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

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

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Chicago Commemorates 125th Anniversary of Haymarket Affair

By Chicago IMC

In early May 1886, Chicago workers demonstrated for an eight-hour workday. One demonstration on May 3, 1886, in solidarity with workers who had been locked outside of the McCormick Reaper Plant while strikebreakers worked inside, led to police opening fire and killing some workers. To protest those McCormick killings, two thousand workers came to Haymarket Square in the West Loop (Randolph and Des Plaines) to an event which Chicago Mayor Carter Harrison permitted and even attended. As the rally came to an end, Mayor Harrison ordered the police to disperse, yet some 180 police entered the square and began attacking attendees.

At that point, someone threw a bomb at the police. The explosion resulted in a number of deaths; wild gunfire by police killed workers and as many as six police officers. But the bomb galvanized a campaign against organized labor and political radicals. Eight labor organizers were charged with conspiracy and found guilty, even though only one of the eight even attended the rally that night.

A massive international cause célèbre rallied on behalf of the Haymarket Eight. Four of the eight were hanged in 1887; a fifth died in prison, and the remaining three were pardoned by Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld in a move considered to be Altgeld’s swansong in politics. 125 years after that fateful night, the consequences of Haymarket still reverberate. May Day has been celebrated internationally (except in the United States) as a workers’ holiday, generations of radicals drew inspiration of Haymarket for their movement and the movement wants justice. The call of the day? The people are the people. The city of Chicago did place a memorial to Haymarket which was unveiled on a non-descript Tuesday in September 2004.

Continued on page 4

Awakening to The Limits of the Obama Presidency

By Antonia Darder

Antonia Darder is a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is a longtime Puerto Rican activist-scholar involved in issues related to education, language, immigrant, workers, and women’s rights.

There are folks who seem to keep hoping that Obama has a ‘progressive’ side which we will all soon see emerging from the transformation of Clark Kent to Superman in the phone booth. Yet, I can’t help wondering if all that progressivism was merely projected upon the handsome black man with the charming discourse style because folks were all feeling so desperate; we were all seeking a political savior or messiah in Obama.

Well the last four years should have caused us to become much more sober and astute about what we can expect from the President of the U.S. in these times. Perhaps, it’s a moment for us to contend with the fact that there are multiple levels of political action and social struggle at work in this nation, and that each of us must decide where our strengths and skills are needed and where we can do the most good. The only in-the-flesh savior we should be looking for is we the people. From such a vantage point, we can then move to discern collectively what it is that we absolutely need to demand collectively from Washington. In the process, this also asks us to consider where we each want to put our individual efforts. For me, issues close to my heart are universal health care, public education, and the amelioration of poverty. For others, it may be issues related to labor and the local or national economy. For others it might be immigration, the arts, women’s issues, or gay marriage.

Now, those who have been around the political block enough times already know that these issues are all interconnected everywhere. We are forced to contend with the interlocking forces of oppression that state, economic or social oppression. ¡La lucha continua! There was also a gathering earlier in the day at Forest View cemetery, burial place of the Haymarket martyrs and site of the Haymarket memorial.

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Statement From Socialist Forum of Champaign-Urbana: Our Democracy Has Been Replaced By a Plutocracy

By a Plutocracy

Urbana: Our Democracy Has Been Replaced

Statement From Socialist Forum of Champaign-Urbana

The present assault on working people and the poor shows us clearly the class warfare inherent in capitalism. The system aims to treat everything, including people, as commodities in order to maximize profits. Wages must be depressed. Basic needs such as food, water, shelter, and education must be subject to the private market. And the two institutions seen as obstacles to this, government and labor unions, must be rendered powerless.

This explains the attack on any attempt of government to play a role in extending health care to the uninsured, or to protect or extend programs benefiting the poor, aged, and unemployed. Such programs are seen as unmerited entitlements rather than as humane claims for dignified living conditions and even survival.

Under severe attack, unions are disappearing rapidly, from the private sector, while businesses export once well-paying jobs to low-wage countries and promote mismatched right to work laws. Attacks on public sector workers, who constitute most of the unionized work force, represent the last stage in an offensive on working people’s efforts to protect themselves. The aim is always the same—to depress wages and impose unlimited control over workers. In Wisconsin, radical right wing officials are taking wages and benefits from state workers and turning them over to corporations in the form of tax reductions.

