

The PUBLIC

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

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

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THE PUBLIC I

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

- Become a citizen journalist; write a news story or opinion piece.
- Make a tax-deductible contribution.
- Help distribute the *Public i* around the Champaign-Urbana area.
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A Benefit for the Striking Health Care Workers in Effingham, IL

Monday, October 8th, 2007 8:00 PM

Jobs with Justice and the Campus Faculty Association (UIUC) present Anne Feeney, Hell Raiser and Labor Troubador with The Ornerly Duffers and Guest Evan Greer

Independent Media Center (Old Post Office Building) Urbana, IL. Price: \$10-20 suggested. As always, no one is turned away for lack of funds.

Dear IMC/WRFU members,

As many of you are aware the station is in need of money for a new tower, and your help is needed. To raise money RFU members will be creating T-shirts with an extra special fundraising theme to sell and promote our tower fundraising campaign. In addition, this graphic will be used on all tower fundraising materials (e.g. brochures, the website and fliers).

We are calling upon you, the members, to participate in designing a graphic which will represent our tower fundraising campaign. The graphic should include a "tower theme," and it should be a single line design in one color.

The deadline for submission of your art work is September 18, 2007 at the RFU general meeting. You may submit your graphic to the RFU-finance list, (rfu-finance@lists.ucimc.org) or bring it to the general meeting on Sept. 18, 2007. For questions, comments, or suggestions should be directed to the RFU-Finance working group at: rfu-finance@lists.ucimc.org

UC Books to Prisoners Fall Book Sale

September 28-30, at the Independent Media Center (202 S. Broadway in Urbana). Come choose from an eclectic collection of thousands of low priced books.

Hours: 9/28 (noon-midnight), 9/29 (7 a.m.-midnight), and 9/30 (11 a.m.-6 p.m.). There will be a \$2 bag sale 9/30 from 2-6 p.m., or until books are gone.

SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS

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

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The PUBLIC

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V7 #7



BETTER LIVING THROUGH MARTIAL LAW

**"A People Should Not Fear *Their* Government...
A Government Should Fear Its People!"**

- V.



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Dempsey Resignation From PTI Fails To Ease Concerns

By H. Hawkeye

Hawkeye is a concerned Urbana resident, keeping watch on the movement of the public to the private in the world.

On September 6, 2007, University of Illinois officials severed their ties with Tom Dempsey, the director of the school's Police Training Institute (PTI) who has been under scrutiny for his work with Blackwater USA, a controversial military contractor.

Local residents first learned, from an exclusive *Chicago Tribune* article on July 31, 2007, that Tom Dempsey, Director of PTI, had signed a "memorandum of understanding" (MOU) with Blackwater to exchange personnel and students, as well as collaborate on special projects for five years. Meanwhile, during his summer vacation, Dempsey worked for Blackwater on drug enforcement training in Afghanistan.

Prior to Dempsey signing the UI memorandum on May 8, 2007, Blackwater entered into an agreement to lease a Mount Carroll, IL firearms training facility, for the duration of the training year. According to Jo Daviess County Recorder records, First Tactical Site, Inc. is the "owner of record" of the 11311 S. Skunk Hollow Rd site at the time of the lease.

David H. Wittrock, 1880 E. 6000N Rd., Bourbonnais, IL and Jeffrey Blomsness, 15 Willow Bay Dr., South Barrington, IL are listed as First Tactical Site, Inc. secretary and president respectively, with the Illinois Secretary of State's office. An experienced law enforcement officer, David Wittrock is an adjunct staff member at PTI and instructs at the Military Sealift Command's Small Arms Program. While president of several Illinois corporations, including North American Midway Entertainment-All-Star Amusement, Inc., Blomsness contributed to Swift Boat Veterans and POWs for Truth and the Henry J. Hyde for Congress Committee.

For years, PTI instructors and other trainers supported law enforcement, 'military operations,' and security personnel at 'the site.' "The Site staff has experience teaching a wide variety of both domestic and foreign firearms systems. We also offer instructor development and continuing education certifications. We have extensive experience working with and training armed professionals from across the globe" (www.shoot-at-the-site.com/).

However, since Blackwater maintains strict employee confidentiality, it is unknown if staff members from the PTI will continue training duties at the Mt. Carroll, IL site.

Unbeknownst to many, the Blackwater agreement is in line with a currently active agreement signed in October 2006, between PTI and Triple Canopy (TC), another private paramilitary company. It is interesting to note that the UI or PTI press office reported neither agreement, hence the story lay "buried" for months.

PTI: TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE.

The Police Training Institute was established in 1955 by the Illinois General Assembly to offer basic law enforcement courses and standardize and upgrade police training. Today, the institute offers short courses, conferences, institutes, training curricula, consultant services for police departments and others enforcement agencies throughout the State of Illinois and beyond.

The PTI in Champaign, IL is one of the largest facilities for training would-be law enforcement and corrections officers in the country. Between 2002 and 2005, PTI's basic law enforcement (BLE) training enrollment exploded, increasing by 100%.

Over its nearly 50-year-history, PTI programs have trained an estimated 100,000 law enforcement officers statewide. The Institute provides a basic 12-week (480-hour) residential training program eight times a year. This program alone trains

4,000 recruits, annually. In addition, there is an advanced master firearms instructor program and elective courses, which include a 16-hour police Spanish course, a 4-hour taser certification, a 40 hour juvenile specialist certification, the Champaign County Citizen Police Academy, and an annual fitness and skills challenge program.

PTI instruction is spread among four campuses: the Tactical Training Center, with five firing ranges, at 609 1/2 E. Curtis Rd; the Willard Aviation Training Center with classrooms, dispatch



Police Training Institute, UIUC campus

center, and traffic crash facility; the Experiential Training Center near Homer, IL, with a seven-acre facility providing a climbing wall and high ropes center, along with a 7,500 square foot training building and 4,000 square foot indoor training arena for scenario training; and, the Administration and Training Center (ATC) located at 1004 S. Fourth St., Champaign.

To facilitate collaboration, the PTI and other university departments conduct joint research on training and law enforcement related issues, such as human factors psychology, quantitative analysis of pursuit data, development of police facilitators, and stress training. Dempsey, confirms that "We have also executed MOUs with several private sector researchers." (www.pti.uiuc.edu)

WHO ARE THESE MEN IN BLACK?

Former Navy Seals established Blackwater USA (BW) in 1996, with the expressed intent of becoming a premier international contracting security company and domestic law enforcement training organization. One decade later, BW is the most powerful private paramilitary army in the world. It's founder, Eric Pince, who comes from a super-rich Western Michigan family, funds a variety of rightwing and religious causes, according to a review of Freiheit Foundation grants.

Blackwater boasts 20,000 soldiers ready for combat, a fleet of twenty aircraft, including helicopter gun ships, a precision parachute drop team, and a domestic law enforcement and private security consulting business, committed in money and prestige to the training of thousands of domestic and international law enforcement personnel, as well as private citizens.

On the international front, recall for a moment the muscled wall of men in mirrored sunglasses, bristling with firepower, guarding the VIP's in Iraq. Tragically, after four BW contractors were dragged through the streets of Fallujah, on March 31, 2004, the U.S. Marines were ordered to lay siege to the city in retaliation and the flames rapidly spread the insurgency across Iraq.

In August 2005, Blackwater military marching boots pounded on domestic Southern soil, among the first on the ground after Hurricane Katrina hammered the Gulf Coast. When citizens asked, "Where are the marines?" New Orleans' weary residents were instead greeted by a for-profit

it "privatized army."

Around the world, the company performs hundreds of million of dollars in U. S. contracts, allegedly utilizing third world nationals' "coalition of the billing," along with "black" contracts withheld from public view. More recently, it has begun focused marketing of security expertise to multinational corporations. The company has a network of connections to multiple U. S. defense contractors and intelligence sectors. The extent of their domestic business is under reported. Initially a training site for SWAT teams, BW has leveraged that business into a national network of law enforcement and arms dealer contacts.

Blackwater USA is simply an example of the growing neoliberal trend toward privatizing the public sphere. According to Arthur Jones and Robin Wiseman, international human rights lawyers, "The legal vacuum in which private security firms have been operating abroad will now be accorded to them at home in the U.S. The program, as outlined by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, aims to insert private business into the public trust and to diminish the role of police in public safety. It strips police budgets, while offering both money and legal immunity to private security and technology firms. Just as the American approach is a 'war on terror' emphasizing the use of military means, the same philosophy or bundle of motives has also attached to the fight against terrorism at home."

MT. CARROLL: "WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?"

About one hundred and forty miles from Chicago, on an eighty-acre isolated site near Mt. Carroll, IL, Blackwater is fashioning a major law enforcement and security training facility. The Skunk Hollow Rd. property comes with a climbing and rappelling wall as well as several firing ranges.

Seemingly proud of the Blackwater accomplishment, Annie Tyrell, a BW spokeswoman publicly asserted in a Chicago television interview with ABC, "You have to go five states away to find a training facility anything like this." (May 7, 2007) And although classes are not certified by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, police departments and individual officers from across the country still attend the Center's training program.

For only \$950 per person (lunch included), Illinois Special Response Team members may enroll in the SWAT team tactics class. Topics covered by the course include firearm skills for the tactical officer, high risks warrant service, rapid deployment, barricaded suspects, hostage rescues, sniper team roles, and stealth entry techniques.

At their BW (North) facility, training is also provided for Illinois and other security guards, private investigators, armored car personnel, and personal protection specialists. In their open enrollment classes, instruction is offered in introductory and basic pistol, advanced handgun skills, tactical pistol I and II, and basic shotgun.

As private security guards have outnumbered police officers since the 1980s, there is no shortage of potential students. Private-sector security is expanding into the legal territory of complex criminal investigations and patrols of downtown districts and residential neighborhoods that used to be the province of law enforcement agencies alone. As a consequence, there is a growing concern among members of these communities that private security companies are replacing certified police officers, without concomitant oversight and liability.

An Illinois law enforcement graduate, wanting to earn "serious money," can apply for open enrollment in the Blackwater Academy. For approximately \$20,000 cash, the

Continued on page 7



CU Citizens Help Ms. Davis Move Out Of Bullet-Riddled House

by Brian Dolinar



On Saturday, August 18, 2007, Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice pitched in to get Ms. Mildred Davis moved out of her house at 4 Hedge Court, nearly two months after a tragedy struck her home. Champaign police were in pursuit of Torriano Johnson on June 24, 2007, which began in Urbana and ended up in a standoff at 4 Hedge Court in the Garden Hills neighborhood of Champaign. Ms. Davis, a 62 year-old grandmother who lives there, says police fired into her home, while people outside told officers that she and her children were inside.

Fortunately, no one was physically injured in the incident. But the approximately 30 bullet holes that remained in her living room were a daily reminder to Ms. Davis of the horror she experienced that night.

CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, a local grass-roots organization, immediately responded after they heard the news. Martel Miller, who is from Garden Hills, talked to Ms. Davis to make sure she had somewhere else to stay and he also helped to get her some food. Miller contacted the local media and was there with them when Ms. Davis came back to her home Monday morning to find it ransacked, she believes by the Champaign police. She had given police a key to her home so that they could conduct an investigation. She says the police went through her personal items and damaged her property. What they were looking for she does not know. She says she never knew the suspect Torriano Johnson.

