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.

EDITORS/FACILITATORS:
Marya Burke
Brady Collins
Glynn Davis
Brian Delinar
davep
Belden Fields
Bob Illyes
Paul Moth
Neil Partham
Niloofar Shambayati

The Public i
Urbana-Champaign IMC
202 South Broadway
Urbana, IL, 61801
217-344-8820
www.ucimc.org

Reader Feedback
Comments on Public i articles may be emailed to print (at) ucimc.org. Send the email with the word “comment” in the subject line.

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

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

World Harvest International
Socialist Forum: An Open Discussion and Action Group, Meets 3rd Saturdays of the month, 3-5 pm, at IMC, Broadway & Elm. (U)
Campus Faculty Association (CFA)
The Natural Gourmet
Progressive Asset Management, Financial West Group
Jerusalem Cafe
Socialist and Solidarity Food
The AFL-CIO of Champaign County
That’s Rentertainment
Milo’s Restaurant
AWARE, the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort
Meetings every Sunday at 5pm at the IMC
The Natural Gourmet
Jerusalem Cafe
World Harvest International

—Installation by Internationally Renown Graffiti Artist Banksy

24 Hours In Gaza
Martin Smith
Page 1

Tasers, The Ups and Downs
Ellen Baranowski
Page 3

The Ethnic Violence
Brady Collins
Page 5

The 2009 European Elections
Belden Fields
Page 6
I first want to thank the CAU for their support of my participation in the Viva Palestina delegation. There is amazing local solidarity for justice in Palestine, and many people gave generously to make my trip possible.

The Viva Palestina delegation, led by British Member of Parliament, George Galloway and former Green Party Presidential candidate, Cynthia McKinney, negotiated one bureaucratic obstacle after another from Egyptian authorities. The convoy finally left for the Rafah border crossing after several days with some of its supplies barred from getting through.

The delegation of solidarity activists was allowed to enter Gaza on July 15 with truckloads of desperately needed humanitarian supplies—but under the condition that the convoy leave again within 24 hours.

On Thursday morning, we began with a tour of the destruction. Everything and everyone was targeted. Mosques were destroyed and graveyards shelled. In fact, you will find none of the minarets common to most mosques throughout the Middle East, because they were all bombed. Destruction of religious institutions is a war crime.

We saw shelled hospitals and burned out ambulances rotting away in ruins—all part of the debris of Gaza. There has been little reconstruction because the over two-year siege by the Israelis has made materials scarce. Basic medical supplies, trash disposal, amenities that we take for granted in the US, have been little reconstruction because the over two-year siege by the Israelis has made materials scarce. Basic medical supplies, trash disposal, amenities that we take for granted in the US.

Pictures of the destruction of the American International School in Gaza have been shown around the world. We were all shocked at this example of the extreme, savage brutality of the Israelis against Gaza.

Where other parts of Gaza had partially wrecked buildings and remnants still standing, this entire working-class area was almost completely leveled. We witnessed the ruins of a concrete factory, a stone and building factory, and a juice factory. The attacks destroyed not only buildings, but people who were at work there as well.

Israel is a country of occupation, foreign nation, and apartment dwelling. Gaza graffiti comes in four kinds. One is for electioneering and political campaigns. Another marks where a particular political faction has control, such as, “Hamas resisted for the protection of the city.” We also saw “Al-Aqsa Brigade” and “Freedom Fighters Brigade.” A third type marked where a martyr had given his or her life.

The final category includes political and social messages. We were moved by the power and will of Gazans to endure and struggle, as captured in these art forms, of grassroots resistance with slogans like: “Unity is a bounty and a blessing to the resistance.” “The strength of our community is the hallmark of our civilization.” “Jerusalem will always be the capital of Palestine.” “Resistance and struggle is the way to victory.” “Our future is bright.” “With patriotism and unity, we will move forward.” “Make your voice heard.” and “A commitment to martyrdom, refugees and our Jerusalem.”

In speaking with many of the volunteer translators, I asked them what they wanted Americans to know. Mohammad Aladda, who lives in Jabaliya said:

“I hope that peace will spread among our countries in order that we may live as the whole people among the world and have our rights. I had 17 neighbors killed during the war, including 10 who were in one house, and they were mostly women and children. During the bombing, we were scared, and now we have so many children suffering from psychological pains. Whenever they hear a loud noise, they cry out, “A bomb! A bomb!” and start crying.

In fact, a recent study found that 73% of Gaza children are suffering from behavioral disorders due to the Israeli war, and there is a significant deterioration in the psychological well being of children living in the Gaza Strip. Mohammad continued:

We had so many martyrs that we buried. When there was a martyr, the sheik informed the neighborhood by chaining from the mosque, and we then prepared a public burial. From everywhere, Israel was so brutal and savage. We had funerals every day, so many funerals. It was like hell. Darkness was all around, even during the day. The streets were empty, and no one could work. The bombs surrounded us.

Mohamad added that in northern Jabaliya at Ben Lahia, near where he lives:

The people now practice their daily life, because there’s nothing to be afraid of from the U.S.-made bombs, tanks, F-16s and helicopters any longer. They aren’t afraid because so many of their family members were killed. They feel like they have nothing left to fear. People prefer to practice their daily life as if it was before the war. They are not afraid because so many of their family members were killed. They feel like they have nothing left to fear.

