

A Brief and Incomplete History of Resistance at



the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

*a brief and incomplete history of resistance at the
university of illinois - urbana champaign, 2007*



Foellinger Auditorium

Racism, Power and Privilege at UIUC

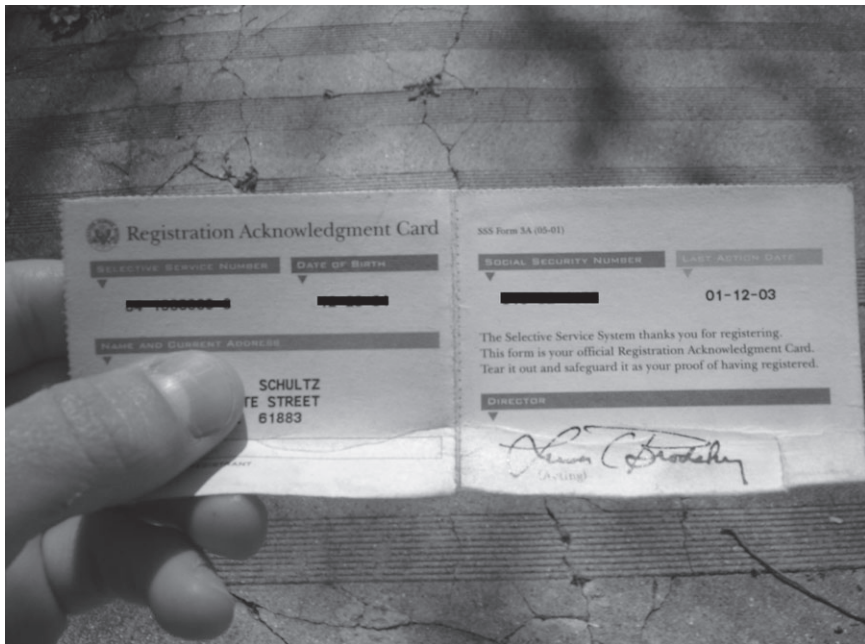
On February 1, 2007, the Students for Transforming Oppression & Privilege (STOP) organized a huge forum at Foellinger Auditorium that allowed several students, community members, Native Americans, and anyone concerned with issues of race, power and privilege on the University campus to voice their concerns. Tensions on campus were already high with the fate of Chief Illiniwek in question and the “Tacos and Tequila” fraternity/sorority exchange that occurred in October 2006, which encouraged its members to dress as stereotyped Mexicans, and an incident on the online facebook group “if they get rid of the chief I’m becoming a racist” in which a student made vicious threats to a Native American student who opposed the Chief. On December 2, 2006, this message was posted:

“...that’s the worst part! apparently the leader of this movement is of Sioux descent. Which means what, you ask? the Sioux Indians are the ones that killed off the Illini Indians, so she’s just trying to finish what her ancestors started. I say we throw a tomahawk into her face.”

The forum allowed many to voice their concerns and confront President White, Chancellor Herman and other top administrators. The forum also provided a platform for STOP to reveal their seven demands to the University administration. The first demand was for the administration to “facilitate the unconditional removal of ‘Chief Illiniwek’ and eliminate the use of American Indian Imagery.”

Finally on February 16, 2007, the Board of Trustees announced that Chief Illiniwek’s last dance would be February 21, 2007, the final game of the men’s basketball season.

iresist.org



Selective Service Registration Card (SS it exists to serve the “emergency manpower needs of the Military by conscripting untrained manpower”)

Cecil Cheatom Refuses the Draft

Cecil Cheatom, a Black student at Illinois, was drafted in March 1968. He refused to report for active duty, citing racial injustice as the primary reason. Responding to the situation, he wrote a letter to the draft board which stated: “I find it completely incomprehensible that the United States Government would really

expect me, a black man, whose human rights and rights of citizenship are not recognized in this country to go to war in the service of the same country! ... I am interested in obtaining my freedom and the freedom of my people here, in this country, and now. If I have to fight, that fight is here.”