Yet those who claim to hate government intrusion most advocate government intrusion in ways that favor the superrich minorities and corporations through tax breaks, tax loopholes, tax write-offs, subsidies, outsourcing, contracting out, no-bid inflated contracts, deregulation, bailouts, and anti-union measures.

The idea that working people, the poor, and the most vulnerable in our society must suffer even more to balance federal and state budgets is a bald lie. The problems we face are largely political. Americans are subjected to high unemployment, a dilapidated national infrastructure, unprecedented loss of homes, out-of-reach utility charges, increasing hunger, and inadequate medical care, all in order that billionaires and multinational corporations can continue to accumulate unprecedented wealth. An un restrained, radical form of capitalism is destroying American democracy and our standards of living. A perverse mentality has justified the greatest inequality between the few rich and the growing ranks of the poor since the 1930s.

The capitalist system of value ignores environmental costs. It denies or underestimates the seriousness of climate change induced by human actions in its push for unregulated growth, consumption, and profit. Technology may improve efficiency, but it also affects employment; the growth of the GDP creates wealth for the upper echelons of society, while much of the world experiences increased poverty and inequality.

WHAT WE NEED

• A truly progressive national and state income tax and the closing of corporate loopholes.
• Substantial reduction of the military budget and an end to foreign invasions and occupations.
• A defense of the basic democratic right of all workers to organize and bargain for their rights, and a fair playing field for unions in order that they might provide some countervailing balance to the enormous and growing power of multi-national corporations.
• Immigration reforms that will protect immigrants and their children, and a clear process for amnesty and naturalization based upon fair criteria.
• An ecological socialism that replaces capitalism’s miseducation with unstratified growth, consumption, and profit with a model that gives a high priority to a sustainable natural world and a livable environment from which all, including future generations, can benefit.
• The single most important change, however, must come from us. All other change depends upon it: Americans must organize in their workplaces, schools, and communities and begin to take their nation back from the plutocrats. Electoral politics can play a role in the effort, but the system is so corrupt by this point that other strategies will also be vital. Community, students, and teachers organizations, unions, and groups formed by women, immigrants, and people of color must unite to protect their most basic rights in the face of an unprecedented assault. We can take back our country and help others throughout the world in the process, but it will not happen without a fight.

Socialist Forum encourages all those who share in these commitments to attend its meetings every third Saturday from 2 to 4 pm at the Independent Media Center in the old post office building in downtown Urbana, for more information, email: lightport(at)sbcglobal.net, or call 344-7265.

The U.S. Wealth-Income Pyramid

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Top 1%</th>
<th>Top 20%</th>
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<tr>
<td>43% of assets</td>
<td>2/3 of all gains in national income</td>
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<tr>
<td>25% of assets</td>
<td>40% of national income</td>
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FACT: Incomes for 90% of Americans have been stuck in neutral, while the wealthiest tier has surged ahead...In 1988, the income of an average American taxpayer was $33,400 (adjusted for inflation). Fast-forward 20 years and not much had changed: The average income was still just $33,000 in 2008, according to IRS data.

OPINION: America is on a path leading to two distinct classes: the haves and the have-nots. When you hollow out the middle class, the very fabric of the country changes forever. It is happening as I type.

Portrait of Ethel Rosenberg

By Brian Dolinar

This is a portrait of Ethel Rosenberg, by local artist Jason Paterson taken from the original mug shot after her arrest on August 11, 1950. Ethel and her husband Julius Rosenberg, both members of the Communist Party, were sentenced for espionage and sent to the electric chair in 1953 at the height of the Red Scare. Their trial was riddled with errors and provoked international outrage from those such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Einstein, and Pablo Picasso. Patterson says he became fascinated by the story of Ethel Rosenberg through the play "Angels In America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes." In the play Ethel Rosenberg is a ghost that haunts Roy Cohn, one of Joseph McCarthy's right hand men, and was also on the prosecution team in the Rosenberg case. "About a year ago, he Googled the Rosenberg's name, found her mug shot, and "just really liked it." After his curiosity was piqued, he began reading about the Rosenbergs and was convinced that this would be the first in a series about the case.

