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EDITORS/FACILITATORS:

- Antonia Darder
- Brian Dolinar
- davep
- Shara Esbenshade
- Belden Fields
- Bob Illyes
- Paul Mueth
- Marcia Zumbahlen

THE PUBLIC I

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



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Why Unity?

By Aaron Ammons

BE, peace. In the U. S., living under a government of, for and by the people, there comes a time when groups of people must be one in spirit, sentiment and purpose. The way our Republic works is that we, the people, elect other Citizens into offices and rely on them to represent our health, rights, interests and needs, thereby operating in the best interest of the community, city, state, and Nation. Consequently, we must at times unify our votes in order to elect a candidate we agree is best for the post that they seek. There are also times when we, the people, must be one in sentiment and purpose to remove an elected official from office, if he/she has abused the power vested in them, by the people. CU Citizens for Peace and Justice has had the pleasure of enacting its Citizenship and participating in the governmental process, nationally and locally. We will continue to do so!

This year, CUCPJ is organizing the 4th annual Unity March. Over the past three years we have utilized our gifts, skills, talents and virtues, organized ourselves, mobilized the people and thus realized that "Community Matters," the theme of this year's event. We invite unity because without strong, unified communities, we have weak governments that pass policies which infringe upon the rights of the people, instead of protect them. The Unity March empowers the people who participate, educates them on issues that affect them, and allows them to become more informed voters. CUCPJ must, can, and will register people to vote over the next year. We are targeting Citizens between the ages of 18 and 35 because the data shows that they are the least represented at the polls. When American Citizens do not express themselves in the voting booth, they silently give consent to policies they may disagree with. We want to work with our brothers and sisters to change this reality.

Another reason we work so hard at CUCPJ is because we know that if our children are not educated about who they are, where they live, and how to navigate the systems that govern them, they will be as herded sheep, led blindly into a vicious cycle of poverty, the penitentiary, or the cemetery. A democracy must have educated Citizens, to prevent a dictatorship.

The Unity March transcends labels of race, class and sex. These are constructs that divide us, the people. Therefore, we do not allow arrogance and ignorance to hinder us from working harmoniously on issues that plague our community. In fact, our agreement to work lovingly and truthfully to educate ourselves and our fellow Citizens is the glue that holds us together and is the spirit of the Unity March. See you all October 13!

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Iraq War veterans being arrested by riot police at the Capitol Building, September 15, —Photo by Chris Tucks



The Politics of Dissent
Various Authors
Page 1



Race and SWAT Raids
Brian Dolinar
Page 2



The Capitalist Academy
Belden Fields
Page 3



NWC: The Race Play Controversy
Various Authors
Page 5

Imagining Justice: Politics, Love, and Dissent

By Antonia Darder



*Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...
You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one*

—John Lennon
Born: October 9, 1940

John Lennon understood deeply the power of imagination. He seemed to recognize imagination as that wondrous human force that enables us to break free of the stagnant, one-dimensional perceptions that perpetuate oppression, suffering, and injustice.

In so many ways, the wealthy and elite in U.S. culture seems primed to disrupt our ability to imagine a different world—a world in which our shared humanity and material wealth are central to our politics. The neoliberal culture of terror of today seems steeped in the shadows of paranoid delusions that ravenously feed on our fears, insecurities, and despair. It is no wonder that we often feel so paralyzed in the face of injustice?

And, since it is precisely the ability to imagine beyond the status quo that promotes our creative action and opens the door to a new vision of politics and the world, neoliberalism violently pathologizes imagination that is not in its own image. Perhaps this is why activists and young people are often viewed as suspect and so easily criminalized.

A THREAT TO OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES

We exist, today, in a world that attempts to squelch the voices of difference and stifle the historical participation of those that refuse to consent to the tyranny of injustice. Thus, a crack down on civil liberties, including the right to information, movement, and dissent has intensified, over the last decade.

Since the late 1980s, an increasing number of men and women from working class and racialized communities have lost their civil rights, as a consequence of felony convictions and massive rates of incarceration. The level of surveillance within many public schools, including armed personnel, has made them paragons of the Security State. While a militarizing wave hungrily seeks to absorb poor and working class youth, through unchecked high school military recruitment.

Increasing actions have been taken against protestors and dissenters. In 2005 a Flag Amendment was passed that made burning the American flag a felony. In 2002, Joseph Frederick unveiled a 14-foot paper sign declaring “Bong Hits 4 Jesus.” Although he was on a public sidewalk outside his Juneau, Alaska high school, he was suspended. The case was to reach the Supreme Court, where the court’s decision drew a murky line between advocacy of illegal conduct and political dissent.

The *Democracy Now!* archive is replete with news stories of peace and anti-war activists who have been spied on, jailed, or fired from their workplaces, including long-time progressive columnist Robert Scheer who was fired by the *L.A. Times* in 2005. Many of these violent actions were intensified by signing into law The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001, better known as the Patriot Act. In response, Michael Steinberg of the American Civil Liberties Union encouraged political dissent saying, “in times of crises, it is even more important for citizens to dissent when the government is doing wrong...Dissent is not antipatriotic.”

DISSENT AND THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE

Given this repressive moment in history, it is so important that we, as world citizens, take on issues of social justice in a serious, forthright, and sustained manner. Emancipatory principles of life make it impossible to deny that dissent is an essential political ingredient for the evolution of a just democratic society. This is particularly so when we must contend with institutional conditions that marginalize, exclude, and repress our existence.

Dissent is, in fact, absolutely necessary to the enactment of democratic principles, particularly within a nation so diverse as the United States. A politics stripped of the creative and transformative fuel of dissent leaves the powerful unaccountable, to run roughshod over the interests, needs, and aspirations of the majority of the world’s population, irrespective of what is said in the public arena.

A revolutionary love compels us to dissent, to become part of a decolonizing culture that cultivates human connection, intimacy, trust, and honesty, from our bodies out into the world. Hence, the moral and the material are inex-

tricably linked. And as such, our politics integrates love as an essential ingredient of a just society.

Love, as a political principle, inspires and motivates us to create mutually life-enhancing opportunities for all people. It is a love grounded in the interdependence of our human existence. As philosopher Terry Eagleton reminds us, such an emancipatory love allows us to realize our nature, in a way that allows others to do so as well. Inherent in such a love is the understanding that we are never at liberty to be violent, authoritarian, or exploitive.

It is precisely a commitment to such a political principle, fueled by our imagination, which has been the anchor for generations of students, workers, women, and other oppressed communities around the world. Many of whom have dissented under the most dangerous and cruel conditions, armed principally with a revolutionary love and a burning desire to create a world where social justice and human rights are the impetus for our labor and relationships, rather than the bloody profits that insure exploitation, powerlessness, and human suffering.

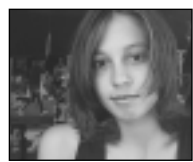
COLLECTIVE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Yet, no form of political dissent or emancipatory struggle can exist in a vacuum, for it requires connection, dialogue, and solidarity. It is precisely for this reason that we can safely say that the struggle for justice or a politics of dissent constitutes one of the most powerful pedagogical dynamics in the history of humankind. At each stage of our collective political engagement, knowledge, power, and difference challenge us to grow, demanding from us respect, humility, and faith in our capacity, as individuals and social beings.