Another translator, Mahmood Elhajj commented:

The last war on Gaza was beyond description, it is hard to describe the situation when you are near to death, the whole areas are burning around you and the sky is full of different kinds of Israel’s fighter planes hitting everything that moves. So what I would like to say and what I would like Americans to know is that we live in a tightened deadly siege. We need for all of the free world, and especially the Americans, to increase the pressure and their efforts more and more to break the intolerable siege. We, as Palestinians, just want to live in peace, nothing but peace.

After the tour we went to a special meeting of family members whose children have been detained and are in Israeli jails. We put a face to one of the detainees via a picture a man shared with us of his son.

After we delivered the supplies to the hospital, we returned to the hotel for a final ceremony of thanks and salutations. The day had been so busy that it was difficult to fully grasp the import and meaning of the past 24 hours. I can say that I never felt sadness throughout the day. In retrospect, I wonder why I had 17 neighbors killed during the war, including 10 who were in one house, and they were mostly women and children. During the bombing, we were scared, and now we have so many children suffering from psychological pains. Whenever they hear a loud noise, they cry out, “A bomb! A bomb!” and start crying.

In fact, a recent study found that 73% of Gaza children are suffering from behavioral disorders due to the Israeli war, and there is a significant deterioration in the psychological well being of children living in the Gaza Strip. Mohammad continued:
Vigil for Reform at Tamms Supermax Prison in Southern Illinois

By Conrad Weitzel

Amnesty International in October 2005, only 4 countries (the U.S., China, Pakistan, and Iran) were known to impose LWOP sentences for juveniles worldwide. The U.S. stands unabashed against our international reputation.

Unilaterally Punitive

By Joseph Dole

At Tamms, whether their condition is caused by solitary confinement or other illnesses, often do not receive adequate care. Participants of the crimes, but were rather found guilty by way of a conscience. The ignorance of the State Department is astounding when you consider that close to 60% of these juveniles serving LWOP have no prior convictions.

Approximately 10 percent of the 73 kids aged 13 or 14 who were sentenced to die in prison in the U.S. have served sentences of solitary confinement or other illnesses. Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution prohibits LWOP sentences for juveniles. More recent studies have shown that even when a person is only 13 years old, they have shown the ability to fully mature until the age of 18. Nevertheless, in 1978 the Illinois legislature passed a law making all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Prior to this a law was passed in 1998 that made all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Now almost all of them. As has been shown time and again, our criminal justice system is broken and more than 100 people have been put on death row for crimes they were later found to be innocent of. In Illinois, more people were exonerated from death row than executed when former Governor Ryan, finally had enough and called a moratorium.

People sentenced to LWOP (there are over 1,400 in Illinois alone) went through this same broken system, but without the added safeguards afforded to people sentenced with the death penalty. Thus it is much more difficult for a lifer who was wrongly convicted to get his conviction overturned, ergo many innocent people are almost definitely serving LWOP sentences than were sentenced to be executed. This is especially so since there are many more people sentenced to LWOP than to death each year.

The courts have unanimously decided that sentencing a juvenile to LWOP does not violate the 8th Amendment right against cruel and unusual punishment. The hypocrisy of many LWOP sentencing schemes and court rulings is glaring. Take Illinois as an example: Article 1, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution specifically states, “All penalties shall be determined both according to the seriousness of the offense and with the objective of restoring the offender to useful citizenship,” and part (d) of the purposes of the Illinois Code of Corrections is likewise to “restore offenders to useful citizenship.” Nevertheless, in 1978 the Illinois legislature passed a law making all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Prior to this a law was passed in 1998 that made all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Now almost all of them. As has been shown time and again, our criminal justice system is broken and more than 100 people have been put on death row for crimes they were later found to be innocent of. In Illinois, more people were exonerated from death row than executed when former Governor Ryan, finally had enough and called a moratorium.

People sentenced to LWOP (there are over 1,400 in Illinois alone) went through this same broken system, but without the added safeguards afforded to people sentenced with the death penalty. Thus it is much more difficult for a lifer who was wrongly convicted to get his conviction overturned, ergo many innocent people are almost definitely serving LWOP sentences than were sentenced to be executed. This is especially so since there are many more people sentenced to LWOP than to death each year.

The courts have unanimously decided that sentencing a juvenile to LWOP does not violate the 8th Amendment right against cruel and unusual punishment. The hypocrisy of many LWOP sentencing schemes and court rulings is glaring. Take Illinois as an example: Article 1, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution specifically states, “All penalties shall be determined both according to the seriousness of the offense and with the objective of restoring the offender to useful citizenship,” and part (d) of the purposes of the Illinois Code of Corrections is likewise to “restore offenders to useful citizenship.” Nevertheless, in 1978 the Illinois legislature passed a law making all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Prior to this a law was passed in 1998 that made all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Now almost all of them. As has been shown time and again, our criminal justice system is broken and more than 100 people have been put on death row for crimes they were later found to be innocent of. In Illinois, more people were exonerated from death row than executed when former Governor Ryan, finally had enough and called a moratorium.

People sentenced to LWOP (there are over 1,400 in Illinois alone) went through this same broken system, but without the added safeguards afforded to people sentenced with the death penalty. Thus it is much more difficult for a lifer who was wrongly convicted to get his conviction overturned, ergo many innocent people are almost definitely serving LWOP sentences than were sentenced to be executed. This is especially so since there are many more people sentenced to LWOP than to death each year.