Black Power on Campus –
Joy Ann Williamson

Protests, demonstrations, petitioning, disseminating information, letter writing, and all kinds of other acts can be considered an “act of resistance”. When thinking about resistance in this way, acts of resistance happen every day. Because these acts occur so frequently, this zine is in no way a complete or comprehensive history of resistance on the UIUC campus. Instead it is an attempt to recover some forgotten events and histories, and examine our relationship to them as well as their relationship to each other.

A Brief and Incomplete History of Resistance at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is a zine containing several acts of resistance that have happened on the UIUC campus. Any information in this zine can be reproduced freely, and if you know of any events or histories not included in the zine, additions are encouraged.

To contribute to the zine, e-mail platialhistory@gmail.com with the facts you would like to be included. Additional information on all events found in the zine, as well as a downloadable pdf, can be found at:

platialhistory.org/uiuc

All information in this zine was compiled by:
Heath Schultz, April 2007



Assembly Hall

Charlene Teters – The Beginning of the End of the Chief

Charlene Teters is a Native American woman and a member of the Spokane nation. In 1988 she arrived on the campus of UIUC after being recruited to participate in the School of Art and Design's Master of Fine Art program. In 1989 she attended a basketball game where she first experienced a performance by Chief Illiniwek. She was greatly affected and offended by the performance and soon began protesting silently outside of the Assembly Hall with signs that simply read "Indians are human beings". Charlene was among the

first to kickstart the movement against the Chief, and would later describe the community as being "...permeated with degrading depictions of American Indian caricatures because of the University's use of an "Indian chief" as its sports team mascot".

Teters' experience on the UIUC campus was a catalyst for her political activism. Besides her personal battle against the Chief she would later go on to start the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and the Media and be an important activist in several battles against Native American mascots.

Charleneteters.com



African-American Cultural Center

BSA Delivers Demands

On February 13 and 14, 1969, the Black Student Association delivered a list of demands to the administration. Some of the demands were: the university drop all charges against those involved in the sit-in at the Union on Sept. 10, 1968; the establishment of a Black Cultural Center; the establishment of a Black Studies Department; hiring 500 black faculty within a four year period; and many others (there were 35 demands total).

While many of the demands still have not been met, many were successful. After the list of demands was delivered the University began working towards developing a class dedicated to Black Studies, which

was the precursor to the current African American Studies program that is in place today (though the University still has not created a major dedicated to African American studies). This was also the first time a cultural center was demanded, which also became a reality in the fall semester of the 1969-79 school year when a small university owned house was dedicated to the African-American Cultural Program.

BSA's demands became a list of things for the Black student community to strive for, and were, in many cases, the first step to making major changes and advances for black students at the University.

Black Power on Campus - Joy Ann Williamson



Illini Union

Sit-in for Equal Housing

In 1968 the Special Education Opportunities Program (SEOP), along with "Project 500" were initiated by the University. The programs aimed to recruit 500 new minority students, primarily black.

At the end of New Student Week in 1968, many of these "500" students were temporarily staying at ISR and were told to move to their permanent residencies, but when they arrived many felt their rooms were unfairly small in comparison to other white students' rooms. One student described her new room "... a closet, and then they said I had a roommate." Several of the "Project 500" female students felt similarly and refused to leave ISR. Over the next day or so, the attempted negotiations failed and the situation escalated, eventually leading to a

threat from the administration that if the students continued to protest they would not be allowed to sign up for classes, or their possible removal from the University. By this time, several other black students along with Black Students Association arrived to show their support of the women. The protesters next went to Illini Union to continue their protest. The group escalated to around 250, and remained in the Union until 3 am when reports of violence and property damage spread. At this time the University police were called in to remove them. The protestors left peacefully, but 250 were arrested and the SEOP was in jeopardy due to the enormous amount of negative press it received from papers all over the country.

*Black Power On Campus - Joy Ann Williamson
Daily Illini - Sept. 9 1968*

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have such ordinances and law: I therefore seek a candid answer to a final question: Is the current leadership of the Champaign County society for or against the general proposition that it is not too much to expect city residents to be willing and able to assume complete responsibility for the animals they are privileged to own?