While Ethel probably knew her husband was passing information to the Soviets, her brother David Greenglass later recanted his testimony during the trial claiming that she had also participated. He had given into pressure to save his wife and children. Others have said that the information provided by Julius was of no use to the Soviet development of the atomic bomb. Their son Robert Meeropol, who was six years old at the time of his parents’ execution, has said that the Espionage Act used to convict his parents is unconstitutional. In 1990, he established the Rosenberg Fund for Children to benefit the children of political prisoners and youth activists.

This story is especially relevant today, Patterson says, “I think the Rosenberg case can help us think twice when we go after the people we see as enemies in this country. Hope fully this case and the entire Red Scare of the 1950s will help us keep our wits. It is important that we not forget the laws and rights we are fighting to protect.”

More of Jason Patterson’s art work can be seen at jasonpattersonart.com
The 1970 Student Strike in Protest of Kent State Killings

By Eric Heim

Eric Heim is a recent graduate of the U of I. He wrote his under-graduate thesis on the 1970 student strike. He is also a member of the International Socialist Organization.

University of Illinois students and faculty went on strike 41 years ago this May in response to the killing of four students at Kent State by the Ohio National Guard. The killings at Kent State were seen by many as the beginning of a battle for labor. Union collective bargaining rights and devastated the same violence that was being perpetrated overseas in Southeast Asia. For this reason, the same violence that was being perpetrated overseas in Southeast Asia.

The next morning saw the beginning of picketing planned for University buildings. The previous day, the campus was calmer, as state legislators and governors at the State Board of Higher Education to include more graduate employees in the College of Fine and Applied Arts (FAA). Less than a year after going on strike to attain graduate assistants and pre-professional graduate assistants were a large tax liability (upwards of 30%) for their tuition waivers. The GEO and University reached an agreement to provide emergency loans for students affected by the strike, but unlike full tuition waivers, the students were not guaranteed to continue and out of pocket expenses for these students still increased by $1,000-$2000 per year.
DIGNITY AND EXPRESSION

One key aspect of dignity is that it requires that people be recognized as human beings with an inherent right to individual and collective expression. It also means that such expression is taken seriously by others and has the potential of affecting one’s conditions of life. Thusly understood, dignity could only be manifested within a civil society in which people can form political parties and labor unions, have access to media outlets not controlled by the state, and peacefully demonstrate in public. None of these was possible under the regime of Ben Ali. He monopolized the public space with his party, the RCD, which he mutated into the General People’s Congress Party in China. Media was strictly controlled by the state. The national labor union was subservient to Ben Ali until his regime was weakened to the point of falling. At the regional levels, however, some of the unions were early supporters of the young people who protested the poverty and lack of jobs in the rural areas. Protests resulted in imprisonment, torture, injury and death for many, clear violations of dignity. Dignity also has material requisites. While the political and economic elites in the coastal cities were living extremely well, poverty was a very serious problem, particularly in the interior. Unemployment was very high for people at all educational levels. Those who graduated from secondary schools or even universities often faced the choice of living off of their less educated parents or leaving the country to search for usually very low-paying, menial jobs in Europe. Life was especially hard for the children of those who were killed or imprisoned after participating in protests over these very conditions.

GENDER

It could be said that the Ben-Ali regime respected the dignity of women to a greater extent than it is respected in many other North African or Middle Eastern countries. According to an article on Aljazeera.net, women represent 26 per cent of the working population, half of students, 29 per cent of magistrates and 24% of the Tunisian diplomatic corps (‘Tunisian Gender-Party ‘Revolution’ Hailed’ 4/21/11). Under the dictatorship, men could not legally take more than one wife. Abortion was legal and the dress of women was unrestricted by the state. It is difficult to know what the attitudes of those in the economically depressed rural areas thought of this cosmopolitan attitude held by the former political and economic elite, but one story is revealing. While the protests and their violent repression go back as far as 2008, the incident that triggered the country-wide process that overthrew Ben Ali was the self-immolation of fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, in the town of Sidi Bouzid on December 17, 2010. Through the world-wide media and web, we learned that this young, uneducated supporter of his family’s livelihood after after, for some reason, municipal officials confiscated his fruit and scale and his attempt to appeal to this a higher official level had been rejected. One factor reported in the story was that his dignity had been affronted because, in the interaction, an officer had slapped him. What most people did not read in the media was that the officer in question was a woman. I pondered whether the indignity he felt was largely in response to being stripped of his and his family’s livelihood, being slapped in public by an officer, or being slapped in public by a woman. I raised the issue with a Tunisian friend in Paris. It turned out that he had attended a Parisian solidarity forum to which Bouazizi’s sister had been brought. There she contended that her brother’s dignity was affronted because the inspector slapped him a woman. My friend tried to convince her that the gender of the inspector should not have been the issue.

