SUPPORT YOUR IMC!!

Rent Parking:
Convenient downtown Urbana parking @ the IMC (old PO building) $40/month for a three-month lease ($5 month cheaper than other options)
Contact finance@ucimc.org or call 217-344-8820

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Get a show on WRFU, Radio Free Urbana, 104.5
Attention All Potential Radio DJs and Radio Interns!
Are you interested in being on the radio? Do you want to get involved in a community radio station? Are you interested in getting a show for the summer ONLY? Are you interested in having a show throughout the year?
Well, come to the next WRFU general meeting which occurs the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Family Room of the Independent Media Center located at 202 S. Broadway, Urbana, IL to find out how YOU can get involved.

Members need to be trained for about 2 hours and pay dues ($20/per person) to be eligible to broadcast on the air. It’s simple and it’s fun. Become a part of WRFU and take back the media!
Contact wrfu@ucimc.org

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AWARE, the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort
Meetings every Sunday at 5pm at the IMC
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A Civil Liberties Case From Champaign

By Daniel McCollum

The story of the PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS ex rel. VASHTI MCCOLLUM v. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS, et al (333 US 203, 1948) has largely been forgotten. The action arose as a challenge to a program of religious education in public school buildings on school time. Today, the chief significance of the McCollum Case is that it was the first of a series of cases brought under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, where a practice by a local or state governmental body was actually held to be illegal as “an establishment of religion.”

The practice of “released time” religious education in the public schools began in Gary, Indiana, in 1921. Little anticipating the determined challenge which would result in a legal decision of nation-wide significance, local clergy and school officials instituted their released time program of sectarian religious instruction in the public schools of Champaign, Illinois, and the five-year fuse was lit.

FAMILY ENBATTLED AND UNDER SEIGE

My connections with this case are more than casual. The plaintiff, Vashhi Cromwell McCollum, was my mother. The causus beli was James Terry McCollum, my older brother, and my grandfather, Arthur G. Cromwell, was a prominent participant. While I had no active involvement in the official events, either in the trial or the two appeals, my memories as a youngster from the ages of eight to eleven are vivid, reflective, I am sure, of the personal trauma related to negative reactions locally while the case was in the courts. Also several rereadings over the years of my mother’s book, ONE WOMAN’S FIGHT, no doubt have helped keep the details reasonably fresh in my mind.

From the time my mother filed suit in June, 1945, well through the trial the following September, the public perception was that the case represented a challenge to religion itself—that God was on trial, rather than whether or not the sectarian religious classes as they were conducted in the public schools of Champaign, Illinois, were legal.

Another factor certainly must have weighed heavily in the public response to the suit. World War II was in its closing months. Already there were cracks developing where there was no direct conflict. These international dissonances were as yet too disorganized politically to successfully challenge the demarcation established by the Supreme Court of the Cold War city—it’s almost synonymous equation with good Americanness. I remember my terror each day that my name would be called, forcing me either to conform or to stand on principle. The result of the latter course would almost certainly have led to enduring similar consequences to those I had experienced earlier during the active years of the McCollum Case. To my great relief, I was never called upon. My mother does not recall saying anything to the school authorities, but now I assume they must have known the situation and were careful to avoid a conflict.

CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

A more liberal climate came with the mild transition. The practice of “released time” religious education in practice by a local or state governmental body was actually held to be illegal as “an establishment of religion.”

By the early 1970s, due primarily to the burgeoning University of Illinois, Champaign had become a highly transient city. Most of the new arrivals knew little or nothing of the McCollum Case. Even among the local population, those who had any memory at all of the case tended to confine it with the later civil liberties cases which involved prayer and Bible reading in the public schools. Elsewhere, where there was no direct connection with the once notorious trial, the case generally was forgotten. Liberals, if they thought about the church-state issue at all, were likely to take the “wall of separation” proposition for granted; fundamentalists, and the religious right in general, were as yet too disorganized politically to successfully challenge the demarcation established by the Supreme Court of what was Caesar’s and what was God’s.

With the election of Richard Nixon in 1968, all of this began to change. The trend was reinforced by the subsequent ascendancy of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Both of these figures were heavily assisted by important support from the religious right. These two presidents, representing the right wing of the Republican Party, between them, with added help from George H.W. and Bush Jr. have appointed a majority of the justices on the United States Supreme Court. Already, a noticeable change appears to have occurred in the court’s perception of the church-state relationship.

Many civil libertarians, including myself, view this trend away from strict separation as alarming. Without question, my connection with the McCollum Case is an influencing factor. The trial and its aftermath posed difficult times for my family and the thought that it may all have been for naught brings with it a strong sense of personal frustration and futility.

Of much greater importance is the threat to the constitutional principle involved: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This lofty statement of public policy and fundamental law is elemental to the survival of a free society. It is based upon the simple common sense notion that the best way to avoid religious strife, which has caused so much pain and suffering over the centuries, is by maintaining to the maximum extent possible, governmental neutrality in the field of sectarian affairs.

The Founding Fathers had first-hand knowledge of the problems which occurred when there was mingling of church and state. As in European history had not provided examples enough, the were the more immediate examples of religious intolerance as it caused in many of the thirteen states just prior to the adoption of the Constitution.

The majority of our early settlers came from countries where church and state were not separated but were linked or interrelated. Many of them had suffered for their religious beliefs and many of them settled this country in religious communities. Ironically enough, although they were seeking religious freedom for themselves, they did not always want to extend that freedom to others of differing beliefs.

Backed up by the precedents set by Roger Williams and the Virginia Declaration of Rights, James Madison and others felt that the best course was to define a separation of church and state, affording the protection of minority rights, religious and otherwise. Accordingly the Bill of Rights was proposed and adopted, establishing definite limitations upon the power of the Federal Government. After the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, and through Court interpretation, similar limitations were placed on the states. In theory at least, these guarantees of individual liberty stand, irrespective of the majority will at any given time or place.

Continued on page 7
A recent shooting in Garden Hills has generated several news reports and concerns with
in the community. On July 14, 2007 an article appeared in the News Gazette where it is
said that community leaders met with the resident and police to try to find an effective
resolution. As a resident of Garden Hills and a member of CU Citizens for Peace and Jus-
tice I met with Ms. Davis who lives at 4 Hedge Court and in my conversation with her
learned that what really happened is different than what the News-Gazette reported in
their latest article.

According to Ms. Davis the officers shot into her home after Torttano Johnson ran into
her living room on June 24. The News-Gazette reports that officers opened fire after John-
son shot at them from inside her residence. Ms Davis told me that while Johnson had his
gun on he did not discharge the weapon while in her home. Another mistake made by the
News-Gazette was in identifying her as the owner of the residence. She is renting the
house and according to property records available on the Champaign County website
the owner of the house is Jamaal Applewhite who is a student at the University of Illinois.

In an email exchange with CU Citizens for Peace and Justice Mr. Applewhite indicated
he was having trouble finding someone to place a bid on the rental account in the
News-Gazette where community leaders expressed confidence that the repair work was being done. I did ask Ms. Davis about the damage to her belongings and she
told me that the City of Champaign is providing compensation for her items, yet
she is still missing gifts she received for mothers day and her birthday which hold signifi-
cant personal and sentimental value.

After the police shot into her home Ms. Davis and her family were able to stay in a hotel
that DCFS provided for her. When she returned home she found that her refrigerator was
unplugged and the place had been ransacked. The food she had bought for the month was
completely spoiled and, as a resident of Garden Hills, I applaud the individuals who pro-
vided her with assistance in that area.