Truly, examples of political dissent exist everywhere, including right here in the Champaign Urbana community. We live in a community rich in a legacy of progressive collective struggles and a will to persevere, despite what may seem the worst odds. Many of these examples are found in the political efforts of students, workers, parents, and others who embody the passion of justice, clear-sighted and unambiguous in their political intent. We are fortunate to struggle in solidarity and are ever fortunate to discover, through our labor and unity, the collective power of our humanity.

A Day in Baghdad Comes to Champaign

By Shara Esbenschade



On the afternoon of Thursday, September 20th, over sixty people laid down at the busiest intersections of campus town. At 5 pm, a crowd gathered in front of the Alma Mater to hear from the UIUC Campus Anti-War Network,

Iraq Veterans Against the War, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the Green Party’s position on congress’ responsibility in ending the war in Iraq, and a perspective on the media’s complicity in the war. Following the Speak Out, there was a local reenactment of what happened in Washington D.C. the Saturday before.

On that September 15, 100,000 people marched through Washington D.C. demanding an immediate end to the war in Iraq. Led by veterans of the Iraq War, they marched from the White House to the Capitol building, where 5,000 laid down in a symbolic act of solidarity with

our brothers and sisters dying in Iraq. The police arrested nearly 200 people for this dramatic action, a majority of them uniformed veterans. Although the mainstream media misreported the day’s actions, trivialized its importance, and lied about its size, to see 5,000 motionless bodies on the clean-cut grass outside the Capitol was truly inspiring.

September 15 was just a kick-off action to a week of national anti-war protest. The Campus Anti-War Network (CAN) is a nation-wide coalition of students working to end the war. The local CAN chapter planned the Die-In on Green Street as part of the protests taking place across the country throughout the week. This is the third youth-led Die-In to take place in this community since May, the other two being organized primarily by local high school students.

The essence of successful protest is to disrupt the calm of our accustomed blissful ignorance. Organizers had written to senators Durbin and Obama and representative

Johnson urging them to cut funding for the war immediately and inviting them to attend the protest. However, the main goal of this Die-In was to force onto the attention of Urbana-Champaign residents the reality of the suffering in Iraq. It is not right for Americans to be able to ignore this war. It is not right that in Iraq there is hardly a person who has not lost a friend in the violence. In Iraq, the lack of energy, water, and food is a daily struggle. Although this war is waged in our name, here in America it is more than easy – almost expected—to ignore it all.

Daily Illini Columnists may trivialize the Die-In, but creative, disruptive local protest has important and undeniable results. Several hundred passersby were forced to pause and ask themselves why “dead” people were scattered on the street, and many more when they saw the photos in the paper. To get people thinking about the Iraq War and how they as citizens can end it is an accomplishment in itself.



Home Invasion: Racial Disparities in SWAT Raids

By Brian Dolinar



On Sunday, June 10, a square block surrounding the Champaign County Courthouse was evacuated and closed off to conduct what Sheriff Dan Walsh called “police training.” Walsh stood at the corner of Main and Elm Street talking to news reporters, telling them to make sure and point cameras at the front doors of the courthouse to get the best view of the SWAT operation they were about to conduct. Throughout the afternoon, police ran between buildings with guns drawn, snipers took position from a nearby parking garage, and “tanks” rolled down the streets. The Sheriff’s SWAT team had taken over downtown Urbana.

Several reality shows on TV now depict the dangerous work of SWAT teams in major cities across the country. They show video footage of police negotiating hostage situations, busting drug kingpins, or thwarting bomb threats. Since 9-11, federal grants from Homeland Security have provided money for local police departments to buy additional equipment, claiming they are fighting terrorism. We have created a culture of fear that has justified the massive spending of public money to build SWAT teams, which the police themselves regard as elite paramilitary forces, with an array of high-powered weaponry, specialized equipment, and armored vehicles.

For this study, I requested police reports through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from our two local police departments and the Sheriff’s Department regarding SWAT raids. I gathered information on 63 SWAT raids and compiled the statistics. In looking at the results, I found that SWAT raids are nearly always for drugs, warrants are usually granted through the use of informants, and almost all raids are conducted on African American households.

OVERKILL

Since the Reagan era, we have seen a proliferation of specialized SWAT teams, although their origin goes back to the 1960s when the LAPD formed a SWAT team after the Watts riots and first used it in a 1968 shoot out with the Black Panthers. Today, these raids have become so common that they have even raised the ire of right-wing groups. A study by Radley Balko titled, *Overkill: The Rise of Paramilitary Police Raids in America*, was funded by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. Balko reports that an astonishing 40,000 such police raids are carried out each year in the United States.

There are past cases in Urbana-Champaign where the use of SWAT teams has ended in tragedy. On December 11, 1998, the *News-Gazette* covered the story of an 81 year-old African American woman who claimed she was grabbed by the neck and thrown to the floor by Champaign’s SWAT team and had to go to the hospital for injuries. The Champaign SWAT team was there to serve an outstanding warrant from Wisconsin to the woman’s grandson, who was not even in the house at the time.

Last year, on May 11, 2006, Champaign police received a call from Garden Hills, about Carl “Dennis” Stewart, a suicidal black man alone in his car with a gun. The Champaign police called out the SWAT team and rolled out their prized Armored Personnel Carrier. After a four-hour standoff, Stewart was chased down the street by the APC. Cornered by police, he put the gun to his head and killed himself.

According to one study, in cities with a population of at least 50,000, 90 percent have at least one SWAT team. This figure has doubled since the mid-1980s. In Champaign County, with a population of around 100,000, we have two SWAT teams, Champaign’s and the County’s.

The first SWAT team in this area goes back to 1985, when the University of Illinois and the Champaign County Sheriff’s Office formed the Tactical Response Unit. In 1991, the Urbana Police Department joined and the name was changed to the Metropolitan Emergency Tactical Response Operations (METRO) team. Today, METRO is a multi-jurisdictional operation that also includes police from Rantoul, Mahomet, and Champaign.

The Champaign Police Department has the resources to maintain its own SWAT team, information on which is hard to find. After 9-11, Champaign purchased an Armored Personnel Carrier with funds provided by Home-

land Security. It is essentially an armored truck converted for police use. Although it is not marked as a police vehicle, it can be identified by the gun slots in the doors. Champaign has recently purchased a second armored vehicle, innocuously called a “Rescue Vehicle,” as if it were the same as a fire truck or ambulance.

The Sheriff’s METRO team is the most encompassing SWAT force. They receive training at the Police Training Institute at the University of Illinois (which has recently been affiliating itself with the private security forces Blackwater and Triple Canopy, increasingly under scrutiny for their involvement in Iraq.) When the METRO team conducts raids, they arrive in the Armored Personnel Carrier. These officers look like stormtroopers when in full gear. They wear green camouflage clothing, black flak jackets with “police” written on the back, ballistic helmets, and face shields. They usually conduct raids in the early morning hours, around five or six a.m. Breaking down doors with a “ram” device, they often find the suspect in bed, naked and unaware. Officers carry AR 15 assault rifles. At least two snipers are assigned. If there is, for example, a pit bull at the suspect’s residence, police may carry a rifle that shoots non-lethal bean-bags (at \$2 a bag). The police also have their own drug dogs. The intent is to apply the maximum use of force to surprise and overwhelm the suspect.

