



Every Step

Spring 2015



Wellesley College Peace & Justice Program Newsletter

Inside

- Wellesley at The Hague 2
- Feminist Perspectives on a Just and Lasting Peace in Israel/Palestine 5
- On Identity and Humor 6
- Emily Greene Balch: Mojia Shen 7
- Alum Update: Priya Agarwal-Harding 9
- PEAC304 by Ron Osborn 11

Welcome

Welcome! The newsletter tells you much about what Wellesley's Peace & Justice Studies Program has been up to this spring, about our faculty and students and programs, past and present and upcoming. Everyone who studies peace and justice campaigns knows that campaigns work when people support one another; heroic individuals are much to be admired, but social change comes about by the actions of communities. So for our program as well. We're keenly aware of those who support our work, and heartily grateful to them: our colleagues, our alums, and peaceworkers everywhere. I noted in my last introductory remark that we wake every morning to news of conflict and injustice. That's no less true now; just have a look at your newspaper or newsfeed. Nothing wrong in that; we need to be aware of the world we live in. But we need to be aware, in our sense of that world, not only of horrific wrongdoing, but also of patient, unglamorous, steadfast work for peace and justice. That's harder to be aware of; have a look at your newspaper or newsfeed again, and see how much news you can find in this area. It is part of the goal of our Program to help people hear more about such news, and to help our students learn to make it happen.

Lawrence Rosenwald,
Director of Peace & Justice Studies

Wellesley at The Hague: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 2015 Conference

In April, five Wellesley students and Professor Catia Confortini went on a trip to The Hague to attend Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)'s 2015 conference. The conference addressed Women's Power to Stop War, WILPF's 100th anniversary movement that aims at strengthening, connecting, and celebrating 100 years of peacebuilding from a gender perspective. The conference involved various sessions, exhibitions, and festival. Our students report back on their experiential learning about peace from WILPF and The Hague.



Wellesley students pose with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah R Gbowee (center), a Liberian Peace activist who helped lead a women's peace movement that contributed to bringing an end to the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. From left, Bridget Dunn ('15), Sydney Stewart ('18), Kanda Faye ('15), Leymah R Gbowee, Erika Liu ('15), Estela Hernandez ('16), Amelia Redmond ('16).

Traces of peace at The Hague



**World Peace Flame,
picture by Sydney Stewart ('18)**

The World Peace Flame is found outside the Peace Palace, known as the seat of international law. The Flame has been burning since July 1999 when seven flames from five continents were united. The stones surrounding the flame represent the 197 countries that joined together in peace and solidarity to endorse a joint statement of peace and create the World Peace Pathway, which opened in 2004.

“The World Peace Flame unites ancient and modern cultures by expressing the fundamental aspirations of both – the hope for peace”
– Former Federal Minister of Australia

The Hague is known as the Legal Capital of the World and the International City of Peace and Justice. It is home to over 150 international organizations, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). As part of the trip to The Hague, Wellesley students visited the ICTY, pictured below.



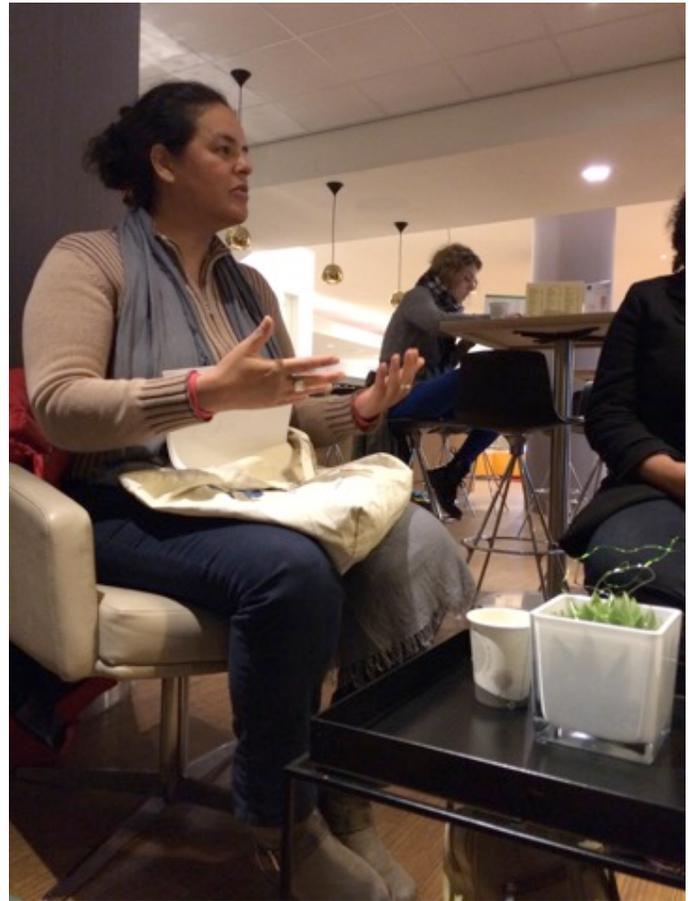
**International Criminal Tribunal for the former
Yugoslavia, picture by Sydney Stewart ('18)**