This article quoted Champaign Police Chief Finney as saying that the police did not
shoot into the house and shot at the suspect when the suspect was in view. The window
treatment in this residence make it impossible to see inside the building and the red cur-
tains hanging in her living room have the bullet holes to prove it. Finney also claimed in
this article that things would be easier to understand if the community had all of the
information. However that is not going to happen as long as police records are sup-
pressed and public access to information is denied. Even the News-Gazette has to now
rely on press releases to get what should be information that is available under the Free-
dom of Information Act.

I absolutely agree with Chief Finney that the police do not have a choice regarding
the locations where deadly force is present. However I find it disturbing that innocent
bystanders ended up being put in danger in this situation. Since Mr. Johnson did not fire
at officers while on Hedge Road there was no deadly force being used to narcotics
shooting into the residence. I do understand that Mr. Johnson did use his gun in parts of Urbana
and Champaign prior to being followed into Garden Hills. As a resident of Garden Hills I
would like to know what type of protocol is being used in situations where there are inno-
cent bystanders around. Ms. Davis told me that she is grateful that she and the children are
growing in her chair by the window when the first shot entered the building. How would the police department have handled this situation if it had happened
in Cherry Hills as opposed to Garden Hills?

Reverend Charles O. Nash Sr. was quoted by the News-Gazette stating a need for the
community and the police need to work together on finding a resolution to this issue. I
absolutely agree, but I do not consider the Champaign Community Relations Committee
to be the most effective advocate in the situation. Right now we are in a situation where
police records are not available to the press, the public, and anyone who is a defendant in
a criminal case is not allowed to have a copy of their own police report. This suppression
of vital information makes it difficult to hold officers accountable for their own actions.

A citizen’s review board in Champaign would be better because it functions as advo-
cates for members of the community and it can do so in a way that the Urban League and the
NAACP can not.

Orchard Downs Apartments

Orchard Downs: The Fate of a Community
Lori Scrb

Orchard Downs is University-owned 160-acre site of grad-
uate student housing – bordered by Race Street, Kirby
Avenue, and Main Campus Road in Urbana. Chancellor Her-
mans Strategic Plan for the Urbana campus requires that
Orchard Downs be redeveloped over the next few years to
include retail stores and retirement services. And although
the new development will profoundly affect those the site
currently serves, the university administration has taken
very little input from them.

Orchard Downs housing biggest draw currently is that
it offers a community environment for families and interna-
tional graduate students. The top countries represented are
China, Korea, India, and the United States. There are 778
units which are generally 85-90% full. While the majority
of residents are Graduate students, some of the units are inten-
tionally kept empty to serve as temporary housing for visit-
ingscholars. Orchard Downs offers good services for resi-
dents: a free after-school program for 5-12 year olds, com-
mon community, study room, free English classes, computer
lab, and more. Students staying in Orchard Downs during the
summer can find a variety of activities for housing residents.
Every Saturday morning the Sewing Room offers residents an opportunity to
repair clothing and the Lending Storeroom has various
lab access, and playground equipment. Every Saturday
morning the Sewing Room offers residents an opportunity

for students $605. Many graduate students who have 33%
appointments over the 2006-2007 school year earned a
minimum monthly gross stipend of $922 97 a month.
That’s before taxes and university fees or health insurance.
Seventy-five to 80% of Orchard Downs residents are
internationals from more than 70 countries. International
students have additional visa restrictions on how many
hours they are allowed to work for the University. They
cannot work more than a 50% appointment (20 hours a week)
This is separate from their PhD work and they cannot legally
get paid for any work outside the University. Certain
types of visa restrict spouses from being able to earn an
income. To add to this stress university departments are
required to even give 30 days advance notice when they
offer appointments to graduate students. In some cases they
receive notice the day their appointment starts or the day
classes begin. Summer appointments are extremely limited.

Chancellor Richard Herman said last month “I want to see
(CU) become the best public research university in
the nation… We need to increase the diversity of our fac-
tual and bring the presence of international students
among other things… it means we need a global
presence… a larger national presence…” The financial
Continued on page 9
Stamp Out the Rate Hikes: Stop New Postal Rules from Stifling America’s Independent Media

by Bob McChesney

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter” —Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 16, 1787

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Our nation’s founders understood the First Amendment would be worth little without a postal system that encouraged broad public participation in America’s “marketplace of ideas.”

Thomas Jefferson supported this with calls for a postal service that allowed citizens to gain “full information of their affairs,” where ideas could “penetrate the whole mass of the people.” Along with James Madison, he paved the way for a service that gave smaller political journals a voice.

Their solution included low-cost mailing incentives whereby publications could reach as many readers as possible. Other founders sooncampaigned to understand that the press as a political institution needed to be supported through favorable postal rates.

President George Washington spoke out for free postage for newspapers through the mail, and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton—who was no proponent of government deficit—conceded that incentives were necessary to spawn a viable press.

The postal policies that resulted have lasted for more than 200 years, spawning a vibrant political culture in the United States. They have eased the entry of diverse political viewpoints into a national discourse often dominated by the largest media organizations.

Our free press did not happen magically; it was built on incentives that could not afford significant lobbying and lawyer fees faced high barriers to effective participation.

The postal system is based on policies of public service and is the latest, largest move towards abandoning postal policy that has guided our nation so well for past 215 years.

Despite the practical result of this move is not only the decline of democracy, as we learned the hard way government deficit—conceded that incentives were necessary to spawn a viable press.

The practical result of this move is not only the decline of democracy, but also the rise of a new generation of media Machiavellis. This year they have used control of the markets, hiring the most aggressive, to manipulate the public discourse.

The new postal rates went into effect on July 15th. Efforts to overturn the PRC’s decision are now underway to rescind them.

This column was published on July 26, 2007 by the Review Online — www.freepress.net.

FIGHT BACK: TELL CONGRESS TO ACT

This year’s rate hikes culminate a long period in which the subsidy for public publications has eroded. It is imperative that Congress, which is ultimately responsible, intervene to protect the postal subsidy for small publications that is the foundation for the free press in the United States.

The new postal rates went into effect on July 13th. Efforts to overturn the PRC’s decision are now underway to rescind them.

This article was previously published on www.freepress.net. Full references, as well as up-to-date information are available at this web site.

Media-Generated “Scandal” Undermines Democracy in Ecuador

By Mark Weisbrot

In his recent book, The Assault on Reason, former Vice-President Al Gore describes how “the potential for manipul- ation of news reports and feelings initially discovered by commercial advertisers is now being used even more aggres- sively to create a new generation of media Machiavellis.”

The concentration of broadcast media ownership is indeed a real threat to democracy, as we learned the hard way when more than 70 percent of Americans were convinced, falsely, that Saddam Hussein was involved in the attacks of September 11—thus enabling the launch of a disastrous and unpopular war in Iraq. The problem is even worse in Latin America, where monopolized TV media is a much larger share of the news that people receive, and is even more shamelessly manipulated for political purposes.

In Ecuador, President Rafael Correa, an economist with a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, was elected last November with a broad mandate for economic reform, pro-growth development policies, and poverty alleviation. One of his government’s first acts was to double the monthly stipend for single mothers, the disabled and elderly that are poor. Although Correa ran without a political party or candidates for the Congress, his mandate was strongly reinforced when the government won a referendum to draw up a new constitution by an even larger margin of 82 percent.