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN

For this study, I looked at the police reports for 63 separate SWAT raids. The data collection is somewhat flawed, because many names were not included, cases were still pending, or basic information was blacked out in the police reports.

After collecting all the information, I was interested in finding out: 1) The race of the suspect, 2) How many raids were for drugs 3) How many warrants were gained through the use of confidential informants. Some very clear patterns were evident in my findings.

I found that in 49 incidents where race was indicated, 44 were black. That means that 90% of SWAT raids were conducted on African American homes. The concentration of raids were in black neighborhoods north of University and on Lierman Street in southeast Urbana.

Despite the media propaganda of bomb scares and terrorist attacks, the wide majority of SWAT raids were for drugs. There was an occasional suicide case, warrant for a murder suspect, or a call for an “armed barricaded subject.”

In 52 SWAT raids where the cause of the warrant could be determined, 45 were for drug searches. This indicates that 87% of SWAT raids were for drugs.

I was able to collect the complete records for the raids conducted by the Sheriff’s METRO team in 2006, which are representative of the trends in Champaign County. Of the 12 raids conducted by METRO in 2006, all were for drugs. African Americans made up 11 of the 12 individuals whose homes were raided. Only two people had a large amount of drugs.

Many of the warrants obtained for SWAT raids are gained through the use of informants. In one study conducted in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, it was found that 87% of warrants were secured with the help of informants. These are individuals who may be drug addicts, are stopped by police, threatened with felony charges, and then coerced into being snitches for the police.

Recently, a man arrested during a SWAT raid was acquitted of drug charges after a jury heard questionable testimony from an informant, a felon with multiple convictions, who said she hoped to get a break on her own pending charges in exchange for her testimony (*News-Gazette*, 9/15/2007).

In 2006, all but one of the searches conducted by the Sheriff’s METRO unit were gained through the use of informants. Surpassing the example of Raleigh-Durham, 92% of raids conducted by the Champaign County Sheriff’s Office were conducted through the use of informants. The only exception was a case where Khat, a plant grown in the Middle East and Africa with psychedelic effects, was intercept-

ed when sent through Fed Ex. It is impossible to know from court documents the name of the confidential sources or to find out if they were given a lighter sentence. They only appear in police reports under ridiculous aliases like, “William Love,” “Pancho Sanchez,” or “Brenda Coker.”

FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES

The one deviation from the METRO unit’s targeting of blacks in 2006 was a raid conducted on two white males who were found to be neo-Nazis. The police secured a warrant after a coordinated cocaine purchase, but they found much more than drugs. The photographs taken by police show Nazi posters on the walls with swastikas and images of marching SS stormtroopers. The police discovered a loaded AK-47 and a cache of weapons in the apartment. They found a total of five rifles: an AMK-ARA K-Kale old military style rifle, a loaded Colt AR-15 .223 caliber rifle, a loaded Remington .22 caliber rifle, a WARDS Western Field .22 caliber rifle, and a Remington Super Magnum 12 gauge shotgun. They also found 2 handguns: a Smith and Wesson revolver in the house, and a loaded .45 caliber pistol in one of the man’s car. Police also came across a stockpile of ammunition.



“Rescue Vehicle”

Additionally, police found the explosives potassium perchlorate, Stearic Acid powder, and Titanium Dioxide. But these two neo-Nazis were not prosecuted under new federal anti-terrorism laws, nor were they characterized by police as “gang members.” According to the police report authored by Sgt. Brian Mennenga, these explosive items were only believed to be used for “entertainment purposes.” There is no mention in the police reports of these two being neo-Nazis. Yet they were evidently preparing for a full-scale race war.

Of the two neo-Nazis, one was given a 12 month conditional discharge for not having a registered FOID card for the AK-47 (Remember, Bush lifted the ban on assault weapons in 2004). The other neo-Nazi, charged with delivery of large amounts of cannabis and powder cocaine, has received eight continuances to date and his case is still pending (Case nos. 06-CF-1561/06-CF-1562).

WHAT IF?

When I asked Sheriff Dan Walsh what the ratio of black to white suspects involved in SWAT raids is, he said, “I do not know the answer to that. We don’t keep statistics based on that.”

Authorities often say there is more crime in black neighborhoods. They say this is where all the service calls come from. Yet in the case of drug raids, police are selectively pursuing individuals. Studies have shown that blacks and whites use and sell drugs at equal rates. Still, it is commonly believed that only blacks are drug dealers. The targeting of blacks by SWAT teams is unequal enforcement of the law, plain and simple. What would happen if a SWAT team targeted a fraternity house on campus or a suburban home in Cherry Hills?

An on-line version of Radley Balko’s *Overkill* can be found at: http://www.cato.org/pubs/wtpapers/balko_whitepaper_2006.pdf. For the full version of this article see ucimc.org.



Capitalist Academy Fund Is Anything But Limited

By Belden Fields



For almost two years, some self-described “good Capitalist” allies of the University of Illinois have been hard at work in forging the Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government. In line with the conservative agenda of the Hoover Institute, the Fund seeks to use its resources and powerful influence to reverse what fellow founder and board member Tom O’Laughlin refers to as “a decided left-wing bias in schools.”

Although Chancellor Richard Herman claims “This is a fund and nothing else”, the Fund has already raised over two million dollars singing the praises of the free market, limited government, individual rights, individual responsibility, enterprise, and entrepreneurship, which they refer to as the lynchpins of the Fund.

In the name of promoting political freedom and economic opportunity, the sponsors of this initiative seek “the development of curricula leading to the establishment of majors, minors, and other academic credentials” that perpetuate and propagate the neoliberal ideals that support this initiative.

In addition, “support for faculty scholars will come in the form of endowed professorships and chairs”, as well as scholarships for undergraduate and fellowships for graduate students engaged in studies, research or teaching pertaining the purpose of the Fund.

Concerns by UIUC faculty regarding the lack of faculty participation in the development of the Fund, the stealth nature of its formation, and the lack of academic accountability, led to the establishment by the Chancellor of an advisory committee to function as a guiding body on the Fund’s academic exploits.

However, despite the Faculty Senates efforts to create some faculty oversight of the Fund, there are those who believe that faculty are still giving away far too much in terms of academic integrity, if the proposed Academy on Capitalism is enacted according to its expressed precepts.

There are a number of central concerns about this forceful regeneration of neoliberal lynchpins, touted as the cutting edge panacea for “a productive and successful American society.” I want to briefly point out the five most obvious include:

INFLUENCING THE CURRICULUM WITH ECONOMIC POWER

Conservatives are usually eager to urge jurists to go to the intent of the framers or legislators when interpreting the application of a law. In a *News-Gazette* editorial on March 4, 2007, Tim O’Laughlin, one of the framers of the proposal to create an Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government clearly reveals the political crusade that is in the minds of the framers of this proposal. In the article, O’Laughlin sarcastically gloats over how people with his views completely overturned Harvard’s curriculum, including getting rid of English 101, or “Postmodern Moonshine.”

