The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The U.S. Signed this Convention in 1980 but the Senate never ratified it.

ARTICLE 11 [CONCERNING WOMEN’S LABOR RIGHTS]

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
   (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
   (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
   (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
   (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work.
   (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;
   (f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures
   (a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;
   (b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;
   (c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular thorough promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;
   (d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

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

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Lilly Ledbetter, Hilda Solis, and The Employee Free Choice Act

By Helena Worthen

That the earning power of a woman on the job is less than a man’s is pretty general knowledge. Right now, women earn about 87 cents for every dollar a man earns. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research calculates that this adds up to $210,000 less for women over a 35-year, full-time work life. Obviously, this impacts what a woman can give her children, to say nothing of retirement security. Full-time work is getting more rare. What matches women with full-time jobs to wages of men with full-time jobs is part-time jobs, mostly in retail, service, and care work like child care and home care. A hard-to-measure number of these jobs drop into the informal economy. People get paid in cash, nothing is in writing, no payroll taxes get taken out and there’s no workers comp, to say nothing of benefits. You may have heard people say, “The best economic stimulus is a union.” This is especially true for women. In simple terms of dollar, women in unions make a median $809 per week compared to non-union women who make $615. But many people in unions will say that it’s not actually the money that is most important—it’s that fuzzy thing called a voice. If you have a union, you have representation, meaning that it’s someone’s job to take your side and understand your experience of your job, and, if it comes to that, defend you and if possible protect you. This means preventing you from being subjected to unhealthy and illegal practices at work but also more general threats, like unsafe working conditions including overwork or exhaustion and discrimination. For women who may not have had practice successfully defending themselves, the experience of representation can come as a revelation. This experience is often sufficiently profound to make an otherwise uninvolved union member decide to become an activist. In fact, this experience is often cited by women who tell the story of how they got involved in their unions. They’ll tell the story of how a problem at work developed, became complex, became something they couldn’t resolve themselves and eventually brought them into conflict with their employer. That moment of confrontation is also a moment of clarity.

In my experience as a labor educator, many such problems have to do with attendance—missing work to take a child to the doctor, taking a phone call at work from a family member, or sometimes the exhaustion that comes from doing too much overtime. An example that comes to mind right away is a woman who cleaned offices in a building for 180 days. She filed a complaint with the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act, amends Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to eliminate the causes of certain substantial obstructions to the free flow of commerce and to mitigate and eliminate these obstructions when they have occurred by encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining and by protecting the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment or other mutual aid or protection. That law is still in effect—although you’d never know it. Employers violate the spirit of this law, as well as its letter, all the time. One of the problems is that although the NLRA says that employers and unions have to negotiate “in good faith,” nothing forces them to do so. There is no effective process and no penalties worth mentioning.

But another proposed bill, the Employee Free Choice Act, is in Congress right now. Passing it was part of Obama’s platform, and our newly confirmed Head of the Department of Labor, Hilda Solis, is in support of it. It allows for majority sign-up, meaning that if a majority of the workers sign cards saying that they want a union, they get a union, period. Perhaps more important, it provides for mediation followed by binding arbitration so that workers, who in the past have sometimes gone years with a union but no contract (remember the Heartland Human Services workers in Ellington—mostly women), will get a contract within 120 days. Perhaps most potently, it allows for up to $20,000 in penalties per violation for things like firing workers for union activity—plus triple back pay for any worker so fired.

Stay tuned. If the Employee Free Choice Act passes, we’re likely to be looking at a very different world of work, especially for women.


Unfair Advantage is at http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2009/03/labor/
Champaign County Board Approves Committee to Study Jury Selection

March 2009

There was an important victory Thursday night, February 19, 2009, for those fighting for reform of the criminal justice system in Champaign County. By a unanimous vote, the Champaign County Board appointed the Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection.

The committee, made up of citizens, board members, and local officials, is intended to help address the racial disparities documented to exist in Champaign County. For several years the Courtvwatch study conducted by the League of Women Voters has shown that while African Americans make up 36% of defendants, they represent 7% of the jury pool.