As in a number of other countries in the region, which has seen a record economic failure over the last 25 years, voters endorsed the sweeping institutional and political changes they saw as necessary to enfranchise the majority. But on May 21 the opposition TV media launched an assault on President Correa’s finance minister, Ricardo Patiño. In a seven minute grainy video clip from a hidden camera they showed the minister meeting on February 12 with two representatives of a New York investment firm, as well as a former finance minister.

Patiño talks about “scaring the markets…” in a way that looks like a plot to manipulate the country’s bond market. The clip, taken out of context, was shown repeatedly for days on the TV news, spiced with gratuitous, unrelated images of faceless people counting large amounts of cash. It turns out that the video was authorized by Patiño himself, an odd thing to do if one is meant to plan a crime. Patiño claims that the purpose of the meeting and the taping of it was to investigate corruption and indeed the rest of the video—shown by Mr. Garcia and Patiño himself—was shot to look like a plot.

Correa’s plan was to offer not only the book that covers public affairs is generated by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the material that goes through print publications are offered by these print publications. Much of the materia...
Robert W. McChesney is Research Professor of Communications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mark Weisbrot is Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in Washington, DC.

To read and view the U.S. news media, there is an episode of grand tyranny unfolding, one repugnant to all who cherish democratic freedoms. The Venezuelan government under “strongman” Hugo Chavez refused to renew the 20-year broadcast license for RCTV, because that medium had the temerity to be critical of his regime. It is a familiar story.

And in this case it is wrong.

Regrettably, the US media coverage of Venezuela’s RCTV controversy says more about the deficiencies of our own news media than it does about Venezuela. It demonstrates again, as with the invasion of Iraq, how our news media are far too willing to carry water for Washington than to ascertain and report the truth of the matter.

Here are some of the facts and some of the context that the media have omitted or buried:

Venezuela is a constitutional republic. Chavez has won landslide victories that would be the envy of almost any elected leader in the world, in internationally monitored elections.

The vast majority of Venezuela’s media are not only in private hands, they are constitutionally protected, uncensored, and dominated by the opposition. RCTV’s owners can expand their cable and satellite programming, or take their capital and launch a print empire forthwith. Aggressive, unqualified political dissent is alive and well in the Venezuelan mainstream media, in a manner few other democratic nations have ever known, including our own.

The media here report that President Chavez “accuses RCTV of having supported a coup” against him. This is a common means of distorting the news: a fact is reported as accusation, and then attributed to a source that the press has done everything to discredit. In fact, RCTV – along with other broadcast news outlets – played such a leading role in the April 2002 military coup against Venezuela’s democratically elected government, that it is often described as “the world’s first media coup.”

In the prelude to the coup, RCTV helped mobilize people to the streets against the government, and used false reporting to justify the coup. One of their most infamous and effective falsifications was to mix footage of pro-Chavez people firing pellets from an overpass in Caracas with gory scenes of demonstrators being shot and killed. This created the impression that the pro-Chavez Gwenmen actually shot these people, when in fact the victims were nowhere near them. These falsified but horrifying images were repeated incessantly, and served as a major justification for the coup.

RCTV then banned any pro-government reporting during the coup. When Chavez returned to office, this too was blacked out of the news. Later the same year, RCTV once again made all-day-long appeals to Venezuelans to help topple the government during a crippling national oil strike.

If RCTV were broadcasting in the United States, its license would have been revoked years ago. In fact its owners would likely have been tried for criminal offenses, including treason.

RCTV’s broadcast frequency has been turned over to a new national public access channel that promises to provide programming from thousands of independent producers. It is an effort to let millions of Venezuelans who have never had a viable chance to participate in the media do so, without government censorship.

The Bush Administration opposes the Chavez government for reasons that have nothing to do with democracy, or else there would be a long list of governments for us to subvert or overthrow before we would get close to targeting Venezuela. Regrettably, our press coverage has done little to shed light on that subject.

Our news media should learn the lesson of Iraq and regard our own government’s claims with the same skepticism they properly apply to foreign leaders. Then Americans might begin to get a more accurate picture of the world, and be able to effectively participate in our foreign policy.

Food is the heart of almost everything we do. It’s woven into the fabric of our everyday lives. Our decisions about what we eat for dinner impacts the political, environmental, health, and fiscal picture of our global and local landscape. With all eyes on the issues of global warming and poverty, the Common Ground Food Co-op encourages anyone who is invested in our community to consider a few reasons to get your food locally.

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What we eat is political. Taking a vested interest in knowing where your food comes from and how it was produced is a political act. Here’s a thought from the online community: “100-Mile Diet—Local Eating for Global Change.” A typical ingredient in a modern meal has traveled 1,300 miles or more from farm to place. Food doesn’t carry itself all those miles. Trucks, airplanes, and freighters are carrying that food from producer to grocery to table, at the expense of the environment.

According to FamilyFarmed.org, a program of Chicago-based Sustain that encourages organic farming and new marketing and business opportunities by connecting local farmers with buyers, growing more food locally also reduces the need for long distance trucking and minimizes the emissions of pollutants that dirty the air and cause global warming.

The Soil Association, an organic standards agency in the United Kingdom, estimates that air freight is the fastest-growing form of food transport, and has the highest climate-change impact per mile. Their recent report states that while air freight accounts for less than 1% of the distance food travels to reach U.K. consumers, it is responsible for 11% of food transport carbon emissions. (see summary online at http://100milediet.org/category/the-lates/)

Eating locally is thinking globally. Supporting local food is a vote for a just and sustainable food system. It is a stone in the edge of Goliaths like Monsanto Corporation, with their genetically modified agriculture.

What you eat affects how food is grown around the world, which effects justice for farm workers. According to a July 2006 article on billeritas.org, tassels protecting beans and corn, including the white corn Mexicans use for tortillas, are to end in January 2008. That will expose Mexican corn farmers — two-thirds of whom subsist on 12 acres or fewer and 90 percent of whom lack irrigation — to competition with U.S. farmers who are so highly mechanized they can produce a metric ton of corn with a half-hour’s labor, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

And the effects are not just on the workers, but on our environment because the growing process affects soil sustainability and bio-diversity.

Financially, we know it can be difficult to afford organic or even local food. But consider the positive effects on our own community when you make that choice. For every $100 you spend locally, at Common Ground, the Urbana farmers’ market, or directly from local farms, $45 is retained in the local community. When you spend the same amount at a chain supermarket, a grand total of $13 stays in our community. What a loss.

By supporting local food, we ensure that our community remains financially independent of corporations, that farming remains a viable option for current and future community members, and that our community remains unique.

Does it sound difficult to eat only food that is grown within 100 miles of your home? Common Ground already does a lot of the research for you.

In 2006, Common Ground bought more than $53,000 worth of food and products from local farms and producers making up 13% of total purchases. With our community and your health in mind, our goal is to raise this number to over 16% of our total purchases in 2007.

Common Ground currently purchases from more than two dozen local produce growers, farms, bread bakers, body care product producers, prepared food producers, aparians, and artisans. We are constantly adding more and looking for more.

Jon Cherniss, owner of Blue Moon Farms, a certified organic vegetable farm in Urbana, is proud to be one of those producers. “I know how important a role Common Ground plays in local food, and I love being a part of it because of what it stands for—local, organic, sustainable food.”

We can help you to make a good decision for your environment and our community. Visit Common Ground at the corner of Springfield and Wright in the Illinois Disciples Foundation, or call 332-3347.

