

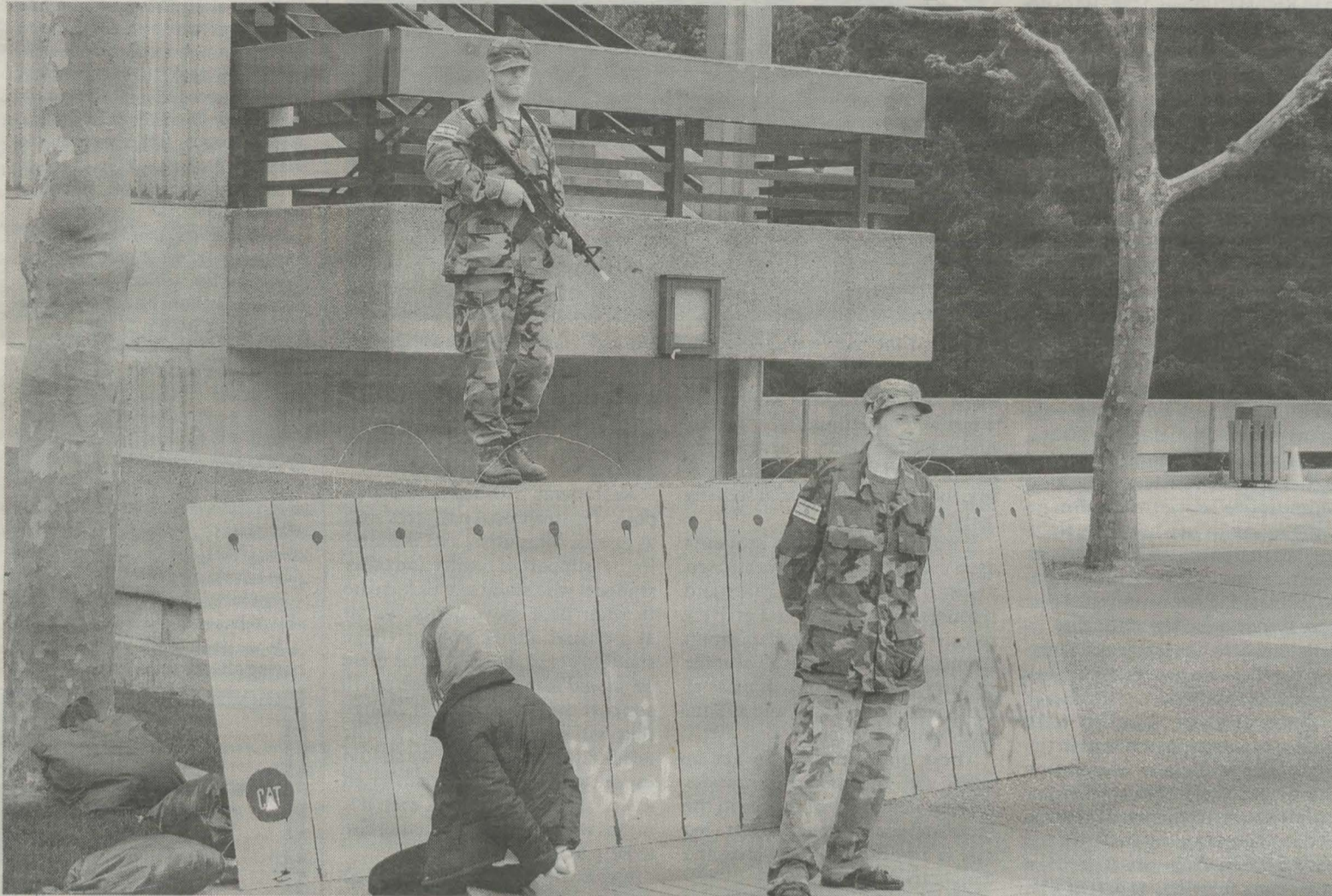
Counter Point Journal

Issue 2 - May 2009

AN UNDESIGNATED FREE SPEECH AREA

FREE

Evergreen under military occupation?



Demonstrators staged a mock checkpoint in front of Red Square with a painted representation of the West Bank wall and a voluntary detainee. (Photo by Andrew Sernatinger)

or...Criminal charges and lawsuit threatened against street theater performance

by CxPJ Reporting Service

Campus police have suggested criminal charges and an Evergreen staff is threatening civil action against a street theater performance that occurred on Red Square on May 13.

The performance of a mock checkpoint was organized by the Mideast Solidarity Project (MSP). It featured three people dressed in fatigues with toy guns, standing in front of a painted representation of the West Bank wall. Passersby were asked for their IDs or to identify the contents of their bags. At times during the performance, skits were staged in which volunteers were tackled to the ground, zip-tied, and detained. The toy guns were marked with bright orange tips.

The mock checkpoint was intended to convey the realities of military occupations. Although the focus was on the hundreds of Israeli checkpoints in the Palestinian territories, it also alluded to the US checkpoints established in Iraq and Afghanistan. Two of the mock checkpoint guards were actual military veterans.

On the day of the performance, Hal Van Gilder, project manager for Evergreen facilities, emailed a complaint to Art Costantino, cc'd to Evergreen Police and other members of the college administration. According to the email, "an individual dressed in a military uniform hailed me as 'Hey, you, tall guy with the bag. What's in the bag?'" Van Gilder asked what authority the man had. According to Van Gilder, a second mock checkpoint guard pointed his toy gun at Van Gilder and indicated that he was the authority. (Checkpoint participants denied pointing a toy gun at Van Gilder.)

Van Gilder walked away "with the military uniformed men shouting something I don't recall."

In the email, Van Gilder claims he was a victim of "assault with a

deadly weapon and brandishing a weapon for intimidation." Van Gilder scolded Costantino for allowing the performance to happen. "Had anyone actually touched me during this exchange we would be having a very different communication."

Van Gilder filed a formal complaint with TESC Officer April Meyers. In a later email, Van Gilder indicated that "Pending the outcome of these processes will determine what civil actions will be available for me to pursue."

John Hurley, vice president for finance and administration, supported Van Gilder's police complaint, stating that the street theater performance "should be made an example

of...or subject[ing] the person...to physical confinement or restraint."

Disorderly Conduct, for "intentionally disrupt[ing] any lawful assembly or meeting of persons without lawful authority."

Ironically, on the previous day, after the street theater performance had ended, Costantino stated that "Police visited the demonstration a number of times during the day. They indicated to me that they saw no violations of law."

Because of the threats of criminal and civil action, MSP has declined to make any statements on the record. However, individual members have expressed incredulity at the claims, stating that the only people detained were volunteers, and also pointing out the hypocrisy of these

charges, stating that the abortion protesters who frequent Red Square and the belligerent preacher, "Bible Jim" Webber, are routinely granted freedom of speech and not subjected to criminal charges.

Reactions to the mock checkpoint varied greatly. A few active-duty soldiers took personal affront. One passerby approvingly asked, "Are you giving us a taste of our own medicine?" while another asked "Where's Afghanistan? Is that in Iraq?" MSP members had hoped to prepare a statement of apology and request for dialogue with people who might have been emotionally triggered by the event, but the ongoing police investigation has made public statements inadvisable.

From the beginning, campus police attempted to prevent the street theater from happening. In the morning of May 13, when the mock checkpoint was first set up near the library loop, campus po-

lice officer Lana Brewster informed the participants that they needed a permit to demonstrate. Participants said that they were not selling anything and were instead exercising free speech. Onlookers pointed out that the abortion protesters did not need permits. Brewster replied that the abortion protesters protested on Red Square, and the area located at the library loop was not considered "Red Square," thus making a distinction between Red Square, where free speech is allowed, and the library loop, which supposedly requires a permit to express oneself. However, onlookers noted that religious proselytizers distributed Bibles at the library loop without impediment.

At various times in the morning, Brewster parked her police car in front of the installation in order to obstruct it, blocked the demonstration by positioning her body in front of the participants, and shouted over the participants as they performed. Ironically, onlookers claimed Brewster's presence made the checkpoint look more official. Brewster also threatened to taser participants if the street theater performance went too far.

The street theater participants eventually acquiesced to Brewster's demand to move the performance further into Red Square.

Individual members of MSP believe that Campus Police took personal affront to the mock checkpoint—with its depiction of a military occupation on campus—and feel that police may have been concerned that such street theater reflects negatively on the police's controversial request for AR-15 semiautomatic rifles.

The day after the mock checkpoint, a male Christian proselytizer demonstrated on Red Square and had confrontational encounters with passersby. As of yet, it is unknown whether criminal charges are being considered against him.

See related article on page 7.

Talk is cheap—free speech isn't

by the CxPJ Collective

What does money have to do with free speech? Well, everything.

With our last publication, the Mideast Solidarity Project was kind enough to front the bill. It was only fitting for MSP to sponsor *Counter Point* because issues specifically regarding Israel/Palestine were being cut from the CPJ.

So our modest print cost was going to be picked up by MSP as part of their education and materials budget and we'd continue to print monthly and that'd be the end of it.

Or so we thought.

In the last two weeks MSP has been reviewed as the sponsor of *The Counter Point Journal* to defend how printing a paper featuring more than 50% articles about Mideast issues fits into their mission statement. (*It does.*)

Then MSP was told S&A did not receive a purchase order for the printing. (*They did.*)

Then S&A said that MSP could not use its money from one part of its budget, and it would need to be reallocated. (*S&A refused to authorize reallocation.*)

Then MSP was told that any newspaper falls under the Student Communications Media policy, which requires authorization from the Board of Trustees, but *Counter Point* could become a zine to bypass it. (*S&A changed their minds.*)

When asked what defines a zine, S&A board members, clearly confused, could not produce a definition. Lastly, we were told to wait for word from the attorney general. (*Until the end of the summer.*)

S&A was informed about our purchase and staff advisors personally inspected the paper after its printing. It was only three weeks after printing that anything really happened. In yet another discussion with the S&A student board, we were told, by a student wearing an ACLU t-shirt no less, that there was no need to provide funding for *Counter Point* because *The Cooper Point Journal* is the "designated free speech area"! (No joke, this is a recorded meeting that you can request a copy of.) Earlier, MSP had applied for money to print an ad in the CPJ, but they were denied on the grounds that MSP had its own paper!

As we've gone through this process, we also tried to meet with Jason Slotkin, editor in chief of the *Cooper Point Journal*, to ask if the CPJ was interested in supporting free speech. In what little correspondence we were able to make with him, Jason told us that he had neither time nor knowledge about the issue (free speech). We tried to schedule multiple meetings with him, all of which he has rejected. We even offered to come to the CPJ's open meetings to discuss with the entire staff. Unfortunately, Slotkin informed us that, "As for the Thursday meeting that no longer is an open discussion meeting. This time is now dedicated to CPJ website discussions." What he neglected to say is that there are two other open meetings, which they have now invited students to, via the CPJ's new editorial column, cleverly titled "CPSay." Seems to be getting kinda cramped in that free speech area.

What it boils down to is that when the CPJ, paid for with our money, makes a habit of rejecting us, and then the college does its part in trying to prevent other newspapers from getting access to our own funding, it's censorship. Free speech isn't just about what you can say, but where you can say it and with what kind of reach. Quite frankly, none of us expected when we started a paper that we would be met with this level of

► FREE SPEECH continues on page 2

► **FREE SPEECH** continued from page 1
resistance from the college. After all, they've told us at every step, 'if you don't like it, start your own newspaper!' (Whoops, we did.)