The courts have unanimously decided that sentencing a juvenile to LWOP does not violate the 8th Amendment right against cruel and unusual punishment. The hypocrisy of many LWOP sentencing schemes and court rulings is glaring. Take Illinois as an example: Article 1, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution specifically states, “All penalties shall be determined both according to the seriousness of the offense and with the objective of restoring the offender to useful citizenship,” and part (d) of the purposes of the Illinois Code of Corrections is likewise to “restore offenders to useful citizenship.” Nevertheless, in 1978 the Illinois legislature passed a law making all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Prior to this a law was passed in 1998 that made all life sentences in Illinois LWOP. Now almost all of them. As has been shown time and again, our criminal justice system is broken and more than 100 people have been put on death row for crimes they were later found to be innocent of. In Illinois, more people were exonerated from death row than executed when former Governor Ryan, finally had enough and called a moratorium.
**Tasers, the Upside and the Downside**

By Ellen Baranowski

Ellen Baranowski is a member of Champaign County's Teachers and members of Coalition of Citizens Concerned about Tasers.

The death of over 400 people in the U.S. has been “proximate” (shortly after) to the use of tasers. This phrase must be used because the scientific research does not yet exist, which would show the number of taser shots that crossed a threshold into lethal territory. Many people have encountered their death proximate to tasering with multiple or prolonged taser shots. The research on what taser use does to the chest in the minutes to hours up to post-mortem cardiac arrest has yielded mixed results. More will be done. Research needs to happen on why so many of the dead proximate to tasering are in a category known as “excited delirium.” This could be, as Taser International claims, that these people are on their way to death in any case, with their elevated body core temperatures, or it might be that there are better methods that could be used to preserve their lives.

There is a completely different type of downside to the theory of tasers saving lives: somewhere between 80% and 90% of those dead proximate to tasering were unarmed! It is a fairly unusual case (and outside of policy) in which police use guns on individuals who are not in possession of a weapon on their person. It could be that the police are choosing the taser as the weapon, so they do not have the gun option, but in our county (Champaign), the use of force policy of the Sheriff states that police are not to use tasers when someone else is holding a weapon unless that police officer is covered by another police officer carrying a gun.

The biggest downside to tasers is that they are increasingly used around the country at use-of-force levels below #2 and #4, they are also used against “active resisters” (#3) and “passive resisters” (#2), which includes anyone who does not comply with orders readily or gives the officer “backtalk.” Each police department in the country is free to cash in its policy for placing the taser situationally. The police officer is then bound by the department policy, not by any law.

The now infamous, recent case in point was the 72-year-old woman in Texas who refused to sign her traffic ticket, and when the officer said he might have to taser her, she said “I dare you.” Then he did. Children as young as six have been tasered in Florida, where School Resource Officers have tasers. Children, as parents will attest, have a non-compliant tendency. So do the mentally ill, who are getting tasered in hospitals for the physically ill and for the mentally ill. (you can call the Sheriff for your County too) as well as in jail/prisons and on the streets.

**ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ABUSE**

Without such oversight for police compliance, tasers are easy to abuse. For instance, they have been used to torture prisoners in jails. Four incidents in the Champaign County Jail came to light in the ‘05 Champaign County jail task force field study’, (reported on in the AMA review of research on tasers, June, 2000) illustrates the possibility of saving lives of suspects. The Dallas Police Department activate tasers #26 times from Nov. 2004 to January 2006. “All suspects who were subdued by these methods were evaluated by paramedics, the jail intake nurse, or a PD tactical physician. One subject in the “excited delirium” state (h dysregulated body temperature - 107 degrees in the ER) collapsed and died after two standard discharges. No other suspect had an injury requiring treatment other than simple...”

**THE NON-LETHAL MYTH**

Tasers seem to have become entrenched in American society with amazing ease and speed. How can we get a handle on the situation? Is it possible to move in the direction of the original vision of “protecting life by taser”? Maybe. But first, the myth of the non-lethal weapon that “never killed anyone” (Taser International website, www.Taser.com and the Police Training Institute at the University of Illinois) has to be shoved aside as the advertising hype that it is, coming from the manufacturer of this device, Taser International.

For how many decades did the cigarette industry advertise that “four out of five doctors say that smoking is not harmful to your health?” This myth has a lethal effect all of its own because it is a sidelong comment in the training that is done by Taser International to police departments. Corporations who have written on death certificates that death was due to tasering or that it contributed to death have been successfully sued internationally. Despite protests from the American Association of Forensic Pathologists and the Association of Medical Examiners, this stands as a legal fiction. It is legally impossible to die from tasing, which is why only one of 78 suits for wrongful death against Taser International has been won. This will change only with continuing scientific medical research done independently of Taser International, which has sponsored much of the research to date. Meanwhile, the relatives and advocates for those dead proximate to tasering are having somewhat better luck with lawsuits against police departments or Sheriffs. There was one filed recently against the Peoria Police Department for tasering a severely autistic young man twelve times. He died. Thus, the police officer can be caught in the middle between the training that does not inform him of all the involved and what can happen as a result of tasing - a) the wrong person, i.e. an at-risk person who is not threatening the life or safety of another or b) tasing too many times for any individual to sustain.