C-U Food Cooperative Encourages Eating Local

By Jacqueline Hannah and Sarah Delmar

Food is the heart of almost everything we do. It’s woven into the fabric of our everyday lives. Our decisions about what we eat for dinner impacts the political, environmental, health, and fiscal picture of our global and local landscape. With all eyes on the issues of global warming and poverty, the Common Ground Food Co-op encourages anyone who is invested in our community to consider a few reasons to get your food locally.

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The Soil Association, an organic standards agency in the United Kingdom, estimates that air freight is the fastest-growing form of food transport, and has the highest climate-change impact per mile. Their recent report states that while air freight accounts for less than 1% of the distance food travels to reach U.K. consumers, it is responsible for 11% of food transport carbon emissions. (see summary online at http://100milediet.org/category/the-lates/)

Eating locally is thinking globally. Supporting local food is a vote for a just and sustainable food system. It is a stone in the edge of Goliaths like Monsanto Corporation, with their genetically modified agriculture.

What you eat affects how food is grown around the world, which effects justice for farm workers. According to a July 2006 article on billeritas.org, tassels protecting beans and corn, including the white corn Mexicans use for tortillas, are to end in January 2008. That will expose Mexican corn farmers — two-thirds of whom subsist on 12 acres or fewer and 90 percent of whom lack irrigation — to competition with U.S. farmers who are so highly mechanized they can produce a metric ton of corn with a half-hour’s labor, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

And the effects are not just on the workers, but on our environment because the growing process affects soil sustainability and bio-diversity.

Financially, we know it can be difficult to afford organic or even local food. But consider the positive effects on our own community when you make that choice. For every $100 you spend locally, at Common Ground, the Urbana farmers’ market, or directly from local farms, $45 is retained in the local community. When you spend the same amount at a chain supermarket, a grand total of $13 stays in our community. What a loss.

By supporting local food, we ensure that our community remains financially independent of corporations, that farming remains a viable option for current and future community members, and that our community remains unique.

Does it sound difficult to eat only food that is grown within 100 miles of your home? Common Ground already does a lot of the research for you.

In 2006, Common Ground bought more than $53,000 worth of food and products from local farms and producers making up 13% of total purchases. With our community and your health in mind, our goal is to raise this number to over 16% of our total purchases in 2007.

Common Ground currently purchases from more than two dozen local produce growers, farms, bread bakers, body care product producers, prepared food producers, aparians, and artisans. We are constantly adding more and looking for more.

Jon Cherniss, owner of Blue Moon Farms, a certified organic vegetable farm in Urbana, is proud to be one of those producers. “I know how important a role Common Ground plays in local food, and I love being a part of it because of what it stands for—local, organic, sustainable food.”

We can help you to make a good decision for your environment and our community. Visit Common Ground at the corner of Springfield and Wright in the Illinois Disciples Foundation, or call 332-3347.
U.S. Government’s Anti-Democratic Media Operations

By Belden Fields

Robert McChesney and Mike Weissbrodt’s article on the Venezuelan government’s lifting of the license of RCTV and the outcry in the U.S. over its being a violation of the freedom of the press, as situated in the context of the U.S. government’s own record of using the media to destroy democratic institutions in Latin America. First, the C.I.A. has covertly “owned, subsidized, or influenced” more than 400 media operations around the world (NY Times 12/26/77, I-37). These included newspapers, magazines, trade publications, journalists working for mainline newspapers and agencies, and news agencies themselves. So people in democratic societies around the world, who thought they were reading legitimate news reports and interpretations, were in fact reading the materialized event of the CIA’s “Propaganda Assets Inventory.”

This is obviously a violation of the right of such a citizen to have access to legitimate information, and to know the sources of that information, in order to fulfill their civic responsibilities. Among the agencies in Latin America that were covertly owned or infiltrated were Agencia Orbe Latino Americana (a features service), The South Pacific Mail in Santiago, The Caracas Venezuela Daily Journal, and LATIN (a Latin American news agency that was operated by the British news agency, Reuters). Editors Press Service was an agency that placed itself willingly at the disposal of the C.I.A. government has actually used foreign media to help violently overthrow or defeat democratic-elect governments. The two instances that have received the most scrutiny were the violent overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile in 1973 and the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the 1990 election.

THE C.I.A. AND EL MERCURIO IN CHILE

Up to 1973, the year that the Allende government, which had come to power through constitutional means, was overthrown, the U.S. spent $43 million in covert money to “support and influence” the Chilean mass media (San Francisco Chronicle, 12/8/73). From September 9, 1971 to April 11, 1972, the C.I.A. spent a million dollars on one newspaper, El Mercurio. This newspaper was owned by the wealthy businessman, Agustín Edwards. The relationship between Edwards and the U.S. government was so close that the S.F. Chronicle reported that Edwards had conferred with top officials of the Nixon Administration on the day that Nixon ordered the C.I.A. to work with elements in the Chilean military, headed by General Pinochet, to make a coup to prevent Allende.

Second, the U.S. government has actually used foreign media to help violently overthrow or defeat democratic-elect governments. The two instances that have received the most scrutiny were the violent overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile in 1973 and the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the 1990 election.

THE C.I.A. AND LA PRENSA IN NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, the U.S. government has covertly continued doing so leading to the Iran-Contra affair (joined with the military dictatorship in Argentina to put together an armed force of anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans to try to destroy the Nicaraguan government. It attacked mainly key civilian targets like collective farms and health clinics, seldom engaging the stronger government army. C.I.A. agents also attacked Nicaragua’s oil storage facilities in the port of Corinto and mined Nicaragua’s harbors. In effect, the U.S. was waging open warfare on Nicaragua, and was declared guilty of it by the International Court of Justice that ruled that the U.S. owed reparations to the government of Nicaragua. Placing itself above international law, the U.S. simply refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the court. At the same time, it was BOTH overtly and covertly supporting the anti-Sandinista newspaper, La Prensa.

A second difference between the Chilean case and the Nicaraguan one is that by the time of the Nicaraguan operation the U.S. Congress had created the National Endowment for Democracy (NED, created in 1983). While formally being private, it distributes public funds allocated by Congress. One source estimates that between 1984 (the year that the Sandinistas won the first elections after the revolution they led that overthrew the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship) and 1990 (the year that the Sandinistas lost the elections after six years of a Contra war that destroyed the economy and killed 30,000 to 40,000 people in a country of 3.5 million), the C.I.A. spent $28-30 million and the NED spent $15,850,000 to get rid of the Contras.

In another landmark victory for student campaigns against Coca-Cola, the company has been kicked out of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. If of I is the third university this summer—following Smith College in the U.S. and the Banana Hindu University in India—to have terminated its beverage contract with Coca-Cola, Coalition Against Coke Contracts (CACC), the group that led the campaign at UIUC, dedicates this victory to the indomitable fighting spirit of communities ravaged by Coke— -- from Colombia to India.

Coca-Cola has been the exclusive beverage provider at the University of Illinois since 1997. According to the terms of the contract, only Coke products were sold on campus. Such monopolistic arrangements have been emblematic of the growing corporatization of education. The contract between University of Illinois and Coca-Cola received much criticism from students, faculty, staff and the local community for, among other reasons, the company’s labor & human rights abuse and environmental degradation in India, Colombia, Indonesia and Turkey.