As for the S&A Board, most of them are good people and they've been put in charge of defending a policy that was never theirs in the first place. We are disappointed with the choices they've made, and quite troubled by talk of "free speech zones," but the Student Communications Media policy and the Board of Trustees are the problem. While newspapers close down around the country, you'd think it would be a priority to maintain free press in our community, especially considering that the CPJ, bad as it can be, will be online-only next year.

In the meantime, you, dear reader, can support us by continuing to submit articles, writing to us to let us know what you think of our paper (tesc.counter.point@gmail.com), tossing a few dollars our way, telling the GSU that you support their revised media proposal, and/or getting in touch with the S&A Board, the Cooper Point Journal and the office of the Vice President to tell them to support free speech and give funding access and support to any group that takes the time to create media for the campus.

Oh, we do have one correction to print from our previous issue, and it's important that we admit our mistake: Art's last name is Costantino, not Constantino. Sorry, Art.

Thanks to everyone who gave us support for this issue.

UPDATE: Just before we went to press, S&A allocated money for MSP to sponsor issues 2 and 3. *Hooray!*

Dismay over TESC non-union labor

This letter came to us from an Evergreen alum who had originally sent it to the Cooper Point Journal. He's said that they rejected the article, so we're printing it here instead. —The Editors.

Dear CPJ:

As an Evergreen alumni (Class of 2000) and as a current journeyman carpenter with the Carpenter's Union Local 1148 (Olympia), I was dismayed to learn that the college's CAB renovation contract went to Paducci Construction, a non-union company. In addition, the Longhouse remodel also went to a non-union company, Christensen Brothers. This is tens of millions of dollars in both state and student money going to companies who are required to have no contracts with their workers regarding health, safety, retirement, apprenticeship training or collective bargaining agreements.

At the danger of sounding like a nostalgic alumni, I'll chance it and say that during my time at Evergreen this would not have been permitted by the students. In 1998 I witnessed Evergreen Earth Firsters! form a large and active partnership with the striking United Steel Workers of America at the Tacoma docks. In 1999, I stood arm-in-arm with union members on the streets of Seattle. In 2000, I witnessed the unionization of the food workers on campus. A large part of why I chose to join the union was due to the battles, strength and solidarity I saw demonstrated by the unions during my time as a student. Well, what happened?

By hiring non-union companies to build at Evergreen, the students, faculty, administrators and staff are undermining our local unions. These unions not only provide a livable wage, healthcare and retirement, but they also provide training to thousands of high school graduates through their apprenticeship programs. I see it as an alarming sign of the times when no alarms are raised.

In Solidarity,
Mac Lojowsky

Foreclosure resistance: Internships available!

by Peter Cooper

This Mother's Day, seven mothers and one father in Minnesota working with the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) defied foreclosure orders issued by their banks and promised to remain in their homes indefinitely. The struggle of these families on the brink of homelessness embodies the brutal human rights crisis fostered by the latest economic downturn, but also provides us as Evergreen students ways to work for real justice, even as we exercise forms of privilege and power we seek to ultimately destroy.

This announcement is the latest in a months-long campaign. The campaign includes sit-ins and demonstrations at the "Sheriff's Sales," where houses once belonging to families and individuals are sold to investors still looking to make a quick buck on the housing market. It includes the resistance of a local Minneapolis activist who, after 20 years living in her house, is fighting her imminent eviction. Perhaps most dramatically it includes the coordinated takeover, unveiled this past Valentine's Day, of thirteen vacant houses to house thirteen homeless families—some with disabilities, some with children.

Some of these families were evicted from their new homes in the midst of a Minnesota winter. One family had their truck confiscated. This is a scene recurring all over the nation as groups associated with and independent from the Campaign stage similar actions as part of a political and social movement building process, and as acts of survival.

These local and timely actions are part of a larger movement for human rights in the United States. Long portrayed as a stumbling block for developing countries or excuses for US military action, human rights are being denied to those in our own country. PPEHRC has created itself as a multiracial organization of poor folks from across the country, build-



Members of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign stage a sit-in demonstration.

ing what Martin Luther King called "a new and unsettling force" for economic human rights. These are the UN-declared human rights to housing, food, education, social security and healthcare.

Students and former students are a crucial part of this campaign. PPEHRC recognizes the skills and resources of students and actively recruits them into the organization. Campaign organizations all over the country sponsor internships as alternative spring breaks, and as Summers of Social Action.

These opportunities to get involved with grassroots organizations seeking fundamental change in the social and economic systems are too rare in a world of surface-level and temporary fixes.

After my internship this last summer, I returned to my hometown of Austin, Texas, looking for work that would pay me to help make the world a better place. My experiences with Minneapolis PPEHRC had paved the way for a profound disappointment with the array of direct service jobs I found on my arrival. I decided to maintain my relationship with PPEHRC while doing the work of ferretting out the grassroots found-

ation-shaking movements here in Austin, while going back to an underpaid and underappreciated job as a preschool teacher to pay bills.

As students with access to a large pool of institutional resources such as grants, computers, and the intellectual support of faculty and other students who study and participate in their own movements, we sit at a crucial nexus. This privilege shouldn't exist, but while it is there we should reap as much as we can to support the possibilities of change that will support everyone's basic needs. Even after college we should use our skills and connections to aid in grassroots movements, even if it means we have to find something else to keep us fed.

Meanwhile, as you prepare to enter the job market or work at the jobs you already have, just think: What would "work" even mean if I and everyone had access to food, healthcare, housing and education?

Peter Cooper is enrolled in an Independent Learning Contract due at the end of Winter Quarter. You can reach him at peterppchrc@gmail.com. For more information on PPEHRC and Economic Human Rights see economichumanrights.org.

the 2009 edition of

SLIGHTLY WEST

is coming soon

it hits the streets weeks nine and ten and will be free to evergreen students

to reserve your copy email slightlywest@gmail.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Swine Flu" poster accountability: an explanation

The first time I heard about Swine flu was during the Procession of the Species. A group of buskers had written it on their cardboard sign, and although I passed this off as another scare tactic, it seemed to ring out into my consciousness...SWINE FLU... Within days the mainstream media had pushed the story to the tip of everyone's tongue. Conversations on the bus started with "Swine flu..." and ended with "...we're all gonna die."

The most contagious part of this virus is not the virus itself but the climate of fear that comes with it. Something had to be done; I needed the spectrum of thought to expand. I wanted to point out that what was happening was not about a virus at all, but Oppression through Fear.

Some facts you may have seen around campus: *1 person has died in the United States from swine flu. Meanwhile 5,769 died last week from obesity.* Fear is a tool of oppression and oppression is the greatest pandemic we

face.

I wanted to put this Pandemic into perspective and out the fear campaign for what it is. I wanted to re-frame the situation, but most of all I wanted my friends to stop being scared.

So, I sat down and made a poster that stated the facts above. Unfortunately that poster hurt people—people that I don't know and people whom I love dearly. *I very seriously and emphatically apologize to anyone who took issue with the poster.*

Please permit me to explain my reasoning behind the framework of obesity. I have seen an epidemic of obesity grow as I have grown. According to the CDC, in 1987 obesity rates in Washington State were less than 10%, by 1998 that rate had risen to 15%, and by 2007 that number was 25%. That is one out of four people. If this is affecting a quarter of the state, this dialogue must take place.

We must put an end to fat-phobia. The discrimination of any group of people is completely unacceptable,

and fat-phobia is no exception.

But we also must question why this oppression is happening. Why is it that the socio-economically oppressed seem to be particularly affected by it? Who's decision was it, and at what point did food start to be replaced with chemicals? How can the effects of this be blamed on the people? Swine flu pales in comparison to the violence our food system has wrought on us.

The War On Oppression is not meant to be comfortable, but it is meant to be won. We are all oppressed and we are all oppressors. It is through this kind of dialogue that we define oppression and fight it. I invite you to continue the debate. Write on those posters, hell—tear them down or post your own.

I also want to share what this dialogue has already taught me...I will judge the content of my messages by the empowerment those messages bring.

—Rand Hunt

CxPJ

The CxPJ is a collective of Evergreen community members who decided to form a monthly alternative press for marginalized voices.

We are always accepting submissions of articles with an emphasis on timely, relevant, and local issues. We specifically seek submissions that are well researched or include interviews or comments from those who are involved or affected by the issue being discussed. We also accept photography, poetry, art, and other creative works.

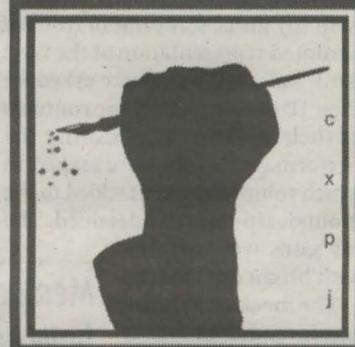
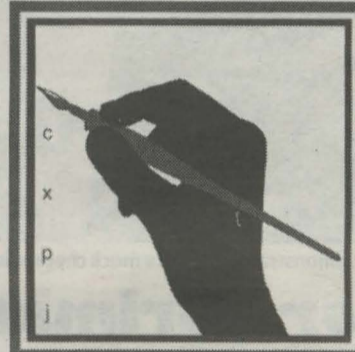
To submit original work, send it to tesc.counter.point@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions to be considered for the June graduation issue is June 2.

The editorial collective reserves the right to question, edit, or not publish any content it receives. The collective will make every attempt to consult the author(s) in regards to any changes proposed.

This doesn't mean we'll make major edits to your work without your consent, despite what some silly folks on LiveJournal are claiming that this means. You coulda asked if you weren't sure, y'know.

The Counter Point Journal is also available online at cxpj.wordpress.com

As we go to press, we are now receiving official sponsorship by MSP.



CxPJ logos by Lamise Al-Shawahin

A Touch—A new play

To be alive and separated from it but be respirationed by the memory, by the suggestion of, the seduction of its appearance, or more illicit: to be captivated by the possibility that it might be reachable, or, better yet, that it might have been felt, that you might have spoken, evoked my sense of touch. Yet A Touch, the play to be performed at 329 Decatur, 7 pm, May 30th and June 5th, is of this touch, the touch of the play that might touch you, that it may touch me, the play, evoking itself attempts to present, through itself, the audience to themselves.

A Touch—A new play, Performances to be held on May 30th and June 5th at 329 Decatur Seating will begin no later than 7 pm Feel free to bring your own chair

The future of campus food service: self-operation?

by Andrew Sernatinger

Food is one of the few issues at Evergreen that just about everyone agrees is political. Food touches every issue, from sustainable farming to indigenous sovereignty to worker solidarity to prison abolition. Even the volume of academic programs having to do with the science, politics, culture and gender of food have increased in the last few years. So its not surprising that food has been the site of the most struggles at the college.

