



Every Step

Fall 2014

Wellesley College Peace & Justice Program Newsletter

Inside

Moving Forward

2

Emily Greene Balch
Scholarship Update

4

Alumni Profile:
Mara Blesoff

8

Fall Lecture:
War Crimes in Gaza

9

PEAC363 by
Professor Rosenwald

11

Welcome

Welcome! The newsletter tells you much about what Wellesley's Peace & Justice Studies Program has been up to this fall, about our faculty and students and programs. I'll preface that account with a couple of more general comments. One is about gratitude: to all who support us at the College and in the world, to our wonderful alums who constitute our extended community, and to all in the world who work for peace and justice. The other is about the world we live in. We wake every morning to news of conflict and injustice. We need to be aware of those things. We hear less often about the work of peacemakers and builders of justice; and it is part of the goal of our Program to help people hear more about such work, and to help our students learn to accomplish it. As usual, if you have any questions or comments about particular stories, or suggestions for future issues, do get in touch with us.

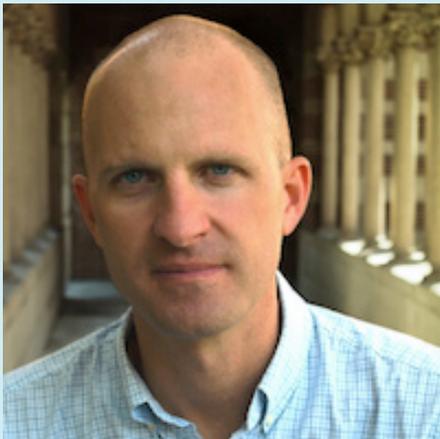
Lawrence Rosenwald,
Director of Peace & Justice Studies

Moving Forward: Peace & Justice Program Updates

By Catia C. Confortini

After a transition year, in which Susan Skeath and Catia Confortini shared the leadership of the Peace & Justice Studies Program, Larry Rosenwald has returned from his sabbatical as director of the Program. We are excited to welcome Dr. Ron Osborn to P&J, as our new Mellon post-doctoral fellow. Dr. Osborn joins us from Los Angeles, where he recently received his PhD in International Relations from the University of Southern California.

Dr. Osborn was formally introduced to our majors during a reception organized by our administrative assistant, Susan Lange, on October 1st, 2014. He will teach our PEAC 204, Conflict Transformation in Theory and Practice, next semester and three more classes during the next academic year, while Prof. Confortini will be on sabbatical. Dr. Osborn has integrated marvelously in the life of the Program: although he was not teaching any classes this semester, he has regularly held office hours and participated in weekly lunches with students and majors



Dr. Ron Osborn

together with Prof. Confortini. We are looking forward to two years together.

On November 7th, we were pleased to host a visit from Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia) students and faculty.



**Visitors from Deakin University
on a tour of Wellesley campus**

The group was on a study tour of the United States and, besides Wellesley, visited other important sites in the educational, cultural and political life of the country, including the US State Department, the US Congress, and the United Nations. At Wellesley, they attended a session of our introductory course, guest lectured by Prof. Hahrie Han, and a lunch-time introduction to the Peace & Justice Studies Program by Prof. Larry Rosenwald. Wellesley and Deakin students shared a lively conversation about student experiences in their respective countries, touching on important Peace & Justice topics, such as equity in education and tuition, and the challenges and rewards of co-educational vs. historically women's colleges.



Through the initiative of Dr. Osborn, the Peace & Justice Studies Program has sponsored (together with the History and Middle Eastern Studies Department) a talk by Bill van Esveld, of the Jerusalem office of Human Rights Watch, entitled “War Crimes in Gaza” on October 29th, 2014. The talk was very well-attended by, and received very positive feedback from students and faculty, who found that it promoted informed and lively conversations on campus on an important issue of particular concern to our Program (more information on the lecture can be found on page 9). The Program also co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Sa’ed Atshan, from Brown University and Tufts University, entitled “On Heroes and Hope: Nonviolence and Resilience in Israel/Palestine” (sponsored by Wellesley Students for Justice in Palestine, Political Science, Middle Eastern Studies, and Philosophy); and a talk by Shir Mnuchin called “Jewish Refugees of Iraq” (sponsored by Wellesley Friends of Israel, Political Science, Sociology, Jewish Studies, and the Freedom Project).

Plans for spring semester events are under way, and they will include more initiatives to foster vigorous debate on campus on the critical issue of the conflict in Israel/Palestine, as well as support for students of color, in the wake of the events in Ferguson and other US cities and the problem of police brutality toward African Americans.