Ms. Davis was sitting in the chair of her front living room when Torriano Johnson ran into her house. She grabbed her two-year-old great-grandson just as police started firing into the house. As she held the boy, a hail of gunshots entered her front window and went through the curtains, just a few feet from her. Two of her other grandchildren were in the bedroom. People outside say that

they had told the police there was a woman and her children inside, and not to fire into the house.

For several weeks, Ms. Davis had to live in the same house, with bullet holes still in the front window and in the drapes. Concerned about getting the damage to Ms. Davis' home fixed, we contacted her landlord who lives in Chicago. He told us he could not locate a contractor while out of town.

The Champaign police have claimed no responsibility, saying it is up to the owner's insurance to pay for the damage. Yet recently, the city tried to pressure her into accepting

a settlement. Adding insult to injury, they offered her a paltry \$200. [See sidebar] Champaign officials must have thought that because Ms. Davis is a poor elderly woman who lives in a black neighborhood, she does not deserve the same attention as the wealthy white residents of Champaign.

Ms. Davis says that the Champaign police sent Charles Nash, Pastor of the New Hope Church of God in Christ, along with Champaign spokesperson Rene Dunn, to talk with her. She

says Reverend Nash told her it would be "ugly" if she took this to court. City officials then contacted her three days later offering her a \$200 check for her pain and suffering. This was, of course, in exchange for her signature on a settlement form. Ms. Davis rejected the deal.

Because she is on a fixed income, Ms. Davis was unable to afford moving out of the house. CU Citizens for Peace and Justice raised \$750 from the community for a deposit on a new rental. Carol Ammons found a house just a few blocks away from 4 Hedge Court so Ms. Davis' foster children could remain in the same school district. Durl Kruse lent his truck and we helped Ms. Davis and her family to move to her new home. We hope Ms. Davis can now live without the daily reminder of this harrowing event.



CU Citizens move furniture

Release And Waiver

[This settlement letter was given to Ms. Davis to sign]

I, Mildred Davis, hereby accept \$200.00 (two hundred dollars) in full compromise settlement and satisfaction of and as sole consideration of the final release and discharge of any and all action, claims, causes of action and demands whatsoever that now exist, or may hereafter accrue, against the City of Champaign, its officers, employees and agents and all others, and any other person in connection with the incident which occurred on June 24, 2007 involving the Champaign Police Department which resulted in damage to the contents of the house located at 4 Hedge Court, Champaign, IL 61820 and which I claim that above named persons or parties are legally liable in damages; which legal liability and damages are disputed and denied. I agree that this Release and Waiver shall apply to all unknown and unanticipated expenses, injuries, and damages resulting from the aforementioned incident as well as those now disclosed and shall be binding upon me and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns. I do further covenant, warrant, and agree not to make further demands nor institute any suit or proceeding, whether in law or equity, arising from or connected with any loss, injury or damage that I may sustain as a result of the aforementioned incident. The delivery of this release and waiver is in exchange for payment of \$200.00. NO ORAL REPRESENTATIONS OR INDUCEMENTS have been made to me on which I rely upon to sign this agreement.

I have read and understand all of the RELEASE AND WAIVER FORM, and by signing below indicate my voluntary concurrence with its terms.

Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Canadian Police Provocateurs Caught With Their Boots On

by Belden Fields

The accompanying photo shows police kneeling over and cuffing three supposed protestors during the North American Summit on August 21 and 22, 2007. President Bush, Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada, and President Felipe Calderon of Mexico were meeting as partners in NAFTA to review the global market turmoil, the credit crunch, and North American integration issues.

Of course, some people in Canada don't like NAFTA and the economic policies pursued under NAFTA, and some don't like President Bush. As is their right, they organized a demonstration. Three of the people in the demonstration wore bandanas over their faces. One of the three held a rock. A trade unionist in the demonstration confronted them and told them to remove their masks. He told the person with the rock in his hand that this was a peaceful demonstration and that he should drop the rock immediately. When there was no response, he ripped the bandana off the face of one of the supposed demonstrators. The Canadian police in riot gear were standing very close to this confrontation. They then "arrested" the three masked "demonstrators."

As the photo shows, the three "demonstrators" were wearing exactly the same combat boots as the Canadian

police. It is an old tactic of police serving governments across ideological boundaries to infiltrate demonstrators with agents provocateurs, police officers posing as demonstrators who urge demonstrators to use violence and/or use it themselves.

The name of the game is to delegitimize the demonstrators in the eyes of the public and to justify violent repression by the police. It is a very dirty tactic, especially in a country that professes to respect civil and human rights. It is interesting that this picture from Canada came to light at the same time as a video that showed that the New York police had lied, and thus committed perjury, about the actions they had charged demonstrators with during the Republican National Convention.





Citizen Police Review Boards As Summer Ends: East 1, West 0

By Ricky Baldwin



When Laurel Prussing ran for Mayor of Urbana in 2005, she promised to support an independent board to oversee the police, as did most City Council candidates. When the new Mayor and City Council took office, they first provided for three additional police officers. And this summer, after much public input and negotiation, the Council at last approved the creation of a police review board. Now the Mayor is calling on residents to help make it work.

The vote was the culmination of a process that began in 2000 following several incidents involving local police, including the death in Champaign Police custody of Gregory Brown, whose family eventually received \$150,000 from the city and its insurer. Shortly afterwards the Champaign County Coalition for Citizen Police Review began actively advocating for a review board composed of private individuals in Champaign and Urbana.

The 2005 elections in Urbana were a major breakthrough, followed shortly by the convening of the Mayor's Taskforce on Citizen Police Review in September 2005.

The Taskforce held open meetings, announced in advance and televised on UPTV, over a period of eight months, during which time community leaders representing churches, the NAACP, Urban League, ACLU and others, met with then-acting Police Chief Mike Bily and the President of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), then—Sgt. Anthony Cobb, as well as the Mayor and City Attorney, to weigh the issues involved in setting up a review board.

At the time, a subcommittee of Champaign's Police Community Relations Committee was meeting behind closed doors to discuss similar ideas, but this fact was not public.

CIVICS 101

These discussions, at least in Urbana, had a contemporaneous tone, of necessity. The Illinois Department of Transportation had released statistics in June 2005 showing racial disparities in local traffic stops in excess of state averages. In Urbana, according to the report, black drivers were 47 percent more likely to be stopped than others, while in Champaign the difference was 71 percent.

In July of the same year an Urbana police officer, Kurt Hjort, was accused of raping a local woman while on duty. The City of Urbana eventually paid out \$100,000 in the case. The officer resigned from the force but was never charged.

Last summer the Urbana Taskforce concluded with specific recommendations for a police review board composed of fair-minded Urbana residents of good character, with the power to subpoena witnesses and documentary evidence, a mediation process for resolving complaints, if agreed by all parties. The Taskforce also recommended that no current Urbana police officer could serve ("a conflict of interest," agreed the FOP president) but imposed no further restrictions. The Urbana City Council took public comment during two sessions, overwhelmingly in favor of an oversight board. Some residents worried about having even former police officers on the board. A small handful rejected the whole idea of oversight.

The City then entered negotiations with the FOP, meetings which are routinely closed to the public.

Meanwhile in Champaign, the subcommittee's final report leaked to the press in September before the larger Police Community Relations Committee had seen it. The report called for a "citizen review committee" to oversee the complaint process. A majority of Champaign City Council members then voted for a study session on the question, which was put off until this July. When Urbana settled its four-year contract with the FOP in December of for a police review board but placed severe restrictions on it. The FOP agreed to accept the review board without further negotiations. The City agreed that ex-felons will be ineligible to serve on the board, even when they have paid their debt to society; that no uniformed police officer will be required to appear before the board; and that the board will conduct no "independent third-party investigations", instead relying on the Police Chief, in the event that further investigation is needed.

The City of Urbana then took more comment, notably at a "Committee of the Whole" meeting of the City Council. A weakened draft of a review board ordinance received the *News-Gazette's* lukewarm endorsement, but not that of the public.

The paper's editors expressed "pleasant surprise" at long standing provisions, discussed publicly at length, such as training for board members. The editors had earlier "surprised" readers by chastising the Champaign Police Department for "managing information" (that is, withholding it) in the case of a West Side Park shootout between police and a homeless man, and this on the eve of Champaign's July study session on police review.

Urbana residents on the other hand spoke passionately of the need for the omitted subpoena power, the dangers of the short deadlines for complainants, and the importance of a strong oversight board. Among the items of concern were restrictions the City promised the FOP, which some residents were just learning about. Council member Danielle Chynoweth even said she could not support it in this form. There followed a tense recess in the process while Urbana staff revised the ordinance again.

Meanwhile Champaign held its long-awaited study session, but not before Champaign Mayor Jerry Schweighart attempted to smother the proposal in its crib.

THE FINAL SCORE

The day before the study session, July 30, Schweighart told the *News-Gazette* he had lined up the votes to block any further discussion of civilian oversight of law enforcement in Champaign. The same day the *News-Gazette* in unusually shrill terms attacked Urbana Mayor Laurel Prussing and Councilmember Danielle Chynoweth for agreeing with the vast majority of resident opinion that has ever been expressed in public concerning police review. The editorial alleged that Prussing was misleading the public and called Chynoweth "the pied piper." It denounced a newly revised version of the Urbana ordinance that now included subpoena power and more flexible deadlines. The Champaign study session proceeded as planned on July 31, 2007. Tracy Parsons of the Urban League and other members of the Police Community Relations Committee spoke eloquently about the need for civilian oversight. A review board is a "safety valve" they said. The Urban League takes hundreds of complaints, as does the NAACP, many of which do not then translate into formal complaints at the Police Department because complainants do not trust the police. Members of the community also spoke up at length, recounting cases of police misconduct, cases of complaints mishandled, and so on.

It mattered not. When it was the Council's turn to speak it became painfully clear how little most of them had been moved by what they heard. Four at least said they wanted to explore the issue further. But four was not enough. The Mayor called for a vote, and was able to break the tie himself, smugly, almost giddily, "pulling the plug" as the *News-Gazette* put it the next day. Not only would there be no police review board in Champaign, but there would be no further discussion of it either. It was the third time since 2000 that the Champaign City Council had rejected recommendations from a committee that the Council itself commissioned to study civilian oversight of law enforcement.

The following Monday in Urbana, August 6, the City Council took further public comment, again overwhelmingly in favor of the strongest possible police review board. Council member Lynne Barnes, nominally a Democrat, had supported the weaker version endorsed by the *News-Gazette*, but now deserted the majority and opposed the ordinance. Council member Heather Stevenson, the Urbana City Council's lone Republican, cited an unscientific on-line poll that found a slim majority opposed to police review boards. Such polls are not generally accepted as valid indicators of public opinion, however, because respondents are not chosen at random but "self-selected" from people who visit the site. There is no way of knowing whether a respondent is even a local resident.

One supporter, Council member Dennis Roberts, was absent, but the ordinance passed in the end, 4-2. There

In the City of Champaign:

- 2/3 of complaints against police are by African Americans.
- 1/4 of complaints made by whites are ruled unfounded.
- 1/2 of complaints made by blacks are ruled unfounded.
- 2 times as many complaints made by whites are found to have merit. African Americans file more complaints than whites and are less likely to be taken seriously.

was little fanfare, and the Council proceeded with other business after a short break. The Mayor of Urbana is now taking applications for police review board members until September 30. Applicants must be residents of Urbana, must pass a criminal background check (no felony pleas or convictions), and have no affiliation with any law enforcement agency or be employed by the City in any capacity. Board members receive no pay for service, and must complete a training program.