In Colombia, for instance, Coca-Cola’s union busting efforts in collaboration with the paramilitaries have resulted in the death of eight union leaders since 1989. Similarly, workers in Coke bottling plants in Turkey and Indonesia have been routinely subjected to violence and intimidation upon attempting to unionize. In India, the company is involved in massive extraction and pollution of ground water. The pollution control board of Kerala, India, has found out that Coca-Cola is responsible for dumping toxic waste into the fields and water around its plants. Further, independent investigations of Coca-Cola products in India have been found to include high levels of pesticides.

For the past two years, CACC, a student & community group in Champaign Urbana has forcefully demanded that the University end its business relationship with Coca-Cola in light of the company’s egregious records. It has further demanded a public statement from the administration regarding, what has been stated by Chancellor Hermand as “Coca-Cola’s recalcitrance” on the afore-mentioned issues. More than 25 local groups joined the coalition, holding numerous dialogs with the administration and organizing public actions. Even as the current contract with Coca-Cola expired on June 30, CACC organized “the last day of contract” action that involved soda-tasting of a range of locally produced beverages.

For the new beverage contract, the University of Illinois has decided to comply with the State’s decision to grant pouring rights to Pepsi. CACC has always been vocal about supporting local businesses and vendors over big corporations. The numerous soda-tasting events organized by CACC over the past year received an overwhelming response. CACC welcomes the University’s decision not to do business with Coca-Cola and hopes that the retail stores outside the contract with Pepsi will take into account the choice of campus community and provide locally manufactured beverages.

Earlier this year, the Urbana Champaign campus made a historic decision to put an end to its racist mascot, thanks to a broad-based campus-wide movement. Non-renewal of the contract with Coca-Cola is another step toward creating a progressive campus. CACC hopes that the University administration will take affirmative steps making sure that it does not enter into business relationships with corporations that have no respect for human and labor rights. Finally, the inclusion of progressive student groups in long-term decision making would be a positive way of achieving this.
Back in the summer of 2006, while the Israeli army was incessantly bombarding Lebanon back to the Stone Age, the U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, comforted us all by calling the death and destruction being inflicted upon Lebanon “the birth pangs of a new Middle East”—a natural process which needs to be endured if life is to renew itself. A more apt metaphor for this and other forces of change in the region would be “a premature Cesarean Section operation” to speed up the delivery of a new Middle East an American-envisioned Uni-Polar World, under the patriarchal care of Israel. The invasion of Iraq, the bombing of Lebanon, the recent attempt to resuscitate the 2002 Saudi proposal for a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, and the nightmarish but currently unplanned for an overt military action against Iran can all be understood better within this paradigm.

This hegemonic ambition and its policy implications have been developed over the past decade-and-a-half by a group of neo-conservative (neo-con) strategists and operatives in the Bush I Administration connected to the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and to the right-wing of the American Israeli lobby (AIPAC and such). Zbigniew Brzez-

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join the urbana-champaign independent media center: become the media!

We are all journalists!

Come to print meetings Thursdays at 5:30 on the main floor and become part of the Public i editorial board. Learn how to write an article, how to conduct an interview, or how to file a Freedom of Information Act request. Send articles to print@ucimc.org.

Get a show on WRFU, Radio Free Urbana, 104.5

Attention All Potential Radio DJs and Radio Interns!

Are you interested in being on the radio?

Do you want to get involved in a community radio station?

Are you interested in getting a show for the summer only?

Are you interested in having a show throughout the year?

Well, come to the next WRFU general meeting which occurs the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Family Room of the Independent Media Center at 202 S. Broadway, Urbana, IL to find out how you can get involved.

Members need to be trained for about 2 hours and pay dues ($20 per person) to be eligible to broadcast on the air. It’s simple and it’s fun. Become a part of WRFU and take back the media!

Contact wrfu@ucimc.org

Volunteer for Books To Prisoners!

Come to pack-a-thons held by Books To Prisoners on Saturdays at 1 p.m.

repair your own bike!

Come to the Bicycle co-op in the basement of the IMC and learn how to repair your bicycle.
Recently an Urbana friend of mine asked me whether being a grad student in the Bay Area left much time for political activism. After explaining that I McCollum may not be the whole course of study to be “activist” in nature, I mentioned that the current mass extinction crisis is of deep concern to many of my peers and professors, and the specific focus of a nonprofit group called Species Alliance (www.speciesalliance.org). Noticing that the words “mass extinction” had made my friend’s eyes glaze over, I offered a brief explanation, which elicited a nervous chuckle and a dismissive wave of the hand. “Haven’t we survived the end of the world a dozen times already?” was the gist of his response. I couldn’t help but feel that my progressive friend had just nudged me off the left end of the bench, right into the loony bin. Peering across the information gap, I resolved to write an article for the Public i.

Not that I was offended by my friend’s reaction, nor even surprised. In fact, it is understandable that when confronted with news as devastating and depressing as mass extinction, most people express incredulity or denial. In more extreme cases, members of Species Alliance, while striving to raise public awareness of the issue, have been met with anger and hostility, even when preaching to the socially- and environmentally-conscious choir. It would seem that when the message is truly dire, even the most open-minded among us are inclined to shoot the messenger or bury our heads in the sand. As the bearer of unpalatable news, my hope is that instead of putting our collective head in the earth, we are able to wrap our head and heart around it.

A Civil Liberties Case From Champaign

CONTENDING VIEWS OF DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION, AND RIGHTS

Unfortunately, a large percentage, perhaps a majority, of the American public does not understand the Constitution and the essential protections it affords minorities. This failing is well expressed in a letter received by Vashti McCollum during the progress of her case through the courts. The person wrote:

“We are a Democracy and in a Democracy the majority rules. The majority of people believe in religious education so why don’t you shut your big mouth you old bag.”

What the letter’s author failed to realize is that a democracy can only exist where people are free to disagree, where divergent views are respected and, when necessary, protected by the power and authority of the government. Without such guarantees, no individual or group would be secure from either the prejudices and persecution of a settled majority or the occasional and fleeting tyranny of the mob.

Many who were opposed to Mrs. McCollum, either failed to understand the nature of the fight, or deliberately distorted the consequences in the event of her victory. Insensitive to the basis - ignorance or deception - the arguments often sounded the same: “...what is to be said of our Christian civilization when the Psalms of David and the story of Jesus are excluded from schools that may teach Karl Marx and the origin of species every day of the year? This Supreme Court ban does not apply to the Communist Manifesto at the University of Chicago...(pause)...”

The inclusion of Bible study as a part of a survey course in religion would not only be appropriate, but may be essential as the reading of the Communist Manifesto in a course on economic history. Singing of Christmas carols was also mentioned as quite likely falling under the ban of the Decision. Concerning this, Vashti McCollum wrote:

“Throughout my own public school attendance I enjoyed and looked forward to the annual Christmas carol sing on the last day before Christmas vacation started.”

She, as her children, loved to sing Christmas carols; and caroling often occurred in public schools her children attended. She never objected. She might have been critical of the practice only if it were a part of a religious pageant.

Vashti McCollum, start to finish, was interested only in the elimination of sectarian religious indoctrination in the public schools. The essential difference between education and indoctrination was summed up by Anton J. Carlson, noted physiologist from the University of Chicago. He was sent to Springfield, the state capital, during the witch-hunting days of the 1950s to appear before a committee of the legislature. The solons were concerned about subversive teaching at institutions of higher learning in Illinois. He was asked, “Do you teach Communism at the University of Chicago?” The elderly scientist thoughtfully responded, “Yes, we teach about syphilis, that doesn’t mean we recommend it.”