**WHAT CITIZENS CAN DO?**

The final piece that needs to change is up to citizens to demand:

A) A reasonable use-of-force policy that does not give police the right to shoot 50,000 volts of electricity for five seconds via barbs in the flesh for any transgression at all, but restricts it to situations of violence (number 4 and 5 on the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center scale). Amazingly, the placement of tasers at a level of force is totally up to the discretion of each police department (GAO report).

B) A public use-of-force policy statement, up on departmental websites, not a document that must be FOIA’d. C) A procedure following a death proximate to tasering that is similar to what is employed for guns. When a person is killed by police gunfire, the police officers are given a period of time off while an investigation is done as to whether the actions taken were proper, and a report is given to the news media.

D) Accountability by such means as a Civilian-Police Review Board, so that internal review can be called into question by the public without the expense and agony of lawsuits.

In the process, the police and the public might even learn things, so as to better protect all of us - to save injury and lives.

---

An entrance requirement to the European Union is that the death penalty be outlawed in the joining country. Concerning life imprisonment, the Council of Europe in 1995 stated, “A crime prevention policy which accepts keeping a prisoner for life even if he is no longer a danger to society would be compat- ible neither with modern principles and norms abroad nor with the ideas of reintegra- tion of offenders into society.” Both the Euro- pean Court of Human Rights as well as the German Constitutional Court have held that a term of life imprisonment must include the possibility of release. Both Brazil and Portugal have banned LWOP sentences. In Spain the maximum sentence one can serve is 40 years. In a country where three-fourths of the population describes themselves as Christians, it is astonishing how few seem to believe in forgiveness and redemption, and how many champion punishment and retribution.

In the words of United States Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, “Our resources are mispent, our punishments are misused, our long sentences are misused. Long Courts may conclude the legislature is per- mitted to choose long sentences, but that does not mean long sentences are wise or just. [All people confident in its laws and institutions should not be ashamed of mercy.” Well said, too bad few are listening.

---

Unilaterally Punitive

Continued from previous page

---

www.ucimc.org / www.publici.ucimc.org

the Public i • 3

August 2009

Get Involved with the Public i

You don’t need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The Public i is always looking for writers and story proposals. 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.
A Memorial for Archie Green: A Union Man, Laborlore Scholar, Folklife Advocate and Legend

By Ron Peters

THIS PAST MARCH, ARCHIE GREEN passed away. He was 91. Archie collected and catalogued songs, poems, and stories produced by ordinary people that described their work experiences, and their lives as workers. He studied Library Science at the University of Illinois and worked as librarian at the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations through the 1950s. Archie was an energetic and enthusiastic advocate for workers’ culture. He coined the term “folklore” which included all the things workers produced on how they related to their work and community environment.

Ron Peters is Professor Emeritus of Labor and Industrial Relations at the U of I and former head of the Labor Education Program.

Archie was fascinated by the stories workers told. He experienced this first hand on work sites. He joined the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, was in the Seabees in the South Pacific during World War II, and worked as a journeyman shipwright in the San Francisco shipyards in the post war years. He was a life-long member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. He combined this experience with his life-long love of country and western music. In the merger of these he searched for and discovered troves of music composed by unnamed workers passed down from one generation to the next.

Archie earned a doctorate in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation was on the songs of Kentuck coal miners and was published in 1972 as Only a Miner. He was one of the early scholars and collectors of the work songs. Archie collected and catalogued songs, poems, and stories produced by ordinary people that described their work experiences, and their lives as workers.

Archie was an energetic and enthusiastic advocate for workers’ culture. He coined the term “folklore” which included all the things workers produced on how they related to their work and community environment.

Beginning in 1969, Archie lobbied Congress to create the National Folklore Center. In 1976, Congress passed the American Folklore Preservation Act, establishing the Center at the Library of Congress. In 2007, Archie was given the Living Legend Award by the Librarians of Congress at a conference sponsored by the American Folklore Center.

As a scholar, Archie has a long list of publications. His most recent in 2007, The Big Red Songbook, features the lyrics of 150 songs included in editions of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Red Little Red Songbooks from 1900 to 1973. Archie inherited the project from John Neusha, a machinist and IWW member who died in 1998. Archie vowed to complete the edition.

Archie Green was an effective teacher because he was always learning from his students. In 1973 in Washington, I sat in on a class Archie was teaching for a group of union leaders on labor music. The music he used was on tape as Archie was not a performer. He played a song he had recorded that had been written and performed by a member of the Operating Engineers Union. This union represents crane and heavy construction equipment operators. The song was titled, “Pan Man Joe”. A pan man is the operator of a large machine called a pan which scoops up a large amount of earth or rock, and then dumps it in another nearby area. There happened to be in the class, a business agent from an Operating Engineers local. He said pan men were always on good terms with bull dozer operators. Dozers frequently have to push the pan machines through particularly hard ground in order for them to take on an adequate load. If the dozer operator doesn’t like the pan man he hits the pan with the dozer blade, sometimes shaking the pan man off his small seat at the controls. So on construction sites, pan men are usually quite deferential to dozer operators. Archie could take a little story like this and later fashion it into some larger examples of how different groups of workers relate to each other because of some on-the-job requirement or interdependence. Archie showed an undying curiosity and respect for the experiences of working people as told through their stories. He was a good teacher because he was first a good listener.