MRS. JACK JUDY
807 East Michigan
Urbana

People Should Speak

EDITOR:

On March 20 we wrote in a letter to the editor the frightening story of the Illinois senate committee hearings on the Broyles bills (Senate Bills 101 and 102), and called for a "groundswell of political pressure" to bring about their defeat. Just two months later, on May 19, we went again to Springfield, to the House judiciary committee hearing on this same legislation. While, as a result of great community interest in these bills, the facts of this hearing have been much more adequately reported in the press, we feel that the significance of the proceedings needs emphasis so that the people may realize more fully the victory that was won.

The essence of the conflict in America today between those who promote and those who oppose this type of repressive legislation was dramatically enacted during the course of the afternoon. If the senate hearing was characterized by the slander of

News-Gazette May 30, 1953

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Patti Page Has a platt
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"Five Housewives" Resist the Broyles Bill and McCarthyism

On February 20, 1953, Broyles introduced the first of two bills to the senate. S.B. 101 called for a fifteen member commission that would have the responsibility of investigating the activities of anyone "suspected of being directed toward the overthrow of the government of the United States or the state of Illinois." The Second bill, S.B. 102, would have made it a felony "for any person knowingly and willfully to commit...any act intended to overthrow or destroy...the constitutional form of the government of the United States" The Broyles Bills would have made it a felony to remain a member of "subversive" groups or participate in "subversive" activity.

There were several groups and citizens that opposed these bills, but there is one particular group who referred to themselves as the "five housewives" that

dedicated much of their time to resisting the Broyles Bill. After attending a hearing to discuss the bill, the five housewives were surprised when only a fraction of those who came to speak in opposition of the bill were allowed to speak. After this, the five women and Urbana-Champaign community members drafted the first of two letters to the editor (the first appeared in the CU Courier on March 17, 1953, and the second in the News-Gazette on May 30, 1953) articulating their opposition to the Broyles Bill and signed it "Five Housewives". The same group of woman obtained a copy of the bills, studied them, and eventually reproduced 500 copies with their own money and distributed them to their neighbors, asking them to write their legislators if they too opposed the Broyles Bills. Eventually after several ups and downs the Broyles Bill was vetoed for the second time by Republican Governor Stratton, which finally put the bill to rest.

The Nation - August 8, 1953



Henry Administration building



Noyes Laboratory, Room 216

GEO Work-In

The Graduate Employee's Organization (GEO) has, since the late eighties, had many battles with the University over stipends, better benefits, and anything that would improve graduate students' lives. But the GEO first responded with public protest on April 8, 9, and 10, 1998, when they gathered at Henry Administration Building for a "work-in". Over 400 members of the GEO gathered at Henry to teach classes, grade papers, prepare for classes, as well as educate the public about its history and goals.

The work-in came after a long history of petitioning, meetings, and legal battles fighting over the unionization of the GEO. This was the primary goal of the GEO during the work-in.

Unionizing was proving to be difficult for the GEO because the University's Labor Board voted that the graduate students' jobs were "so deeply intertwined with their education that their jobs were primarily educational," excluding graduate students from the Labor Act.

uigeo.org

Protesting Dow Chemical

Dow Chemical, producer of napalm, and supplier of the military, was scheduled to hold interviews and recruitment sessions on October 25 and 26, 1967. In response to the interviews, some Chemistry faculty scheduled a "teach-in" on the quad south of the Union. At the teach-in, information on napalm would be taught and distributed. After the teach-in, many protestors went over to the East Chemistry building (Noyes) and began a five hour sit-in in an attempt to disrupt the

interviews Dow Chemical planned to conduct. Demonstrators blocked the door of room 216, where the interviews were to occur, and due to fear of more interviews in a secret location, the representative for Dow Chemical was blocked from leaving the room.

After five hours, Herbert Gutowsky, head of the Chemistry Department, read a statement informing the demonstrators that the interviews had been cancelled.