In general, positions in the repressive forces were open to both men and women. Indeed, Leila Trabelsi, the extremely powerful wife of dictator Ben Ali, was reported to play a central role in the recruitment of a special commando force of exceptionally loyal men and women whose job it was to violently put down any protest. Their country work was especially brutal and deadly in the rural towns of Kasserine, Mharbi, and Dachouch. So it seems that the conditions for women in Tunisia were better than in many other countries, but no less representative of a strong endorsement of dignity.

RELIGION

Under Ben Ali, his and predecessors, Tunisia was a secular state. Unlike Egypt, which has an approximately 10% minority Christian Coptic population, almost the entire religious population of Tunisia is Muslim. Like Egypt under its dictator Mubarak, there was also a banned Islamist movement in Tunisia, Ennahdha. As was the case in Egypt, the ban was removed after the dictator was deposed.

Respect for human dignity must surely entail respect for the spiritual beliefs and practices of others. Sadly, some of the same Modern people who were united with Copts in struggling for freedom from the Mubarak dictatorship have violently turned on the Copts and are risking the freedom and dignity of all of the people of Egypt. This civil disorder might be used by the Egyptian military as an excuse to set itself up as the new collective dictator in a country that they view as ill-prepared for democracy.

There is hope that religious differences will not be so detrimental to the future of Tunisia, though it is far from clear. Ennahdha was by far the single largest political force in the country today. The group is allied with the politically aggressive Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen, but says publicly that it does not share the Brotherhood’s position of imposing Islamic law on their country. Nevertheless, some fear that they will play upon the religious sentiments of those rural people who were the most economically and politically oppressed under the former secular dictatorship in order to impose a religious one. However, Ennahdha has supported an electoral rule that stipulates that all parties must have equal gender parity on their electoral lists for the coming national elections on July 24.

If Ennahdha does become the majority party in the new government, it might model itself on the more restrained Islamist majority party in Turkey. Or there might be a more powerful secular party or coalition of parties to counter it. Nothing is guaranteed after a revolution, especially where there has been no opportunity for a civil society to develop. The struggle to create a society with freedom and dignity is only just begun with the overthrow of a dictator.

Awakening to The Limits of the Obama Presidency

Continued from page 1

dehumanize and lead to policies and practices that perpetuate and reproduce inequalities and social exclusion. That said, it seems that the ways in which we must proceed is to create a greater public commitment to coalitional and collaborative relationships across communities and across the nation a sort of multiple peoples’ congresses, if you will, that can communicate with one another on key issues and concerns, outside of the limited and ego driven arena of electoral politics.

Moreover, it seems that once we accept the limits of the presidency in its capacity to enact change that improves the quality of life, in the interest of the many, were made as a consequence of the enormous pressure put on the Washington by folks on the ground. This said, while more and more people out of work, we should be working together to develop community cooperatives so unemployed people can put their “on hold” talents in work in ways that might make a difference in their own lives and the lives of our communities, while being both fed and housed. This requires us to shift our paradigm, from an individual and equal opportunity work was especially brutal and deadly in the rural towns of Kasserine, Mbari, and Dachouch. So it seems that the conditions for women in Tunisia were better than in many other countries, but not always representative of a strong endorsement of dignity.

The Tunisian Revolution: Dignity, Expression, Gender, and Religion
By Belden Fields

THE TUNISIAN UPRISING THAT DEPOSED dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali is of enormous historical significance for the entire region of North Africa. A recurring and resounding call during the uprising has been for dignity and freedom. Dignity, as the word has been used by the participants and transmitted through the media, is complex and encompasses a wide range of individual and societal factors.