The 16 members of the committee include: Pius Weibel, Matt Gladney, Presiding Judge Thomas Difanis, By the League of Women Voters has shown that while African Americans make up 36% of defendants, they represent 7% of the jury pool.

Beckett responded by saying that members of the pub-

lic were “inadvertently misrepresenting his proposal.” In collaboration with the League of Women Voters, Beckett also a Law Professor at the University of Illinois provided students to help conduct the Courtvwatch study. Now that his own study has shown that gross inequalities exist in the jury selection process, he has been forced to address the issue.

Already, the right-wing News-Gazette has editorialized against the Citizens Committee, commenting that the “extreme views” of some of its members would keep them from working in a “cooperative fashion” (2/26/09). In attempt to further stifle the committee, the newspaper brought up that some of its members had been “charged or currently face criminal charges in Champaign County.” It is now up to the Citizens Committee to find out a way to ensure that defendants will have a “jury of one’s peers.”

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‘Unofficial’ Is Back, Like a ‘Hungry Ghost’

By Andrea O’Boyle

Reflecting on ‘Unofficial’ as an example of cultural stereotyping at the University, I have found myself doing so in the shadow of that most blatant example of racism and cultural appropriation, the ‘Chief.’ As I write this, window displays in campus-town stores juxtapose these two “heroes” in a disturbing montage of arrogance and presumptuous racism. At the same time, it is more than a truism to note that there are important differences between the two acts of appropriation. The expansionist history of the United States involved the killing of many Native Americans, as well as the destruction of much Native American culture, whereas that same expansion provided many opportunities for Irish immigrants. There are few individuals on campus who identify as having Native ancestry, while many individuals claim at least some Irish ancestry. The ‘Chief’ was officially sanctioned as a symbol of this campus, while university authorities have taken various steps to discourage and suppress ‘Unofficial’ events.

These points speak to the special context of the ‘Chief’ and suggest why it became such an important issue on this campus. None of the points, however, negate the problematic nature of the Unofficial event, such as it is. I have been less than impressed with the turns that these experiences have taken in a competition, where a group ‘wins’ by being more put upon—this benefits nobody, and prevents us from learning from the common ways in which different forms of stereotyping, appropriation, and prejudice each act to erase the humanity of individuals and groups.

Further, as is so often the case, the so-called mitigating factors of the ‘Unofficial’ event lose their sheen when examined in any detail. I’ve had many people claim ‘I’m Irish too’ as a defense for some prejudicial remark. These people are, almost invariably, many generations removed from their immigrant ancestors. They don’t speak an Irish accent, and, rarely if ever, practice any Irish customs.

Their Irishness is a cloak to put on or take off as convenience dictates, and is generally musty from lack of use, lying forgotten in a dark closet of the mind until pulled out with a rhetorical flourish.

I’m proud of my heritage, of Irish literary culture and scientific accomplishments. I’m happy when someone’s questions allow me to boast about our beautiful landscapes. I’m glad that many people are able to feel pride in a connection, however tenuous, to my country and my people. But it would be more than charitable to describe a one-dimensional identification of Irish culture with drinking as tokenism.

We can quibble over the reasons for this stereotype.

Many will point to the role played by advertising campaigns, most notably that of Guinness. Perhaps less well-known is the history of imagery of the Irish—how we have so often been portrayed as sub-human, irrational, not in control of our actions. While being seen as poets and rascals is, on one level, a neat reclamation (a positive twist on decidedly negative prejudices), on another level, it traps us within the bounds of those same images.

In the case of ‘Unofficial’, we have an event created and promoted by bar owners, for commercial purposes, which further reduces Irishness to a single concept. ‘Drink until you’re Irish,’ say the T-shirts, ‘Unofficially wasted.’ Any sense of reclamation undone, the implications—never subtle enough to be connotations—are painless, upsetting.

And so, it’s helpful—nay, important, necessary—to have the tools of critical reflection, and bonds of fellowship with those who can engage us in dialogue. I’m grateful, therefore, for my fellow activists who have assisted me in my personal and intellectual growth, providing emotional support and enabling me to engage productively with this issue.