The Flaming Eggplant Café

This year's highlight has been the opening of the Flaming Eggplant, a student-run café located in a trailer on Red Square. The Eggplant, which opened at the beginning of fall quarter, grew out of a campaign launched by Students Organizing for Food Autonomy (SOFA) in the 2005-2006 school year. SOFA's campaign initially advocated for a self-operated campus food service, citing the relationship between food sourcing and environmental sustainability, the major expense and rigidity of catering contracts with outside companies, and a specific critique of Aramark, the campus's current caterer, for their investment in the prison-industrial complex and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the close of 2005-2006, SOFA members developed a business proposal for the college to open a student-run café in the CAB building as part of the CAB's redesign. The café received student support in the form of a ballot initiative and was subsequently authorized by the college's Board of Trustees. For the next two years, Eggplant organizers worked diligently on the logistics of the café, with plans to open a trailer to begin service before the CAB redesign, costing approximately \$46,000. The Eggplant proposed and passed a student "tax" levy at the end of 2005-2006 to raise funds for the café to open in 2007-2008. Some students, however, were upset when the café did not open in the fall of 2007, especially after one Flaming Eggplant coordinator gave a provocative interview about the delays in the Cooper Point Journal.

A project of the Eggplant's magnitude requires a considerable amount of work just to get things running. "Fall quarter we had people working between 40-60 hours a week,"

said one former Eggplant volunteer. Julianne Panagacos, Eggplant Office and Kitchen Coordinator added, "It's a job, it's not school. That's really important to recognize in the long-term planning of a student-run food service. Students are transient and need effective leadership to be able to organize all this temporary energy."

She continued, "It has been a frequent problem where there are a lot of students who come to campus, recognize that Aramark's here, wanna see that something's different, especially before we were open, and say 'What's happening? Why aren't you guys doing this?' instead of 'How can I help?' The Eggplant currently runs with volunteers and interns for credit, building off of the café's dedicated base.

The Eggplant, like many first-year businesses, does not currently turn a profit. "We had money in our budget for start-up and what was left over is what's subsidizing our operation right now," says Panagacos. "When that runs out what will happen is that we will ask the S&A Board for money to close out our fiscal year. So it comes from S&A money, which is student money instead of Evergreen money." The Eggplant functions as a Tier 1 organization out of Student Activities, along with KAOS Radio, the Childcare Center, the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and the Cooper Point Journal (until next year when they will become a Tier 2).

In regards to their fiscal plan, Panagacos said, "We have every intention to getting as close to [turning a profit] as possible. We are selling a lot of really high cost and high quality food." Another Eggplant volunteer agreed, "Our bottom line is food and we haven't compromised. The [food-price] system doesn't recognize the cost of pesticides and shitty wages."

In large part, the Eggplant has demonstrated what a team of dedicated organizers can accomplish with persistence. The Eggplant recently held its Big Annual Meeting (BAM) on May 6th with overwhelming approval. There, coordinators showcased the café's many achievements and elected student representatives to the café's Board of Advisors. Eggplant coordinators also presented their plan to hire a full-time support staff to ease the load on students for purchase orders and paperwork.

One student attendee objected to the staff position not on the basis of disagreement, but on transparency.

"I just don't understand why you guys couldn't put this on the [end of the year] ballot like you've done before," she asked. As they debated for a few minutes, Panagacos ended the discussion by stating, "If you don't like it, you can join the S&A Board." This raises the issue of how best to create an efficient structure that supports the work of its organizers while also respecting the concerns of the body of students who pay into S&A. As it stands, oversight for the Eggplant is arranged through a Board of Advisors comprised of five students, one faculty, one staff and two advisors appointed by the Vice Presidents.

Aramark and students

Though the issue is sometimes raised whether the Eggplant is taking away business from Aramark, Panagacos comments, "A lot of what we've heard about Aramark through Sharon [Goodman, Director of Residential and Dining Services] is that they have been experiencing record levels of business because there are more people on campus. It seems like more people are buying food instead of a lot of people who used to buy at Aramark are now buying at the Flaming Eggplant. That's a good thing for us, because we're doing the amount of business that we're able to sustain."

Some Evergreen students, in their criticism of Aramark, have grouped service workers in with the corporation's legacy. (I personally witnessed one student yell at workers, calling them corporate whores, as they served him food.) Campus food workers, however, did not come to the school with Aramark, but unionized with one of the previous catering companies and have continued as the school has transitioned to other caterers.

Little known to most patrons, campus food service employs workers who commute from areas around the South Sound including Shelton, Lacey, and Centralia. Food service employees at the college range from old to young, some supporting families on a wage that starts a dollar above minimum and has greater security through representation with a progressive union. Other workers are students, supporting themselves as they continue through school.

Aramark also recently put in a bid to the college to revamp the kitchens in the Greenery as part of a contract

deal that would extend their presence past the current contract.

Self-operation

While SOFA's primary goal was for the campus to adopt a self-operated service, consensus on what that looks like, how to do it and even if it's still a goal does not exist yet. "We haven't had a conversation about whether our goal is still to completely take over food service," said Panagacos. On the other hand one Eggplant staff member explained, "Self-operation is both possible and desirable. They thought we couldn't do this, and here we are doing it."

Panagacos commented on self-operation, "We've paved the way for self-op to happen, we've seen what is hard and what's not. We've seen that its possible because we're doing it, but there are definitely areas where more support in business services would really help the whole college get to that place." The Eggplant currently runs all of its transactions through business services, which puts a significant load on the office as well as creating bureaucratic delays.

At this point, the dialog has shifted away from self-operation as run directly by students and into a plan where the college would run the various operations. "We can't run an entire operation like the Eggplant," said Giselle Garcia, former Eggplant coordinator. Panagacos added, "It would be in the same spaces and a lot of the same stuff, it just wouldn't be Aramark that's making the orders. It wouldn't be them that's making a profit at the end of the day or it wouldn't be them with a loss."

"We don't just want to take over college food service and run huge deficits. We want to figure out, with what we're doing now, how do we not order from Sysco and still make this work," Panagacos added. (The college's flat managerial contract with Bon Appetit catering corporation left Evergreen with a deficit of approximately \$1.5 million.)

This new vision for self-operation takes a turn on campus food service that recognizes different needs and tastes. Nearly everyone interviewed were quick to admit that the Eggplant's success is due in large part to the fact that they are satisfying a niche, with high quality food, coffee (except in December when it for some reason turned piss-poor), and inexpensive and filling options like

rice and beans. Running the cafeteria, market and cafés through the school is in line with a DTF and independent analyst report issued in 2001. The report suggested self-operation for the college, and presents the possibility of a less-costly operation while maintaining the union labor force and providing sustainable food sources.

Self-operation at Evergreen has only come as far as it has because of the work of students and will only advance with more planning and organization.

Food service timeline

(with parts reprinted from the Evergreen Disorientation Manual)

1988: "The Corner" café moves to the new Housing Community Center, away from its upper campus customer-base.

1990-2001: Fine Host serves as campus caterer.

2000-2001: End of "Corner" café. Fine Host campus catering to be replaced by a new catering service corporation. That same year, food service workers vote to unionize with representation by ILWU Local 5. Bid for campus dining contract to go to France-based Sodexo Corporation, but student protests make the deal fall through.

2001-2002: A Food Service Disappearing Task Force, along with a paid independent consultant, report that the best option for Evergreen's food service needs would be to transition to self-operation. Instead, Bon Appetit replaces Fine Host as the new caterer.

2004-2005: Bon Appetit's contract, entailing a flat managerial fee, leaves the campus with more than \$1 million deficit. Aramark replaces Bon Appetit as the only company to bid on the school's contract. Housing begins its process of removing kitchens from first-year housing and imposes a mandatory meal plan as part of a plan to balance the budget.

2005-2006: Students Organizing for Food Autonomy (SOFA) hold weekly Food-Not-Bombs style potlucks in Red Square as part of a campaign for the campus to adopt a self-operated food service.

2006-2009: SOFA members on the CAB redesign committee create a business plan for The Flaming Eggplant café, and make preparations for a trailer in Red Square to operate until their CAB space is ready.

2008-current: Eggplant trailer opens.

Geoduck Union shenanigans: a rundown

by Andrew Sernatinger

Authors note: The issues discussed below might at first be taken for "gossip." They are not gossip. These events did actually occur, and because they involve public elected officials they should be taken as necessary for understanding our political situation as it pertains to our student government. Furthermore, these specific actions demonstrate the need for accountability and for the creation of a process to account for our flaws.

Most people have pretty much no idea what the Geoduck Union does, or why its important. Aside from an occasional two-paragraph update in the Cooper Point Journal, the student government lives as an abstraction in the lives of most students. So as we close out the year and approach elections, it might be helpful to do a year-in-review of the GSU.

We begin with last year's elections. The usual assortment of candidates were joined by what came to be known as the Glasses Party, a group of students wearing signature glasses to identify their commonality as candidates. Most Glasses candidates ran on an incoherent platform of pancakes, dolphins and assorted jokes.

In response, then-representative

and graduating senior Charles Loosen decided to submit a last-minute candidacy to combat what he referred to in a CPJ interview as the "fascism" of the Glasses Party. Successfully convincing the campus of the threat of fellow students, Loosen, along with other continuing representatives Brittany Newhouse and Sammi Webster, were re-elected; Loosen, as a graduating senior, re-enrolled at Evergreen for two-credits just to be on the Union.

Also elected were Kris Craig, on a campaign of reason citing the SDS sit-in's insanity, and Jake Mixon, running on a campaign to make the campus sustainable by growing food basically everywhere. (Mixon erected signs around campus that read "We Could Grow Food Here-Vote Jake Mixon.") Glasses party candidates Raissa Huntley, Christopher Rondo, Kate Schiffman and Shyam Khanna were also elected, only one of who used the pancake platform.

Issues within the union were quick to appear. Early in the quarter, Brittany Newhouse, having campaigned with Loosen, resigned from her seat on the Union to become the student representative to the Board of Trustees (as of now, no reports have been issued by Newhouse about the Board's activity). Halfway

through fall quarter, the candidate of reason, Kris Craig, turned out not to be a student and was forced to resign (although technically he wasn't forced because that would mean he was never a representative in the first place).

Around the same time that the rifle proposal was brought to the GSU, CPJ Reporter Madeline Berman gave a full-page interview to Jake Mixon, giving him space to talk about how he vehemently supports police because he wants to create a 'safe campus' and is afraid of violent students. This fear even led Mixon to purchase a gun to protect himself. Mixon, however, personally delivered a death threat to a recent Evergreen graduate, to quote: "If I ever see you off-campus, I'm going to fucking kill you." Mixon resigned shortly after the encounter details were sent around various listservs and a grievance was filed against him.

Representatives Loosen, Xander Chateaubriand and Victor Sanders also resigned at the end of winter quarter. Sanders, a continuing representative who helped put together the late night "drunk bus," resigned with an email saying he just didn't "want to play anymore." Chateaubriand, enrolled in a full-time contract with Art Costantino, resigned

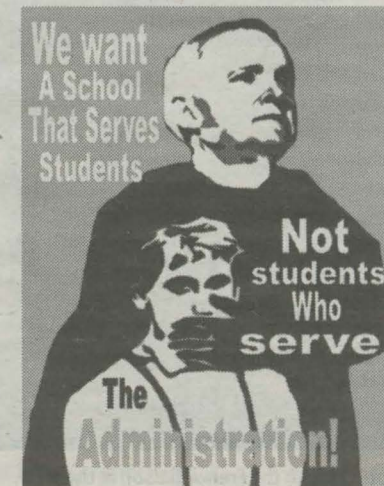
for personal reasons but was largely regarded as following Costantino's lead in votes.

