. This is so because most people know someone who has suffered needlessly from a disease or the side effects of a treatment which could have been potentially relieved with the use of medical cannabis. With this in mind, advocates for medical cannabis insist that it is time to mobilize, educate, and let the voices of reason be heard in Springfield and Washington.

(See Shaleen Aghi's article in November 2007 issue of the *Public i* for background and previous legislative efforts.)

SPEAK CAFÉ

Poetry, Spoken Word, and More...

Dates: Thursday, October 9 & November 13.

Time: 6:45-9:00 P.M.

Place: Krannert Art Museum 500 E. Peabody

Privatization Threatens Our Democracy

Friday October 10th

Urbana City Hall Council Chambers, 7:00 pm.

It will be televised on UPTV

The talk, given by Dan Kenney, will address how privatization of our military, police services, prisons, and schools threatens our democracy. Outsourcing of political decisions, security, and other significant functions that were once inherently the government's responsibility has stripped the power from the people and given it to companies and corporations such as Blackwater and Halliburton. Feasible changes need to be made to reverse this dangerous trend.

GRAN KERMES! MUSIC & FOOD

LUGAR: El Centro de Romero de la Iglesia Santa Maria 612 E. Park St. Champaign

FECHA: Domingo, 12 de Octubre

HORARIO: 7:00-10:00p.m.

QUE SE VENDE: Tamales, Pozole, Tostadas, Atole

MUSICA: SONIDO CALLEJERO

WHERE: ST. MARY CHURCH 612 E. Park St. Champaign

WHEN: Sunday, October 12

TIME: 7:00-10:00P.M.

FOOD FOR SALE: Tamales, Pozole, Tostadas, Atole.

MUSIC: SONIDO CALLEJERO



The New Jersey Seven: A Case of Intersectional Injustice

By Midwest NJ7 Solidarity Collective

ON AUGUST 18, 2006, SEVEN young African American lesbians traveled to Greenwich Village in New York City from their homes in Newark for a regular night out. When walking down the street, a male bystander sexually propositioned one of the women. After refusing to take no for an answer, he physically assaulted them. The women tried to defend themselves, and a fight broke out.

The women were charged with Gang Assault in the 2nd degree, a Class C Felony with a mandatory minimum of 3.5 years. Patreese Johnson was additionally charged with 1st Degree Assault. Chenese Loyal, Lania Daniels, and Khamysha Coates accepted plea offers. On June 14th, 2007 Venice Brown (19), Terrain Dandridge (20), Patreese Johnson (20), and Renata Hill (24) received sentences ranging from 3.5 to 11 years in prison.

The prosecution of the New Jersey Seven for defending themselves against a homophobic attack illustrates the state's disregard of street harassment and the ridiculous expectation that women and trans folks should not defend themselves. Dwayne Buckle, the bystander who attacked the women, sexually propositioned Patreese and followed them down the street, insulting and threatening them: "I'll f**k you straight, sweetheart!"

Buckle's violent harassment of the women should not be seen as an isolated incident not requiring a response. Only one year earlier in 2005, Sakia Gunn, a fifteen year old black lesbian from Newark was stabbed to death on a downtown Newark street corner after verbally rejecting the advances of two men. For the seven women trying to return to Newark after a long night, Buckle's attack terrifyingly echoed the circumstances of Gunn's murder. If they had not defended themselves, the consequences could have been deadly.

The district attorney office's decision to charge the women with Gang Assault in the 2nd degree, a Class C Felony in New York State, further perpetuates the violence against women of color initiated by Buckle. Charges such as "Gang Assault" with mandatory minimum jail sentences function as a form of legal lynching. Historically lynching has been used to repress communities and normalize violence against women of color.

Defining a gang as two or more people present during an altercation allows judges and state's attorneys to selectively

inscribe deviancy onto certain bodies (see New York State Law 120.06). Given the statistically verified practice of racial profiling and the historical practice of defining women of color as non-normative, it is not surprising that women of color continue to be the fastest growing prison population.

The case of the New Jersey Seven demonstrates that pathologizing women of color occurs both on the street and in the courtroom. Not only do Buckle's remarks exemplify the daily violence women of color face, but the trial proceedings also mark the state's role in normalizing this violence. According to the *New York Times*, "Justice Edward J. McLaughlin of State Supreme Court in Manhattan, showed little sympathy for the women's contention that taunts from Dwayne Buckle had left them no choice but to defend themselves" (*New York Times*, 6/15/07). After dismissing the women's lawyer's request to consider the influence of Sakia Gunn's murder on the case, Justice McLaughlin quoted the nursery rhyme, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me" (*New York Times*, 6/15/07). Considering Justice McLaughlin's comments and harsh sentencing, especially in the context of Sakia Gunn's murder, the state's grim options for women of color are revealed: confinement or death.