Tuition Waiver Proposals Scrapped in Face of Grad Student Protests

By Kerry Pimblott

Over the past month, graduate students at the University of Illinois have engaged in a concerted struggle to halt proposed changes to the campus tuition waiver policy. Under the new recommendations, graduate students on tuition waiver or increase their basic tuition-generating income, these changes would put their continued presence at the University in serious jeopardy. To make matters worse, decreasing the total number of assistantships would result in larger class sizes and workloads for faculty and graduate students, undermining the overall excellence of undergraduate instruction at the University.

In fields like Social Work and Library and Information Science, graduate students were particularly concerned about the recommendation that students in terminal Masters and professional degree programs be prohibited from attaining tuition-waivers altogether. If implemented, these recommendations threatened devastating consequences for the quality and accessibility of education at the University of Illinois. Over six hundred graduate students currently hold assistantships of less than 33% and would be severely impacted by any effort to eliminate tuition waivers. Cash-starved departments—particularly in the Fine and Applied Arts—would be forced to either continue offering 29% assistantships without a tuition waiver or increase their basic tuition-generating appointment to 33%, resulting in an overall decline in the total number of positions offered. For graduate students who rely upon the availability of assistantships as their main source of income, these changes would put their continued presence at the University in serious jeopardy. To make matters worse, decreasing the total number of assistantships would result in larger class sizes and workloads for faculty and graduate students, undermining the overall excellence of undergraduate instruction at the University.

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the Public i • 3

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The Objectification of Women In War Zones

By Evelyne Accad

"Children here find refuge in their hopes to die. The fact that death is equated to life is horrifying. How are we going to deal with this generation in the future, how can we talk to them?"

—Message from Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, working in the Palestinian Balata camp during the Israeli raids, March 2002

This quote from an email message I received from Nadera, an extraordinary woman I met in Istanbul several years ago, who works with and for women in Israel and Palestine, very much sums up the place we have reached in our present world: millions of children around the world hope to die, their lives offer them only despair, injustices are the order of the day. The situation in the Middle East, which has been left to fester since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 continues to degenerate. It led to the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 by Israel and to the subsequent massacres of Sabra and Shatila in the Palestinian camps that left upwards of 2,000 Lebanese and Palestinian civilians dead, women raped, children massacred. Another war against Lebanon and the Hezbollah by Israel took place in 2006 and indiscriminate killing by all the horrors that had taken place previously. Women in war zones pay the highest tribute to the violence that prevails. How can it go on like this? The implication is that women have no impact? As I watch the news from year to year, month to month, the tanks and heavy artillery against the major cities of Palestine, against the camps and the civilians, I am reminded of so many war events that stuck in my memory: the war aimed to expel the Palestinians from their homes, which was put into place without any qualms. A sense of urgency and doom I had not felt then. Other connections to be made when one talks about the present world situation, globalization, women living in war zones, terrorism, etc… are the women who die from ill-treatment or murder by men every year in the US. It amounts to more than ten on 9/11, even though this continuous massacre is not considered war. Violence perpetrated against women by men, an international phenomenon, is not considered a violation of human world ethics, even though it is a war which has gone on for centuries. The women given to this violence has been lost in the statistics of times. Today we ought to consider the terror committed against women on a world scale as a violation of international law, a war against humanity. (MacKinnon)