The ICTY is a body of the United Nations established in 1993 to prosecute war crimes of the former Yugoslavia. The Hague is one of the major cities hosting the United Nations, along with New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Addis Ababa.

Learning from WILPF



Students met Nobel Prize Laureate Leymah R Gbowee on the second day of the conference. Many peace activists spoke about how in order to do peace and justice activism well, you had to "live" peace and justice. Estela Hernandez ('16) asked her about what that looks like for her. Here, she is elaborating on how her family has learned to adjust because of the urgency required in building sustainable peace movements.



On their third day, students got to hear the story of Jasmin Nordien, who worked in peace organizations in South Africa and India at a time when conflict resolution programs were just being constructed.



Students enjoyed a dinner with Professor Confortini and Tanya Henderson, founder and executive director of Mina's List, an organization committed to empowering women's political leadership globally.



Professor Confortini and the students enjoyed dinner with Professor Janie Leatherman (Fairfield University) and some of the students they would present with later in the week.

Feminist Perspectives on a Just and Lasting Peace in Israel/Palestine



Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi is Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies/Race and Resistance Studies at San Francisco State University



Dr. Simona Sharoni is a professor of Gender and Women's Studies at State University of New York in Plattsburgh

On March 2nd Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi and Dr. Simona Sharoni together addressed “Feminist Perspectives on Israel and Palestine.” The lecture provided a feminist analysis of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians that dissected the use of villain narratives to represent the conflict.

Using a feminist perspective in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we discover that often narratives are used to illustrate Arab and Muslim men as villains and Arab and Muslim women as docile. Because Arab and Muslim men are constructed as vicious and domineering, a popular assertion is that the Israel and Palestinian movement is a “men’s only movement and women are only participating on behalf of the men.” Supporting this claim is the allegation that in Palestinian society women are inferior to men and devoid of free thought and will. The participation of women in the conflict in Israel-Palestine,

specifically that of female suicide bombers, but also that of women in the peace and justice movement, refutes this claim. Such involvement represents active political participation and agency.

What I appreciated most was the speakers’ insisting that students open dialogue instead of becoming defensive. Dr. Abdulhadi expressed the importance of understanding that the struggle in Israel and Palestine is not about “sides but about being for or against Justice.” This sentiment is one that we could all identify with as there are many narratives that force individuals to categorize which party is most moral, most victimized, or most traumatized. But rather than focusing on branding, it is crucial to understand conflicts as unique, dynamic and diverse. This lecture encouraged students to think critically and reconsider narratives that generalize reality.

Maryam Khan ‘18

On Identity and Humor: *with Sayed Kashua*



Sayed Kashua is an Arab-Israeli author of a fiction novel and a satirical sitcom situated in Israel-Palestine

In early March, Wellesley was fortunate enough to host Sayed Kashua. An Arab-Israeli author, he is known for having written *Let it Be Morning*, a novel chronicling the life of an Arab family living in the midst of the Israel-Palestine conflict and his satirical Hebrew sitcom, *Arab Labor*. During the March 10th event entitled “On Identity and Humor” in Collins Cinema, Mr. Kashua screened one of the comedic episodes. The first of Season Three, “Reality,” shows the protagonist, Amjad, as he bungles his way onto the Israeli Big Brother where he must blend in with the Jewish contestants in order to win. While some members of the audience were able to follow the dialogue, most had to wait until they read the subtitles in order to join in the laughter.

Following the screening, Mr. Kashua

spoke about his life experiences and entertained a few questions from student panelists and the audience. While his discussions lacked any sort of gender-aware analysis of the Israel-Palestine conflict, he was sure to maintain an informative and fair tone throughout the event towards all parties. He touched on several difficult topics, such as the violence in Gaza and the West Bank and land conflict between enemies and families alike as well as more humorous discussions of his children adjusting to life in Champagne, Illinois. In closing, Mr. Kashua ultimately praised the power of humor in cutting through racial and religious tensions, but he is not hopeful that a timely resolution to the conflict can be found. He has “lost the ability to dream of a better future.”

Mackenzie Hempe ‘16

Class of 1950 Emily Greene Balch Scholarship Recipient

The Emily Greene Balch Grant 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.