It is my feeling that the McCollum Case represents an excellent article in support of a strict observance of the Bill of Rights, in general, and the prevention of “an establishment of religion,” in particular. The intrusion of the religious classes into the Champaign schools was divisive. That was the experience of James Terry McCollum and of his family as well. Other individuals and groups, Jews in particular, also were affected negatively, though most refrained from active protest.

Vashti McCollum died on August 30, 2006. She was the last adult prominently associated with the case to pass from the scene. And she was remembered, not only in her home town newspaper, but in the TIMES in New York to the TIMES of Los Angeles. She passed away with the uneasy feeling that the constitutional principle for which she successfully fought was far from secure.
The End of Nature?

Continued from page 7

- Humans Moving Closer To Extinction, Study Says (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 5, 2001)
- World Facing Greatest Extinction Risk Since Dinosaurs Disappeared (BBC, May 8, 2001)
- Scientists Agree World Faces Mass Extinction (CNN, August 23, 2002)
- World’s Ecosystems on Verge of Sudden Collapse (Nature, October 12, 2003)
- Earth Faces Sixth Mass Extinction (New Scientist, March 18, 2004)
- One Quarter of Primates Will Be Extinct in 20 Years (London Times, April 7, 2005)
- United Nations: Humans Causing Greatest Mass Extinction in 65 Million Years (Reuters, March 21, 2006)
- Earth Faces Catastrophic Loss of Species (U.K. Independent, July 20, 2006)

The headlines above were culled from among literally hundreds, each posted as a link on the “world wide web’s most comprehensive source of information on the current mass extinctions” (www.massextinction.net), a site maintained by Species Alliance director David Ulansky. While there exists minor disagreement among biologists about the number of life forms facing imminent demise, the timeline for extinction and the ultimate effects of rapid and widespread species loss, there is almost unanimous agreement that for the first time ever, the web of life is being radically altered by a single species.

HUMAN CAUSES: ACTION AND THOUGHT

Just as all life on earth is connected through a vast and intricate network of mutual dependence, so too are the causes of the current crisis intimately intertwined. Global warming, habitat destruction and degradation, deforestation, pollution, introduction of non-native species and over-harvesting all play a part, each in turn caused or at least greatly compounded by rapid, exponential growth in human population and increasing rates of consumption. The human race is effectively “eating” itself out of house and home, and endangering countless other species in the process.

Of course, our destructive behavior as a species stems from underlying psychological patterns and beliefs that are wildly out of synch with Nature. Among these are an adolescent individualism, a myopic focus on short-term gain over long-term sustainability and an anthropocentric cosmology in which human beings are seen as the pinnacle of creation, with the freedom to do whatever we want, as long as we don’t “interfere” with our little slice of the ocean, the air, or the birds of the air, and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26) (though some ecologists have identified a second, less human-centered perspective). Of course, we do not do this out of malice, but rather because we feel we have a right to it. Raising the family, raising the children, and living our lives, each according to our own needs. The realization that our very existence threatens that of others must be a rude awakening.

Media-Generated “Scandal” Undermines Democracy in Ecuador

Continued from page 3

The others to present and explain the possibilities in detail, never agreeing to go along with anything—just as one would expect in an investigation of this sort. In fact he states that it would be wrong to manipulte the market. The meeting ends with one of the investors stating that nothing would be done regarding the current debt payment—though he could think about what to do in the future. But the TV media is repeated, propagandistic images—playing on people’s cynicism from decades of corrupt government—had the most influence. This emboldened the opposition to make more wild allegations of secret deals with foreign banks, and vote to censure Patria in the Congress—which they control. All of this has been done without anyone presenting evidence that the finance minister was involved in any wrongdoing. If all this seems Orwellian, it is.

The human race is effectively “eating” itself out of house and home, and endangering countless other species in the process.

U.S. Government’s Anti-Democratic Media Operations

Continued from page 5

U.S. government’s anti-democratic media operations

Saninista-controlled government. If we compare the total amount of money which would be a foreign power had financed elections in the U.S., taking into account the population differential it would come to $3.1 billion to $3.4 billion. (S. Brian Willson, 1990, www.brianwillson.com/awarning.html)
The NED also funded an organization called PRODEMCA (Citizens Committee for the Democratic Forces in Central America). PRODEMCA, which supported the Contras, is reported to have given $10,000 to La Prensa to support the right-wing opposition in the 1984 elec-
tions. Between 1987 and 1988, PRODEMCA is reported to have given an additional $170,000 to La Prensa. While many Democrats spoke and voted against the U.S.’s sup-
port of the Contras, most Democrats as well as Republi-
cans supported the money funneled through the NED—
even though the U.S. was militarily attacking Nicaragua at the time and PRODEMCA was promoting the Contra cause. Imagine if during wartime an enemy was on U.S. soil or supporting an armed insurrection in the United States and was and was splitting warming money to its favored U.S. parties and media! Unlike the Allende government in Chile, the Sandin-
ista government did suspect La Prensa, but only for a year. Just as the Allende government had foreseen, the liberal “democratic” governments and media in the West, led by those in United States, used the closing down of the paper in a world-wide propaganda campaign to por-
tray the Sandinistas as dictatorial, and the U.S. and the Contras as fighters for democracy and freedom, including freedom of the press that the U.S. was so dearly corrupting all over the world. Thus, when we read that the government of Venezuela has refused to renew the TV license of a powerful media network with close ties to the U.S.—one that played a role in helping the former right-wing coup against the elected gov-
ernment—we should be more skeptical about the U.S. government’s criticism and posturing as the defender of democracy and freedom of the media.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I report that I was LaPrensa’s thesis adviser. Since the Public I is a newspaper, we do not cite all of the sources used in, or relevant to, our articles. Anyone interested in a more complete bibliography of sources on this subject can contact me at a-filcis (at) uiuc.edu
ACLU Defends IMC Reporter/Police Chief Responds

As reported in the June/July issue of the Public i newsletter, I was kicked out of a press conference held by Champaign Police Chief R.T. Finney on June 8, 2007. The day after three of his officers were shot in West Side Park, I had barely sat down at the press conference before Finney’s second-in-command, Troy Daniels, tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to leave. I did not even have the chance to be disorderly or ask a question—although I was planning to make no comment about the shooting. Outside, I was approached by Finney who told me I was not a legitimate member of the press. “I choose who I want to talk to,” he told me.

Since March 1, 2007, when I met with Chief Finney and Champaign attorney Trisha Crowley, I have been considered a member of the press in Champaign. This was verified most recently in a letter dated on May 16, 2007, when Champaign responded to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request I had made.

With the help of the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, I contacted Adam Schwartz, an ACLU attorney in Chicago. He wrote a letter on my behalf that was sent on June 20, 2007. A copy of the letter is attached to this article. He cites 30 years of case law based on the First Amendment protecting members of the press from being arbitrarily denied access to press events.

Chief Finney responded in a letter dated July 2, 2007. Finney asks that members of the media follow proper decorum, but makes no mention of how I failed to do so.

The Champaign Police Department also told the ACLU’s Adam Schwartz that there was no specific policy concerning press conferences.

A month later, after I had left several phone messages, I finally got a call from the Champaign police’s spokesperson Rene Dunn. I had only received Finney’s letter after it was forwarded to me by the ACLU. Dunn called me within 24 hours of my posting these two letters at the Independent Media Center web site (ucimc.org).

Dunn confirmed that I was back on the CPD’s press list. I asked if she would email me any future press releases, which are sent out to all members of the local mainstream media. Dunn denied my request. “We don’t send out press releases to everyone in the country,” she said.