Once the board is officially constituted, its first members have a tall order. The Mayor will appoint the chair, but the board itself must then write its own rules for proceeding, determine when it will meet, publicize itself, and step into the choppy waters of local police complaints. The review board must prove itself to be a fair arbiter of complaints, without prejudice for or against the police. It will not have direct disciplinary authority. Its power is in the ability to give a possibly wronged individual fair hearing and issue an independent assessment of police actions and policies. It is a largely moral authority, tied to its credibility in the community and in City Hall. And as such, its effectiveness depends wholly on its fairness as much as on its access to all the evidence.

Now for the hard part.

UNITY MARCH IV

October 13, 2007 at Noon

Champaign route kicks off in West Side Park Urbana route kicks off in West Side Park, Urbana route kicks off at Champaign County courthouse, March meets at John Lee Johnson Way, Rally in Douglass Park

IMCfest 2007

Nov. 9th-11th

Almost 30 of the areas best local artists and performers

shows.ucimc.org/imcfest

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center



The Return To Torture: The Case Of The San Francisco 8

By Neil Parthun



Neil Parthun is a graduate of the University of Illinois and a junior high social studies teacher in the community. He is very interested in local politics and social justice.

On September 17, 2001—in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks—then Attorney General John Ashcroft created the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council. The goal of this organization is to vigorously disrupt potential terrorist activities in the United States and prosecute any terrorists who have committed or intend to commit terrorist activities in the United States. This Council soon came under the control of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) when it was created. DHS proceeded to work in tandem with state governments to create Anti Terrorism Task Forces in every state with the goal of combating any cases of terrorism, both past and present. DHS and the Anti-Terrorism Task Forces re-opened every unsolved case where a police officer had been murdered and labeled the perpetrators as terrorists.

The federal and state governments were adamant about fighting terrorism. However, when California's federal and state Anti-Terrorism Task Force began investigating an unsolved murder of a San Francisco police officer, it would ironically lead to their acceptance and condoning of terror tactics used against innocent Americans, in this case against former Black Panther Party members.

On August 29, 1971, a San Francisco police officer named John Young was murdered. Police investigators believed the perpetrators were members of the Black Liberation Army, an ideological offshoot of the Black Panther Party that believed in armed struggle for liberation. This split was not just due to differences in ideology but also due to inter-organizational problems from the FBI's counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) disruption/neutralization activities directed at the Panthers. COINTELPRO's extralegal activities varied from illegal surveillance to murder and were used to disrupt the efforts of the Black Panther Party and a wide number of dissident political organizations during the 1960s and 1970s.

Two years later in 1973, three members of the Black Panthers/BLA, John Bowman, Ruben Scott, and Harold Taylor, were arrested in New Orleans. Two officers from the San Francisco Police Department who were also working with the FBI—Frank McCoy and Ed Erdelatz—would ask the three men questions hoping to get answers. When the three men refused, McCoy and Erdelatz left the room. The three BLA members were then tortured. According to Bowman, Scott and Taylor—the three men suffered systematic and purposeful torture that the police hoped would get them to confess to Officer Young's murder.

Describing the events that took place in the New Orleans police station, Harold Taylor stated: "I was in there for maybe

five minutes, when the door opened. Three police officers of New Orleans came in, dragging me out by my heels, took me to a chair, where they handcuffed me to the chair and handcuffed my ankles, my feet, to the bottom part of the chair. Without asking any questions, they commenced beating me... [The cattle prod was placed] down on my private parts, under my neck, behind my ears, down my back. I think I passed out one time, and they woke me back up, and they had taken me to another room. Two detectives had me by one arm—by each arm, and a detective came out of nowhere and he just cold-cocked me and knocked—I mean, he knocked me straight out. I was unconscious... There was two detectives from San Francisco. I later found out it was McCoy and Erdelatz. They started asking me questions. They told me they had a script. I'm sure I saw a recorder there, too. And they was reading to me about what they said took place in San Francisco. I told them I had no knowledge of it... It was back again with the plastic bag. This time they had a blanket. I don't know what they soaked it in, but it was really, really hot, and they just covered me with that blanket and put that plastic bag over my head. And I couldn't scream, I couldn't holler. I couldn't get my hands up to poke a hole in the bag, because I was handcuffed to the chair and my legs were tied to the chair. And they kicked the chair over and let me just suffocate. I was just about to pass out. They would snatch it off, spit in my face, and they left me sitting there for a little while. McCoy and Erdelatz, they started asking me questions. I had no knowledge of the things they were asking me, so I couldn't answer them, you know. So they said, "Well, we'll"—they turned off the recorder or whatever they had and said, "We'll tell you what happened. And then after we tell you, this is what we want you to say."

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "A court found that when the two San Francisco police investigators who came to Louisiana to interview the three men were out of the room, New Orleans officers stripped the men, blindfolded them, beat them and covered them in blankets soaked in boiling water. They also used electric prods on their genitals, court records show." As a result, a federal court ruled in 1974 that both San Francisco and New Orleans police had engaged in torture to extract a confession. A San Francisco judge dismissed the charges against the three men based on the federal court's ruling in 1975.

Fast forward almost thirty years. Due to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the United States government created the Department of Homeland Security. Using Department of Homeland Security money, special divisions called Anti-Terrorism Task Forces were created to work in tandem with state governments to apprehend suspected terrorists, including cases that were still unsolved like Officer Young's murder from 1971.

The state of California and the federal task force re-opened the case of Officer Young in 2003. In 2005, the government began to convene grand juries to pursue charges against members of the Black Liberation Army that they had been investigating. The BLA/Black Panthers who had been tortured in the 1970's and other members—Richard Brown, Ray Boudreaux, Harold Taylor, Hank Jones and John Bowman—were jailed for refusing to cooperate with the grand jury investigations. In January

of 2007, it was announced by the San Francisco Police Department that nine BLA/Black Panthers—Richard Brown, Richard O'Neal, Ray Boudreaux, Hank Jones, Francisco Torres, Harold Taylor, Harold Bell and Jalil Muntaqim—were arrested and were charged.

Prosecutors have stated that they have no new physical evidence in the case since it was originally dismissed. The physical evidence the prosecution does have is very limited. An affidavit filed with the court said in 2004 an FBI investigator matched five of the fifteen shotgun shells recovered from the crime scene to spent shells recovered from a shotgun found at Herman Bell's New Orleans home in 1973. But police are now saying they have since lost the shotgun allegedly found at Bell's house. This means that defense forensic scientists cannot duplicate the conclusions of the FBI. There was also a latent fingerprint that was lifted off of a lighter. There was an attempt to match it to Francisco Torres and a number of other people. All of these tests yielded negative results. These attempts continued all the way up until 2002.

Due to the lack of physical evidence, the prosecutors are relying on a theory that implicates all eight defendants (John Bowman has since died of terminal cancer in December 2006). The prosecutors are relying on the belief that the BLA was involved in a conspiracy to murder as many police officers as possible. In order to supplement their theory of the crime and limited physical evidence, prosecutors plan to use the confessions that the three BLA

members gave in the 1970's to prove their guilt. Yes, the same confessions that federal and California courts dismissed in 1975 because tactics of terror and torture were used to retrieve the confessions.

The case of what is now known as the San Francisco Eight is not only a local issue for the citizens of San Francisco and the state of California. This case fits into the framework of debate about the functionality and acceptance of torture in America. Americans are now familiar with the vile, disgusting photographs and reports of systematic torture by US

soldiers that emerged from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Americans have been exposed to the ugly realities of waterboarding, sensory deprivation and the indefinite detentions at Guantanamo Bay and other secret prisons being used in the 'War on Terror.' People are aware of the publicized police abuses like the torture of black suspects by the New York Police Department. The public knows about Sergeant Burge who tortured over 100 black men in the South Side of Chicago. Abuses have even been known to occur locally after Sergeant Myers pled guilty to taser ing inmates in Champaign-Urbana.

The United States government has created these anti-terror organizations to protect our rights that are enshrined in the Constitution and protect all citizens from being terrorized. There is a disappointing incongruence between the Constitutional ideals that our government should uphold and their current activities to legitimize torture as a necessary tool in their war to combat terrorism. The San Francisco Eight case seeks to normalize torture as an acceptable practice to elicit legal confessions inside the United States legal system. If we do not condone the use of torture or terrorism against American citizens, then the United States government must end the prosecution of the San Francisco Eight.

Addendum: The San Francisco 8 had initial bail hearings and two—Richard O'Neal and Richard Brown have been freed on bail. Further hearings on court motions will continue on Sept. 11, 2007.



L to R: Hank Jones, John Bowman, Ray Boudreaux, Harold Taylor, Richard Brown.

UC Books to Prisoners is hosting the
National Conference of Prison Book Projects
November 2-4 at the Independent Media Center

Public Events:

Paul Wright of Prison Legal News, Nov 3, 1-2:30 PM

Slam-Jam, Romp-Stomp, Nov 3, 7:30 PM

We need volunteers to host participants,
bake cookies, provide transportation
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to volunteer email conference.planning@books2prisoners.org
or visit www.books2prisoners.org/conference/volunteer.html





Toxic Tours

by Marti Wilkinson



Neighborhoods that are occupied by the poor and people of color face many challenges that remain hidden from public view. Lack of grocery stores in walking distance, the policing of Douglass Park, and the location of a former coal to gas power plant have generated concerns by residents. As a result, students, educators, and activists have gathered at Douglass Park as part of a series of "Toxic Tours" to address how public space is organized and the impact it has on residents, especially individuals who have limited resources.

The original usage of the term "Toxic" denoted the presence of a chemical or poison capable of causing injury and, in some cases, death. Over time the concept of what it is to be toxic developed into a metaphor which describes conditions and spaces that can harm individuals within its borders. One way in which the use of public space is manifested is through the location of parks, churches, and schools. For instance if a person is caught with a small amount of drugs it is usually considered to be a misdemeanor. Yet, if that same individual is within a short distance from a school, park, or church, that misdemeanor charge turns into a felony.

Last May a 17 year old male was leaving the gym at Douglass Center with two companions. In order for him to walk home he had to go across park grounds.

He was stopped by a police officer because he was on park grounds after dusk which, at the time, was when the park officially closed. Later it was observed that the Douglass Center closed at 9pm and the young man and his companions had left the building before that time. This raises the question as to how parks and other public spaces are managed to put people at a disadvantage. That evening, the young man was assaulted and pepper-sprayed by police. One of his companions ran to the home of city council representative Gina Jackson and the young man ended up being taken to the hospital. According to local activists, the young man is facing charges in connection with this incident.

Late, during a couple of tours, both Martel Miller and Aaron Ammons, from CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, asked a group of University of Illinois students to tell them what time "dusk" occurred. On both occasions this question was treated with ambivalence, with a couple of people suggesting sunset. As Ammons pointed out to the group, sunset could easily occur fairly early during the winter and later in the evening come summer, yet the Douglass Center remains open until 9pm. When the young man was accosted by police, he was leaving the center during its regular hours; and in order for him to leave the premises, he would have to be on park grounds. At the time, Douglass Park was the only park in Champaign to officially close at dusk. Later the time was changed to 9pm to coincide with the Douglass Center hours.

Individuals who toured Douglass Park have noted that the park is next to a school and is close to at least four churches nearby. A question raised as a result of this observation is how do the placement of parks, churches, and schools influence the disproportionate amount of felony charges against minorities and individuals who have social and economic disadvantages? This is a question for which there are no easy or simple answers to offer.