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The Border Thickens: (In)Securing Communities in C-U and Beyond

By Gilberto Rosas

The despotic policing apparatus found at the U.S.-Mexico border now reaches into Champaign County and across much of the United States. Under federal initiatives “Secure Communities” and related police-ICE collaborations, local law enforcement agencies in communities across the United States have been enlisted in the enforcement of immigration laws. Indeed, the apprehension of the undocumented through the criminal justice system is now the primary focus for enforcement. In the last 3 years ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the US Department of Homeland Security) has rounded up over half a million people through such Criminal Alien Programs. Yet, there is no legal definition of what a criminal alien is.

Secure Communities is in effect in more than 1,000 jurisdictions in 40 states, including locally. The plan is to take it nationwide by 2013. This prerogative was once exclusively reserved for government agencies. Today, the nation’s largest militarized police force, the Border Patrol, “Secure Communities” is an automated screening system. Fingerprints of presumably everyone booked into participating jails are run through vast immigration databases. ICE agents then are supposed to have 48 hours to pick up those deemed criminal aliens to process them for deportation.

In Champaign County, consortial forms that are designed to protect foreign nationals by alerting their representatives of their arrests and that are given to foreign nationals that they enter the County Jail have become the modus operandi for in-securing community. The Immigration and Criminal Justice Working Group, comprised of local community members, students, and faculty, has discovered that in Champaign County these forms are being shared with ICE.

Moreover, although Secure Communities was ostensibly designed to find and deport illegal immigrants found guilty of serious crimes, concerns have emerged that a significant number of arrestees hold no criminal record through February 2011. Over 50% of those deported from Illinois through Secure Communities were of non-criminal status as of September 30, 2010. 71% of those arrested and processed through “Secure Communities” were not criminals. Moreover, over 60% of the deported were not criminals. Indeed, the aforementioned working group found that an overwhelming majority of the “Secure Communities” related arrests are for minor offenses, such as having no car insurance or lacking a driver’s license. Traffic stops and other mundane elements of policing so taken for granted in daily life thus now sow terror among the undocumented community. The undocumented can be ripped from the fabric of their communities and deported to places that they haven’t lived in many years.

Secure Communities related ICE-police collaborations, and the insecurity it generates on marginalized communities, must be situated in a cautionary of white supremacy, capital flows, and political violence infusing The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, for example, limited the availability of Chinese laborers as southern landowners then sought to replace these workers with black migrants, but they encountered significant popular resistance. Later, business interests experimented with Japanese labor and Filipino labor. Notably the Border Patrol emerged from the paramilitary police force of the Texas Rangers, an organization that terrorized Black, indigenous, and Mexican people. It was established in the 1920s, days after the passage of the National Origins Act of 1924, which implemented a system of national quotas to protect American racial stock from further degradation or change through mongrelization, and which outlawed virtually all immigration from the western hemisphere. It is further revealing that the US Border Patrol, from 1924—when it was first created—until 1940, operated under the auspices of the Department of Labor. By the late 1920s, the Border Patrol had very quickly assumed its distinctive role as a special police force to protect foreign, all-too-often, Mexican workers in the US. Indeed, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS; ICE’s predecessor) once estimated that Mexicans comprised 54 percent of all undocumented migrants in the United States. Yet, modern organized vigilance and enforcement against illegal aliens has been primarily directed against Mexicans.

Since at least the late 1970s military strategies and tactics derived from low intensity conflict doctrine have been incorporated into immigration policing in the southwestern United States. On the eve of the implementation of NAFTA, which liberalized the flows of commodities, flora, and fauna, across the borders of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, dramatic militarized border policing campaigns occurred in regions surrounding El Paso, and later in south Texas, San Diego and Arizona. A 1990s government document warned that said campaigns would make undocumented crossings perilous, exposing “illegal aliens” to “increased violence,” and ostensibly diminishing them. Instead, approximately 5,000 corpses and countless other human remains have been found in the killing deserts of Arizona and other regions of the Southwest. And, undocumented migrants in the borderlands now become subject to the Minutemen and other nativist vigilante groups. Nevertheless, the vast majority of undocumented migrants succeed in crossing, having been violently inaugurated to the subordinate position in the US economic and racial order. Secure Communities and related police-ICE collaborations serve to reinforce their subordination, effectively thickening the border.