So why don't people know what the Geoduck Union does? Well, because it hasn't been able to do much of anything. The government's constitution was written in the 2005-2006 school year to mirror the Olympia City Council's model, adding in a consensus structure. Consensus is typically regarded as a decision-making model to be used with people who voluntarily come together and share similar goals. Representatives are not a group who come together with similar goals, but are voted in by the student body to represent different interests and values. This makes it difficult to reach consensus, and has drowned the union in inactivity for the last three years. (Members of the classics club originally created the constitution, styling themselves as regular philosopher-kings, and under the supervision of Costantino no less.)

Its been this kind of rife internal dynamic that has prevented the student union from seriously addressing this year's pressing issues: budget cuts, police rifles, sexual violence, tuition, disaster preparedness and racism among others. However, since the retirement of the afore-

mentioned reps, the Union has been able to issue a resolution regarding the Active-Shooter Response Plan, pass a proposal to revamp the existing Student Communications Media Policy and begin work on the disciplinary code for Registered Student Organizations.

Even though there are only nine remaining representatives, the Union is not a moot issue; the state does require the college to recognize the collective voice of students to some extent. What role students will have in creating their own policy remains to be seen.



From Elma to Evergreen: by way of Afghanistan and elsewhere

by Phan Nguyen, from interviews with Travis Roberts

32-year-old Travis Roberts is not the kind of Evergreen student you would see profiled in Evergreen's promotional materials. As a former private military contractor in Kosovo and Afghanistan, black market entrepreneur, pimp, and substance abuser with PTSD, Roberts isn't proud of his past either. But with the Obama administration's continued military pursuit of — well, whatever — in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Roberts's story deserves a hearing. It's as American as apple pie and the war on terror. And it forces us to question whether any war, however justified, can ever be just.

Travis Roberts is a local boy. Growing up in Elma, Washington in the 1980s, he used to wonder why so many Vietnam vets were living in the woods of nearby Capitol Forest. In 2006, after returning from Afghanistan and suffering from PTSD amassed from tours in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Egypt/Israel — and having squandered hundreds of thousands of dollars gained from the Afghan black market — Roberts journeyed to the same Capitol Forest to seek refuge, only to be driven out by the preponderance of meth addicts.

The Army years

It was ten years earlier, at age 20, that Roberts had joined the Army, figuring "that it was the only way that I could get a decent job and receive the school benefits that they offered, and the training."

One thing that did not influence his decision to enlist, however, was a patriotic sense of duty. "Before I went into the Army, I had a certain set of values," Roberts said. "And when I arrived at basic training, they issued me a new set of values.... I knew they were going to do something like that. But I thought that I was too smart, that of course I'm going to believe in what I believe in. I'm not gonna think intervening in these foreign countries is a good thing. I'm not gonna think that using military might to reinforce foreign economic policies is wonderful and that everything's cool, or I'm just gonna become a conservative or whatever."

Roberts never did become a conservative. "But what happened was a little bit more personal somehow. I ended up internalizing these values of oppression on a more individual level, as far as the people that I worked with, the culture in the military, the hierarchy. And that played itself out eventually in my relationships with my children and my wife. I started ordering them around like a sergeant. I learned to put extra value

on violence, because that was a part of what I did for so long."

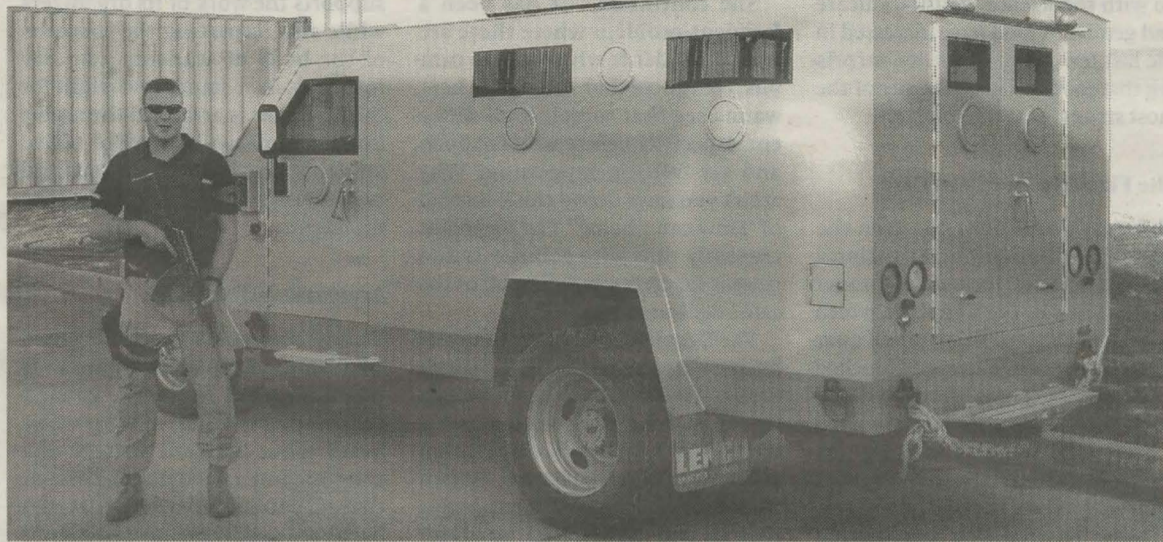
As part of his military intelligence training, Roberts studied Arabic at the Defense Language Institute, (DLI) where he was also assigned a Lebanese-American Muslim identity, "Kamal Shami."

After a stint in 1999 guarding the Egyptian-Israeli/Palestinian border with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), Roberts returned to the US with two possessions: a medal for rescuing an Israeli policeman and PTSD.

New Mexico: peace, drugs, and the military-academic-industrial complex

In 2001, Roberts left the Army and enlisted in the New Mexico National Guard. He applied to work in the National Guard's drug interdiction program, but despite his qualifications, he was turned down. "Certain people were in control of that program, and I don't think they wanted anybody outside of their circle involved." He would later find out why. "I already knew that these guys carried the M-16s from the armory in their cars. I thought that was a little strange." One night, at a party, Roberts encountered "guys from my guard unit selling large quantities of drugs. And those guys happened to be the ones that were involved in the drug interdiction program. And everything started to make sense. All the convoys down to the border, it all seemed to fit together."

At the same time, Roberts was enrolled in the University of New Mexico, majoring in political science and later West Asian studies, with a minor in peace studies. The first class he took at UNM was in Ancient Near Eastern History with Prof. Richard Berthold, based on the merit that Berthold had just infamously proclaimed in reference to the recent 9/11 attacks, "Anybody who blows up the Pentagon gets my vote." That was



Travis Roberts at the US embassy compound in Afghanistan

good enough for Roberts. "I felt that what he said was right on. I immediately enrolled in his course."

Roberts also became involved in local peace groups. In 2003, when former Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera was instated as President of the University of New Mexico, Roberts wondered, "Why is Louis Caldera, with all his Washington cronies, being installed as the president of the university that has so many research grants from the government to conduct research in collaboration with Los Alamos National Laboratories, weapons research at Sandia Laboratories and Kirtland Air Force Base, and all these very controversial weapons research programs?" Sure enough, Caldera began promoting more military research at UNM. At an open forum, Roberts scolded Caldera. The UNM student newspaper described the scene:

Travis Roberts, a UNM senior and military veteran...described what he called the mass murder of thousands of innocent civilians by technology designed, at least in part, at Sandia National Laboratories and Kirtland Air Force Base — two military institutions UNM has research grants from. "Shame on you, President Caldera, for allowing this institution, which is supposed to foster education and life, to contribute to the atrocities occurring in the world," said Roberts, who broke down into tears as he spoke.

Roberts credits his time as a peace activist as one of the times he has felt proudest. It wouldn't last.

Get rich quick in Afghanistan

In 2004, Roberts suffered a mental breakdown. He quit school and moved to Tennessee. Unemployed with a pregnant wife and two children, Roberts was offered a job that would utilize the skills he knew best. He signed a one-year contract with Group 4 Falck, an Irish/British security company (now known as G4S) to provide security for US army personnel in Kosovo. He was now a private military contractor.

After his contract ended, Roberts took a more lucrative contract with Global Risk Strategies, assigned to guard the US embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan for \$167,000 a year. But there were opportunities to make even more money on the side. "A lot of people working [as contractors] at the embassy — they all have something going on the side. Everybody had capital, because we made so much money at the embassy. With 14 grand a month coming in, and with prices of things cheap in Afghanistan, you can pretty much finance things. You have capital. It doesn't take long to save up enough money

to launch some type of investment in Afghanistan when you're working at the embassy."

The situation in Afghanistan was prime for business. "Just like anywhere you go, there's already a surplus of people there with a lot of good business ideas, and the only thing they're missing is capital. And everybody over there with any connection to the contractors know that the contractors are capital, because they're all made of money. And they would always approach you — especially once they got to know you — with their business idea.

"It's like a bank — people coming in and asking for loans — I have an idea, I wanna start this business, I wanna do this. It doesn't take long before you have an idea of who knows how to do what."

Indeed, for contractors, such businesses could not be avoided. "The State Dept. wouldn't give us permission to carry weapons or to bring weapons on convoys. I think that it had something to do with liability. I don't think that they wanted to send me and the people that I worked with — the South Africans — out on these convoys with their weapons to possibly create a massacre. They wanted to tell us that our job starts when we get to the embassy. And what happens in between there is on us.

"But anybody that has been there knows that you can't move busloads and long convoys full of westerners through parts of Afghanistan unarmed." The inference was that the contractors would have to rely on sources not directly tied to the US. "So we were forced to purchase large quantities of weapons on the black market — AK-47s, Makarov pistols — because we had to provide security for ourselves. And not only that, but the arms dealers that we were dealing with, that worked for our company, were under investigation for purchasing Stinger missiles for the Taliban. But see, that's the kind of connections that you need in order to operate in Afghanistan successfully. You just can't operate without that. If we didn't have those kind of connections, then we would've been impotent to carry out our tasks."

Going "freelance"

In May 2006 Roberts was promoted to chief intelligence officer. Soon after, he overdosed on a combination of valium, codeine, alcohol, and hashish. "I was unconscious. I woke up four days later." He was also fired.

By that time, Roberts was already separated from his wife, pending divorce. "I started up an operation after I lost my job. It only took me a week. I had rented out my own compound,

hired a security team, rented vehicles, and sat down and formulated a plan to make some serious money selling information and brokering deals between different firms and providing services, such as manpower or bringing equipment to the people who needed it — for example, weapons, communications equipment, people. I had stacks of résumés." As a front, the compound operated as a restaurant with a business license from the Afghan Investment Support Agency.

There were thousands of unemployed Nepalese Gurkhas in Afghanistan, trafficked in by the Nepalese Mafia under empty promises of work. "Once I opened my restaurant, they all started coming there, and they're all giving me their résumés, and they all begged for work. There were enough unemployed Nepalese guys in Kabul to staff an entire battalion, if not a brigade. I sent e-mails out to all the security companies.... I'd go through the stack and find people they needed and take a payment from the security company."