Another observation made during these tours is how residents who live around Douglass Park do not have close access to grocery stores, but are easily able to obtain fast food and other unhealthy

items. Ammons shared his vision of someday developing and maintaining the use of community gardens. A community garden would present an opportunity to provide fresh vegetables to the residents as well as a tool to build relationships within the community. The one thing that prevents Ammons from using land available in the neighborhood is concerns he has about the potential toxins from the former power plant. As the tour continued, participants reached the site of this former coal to gas plant which has been abandoned for several years.

According to information provided by Dr. Ken Salo, a professor with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the U of I, the former coal to gas plant provided heat and

light to area homes from 1897 to 1955. During the 1980s the location was owned by the American Legion who planned to expand the building for community activities. This changed when construction workers discovered coal tar which is a cancer causing byproduct, while building a drainage ditch. The American Legion ended up selling the property back to Illinois Power, which is now Ameren IP, and the company concluded that the site did not pose a threat to nearby residents. Yet in 1997 there began a massive cleanup of the site and 200,000 gallons of coal tar were removed from the area.

This plant is supposed to be fenced off so that members of the public can't enter the grounds. However, the tour participants discovered a huge opening that had been made in the fence, making it easy for anyone to enter the area. This opening was initially observed on August 19, 2007 and another tour which took place on August 31 found the damage to the fence still present. [See photo] Does Ameren IP keep an eye on the area and make attempts to repair the damaged fencing or is this responsibility shifted to the city of Champaign? Could this be an example of abusive corporate practices in where toxic sites are located and how community members are expected to clean up the mess that is left behind? One thing that the gaping hole does reveal is the ease by which a community of people can be injured and harmed by the management of public spaces.

A resident who lives close to the plant told participants how her grandfather died from a rare form of cancer and how another neighbor (no relation) also died of the same type of cancer. One observation that participants made is the old power plant is located within a block of a day care center and a woman's shelter. Some of the residents plant huge gardens every year. If the neighborhood is coping with lingering toxins in the ground, then what are the long-term effects that we can see here? The process of discovering the implications of these spaces to the City of Champaign and Douglass Park is an ongoing journey that may reveal information on how public space is used and abused and the social, physical, and psychological effects it has on the residents. Identifying the issues and finding the solutions is a challenge this community faces today.



Ken Salo points to a hole in the fence at one of the toxic sites.

Deportee (Plane Wreck At Los Gatos)

Woody Guthrie (1948)

The crops are all in and the peaches are rott'ning,
The oranges piled in their creosote dumps;
They're flying 'em back to the Mexican border
To pay all their money to wade back again

Goodbye to my Juan, goodbye, Rosalita,
Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria;
You won't have your names when you ride the big airplane,
All they will call you will be "deportees"

My father's own father, he waded that river,
They took all the money he made in his life;
My brothers and sisters come working the fruit trees,
And they rode the truck till they took down and died.

Some of us are illegal, and some are not wanted,
Our work contract's out and we have to move on;
Six hundred miles to that Mexican border,
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves.

We died in your hills, we died in your deserts,
We died in your valleys and died on your plains.
We died 'neath your trees and we died in your bushes,
Both sides of the river, we died just the same.

The sky plane caught fire over Los Gatos Canyon,
A fireball of lightning, and shook all our hills,
Who are all these friends, all scattered like dry leaves?
The radio says, "They are just deportees"

Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?
Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?
To fall like dry leaves to rot on my topsoil
And be called by no name except "deportees"?

A protest song with lyrics by Woody Guthrie detailing the crash of a plane near Los Gatos Canyon in Fresno County, California on January 29, 1948 and what he considered the racist mistreatment of the passengers before and after the accident. The crash resulted in the deaths of four Americans and 28 illegal immigrant farm workers who were being deported from California back to Mexico.

Patriotism

By Aaron Ammons a.k.a. Brother A-Dub

Manifest destiny
Complacency
Arbitrary constructs
Controlled conducts
Ducks in a row
Canoeing down the mainstream
Stuck in a dream
C.R.E.A.M.
Cash Rules Everybody Around Me!

Flagging me down with the star spangled banner,
I recall scanners,
Head explosions
Erosion of human rights
Firefighters 'throw ya lights up',
Caught up,
Locked up,
Every time revolution is brought up!

Have and Have Nots
and whatever else that puts knots in our pockets
We'll drop it like it's hot
I'm talking about the have nots
3 hots and a cot
Military duty,
Section 8 vouchers
Code blue/and a moment of silence
For "Q"!



Elvira Arellano: Inspiring the Immigrant Rights Struggle

By Antonia Darder



Antonia Darder is a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is longtime Puerto Rican activist-scholar involved in issues related to education, language, immigrant, workers, and women's rights. She is the producer of *Liberacion!*, a public affairs program on WEFT 90.1 FM, aired at 10:00am the second Sunday of the month.

Candles shone brightly in the hands of Latino immigrants and their supporters, as vigils were held in communities across the country to protest the capture of Elvira Arellano by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Over the last year, Arellano has become a powerful figure of resistance in the struggle for immigration rights in the United States.

An activist for immigrant rights and president of La Familia Latina Unida (The United Latino Family), Arellano was apprehended August 19 outside of Our Lady Queen of Angeles Church in downtown Los Angeles. Separated from her eight-year-old son, Elvira Arellano was arrested and immediately deported to Mexico the same night. She had traveled with her son and fellow activists to urge immigrant supporters to travel to Washington D.C. on September 12 to participate in a national vigil on behalf of immigrant rights.

Arellano, a native of San Miguel Curahuango, Michoacán, entered the U.S. in 1997, but was apprehended within days and deported. Tenacious, she quickly reentered the country and found her way to Seattle. She arrived in Chicago in 2000, taking a job cleaning airplanes at O'Hare International Airport. In 2002, following a post-September 11 security sweep at O'Hare, Arellano was arrested and convicted of working under a false social security number and sentenced to three years probation. She was later ordered to appear before immigration authorities on August 15, 2006, facing the likelihood of deportation. Unwilling to risk separation from her son, she challenged the order of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office, by taking refuge with her son inside the Adalberto United Methodist Church in Chicago, where parishioners and clergy alike embraced her courageous decision with open arms.

On November 14, 2006, her young son, Saul, traveled to Mexico to address the Mexican Congress, pleading for help in stopping the deportation of his mother. In response, the Mexican government passed a resolution against deportations, appealing to humanitarian principles of family cohesion. But despite this seemingly benevolent gesture, Mexico's oppressive role in this drama cannot be overlooked. Just prior to entering the U.S., Elvira Arellano, like so many young women of her generation, earned \$1.20 an hour, working six days a week and 12 hours a day as a *maquiladora* worker on the border. Hence, the Mexican government is as much responsible for the conditions that force Mexican citizens to brave the treacherous and oftentimes bloody journey across an increasingly militarized border zone.

BORDER POLITICS AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENTS

The U.S./Mexico border is one of the most contentious geopolitical arenas in the world. Since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, increasing violence and conflict, fueled by a variety of political and economic pressures, has plagued the region. In the last decade alone, campaigns for the militarization of the border by official border patrol agents and private vigilantes have prevailed. The names given to these campaigns—Operation Rio Grande at the Brownsville-Matamoros border, Operation Hold the Line at the El Paso-Juarez border, and the Minuteman Project at the San Diego-Tijuana border—attest to the war-like mentality.

In the midst of this intensification of border security, Elvira Arellano is only one of the estimated 12,000,000 undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to cross the border. According

to Human Rights Watch reports, of those who were unable to enter successfully, over 3,000 have died in the last five years. The unsolved murders of almost 400 young *maquiladora* workers in the border cities of Juarez and Chihuahua are considered by some to be directly linked to the viciousness of the on-going contested border politics of the region.

Relentless U.S./Mexico border hostilities have fueled powerful anti-immigrant sentiments expressed by the media, local municipalities, and neo-conservative political pundits. In December 2005, the House passed HR 4437 (or the Sensenbrenner Bill) that called for the deportation of all illegal immigrants and proposed making it a felony to offer them any assistance. A poll released by the Pew Research Center in 2006 concluded "the majority of Americans (53 percent) think all 11 million illegals should be required to go home."

Such political and popular support for mass deportations is fueled by mean-spirited portrayals of Mexican immigrants as dirty, uncivilized, and dangerous. The criminalization of immigrants, for instance, is widespread in the rhetoric of Americans for Legal Immigration website, where every other entry seems to link undocumented immigrants to accounts of homicide or sexual assaults. These attitudes prevail despite reports by the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Immigration Policy Center that conclude "...immigrants commit crimes at one-tenth what would be expected given their demographics" and they do not cause crime rates to increase.

GUEST WORKER PROGRAMS AND IMMIGRANT DETENTIONS

Since November 2005, the Bush administration has actively promoted efforts to get a grip on illegal immigration, through a plan to tighten border security and immigration law enforcement, as well as expand a guest-worker program. Hence, it was not surprising that both these measures were at the heart of President Bush's May 2007 "compassionate conservative" plan for immigration.

The president's proposed national guest worker program would potentially allow millions of undocumented immigrants to work legally in the U.S. on a temporary basis, before forcing them to return home. In many ways, the program would legally sustain the creation of a permanent underclass of exploitable workers. Chairman Charles Rangel (D-NY) of the House Ways and Means Committee adamantly opposed expansion of

the H-2 guest worker program, asserting that "This guest worker program's the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery." Rangel's view echoes the sentiments of former Department of Labor official Lee Williams who once described the old "Bracero" program as a system of "legalized slavery."

Labor advocates see the current H-2 guest worker system as a modern system of indentured servitude, but worse. Worse, because the new bill fails to include any provisions for legalization of today's guest workers, limiting their path to citizenship. Instead, when their visas are expired, they are expected to leave the country, without any guarantee of visa renewals in the future. As such, the guest worker program serves as the perfect repository for the disposable workers of the U.S. global economy.

But despite all the hoopla last May, the new bill, heralded as a product of a bipartisan agreement, collapsed under the weight of conservative objections. It was revived after an agreement was reached among Republicans to limit the number of amendments, then failed again on June 28, when another proposal to end the debate was defeated. Given the current antagonisms on both sides

of the issue, it is unlikely that any congressional bill can be successfully passed before the 2008 elections. This, of course, has by no stretch of the imagination halted the powerful apparatus of the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

In fact, immigration historian Ericka Lee reports that "over a thousand would be immigrants are deported or detained each month—a number that actually tripled in the last year. Every year, hundreds of thousands of non-citizens, including asylum seekers and those charged with violating civil immigration laws, are now detained in county jails and federal prisons. There are more than 300 facilities across the country... 65 percent of detained illegal immigrants are in state or local jails and prisons, 2 percent are in federal prisons, 14 percent in ICE-owned facilities and 19 percent in contractors' facilities. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers hold 28,000 illegal immigrants in an average day, up from 18,000 in July 2006."

The expected increase in immigrant detentions in the future has spurred a national plan to triple detention space to 60,000 beds, in order to house the growing number of immigrants caught as a result of the intensification of workplace raids and border crackdowns. As the Bush administration postures tough on illegal immigration and increases its spending on enforcement, some of the biggest beneficiaries are the companies that build and run private prisons around the country. Last February, for example, the *New York Times* reported that "The Army Corps of Engineers awarded a contract worth up to \$385 million for building temporary immigration detention centers to Kellogg Brown & Root, the Halliburton subsidiary that has been criticized for overcharging the Pentagon for its work in Iraq."