The Fund’s wide-reaching curricular ambition is openly expressed in the mission statement of the initiative readily found on its website. With an explicit objective to set right the misguided direction of the liberal university, the Fund proposes to support “leadership, initiative, and creativity” among students and faculty—particularly in the curriculum development and teaching of education and journalism—who are closely aligned with their mission.

THE U OF I AS BEACHHEAD

As a reinforcing precedent, the Chancellor has referred to two private universities that have such conservative initiatives. Private universities can have any orientation that they want to, including religious. While this specific “Academy Fund” is locally initiated, it is clear from the writings of the founders that it is to serve as a pilot program to exert economic power over public universities across the United States.

Once on the ground, this “Academy” and others like it would likely receive a huge influx of funds from a wide range of right-wing funding sources. This would become one of the most attractive “buys” in a newly conceived aca-

democratic market place, where the new commodity would be curricula in public universities.

The University of Illinois has not only a responsibility, to itself, to resist such intrusion, but also to other public universities that would become more vulnerable, given the precedent that UIUC’s conjoint relationship with the Fund will set for public higher education. With the hugely unequal wealth and power of influence at work in such a relationship, it could portend a dangerous moment in the history of public education’s commitment to academic freedom and the emancipatory principles of an enlightened polity.

PERPETUATING A FALSE PREMISE THAT THE ELITE ARE NOW THE EXCLUDED MINORITY

The notion that capitalists are now the new excluded minority of the academy and that a “a forum for another point of view” is sorely needed underscores the sentiment of the Fund’s literature. To ameliorate this condition “The Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government Fund will encourage intellectual diversity and civil debate by opening discourse to a greater range of perspectives.” The founders imply here that those with their views are silenced and marginalized, while the academy plunges into the depth of left-winged radicalism.

But the facts belie such a claim. For example, the Department of Economics, which had a great diversity of views on the place of markets relative to the state’s role, when I was an undergraduate at the U of I, has today become increasingly homogeneous in its views of markets, monetarism, and the government’s role in the economy. If representation for their view is what they seek, then the proponents of the Academy should be well pleased by this shift.

Meanwhile, the Department of Finance, and the College of Business as a whole, is certainly teaching the kinds of ideas that the donors contend are absent from the discourse on this campus. The College of Engineering, too, is heavily invested in entrepreneurial relations with the private sector, and professors in the college spin off their own private enterprises. The College of Agriculture enjoys close ties with the private agricultural sector, including the Farm Bureau Federation.

In the College of Law, the Law and Economics school of thinking that privileges corporate interests is very well represented. New hires over the last two years have especially tilted the college in that direction. Even the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, the foundation of which was greatly aided by the state and local AFL-CIO’s, is turning out mainly graduate students who wind up working in personnel departments on the side of management. The Research Park offers corporations a place and many cooperative relations with academics on our campus; and the privatization of the development of Orchard Downs is well on its way.

So given this enormous amount of capitalist-inspired activity, how can, by any stretch of the imagination, it be claimed that there is an exclusion of capitalist viewpoints and interests at this university? In truth, it cannot. The Academy on Capitalism, which is now being referred to by the administration as a Fund rather than an Academy, is not an attempt to fill a lack. Quite the contrary, it is a brash attempt at ensuring a conservative ideological hegemony over the campus.

THE IDEOLOGY IS ALSO QUITE SPECIFIC

The framers of the Fund derive their theoretical inspiration from Friedrich von Hayek who, in volume 2 of his tome, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty* (itself entitled *The Mirage of Social Justice*), denies the validity of the very concept of social justice. For Hayek, the social good is achieved only by individuals making rational self-interested economic choices, not by governments trying to remedy market effects or trying to control corporate power. Monopolies are good, considered signs of economic efficiency.

Meanwhile, governments that seek to pursue social justice or advance economic or social rights are perceived as disrupting economic efficiency. Consequently, those who see a moral or efficiency problem in severe economic inequalities; those who argue that governments should use fiscal policies (e.g., progressive taxation) to reduce

economic inequality and poverty; those who support government measures to bring about universal healthcare; or those who take seriously the economic and social rights stipulated in the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, all fall beyond the ideological pale and are, thus, ineligible for any of the resources offered by this Fund.

POWER DRIVEN HEGEMONY OR INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE?

So, rather than accepting such a blatant attempt to propagate a specific political and economic viewpoint, would it not be more academically respectable to insist that the Fund be devoted simply to the relationship between economy and government. In this way, it could be opened up to the diversity that the founders claim is missing.

Indeed, that diversity is already here at the university; where it is missing is in the founders’ own proposal. Approaching this as I am suggesting here would open up opportunities to people with varying views of that relationship and a number of other important related issues.

Some issues that such an approach would raise include: how we should we think about economic rights; the status and rights of the corporation as a legal person; the effect of free markets nationally and internationally; the meanings of the “right to work” and the “right of workers to organize;” and how to morally assess inequalities. The university could set up public forums and symposia on these issues where students, faculty, and community people could be exposed to serious debates and probing analyses across disciplinary lines.

At the Annual Faculty Meeting on September 24, two contradictory ideas were put forth by the Chancellor: “No one will be hired on political grounds. Those who have supplied the resources are entitled to determine where the resources will go.” If the Academy/Fund operates according to its stated mission, people will have to be hired on political grounds. They might be very good scholars, and I am confident that the Chancellor and his Advisory Committee would insist on that, but they will have to meet a political litmus test as well.

Therein lies the rub. That is a huge, and to my knowledge, unprecedented leap in how we operate. If we insisted on using the Fund as I have suggested, to truly further diverse exchanges on these major issues, the founders might decide to withdraw their offer of money because it would not have the same ideological propagating force. That would indeed be their right. But accepting a political litmus test in recruitment of faculty, curricular decisions, and foundation grants is, in my view, infinitely more damaging to us and other public universities in this country than giving up the proffered money.

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I Can't Vote, But I Have A Voice

By Jelani Saadiq

Jelani Saadiq, eldest son of Carol and Aaron Ammons, is a 7th grader at Urbana Middle School. He has travelled extensively for his young years and practices Shaolin Gong Fu at Precious Sword Martial Arts School in Urbana. He hopes to study abroad in China when he turns sixteen.

On September 13, 2007, I visited a place that most people have only seen on TV. It is a place where a lot of historic events took place, for instance the March on Washington and the Million Man March. I went there for an anti-war rally with my mom Carol Ammons and our friend, Kimberly Kranich. We got on the road around 4:00 p.m. going to Chicago and arrived at Midway airport about 5:45 p.m. to catch our flight. We got on the plane and a few minutes later we were off, gliding through the air until we landed at the Ronald Reagan airport in Washington D.C.

We retrieved our bags and went to catch the Metro train. Washington, D.C. has one of the best public transportation systems in the United States, in my opinion. It has the best transportation because you are able to travel all over the city in minutes. It does not cost a lot of money and it goes so far around the city that you have no real reason to drive unless you are going out of town. When we got off of the Metro, we rode the biggest escalator I've ever seen. It was about 50 feet tall. We had to walk to a lady's house by the name of Martha Allan. She has a wonderful home that she shares with her husband Jonathan and daughter Zenia. We spent the evening getting to know each other until we finally went to bed.