The Fast Sooner Hound,” one of Archie’s favorite songs, will be performed by Stephen Wade to complete the program. A reception will follow the program. The event is free and open to the public.

THE PEOPLE’S COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Sunday, September 6, 6–8 PM, Independent Media Center, 202 South Broadway, Urbana

The idea behind the People’s Community Potluck, a food-sharing communal gathering to discuss the economic and social problems in our community. The intention is to harness the talents and resources of local organizations and individuals to improve the conditions of working people, unemployed people, poverty-stricken people, and those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Given the sorry state of the economy and government economic policy over the past 8 years, which has been most concerned the talents and resources of local organizations and individuals to improve the conditions of working people, unemployed people, poverty-stricken people, and those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Given the sorry state of the economy and government economic policy over the past 8 years, which has been most concerned
Ethnic Violence in China: A Conflict Under Wraps

By Brady Collins

Brady Collins is a student and a Civic Leadership Fellow at the University of Illinois, studying Economics and International Studies. The following is his first article for the Public.

China has lost a lot of blood this month, and as it continues to dribble red, the rest of the world is struggling to understand China’s inability to have anticipated and managed the situation. China is rife with ethnic conflict, and the clashes have grown increasingly brutal as the government fails to face the music and attempt to not only ease, but understand the roots of their own ethnic divides.

It is a complex state of affairs, where the majority Hans and the minority Uighurs are dissatisfied and feels that they are both the victim, and the scapegoat. The quarrel is the unfortunate product of a variety of factors that cannot be easily undone. For some time now, the Uighurs have criticized the Chinese government for suppressing their language, culture and religion. More recently, they have argued that the government has created policies that encourage the Hans to migrate to Kashgar, an ancient city where their civilization first began. As the Hans began receiving the more desirable state jobs, the Uighurs were forced to move elsewhere seeking employment. Hence a kind of cross migration occurred. Once fairly separate communities began mixing and competing for the same jobs and houses, historically creating a tension that only takes a small spark to engulf in flames.

The Hans have issued their own grievances. They claim that the government gives the Uighurs unfair advantages on college placement exams. The Uighurs, like other minorities, are also exempt from the one child policy that restrains the Hans. There is a general failure by both sides to find any sort of empathy to decrease their bitter sentiments, a result of the absence of any sort of local policy reform. Their unique place under a Chinese government that has not fostered discussion between the two parties. Therefore the Uighurs, a Muslim population and Turkish speakers, are not fully accepted by a largely homogenous society.

The deadliest wave came at the beginning of the month in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, when a group of frustrated Uighur youths viciously attacked a community of Hans. The clash took almost 200 lives, several of which were taken by the government troops’ own gunfire as they attempted to intervene. Several days later, the two sides began brutally assassinating each other once again, this time at a factory in coastal China. Again, hundreds were killed, many injured, and the government could only offer an explanation that it was a misunderstanding, the director of the Foreign Affairs Office comparing it to a quarrel between husband and wife. However, this has proven to be a marriage of inconvenience as uprisings continue to take the lives of civilian non-combattants. Any violent outbreak by one party is quickly justified as a response to another and the aftermath largely consists of pointing fingers and counting casualties.

As the aggressive emotions continue to boil, the Chinese government continues to offer such absurd defenses in order to ease the discomfort their international cohorts and potential business partners. Most recently Beijing has denounced a Uighur activist, Rebiya Kadeer, for traveling as she is one of the reasons for the bloodshed, evidently worried that she might spread awareness of China’s oppression of the Uighurs. She has made several statements denouncing her government, claiming that they are responsible for several thousand people disappearing in the Xinjiang region one night without any explanation.

This testimony will undoubtedly attract the international spotlight, and China is anxiously trying to attain a conversation with Japan’s ambassador to reduce his biased feelings. They are pulling for an image that would have us believe this is merely a blip in the radar, that it is not a human rights concern, and more importantly that they have all it under control. But, this does not appear to be an isolated incident to be brushed off by history. The fight between Uighurs and Hans is very relevant, a devastating result of the economic policies that have now erupted given China’s failure to integrate its minorities into a diverse, accepting society.

And so, the situation continues to evolve and the government will spin it how it sees fit, reducing the killing to mere quarrelling and hand slapping between neighbors. But, the conflict between the Hans and Uighurs, like many ethnic disputes, has deep roots and deserves a more profound analysis of historical and cultural differences, geo-politics, and the kind of mediation that can only come about when a government comes to terms with its own internal flaws. These issues are not new skeletons in the closet for China. A bitter history with the Tibetans and the exile Dalai Lama bears a striking resemblance to the recent unrest, the Tibetan criticisms against the government nearly one in the same with the Uighurs’. A resolution would entail the regime taking a long gaze in the mirror, not to mention an intense redistribution of governmental priorities.

China’s heavily nationalized business sector has helped his government for disregarding civil rights when you are in severe debt and in need of a helping hand. The Chinese government continues to offer such absurd defenses by more important political necessities. Still, given President Obama’s allegations diplomatic-soror-fare, our future relationship could definitely benefit from a shared concern for internal affairs as well. Obama surely knows a thing or two about how to integrate minorities and organize communities peacefully. The future will remain unknown, but as history shows us this kind of ethnic hatred is best not to be underestimated or ignored. While the President smiles and shakes hands with our Chinese allies, he may want to be checking to see if there is blood on them.