Students, faculty and staff face wind and cold during the final day of classes (December 9th) to protest grand juries’ failure to bring to trial the police officers responsible for the killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner



PEAC 104’s semi-annual visit to Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Roxbury

Class of 1950 Emily Greene Balch Scholarship Recipient Update

The Class of 1950 Emily Greene Balch Scholarship is a \$3,500 summer internship stipend for students to carry-out a summer project which analyzes the ways in which injustice is linked to conflict, and encourages the study of the relationship between peace, justice, and social change. It is generously supported by a grant from the Class of 1950. This year's recipient **Idalmis Vaquero** reports back about her experience over the summer.



**Idalmis with other
interns at Communities
for a Better
Environment, Los
Angeles**

This past summer I interned at Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), a California-based non-profit environmental justice organization. I was an intern in the organizing department at CBE's Los Angeles office. Working in Los Angeles was very important to me because I got to work with youth members in the communities in which I was born and raised. During my internship, I developed and facilitated a youth summer training program for over 35 high school students who live in communities overburdened with environmental injustices and were exposed to what identity, environmental racism, and organizing mean. I also worked on a wide range of projects and events related to many of the campaigns CBE is involved in. I had the opportunity to meet people from other environmental organizations in Los Angeles and

California, attend meetings with coalitions CBE is a part of, organize community members to attend important hearing and city council meetings, and experience first-hand how funding determines the agenda of a non-profit environmental justice organization. Most importantly, I learned about the environmental injustices happening in my community, ways I can help, and future goals and vision for my community and myself.

Working at CBE this summer has completely changed my perspective and contributed to my self-development. Prior to working at CBE, I had little knowledge about what I really wanted to do with my Environmental Studies degree once I graduate. I knew that I really wanted to major in Environmental Studies, but did not really know why or what really motivated me to take this path

Working at CBE made me realize that I wanted to fight for the health and environmental justice of the community I live in. At times I became frustrated knowing of the environmental injustices that my family and my community have to live through, but working at CBE allowed me to channel my frustrations into educating and organizing my community to stand up for the environment we deserve.

My initial goal for this internship was to be able to devote my time to one specific campaign that interested me. Although this did not end up being the case, I was very happy that I got to work with the other campaigns CBE is involved in. I worked in a very dynamic and fast-paced environment, which allowed me to learn more about efficiently completing tasks and becoming more goal-oriented. I was also able to gain more knowledge about every campaign and learned different skills by diversifying the amount of work that I did. Another goal I had for my internship was working in every aspect of the organization. Although I really enjoyed working in the organizing department, I also wanted to gain some experience in the legal and policy departments. Since my internship was unstructured and because the organization did not have a specific set of



**Communities
for a Better Environment, Los Angeles**

goals and tasks for summer interns, my supervisor was not able to manage who I worked with and was therefore, mostly working with the organizing department.

My internship at CBE helped me confirm my future academic and career plans. This semester I am taking a class with Professor Steady called “Environmental Justice, ‘Race’, and Sustainable Development” which will help me to engage with environmental justice literature and gain an academic perspective to my experience. I will also be doing an Independent Study with Professor Steady that focuses on the environmental justice movement in Southeast Los Angeles and the intersection between public health and environmental justice. My internship also helped me realize that I want to continue to be an environmental justice activist and organizer in my community. I also became motivated to obtain a Masters’ degree in Public Health and specifically focus on the environmental health aspect.

I really enjoyed my internship at CBE and am grateful to the class of 1950 for the opportunity to work and learn more about the environmental injustices in my community. This internship made me realize the importance of returning to my community and using my knowledge and skills to improve the lives of my family and of all the people who live there.



**Idalmis at work with Communities
for a Better Environment, Los Angeles**

Class of 1950/Class of 1945 Emily Greene Balch Scholarship- Alba Jameson Memorial Fund Recipient Update

This year's recipient [Michele Ross](#) reports back about her experience over the summer.



Childhood food insecurity is not simply a moral issue; it is a social justice issue and a crucial indicator of larger structural problems in our communities. A hungry child struggles to learn. A child who struggles to learn is more likely to suffer from poverty as an adult. And food insecurity is just one symptom of a larger, more endemic

problem affecting an increasing number of families in our communities – inequality of opportunity. If we are serious about alleviating poverty and addressing the issue of inequality of opportunity in this country, it is crucial that we start here and eliminate childhood hunger, one child at a time, one school at a time.

THE PROBLEM: HUNGRY KIDS CAN'T LEARN.

3 IN 5 K-8 PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS SAY STUDENTS REGULARLY COME TO SCHOOL HUNGRY. *"2012 SHARE OUR STRENGTH, "NO KID HUNGRY" CAMPAIGN*



*FOOD INSECURITY MEANS YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUR NEXT MEAL IS COMING FROM.

MORE THAN HALF OF THE CHILDREN IN CAMBRIDGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM LIVE IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING. 38% OF OUR STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE LUNCH, WHICH MEANS **A LOT** OF OUR STUDENTS RELY ON SCHOOL MEALS AS THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE OF NUTRITION.