Women become instruments which power manipulates on the political scene. This manipulation can take various forms, social, legal, symbolic, etc., and follow multiple objectives. It can try to obtain political support from the population itself being manipulated (here meaning women), or the support from other sectors of public opinion (men for example). In past decades, several authoritarian regimes have adopted political positions favorable to women in order to bring them over to their side, while repressing political opinion expressed mostly from the male side of the population. The cause of women tends to become today, and this is very remarkable, one of the main ideological values of the institutions of Empire. One can see it in the politics of the United States, but also in other institutions that call themselves international. Globalization as it is understood by imperial economic organizations (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc., but also the United Nations) tends to, with the best intentions in the world, manipulate women just as it manipulates the poor. Women are made to think that no matter how weak or poor, everyone can consume and acquire needed goods with whatever means they have—to other words, with whatever price they must pay for such transformation, i.e. additional impoverishment. This is one of the worst aspects of globalization in its frightening paradoxes (see the Sepol tickets for women in Israel). This ideology of globalization invests women as the most open to the myth of consumerism, the central myth of the American way of life. Under this ideology, women become phase-transitionally invested with the capacity to transform societies, to become the defenders of Western values and civilization. In contrast, Islam, (as formerly Communism) reputed to be masculine in their attributes, are considered to be poles of resistance to ‘modernity.’

The main target of the women’s political movement today is the masculinization of the world, the will and efforts to militarize to the extreme, and to promote everything that is military. The militarization of any approach to problems within civil society (that of drugs for example), means that women’s voices are reduced to silence.

Evelyne Accad is an Emerita Professor of French at the U of I and a native of Lebanon.

The Library Loses a Patron.

By Anna Phillips, a Librarian at the Urbana Free Library

A regular user of The Urbana Free Library died last week. We weren’t surprised when the first notice appeared in the paper – we knew she had been ill and we had not heard from her recently, whereas once she had been one of our most persistent callers. Though I had spoken with her so many times, I knew very little of her story and was thus anxious to see the full obituary.

That came the next day. Just one sentence had been added: There will be no services.

Our relationship with this woman was not all sunshine. She was often querulous and impatient; she frequently asked for telephone numbers and had an aggravating habit of quickly losing the slips of paper that she wrote them down on. I know I’m not the only staff member whose heart sometimes sank upon hearing her voice. Still, we actually like to serve her: We’re happy to be at a resource for those who seem to lack them. We knew she was often alone and as the calls started coming from a hospital room as often as from her home, we knew her health was deteriorating. A note of fear crept into her voice. She always said thank you and sometimes called me “dear.”

The last time I heard her voice it was close to Christmas and she called to arrange pick-up of a gift she had for our Homebound Services Coordinator. It was, she assured me, a wonderful gift, a gift worth a special trip. We’re very protective of our patrons here; their right to privacy is paramount. But this woman’s story has already been lost. Let us at least give her a name:

Bettina Chapman, 1937-2009

Rest in Peace

Erma Bridgewater

On February 26, 2009, Erma Bridgewater was the recipient of the Distinguished Community Services Award given to her at a Black History Month event held by the Muslim American Society. Born in 1913, Erma graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in sociology and was Director of the Douglas Community Center for 24 years. She remains an active volunteer. The events also included talks by Carol Ammons and keynote speaker Imam Jozair Ab demalek, and a performance by Ron Hanif Bridgewater and his jazz band.
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National

The History and Significance of Women's Achievements in Sports

By Neil Parchman

When discussing the history of the women's movement and its achievements, people often forget the contributions of sports and women athletes to the social and political emancipation of women. Sport was and remains a way for women to gain self-reliance and equal opportunity and equal access to educational programs and activities. It has given women and opportunities to overcome discrimination in academic programs, but also in sports. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, before Title IX there were 1 in 27 high school girls playing sports. The ratio is now 1 in 3. The involvement of women and girls in sports has had many positive outcomes. Studies have shown a correlation between success and higher grades in school, better self-esteem, less early pregnancy and drug use, and higher graduation rates.

While women athletes have made vital contributions toward gender equality that have positive impacts on athletes' lives on and off the field, there are still battles that need to be fought: swimsuit issues that sexualize female athletes, photo shoots that promote an unhealthy and dangerous style of beauty, and Maxim-style articles that cheapen women's sports into simple ogling festivals. There have been male athletes. Sport should be an open category for anyone who wants to participate, regardless of gender or sexual identity. There have been studies that have shown that these sexualized images negatively impact the interest level of males and females to the sport being represented.