Daily Illini - October 26, 1967



Assembly Hall



Quad

Mencia Met with Protestors

On Sunday, October 22, 2006, Carlos Mencia made a stop at the Assembly Hall while on his “Punisher Tour”. Almost a month in advance, on September 29, *Daily Illini* opinion columnist Eric Naing wrote an editorial voicing his criticism of Mencia, stating that Mencia was “bringing stupid to campus”, and that Mencia was “(Dave) Chapelle minus the message, wit, and humor.” Finally Naing encouraged students to skip the upcoming show.

When October 22 finally arrived, six protesters and members of the Central And South American Students Association (CSASA)

stood outside of the Assembly Hall holding signs and chanting things like “Learn your culture before you laugh at it”, and “where are Mencia’s Mexican fans?” Mencia himself made his way out to talk with the protestors and invited them to the show and provided all six protestors with free tickets, asking them to watch the show, then afterwards they could discuss their problems with his comedy if they wished. The protestors agreed and went inside. After the show, Mohammad Rasool, president of the CSASA, said his opinions of Mencia’s comedy had not changed, but in fact were solidified.

Daily Illini – Sept. 29, 2006

Daily Illini – Oct. 23, 2006

Greens Get on the Ballot

With an upcoming election for Governor, the Campus Greens joined with the Green State Party of Illinois on a massive petition drive in the spring of 2006. Campus volunteers for the Green party went door-to-door to fulfill state of Illinois’ requirement of over 25,000 signatures in order to put a new party on the ballot, and within 90 days, they were successful. The Green Party ran Rich Whitney and to the surprise of many, he received 11% of the statewide vote, 16% in Champaign County. Because

Whitney received more than 5% of the statewide votes, the Green Party became legally established as a statewide party, making it easier to participate in elections in the future. This local success of the Green Party could in large part be attributed to the efforts of the Campus Green Party. Though Whitney lost the election, surprisingly high numbers perhaps prove that grassroots organization and efforts can have a real effect on larger politics.

Daily Illini – Dec. 6, 2006
uiuc.edu/ro/greens



Noyes Laboratory

Protesting the CIA

On April 9, 2007, several activists from the Campus Anti-War Network (CAN) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO) - UIUC branch, protested outside of Noyes Laboratory in opposition to the CIA's recruitment of students on campus. The protest was both a counter recruitment event as well as an information session. CAN and ISO passed out information fact sheets on the CIA's history and held signs that read "end torture" and "CIA not welcome". The reasons cited for protesting the CIA were as follows:

"The CIA is the U.S. empire's front line in the training of death squads throughout the third World, particularly in Latin America, and now in Iraq. It is responsible for the overthrow of democratically elected governments that oppose U.S. interests, and for 'extraordinary rendition'—the transferring of suspected 'terrorists,' mostly Arab and Muslim men, to secret prisons in other countries known for committing human rights violations.

Such barbaric deeds are a gross violation of international and U.S. constitutional law, and are crimes against humanity."

Socialist Worker Online – April 20, 2007



Illinois Strees Residence Hall - Home of most "Project 500" students.

BSA Recruits for "Project 500"

In the late sixties the University began working toward raising their minority enrollment and initiated the Special Education Opportunities Program (SEOP), along with "Project 500". The programs aimed to recruit 500 minority students, primarily black.

In order to meet their goal of 500 minority students, the administration enlisted the help of the Black Students Association (BSA) and the BGRC to help with the recruitment of black students from across the country. Members of BSA invited high school students from Chicago, East St. Louis, and Holmes County, Mississippi and sponsored tours, dances, and various other activities. The BSA also dedicated their efforts in their hometowns on summer break. Many BSA students turned down summer jobs so they could recruit for the BSA,

and were successful in several cities recruiting students from Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago. The BSA was essential in helping the University meet Project 500's goal. They were able to tap into community sources that the University did not have access to, and BSA members had a valuable perspective on the University that no administrator or spokesperson of the University could offer. The Black Graduate Recruitment Committee also helped "Project 500" and traveled to historically black universities as well as primarily white institutions to recruit graduating black students. They took with them all necessary application forms and would return them to the university for consideration. The BGRC was extremely successful. By 1972 they had raised the black graduate student numbers from 1.3% to 3.8% of the graduation student population.