Folk & Roots Fundraiser

Music for the Young and Young at Heart is the theme of the upcoming fundraiser for the Campaign Urbana Folk and Roots Festival. The fundraiser will take place Sunday August 23rd Noon to 8pm at Channing Murray Foundation and the Red Herr Coffeehouse located at 1209 West Oregon, Urbana. Donations will gladly be accepted at the door. The festival itself is scheduled for September 25th and 26th in and around downtown Urbana.

For the latest updates go to www.cufolkandroots.org

Contact Ed Hawkes at: oltime1@att.net, or phone 217-493-4654 for information.

AmeriCorps Positions at UCIMC

We are excited to announce that the UCIMC is hiring for 8 full-time AmeriCorps volunteers starting this fall!

We are accepting applications for: News Media (including the Public i and WRFU) Coordinator, Building Management, Books to Prisoners Volunteer Coordinator, The Bike Project Volunteer Coordinator, Web/Technical Projects Developer, Performance Venue Coordinator, School for Designing a Society Program Coordinator and Gender Issues Program Developer.

The deadline for most of the applications is August 21. All the job descriptions are available at: http://ucimc.org/content/ucimc-hire-8-state-ameri corps-fall-applications-requested.

Contact Nicole Pion for more information: Nicole.pion@gmail.com

Afghanistan Article Clarifications

By Shehroz A. Sharif

I would like to express my gratitude to the Public i for allowing Margaret Fitzpatrick to highlight the problems taking place in Afghanistan in her article “Afghanistan, a Beautiful Place Now Covered in Landmines”. However, there are some inconsistencies within the article that need to be addressed.

To clarify, the article stated that my family and I were on the last commercial flight to leave Afghanistan. While that was true in 1978, flights have since resumed. The statement that the Taliban proved “more divisive and destructive than any previous tyranny” is perhaps careless. While they have proven themselves ruthless oppressors, it minimizes the human rights abuses that occurred during the Soviet invasion and ignores the corruption under President Daud.

While the “six degrees of separation” network did ultimately lead my aunt, Dr. Ziaia Shirzad-Shamley, to a cooperative endeavor with the Feminist Majority, it is important to distinguish the fact that she had already established her non-profit organization, WAPFIA (Women’s Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan) several years prior. Additionally, the Tajik versus Pashtun mentality described by Fitzpatrick I find to be detrimental to the healing of the country.

As for the specific dates mentioned, I was attached to HC-4 in 1991, not 1990, which was the year I joined the Navy. I was deployed for the third campaign of the Gulf War in August of 1992. I appreciate the Public i for giving me the opportunity to bring these issues to light.
WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS?

The answer cannot be sought uniquely within France because the Right beat the Left in almost all of the countries of the EU. Part of the reason has to be that the Left is simply not convincing the voting public throughout Europe that they have a program and/or a sufficiently competent list of candidates that can deal with the complex issues, like economy and immigration. Some of it certainly is a backlash against immigration and the feeling that the Left is too sympathetic with immigrants and their cultures and too soft on crime. Indeed, it is fair to say that the major reason that Sarkozy rose to where he is was his tough law-and-order line on immigrant youth when he was Minister of Interior, and thus head of the National Police. The issues of race and cultural differences have been played skillfully by politicians on the Right throughout Europe.

But there are also issues specific to France. The French Socialist Party has become a bit like the British Labour Party in that it has lost a sense of vision. In the 1970s, while it was still obliged to share the space on the Left with the Communists and the former Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), it was forced to negotiate with them to come up with common programs for substantial change. After the severe decline of the Communists and the disappearance of the PSU, the imperative to define itself programmatically seems to have dissipated. It has relied too heavily upon "party loyalty.

A related problem is that the party has been factionalized around specific personalities. That was even true back in the 1970s and 1980s when I did much of my research on the French Left. It took a very skilled politician, François Mitterrand, to work the party internally and appeal sufficiently to the voters to capture the big prize in French politics, the presidency. But Mitterrand was at once pragmatic and programmatic in his approach to politics, and he was skilled in his maneuvering with the Communists, which he helped weaken (e.g., by joining with the Right in portraying them as racist) after the coalitions were pragmatic and programmatic in his approach to politics, and he was skilled in his maneuvering with the Communists, which he helped weaken (e.g., by joining with the Right in portraying them as racist) after the coalitions were

But there are also issues specific to France. The French Socialist Party has become a bit like the British Labour Party in that it has lost a sense of vision. In the 1970s, while it was still obliged to share the space on the Left with the Communists and the former Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), it was forced to negotiate with them to come up with common programs for substantial change. After the severe decline of the Communists and the disappearance of the PSU, the imperative to define itself programmatically seems to have dissipated. It has relied too heavily upon "party loyalty.

A related problem is that the party has been factionalized around specific personalities. That was even true back in the 1970s and 1980s when I did much of my research on the French Left. It took a very skilled politician, François Mitterrand, to work the party internally and appeal sufficiently to the voters to capture the big prize in French politics, the presidency. But Mitterrand was at once pragmatic and programmatic in his approach to politics, and he was skilled in his maneuvering with the Communists, which he helped weaken (e.g., by joining with the Right in portraying them as racist) after the coalitions were no longer useful to the Socialists. On the other hand, the prominent members of the PSU were simply absorbed by the Socialist Party.