There is also the struggle for acceptance of gays, lesbians, transgendered and queer players on teams. There have been more open lesbian athletes like Martina Navratilova than there have been male athletes. Sport should be open for all players, no matter their sexual preference, to be able to hone their skills and enjoy play.

As struggles remain on the forefront, it is important to remember the valiant struggles that have gotten us this far both in politics and sport so we can have motivation and vigilance to continue the fight for social justice.

For further information about contributing to the struggles of women and sports, check out the Women's Sports Foundation and the academic work of Prof. Pat Griffin.

"Transforming Power": Tenth Annual Graduate Symposium on Women's and Gender History

March 5–7, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Levis Faculty Center, 919 W. Illinois Street, Urbana
Keynote Address: Thursday, March 5 at 7:30pm
Roderick A. Ferguson, University of Minnesota "My Man Bovanne: A Black Feminist Critique of Black Power and the Institutionalization of Movement Politics"
Spurlock Museum Knight Auditorium, 600 S. Green Street, Urbana
In his January 22 CREdENT to announce the appointment of George Mitchell as the special envoy to the Middle East, President Obama spoke to the urgency of a lasting ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and made a commitment “to seek two states living side by side in peace and security.” Both goals are laudable but the language employed is disingenuous and dishearteningly reminiscent of past declarations. The speech offers a pledge to Israel, advice to the Palestinians, and a judgment of the American position for the rest of the world: “Let me be clear: America is committed to Israel’s security. And we will always support Israel’s right to defend itself against legitimate threats. No democracy can tolerate such dangers to its people. Neither should the Palestinian people themselves, whose interests are only set back by acts of terror.” The President, then, demands that Hamas “recognize Israel’s right to exist, renounce violence, and abide by previous agreements, if it wants to be a genuine partner for peace.” A fair demand only if it were asked of Israel as well. Mr. Obama portrays Israel as a victim of aggression, who, by pursuing its rights, is thereby bringing Hamas and its sponsors down. He concludes by championing the democratic values that they share with the West. He then implies that Palestinians don’t appreciate the benefits of democracy because they seem to have fallen behind Hamas. In one sentence, he ignores two obvious facts: Israel is a democracy applied largely to its Jewish population, treating the Palestinian citizens as second class; Palestinian democratic aspirations and experiments have repeatedly been crushed by deliberate Israeli and American actions (these assertions will be discussed in future articles).

In reality, the threat to Israel’s security is the direct consequence of Israel’s occupation of Palestine. Both the Palestinians and Hamas have committed themselves to a two-state solution to the conflict, in accordance with the national aspiration of the Palestinian people and spelled out in the National Reconciliation Document of 2000. In addition, Hamas has demanded on several occasions that Israel end its military operations in Gaza and the West Bank in return for a stable truce, but Israel insists on receiving an unconditional recognition of its right to exist and continues to expropriate land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, rendering a two-state solution unavailable. Palestinians continue to be subjected to humiliation, poverty, unemployment, indefinite imprisonment without trial, and violence. They are also helpless witnesses to the rapid loss of their land to illegal and hostile Israeli colonies, road blocks, Israeli-only roads, and recently the Wall of Separation. President Obama admits to, not an unconditional commitment to what Israel considers to be right to its security but can only perpetuate the injustices done to the Palestinians by maintaining this illegal and illegal and ongoing occupation. The separation Wall unjustifiably cuts through the West Bank and robs the fertile Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank, allowing only the long-time residents who carry Israeli-issued papers to remain in the area and evacuating the others. Israeli officials maintain that this area cannot be returned to the Palestinians because this would expose Israeli attacks from Arab countries as well as al-Qaeda-type groups.

THE WEST BANK
According to Israeli Peace Now, the population of the Israeli colonies in the West Bank increased from 139,974 in 1996 to 261,879 in 2006, 270,000 in 2007, and 285,000 in 2008. The number of new structures in settlements and outposts grew by 69 percent in 2008 over the 2007 figures. The daily Haaretz reports that these increases far exceed the natural Israeli population growth (1.6%) and are more than twice the growth rate in any region of Israel. The Israeli government spends at least $560 million a year on subsidies, infrastructure and education for the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, in addition to the off-the-record military cost of controlling the Palestinians. Why all the trouble if in near future these illegal Israeli settlements are to be evacuated?