On September 13, 2007, I visited a place that most people have only seen on TV. It is a place where a lot of historic events took place, for instance the March on Washington and the Million Man March. I went there for an anti-war rally with my mom Carol Ammons and our friend, Kimberly Kranich. We got on the road around 4:00 p.m. going to Chicago and arrived at Midway airport about 5:45 p.m. to catch our flight. We got on the plane and a few minutes later we were off, gliding through the air until we landed at the Ronald Reagan airport in Washington D.C.

The next day we went to talk with Rev. James Luther Bevel, director of direct action in the Civil Rights Movement. We spent a few hours with him, then we went home to rest for the march the next day. The following morning we got ready and headed to the Metro once again. This time the train didn't get us as close as we wanted it to and we had to walk a long way to the starting place of the march. The march was supposed to start at noon so we got there around 11:30 a.m. We talked to people from all over the United States: Virginia, California, and Illinois. Nearly everyone brought a sign that expressed what they felt. They knew why they were there and had all the information to support it. I say that because the people that brought signs explained what their signs were all about, including years, days, even the names of the people they were talking about. They weren't afraid of the response that they would get. They stood on truth and they wouldn't back down on what they were saying.

There were so many people that we did not start moving until 3:00. While we were marching there were people on the sideline who were pro-war and of course, we were anti-war. Over 15,000 people marched for peace from the White House to the Capital building. The Capital grass was unbelievable. I was so tired that it served as a soft bed. Washington D.C. is a place that you must visit so you can see all of the historic treasures and start to understand government. While there, I was able to visit Fredrick Douglass' house, the Lincoln Memorial, the Pentagon, the Washington Monument and the White House, all while voicing my opinion against the war.

Inclusive Illinois? Hell No!

By Brian Dolinar

On Wednesday, September 19, at noon the Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege (STOP) Coalition successfully took over the student union and reclaimed it as a public space. Approximately 60-80 people marched throughout the main floor of the union, going in and out of the building several times. STOP protesters marched past the ice cream corner, the Credit Union, and past the Espresso Royal Café counter as employees looked on in wonder. STOP organizers Treva Ellison, John Gergeley, and Paty Garcia led chants of "Whose Union? Our Union!"

The march drew upon the coalitional structure of STOP and called out students of color, students of conscience, community members, union members, LGBT people, and many others. SEIU workers were there to protest going for a year without a contract. In the Courtyard Café they chanted, "Who Cleans the Buildings? B-S-Ws!" (Building Service Workers) "Who Feeds the Children? F-S-Ws!" (Food Service Workers).

STOP then marched over to the Swanlund Administration Building shouting, "Inclusive Illinois? Hell No!" and "They Say Cut-Backs. We Say Fight Back!"



Local die-in against the war—Shara Esbenschade

Rally For Designated Suppliers

By Alison McGuire

A rally was held to make the UIUC community aware that the system by which the University of Illinois gets its apparel is horribly flawed and rife with human rights violations. Companies like Nike, which make Illinois apparel, demand that factories lower their prices more and more each year, until there is little or no money left over for workers' wages, benefits, or even basic safety precautions. Workers who try to unionize are fired immediately, because as soon as a union gets recognized, the brands pull their orders, and move to a cheaper factory.

The Designated Suppliers Program would be a huge step toward fixing this problem. Brands would be required to source a certain percentage of their university apparel from factories where workers earn a living wage and have a real right to form a union, creating a safe space for workers to organize. Brands would also be required to pay high enough prices for their goods, so that workers would be able to bargain for living wages, making it pos-

sible for factory owners to meet the demands of a unionized workforce without the fear of losing orders.

The Designated Suppliers Program is the only program out there that addresses the root causes for the existence of sweatshops. Yet, the University has been dragging its feet for **over two years**. Why aren't we signed on? Because Chancellor Herman doesn't feel it is an urgent enough issue.

Chancellor Herman must realize that this is an extremely urgent issue. Our slowness in signing on to the Designated Suppliers Program has resulted in thousands of people losing their jobs, and thousands of other people being forced to accept lower and lower wages year after year, until they can barely afford to feed themselves, let alone their families. The rally was an effort to show the Chancellor that students will not accept his inaction in the face of human rights violations.

More importantly, UIUC students care about human rights and want the DSP!



Demo against the health care veto

Disorientation 101

By Antonia Darder

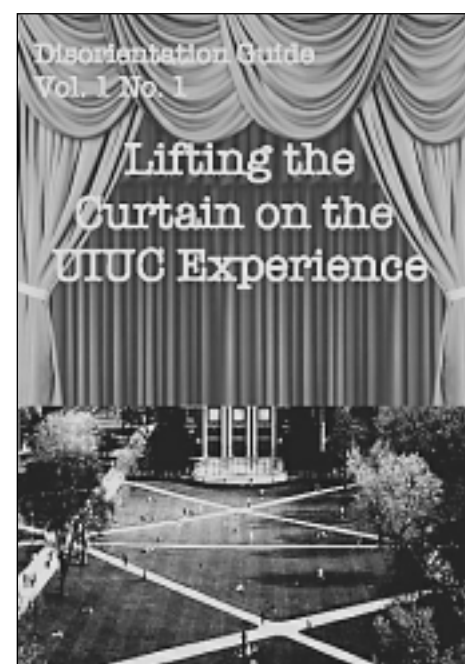
At more than a dozen campuses around the U.S. and Canada, students have taken the college orientation process into their own hands, by publishing a series of alternative student guides. Each publication specifically addresses its own campus, in an effort to provide in-coming students with the real deal on university politics and the college experience, particularly for those concerned with issues of social justice and human rights.

Whether it be the Boston College *Freshman Disorientation*, the Stanford University *Disorientation Guide*, the Harvard University *Disguide*, or the UIUC *Disorientation Guide: Lifting the Curtain on the UIUC Experience*, these publications seek to provide access to an often silenced history of the institution and helpful hidden facts.

The UIUC *Disorientation Guide*, for example, introduces students to sites of historical student struggle, highlights the invis-

ibility of queer students, offers a history of the Chief Illiniwek controversy, articulates student demands since 1968, and introduces students to progressive organizations.

More importantly, "the aim of disorientation is... to critique and unravel our socialization, to build solidarity with one another and to document and discuss dissent, resistance, and change on the UIUC campus and the larger community."



NWC: The Race Play Controversy

*In September, the university brought to campus N*gger Weib*ck Ch*nk: The Race Play, touted as an effective educational tool for engaging difficult issues of race. Many across the country herald this production as a grass-roots phenomenon. But it seems that the title alone creates controversy. Yet, the actors claim that "this factor is a fantastic opportunity to start the dialogue, so people can become a little more at ease talking about issues of race."*

"People ask us all the time, 'Why did it have to be these words? Couldn't you just call it 'African American/Latin American/Chinese?'" My answer to that is why not these words? What is it that people are so afraid of? It's a shame that someone's day is ruined if they see a poster of ours. When people are offended it's because of their own experiences they've had with these words. We're not out to offend anyone, and we're not using these words against people. When the three of us got together, the title just came and it was perfect: These are the words we've been dealing with our whole lives."