Recently, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn bowed to political pressure and called to end our state’s participation in this program. Community groups in Champaign-Urbana have mobilized and intervened. On March 31, a well-attended Foro Comunitario, or community forum, was held at the Urbana Civic Center, and future forums are planned.

Imigrant march in Pilsen on May Day

Bees in Your… Lawns!

By John C. Martin

John C. Martin of Urbana has a PhD in entomology and worked on native bees as graduate student.

Area varis are abuzz as thousands of dark colored bees weave at low altitude in impressive displays of aerial acrobatics. These impressive displays are harmless ground nesting spring bees. They will not attack children, pets or postal delivery persons. However, they will sting it grabbed! Not surprisingly, sugar-loving bees are solitary and do not form colonies or live in hives like honey bees and bumble bees. Each female diggs its own nest and provisions it with pollen for its young. Many females nest in close proximity and form aggregations of hundreds of nests. The nesting areas are covered with small mounds of excavated soil. You can often find them in shady areas where grass is spotty leaving bare spots for digging. Older neighborhoods with mature trees are good places to look for them. The north side of Carle Park in Urbana has a large aggregation.

The bees emerge in the spring and fly in circutious patterns about a foot above the ground. Males soon die leaving the females to function as single mothers. Females finish the underground cells where they will lay eggs and spend the next several weeks stockig it with pollen. In the next 24 hours these molsoms buzzing about with pollen on their legs like yellow leg warriors! As a single mother, this bee is not aggressive; she can’t afford to risk aggression because her young will not survive if she is killed or seriously injured.

After the nest is well provisioned, the female dies too and the young develop in the nest. The following spring they will not survive if she is killed or seriously injured.

Foro Comunitario, or community forum, was held at the Urbana Civic Center, and future forums are planned.

Curtis Lee points to bee nest mounds between the bricks on W. Nevada Street in Urbana. Solitary spring bees dig tunnels in the soil for their nest cells.

The bees emerge in the spring and fly in circular patterns about a foot above the ground. Males soon die leaving the females to function as single mothers. Females finish the underground cells where they will lay eggs and spend the next several weeks stockig it with pollen. In the next 24 hours these molsoms buzzing about with pollen on their legs like yellow leg warriors! As a single mother, this bee is not aggressive; she can’t afford to risk aggression because her young will not survive if she is killed or seriously injured.

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Alliter of the nest is well provisioned, the wildflowers bloom throughout the year, home and landowners get a greater benefit when they have a variety of plants with different blooming times. Many native wildflowers work well for this purpose. We get a long-lasting and varied garden, and they get well-stocked ‘pantries’! Like the spring bees, there are many other beneficial insects that live in soil. All are threatened by excessive insecticide use. Persons concerned about this should make sure that insecticides and herbicides are not routinely added to the “fertilizer” applied to their lawns. Harmful insects can be controlled by targeted applications if they become a problem.
UIUC Disappoints Environmental Community

By Katie Kinley

Katie Kinley is a sophomore from in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois and a member of Students for Environmental Concerns.

Millions of years ago, dinosaurs died off and left humans a parting gift of a vast supply of fossil fuels. Coal, natural gas, and oil are the black gold upon which societies stand. Carbon dioxide is the one chemical experiment we humans only get one chance with.

The atmosphere is the one chemical experiment we humans only get one chance with. Here on-campus, the Students for Environmental Concerns (SECS) group understand this. We have been at the forefront of the efforts to hold UIUC to their commitments made in the Illinois Climate Action Plan. Among these are promises to transition Abbot Power Plant off of coal by 2017 and to build a campus wind turbine by 2011.

Maybe you don’t know about Abbott Power plan? It is on-campus, University-owned, 70-year-old coal and natural gas burning facility. SECS has been utilizing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to get more information about Abbott, and campaigning for an end to Abbott coal use by 2013, which is the soonest feasible date. The plant is in need of renovation anyway and would transition to burning solely natural gas. This is really the lesser of two evils, considering natural gas produces roughly half as much carbon dioxide as coal but still has its own set of issues with fracking and methane leakage from gas wells.