Such government sanctioned profiteering, associated with the intensification of immigrant enforcement and detention, certainly brings to mind the manner in which U.S. capitalists have historically reaped immoral dividends from the human suffering of oppressed populations around the world. This has been so, whether through the neoliberal policies of the globalized free market, the international machinery of wartime, or the domestic paramilitary apparatus of drug wars and immigration enforcement—forces that consign undocumented immigrant workers like Arellano to the mercy of capital and arbitrary enforcement.

IMMIGRATION AND GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Yet, like Arellano, scores of undocumented immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, continue to make the arduous journey northward seeking a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Their trek northward is the most logical response to the global structures of inequality. They move from geographical regions where wealth concentrations are low to the USA, where concentrations of capital are high and density is still low by world standards. They also move to the region of the world that has the highest consumption rate of all industrialized nations.

Despite widespread human rights failures long associated with the lives of undocumented immigrants in the U.S., reactionary anti-immigrant campaigns have a devastating impact on the current climate, fueling human rights violations at the border, in the workplace, and on the streets. For example, two days after Arellano's deportation, federal

immigration authorities in North Carolina raided the Smithfield Foods packing plant, detaining 28 current and former workers of the plant. Immigration officials arrived in the middle of night at local mobile home parks. They targeted areas heavily populated by poor immigrant workers and their families, arresting people in their homes. Eyewitnesses reported that immi-

gration enforcement agents forced women to leave their

continued on next page



Elvira and her son Saul



Vigil at La Casa Cultural Latina—Joe Palencia



Batey Libertad: "They deport us for being Black"

By Shara Esbenshade



Your life is illegal. You are told you must leave the only home you have ever known. You are told this not only with words, but with a brutal force and not one moment to prove your legality.

This is the situation Dominicans of Haitian descent are forced to endure by the Dominican military and the racism that impacts the culture of the island of Hispaniola. This past June, I spent two weeks at Batey Libertad, one of hundreds of migrant communities in the Dominican Republic. I went with a service-learning group from Illinois, organized through the University's Global Studies Center here in Urbana-Champaign.

When you walk into Batey Libertad you see colorful tidy houses next to faded tin ones. Dirt streets scattered with empty plastic water pouches and bottle caps. Everyone is outside, carrying water, washing, making music, excited children everywhere. No community gets along perfectly, and Batey Libertad has plenty of racial tension between the slightly better-off lighter-skinned Dominicans and the Haitian Dominicans, yet there is an atmosphere of energy and cooperation. Like a friend of mine observed, poverty tends to unite people more than money. But during those two weeks of working side-by-side with community members as we built a house, planted trees and picked up trash, I learned much that was not apparent on the surface.

According to Yadira Perez, a graduate student from the University of Virginia studying racial identity in the Dominican who spoke to our service-learning group as we prepared for our trip last spring, the racism between Dominican Dominicans and Haitian Dominicans has its origins in the era of "EL Jefe." Rafael Trujillo, who was dic-

tator from 1930-1961, realized that in order for the Dominican Republic to make it as an economic player in the world, it would have to separate itself from the "black" nation of Haiti, which he considered synonymous with "barbarian" nation. Trujillo went so far as to rewrite the history books, demonizing Haiti and elevating the Dominican self-image. He would hire white officials to "whiten" his country. Today Dominicans tend to see themselves as white, white being defined simply as not Haitian. Race is relative, a construct having little to do with actual skin color.

Over the past decade, the Dominican military has deported hundreds of thousands of Haitians and thousands of legal Dominicans of Haitian descent. As I got to know the youth of Batey Libertad they slowly opened up enough to share their experiences with me.

When the military carries out a deportation, it deports everyone in the community, or those that have not yet fled. In May of 2005, this happened to Libertad. Women, children, the elderly were treated with equal roughness, equal disrespect.

After being taken by soldiers across the militarized border with Haiti, coming back home can take months and possibly over a year for deportees. They have to come back illegally. Peter (name changed for security), a community leader of Libertad whom we interviewed for a short film, said it took him 8 months to get back after the deportation in 2005 and he had to walk for nearly 24 hours. Ninety percent of Libertad is of Haitian descent, but most of those people are legal citizens of the Dominican because they were born there.

However, even at birth Dominican doctors often refuse to give Haitian parents the papers proving the legality of their child; and once an adult, it is even more difficult to obtain these documents. Constitutionally,



Children in the street of Batey Libertad—Photo by Cory Bralts

someone born on Dominican soil is a citizen, but the government finds loopholes to get around that law, effectively making poor black people in the Dominican Republic illegal simply by the nature of their very being. The government illegally denies citizenship based on race, and through it denies opportunity.

This is where the economic oppression starts to blur with racial oppression. The *bateyes* are very isolated from the cities. It can be expensive just to get into the city to renew a visa. The yearly visa fees are another burden that someone who makes less than a dollar an hour, if they are one of the few working people at the *batey* to even have a stable job at the local rice factory, simply cannot afford. In any case, whether one has their papers or not, legality matters nothing to the officers. As Anthony (name changed for security), a Libertad youth I spoke with, told me, "they deport us for being black."

Dempsey Resignation From PTI

Continued from page 1

curriculum ranges from hand-to-hand combat (executive course) to precision rifle marksmanship. Few, if any, women have graduated from the security-consulting wing of BW, as "strength requirements" for admission into the program discourage potential female participation in the 'War on Terror.'

Training as a private enforcement officer is a potentially lucrative venture. For comparison sake: a contractor in Iraq earns approximately \$135,000 per year (same as a two star general); an American soldier typically pockets \$38,000/year (counting benefits); and, a newly hired UI police person starts at approximately \$42,000 per year.

The new rules of international law enforcement—a blending of police work, security consulting, and military engagement—have forced personnel departments to re-write their traditional job descriptions. This process, for example, can enable an Illinois police officer to request a year sabbatical to work for a large defense contractor in Iraq or Afghanistan; or, a security consultant in Iraq may opt to work for a law enforcement-training academy in Illinois. Blackwater has a database of thousands of former police and military officers for potential security and law enforcement deployment.

With BW North's offering open enrollments, a "wannabe" student may still try to pre-position himself/herself for acceptance into a law enforcement career by enrolling in basic courses, possibly training with an off-duty Illinois officer, under the watchful eye of a BW contractor.

PARAMILITARY CONTRACTORS: MERCENARY THUGS OR SAINTS?

Until recently, paramilitary contractors operated free from public scrutiny or accountability. They are largely private companies, who don't publicize their businesses. Yet, media accounts

present a peek into their secret realm. Reports link Blackwater, for example, to killing of innocent Iraq civilians (*Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 2005), firing on coalition troops (*NBC*, Aug. 11, 2007), hiring ex-Pinochet Chilean mercenaries for duties in Iraq (*The Guardian*, May 5, 2004); and, Triple Canopy to killing Iraqi civilians (*New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2006), hiring of Latin American mercenaries for Iraq (*Christian Science Monitor*, Mar. 3, 2005); and, training Latin American mercenaries for "counter insurgency" (*La Tribuna*, Sept. 2005).

Of the sixty publicly available Iraq contracts examined by Laura Dickinson, Professor at the University of Connecticut School of Law, none contains specific provisions requiring contractors to respect human rights, or to anticorruption or transparency norms. "There is significant concern in the contracts' lack of basic, much less adequate, human rights protections or training requirements."

With the 'War on Terror' a constant domestic topic, apprehension is, for good reason, high. The intensification of private policing versus state maintained "law and order," the danger of civil liberties violations given the Bush administration's "warrant-less spying," and the increasing incarceration and detention of undocumented immigrants are being decried daily in communities across the nation.

Just as the 'War on Drugs' created massive corporate profits, so the 'War on Terror' may prove an even more profitable and sustainable venture. In a permanent "state of war," the real question is "where will the ethical lines be drawn?"

Comments from the UI administration are welcome for publication in the *Public i*.

Elvira Arellano: Inspiring the Immigrant Rights

Continued from previous page

children behind. Others were arrested at their job, without opportunity to communicate with their families.

Concerned with the rampant violation of immigrant workers' human rights, the Immigrant Workers Freedom Rides campaign was organized in 2003. Nearly one thousand immigrant workers and their allies boarded buses in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Miami and Boston.

The campaign issued four central demands, seeking to abolish anti-immigrant abuses, such as those suffered by the Smithfield Foods workers. The demands included 1) legalization and a "road to citizenship"; 2) family reunifica-

tion; 3) immigrants' rights in the workplace; and 4) civil rights and civil liberties for all. These four demands were also meant to signal the need for a global human rights agenda for immigrants around the world. The agenda reinforces the human dignity and sovereignty of people like Arellano, forced into exile by the rapidly declining quality of life in Latin America—a phenomenon directly tied to U.S. foreign economic policies in the region.

Moreover, the issue of family reunification, as highlighted by the immigrant freedom riders, dramatically exposes the racialized hypocrisy of neo-conservatives, who seem to speak family values only when it refers to U.S., white, Christian, and economically privileged citizens. Yet, the

value of family is central to the concerns of Arellano and her organization, La Familia Latina Unida. In fact, according to *La Voz de Aztlan*, Arellano spent a good part of her meeting with Mexico's President Felipe Calderón, on August 28, discussing the plight of over 600,000 undocumented mothers with children who are U.S. citizens, in danger of being deported and separated from their families.

Elvira Arellano, like so many before her, has taken a courageous step to break out of the disempowerment of economic oppression. Her strength has come through joining with others in building political commitment and wide-reaching solidarity. Her example beckons us to become empowered, responsible, and active citizens of the world.

and her children were his de-
Fortunately, no one was physically injured in the incident. But the approximately 30 bullet holes that remained in her living room were a daily reminder to Ms. Davis of the horror she experienced that night.

CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, a local grassroots organization, immediately responded after they heard the news. Martel Miller, who is from Garden Hills, talked to Ms. Davis to make sure she had somewhere else to stay and he also helped to get her some food. Miller contacted the local media and was there with them when Ms. Davis came back to her home Monday morning to find it ransacked, she believes by the Champaign police. She had given police a key to her home so that they could conduct an investigation. She says the police went through her personal items and damaged her property. What they were looking for she does not know. She says she never knew the suspect Torriano Johnson.

Ms. Davis was sitting in the chair of her front living room when Torriano Johnson ran into her house. She grabbed her two-year-old great-grandson just as police started firing into the house. As she held the boy, a hail of gunshots entered her front window and went through the curtains, just a few feet from her. Two of her other grandchildren were in the bedroom. People outside say that



CU Citizens move furniture

July, they offered her a party \$200.[See sidebar] Champaign officials must have thought that because Ms. Davis is a poor elderly woman who lives in a black neighborhood, she does not deserve the same attention as the wealthy white residents of Champaign.

Ms. Davis says that the Champaign police sent Charles Nash, Pastor of the New Hope Church of God in Christ, along with Champaign spokesperson Rene Dunn, to talk with her. She

says Reverend Nash told her it would be "ugly" if she took this to court. City officials then contacted her three days later offering her a \$200 check for her pain and suffering. This was, of course, in exchange for her signature on a settlement form. Ms. Davis rejected the deal.