ORGANIZING TO FREE THE NEW JERSEY FOUR

Following the 2006 trial, Venice Brown (19), Terrain Dandridge (20), Patreese Johnson (20), and Renata Hill (24) entered Bedford Hills Correctional Institute and Albion Prison with sentences ranging from 3.5 to 11 years in prison. The three women who accepted plea offers began to negotiate life with even more severe limitations on access to housing and jobs. The families of Venice, Terrain, Patreese and Renata began to work with local New York activists to appeal the ruling and support the women. In the absence of support from national gay and lesbian organizations, FIERCE (www.fierceny.org), an organization advocating for queer youth of color in New York City, became the primary group raising money and awareness in support of the imprisoned women.

While the appeals process has proven to be slow, the collaboration of family members, supporters and the pro-bono legal teams has paid off. On June 13, 2008 the New York Appeals Court overturned Terrain Dandridge's case,

dropped all the charges and cleared her record. The court also granted Renata Hill a new trial. On June 23rd Terrain Dandridge was reunited with her family and the following day traveled with her mother, Kimma Walker, to speak at the San Francisco Dyke March and the New Jersey Four Solidarity Evening with Angela Davis.

Although Terrain's long awaited release from Albion Correctional Facility is a victory, it is important to remember that Terrain still unjustly spent 673 days (2 years) of her young life in prison because of wrongful prosecution and conviction. The three women, who accepted appeals, Chenese Loyal, Lania Daniels, and Khamysha Coates, still have felony charges that prevent them from getting jobs, registering for housing and other unjust discrimination. Renata Hill still awaits a new trial. Venice, sentenced to 5 years and Patreese, sentenced to 11 years, remain incarcerated, awaiting appeals to be heard this fall. The three women will continue to navigate the legal system until the day comes when their stories will finally be heard.

FREE THE NEW JERSEY FOUR

Three women still remain in prison and three women continue to experience the effects of an unjust felony charge. The Midwest NJ7 Solidarity Collective encourages you to support these women. Contact natalie@all7.org or treva@all7.org and visit <http://www.freenj4.wordpress.com> for information on how you can get involved.

The Cultural Politics of Identity and the Cuban Revolution

Louis Perez, J. Carlyle Sitterson Professor of History at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Thursday, November 13, 4:00pm

Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum

600 South Gregory Street, Urbana

Hozho Nahazdlii: In Beauty, It is Restored

By Charlotte E. Davidson (Diné, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara) & Jamie Singson (Yaqui/Apache)

Charlotte & Jamie are doctoral students in the Educational Policy Studies program at UIUC. Both use Indigenous epistemologies and decolonization to ground their research.

ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, non-western ways of knowing, learning and living were experienced at a day-long community symposium, *In Beauty, It is Restored: Media Activism, Indigenous Women's Epistemologies, and Scholarship*, sponsored by Native American graduate students at UIUC.

The symposium presentations framed the importance of respecting different worldviews, in our efforts to ground our scholarship in our humanity. Grandmothers, mothers, brothers, students, and professors gave voice to the survival of Chicana/o, Mississippi Choctaw, Zapotec, Yaqui, Hopi, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Diné, and Apache Peoples within our communities and within the academy. There was no concentration on one sole way of "being." Instead, through a willingness to be self-reflective about participants' histories and experiences, the question of how to remain human was revisited throughout the day.

California based legislation, *Proposition 21*, Hopi identity and boarding school experiences were the focus of a panel on "Media Activism: Community Issues, Voices and Perspectives." The panelists' work aimed at disclosing oppressive issues and marginalized histories. How their project fit into their everyday lives and the wider social contexts, (i.e., language issues, social and cultural



Jamie Singson presenting on a panel

resources, community power and institutions) created unique perspectives related to producing a collective vision of justice in communities, through media mobilization.

One of the most compelling sessions,

"Leaving a Legacy for the Next Seven Generations: Indigenous Women's Epistemologies," inspired listening with the heart and respect for every aspect of our human reality. Through tears, female narratives presented a life journey where ways of knowing are informed by how one grounds self to environment and how genealogy is attached to land. The theme of the panel was infused with care and respect for indigenous language as a mechanism that embodies ways of knowing and acknowledgement of our relationship with the non-human beings with whom we share the earth. Central here was an understanding of how languages are embedded social meanings that encompass ways of being, including the manner in which land is experienced differently as a result.

Institutions of higher education, too often, exist without compassion, are ahistorical, objectify beings (human and non-human) and are spaces that do not allow for grieving and healing of past collective violations and betray-

als. In the panel, "Truth and Tradition: Trusting Our Histories and Stories to Decolonize Scholarship," UIUC graduate students addressed the question of: how does one remain human within a structure that has an epistemology and a language of hierarchy, competition, and domination? The panel shared their process of rethinking values, language, meanings and relationships within a course on Decolonizing Methodologies, led by Larry Emerson, a Dine teacher and scholar. The course guided students to recognize themselves as the methodological lens. Through an experience of laughter, grief, and tears, they began to develop a language to carry and restore a vision of hope for the next seven generations.

Diné prayers opened and closed the symposium in a way that asked for human beings to be reconnected to a way of life that is healing and restores kinship, harmony, balance and beauty. For, ultimately, it is through these values, and not theory, that truth can emerge and restore our communities. It is in this that we are reminded that we are all here, not because of the institution or the professors, but because of our ancestors' dreams for us. It is in this way, that beauty can be restored and prevail, even during the most perilous times.