We don’t set our sights higher, beyond simply the lesser of two evils? Well, we have had them set higher. For seven years, we had our sights on the promise of a University-owned wind turbine. Wind is the reigning champion of the renewable world when well-placed, it is even more cost effective than coal, especially if one considers externalized costs. In this year alone, SECS had several strategic planning meetings, made flyers, and organized a rally for our wind turbine campaign.

One of our problems is NIMBY. This is where residents are all for an initiative until it comes close to home and literally stands for Not In My Back Yard. They want it; they just don’t want to see it. Key example: Urbana.

Some Urbana residents have in this past year voiced their opposition to the University’s wind turbine. Urbana cannot stand to have it less than 1,200 feet away from the nearest resident (the site is all of 200 feet too close). They are not against the turbine itself in any way, just so long as it’s not in their backyard. These being the same residents that happily live outside of Urbanas city limits to avoid paying their fair share of property taxes.

Urbana claims to have had a legal case, but in reality, the city’s ordinances don’t apply to state-owned property and their claims would have never held up in court. Nevertheless, in the last few weeks, the administration has given in to Urbanas complaints and killed the project, despite having $2 million in grant money and $640,000 committed to the project by the Student Sustainability Committee (SSC) which is tasked with allocating funds from campus Green Fees.

This turbine would have gone up at about 50% of its total cost for the University. It would have paid for itself in about ten years and generated revenue (not to mention an unprecedented learning opportunity) for the University for more than twenty years. This represents a better return on investment than that of the U of I Foundation.

So why did the University kill this project and offer the students investment in something else? I seriously doubt that Urbana was the cause, although they may have been the tipping point. If UIUC had wanted a wind turbine, we would have had one. We had the bid, the funds, and everything we needed but the will from the people that matter. So the question is: why didn’t these people want the wind turbine?

I’ll tell you why: we weren’t loud enough to disturb the status quo. Efforts from ROSs like SECS alone were not enough to push this project through. People have other things to do, and its easy to believe that our efforts won’t make a difference. Well, in this case, they would have. Urbana was obnoxious, Facilities and Services was motivated, and one wind turbine by itself can’t generate enough revenue to really get the board of trustees attention.

They don’t understand the world situation regarding climate change, that UIUC as a world class institution needs to visibly show its commitment to protect the future, and that they have just passed up the perfect dramatic opportunity to do so. Because we—the students, faculty, and community—didn’t realize they were ignorant of the facts and that unwilling to do anything disruptive.

The 1970 Student Strike

Continued from page 3

time, many, though not all people, in Champaign-Urbana were receptive to what the students were doing, provided it was peaceful.

Saturday, May 9 saw the largest single arrest of the strike with over 100 people caught in a sweep on the Main Quad. According to the Daily Illini, many of those arrested had been singled out before hand by the police for arrest. They were held in Memorial Stadium before being released on bail. The mass arrest was an attempt by administrators to clamp down on the strike. In spite of this effort by the police, 6,000 students met on the Main Quad the next day and in the words of the Daily Illini, declared themselves liberated from the University. A University official also announced that the National Guard would be demobilized and state police would not intervene on campus again unless violence occurred. Students were also informed by the Dean of Students Hugh Satterlee that the University administration would not take punitive measures against the striking students.

Instead, a statement released by Chancellor Pelton acceded to the demand for liberation classes to be held in the following week. Taught by professors, these classes were held on the Quad or in classrooms and designed to carry on discussions of the many problems which face our society.

This move was welcomed by most, if not all, students simply for the reason that the strike was winding down. The UGSA steering committee had ended the picketing of buildings on Tuesday, May 12, because of lack of participation and to allow picketers to attend liberation classes. Participation in the strike had dropped down to about 50 per cent. Mike Reis, chairman of the GSA noted that it would be unwise to continue the strike any further because of the concessions given to the students by the administration.