The event helped to kick off the administration's Inclusive Illinois: One Campus Many Voices initiative. The following are commentaries submitted by students, faculty, and community members about the controversial event.

The Administration's Solution to Our Ills

Cassidy C Browning is an activist theatre scholar and artist. Browning is now in the second year of the M.A. in Theatre program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I received an email on September 16 from the Office of the Dean of Students stating that, "tickets [for NWC] are being held for you or for representatives of your organization." It did not specify for which group I was being singled out, how these groups were identified, or how I was identified as a member.

The email simply detailed how I could purchase one of these held tickets for a discounted price. The "Office of the Dean of Students has obtained a limited number of UI student tickets to ensure that as many students as possible have an opportunity to view the performance if they wish and to engage in critical examination and thoughtful dialogue."

As the groups of which I am a part are linked by their "activist" goals, I gleaned that the Office of the Dean was reaching out to campus activists, or those likely to have strong positions about the performance, to attend. The fact that grassroots groups, cultural houses, and the racialized studies programs were not in favor of or questioned the production threatened the validity of the administration's effort. Moreover, the lukewarm to hostile reception of Inclusive Illinois most likely compounded the need for this outreach.

I detail this process because it was clear that the UIUC administration (including the Krannert Center) purported this show as a solution to issues of racial oppression and privilege on the UIUC campus, though company members professed that the piece was merely a comedy dealing with personal experiences.

The Theatre Company markets itself as an educational tool and is available for residencies and workshops, which is the capacity in which UIUC engaged the group. Their website states that, "School and community outreach as well as artist-in-residence programs are a fundamental component of our work as we strive to enhance cultural awareness, acceptance, and risk-taking." Unfortunately, those in attendance at events, which featured discussion with the company members, found the experience to enhance anything but awareness and acceptance.

The production originated as a performance vehicle for Rafael Agustin, Allan Axibal, and Miles Gregley. These three actors of color were systemically excluded from the casting processes at UCLA, and so created their own performance opportunity with NWC, based on lived experience. This show, which was originally scheduled to run for one weekend, extended its run and began playing professionally in LA, before touring the United States for the past three years. A non-professional student production has become a professional, educational touring show and residency package, complete with t-shirts and buttons for purchase outside of the theatre.

Steven T. Seagle, one of two white co-writers and co-directors of NWC, was present at the community and University discussions with the performers. I found his role in the company and specifically during discussion extremely problematic and harmful. At several such events, Seagle implied that the three performers should not be critically questioned about their work, because performers of color are so rare. At other events he demeaned questions regarding the performative effect of the work, which came off as a patronizing effort to protect the performers and the piece.

A section of the performance is called "The Night I was Gay." It is about Alan's experience of questioning whether he was gay, as so many people had told him. When a question arose after the performance about his story's stereotypical representation of homosexuality, Alan replied, "I feel it was very brave to share this story. A lot of people wouldn't have shared that story." The audience was again told that they had no place to question these individuals or their representation of identity.

Several questions and comments were about the performative effect of representing these stereotypes. One person asked about the pleasure expressed in their consumption and another whether invoking the stereotypes reinforces them in the cultural imagination. The performers expressed no discomfort in the laughter and consumption of the show's content, and seemed to care little

about the effect on the audience, even when people of color see white audience members joyfully consuming the slurs and imagery.

The most upsetting moment for me was when Rafael Agustin equated the level of concern about their show with there being more race problems in this area. This effectively silenced and demeaned any discontent or critical engagement with the piece and the artists, by stating that any such expression was merely indicative of racism.

Yet, on a campus where racial masquerade has been and continues to be endorsed, sold, reinforced, and commodified, the community is bound to have a more complex understanding of how stereotypes function. They will also be especially weary when told that this particular case is a positive use of stereotypes and epithets.

The most blunt and perhaps most astute comment made, likened NWC to minstrelsy. Understandably, this was upsetting for the performers to hear. Less understandably, however, was for a group of artists in residence at the University to allow their personal emotions to stunt their ability to critically engage with the conversations, which they claim to foster and desire. The basic claim of minstrelsy was based on the observation that these performers are commissioned to perform in stereotypical roles (either as "race educators" or the stereotypes which they embody in performance), which those in power are comfortable consuming.

The show began with an announcement asking patrons to turn off their cell phones followed by, "Above all, remember that this is a comedy." People's lived experiences with these words and stereotypes are not comical, nor does the genre, content, or ethnicity of the performers dismiss the violence they engender or the right to critical engagement.

Poor Decisions Disrupt Community Trust

Amira Davis is a resident of Champaign Urbana and the founder and director/ instructor of the Afrikan-American Cultural Arts Program.

By now, anyone who has spoken with African-Americans associated with the theater department realizes that the unilateral scheduling of NWC is only part of the problem. For example, the upcoming plays on Africa have either been written by non-Blacks and will be directed by non-Blacks or in the one instance where the writers are Black, the play will be directed by a novice non-Black.

Other issues, aside from a lack of inclusive non-white voices on the productions at KCPA, include having Black actors and actresses play compromising roles: one in which

Continued on page 6

In Memory of Student Protesters Mexico City October 2, 1968

40 years ago, academic life throughout Mexico was halted by antigovernment demonstrations ignited by student grievances, with many discontented sectors of society also joining the protests. As the Olympic Games approached, the government prepared the country to show foreign visitors that Mexico was politically stable and economically sound. But student unrest grew louder and more violent, as they demanded freedom for all political prisoners, dismissal of the police chief, disbanding of the antiriot police, guarantees of university autonomy, and the repeal of the "law of social dissolution" (regulating the punishment of acts of subversion, treason, and disorder.)

Luis Echeverría Álvarez, the new interior minister, agreed to meet with the students but changed his mind when they demanded that the meeting be televised. When their demands were not met, the students escalated the scale and frequency of their protests. On August 27, 1968 the students convened the largest antigovernment demon-

stration to date, rallying half a million protesters in the main plaza of the capital.

Seeking to bring a halt to the demonstrations, President Díaz Ordaz ordered the army to take control of UNAM and to arrest the student movement leaders. In response, the students called for another rally at La Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City's Tlatelolco district. On October 2, 1968, a crowd of about 5,000 convened on the plaza in defiance of the government crackdown. Armed military units and tanks arrived on the scene, surrounding the demonstrators.

Shots rang out. The panicked crowd suddenly surged toward the military cordon, which reacted by shooting and bayoneting indiscriminately into the crowd. No one knows how many were killed, but some estimate that more than 400 people died. The massacre had a profound and lasting negative effect on the government's public image—its authoritarian nature had been tragically unveiled.



Photo by Patrick Allen

NWC: The Race Play Controversy

Continued from page 5

a Black actor has been “blind casted” into a Tennessee Williams’ role in which he must use the ‘N’ word repeatedly.