Roberts could supply manpower to a broad clientele. "Yeah, the US or anybody, you know — the Afghan national army, Australian security companies, British security companies, the Danish Embassy, whatever. You know, 'The Danish Embassy needs additional security because of the cartoons that came out about the Prophet Mohammed in Denmark, so we need an extra twenty guys to guard the embassy because people are gonna come burn it down.' Then I would say, okay, well I got twenty guys. Give me \$20,000 and then here they are — today, standing tall."

Roberts also sold intelligence. After soliciting his services to various multinational companies operating in Afghanistan, "all these people would come over to my restaurant and introduce themselves. And if they had a requirement for a certain type of information, then they'd ask me. Like PSI would come over and say, 'We're bidding on the embassy contract and we require this information which we think will improve our odds of obtaining the security contract at the embassy. Can you provide us with that information, and if so, here's the price.' And I would say, okay, yeah, I got that information, or I can get that information. Let's do this deal. Give me cash. That's how it was done."

One of the primary ways intelligence was collected was through another branch of Roberts's business: prostitution. "I brought in the women via the Nepalese Mafia, under visas to come and work at my restaurant. And that's when we turned this compound into a brothel."



Roberts with the French liaison at the MFO.

First comes war— then comes prostitution

Roberts wants people to be clear: “Prostitution and the ‘War on Terror’ are two things that go hand-in-hand. Wherever the troops go, the prostitutes follow. And I’m not talking about a few. I’m talking about thousands and thousands of Chinese prostitutes. Everywhere where US troops go, everywhere where there’s contractors, hundreds of brothels pop up.

“And it’s not just the US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know a lot of these hookers. They follow ‘em wherever they go: Sudan, Ivory Coast. French troops go to the Ivory Coast—thousands of Chinese hookers in the Ivory Coast. Dubai is a transit point for everybody going to these wars. And there’s thousands and thousands of ‘em there. That’s one thing, is the link between prostitution and the ‘warriors on terror.’”

When Roberts worked as a contractor, the security companies “would bus us down to the whorebar, provide security for the bus while we were all inside, pay a driver, pay somebody to stand out there. Sometimes we’d rent out the entire whorebars for the entire evening.” But it wasn’t limited to contractors. Roberts recalls that in Kosovo, the US Army’s MWR (*Morale, Welfare, and Recreation*) would bus soldiers to Bulgaria to indulge in prostitution.

Despite the activities occurring in his compound, Roberts had little to worry from the authorities. “The Kabul government was set up to do business. The government doesn’t care if you pimp hos.” He received

on drugs, alcohol, and women. “I spent so much money on nothing. I didn’t know people could spend that much money and not have it anymore.”

He returned to the US and eventually made his way back to Elma, Washington. Capitol Forest, with its predominance of meth heads, proved inhospitable, so he moved into the woods north of Elma, living on MREs that he had saved from his Army years. “I set up my tent, threw a mattress inside of it, and stayed there for the whole winter. Matter of fact, it was the Hannukah Eve Windstorm, and a tree fell on my tent. It was bad. There were trees always falling on my tent. It was really cold. It got down to the teens, twice in November that year.”

His remaining money was lost at the bar in Elma, where he would spend hundreds of dollars in alcohol a day.

He was finally convinced to move into a friend’s house in March 2007. A girlfriend in Seattle, who would later become his wife, moved in with him. Roberts needed a job, so again he relied on his specialized skills. He signed up for another year-long tour in Kosovo as a military contractor. He was forced to resign after six months, however, when the company doctor told him his blood pressure was too high to continue.

Upon returning to the Pacific northwest, Roberts enrolled at The Evergreen State College, where he is now finishing up the degree that he

erts witnessed first-hand and participated in the micro-economy that props up around war zones, an economy that mimics the greater corporate needs that fuel wars. “I modeled my business [in Afghanistan] completely after US corporations. I exploited the natives, I ripped off my investors, I avoided paying taxes, I skirted the rules and regulations. There was no oversight. It was the Wild West. Anything could go.

“As long as [my clients] could pay, we could do anything we wanted. We could kill anybody, we could do anything. As long as we weren’t attacking the US.”

As for the benefit to the Afghans, “most of the Afghans that supported the presence of foreigners in their country are the Afghans that benefited from it, and that’s a very limited sector of the population. If somebody wanted to go get an interview of an Afghani saying that having the US troops here is wonderful, it wouldn’t be hard. All you’d have

“These contractors that I worked with, they don’t care if the Afghan people are fucked over. They just want a job. They hope we stay over there as long as we can so they can keep working and making phat bank.”

to do is go down to the embassy and find somebody that makes \$600 a month, which is more money than most Afghans make in a year, and ask him, ‘Is it cool that the Americans are here?’ And they’re gonna give you all the right answers, on camera. But if you are a Muslim and you speak Arabic, and you’re learning Farsi, and you know about Islam [Roberts had been assuming the Kamal Shami identity he was given at DLI], eventually even those people will open up and tell you that the only reason they support the US is because they have a job. And if Massoud was here, they’d kick the fucking US out. That’s what they always say. [Ahmad Shah Massoud was a leader in the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation.]

“These contractors that I worked with, they don’t care if the Afghan people are fucked over. They just want a job. They hope we stay over there as long as we can so they can keep working and making phat bank.”

Fucked up

When asked to reflect on the controversy around the mock checkpoint street theater (see page 1), Roberts replied, “We can take all this shit that goes on [overseas] and brush it all under the rug. Or we can tell everybody about it and invite the public in. Because who’s making the decisions whether this shit goes down or not? I mean, maybe it’s the corporations or the people in control. But only the people I see around can do anything about it to change it. So that’s what I want people to take out of it. I want

people to take war seriously. I want ‘em to be educated about it—not to come over to the freakin’ table and say, ‘Where is Afghanistan? Is that in Iraq?’ That’s fucking lame, if you ask me. I mean, can you believe that?”

“I want people to—I wish that my buddies—I’ve had three buddies, two extremely close friends, put bullets through their own brains. And I think that in both cases, it was because they couldn’t deal with this. They couldn’t deal with this at all. They couldn’t go to the therapy in Aberdeen or this or that. And they both put bullets through their brains. One went to Kosovo in 2001 and put a bullet through his brain there, on Camp Bondsteel, where I spent two years. He put a bullet through his brain there. And then another close friend in Kosovo put a bullet through his brain.

“There’s all kinds of vets that kill themselves. Thousands of ‘em. Why? Because they know the reality of what’s going on. They actually know what’s going on, and they can’t deal with it because it’s so fucked up.

“You know, I can’t walk anywhere—two blocks from my house—because I’m so afraid of dogs. I was never afraid of dogs before, and I don’t know if it’s because of when I was in Afghanistan. I had to shoot a lot of dogs and cats in Afghanistan, because they’re starved and feral and they’re everywhere.

“But one day in particular, I was walking along in Afghanistan and shit hit the fan. I heard some dogs growling, and I came around the corner, and I looked over there, and there was a girl laying on the ground, on the side of the road. Nobody else in sight. And her feet were sticking out—what was left of her feet. They were all burned. Her arms were sticking out—one hand completely gone, one hand no fingers. All arms burnt. Belly burnt. Face completely untouched. And, I mean, she was beautiful—probably about 14. And the dogs were freakin’—had one of her arms pulled out into the road, tugging on it. And the feet—as soon as I came around the corner, I saw a dog just rip a piece of her foot off and run away, and other dogs were chasing it and trying to get to the feet. And she was alive.

“And you know, I really didn’t know what to do. I was looking around, trying to figure out what was going on. I fired off a round from my pistol, and all the dogs scattered. But they didn’t scatter very far; they were in a big circle around me. I walked over to her, and I stood there for a few minutes, looking around, yelling for people. I was afraid, because these dogs were snarling. And they weren’t very far away from me. And you know, I really didn’t know what to do about this whole situation. She was burnt to a crisp. She was alive, but she was just staring straight up into the sky. And the dogs were eating her. She didn’t even seem to no-



Roberts inside his restaurant.

“I really just didn’t know what to do. So eventually I made a decision. I put a bullet in her—in her face. Right here [points between the eyes].

“I think about that a lot. I have a lot of nightmares about that. And I just don’t think that people think about that when they think about the war in Afghanistan or the escalation of the troops. I think people just see a news flash, or something scrolling along the bottom of the screen. That’s what I think they think of. Just numbers. 17,000. What’s that mean? I don’t know.

“I want people to understand that war means something a lot different than what they see in the movies, where one side lines up, then another side lines up, and they shoot at each other. There’s a lot more to it than that. It’s not two sides fighting. The whole thing is fucked up. People don’t know how fucked-up fucked up is. You can’t even explain it, because it doesn’t make any sense.”

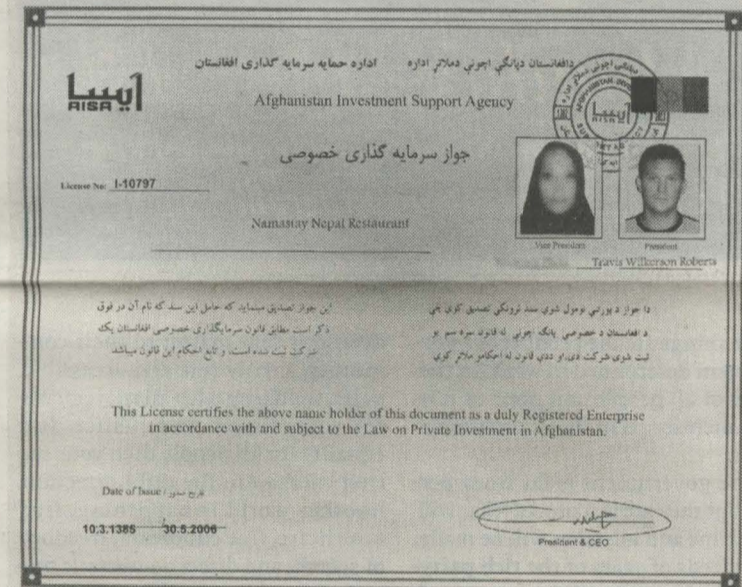
The saying “War is Hell” is a cliché. It says nothing about the civilians who died in it. It says nothing about how it could have been avoided. It says nothing about those who profit from it, from the industries that live off of it. And it makes no sense of it.

Even worse, it normalizes war. It honors those who engage in war and survive. It signals a rite of passage, a proud scar that demonstrates that what didn’t kill someone made them stronger.

But for Roberts, “Before I joined the Army, I used to be a completely different person. I used to be so happy. I used to have some kind of a spark. I used to be able to do so much stuff and produce high-quality work. But I can’t now. I can’t concentrate.”

Roberts never expected the Army to change him the way it did. “Unfortunately, I thought that I was better than that. And then these things that I gained in the Army made me worse. And now I’m trying to reverse that process.”

What Roberts internalized from the Army grew as he used the training that he was given, until he got sucked into the “excesses” of war. Yet Roberts’s experiences demonstrate that nothing in war was ever “excess.” It was always part of the scheme.



The business license for Roberts’s restaurant in Kabul.

visits from the tax collector, which he simply brushed aside. Besides, “every single business over there was like that, even the ones that operated with contracts with the State Department—everything that goes on over there is shady. They all have prostitutes living in their offices. All the restaurants over there in Kabul are filled with Westerners, and you don’t know who they work for. You don’t know what they’re doing. But they all have something going on. And they all work for somebody, and they’re all buying and selling something. You can bet on that.”