IT'S CLEARER THAN EVER THAT THESE **STUDENTS NEED BETTER ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS**. WE NEED TO ENSURE THEY GET THE HEALTHY FOOD THEY NEED TO LEARN & GROW WHILE STOPPING **FOOD INSECURITY*** IN ITS TRACKS.

THE IMPACT: THREE COMMON CONSEQUENCES OF HUNGER IN SCHOLS:

<p>INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE</p>	<p>POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</p>	<p>HEADACHES & STOMACHACHES</p>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------------

MANY OF US TEACHERS HAVE IDENTIFIED FAMILIES AT OUR SCHOOL STRUGGLING WITH FOOD INSECURITY. WE'VE SENT STUDENTS HOME WITH FOOD OURSELVES AND WISHED ALOUD THAT A FORMAL BACKPACK PROGRAM EXISTED. *-CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER*

THE SOLUTION: THE WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM



THE WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM SENDS TWO LUNCHES, TWO BREAKFASTS, MILK AND FRESH FRUIT HOME TO CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WHOSE PRIMARY SOURCE OF NUTRITION IS THE SCHOOL CAFETERIA.

THE HEALTHY MEALS ARE PACKED DISCREETLY IN THE STUDENTS' BACKPACKS EACH FRIDAY AFTERNOON TO HELP **STOP FOOD INSECURITY** IN ITS TRACKS & ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE BETTER PREPARED TO LEARN.



THE WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM WAS FOUNDED AS A PARENT-RUN PILOT PROGRAM AT THE TOBIN MONTESSORI SCHOOL AND VASSAL LANE UPPER SCHOOL IN 2013. BASED ON POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES & SCHOOL STAFF, OUR GOAL IS TO REACH MORE STUDENTS IN THE CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

I worked this summer with the Cambridge Weekend Backpack Program, a community-based, parent-led nonprofit program that is addressing the issue of childhood food insecurity in the Cambridge public school district. I drew from my experiences working in both the field of family law and with CASA in previous internships, as well as my experiences as a PTA president and parent to help evaluate, refine implementation and expand the outreach of the program. I looked closely at why the issue of childhood food insecurity so easily goes unnoticed in districts like Cambridge and explored this CWBP's approach to addressing this issue at a grass roots level. I looked at the program's track record so far - what works well and what could work better - and its projected growth this year into all 13 public elementary schools, 2 upper schools and one high school in the Cambridge school district. I used a combination of experiential observation, direct participation and data analysis to understand and illustrate this program's successes and frustrations, as well as to identify strategies for reaching goals in the future. Because of my variety of personal, volunteer, scholarly and professional experiences, I found it easy to connect with and play an active role in this program on many levels, and will continue to do so after graduation.

Instead of watching food insecurity impact more Cambridge families this year, the Cambridge Weekend Backpack program is ready to hit the ground running in 2014-15, and is once more dedicated to working toward eliminating childhood food insecurity one backpack/child at time.

For more information, or to become involved, please go to <http://www.cambridgeweekendbackpack.com/about.html>

Michele Ross '14

Alumna Profile

Mara Blesoff

Class of 2013

Corporate Accountability International



Mara Blesoff '13

After helping a fellow Wellesley alum to start up a bakery on Newbury Street in Boston, I realized I wanted to move back into values-based, change-making work. As fate would have it, this past September I got a job at Corporate Accountability International. We are a member-powered nonprofit that runs campaigns to protect human rights, public health, and the environment. Born in 1977 as Infact, we partnered with global allies to challenge Nestlé, the world's largest food corporation. In an unprecedented victory, we won our first campaign and forced Nestlé to commit to sweeping changes in its infant formula marketing. Our three major campaigns at the moment are: Challenge Big Tobacco, Challenge

the Corporate Control of Water, and Challenge the Corporate Abuse of Food. In addition to all of this, Corporate Accountability International is a wonderful and inspiring place to work.

In my role as Development Coordinator, I work mostly with the Major Gifts team to ensure they are equipped with anything and everything they need to most effectively do their work. That means I project manage, conduct research, organize data, prepare informational materials, etc. Besides gaining new practical skills (I didn't work with Excel much as a P&J and Spanish major) and overcoming every day workplace challenges (I would much rather take on a large transnational corporation than our large office copier named Carol), I've learned a lot about highly effective campaigns and activism.

The aspect of my work I enjoy most is knowing that I am part of a team that is changing the world. I truly believe that is what we are doing. Even in my short time here I've seen us accomplish victories challenging a few of the world's most influential corporations and institutions. We have allies across the globe (and in our office), who are some of the best organizers out there; and together, we are working to change the balance of power from transnational corporations (who are NOT actually people) to people (who are actually people).

To find out more about our current campaigns and ways to get involved with Corporate Accountability International, visit our website at www.stopcorporateabuse.org.