Black Power on Campus -
Joy Ann Williamson



Lincoln Hall, Room 110 - Meeting room for CACC



Henry Administration building

Coalition Against Coke Contracts

“Coalition Against Coke Contracts (CACC), is a broad coalition of campus and community groups in Champaign-Urbana that has mobilized to demand that the University cut its contract with Coke since it has repeatedly violated labor rights in Columbia, and is responsible for severe environmental abuse in India.” – caccuc.blogspot.com

CACC was formed in 2005 and was part of a larger movement against Coca-Cola responding to various environmental and human rights violations in India and Columbia. Since 1989, eight union leaders from Coke’s bottling plant in Columbia have been murdered by paramilitaries, allegedly working closely with Coke management. In India, Coke has been accused of putting bottling plants in

areas suffering from drought with an already scarce water source. In result, the water sources were polluted and dangerously reduced to farmers and villages. In 2003, India’s Centre for Science and Environment reported that the products produced in India contained pesticides (DDT, malathion) that are 30 times greater than what is allowed by the European Union regulations.

Since 2005 CACC has organized various protests, lectures, vigils, information sessions, and calls for action, all in an effort to raise awareness of Coke’s violation with an attempt to end the University’s contract with Coke in 2007.

CACC meets weekly on Wednesdays at 7:30 in Lincoln Hall room 110

caccuc.blogspot.com
cokeactiongroup@riseup.net

Sit-in for Latino Rights and the Removal of Chief

On May 5, 1992, between 60 and 120 students took over Henry Administration Building for an eight-hour sit-in. The sit-in was a culmination of growing protests beginning with the administration’s failure to respond to a set of demands created by a committee of Latino students. Some of the demands that were called for were: the use of “Latino/a” rather than “Hispanic”, University funding for a Latino studies program, more Latino students that is more

proportional to the number of Latinos in Illinois, more Latino faculty, and terminate the Chief.

Law enforcement was called to remove the students from Henry, and accusations of unfair and abusive treatment toward minority protestors were made. Though some demands have still not been met; in 1995 La Casa moved to it’s current address at 1203 W. Nevada Street in Urbana, received \$200,000, and the University reinstated an assistant director and graduate assistant for La Casa.

Daily Illini – April 26, 2002



506 E Green St.

Barbershop Resistance

On February 10, 1954, Don Stokes, a senior at the University, went to get his hair cut at John's Barbershop at 506 E Green Street on campus. After he arrived and sat on a bench, waiting for his haircut, the owner told him they were closed for the day to go to a funeral. The next day another black man went to John's Barbershop in attempt to get a haircut, and once again was told that the shop was closed.

These events were the beginning of what was to become a series of

protests and pickets of several Campus town barbershops that refused to serve black customers. The protests were largely composed of women from the Student-Community Human Relations Council who demanded service for black customers in all barbershops. Finally in November of the same year, after months of struggle, the chairman of the human relations committee announced that all black students were welcome at all campus barbershops.

Hot Type: 150 Years of the Best Local Stories From The News Gazette



Swanlund Administration building

GEO Sit-in at Swanlund

On March 13, 2002, the GEO continued its battle with the University. This time, 50 members of the GEO occupied Swanlund Administration Building, blocking any employees from entering. This action coincided with the Board of Trustees coming into town for a two-day meeting. The protestors vowed to stay in Swanlund until they began negotiations or until they were arrested, and with the threat of a three-day strike

already scheduled by the GEO, the administration went against its policy and began negotiating with the GEO. This protest opened the door and led to a series of meetings and negotiations with the University, and eventually resulted in an agreement between the GEO and University. The agreement allows most Teaching and Graduate Assistants to have bargaining rights and was the result of a seven year battle with the University.

uigeo.org