As an artist, I am sensitive to the role that art and culture play in the liberatory efforts of subjugated groups. In that same respect, I am acutely aware of the lack of performance spaces for African-Americans, Native Americans and Latinos in the community that hosts this university. As a result, Krannert has an obligation to ensure, as “the” performance venue for Champaign County, that programming decisions do not merely reflect diversity, as viewed from the perspective of Mike Ross or others who are not members of marginalized communities. Instead they must take into account the types of art that truly reflect diversity and divergent ideas.

To that end, I feel that a stronger statement should be made with regards to the fall schedule of events at KCPA, beyond just boycotting the performance and the talkbacks associated with NWC. Perhaps a more visible presence, the nights of the performance, will be more efficacious in sending Mike the message that if he wants to trust (as he indicated last year during the Katrina events), he needs to first be trustworthy. This entails being responsive to the needs of all consumers of art & culture.

Challenging the Wasteland of Racism

D. Anthony Tyeeme Clark (Meskwaki) is Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies at UIUC and co-editor of the Indigenous Futures Series at the University of Nebraska Press.

The Krannert Cultural Performance Arts programming decisions, including the current presentation of *NWC: The Race Play*, reflect a three-part core problem at this historically white university: 1) The lingering residue of historical white privilege; 2) the intergenerational post-traumatic stress of unhealed trauma caused by heterosexist, misogynist white-inspired and perpetrated forms of violence and colonialism; and 3) the neo-liberal structures through which power and privileges are distributed today and into unforeseeable future.

Panning outward to a broader context, the Chancellor’s Inclusive Campus initiative, in the end will fall far short of creating social justice. It will do so, because the most counter-hegemonic events will likely have the smallest audiences, reaching mostly those people who are already calling for redistribution of institutional power and a flattening of institutional privileges at this university and the broader society.

Reflecting the mainstream ethos of this initiative, Mike Ross and the KCPA programming certainly will bring good people together who, basking in the joys and exoticism of liberal multiculturalism, will frolic with their people-of-color allies in the wastelands of overt racisms and subtle micro-aggressions. This was made evident by Ross’ impenitent explanation of his choices when challenged and the hierarchical structure through which his decisions are made. Unfortunately, this “race play” is not likely to move the university even one-millimeter closer to the much needed and long-overdue structural changes.

Left to Answer Sloppy Questions

Genevieve Tenoso is a Lakota/Ojibwe tribally enrolled, and a PhD student in anthropology at UIUC. Her work centers on Native representation and decolonization theory.

I inadvertently purchased a ticket to the Wednesday evening NWC show; and after I had committed to going, I became aware of the controversial nature of the event. I found the overuse of the words NWC to be unnecessary. While I might find celebration in witnessing a performance by a cast of people of color, their messages were not new.

During the post-show discussion the cast had trouble with critiques raised by other people of color who found the performance offensive and ineffective. The context of the UIUC campus climate and the sophistication of the audience’s understanding of race were factors the cast evidently failed to consider.

The performance-venue sale table of show souvenirs, defensive promotion “we have performed for over 60,000 people”, and the cast’s inability to articulate a more nuance discussion about race and racism caused me to question their self-proclaimed educational value.

Audience numbers and popularity alone cannot stand for success, when using such inflammatory language, in light of its damaging history. Even worse, when the NWC Company leaves town, the rest of us have to do the work of answering their sloppy posed questions.

We are Weary of White Arrogance

Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua is Director of the African American Studies and Research Program and is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at UIUC. He is the author of America’s First Black Town, Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915.

I, in concert with the faculty of the African American Studies and Research Program, adamantly opposed the NWC: The Race Play performance. After reading and viewing their material, I found the routine simplistic and shortsighted. Apparently, the production aims to challenge personal prejudices, by performing stereotypes and using offensive racial slurs. Though I have no doubt that these words are still widely used as slurs today, they are mostly used in all-white settings and rarely make their way into the public discourse today.

I suppose engagement with racial slurs has some value, though NWC’s method is greatly flawed. After massive usage of these slurs, they simply proclaim that African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans are not the stereotypes depicted. Then reminiscent of Rodney King, they naively argue that there is just one race. Moreover, they seem to have no conceptualization of institutional racism, which is what we mainly confront at UIUC.

NWC is at best hopelessly naïve and at worst insidious. The routines are not good comedy. The trio lacks the sophistication of Dave Chapelle or Chris Rock or even Carlos Mencia, who though offensive, are occasionally funny. But even Chapelle discovered that despite his sophisticated critique of racial oppression, his white audience did not “get it.” Hence, it’s doubtful that the negative impact of this “play” can be blunted. Especially when the performers seem devoid of an understanding of the complicated nature of racial oppression and are presenting poorly conceptualized material.

The NAACP recently performed a symbolic burial of the N-word, movements to ban it have emerged at schools in several states and cities have passed resolutions either banning the use of the word or urging their citizens to voluntarily refrain from using it. I find it curious that just as a movement develops to ban the N-word, this series of skits emerges as a darling of the campus newspapers and the mainstream press.

Finally, I am dismayed that Mike Ross made the decision to bring a “play” which even he agrees is controversial, without first consulting people of color on campus and in the community, especially those who study, teach and regularly engage these issues. Why weren’t the racialized studies programs and cultural centers engaged before a commitment was made to bring this parody to our campus? I, for example, was only “consulted” after Ross learned that the Krannert Art Museum refused to schedule a collaboration between NWC and SPEAK Café because our program opposed the performance. Given all that happened on campus last year, how do you make this kind of decision without consulting the victims of racism?

The point is that we are weary of white arrogance. And the decision to impose this “play” on us without consultation represents the height of white liberal arrogance! I do not doubt the good intentions of the decision-makers. But, unfortunately, African Americans and people of color will suffer the consequences of the institution’s bad decision. What happens when members of ZBT or the Tri-Deltas complain that they were disciplined (however lightly) for doing the same thing—“parodying” racialized minority groups?

Creating a Truly Progressive Cultural Politics

Faculty of the Asian American Studies Program. The following is an excerpt from their collective statement on the issue of the NWC performance.

As a program that aims to provide students with the critical tools to examine racist and racialized everyday and spectacular images, situations and meanings, the Asian American Studies Program neither endorses a boycott of the Speak Theater Arts production of NWC: The Race Play nor tacitly approves of the performance. Instead, we strongly believe that the University of Illinois community should take this opportunity, and the unfolding controversy, and transform them both into teaching moments.

The controversy around the Speak Theater Arts production of NWC speaks to larger issues of representation in programming at the University. There are many artists-of-color working through a multitude of aesthetic and cultural practices whose works address the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in sophisticated ways, but without the kind of publicity and support given to this particular production by the University and the Krannert Center. The focus of attention should not be on Speak Theater Arts, but the ways in which both students of color and the performing arts are marginalized on campus. Important questions about the University’s response to the campus climate of racialized tensions and conflicts cannot be addressed, let alone alleviated, by its support for this particular production.

Furthermore, it is the position of the Asian American Studies Program that boycotting the Speak Theater Arts production of NWC, without having seen the production, disallows a critical engagement with its content. Works by many theater scholars and professionals, notably Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns and New World Theater’s former manager Roberta Uno’s co-edited anthology *The Color of Theater*, theater scholar Meiling Cheng’s *In Other Los Angeleses*, and David Roman’s *Performance in America* provide the theatrical context in which the politics and aesthetics of Speak Theater Arts’ production of NWC emerge. Speak Theater Arts joins the growing body of performance art by artists-of-color whose work speaks to issues of race, ethnicity, and identity, through ironic re-appropriations of racial stereotypes.