Lecture:

Human Rights Watch & War Crimes in Gaza

with Bill van Esveld

By Ron Osborn

On October 29, Human Rights Watch researcher for Israel and Palestine Bill van Esveld delivered two lectures, a lunchtime talk on “Careers in Human Rights” and an evening lecture on “War Crimes in Gaza”. Van Esveld, who holds a law degree from New York University, lives between Jerusalem and Ramallah and has been the primary author of all Human Rights Watch reports on Israel and Palestine since 2009. His talk combined a careful exposition of customary international law in times of war with a

rigorous empirical analysis of violations of these laws by all sides during the Israeli Defense Force’s summer assault on the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip.

According to Van Esveld, significant war crimes were committed by both Israel and Hamas, although the human costs of these atrocities were overwhelmingly felt by Palestinian civilians. The IDF, he said, shelled densely populated areas using munitions certain to take innocent lives. It bombed well-marked schools in which it knew

hundreds of civilians were taking shelter, resulting in scores of deaths. Israeli soldiers fired on and killed civilians in several documented cases. Hamas for its part indiscriminately launched rockets toward Israeli civilian populations, with little effect although still in violation of the rules of war. More than 2,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, were killed in seven weeks of fighting. During the same time period, sixty-seven Israeli soldiers and six Israeli civilians were killed.

Van Esveld emphasized that Human Rights Watch does not enter into debates about the legitimacy of the state of Israel, the Palestinian right of return, or other controversial political questions. The organization simply applies international law and “just war” principles, accepted in theory by all states, to their actual conduct. These principles include respect for the immunity of civilians, proportionality, and individual rather than collective guilt. Despite well-documented violations of the laws of war by individuals in the Israeli Defense Force, Van Esveld said, there have been no prosecutions. Human Rights Watch urges Israel to join the International Criminal Court and to uphold the rule of law and its own highest stated values by punishing members in its military responsible for clear war crimes.

The talk was attended by more than 60 Wellesley students and faculty members. After speaking for approximately 40 minutes, Van Esveld answered questions from students and faculty, many of whom praised him for his objectivity and thorough presentation of facts. The event was co-sponsored by the Peace and Justice Studies program along with the History Department and the Department for Middle Eastern Studies.

Posters for the day's events

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Careers in Human Rights

A Lunch Talk with
HRW Researcher
Bill Van Esveld

- *What is it like being a human rights researcher?*
- *What practical skills do you need to enter the field?*
- *How can students gain experience in rights work?*
- *Is a career in human rights right for you?*

Join Bill Van Esveld for a lunch conversation on how to pursue a career in human rights research and advocacy



Bill Van Esveld is the Human Rights Watch Researcher for Israel and Palestine (Middle East and North Africa Division). He began working on Israel, the West Bank and Gaza in 2008. As the Arthur Helton research fellow at HRW in 2007-08, he wrote or contributed to reports on Western Sahara and Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria, asylum seekers in Egypt and Israel, and migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates. Before joining HRW, Van Esveld helped report on Iraq for the International Center for Transitional Justice, and on human rights developments in the UN General Assembly for the International Service for Human Rights. He holds a J.D. from NYU Law, where he was a fellow at the Institute for International Law and Justice.

Wednesday, October 29 | 12:30pm | FND 120

Sponsored by the Peace and Justice Studies Program & the History Department

Careers in Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

A Report by HRW Researcher for Israel and Palestine Bill Van Esveld

War Crimes in Gaza

Wednesday, October 29 | 6:30pm | Room FND 126

Sponsored by the Peace and Justice Studies Program and the History Department

War Crimes in Gaza

New Course Offering: **PEAC 363/ENG 363/AMST 363:** *War Resistance and American Literature*

By Lawrence A. Rosenwald

A study of how the antiwar impulse has been represented and thought about in American sacred texts, fictions, plays, poems, films, operas, letters, treatises, memoirs, essays, songs, and cartoons.

Some possible texts, in chronological order: John Woolman's visionary 18th-century *Journal*, the *Book of Mormon*, Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," Julia Ward Howe's "Mother's Day Proclamation," William James's "The Moral Equivalent of War," memoirs by Jane Addams and Dorothy Day, *High Noon*, speeches by Dwight Eisenhower and Martin Luther King, journalism by Norman Mailer and Barbara Deming, Daniel Berrigan's drama *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, Nicholson Baker's *Human Smoke*, Philip Glass's opera *Satyagraha*, and a broad, broad range of anti-war poems and songs.

Opportunity for both creative and critical work.



*“Strong people don’t need strong leaders”
– Ella Baker*



Fall 2014

Every Step

Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA
02481



Susan M. Lange
Peace & Justice Administrative Assistant

Compiled & Edited by: Claire Yi '15
Coordination by: Susan M. Lange, Administrative Assistant