I asked if a new policy would be written making it clear that all members of the media have access to press conferences. Dunn said she doesn’t handle those matters.

I still do not have an explanation why I was kicked out of the June press conference. Apparently, Finney was simply doing whatever he damned well pleases. His actions are another example of why there is a need for an independent Citizen Police Review Board in Champaign that can begin to bring accountability to the department.

Dear Chief Finney:

We write on behalf of Brian Dolinar. He advises us of the following. On June 8, 2007, you held a press conference regarding the shooting of three police officers the previous night. Mr. Dolinar is a journalist who covers such issues for the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center’s Monthly newspaper (the Public i) and its Internet blog (at www.ucimc.org). He attempted to attend the press conference, in order to obtain information that he would then share with the general public. He was not disruptive. Nonetheless, he was ordered to leave the press conference.

For at least 30 years, it has been clear that “arbitrary or content-based criteria for press pass issuance are prohibited under the first amendment.” Sherrill v. Knight, 569 F.2d 124, 129 & n.17 (D.C. Cir. 1977) (citations omitted). Thus, for example, a federal appeals court held that the Secret Service cannot withhold press passes from journalists seeking access to the White House, unless the restrictions are “no more arduous than necessary” to achieve “a compelling governmental interest.” Id. at 298-99. These principles, which are necessary to protect the interests of both journalists and the general public. In effective newsgathering, are ingrained in modern First Amendment jurisprudence. See, e.g., Telemundo v. City of Los Angeles, 283 F. Supp. 2d 1095 (C.D. Cal. 2003) (granting a preliminary injunction commanding a city to grant a television station equal media access to coverage of a city ceremony); United teachers of Dade v. Stierheim, 213 F. Supp. 2d 1368 (S.D. Fla. 2002) (granting a preliminary injunction commanding a school board to grant a union magazine equal media access to a press room adjacent to school board meetings).

Thus, we respectfully request that you allow Mr. Dolinar to attend future press conferences of the Champaign Police Department and its leaders, on equal terms with other members of the news media. By July 6, 2007, please advise me in writing of your position in this matter.

Finally, this letter comprises a request for documents pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Specifically, we request all documents that relate to, refer to, or comprise policies and practices of the Champaign Police Department regarding whether and when a journalist may attend a press conference of the Champaign Police Department.

If you have any questions regarding any of the foregoing, please do not hesitate to call me [phone number omitted].

Sincerely,

Adam Schwartz

July 2, 2007
Adam Schwartz
c/o The Roger Baldwin
Foundation of ACLU, Inc.
Suite 2300
180 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601-1287

Re: Freedom of the press

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

All press conferences held by the City of Champaign in a public forum may be attended by any media representative. We ask that all representatives of the media display the proper decorum of behavior for this type of event. In addition, media representatives should have the proper credentials indicating who they represent.

The Champaign Police Department does not issue press credentials. Mr. Dolinar needs only to provide press credentials as provided by his organization, Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center’s, Public i and/or its Internet blog, and sign in at our front desk to gain future entry to a press conference within the Police Department.

R.T. Finney
Chief of Police
City of Champaign

Orchard Downs: The Fate of a Community

Continued from page 2

insecurity and high stress graduate students face affects their work which in turn affects undergraduates, faculty, and departments on the whole and ultimately affects the research status of this public university.

The Orchard Downs Housing Council has petitioned Vice-Chancellor Renee Romano asking that a committee be formed to allow residents and other interested parties the ability to provide input on the development. The committee will consist of 2 Housing Council members, 2 Community Aides, 2 GEO members and 6 residents. An input session for residents with Vice-Chancellor Romano and the Director of Capital Development of Orchard Downs, Fred Coleman, The first meeting to discuss this committee happened June 14th at Orchard Downs Community Center. Residents and GEO members attended this meeting.

The summer timeline for the redevelopment stipulated that a master developer recommendation be presented to the Chancellor at the end of June. In July the Chancellor will have his recommendation – which I would have been to use one of the plans proposed by one of the developers, portions of both or neither plan – presented to the President and the Board of Trustees. As yet, however, no firm decision has been made. A link to preliminary survey results from Public Input submitted can be found online at www.orcharddowns.uiuc.edu. It had been anticipated that the master developer would be authorized to proceed with the chosen design in August. It is unclear if the developers will choose union labor to implement the development.
Every Cook Can Govern: The First U.S. Social Forum

By Alex Bonick

Black & Latino Alliances: The South L.A. Coalition explained how they formed in the 1980s in response to the racist crack epidemic, which the Left ignored. A member-driven organization, it moved past its origin as a service provider and opened up critiques of capitalism and white supremacy—now as a policy analyst and maker, the Coalition works with Black and Latino people in south L.A. on four protracted issue campaigns: foster care, land use, prison re-entry, and education.

White Anti-Racist Organizing: White anti-racists are known for calling debates about how to get white people to give up racism by talking about it. Instead, the Rural Organizing Project (ROP) talked about organizing on shared self-interest as the solution. During the early 1990s, the ROP saw that the Right was ‘targeting’ white people in Oregon via anti-gay and anti-immigrant ballot measures. In response, they successfully organized dozens of white communities via house meetings and rapid-response teams to see the common thread between fighting xenophobia and homophobia—that people can be united by common values of democracy and human dignity.

DEMOCRACY—OR DIDDLY-SQUAT?

As for actual decision-making, the USSF stuck to the much-debated WSF principle of providing an open space while avoiding making decisions as a body. This makes sense, as the SF process is young, movements are not uni-fied, and participation multiples yearly. In practice, avoid- ing decision-making, or even unified statements, seemed painful to people who breathe, eat, and sleep organizing. The Six plenaries—on Katrina, war/militarism/prisons, indigenous voices, immigrant rights, gender/sexuality, and workers’ rights—had energetic analyses, diverse panels, and an intensely hopeful vibe. The People’s Movement Assembly saw group after hyped group recite two-minute pleas for movement-building.

My most disappointing moment came during the Mid- west Break-Out preceding the People’s Movement Assembly. In a mostly empty room full of mostly white people representing only a few Midwest organizations, we actual- ly debated whether to move ahead with concrete proposals or focus on first building an inclusive Midwest move- ment. All the players were not at the table, and several of the ones there did not seem to care. Whether this was from lack of communication or intentional disinterest in others’ struggles, it left alienating and exclusionary. Fur- thermore, it felt like nothing had been done since the (heavily academic) Midwest Social Forum a year ago. The USSF rep seemed to prefer aid to facilitation.

Calling for unity, applauding slogans, and endlessly deferring decision-making should not replace analysis and strategy—and judging by the overall level of debate, one would think we don’t disagree about anything else? Many people—especially those unfamiliar with the SF process (including me)—had hoped for more of the latter and less of the former at the USSF. While the workshops were stronger on this point, it should be pointed out that this is the first USSF—we were inventing something brand new, and people were rightfully tolerant of the organizational theory that “the movement” got together at all. Many older movement veterans have been waiting for this type of event their whole life. We were just getting to know one another, the real test will be how we use these new comradeships out- side the networking bonanza that is the USSF.