NWC follows a long tradition of artists using ethnic humor to subvert stereotypes and political correctness in irreverent and controversial ways. NWC is also in dialogue with productions companies such as Culture Clash, 18 Mighty Mountain Warriors, and other artists such as John Leguizamo and Michael Zia, whose works stage stereotypes of Latino and Asian American masculinity in order to acknowledge and confront the pain caused by racial stereotypes, while also proposing new ways of re-staging and empowering Latino and Asian American bodies with agency.

The Asian American Studies Program acknowledges that these works often reproduce problematic discourses about masculinity or liberal multiculturalism, or otherwise fail to incorporate a critical lens with regard to gender or sexuality. These issues have been and continue to be part of ongoing debates about cultural politics in which we seek to intervene as scholars, artists, and activists. That said, Speak Theater Arts adds another dimen-



Breast Cancer Survivor

by Marti Wilkinson

In the year 2003, I am 35 working, raising a child, trying to get by. I go to the women's clinic for my yearly probe. It becomes more than a matter of routine when the nurse says, "Hey you're 35 and that means, baseline mammogram time."

No big deal, a lot of women do it. I make the appointment and get my breasts clamped, so a technician can take the screens. I go to work. I go about my business.

In the year 2003, I am 35 working, raising a child, trying to get by. Within a week, I get the call. The left side is dense. They need to take another look.

So once again, I return to get my left breast clamped, down hard and good. In a sterile machine. In a sterile room.

I did not know what was going to happen, when an attendant asked, "follow me." She led me quietly to yet another sterile room. I'm placed on a table, as I see the sonogram machine, being fully loaded and prepared just for me. While a cold probe explores my left breast, I watch the ladies chat amongst themselves. Then, the room falls silent.

One of the technicians leaves and returns with the doctor who wants to see the strange mysterious lump, the one that looks "suspicious." Suspicious is not a good word. I started to feel fear.

In the year 2003, I am 35 working, raising a child, trying to get by. The nurse calls and tells me my doctor

wants me to be seen by a surgeon, who can take a further look at me. I make the appointment and see the surgeon, who wants to perform a biopsy. I'm told not to worry; after all it's a common procedure and a mere precaution. No big deal; a lot of women do it.

Two weeks later the biopsy is done. A few days later, driving I-74, I make the call that changes my life. The nurse tells me she is sorry to give me such terrible news.

The pathologist calls it invasive ductal carcinoma. The insurance company calls it a malignant neoplasm of the breast. I call it breast cancer.

In the year 2003, I am 35 working, raising a child, trying to get by. A partial mastectomy permanently alters my breast, which no amount of reconstruction will ever fix. The chemo takes my hair. Radiation burns break my skin.

I seek support and learn a lot, but I just can't identify with the women, who are older and have partners to help them weather the rough seas of treatment and recovery.

No one in the group is 35, working, raising a child, trying to get by. My daughter turns 11 and feels all alone; adrift in the world, which has suddenly dropped out from under her. It's hard for a child to have a mom with breast cancer. She thought I was going to die. All her life, I've been both mother and father.

She becomes depressed and withdrawn. I get her professional help. In spite of my sickness, I try to be

a good mom, caring, loving, and attentive. She is only 11 and I'm still her mom. In sickness and in health, it's my job.

In the year 2003, I am 35 working, raising a child, trying to get by. I'm alone, but I have my god, who has traveled with me, near and far. I'm a survivor. I'm alive.

I don't know how much time I have on earth, but it's up to me to make the most of it. I've come to terms with my mortality and the fragility of life. I look forward to seeing my daughter become a young woman.

In the process there are things I have learned. Every moment needs to be valued and appreciated. Take the risk to love; to grow, to smell the flowers. I am a breast cancer survivor; not a breast cancer victim.

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is designated as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The campaign is dedicated to increasing awareness about the importance of early detection of breast cancer, through a nationwide campaign that seeks to save lives. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women today. There are more than 25,000 women 40 and under in the U.S. living with breast cancer; over 11,000 young women will be diagnosed in the next year. Yet, despite the fact that breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women ages 15 to 54, many young women and their doctors are unaware of the risk. According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.2 million people are diagnosed with breast cancer each year worldwide and over 500,000 die from the disease. Yet, breast cancer death rates have begun to drop steadily in all communities since 1990, because of earlier detection and better treatments. Nevertheless, over 40,000 breast cancer deaths are expected this year alone. African-American women suffer the highest incidence of deaths.

NWC

Continued from previous page

sion to the alternative theater scene whose works both explore, and provide opportunities to further discuss, the possibilities and limits of dialogue between Asian American, Latino, and African American subjects.

As such, the Asian American Studies Program does not encourage a boycott of the NWC performance, but instead a concerted and collective effort to grapple with both the campus climate of racial tensions, as well as the multifaceted nature of contemporary cultural production by artists-of-color. This position does not preclude either critical responses to or criticisms of the performance or of the context for its production at the University of Illinois. Again, we strongly believe that the UIUC community should regard this controversial performance as an opportunity to discuss both the institutional politics of curatorial decision-making, as well as the possibilities for creating a truly progressive cultural politics.

The Last Word on the N Word: Asim Jabari

"I dream a world," wrote Langston Hughes. I entertain similar visions in which the language we use helps us determine a new and invigorating reality. I imagine a way of life derived from our purest, wisest, fiercely loving selves. I dream of a world where "nigger" no longer roams, confined instead to the fetid white fantasy land where he was born.



FREE THE JENA SIX!!!

C-U Citizens for Peace and Justice is bringing to town Terry Davis who took the initiative to go to Jena during this intense time, contributed her skills as an investigator on the Mychal Bell legal team for over three weeks and was there during the historic protest, September 20.

She and will be visiting us on Oct. 12th and 13th to share her observations and inside info about the events that have us all in an uproar! You don't want to miss her!

Terry Davis will be co-sponsored at the URBAN LEAGUE of Champaign on the corner of Neil and Springfield Friday Oct 12, 2007 at 7p.m. to share info and answer questions from the community.

She will also be participating in the Unity March on Saturday, October 13 at noon.

UFPJ National Day of Action Against the War in Iraq

Saturday October 27 in Chicago. Interested in riding the bus? Email Shara Esbenshade esbenshd at uni.uiuc.edu

UNITY MARCH IV

October 13, 2007 at Noon

There will be two starting points: West Side Park in Champaign, and at the Courthouse in downtown Urbana for your 4th annual Unity March. We will march down University, up John Lee Johnson Way, and rally at Douglass Park. Don't forget to join us at the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club on 2nd and Park for the appreciation dinner honoring Catherine Hogue and Bob "Grandpa" Wahlfeldt. The dinner is free but we are accepting donations at P.O. Box 1 Urbana, IL 61801. Please make checks payable to CU Citizens for Peace and Justice. BE, just