Because she is on a fixed income, Ms. Davis was unable to afford moving out of the house. CU Citizens for Peace and Justice raised \$750 from the community for a deposit on a new rental. Carol Ammons found a house just a few blocks away from 4 Hedge Court so Ms. Davis' foster children could remain in the same school district. Durl Kruse lent his truck and we helped Ms. Davis and her family to move to her new home. We hope Ms. Davis can now live without the daily reminder of this harrowing event.

others, and any other person in connect on w th the incident which occurred on June 24, 2007 involving the Champaign Police Department which resulted in damage to the contents of the house located at 4 Hedge Court, Champaign, Il 61820 and which I claim that above named persons or parties are legally liable in damages; which legal liability and damages are disputed and denied. I agree that this Release and Waiver shall apply to all unknown and unanticipated expenses, injuries, and damages resulting from the aforementioned incident as well as those now disclosed and shall be binding upon me and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns. I do further covenant, warrant, and agree not to make further demands nor institute any suit or proceeding, whether in law or equity, arising from or connected with any loss, injury or damage that I may sustain as a result of the aforementioned incident. The delivery of this release and waiver is in exchange for payment of \$200.00. NO ORAL REPRESENTATIONS OR INDUCEMENTS have been made to me on which I rely upon to sign this agreement.

I have read and understand all of the RELEASE AND WAIVER FORM, and by signing below indicate my voluntary concurrence with its terms.

Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Canadian Police Provocateurs Caught With Their Boots On

by Belden Fields

The accompanying photo shows police kneeling over and cuffing three supposed protestors during the North American Summit on August 21 and 22, 2007. President Bush, Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada, and President Felipe Calderon of Mexico were meeting as partners in NAFTA to review the global market turmoil, the credit crunch, and North American integration issues.

Of course, some people in Canada don't like NAFTA and the economic policies pursued under NAFTA, and some don't like President Bush. As is their right, they organized a demonstration. Three of the people in the demonstration wore bandanas over their faces. One of the three held a rock. A trade unionist in the demonstration confronted them and told them to remove their masks. He told the person with the rock in his hand that this was a peaceful demonstration and that he should drop the rock immediately. When there was no response, he ripped the bandana off the face of one of the supposed demonstrators. The Canadian police in riot gear were standing very close to this confrontation. They then "arrested" the three masked "demonstrators."

As the photo shows, the three "demonstrators" were wearing exactly the same combat boots as the Canadian

police. It is an old tactic of police serving governments across ideological boundaries to infiltrate demonstrators with agents provocateurs, police officers posing as demonstrators who urge demonstrators to use violence and/or use it themselves.

The name of the game is to delegitimize the demonstrators in the eyes of the public and to justify violent repression by the police. It is a very dirty tactic, especially in a country that professes to respect civil and human rights. It is interesting that this picture from Canada came to light at the same time as a video that showed that the New York police had lied, and thus committed perjury, about the actions they had charged demonstrators with during the Republican National Convention.



including the death in Champaign Police custody of Gregory Brown, whose family eventually received \$150,000 from the city and its insurer. Shortly afterwards the Champaign County Coalition for Citizen Police Review began actively advocating for a review board composed of private individuals in Champaign and Urbana.

The 2005 elections in Urbana were a major breakthrough, followed shortly by the convening of the Mayor's Taskforce on Citizen Police Review in September 2005.

The Taskforce held open meetings, announced in advance and televised on UPTV, over a period of eight months, during which time community leaders representing churches, the NAACP, Urban League, ACLU and others, met with then-acting Police Chief Mike Bily and the President of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), then—Sgt. Anthony Cobb, as well as the Mayor and City Attorney, to weigh the issues involved in setting up a review board.

At the time, a subcommittee of Champaign's Police Community Relations Committee was meeting behind closed doors to discuss similar ideas, but this fact was not public.

CIVICS 101

These discussions, at least in Urbana, had a contemporaneous tone, of necessity. The Illinois Department of Transportation had released statistics in June 2005 showing racial disparities in local traffic stops in excess of state averages. In Urbana, according to the report, black drivers were 47 percent more likely to be stopped than others, while in Champaign the difference was 71 percent.

In July of the same year an Urbana police officer, Kurt Hjort, was accused of raping a local woman while on duty. The City of Urbana eventually paid out \$100,000 in the case. The officer resigned from the force but was never charged.

Last summer the Urbana Taskforce concluded with specific recommendations for a police review board composed of fair-minded Urbana residents of good character, with the power to subpoena witnesses and documentary evidence, a mediation process for resolving complaints, if agreed by all parties. The Taskforce also recommended that no current Urbana police officer could serve ("a conflict of interest," agreed the FOP president) but imposed no further restrictions. The Urbana City Council took public comment during two sessions, overwhelmingly in favor of an oversight board. Some residents worried about having even former police officers on the board. A small handful rejected the whole idea of oversight.

The City then entered negotiations with the FOP, meetings which are routinely closed to the public.

Meanwhile in Champaign, the subcommittee's final report leaked to the press in September before the larger Police Community Relations Committee had seen it. The report called for a "citizen review committee" to oversee the complaint process. A majority of Champaign City Council members then voted for a study session on the question, which was put off until this July. When Urbana settled its four-year contract with the FOP in December of for a police review board but placed severe restrictions on it. The FOP agreed to accept the review board without further negotiations. The City agreed that ex-felons will be ineligible to serve on the board, even when they have paid their debt to society; that no uniformed police officer will be required to appear before the board; and that the board will conduct no "independent third-party investigations", instead relying on the Police Chief, in the event that further investigation is needed.

Urbana residents on the other hand spoke passionately of the need for the omitted subpoena power, the dangers of the short deadlines for complainants, and the importance of a strong oversight board. Among the items of concern were restrictions the City promised the FOP, which some residents were just learning about. Council member Danielle Chynoweth even said she could not support it in this form. There followed a tense recess in the process while Urbana staff revised the ordinance again.

Meanwhile Champaign held its long-awaited study session, but not before Champaign Mayor Jerry Schweighart attempted to smother the proposal in its crib.

THE FINAL SCORE

The day before the study session, July 30, Schweighart told the *News-Gazette* he had lined up the votes to block any further discussion of civilian oversight of law enforcement in Champaign. The same day the *News-Gazette* in unusually shrill terms attacked Urbana Mayor Laurel Prussing and Councilmember Danielle Chynoweth for agreeing with the vast majority of resident opinion that has ever been expressed in public concerning police review. The editorial alleged that Prussing was misleading the public and called Chynoweth "the pied piper." It denounced a newly revised version of the Urbana ordinance that now included subpoena power and more flexible deadlines. The Champaign study session proceeded as planned on July 31, 2007. Tracy Parsons of the UrbanLeague and other members of the Police Community Relations Committee spoke eloquently about the need for civilian oversight. A review board is a "safety valve" they said. The Urban League takes hundreds of complaints, as does the NAACP, many of which do not then translate into formal complaints at the Police Department because complainants do not trust the police. Members of the community also spoke up at length, recounting cases of police misconduct, cases of complaints mishandled, and so on.

It mattered not. When it was the Council's turn to speak it became painfully clear how little most of them had been moved by what they heard. Four at least said they wanted to explore the issue further. But four was not enough. The Mayor called for a vote, and was able to break the tie himself, smugly, almost giddily, "pulling the plug" as the *News-Gazette* put it the next day. Not only would there be no police review board in Champaign, but there would be no further discussion of it either. It was the third time since 2000 that the Champaign City Council had rejected recommendations from a committee that the Council itself commissioned to study civilian oversight of law enforcement.

The following Monday in Urbana, August 6, the City Council took further public comment, again overwhelmingly in favor of the strongest possible police review board. Council member Lynne Barnes, nominally a Democrat, had supported the weaker version endorsed by the *News-Gazette*, but now deserted the majority and opposed the ordinance. Council member Heather Stevenson, the Urbana City Council's lone Republican, cited an unscientific on-line poll that found a slim majority opposed to police review boards. Such polls are not generally accepted as valid indicators of public opinion, however, because respondents are not chosen at random but "self-selected" from people who visit the site. There is no way of knowing whether a respondent is even a local resident.

One supporter, Council member Dennis Roberts, was absent, but the ordinance passed in the end, 4-2. There

complaints than whites and are less likely to be taken seriously.

was little fanfare, and the Council proceeded with other business after a short break. The Mayor of Urbana is now taking applications for police review board members until September 30. Applicants must be residents of Urbana, must pass a criminal background check (no felony pleas or convictions), and have no affiliation with any law enforcement agency or be employed by the City in any capacity. Board members receive no pay for service, and must complete a training program.

Once the board is officially constituted, its first members have a tall order. The Mayor will appoint the chair, but the board itself must then write its own rules for proceeding, determine when it will meet, publicize itself, and step into the choppy waters of local police complaints. The review board must prove itself to be a fair arbiter of complaints, without prejudice for or against the police. It will not have direct disciplinary authority. Its power is in the ability to give a possibly wronged individual fair hearing and issue an independent assessment of police actions and policies. It is a largely moral authority, tied to its credibility in the community and in City Hall. And as such, its effectiveness depends wholly on its fairness as much as on its access to all the evidence.

Now for the hard part.

UNITY MARCH IV

October 13, 2007 at Noon

Champaign route kicks off in West Side Park
Urbana route kicks off in West Side Park,
Urbana route kicks off at Champaign County courthouse,
March meets at John Lee Johnson Way, Rally in Douglass Park

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**Urbana-Champaign
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who have committed or intend to commit terrorist activities in the United States. This Council soon came under the control of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) when it was created. DHS proceeded to work in tandem with state governments to create Anti Terrorism Task Forces in every state with the goal of combating any cases of terrorism, both past and present. DHS and the Anti-Terrorism Task Forces re-opened every unsolved case where a police officer had been murdered and labeled the perpetrators as terrorists.

The federal and state governments were adamant about fighting terrorism. However, when California's federal and state Anti-Terrorism Task Force began investigating an unsolved murder of a San Francisco police officer, it would ironically lead to their acceptance and condoning of terror tactics used against innocent Americans, in this case against former Black Panther Party members.

On August 29, 1971, a San Francisco police officer named John Young was murdered. Police investigators believed the perpetrators were members of the Black Liberation Army, an ideological offshoot of the Black Panther Party that believed in armed struggle for liberation. This split was not just due to differences in ideology but also due to inter-organizational problems from the FBI's counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) disruption/neutralization activities directed at the Panthers. COINTELPRO's extralegal activities varied from illegal surveillance to murder and were used to disrupt the efforts of the Black Panther Party and a wide number of dissident political organizations during the 1960s and 1970s.

Two years later in 1973, three members of the Black Panthers/BLA, John Bowman, Ruben Scott, and Harold Taylor, were arrested in New Orleans. Two officers from the San Francisco Police Department who were also working with the FBI—Frank McCoy and Ed Erdelatz—would ask the three men questions hoping to get answers. When the three men refused, McCoy and Erdelatz left the room. The three BLA members were then tortured. According to Bowman, Scott and Taylor—the three men suffered systematic and purposeful torture that the police hoped would get them to confess to Officer Young's murder.

Describing the events that took place in the New Orleans police station, Harold Taylor stated: "I was in there for maybe

tives from San Francisco. I later found out it was McCoy and Erdelatz. They started asking me questions. They told me they had a script. I'm sure I saw a recorder there, too. And they was reading to me about what they said took place in San Francisco. I told them I had no knowledge of it. . . It was back again with the plastic bag. This time they had a blanket. I don't know what they soaked it in, but it was really, really hot, and they just covered me with that blanket and put that plastic bag over my head. And I couldn't scream, I couldn't holler. I couldn't get my hands up to poke a hole in the bag, because I was handcuffed to the chair and my legs were tied to the chair. And they kicked the chair over and let me just suffocate. I was just about to pass out. They would snatch it off, spit in my face, and they left me sitting there for a little while. McCoy and Erdelatz, they started asking me questions. I had no knowledge of the things they were asking me, so I couldn't answer them, you know. So they said, "Well, we'll"—they turned off the recorder or whatever they had and said, "We'll tell you what happened. And then after we tell you, this is what we want you to say."