Yet another problem for the Socialist Party has been that many of its traditional voters, middle-class people like teachers and other professionals, just deserted it in these elections. Some simply abstained. There was an unusually high 59.3% abstention rate of eligible voters in this election, a record for France. People have been so disaffected by the parties that the traditional Left has lost any real identity.

The election was a disaster for the Left. The electoral map shows that the Left was in a shambles. The French Greens are more than a single-issue group. While Cohn-Bendit helped to give rise to a kind of French "New Left" in the 1960s, he may now be helping to definitively do in the one remaining sizeable structure of the Old Left in France. Of course, those in the small parties to the left of the Socialist Party, which managed to win 5 seats in the European Parliament, will not shed any tears over that party’s demise. But neither will they embrace the triumph of "Dany the Red" morphed into Dany the Free Marketeer.

Next year’s regional elections in France will be particularly significant in framing the ideological spectrum of French domestic politics.

From The Front Lines In Honduras

By Bill Taylor

Bill Taylor lives at the Kalytics Center in rural Piatt County. He has worked since 1988 in solidarity with various Central American groups to improve radio communications. Planning of La Voz Lenca started in 2002, major construction in 2007, and ongoing engineering is ongoing to this day. Contact bill@illaryradio.org

Two years ago, a cooperative effort between our local Primary Communications Project and el COPINH, an indigenous peoples’ organization in La Ceiba, Honduras, built a powerful AM radio station to enable the Lenca Mayans to communicate their ideas. Honduras is signatory to an international covenant granting certain rights to native peoples, among which is free speech. It’s unusual these days to build a new AM radio station, but with AMs ability to penetrate into the isolated mountain valleys where many Lenca live, it can be an effective form of technology. So el COPINH sought and was awarded a license for La Voz Lenca AM, a kilowatt station which serves a good part of western Honduras where the Lenca live... and, it’s sister station to WRFU, Radio Free Urbana.

I’ve been listening to La Esperanza every so often to keep the transmitter running and make some improvements, so I had scheduled a trip for this summer... But when I arrived there time line in the afternoon of June 25th, I’m met at the bus station by my friends Justo Soto and Jorge Ramos. “Have you heard the news?” Justo asks. Immediately, my mind flashes to the internal conflicts that are all too common in community
From The Front Lines in Honduras

Continued from previous page

radio, but his next words are electrifying. “Mel Zelaya, our president, has been detained by order of the National Assem- bly, which has overridden the constitutional court in violation of the定制 Makes of America Exceptionalism. It was intriguing to check out the financial reports telling of Zelaya employees at Heartland winning money for their members. But the Knights died a vio- lent death during an early red scare’ following the struggle for an eight hour day.

An increasingly concentrated business class, with sup- port from its friends in government at many levels, brutal- ly attacked the Knights’ networks, killing many, jailing more, and bequeathing the field of organized labor to the more conservative unions. Kim Voss points out in The Myth of American Exceptionalism (Carroll 1990) that organized labor was able to retain a more open structure— and the left politics that come with it—only in countries like England and France where the employers were less willing to be authoritarian enough to use the state as a truncheon, or not as effectively.

As a result US workers, for generations largely bereft of organizational support for a more solidaristic worldview, largely do not know that almost every country in the world celebrates Labor Day on May 1, marking a fatal event in the struggle for the Eight Hour Day in Chicago—or that Pres. Grover Cleveland began our September Labor Day on behalf of US and other foreign businesses. One of these, Gelmart Industries, was recently involved in a sweatshop scandal involv- ing abusive working conditions. Also nearby in Ellingham, employees at Heartland Human services have been out of work, on strike then locked out by management, for two years during which management continues to receive funding from the sup- posedly cash-strapped State of Illinois for services largely not being provided.

The same State of Illinois in the recent past ‘borrowed’ from its workers’ pensions and now can’t pay the money back (and state employees won’t get Social Security either; because they pay into the pension plan instead). Now the state’s fig- ures are a joke to the general public, particularly when employees must take a pay cut this year (it’s called a ‘far-ough’ but many employees will still have to do the same thing in the future and the state is truly in bad shape, bad trade-off finding a second job to fill in the random days you may be out of work.) That’s why the upper echelons at the university have been busy earning their six-figure salaries pandering to the rich and powerful—tailoring admissions standards and creating cushy jobs.

Managers and politicians have little compunction about promoting such attacks on workers in large part because of the much-talked-about decline in organized labor and its political implications. More than the declining numbers since the 1970s, labor’s recent nadir has its roots back in the violation of the rights of the US labor that led to the rise of conservative unions, Voss argues. Pres. Ronald Reagan may have infamously fired the PATCO air traffic controllers, sug- naling open season for three decades of renewed attacks on the right to strike and their strike had been illegal for years owing to the influence of anti-labor politicians, many of them, like Reagan, endorsed by conservative unions—like PATCO.

The myopic, rightward drift of US labor, albeit uneven, certainly has played a role in aggressive US foreign policy, much of it aimed at ensuring cheap labor for US business. The AFL-CIO has colluded directly with the US government in busting leftist unions in other countries, and less directly US unions often support rightwing politicians—like Rea- gan—who then go on to undermine working conditions on an international scale. Presidents Clinton, Reagan and Bill Clinton have all used the same US-Latin American Free Trade Agreement and several Haitian FTZs were just a few examples that labor has had to regret—barely.