Roberts didn’t fear the Afghan government, but the Taliban and the Afghan people were another thing. Major anti-US riots erupted in 2006 after a US military truck crashed into several Afghan civilian cars, killing several people. For security, Roberts rigged up a harness that would enable him to hide inside a well. Moreover, the Taliban had retaken most of the countryside. Establishments similar to Roberts’s had been attacked. “The security situation had eroded to a point where I couldn’t operate safely. I couldn’t guarantee my own safety. Also, being involved in this was just really taking its toll on my conscience and my ability to function mentally and emotionally. I just couldn’t maintain myself—I couldn’t keep doing that. So I quit.”

Roberts left Afghanistan in the fall of 2006 and traveled to China, where he spent \$30,000 in ten days, mostly

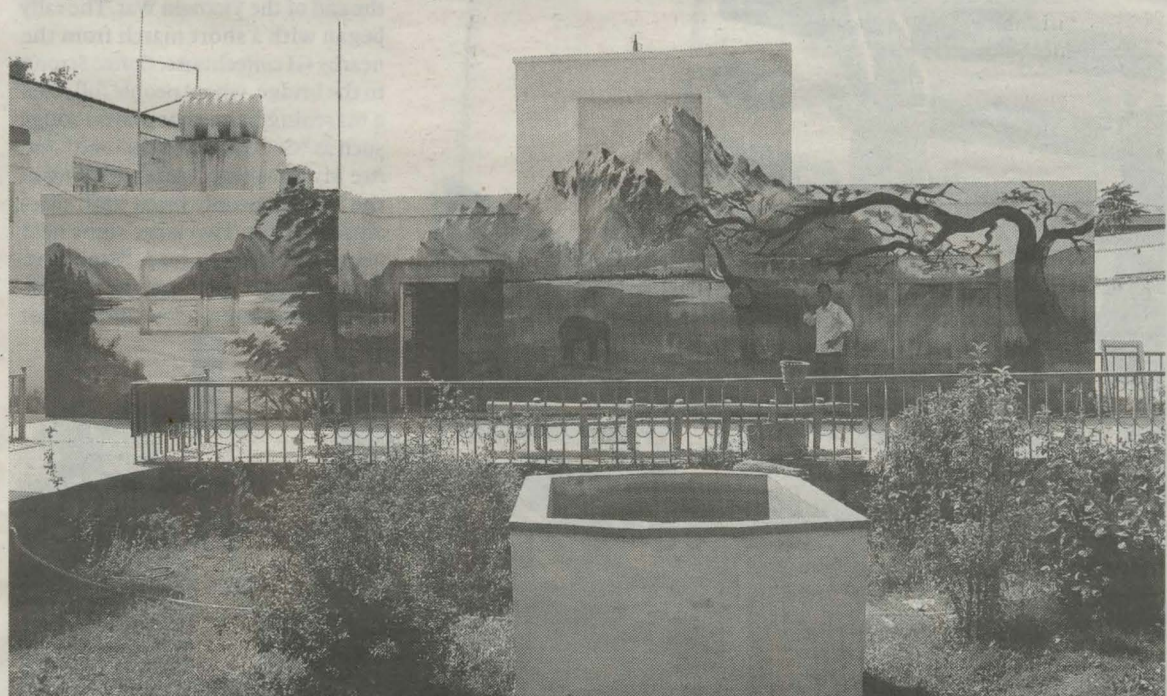
was working on in New Mexcio. He is currently taking “Art and Activism.” He sees a therapist in Aberdeen to deal with his PTSD. He has been sober for two months.

Twelve years of a young life

There are many lessons that Travis Roberts learned that he hopes he can impart on others. “The alcohol’s a big one. If you don’t know that alcohol and violence are part of the military, you’ll find out real quick” when you enlist. “Then the prostitutes and black market follow.” Roberts’s adulthood has revolved around the military, war, and corruption. In the New Mexico National Guard, he learned that the drug war was used to facilitate the drug trade. At the University of New Mexico, he found himself confronting the nexus between the Military-Industrial Complex and the University, under the aegis of its then-president, Louis Caldera.

Even his role as a peacekeeper on the Egyptian-Israeli border with the MFO wasn’t honorable. The establishment of the MFO in 1981 freed Israel from minding the Egyptian front, which in turn allowed it to invade Lebanon in 1982, resulting in the deaths of up to 20,000 Lebanese and Palestinians—in addition to facilitating further Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank. “The — was designed in Israel’s favor,” said Roberts.

In Kosovo and Afghanistan, Rob-



The restaurant where Roberts conducted his business, after painted with a mural that he had commissioned.

Reflections on a class trip to Venezuela

by Bruce Wilkinson

The revolution is reforming our hemisphere from south to north. It is a mixed bag of ideologies that rejects dogmatism and orthodoxy. It is power from below and charismatic leadership from above. It is defined by a deepening of democracy, a rejection of violence, the empowerment and inclusion of all people, respect for the land, and the rejection of imperialism. Forty students from Evergreen went to Venezuela, the epicenter of the revolutionary earthquake, to find out the meaning of 21st century socialism and see for ourselves what the corporate media here is too scared to accurately report.

Arriving in Caracas we met with Charles Hardy, author of *Cowboy in Caracas*, who surprised us with a trip to a land takeover ceremony. After a three-hour bus ride, we came upon the celebration of a community of poor farmers who legally took title of an abandoned parcel of land owned previously by a wealthy landowner. As a result of 500 years of colonialism, the majority of land in Venezuela is owned by a small percentage of light-skinned capitalists, who inherited the land from their slave owning and indigenous killing forefathers. In 1998 this heritage of racist wealth accumulation, combined with neoliberal economic policies, made Venezuela one of the most unequal countries in the world with 80% of the population falling below the poverty line, many in extreme poverty.

The people struggled for three years to legally take over the land, forming themselves into a cooperative and community council. People cried and spoke movingly of what it meant to them to be able to work their own land and share together, sustainably, the abundance. These families fed us while explaining that the Chávez government has opened the door for them but that they had

to walk through it together. That was our first day.

The country was in the middle of a lively political date on the amendment to the constitution that abolished term limits. Our class interviewed community leaders, workers, women, gays, opposition members, and government officials about this and other aspects of Venezuelan society. Everyone had an opinion and spared no words of good or ill about the problems and successes of their country or their view on the amendment. Most in our class arrived skeptical of the change in law, but after careful consideration, I came out strongly for it. Undeniably, if the amendment had lost, it would have meant a major setback to the revolutionary government.

I visited seven community radio and television stations, all of which were built after Chávez was elected president. The community media is

by law set up so that 70% of the content shown must come from the community in which it is a part of while only 15% can come from the station itself and 15% from outside the community. Hundreds of small radio and several television stations have spread across the land, providing extreme local news of the people

and by the people. I went on two different radio shows as a guest, where the host asked us about Obama, our experiences here, Palestine and US foreign policy. This was a starkly different and participative press than the private media, which is vehemently anti-Chávez, that still dominates the airwaves.

The truth about Venezuela is hard to discover from reading about it in the *New York Times*. On the ground a deep sense of optimism pervades communities, especially in the poorest and formally most ignored sectors of society. Since becoming president Chávez's social programs have virtually wiped out illiteracy by teaching over three and a half mil-

Most in our class arrived skeptical of the change in law, but after careful consideration, I came out strongly for it.

Friday: What's up with Venezuela? Evergreen State College, Seminar 2 E1107
4-6: Movie: "Venezuela Rising," 2006, documentary covering the rise of Chavez!

7-9: "Venezuela and US Intervention Keynote Address,"
Featuring special guests:

Martín Sánchez, *Cónsul General of Venezuela,*
creator of Apoorrea.org

Eva Golinger, *author, "The Chavez code: cracking US intervention in Venezuela"*

Saturday: Solidarity with the New Latin American Left: Evergreen, Seminar 2, D1107

10-12: US Intervention and Media Control Panel with Eva Golinger and Larry Mosqueda

12-1: Lunch, Latin American themed, Red Square

1-3:30: 21st Century Socialism Panel with Peter Bohmer and students

3:45-5:30: Latin American Solidarity Panel with Martín Sánchez, CISPES and PCASC

8-midnight: Gallery opening party! Ottos, Downtown Olympia, Washington and State Ave.

Sunday: Art, Participation and Popular Education: *Art All Day!* Ottos

11-2: Stenciling workshop and crafts sale

2:30-5: "Experiences of Latin America," story telling, poetry, skits and more!

Monday: El Salvador's Historic Inauguration: Evergreen

10-1: Report back of elections observers in El Salvador, live feed of inauguration

8-late: Celebration Bash of FMLN Inauguration Victory! Ottos, downtown

Latin American Solidarity Conference

Friday, May 29th-

Monday, June 1st

Co-sponsored by the Latin American Solidarity Group, CISPES,
and the Evergreen State College Venezuelan Program

lion people how to read, beginning with the new constitution and their rights protected therein. He has provided free high quality healthcare for all in the form of over six thousand clinics run by Cuban doctors, training the next generation of socially conscious Venezuelan doctors. Barriers to education were removed with Chávez, expanding the university system by half a million a year, providing free breakfasts and lunches and grants for living expenses. All of

these things are the product of a government determined to work for the good of all people and none of it is ever mentioned in the international press.

The government is far from perfect but they are in a process that will take time and mistakes will be made. Hundreds of years of the rich partying on the backs of the oppressed takes time to clean up. However when your principles are the continuing inclusion of all people in the

decisions that matter to their community, a truly free and accessible press, solidarity with all movements for sovereignty and justice and equality for all people then your setting yourself in the right direction. Another world is happening, free healthcare, free education, freedom of speech, and direct democratic control of the decisions that affect you most is not just a dream anymore it is a reality.

Protesting stop-loss outside Fort Lewis

Photo by Kyle Ludowitz



by Tessa Wyllie de Echeverria

Last Saturday around sixty people got together on Freedom Bridge, a highway overpass near Fort Lewis to protest stop-loss. Stop-loss is a backdoor draft that has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. The rally began with a short march from the nearby GI coffeehouse, Coffee Strong, to the bridge, where people followed a marching band that played songs such as "Get Up, Stand Up" and "You Are My Sunshine." After arriving at the bridge, people lined both sides, signs waving. Two large signs held above the freeway read, "Stop stop-loss, support your troops." It was a beautiful sunny day, and we got

much support in the form of honks and peace signs. Only a few middle fingers were shown, and the day progressed peacefully. There were two Washington State Patrol cars present to make sure we didn't affect traffic, and two Lakewood police cars were present for backup. The officers spent a long day of sitting in their cars and counting sheep, which leaves me wondering if that was the best use of our tax dollars.

There were about six counterprotesters waving American flags, sandwiched between the band and the sign that said, "End This Backdoor Draft." I walked over to ask a few questions about how supporting stop-loss was supporting the troops. The counterprotesters responded that stop-loss didn't exist and we were protesting something that doesn't exist. I told them there were soldiers on the bridge who had experienced stop-loss firsthand, and the counterprotesters informed me that this was only a policy under Bush but now that Obama was president, that policy was gone. At this point they decided to stop talking with me and went back to their flag waving, protesting against something which they don't believe exists.