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "A court found that when the two San Francisco police investigators who came to Louisiana to interview the three men were out of the room, New Orleans officers stripped the men, blindfolded them, beat them and covered them in blankets soaked in boiling water. They also used electric prods on their genitals, court records show." As a result, a federal court ruled in 1974 that both San Francisco and New Orleans police had engaged in torture to extract a confession. A San Francisco judge dismissed the charges against the three men based on the federal court's ruling in 1975.

Fast forward almost thirty years. Due to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the United States government created the Department of Homeland Security. Using Department of Homeland Security money, special divisions called Anti-Terrorism Task Forces were created to work in tandem with state governments to apprehend suspected terrorists, including cases that were still unsolved like Officer Young's murder from 1971.

The state of California and the federal task force re-opened the case of Officer Young in 2003. In 2005, the government began to convene grand juries to pursue charges against members of the Black Liberation Army that they had been investigating. The BLA/Black Panthers who had been tortured in the 1970's and other members—Richard Brown, Ray Boudreaux, Harold Taylor, Hank Jones and John Bowman—were jailed for refusing to cooperate with the grand jury investigations. In January

in 1973. But police are now saying they have since lost the shotgun allegedly found at Bell's house. This means that defense forensic scientists cannot duplicate the conclusions of the FBI. There was also a latent fingerprint that was lifted off of a lighter. There was an attempt to match it to Francisco Torres and a number of other people. All of these tests yielded negative results. These attempts continued all the way up until 2002.

Due to the lack of physical evidence, the prosecutors are relying on a theory that implicates all eight defendants (John Bowman has since died of terminal cancer in December 2006). The prosecutors are relying on the belief that the BLA was involved in a conspiracy to murder as many police officers as possible. In order to supplement their theory of the crime and limited physical evidence, prosecutors plan to use the confessions that the three BLA

members gave in the 1970's to prove their guilt. Yes, the same confessions that federal and California courts dismissed in 1975 because tactics of terror and torture were used to retrieve the confessions.

The case of what is now known as the San Francisco Eight is not only a local issue for the citizens of San Francisco and the state of California. This case fits into the framework of debate about the functionality and acceptance of torture in America. Americans are now familiar with the vile, disgusting photographs and reports of systematic torture by US

soldiers that emerged from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Americans have been exposed to the ugly realities of water-boarding, sensory deprivation and the indefinite detentions at Guantanamo Bay and other secret prisons being used in the 'War on Terror.' People are aware of the publicized police abuses like the torture of black suspects by the New York Police Department. The public knows about Sergeant Burge who tortured over 100 black men in the South Side of Chicago. Abuses have even been known to occur locally after Sergeant Myers pled guilty to taser-ing inmates in Champaign-Urbana.

The United States government has created these anti-terror organizations to protect our rights that are enshrined in the Constitution and protect all citizens from being terrorized. There is a disappointing incongruence between the Constitutional ideals that our government should uphold and their current activities to legitimize torture as a necessary tool in their war to combat terrorism. The San Francisco Eight case seeks to normalize torture as an acceptable practice to elicit legal confessions inside the United States legal system. If we do not condone the use of torture or terrorism against American citizens, then the United States government must end the prosecution of the San Francisco Eight.

Addendum: The San Francisco 8 had initial bail hearings and two—Richard O'Neal and Richard Brown have been freed on bail. Further hearings on court motions will continue on Sept. 11, 2007.



L to R: Hank Jones, John Bowman, Ray Boudreaux, Harold Taylor, Richard Brown.

UC Books to Prisoners is hosting the
National Conference of Prison Book Projects
November 2-4 at the Independent Media Center

Public Events:

Paul Wright of Prison Legal News, Nov 3, 1-2:30 PM

Slam-Jam, Romp-Stomp, Nov 3, 7:30 PM

We need volunteers to host participants,
bake cookies, provide transportation
and make the IMC hospitable.

to volunteer email conference.planning@books2prisoners.org
or visit www.books2prisoners.org/conference/volunteer.html



be toxic developed into a metaphor which describes conditions and spaces that can harm individuals within its borders. One way in which the use of public space is manifested is through the location of parks, churches, and schools. For instance if a person is caught with a small amount of drugs it is usually considered to be a misdemeanor. Yet, if that same individual is within a short distance from a school, park, or church, that misdemeanor charge turns into a felony.

Last May a 17 year old male was leaving the gym at Douglass Center with two companions. In order for him to walk home he had to go across park grounds.

He was stopped by a police officer because he was on park grounds after dusk which, at the time, was when the park officially closed. Later it was observed that the Douglass Center closed at 9pm and the young man and his companions had left the building before that time. This raises the question as to how parks and other public spaces are managed to put people at a disadvantage. That evening, the young man was assaulted and pepper-sprayed by police. One of his companions ran to the home of city council representative Gina Jackson and the young man ended up being taken to the hospital. According to local activists, the young man is facing charges in connection with this incident.



Ken Salo points to a hole in the fence at one of the toxic sites.

the park is next to a school and is close to at least four churches nearby. A question raised as a result of this observation is how do the placement of parks, churches, and schools influence the disproportionate amount of felony charges against minorities and individuals who have social and economic disadvantages? This is a question for which there are no easy or simple answers to offer.

Another observation made during these tours is how residents who live around Douglass Park do not have close access to grocery stores, but are easily able to obtain fast food and other unhealthy items. Ammons shared his vision of someday developing and maintaining the use of community gardens. A community garden would present an opportunity to provide fresh vegetables to the residents as well as a tool to build relationships within the community. The one thing that prevents Ammons from using land available in the neighborhood is concerns he has about the potential toxins from the former power plant. As the tour continued, participants reached the site of this former coal to gas plant which has been abandoned for several years.

According to information provided by Dr. Ken Salo, a professor with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the U of I, the former coal to gas plant provided heat and

Deportee (Plane Wreck At Los Gatos)

Woody Guthrie (1948)

The crops are all in and the peaches are rott'ning,
The oranges piled in their creosote dumps;
They're flying 'em back to the Mexican border
To pay all their money to wade back again

Goodbye to my Juan, goodbye, Rosalita,
Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria;
You won't have your names when you ride the big airplane,
All they will call you will be "deportees"

My father's own father, he waded that river,
They took all the money he made in his life;
My brothers and sisters come working the fruit trees,
And they rode the truck till they took down and died.

Some of us are illegal, and some are not wanted,
Our work contract's out and we have to move on;
Six hundred miles to that Mexican border,
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves.

We died in your hills, we died in your deserts,
We died in your valleys and died on your plains.
We died 'neath your trees and we died in your bushes,
Both sides of the river, we died just the same.

The sky plane caught fire over Los Gatos Canyon,
A fireball of lightning, and shook all our hills,
Who are all these friends, all scattered like dry leaves?
The radio says, "They are just deportees"

Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?
Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?
To fall like dry leaves to rot on my topsoil
And be called by no name except "deportees"?

A protest song with lyrics by Woody Guthrie detailing the crash of a plane near Los Gatos Canyon in Fresno County, California on January 29, 1948 and what he considered the racist mistreatment of the passengers before and after the accident. The crash resulted in the deaths of four Americans and 28 illegal immigrant farm workers who were being deported from California back to Mexico.

Its opening was initially observed on August 19, 2007 and another tour which took place on August 31 found the damage to the fence still present. [See photo] Does Ameren IP keep an eye on the area and make attempts to repair the damaged fencing or is this responsibility shifted to the city of Champaign? Could this be an example of abusive corporate practices in where toxic sites are located and how community members are expected to clean up the mess that is left behind? One thing that the gaping hole does reveal is the ease by which a community of people can be injured and harmed by the management of public spaces.

A resident who lives close to the plant told participants how her grandfather died from a rare form of cancer and how another neighbor (no relation) also died of the same type of cancer. One observation that participants made is the old power plant is located within a block of a day care center and a woman's shelter. Some of the residents plant huge gardens every year. If the neighborhood is coping with lingering toxins in the ground, then what are the long-term effects that we can see here? The process of discovering the implications of these spaces to the City of Champaign and Douglass Park is an ongoing journey that may reveal information on how public space is used and abused and the social, physical, and psychological effects it has on the residents. Identifying the issues and finding the solutions is a challenge this community faces today.

Patriotism

By Aaron Ammons a.k.a. Brother A-Dub

Manifest destiny

Complacency

Arbitrary constructs

Controlled conducts

Ducks in a row

Canoeing down the mainstream

Stuck in a dream

C.R.E.A.M.

Cash Rules Everybody Around Me!

Flagging me down with the star spangled banner,
I recall scanners,
Head explosions
Erosion of human rights
Firefighters 'throw ya lights up',
Caught up,
Locked up,
Every time revolution is brought up!

Have and Have Nots

and whatever else that puts knots in our pockets

We'll drop it like it's hot

I'm talking about the have nots

3 hots and a cot

Military duty,

Section 8 vouchers

Code blue/and a moment of silence

For "Q"!

gration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Over the last year, Arellano has become a powerful figure of resistance in the struggle for immigration rights in the United States.

An activist for immigrant rights and president of La Familia Latina Unida (The United Latino Family), Arellano was apprehended August 19 outside of Our Lady Queen of Angeles Church in downtown Los Angeles. Separated from her eight-year-old son, Elvira Arellano was arrested and immediately deported to Mexico the same night. She had traveled with her son and fellow activists to urge immigrant supporters to travel to Washington D.C. on September 12 to participate in a national vigil on behalf of immigrant rights.

Arellano, a native of San Miguel Curahuango, Michoacán, entered the U.S. in 1997, but was apprehended within days and deported. Tenacious, she quickly reentered the country and found her way to Seattle. She arrived in Chicago in 2000, taking a job cleaning airplanes at O'Hare International Airport. In 2002, following a post-September 11 security sweep at O'Hare, Arellano was arrested and convicted of working under a false social security number and sentenced to three years probation. She was later ordered to appear before immigration authorities on August 15, 2006, facing the likelihood of deportation. Unwilling to risk separation from her son, she challenged the order of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office, by taking refuge with her son inside the Adalberto United Methodist Church in Chicago, where parishioners and clergy alike embraced her courageous decision with open arms.

On November 14, 2006, her young son, Saul, traveled to Mexico to address the Mexican Congress, pleading for help in stopping the deportation of his mother. In response, the Mexican government passed a resolution against deportations, appealing to humanitarian principles of family cohesion. But despite this seemingly benevolent gesture, Mexico's oppressive role in this drama cannot be overlooked. Just prior to entering the U.S., Elvira Arellano, like so many young women of her generation, earned \$1.20 an hour, working six days a week and 12 hours a day as a *maquiladora* worker on the border. Hence, the Mexican government is as much responsible for the conditions that force Mexican citizens to brave the treacherous and oftentimes bloody journey across an increasingly militarized border zone.

BORDER POLITICS AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENTS

The U.S./Mexico border is one of the most contentious geopolitical arenas in the world. Since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, increasing violence and conflict, fueled by a variety of political and economic pressures, has plagued the region. In the last decade alone, campaigns for the militarization of the border by official border patrol agents and private vigilantes have prevailed. The names given to these campaigns—Operation Rio Grande at the Brownsville-Matamoros border, Operation Hold the Line at the El Paso-Juarez border, and the Minuteman Project at the San Diego-Tijuana border—attest to the war-like mentality.