By the end of the second week of actions on campus, the strike was over. The militancy of the actions taken by students and faculty on the issue of the war had an effect as the Nixon administration pulled out of Cambodia shortly after a national strike wave on May 13. As one of the high points of activism during this era, the strike at the University of Illinois was a local manifestation of a national movement. It is a story that deserves to be told and remembered by activists today.
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The Eurozone Crisis is in some ways less complicated in its foundations than most people are making it. The fundamental problem is that Greece, Spain, Ireland, and Portugal are stuck in recession or near-recession and are not allowed to adopt the policies that are necessary to get out of it. In 2009, most countries in the world adopted some combination of expansionary policies to get out of recession: for example, a fiscal stimulus or expansionary monetary policy (witness the more than $2 trillion that the U.S. Federal Reserve has created since our recession began). In some cases countries also got a boost from a depreciating currency which increased their exports and reduced their imports.

The peripheral European countries are stuck in a currency union where their monetary policy is dictated by the European Central Bank (ECB), which is far to the right of the U.S. Federal Reserve and has little interest in helping them. Since they have adopted the Euro, they also do not control their exchange rate, and their fiscal policy is going in the wrong direction, under pressure from the European authorities (the European Commission, ECB, and the International Monetary Fund-IMF).

No wonder then, that Spain has more than 20 percent unemployment, the Greeks have nearly 15 percent unemployment and are sinking further into debt, and Ireland has lost about 17 percent of its income per person since the crisis began. Portugal just signed an agreement with the IMF that is projected to give them two more years of recession.

This does not make any economic sense, except from the point of view of creditors that want to make sure that these countries are punished for their “excesses”—although for the most part, it was not over-borrowing but the collapse of bubble growth and the world financial crisis and recession that brought them to this situation. Unfortunately, the view of the creditors is that which prevails among the European authorities.

The governments of Greece, Portugal, and Ireland need to tell the European authorities (the European Commission, ECB, and the International Monetary Fund-IMF) that they will not accept any “bailout” agreements that do not allow their economies to grow. That has to be the bottom line: help, not punishment. Spain has not yet entered a loan agreement but its situation is similar. All of these governments have a lot of unused bargaining power, since the European authorities are very much afraid of a default and/or exit from the Euro by any one of them. And the European authorities have the money to help each and every one of these economies recover with expansionary macroeconomic policies. They just need to be told that “there is no alternative.”

IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn, currently jailed on sexual assault charges, understood the futility of some of these policies, particularly in Greece; but he was unable to change them very much, since IMF management is subordinate to the European authorities (and U.S. Treasury). His imminent departure is therefore unlikely to change much, although it may speed up the process of Greece’s inevitable move toward a debt restructuring.

Argentina defaulted on its foreign public debt at the end of 2001 after more than three-and-a-half years of trying the IMF route to recovery and sinking further into recession. The currency was cut loose from the dollar, and although the free-fall of the economy accelerated for one more quarter, it then recovered and grew 63 percent over the next six years. Within three years Argentina had reached its pre-crisis level of output, by contrast, Greece is not expected to reach its pre-recession level of GDP for at least eight years, and it will probably be longer.

When will it end? So long as these governments are committed to policies that shrink their economies, their only hope is that the global economy will pick up steam and pull them out with demand for their exports. This does not look likely in foreseeable future—the rest of Europe is not growing that rapidly and the U.S. economy is still weak.

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Capitalism is a Pyramid Scheme

The labor of those lower on the pyramid enriches the ones towards the top. To stay stable, the economy has to draw in more and more resources—continents, countries, industries, workers, and aspects of the natural environment. This is self-destructive and can only be maintained by ever-escalating crises.

We’re encouraged to compete against each other to improve our positions on an individual basis. But there’s not enough space at the top for all of us, no matter how hard we work—and no pyramid scheme can go on expanding forever. Sooner or later it’s bound to crash. An accelerating economic crisis is just the first warning signs. Instead of going down with the Pharaohs, let’s join forces to establish another way of life.

Revolution

By Derek Walsh

From the pulpit of blind patriotism, you preach to me about god and nation. This so called “land of freedom” built on the backs of slaves through genocide and exploitation. And in the name of god, you murder without reservation, the men and women who resist domination. And with that you expect me to salute and wave, the blood stained banner, that you so proudly wave as a symbol of freedom, and justice for all, yet the day will come, for you to be called, to answer for the crime, that you’ve been committing, and when it does, we’ll all be singing, a song of triumph and liberation won, a ballad in the name of Revolution!