At this point I think it important

to give a little background on stop-loss. It started right after the Vietnam War and its draft ended. The policy states that, "In the event of war, one's enlistment in the Armed Forces continues until six months after the war ends, unless the enlistment is ended sooner by the President of the United States." After Obama was elected, he stated that the United States army would be stopping this policy. However in order to get out of being called back up by stop-loss, one must "complete an involuntary deployment of twelve to fifteen months and 90 days stabilization time (to 'out-process' from the military)," after which they can apply to end their contact.

Even under this new policy, the army holds the power to reinstate stop-loss at anytime. "Still," Robert Gates (Secretary of Defense) said that changes "do carry some risk," and that the Army retains the authority to use stop-loss under "extraordinary circumstances." The timeline for ending this policy plans to have 50 percent of the soldiers out of the program by 2010 to 2011. Judging by this information, it doesn't sound like stop-loss is over to me. Furthermore the beginning of its end has yet to be implemented.

El Salvador on the eve of inauguration

by Ashley Waldron, Ken Hoyt, representing CISPES

In early May, the Canadian mining company Pacific Rim announced that it will sue El Salvador for the crime of not permitting it to open a gold and silver mine. This will be the first of such cases to be heard by a special international arbitration court established by the Central American Free Trade Agreement or CAFTA. This confirmation of legal action is real fucking alarming, especially when it coincides with the historic electoral victory for the people of El Salvador.

A little over a hundred days ago, Pacific Rim first filed its Notice of Intent to sue for damages, lost profits and lost investments, during which El Salvador had time to decide how to react. The mining company claims it has already spent \$75 million “exploring,” which is the geological term for driving their industrial equipment into people’s communities and neighborhoods and punching enormous holes in the ground—a perfectly phallic illustration of capitalist exploitation. On top of the \$75 million investment they’re going to sue for lost profits, which could be in the hundreds of millions. The country’s already broke—poverty that has only been exacerbated by CAFTA in the first place.

The disputed mine is planned for the town of San Isidro in the department of Cabañas, the name for the site is un-ironically El Dorado—the mythical city of gold. While mining proponents would claim that a country in which people are going hungry can’t afford to turn down such an opportunity for foreign investment and new jobs, Salvadoran civil society, the people, and therefore, the FMLN (the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), El Salvador’s Leftist political party, are in staunch opposition.

Salvadoran taxes on the profits from the gold would only be about 2 percent. Potential jobs would number in the hundreds, and few would be long term, but the potential and guaranteed risks are immense.

Cyanide, the chemical used to extract gold from ore threatens to pollute the environment of El Salvador if the mining project begins. Cyanide a deadly poison by itself in addition to the other heavy metals freed by the leaching process—aluminum, zinc, mercury, arsenic—would pollute the soil as well as the largest water source in the country: the Rio Lempa. The Rio Lempa is a massive body of water that supplies drinking water to more than half of the residents of El Salvador. Pollution is guaranteed, accidents are commonplace, the history of mining in the rest of Latin America, is fucking tragic. (Go read *Open Veins of Latin America* by Eduardo Galeano, if you haven’t yet)

Resistance has been strong. In 2007, at the Central American alliance against Metallic Mining conference in Cabanas, more than one thousand protestors rallied at the Canadian Embassy to protest mining. The Catholic Church is even against mining, especially the current archbishop, who has been especially vocal. The FMLN has fought the mining process in the legislative assembly, going up against rightwing politicians, many of whom have been purchased by the mining company. Perhaps the strongest resistance however has been from those oriented towards direct action. There are numerous stories of communities organizing and mobilizing to keep anyone with a corporate or gringo appearance out of the town, and even dismantling of mining equipment. Other types of direct action include the re-ignition of El Salvador’s rich tradition of popular education, classes and workshops carried out by anti-mining activists, that serve to organize and raise awareness amongst the affected populace—the people of El Salvador.

Just a piece of the puzzle

Anti-Mining activists see the mine as part of an even larger attack on the country and all of Central America.

Plan Puebla Panama, or the “mega-projects,” are massive development

schemes for highways and dry canals (the Panama canal isn’t big enough anymore) to connect huge ports that serve to facilitate the ongoing robbery of El Salvador’s wealth—meaning more sweatshops, invasive mining, and huge hydroelectric dams. These “projects of death” already have and will continue to displace entire communities, and poison the land, water and people. These projects will be paid for directly by the people, or through international loans, but ownership will be private.

If government could have been a defense against these assaults, it was neutralized with the signing of DR-CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

The third part of the neocolonial assault is the way in which dissent has been criminalized. A proud member of Bush’s “coalition of the willing” El Salvador just recently brought its troops home from Iraq but continues to wage war on its own people with its own PATRIOT act or “Anti-Terrorist law” under which activists have already been charged with terrorism which is upwards of 60 years in prison. When the people stand up to these assaults on their homelands, an increasingly militaristic police force will repress protests with tear gas and rubber-coated metal bullets, arrest organizers and leaders, throw them into horrible prison conditions with charges of terrorism, or worse—political murders have hardly been relegated to El Salvador’s past.

Hope and change

We, CISPES are in solidarity with the people of El Salvador. On March 15th we watched The People of El Salvador overcome egregious electoral fraud, a massive fear campaign and US intervention to elect a leader that really represents them. On that day they said no to centuries of oppression and imperialism. On that day they began the construction of a dual power system wherein the state and the social movement will work together to create “a new El Salvador.”

CELEBRATE WITH CISPES
 Victoria 2009
MONDAY, JUNE 1ST
MORNING ON CAMPUS: WATCH THE INAUGURATION LIVE FROM EL SALVADOR
EVENING DOWNTOWN: CELEBRATE AT THE INAUGURATION PARTY at the old Otto's, 111 Washington St
 On March 15th 2009, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and the people of El Salvador won historic elections and triumphed over electoral fraud, US intervention and fear.
 On June 1st, we will celebrate the inauguration of El Salvador's first ever People-Centered Government and the beginning of the construction of a brighter future.

Olympia Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador

In 1992, the FMLN and the government forces signed the Peace Accords ending twelve fratricidal years of declared war. We were in solidarity then. We will continue in solidarity to struggle with the people and against this current phase of war in the struggle towards real peace.

We hope to hold Obama accountable and remind him of the things he said before he became president. He voted no on CAFTA as a senator

and is on record disapproving of the kinds of lawsuits discussed earlier.

On June 1, CISPES, or the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador will be celebrating the inauguration of a people-centered government, partying alongside millions of Salvadorans and compañeros world-wide. We hope to see you there.

Winners	Losers
FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front	ARENA, or Republican Nationalist Alliance
Used to be guerillas, still revolutionaries.	Rightwing death squad party, republicans.
Candidate: President Elect Mauricio Funes ex-journalist, college dropout, wordsmith and charismatic badass.	Candidate: Rodrigo Ávila. Used to be a police officer, has bragged about killing people during the war, but was too afraid to debate Funes.
Flag: Red with a white star	Flag: American red white and blue with a cross on it
Party of the People	Party of the rich
Inauguration will occur on June 1, 2009.	Controlled government since 1989.

Mock checkpoint proves people don't like to live under military occupation. Hmmm...

by Lamise Al-Shawahin

On Wednesday May 13th, 2009 a group of Evergreen students engaged in a street theater production that simulated an Israeli Defense Force (henceforth called the Israeli Occupation Force, or IOF) check point in Red Square. The demonstration was an attempt to raise awareness about the daily harassment that Palestinians are subjected to living under the Israeli government.

The simulation consisted of two boards painted to look like the security (read: apartheid) walls constructed on Palestinian land and three people dressed as IOF soldiers carrying plastic guns with bright orange caps. The mock-soldiers asked passing students for their ID and to reveal the contents of their backpacks. They did not enforce their demands if students were unwilling to comply.

Tessa Wyllie-de Echeverria, one of the organizers of the event, stated that the street theater performance was, “a great way to show people a glimpse of reality that they’re too busy with their daily lives to go out and research.”

Many members of the Evergreen community took offense to the performance. It was considered disturbing by some community members who complained both directly and indirectly to the demonstrators. A few students who were not consenting performers felt threatened. This reporter was unable to find any evidence of direct threats being made.

Hal R. Van Gilder, the Project Manager for Facilities Services at

Evergreen, sent an email to Art Costantino stating, “No one and I mean NO One [sic] will be allowed to point a gun at me and threaten me in my work place. I believe that this is assault with a deadly weapon and brandishing a weapon for intimidation.” Later on in the correspondence he called the demonstration a “little deadly weapon assault.” In a reply to that correspondence, John A. Hurley, Vice President for Finance and Administration stated, “[n]o employee or student or community member should experience this level of harassment.”

Another member of the Evergreen community, Frank Fatseas, approached the demonstrators asking how they would react if he were to stage a mock beheading “like the Islamo-fascists do on CNN.” He went on to say, “I bet you’d call me a racist if we did that next week.” The reference he was making was not entirely clear, but there are no instances of Palestinians beheading anyone that have been shown on CNN.

Fatseas appeared to be comfortable linking an isolated terrorist act with the entirety of Palestinian people and felt it to be proportionate to use such an act to represent all, one can assume, Muslims/Arabs/Middle Easterners. An isolated incident of a beheading (It is unclear as to whose beheading is being referenced. Perhaps Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII’s second wife?) and the daily reality of living under apartheid are two completely disproportionate things. Apparently, the crime of one Muslim/Arab/Middle Easterner/ North

African/ South Asian is a burden to all members of the aforementioned groups and somehow has the power to dismiss the suffering of Palestinians.

With this level of outcry towards a demonstration in which no one was physically harmed, one would assume that those who expressed concerns would be extremely enraged to hear that this type of harassment is a daily reality for Palestinians. The ability to contact authorities and arrest a group of people who they felt were violating their rights is a privilege that Palestinians do not have. Those living under the occupation do not have the privilege of state authorities backing them when their human rights are violated, nor do they have a responsive organization to report the atrocities committed against them.

Wyllie de Echeverria said “[w]e heard many complaints that being dressed as authority figures gave mixed messages to people, but one of the points we were trying to make is that the authority figures in Israel are the ones who are abusing their power.”

B’Tselem, a group that aims to educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the occupied territories, reports that, “Israel’s policy is based on the assumption that every single Palestinian is a security threat, thereby justifying restrictions on his or her freedom of movement. This assumption is racist and leads to the sweeping violation of the human rights of an entire population on the basis of

national origin. As such, the policy flagrantly violates international law.” In spite of the policies violating international law, the harassment and violence persists.

The actual walls in Palestine are roughly 8 meters high, topped off with razor wire, and surrounded by “buffer zones.” The buffer zones can be anywhere from 30 to 100 meters wide with electric fences, trenches, cameras, sensors, and military patrol. The buffer zone gives occupation forces an excuse to expel many residents living near the wall from their homes, as well as uprooting hundreds of olive trees. The occupation demolished at least 165 houses in 2007 in addition to the destruction of dozens of businesses. Ultra conservative Israeli MP’s recently pro-

tested a proposal to ease, not remove, the restrictions on Palestinians trying to get through the checkpoints at a checkpoint near the occupied West Bank city of Hebron.

It is frequently the case that the wall is erected just meters away from homes, shops, and schools. Passing through checkpoints in Palestine is a part of daily life; a Palestinian may have to pass through a checkpoint to get to work, visit a loved one, or even go to a hospital. Palestinians have been humiliated, detained, beaten and even shot at while attempting to cross through these checkpoints.