Why do Israeli citizens who contribute to these settlements and the Palestinian and their property, when it’s known that they have pledged never to leave and call their residences were built without Israeli permission. 1500 Palestinians from their homes, under the pretext that the colonies of East Jerusalem have been progressing more blatantly. In 1980, against all international laws, the Israeli parliament declared that “Jerusalem, complete and unaided, is the capital of Israel.” Jerusalem continues to reject any compromise in this regard while Palestinians insist on establishing their capital in East Jerusalem. A Washington Post investigation reveals that the Israeli government and private Jewish groups have been moving Jewish residents into Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. The Post also reveals a report prepared by the Israeli State Attorney’s Office and published in the newspaper Yedioth Aharonoth, which concludes that almost every major ministry has assisted in the construction, expansion and maintenance of illegal settlement outposts. In addition, immaturity and unavailability of legal documents are used to expel Palestinians from their homes and work places. Even as George Mitchell is holding talks with Israeli officials, the Municipality of Jerusalem is in the process of evicting 1500 Palestinians from their homes, under the pretext that their residences were built without Israeli permission. What an irony to demand that the occupied people apply for legal documents from their illegal occupiers.

THE WALL
The Annexation Wall, which Israel and the U.S. refer to as a separation wall to presumably protect Israel, is another obstacle to the creation of a viable Palestinian state. The Wall unreasonably cuts through the West Bank and robs many Palestinians of their gardens, orchards, and the fertile Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank, allowing only the long-time residents who carry Israeli-issued papers to remain in the area and evacuating the others. Israeli officials maintain that this area cannot be returned to the Palestinians because this would expose Israeli attacks from Arab countries as well as al-Qaeda-type groups.

Deconstructing Obama’s Rhetoric on Palestine
By Niloofar Shambayati

By Kumars Salehi

Transcendence

The older I get, the more it seems our world’s been a failure. How could a world filled with unhappy people ruled by the most soulless of us be anything but? Our money is a joke, and now the joke’s on us. Our media is a joke, and there’s nothing funny or excusable about Israel’s institutionalized genocide, ethnic cleansing in Palestine.

Who does Israel think is watching? And who do they think they’re kidding? Truthfully, they’re fooling no one, except for the people of the most powerful country in the world.

A people who won’t hold their leaders accountable for their crimes and the crimes of those they support whose ignorance, complacency and egoism stand in the way of rising up.

Against Capitalism
Against Imperialism
Against Zionism
In our history class, we’re told how they said, “Never again.” But the truth is, they are repeating the same story. Maybe that’s how the world began.

But that’s not how the world should end.

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AN HONEST BROKER
In order to have a real change in the U.S. policy, leading to the establishment of a viable Palestinian state and the security of Israel, we need to demand that the new administration begin negotiating an honest broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and end American unconditional support of the state of Israel. The long-term interest of all the parties involved, including the American people, depends on the U.S. playing a real and collaborative role. Obama must dissociate himself from any plan which offers the Palestinians a truncated state, consisting of isolated cantons with little or no control over vital natural resources. We should demand that the President’s mantra of change apply to the Israel-Palestinian conflict (the conflict outlives his presidency with yet more tragic consequences.)
There are many reasons to be disappointed in Alex ‘ARod’ Rodriguez. While many sportswriters and pundits at ESPN have spilled gallons of ink and use hours of airtime flagellating Rodriguez for his alleged lies and steroid use, they have missed a crucial and not yet condemned act perpetrated by ARod—his deplorable and overt sexist treatment of Sports Illustrated journalist Selena Roberts who broke the story about Rodriguez’s steroid use.