In the midst of this intensification of border security, Elvira Arellano is only one of the estimated 12,000,000 undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to cross the border. According

2006 concluded "the majority of Americans (53 percent) think all 11 million illegals should be required to go home."

Such political and popular support for mass deportations is fueled by mean-spirited portrayals of Mexican immigrants as dirty, uncivilized, and dangerous. The criminalization of immigrants, for instance, is widespread in the rhetoric of Americans for Legal Immigration website, where every other entry seems to link undocumented immigrants to accounts of homicide or sexual assaults. These attitudes prevail despite reports by the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Immigration Policy Center that conclude "...immigrants commit crimes at one-tenth what would be expected given their demographics" and they do not cause crime rates to increase.

GUEST WORKER PROGRAMS AND IMMIGRANT DETENTIONS

Since November 2005, the Bush administration has actively promoted efforts to get a grip on illegal immigration, through a plan to tighten border security and immigration law enforcement, as well as expand a guest-worker program. Hence, it was not surprising that both these measures were at the heart of President Bush's May 2007 "compassionate conservative" plan for immigration.

The president's proposed national guest worker program would potentially allow millions of undocumented immigrants to work legally in the U.S. on a temporary basis, before forcing them to return home. In many ways, the program would legally sustain the creation of a permanent underclass of exploitable workers. Chairman Charles Rangel (D-NY) of the House Ways and Means Committee adamantly opposed expansion of the H-2 guest worker program, asserting that "This guest worker program's the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery." Rangel's view echoes the sentiments of former Department of Labor official Lee Williams who once described the old "Bracero" program as a system of "legalized slavery."

Labor advocates see the current H-2 guest worker system as a modern system of indentured servitude, but worse. Worse, because the new bill fails to include any provisions for legalization of today's guest workers, limiting their path to citizenship. Instead, when their visas are expired, they are expected to leave the country, without any guarantee of visa renewals in the future. As such, the guest worker program serves as the perfect repository for the disposable workers of the U.S. global economy.

But despite all the hoopla last May, the new bill, heralded as a product of a bipartisan agreement, collapsed under the weight of conservative objections. It was revived after an agreement was reached among Republicans to limit the number of amendments, then failed again on June 28, when another proposal to end the debate was defeated. Given the current antagonisms on both sides

state or local jails and prisons, 2 percent are in federal prisons, 14 percent in ICE-owned facilities and 19 percent in contractors' facilities. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers hold 28,000 illegal immigrants in an average day, up from 18,000 in July 2006."

The expected increase in immigrant detentions in the future has spurred a national plan to triple detention space to 60,000 beds, in order to house the growing number of immigrants caught as a result of the intensification of workplace raids and border crackdowns. As the Bush administration postures tough on illegal immigration and increases its spending on enforcement, some of the biggest beneficiaries are the companies that build and run private prisons around the country. Last February, for example, the *New York Times* reported that "The Army Corps of Engineers awarded a contract worth up to \$385 million for building temporary immigration detention centers to Kellogg Brown & Root, the Halliburton subsidiary that has been criticized for overcharging the Pentagon for its work in Iraq."

Such government sanctioned profiteering, associated with the intensification of immigrant enforcement and detention, certainly brings to mind the manner in which U.S. capitalists have historically reaped immoral dividends from the human suffering of oppressed populations around the world. This has been so, whether through the neoliberal policies of the globalized free market, the international machinery of wartime, or the domestic paramilitary apparatus of drug wars and immigration enforcement—forces that consign undocumented immigrant workers like Arellano to the mercy of capital and arbitrary enforcement.

IMMIGRATION AND GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Yet, like Arellano, scores of undocumented immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, continue to make the arduous journey northward seeking a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Their trek northward is the most logical response to the global structures of inequality. They move from geographical regions where wealth concentrations are low to the USA, where concentrations of capital are high and density is still low by world standards. They also move to the region of the world that has the highest consumption rate of all industrialized nations.

Despite widespread human rights failures long associated with the lives of undocumented immigrants in the U.S., reactionary anti-immigrant campaigns have a devastating impact on the current climate, fueling human rights violations at the border, in the workplace, and on the streets. For example, two days after Arellano's deportation, federal immigration authorities in North Carolina raided the Smithfield Foods packing plant, detaining 28 current and former workers of the plant. Immigration officials arrived in the middle of night at local mobile home parks. They targeted areas heavily populated by poor immigrant workers and their families, arresting people in their homes. Eyewitnesses reported that immigration enforcement agents forced women to leave their

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Elvira and her son Saul



Vigil at La Casa Cultural Latina—Joe Palencia

ty houses next to laded t n ones. D ft streets scattered with empty plastic water pouches and bottle caps. Everyone is outside, carrying water, washing, making music, excited children everywhere. No community gets along perfectly, and Batey Libertad has plenty of racial tension between the slightly better-off lighter-skinned Dominicans and the Haitian Dominicans, yet there is an atmosphere of energy and cooperation. Like a friend of mine observed, poverty tends to unite people more than money. But during those two weeks of working side-by-side with community members as we built a house, planted trees and picked up trash, I learned much that was not apparent on the surface.

According to Yadira Perez, a graduate student from the University of Virginia studying racial identity in the Dominican who spoke to our service-learning group as we prepared for our trip last spring, the racism between Dominican Dominicans and Haitian Dominicans has its origins in the era of "EL Jefe." Rafael Trujillo, who was dic-

enough to share the r experiences w th me. When the military carries out a deportation, it deports everyone in the community, or those that have not yet fled. In May of 2005, this happened to Libertad. Women, children, the elderly were treated with equal roughness, equal disrespect.

After being taken by soldiers across the militarized border with Haiti, coming back home can take months and possibly over a year for deportees. They have to come back illegally. Peter (name changed for security), a community leader of Libertad whom we interviewed for a short film, said it took him 8 months to get back after the deportation in 2005 and he had to walk for nearly 24 hours. Ninety percent of Libertad is of Haitian descent, but most of those people are legal citizens of the Dominican because they were born there.

However, even at birth Dominican doctors often refuse to give Haitian parents the papers proving the legality of their child; and once an adult, it is even more difficult to obtain these documents. Constitutionally,

someone born on Dominican soil is a citizen, but the government finds loopholes to get around that law, effectively making poor black people in the Dominican Republic illegal simply by the nature of their very being. The government illegally denies citizenship based on race, and through it denies opportunity.

This is where the economic oppression starts to blur with racial oppression. The *bateyes* are very isolated from the cities. It can be expensive just to get into the city to renew a visa. The yearly visa fees are another burden that someone who makes less than a dollar an hour, if they are one of the few working people at the *batey* to even have a stable job at the local rice factory, simply cannot afford. In any case, whether one has their papers or not, legality matters nothing to the officers. As Anthony (name changed for security), a Libertad youth I spoke with, told me, "they deport us for being black."

Dempsey Resignation From PTI

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curriculum ranges from hand-to-hand combat (executive course) to precision rifle marksmanship. Few, if any, women have graduated from the security-consulting wing of BW, as "strength requirements" for admission into the program discourage potential female participation in the 'War on Terror.'

Training as a private enforcement officer is a potentially lucrative venture. For comparison sake: a contractor in Iraq earns approximately \$135,000 per year (same as a two star general); an American soldier typically pockets \$38,000/year (counting benefits); and, a newly hired UI police person starts at approximately \$42,000 per year.

The new rules of international law enforcement—a blending of police work, security consulting, and military engagement—have forced personnel departments to re-write their traditional job descriptions. This process, for example, can enable an Illinois police officer to request a year sabbatical to work for a large defense contractor in Iraq or Afghanistan; or, a security consultant in Iraq may opt to work for a law enforcement-training academy in Illinois. Blackwater has a database of thousands of former police and military officers for potential security and law enforcement deployment.

With BW North's offering open enrollments, a "wannabe" student may still try to pre-position himself/herself for acceptance into a law enforcement career by enrolling in basic courses, possibly training with an off-duty Illinois officer, under the watchful eye of a BW contractor.

PARAMILITARY CONTRACTORS: MERCENARY THUGS OR SAINTS?

Until recently, paramilitary contractors operated free from public scrutiny or accountability. They are largely private companies, who don't publicize their businesses. Yet, media accounts

present a peek into the their secret realm. Reports link Blackwater, for example, to killing of innocent Iraq civilians (*Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 2005), firing on coalition troops (*NBC*, Aug. 11, 2007), hiring ex-Pinochet Chilean mercenaries for duties in Iraq (*The Guardian*, May 5, 2004); and, Triple Canopy to killing Iraqi civilians (*New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2006), hiring of Latin American mercenaries for Iraq (*Christian Science Monitor*, Mar. 3, 2005); and, training Latin American mercenaries for "counter insurgency" (*La Tribuna*, Sept. 2005).

Of the sixty publicly available Iraq contracts examined by Laura Dickinson, Professor at the University of Connecticut School of Law, none contains specific provisions requiring contractors to respect human rights, or to anticorruption or transparency norms. "There is significant concern in the contracts' lack of basic, much less adequate, human rights protections or training requirements."

With the 'War on Terror' a constant domestic topic, apprehension is, for good reason, high. The intensification of private policing versus state maintained "law and order," the danger of civil liberties violations given the Bush administration's "warrant-less spying," and the increasing incarceration and detention of undocumented immigrants are being decried daily in communities across the nation.

Just as the 'War on Drugs' created massive corporate profits, so the 'War on Terror' may prove an even more profitable and sustainable venture. In a permanent "state of war," the real question is "where will the ethical lines be drawn?"

Comments from the UI administration are welcome for publication in the *Public i*.

Elvira Arellano: Inspiring the Immigrant Rights

Continued from previous page

children behind. Others were arrested at their job, without opportunity to communicate with their families.

Concerned with the rampant violation of immigrant workers' human rights, the Immigrant Workers Freedom Rides campaign was organized in 2003. Nearly one thousand immigrant workers and their allies boarded buses in Seattle and traveled across the United States, holding rallies in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Miami and Boston.

The campaign issued four central demands, seeking to abolish anti-immigrant abuses, such as those suffered by the Smithfield Foods workers. The demands included 1) legalization and a "road to citizenship"; 2) family reunifica-

tion; 3) immigrants' rights in the workplace; and 4) civil rights and civil liberties for all. These four demands were also meant to signal the need for a global human rights agenda for immigrants around the world. The agenda reinforces the human dignity and sovereignty of people like Arellano, forced into exile by the rapidly declining quality of life in Latin America—a phenomenon directly tied to U.S. foreign economic policies in the region.

Moreover, the issue of family reunification, as highlighted by the immigrant freedom riders, dramatically exposes the racialized hypocrisy of neo-conservatives, who seem to speak family values only when it refers to U.S., white, Christian, and economically privileged citizens. Yet, the

value of family is central to the concerns of Arellano and her organization, La Familia Latina Unida. In fact, according to *La Voz de Aztlan*, Arellano spent a good part of her meeting with Mexico's President Felipe Calderón, on August 28, discussing the plight of over 600,000 undocumented mothers with children who are U.S. citizens, in danger of being deported and separated from their families.

Elvira Arellano, like so many before her, has taken a courageous step to break out of the disempowerment of economic oppression. Her strength has come through joining with others in building political commitment and wide-reaching solidarity. Her example beckons us to become empowered, responsible, and active citizens of the world.