In the end, the performance broke people out of their daily routine and, despite their political stance, made the occupation in Palestine part of their discourse on campus.



If the mock checkpoint was an outrage, what's a real checkpoint like? (Photo by Nicholas Dehning)

Imperial ventriloquism: A review of *The American Pilot*

by Anna Simonton

If you've walked past the State Theater in the past few weeks, you may have noticed the disconcerting poster advertising Harlequin's current production, *The American Pilot*. In the poster, a close-up on the face of an Air Force pilot is offset by an out-of-focus woman behind him, who casts an alluring look in his direction from underneath her hijab. The image is evocative of the old stereotype of the exotic, mysterious eastern woman who, hidden under swaths of cloth, beckons with her gaze. On its website Harlequin describes *The American Pilot*, written by Scottish dramatist David Greig, as a "portrayal of how the third world views the US and how the US views the third world." Unfortunately, the play is neither, and only succeeds in projecting western ideals onto non-western characters.

The play takes place in "an unnamed third-world country where the fight for liberty against an oppressive, American-backed government has been going on for years," according to Scot Whitney, the director. Also unnamed are the characters. With a few exceptions, they are addressed by their job descriptions: Farmer, Trader, Captain, etc. The plot unfolds around an American Air Force pilot who crashes in some mountains, where Farmer finds him and takes him home to be cared for. It then falls into the hands of the people of the village—and ultimately the captain of the rebel forces that govern the region—to decide what to do with him. They debate whether it would be to their benefit to hand him over to the United States and hope that they receive support in return, or hold him hostage and see their cause gain attention around the world.

Supposedly, Greig's play is an allegory. With nameless characters and an unspecified location, the

play could be set in a number of war-torn countries and is therefore supposedly able to represent a generalized relationship between the US and the "third world." (Apparently "third world" has evolved from an adjective that describes a nation's level of industrialization, to a noun loosely defined as a conglomerate of countries that are essentially one entity.) Anyway, let's suppose that The Third World is something that can be represented in one situation, spoken for with one voice. The issue then, is who does the speaking.

Farmer opens the play with the line, "The American pilot was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. His skin was the color of sand flecked with gold...his eyes were as blue as the sky he fell from." A bizarre way to describe someone who has just survived a plane crash and is probably more black and blue than gold. Thus begins ninety minutes of idol worship/envy that implies in the characters a desire to be western.

Farmer and his daughter share a scene in which he confesses to her that he wishes he could have been an engineer instead of a farmer. He fantasizes about building huge dams, reducing the role of the farmer to stereotypically parochial terms, while romanticizing the developed world. Maybe some farmers in The Third World feel that agriculture is unfulfilling, but why is this a defining element in a character who symbolizes The Third World Farmer? Whose view is this?

Later in the play his daughter describes, in a fit of ecstasy, a vision in which she sees their valley with a big road from the village to the mountains, cars driving fast, a dam, and "helicopters like a flock of geese." She concludes by saying that this is how she knows the pilot was sent by God to save them, as if paradise to

her existed within the parameters of a Honda commercial. It's doubtful that many first-worlders take comfort in the sight of helicopter convoys, let alone people who have lived under military occupation. This is clearly not The Third World speaking.

When the captain of the district is called in to decide what to do with the pilot, he sees the injured man laying crumpled on the ground and says "His presence makes me feel weak," as if a half-starved American with a broken leg were intrinsically more masculine than a robust guerrilla soldier from The Third World.

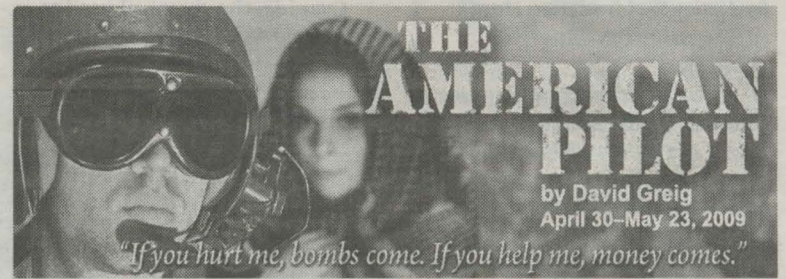
Captain and his Translator discuss the resistance at length, during which time Captain repeatedly

In a society where public opinion is gleaned from pop culture, artists have a responsibility to create works that challenge dangerous assumptions, not reinforce them.

laments the futility of their efforts, finally declaring that he wishes he had never come back from exile in Norway and that, in fact, he wishes he were Norwegian. To insinuate that people who make sacrifices in the struggle for self-determination don't really believe in that cause, that if they had a choice they would trade their cause for an American passport, or a Norwegian one, undermines the reality of such sacrifices. This is not The Third World speaking.

The pilot has hardly any lines; the most he says is, "My whole fucking record collection is on there," in reference to his iPod as it is being confiscated. The lack of a distinct voice from the character that symbolizes the United States further emphasizes the fact that every other voice on stage speaks for the west, masked only by a markedly uncomplicated sentence structure.

The overarching issue with this play is that Greig does not have a point of reference for speaking to the experience of oppressed peoples. Translator tells Captain, "You represent the legitimate aspirations of your people," so Greig isn't glorifying the US military as a totally beneficent force or portraying the



rebel army as terrorists. But it is clear from the way his characters denigrate their own lives and identities, while elevating a bloodied, half-conscious American to divine status (the daughter actually says he "glows"), that Greig believes western culture, along with other hallmarks of the developed world, are what everyone ultimately aspires to be a part of. This is not "a portrayal of how the third world views the US," this is the imperialist west (probably unassumingly) imbuing oppressed, non-western characters with American ideals. This is problematic.

It's problematic because in 1999, 85% of Americans agreed with the statement, "Democracy may have problems, but it's better than any other form of government," according to the Pew Research Center. One year earlier, a CBS poll recorded that in response to the question "Should the United States try to change a dictatorship to a democracy where it can?" 29% of those polled answered yes, 16% said it depends, and 7% weren't sure, totaling 52% who did not necessarily consider US intervention in other governments objectionable.

It's not surprising then, that in 2003, according to several polls, an overwhelming 75% of the American population supported a war that, while primarily based on the supposed nuclear threat posed by Iraq, was secondarily touted as a war to liberate the Iraqi people from an evil dictatorship.

One more statistic: in 2005 a PIPA poll showed that when asked whether the US should support a country that is becoming a democracy if there is a high likelihood that the people will elect an "Islamic fundamentalist" leader, 54% answered no. This further indicates that for many Americans, democracy means more than representation—it means

American culture; for some, the two are synonymous to the point of exclusion of other cultures. This assumption of cultural superiority, and its conflation with the idea of democracy is clearly linked to the idea that military action is justified if its purpose is to bring "democracy" to another country.

In a society where public opinion is gleaned from pop culture, artists have a responsibility to create works that challenge dangerous assumptions, not reinforce them. Producing a play where characters from The Third World rhapsodize on the desire to live a Western life does little to challenge the assumption that everyone wants to be American, and would be happy for the US to "liberate" them. If Harlequin wants to stage a "portrayal of how the third world views the US" they might do well to consider what implications different voices bring with them, and which ones can do justice to the experiences of people who are on the reality side of conflict.

This isn't to say that westerners can't create good plays about the Middle East. *Iraqi Refugee Project* is a docu-drama recently finished by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen, two Americans who transformed interviews conducted with Iraqi refugees in Jordan into an anthology of monologues. In this case, the only thing imposed on the narratives is theatrical constraint.

And I know I've been going along with the idea of The Third World as a geographic area, but it's important to point out that, rather than a physical place, "third world" is a condition subject to change. Like in Iraq, a country that was first world until the US imposed years of debilitating sanctions and then bombed the shit out of the infrastructure and civilian population. Just sayin'.



The Israel lobby double dares Evergreen

In last month's Counter Point Journal, the Mideast Solidarity Project (yes, formerly SESAME) sought genuine participants for a formal civil debate on the Palestine-Israel conflict, after the campus pro-Israel group, SIIA Shalom, declined to participate. Little did it expect to receive a strange offer—and a dare.

by Phan Nguyen

In the US, the Israel public relations campaign is a multimillion dollar industry with a particular emphasis on college campuses. To this end, various Israel PR groups have funneled money into student groups, have flown US college students to Israel for public relations training, and have sponsored campus events such as "Islamofacism Awareness Week," and "Israelpalooza." In an attempt to turn college-age students on to Israel, the Israel lobby has done everything from producing policy papers (such as "Israel in the Age of Eminem," authored by famed Republican PR consultant Frank Luntz) to sponsoring the "Women of the Israel Defense Force" bikini spreads in *Maxim* magazine.

Evergreen is not immune to the Israel lobby. Evergreen professor Steve Niva was profiled as an enemy of Israel for his research on Palestinian suicide bombings in the pro-Israel magazine *CAMERA on Campus*. In these last two years, the infamous PR group StandWithUs has given at least \$7000 to Evergreen students to promote Israel on campus. Since then, StandWithUs has continued attempting to establish greater footing at Evergreen.

Last March, SIIA Shalom decided

on its own to add the Mideast Solidarity Project to its email list. MSP began receiving unsolicited pro-Israel propaganda ranging from generalized demonizations of Arabs and Islam to personal attacks against Desmond Tutu.

When MSP asked to unsubscribe from the email list, it received a response not from SIIA Shalom, but from Robert Jacobs, the Northwest Regional Director of StandWithUs, reproduced below. Note how Jacobs attempts to bait MSP into inviting him onto campus. One must wonder if StandWithUs operates like a mythical creature that must be invited before it enters.

Also note how Jacobs makes light of the various censorship controversies on campus when he compares MSP to Nazis for simply unsubscribing to an email list that it never asked to subscribe to in the first place. Finally, note that this email was written by a grown man, representing a multimillion dollar PR organization, ostensibly fighting for Israel's survival.

From: Robert Jacobs
Sent: Tue 4/21/2009 12:22 PM
To: Sesame
Subject: RE: SIIA Shalom - Imam preaches extermination of all Jews
Out of curiosity, why is it that MSP does

not want to see the other side of the argument? Do you doubt the veracity of the videos of Palestinian media on Palestinian Media Watch? Do you doubt the statements made by Ziad Abu Alhaj that were taped off of Hamas TV? Were they mistranslated?

If not, why is it you do not want to hear the other side of the story?

I challenge you to invite us to speak on campus and to listen. But I know that is a challenge you won't make, because you do not want anything to disrupt the bizarre belief system you've built around you—a belief system that would have leftists and liberals support Hamas, the most repressive theocracy in Middle East, over Israel, a country that, yes, has problems (as does every other country) and social ills that need correction, but that is a democracy...

Are you willing to take us up on the challenge? Are you willing to disagree respectfully with someone after listening to them rather than shout them down? How much difference is there between your refusal to listen and tolerate and the Nazi's refusal to listen to the Communists in the 1920's and 30's and the Nazis' burning of books with which they disagreed?

Prove you believe in democratic discussion and debate. Invite us to speak. Or come hear us speak if we visit the campus.

Rob

Robert Jacobs
Northwest Regional Director
RobJacobs@StandWithUs.com

Israel 101

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StandWithUs has such wholesome-looking material. Why do they have to be so mean?