In order to understand the ARod steroid scandal, one must be aware of some history. In 2003, the owners, Commissioner Bud Selig, and the Major League Baseball Players’ Association (MLBPA) agreed to conduct anonymous testing of players to see how prevalent the use of performance enhancing drugs was in baseball. The agreement stated that if more than 5% of the players in the sample tested positive, Major League Baseball would institute a testing policy with punishments for positive tests. If fewer than 5% of the players tested positive, there would be no testing policy.

Any players that tested positive in this survey were to suffer no repercussions and their names were to remain anonymous. This should have been the end of the story.

However, the MLBPA failed to destroy the list of 104 players who tested positive. Federal authorities discovered this information before she went to print. The news that Rodriguez was confirmed as a user of illegal steroids was significant because ARod had previously denied using any steroids or performance enhancing drugs during an interview with Katie Couric on “60 Minutes” in 2007. Public perception was quickly shifted from believing that Rodriguez was ‘clean’ to suspecting him of cheating.

ARod and his public relations staff quickly went into damage control and they scheduled an interview with veteran baseball reporter Peter Gammons on ESPN. During the interview, Rodriguez addressed the allegations put forth by Roberts. He stated: “What makes me upset is Sports Illustrated pays this lady Roberts to stalk me. This lady has been following me, straight out of a film like Fatal Attraction and the character that Glenn Close portrayed. This sexist imagery was again used to delegitimize Roberts’ journalistic credibility to absolve Rodriguez of culpability in these allegations. Rodriguez also stated, ‘really respectable journalists are following this lady of the cliff, and following her lead’ to finish his opinion about the veracity of Roberts’ claims. Rodriguez used the gender dynamics of the situation to portray Roberts—a journalist for Sports Illustrated and The New York Times—as an overly emotional, unprofessional, mentally unstable woman that seems obsessed with a young, single man. But nowhere in this rant did Gammons or ESPN interrupt him or question his statements. Gammons and ESPN chose not to defend a fellow sports journalist.

While Rodriguez’s blatant sexism was deplorable, it was later confirmed that certain facts in his rant did not conform to reality. While Rodriguez alleged that Roberts had attempted to break into his home, Miami Beach and Coral Gables police have no record of Selena Roberts being arrested, stopped or cited. Likewise, Peter Gammons, who interviewed ARod during the infamous ESPN interview stated: “My first question asked if Selena’s story were true, he essentially admitted it was, and I believed she was therefore vindicated.”

On February 16, 2009, CNN reported that Alex Rodriguez had called Selena Roberts and apologized to her for his sexist ESPN rant and that the allegations that she was a stalker were unwarranted and not based in fact. Rodriguez’s story has continually been shown to be true. More recent media admissions by ARod state that he did use the steroid primobolan for the period of time alleged by Roberts in her article.

Rodriguez’s statements to the media have continued to be less than truthful. His assertion that primobolan was available over the counter in the Dominican Republic (where he admitted to using it from 2001 to 2003) was found to be untrue. The New York Daily News is now reporting that a personal trainer, Angel Presnal, has been connected to ARod as late as the 2007 season. This trainer has been repeatedly connected to the use and possession of steroids and performance enhancing substances since 2001. Presnal’s reputation has earned him the infamy of being banned from ever Major League Baseball clubhouse.

As Rodriguez’s career and credibility falls apart before our eyes, it is commendable that the public did not fall for his appeals to blair sexism to blaim allegations of his own illegal behavior. While ARod did eventually apologize for his sexist diatribe and to Selena Roberts, the use of sexism as a means of scapegoating is not acceptable, especially for an athlete with global recognition like Alex Rodriguez.

Tuition Waiver Proposals Scrapped In Face of Grad Student Protests

Continued from page 3

a hundred members of the campus community came together at the forum to discuss their concerns and develop a plan of action. Shortly after, the Provost’s Office announced that they were retracting two of their recommendations including the proposal to set the minimum waiver-generating appointment at 33% and the proposal to render students in terminal Masters and professional programs ineligible for tuition waivers.

This decision is a tremendous success of airtime that ARod was on the list along with 103 other players. He had four sources confirming this information before she went to print. The story that ARod was on the list came out with 104 players.

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