Yet there has always been resistance. A vision of more universal solidarity remains in place and Agit-Paint, and work of time new ground is gained and defeated is less total, as with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the early 20th century and later the Congress of Industrial Organiza- tions (CIO), both largely but not entirely broken by ‘red scare’ public-private partnerships. Unskilled labor of both sexes and many ethnic groups is now a permanent, unquestioned fixture within the labor movement, although by no means equally. The United Farm Workers, once brutally assimilated by Teamsters, is now a player in the AFL-CIO. New alliances formed in the ‘Battle of Seattle’ and other resistance against Clinton’s NAFTA in 1999 and the Zap- atista uprising in Mexico. The trend continues in the recent heartening embrace by once-myopic labor unions for groups like Jobs With Justice community-labor coalitions, United Students Against Sweatshops, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers—who organize farmworkers in the US, ‘sweatshops of the fields’—and US Labor Against the War, which works with workers and students in many countries, often in solidarity with the laborers. There are many divisions in labor and the true test of solidarity is likely to be in the crucible of recent economic disasters, when workers and their organizations will have to choose: wages in a circle or greater solidarity.

Continued from previous page

In the 1880s, the Knights of Labor constructed a much broader vision of organized labor than the ‘business unions’ of its craft union rivals that became the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The Knights welcomed unskilled workers, of any race or gender, into community-labor organizations that met concerns across the US at a time when AFL unions were essentially guilds of all white men focused solely on mak- ing money for their masters. But the Knights died a vio- lent death during an early red scare’ following the strug- gle for an eight hour day.

An increasingly concentrated business class, with sup- port from its friends in government at many levels, brutal- ly attacked the Knights’ networks, killing many, jailing more, and bequeathing the field of organized labor to the more conservative unions. Kim Voss points out in The Myth of American Exceptionalism (Carroll 1990) that organized labor was able to retain a more open structure— and the left politics that come with it—only in countries like England and France where the employers were less willing to be authoritarian enough to use the state as a truncheon, or not as effectively.

As a result US workers, for generations largely bereft of organizational support for a more solidaristic worldview, largely do not know that almost every country in the world celebrates Labor Day on May 1, marking a fatal event in the struggle for the Eight Hour Day in Chicago—or that Pres. Grover Cleveland began our September Labor Day on behalf of US and other foreign businesses. One of these, Gelmart Industries, was recently involved in a sweatshop scandal involv- ing abusive working conditions. Also nearby in Ellingham, employees at Heartland Human services have been out of work, on strike then locked out by management, for two years during which management continues to receive funding from the sup- posedly cash-strapped State of Illinois for services largely not being provided.

The same State of Illinois in the recent past ‘borrowed’ from its workers’ pensions and now can’t pay the money back (and state employees won’t get Social Security either; because they pay into the pension plan instead). Now the state’s fig- ures are a joke to the general public, particularly when employees must take a pay cut this year (it’s called a ‘far-ough’ but many employees will still have to do the same thing in the future and the state is truly in bad shape, bad trade-off finding a second job to fill in the random days you may be out of work.) That’s why the upper echelons at the university have been busy earning their six-figure salaries pandering to the rich and powerful—tailoring admissions standards and creating cushy jobs.

Managers and politicians have little compunction about promoting such attacks on workers in large part because of the much-talked-about decline in organized labor and its political implications. More than the declining numbers since the 1970s, labor’s recent nadir has its roots back in the violation of the rights of the US labor that led to the rise of conservative unions, Voss argues. Pres. Ronald Reagan may have infamously fired the PATCO air traffic controllers, sug- naling open season for three decades of renewed attacks on the right to strike and their strike had been illegal for years owing to the influence of anti-labor politicians, many of them, like Reagan, endorsed by conservative unions—like PATCO.

The myopic, rightward drift of US labor, albeit uneven, certainly has played a role in aggressive US foreign policy, much of it aimed at ensuring cheap labor for US business. The AFL-CIO has colluded directly with the US government in busting leftist unions in other countries, and less directly US unions often support rightwing politicians—like Rea- gan—who then go on to undermine working conditions on an international scale. Presidents Clinton, Reagan and Bill Clinton have all used the same US-Latin American Free Trade Agreement and several Haitian FTZs were just a few examples that labor has had to regret—barely.

Yet there has always been resistance. A vision of more universal solidarity remains in place and Agit-Paint, and work of time new ground is gained and defeated is less total, as with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the early 20th century and later the Congress of Industrial Organiza- tions (CIO), both largely but not entirely broken by ‘red scare’ public-private partnerships. Unskilled labor of both sexes and many ethnic groups is now a permanent, unquestioned fixture within the labor movement, although by no means equally. The United Farm Workers, once brutally assimilated by Teamsters, is now a player in the AFL-CIO. New alliances formed in the ‘Battle of Seattle’ and other resistance against Clinton’s NAFTA in 1999 and the Zap- atista uprising in Mexico. The trend continues in the recent heartening embrace by once-myopic labor unions for groups like Jobs With Justice community-labor coalitions, United Students Against Sweatshops, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers—who organize farmworkers in the US, ‘sweatshops of the fields’—and US Labor Against the War, which works with workers and students in many countries, often in solidarity with the laborers. There are many divisions in labor and the true test of solidarity is likely to be in the crucible of recent economic disasters, when workers and their organizations will have to choose: wages in a circle or greater solidarity.