One test case could be the USSF media model, which was consciously outside the “star” system of the left (no Chomskys or Sarandons). The Ida B. Wells Media Justice Center was supposed to “create a revolutionary model of media coverage, documentation, first-person storytelling, and community-based newsmaking on location.” But the Poor News Network reports that there was an apparent effort by some to privilege the “real” media (i.e., Pacifica) and ignore the “other” grassroots/participatory media—and an appalling lack of media access and resources for poor and disabled people. On the other hand, while DemocracyNow! and NPR were notably absent, dozens of papers and stations in Canada and Latin America broadcast the USSF to the world. A month later, the quantity and quality of Left reporting on the USSF is still (surprisingly?) low. The USSF website is cataloging audio and video footage on their Media Server (http://medialist2007.org), and the best collection of recent press is at https://www.usssf2007.org/en/news. How do we assess all this—flawed model, flawed opera- tions, both—or rookie mistakes?

OLD LEFT, NEW LEFT—POST—“LEFT”?

The most intriguing workshop I saw was about child sex abuse. Generation Five’s Transformative Justice 101. Child abuse is so widespread (across race, gender, class) that we are all traumatized because being abused is how we, as children, learn authority and violence. But violence is not just an impulse; it is organized, political, and interpersonal. We are re-victimized when the government co-opts our outrage in a punitive manner—this doesn’t solve the prob- lem. We need to be working towards a healing model that addresses abusers’ and victims’ internalized shame/blame, guarantees survivor safety, and engages the community in abuser accountability. The end result would be communi- ty transformation: the prevention of child abuse would allow us to challenge the very conditions that allow it, and other forms of violence, to occur. What would this new community be like?

If we are the “Left,” don’t we have a lot of things backwards. How do we talk about our issues? Do we take the time to explain the hurt, pain, and sorrow we organize against? Or do we remain abstract with words like “injust- ice” and “oppression”? If we know our movement is root- ed in ending violence, then shouldn’t we say so? Other- wise, who else knows? It’s true the language of suffering has been denigrated: the victimized are disbelieved (rape), re-traumatized (Katrina), told to bear it (poverty), or asked to “prove” it (racism). But I don’t think we should stop try

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ing to resuscitate the language of hurt. If anything, it would help build authentic communication, the lack of which helps keep the “Left” the “small but vocal minority” left—and not the majority of people (who we believe share our values).

This leads to another point about reaching out and growing—and winning. The “Left” likes to make use of “experts.” The USSF eschewed them.

The holding of the USSF in the southern location of Atlanta meant going against the grain of U.S. power and the nonprofit/NGO culture in this country. There was a sense from many that the South could not pull something like this off and this resulted in a USSF process deprived of significant support from national, regional, and local organizations in other regions of the country. Until the South “proved” it could mobilize and organize a social forum…was little support and hope from the national level (itself).

At the USSF, foundations, philanthropies, and some unions fell into the much-criticized “nonprofit/NGO” category. 501(c)(3) organizations, run by experts, unaccountable to members, financially tied to the mainstream—and strategically limited (and thus dis-empowering). Of course, there were plenty of groups who wouldn’t fit a pure definition of “grassroots” or “NGO.” But there was the sense that the grassroots should be leading the struggle.

The USSF was brought into being, and attended, mostly by people who get these two points on some level. However, this is the “Left” also plausibly used the grassroots—whether they can represent the organized movement more than the actual people affected by the issues addressed. So do we have a “movement of movements”—or was the USSF an “orga- nization of organizations”? Is the “Left” simply a mixture of relatively privileged people and full-time paid organizers who get to choose to speak up? Are the “grassroots” simply disenchanted people who organize for their very survival on spare time from their low-paid jobs? In other words, is the “Left” thoroughly unrepresentative of the grassroots? Where, exactly, is the overlap, the synthesis? If you paid attention, the USSF highlighted these challenges and questions. Despite the holistic sense that we are all fighting for healthy communities and against the same arrangements, we’re learning not just to respect but also work with people—and policies, tactics, and strategies—we may never have seriously considered.

LOOKING BACK WHILE MOVING FORWARD

If it were as simple as having common goals or enemies, looking back while moving forward would be easy. Of course, there were plenty of groups who agreed to disagree; ask every cook can govern.

Marchers filling the streets

are still very divided—by demographics, privilege, displacement, violence, misunderstanding, and disrespect. Flashback to U.S. Movement History 101: betrayal after betrayal of people of color by white allies, poor people by unions, lesbians by [straight] feminists. We are living this history, and yet I was still shocked, for a few seconds, by the white woman who first claimed that “there’s no Indigenous issues in Ohio,” backtracked to “I meant there are no Indians in Ohio,” and ended up at “well, there are no reservations in Ohio.” One of the most powerful representatives was Jabbar Magruder, a young Black man from Iraq Veterans Against the War: his anger was as directed against the anti-war movement for tokenizing and silencing him as it was against the war itself. None of the problems at the USSF were new to any of us, even if this was the first one.

In the run-up to the USSF, separate Forums were held (the largest were in the Southeast and Southwest) to build authentic grassroots leadership. So not only were the 1,000 USSF workshops run and attended by a majority of people of color, women, and youth, (70-80%), 60%, and over 50%, respectively, according to Project South’s (and some Scotts)—but also the logistics (funding, housing, transportation, programming, media, communication, cultural events) were planned and executed by these same people. So, the South—the non-profit, grassroots South—did pull it off after all. And now what? What about the internal politics we all know from experience are there—jockeying for “issue” turf and money, despite the non-501(c)(3) shorting budget of under a million self-raised dollars? Logistically, there were a few glaring hitches—but wasn’t the whole thing too spread out, too inaccessible, with too little time between workshops?

Debating these nitty-gritty questions—the heated ones that can destroy friendships—is actually what this is all about. If democracy is a process as well as a goal, how do we bring more people on board? Fundraise more effectively? Balance analysis, debate, strategy, and decision-making? Make venues more accessible? Keep it real, keep it grassroots? Here’s the real kick— if the USSF was supposed to build movement power in the South, what did Atlanta’s poor majority get out of it—besides tips if they were working at one of the posh hotels we stayed at? Answer: we don’t know, we won’t know for a while. For organizers, trying to actually measure our effectiveness—oh, we know what you’re thinking—and, of course, it remains to be seen how Iran policy. The recent Iran-U.S. standoff is a prolonged Great Game.

The only sure bet is that the only safe-stakes game that ends well is that of radical grassroots democracy, the idea that is best summed up in four simple words from C.L.R. James—every cook can govern.

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with Iran as result of the assistance the Quad force had provided them in the 1980’s against Saddam Hussein.

As part of this “redirection”—I would prefer the term “refocusing”—the Administration has started to complain about Iran’s meddling in Iraqi affairs and accuses its regime of training terrorists and providing munitions to the radical Shiites. The U.S. military has arrested hundreds of Iranians in Iraq, many of whom have turned out to be humanitarians and aid workers. According to Paul Streitz, the U.S. has also placed Special Ops and CIA teams inside Iran as well as stationing two full carrier groups in the Persian Gulf. The Iranian regime insists that any Iranian involvement in Iraq takes place at its own request and targets only radical Sunni cells and Muqada al-Sadr’s anti-government anti-American guerrilla group. Indeed, the interest of the Iranian regime is best served if factional fighting and terrorist attacks end, and the governmental and constitutional arrangements that were shaped with the help of the U.S. start working. Even Bush admits that any connection between these activities and the high echelons of Iranian administration has started to complain about Iran; the rest are pretty much silent. Given this, possibly most importantly, people relate to people, not abstract concepts. These are the principles of radical grassroots democracy, the idea that is best summed up in four simple words from C.L.R. James—every cook can govern.