Congratulations to this year's recipient **Mojia Shen!**



Mojia Shen '18

Everyone has her own role in the world, and I want mine to be a leader sparking positive social changes, through my two non-profits on education and mental health and my social business on women's empowerment.

Revive is my first non-profit, that provides psychological and related support for families who have lost their only child in Qinhuangdao, China. Under the one child policy, families are forced to have only one child, but there are too many innocent families suffering from the tragedy of losing that only child.

Dima, 57 years old. Her only daughter died in a car accident while pursuing her Ph.D.

Kuanma, 55 years old. Her daughter took her own life, and her husband died several months later. Both of them have attempted suicide several times, and avoided all of their social contacts. They are my aunts, people that I have known for more than 10 years, but having seen them ever since the tragedies happened. These are not isolated incidences. Over all of China, one millions families have lost their only child, and the targeted city, Qinhuangdao, has 900 families that are desperately in need of help. Of all the families, 60% suffer from severe depression.

The One-Child Policy deprives people of the right to choose for their families. Among the consequence of the injustice are 25% of the suffered families getting divorced, and half living under the poverty line. Every year families demonstrate in front of the National Demographic Committee, but have received very little compensation. The intense confrontations accelerate the conflicts between the families and the government, and generate tension inside the society.

As an only child, a niece, a citizen, and a young leader, I cannot sleep soundly knowing one million families cry themselves to sleep. I decide to start Revive to provide stop them from bleeding, through three services.



One Child Policy in China
image from Harvard Political Review

First, provide free counseling services to grieving families, to help them recover from depression, and regain the desire to live. Second, facilitate monthly group gatherings to bring families together and form long term support groups. This will create a safe space for them to eliminate feelings of isolation. Third, offer daily life assistance. As the parents age, they become more and more desperate for daily life support, whether it is something as simple as going on a shopping trip, to visiting hospitals, all things their children might have normally done. Our volunteers can fill this gap, and reduce the parents' worries for old age care.

Revive has formed two strong partnerships. Qinhuangdao Psychology Committee's 30 counselors will provide free psychological services for families. Qinhuangdao

Green-life Foundation will provide two hundred volunteers.

Revive has a 4-month plan. In May we will visit 50 families in their homes to encourage their participation; from June to August, we will start all our services, and close up the first session with a series of group evaluations. In order to help families recover from mental health challenges, Revive cannot be a short term project. In the long term, we hope to benefit over 200 families in Qinhuangdao, and develop a sustainable model to replicate in other cities in China. I will take the lead in this social movement improving the well-being of families who have lost their only child, and promoting a culture of volunteerism in China.

Mojia Shen '18

Alumna Profile

Priya Agarwal-Harding

Class of 2012

The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)



Priya with Professor Confortini and Professor Rosenwald on 2012 graduation

I graduated from Wellesley in 2012, with a double major in Peace-and Justice Studies (Political Science concentration) and English. During my time at Wellesley, I found myself gravitating towards classes in both departments that dealt with the historical and political

oppression of minority groups around the world, ways of re-thinking traditional frameworks for examining the distribution of power in societies, and examples of both large and grassroots movements that sought to address these injustices.

Upon graduation, I was still left with a big question about the most effective way to address longstanding injustices, often met with impunity, so I enrolled in a Master's program in Human Rights at University College London in the UK. This was a foundational and interdisciplinary program, during which I took classes in philosophy, law, development, economics, gender, and research methodologies.

After living in London for a year and, missing the experiential learning that I had experienced through various internships and travels during my time at Wellesley, I moved to Washington D.C. to begin working at an International NGO doing work on measuring and promoting the Rule of Law around the world. Six months later, I found myself backpacking around the Island of Java, Indonesia, with my brother, stopping at cafés and bars to write chapters of my dissertation and have Skype meetings with my thesis supervisor back in the UK.



Making my way to Jakarta, I then travelled to Papua to interview a wide range of development and local stakeholders on their views about Indonesian government's attempts to address self-determination of indigenous Papuans and the likelihood of escalating conflict in the region, a topic I had learned about during my internship at UNICEF in Indonesia during my fourth year at Wellesley. I graduated from my Master's this past November, and am now living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where I am continuing to pursue my interests in human rights in post-conflict situations.

Obviously, none of my post-grad journey was linear. My advice to you, current P&Jers, is not to be afraid of a somewhat messy path. You may not see it at the time, but the small steps you take towards your goals will later pay off in creating your career of choice.



New Course Offering: **PEAC 304** *Senior Capstone Seminar: Grounding Human Rights*

By Ron Osborn

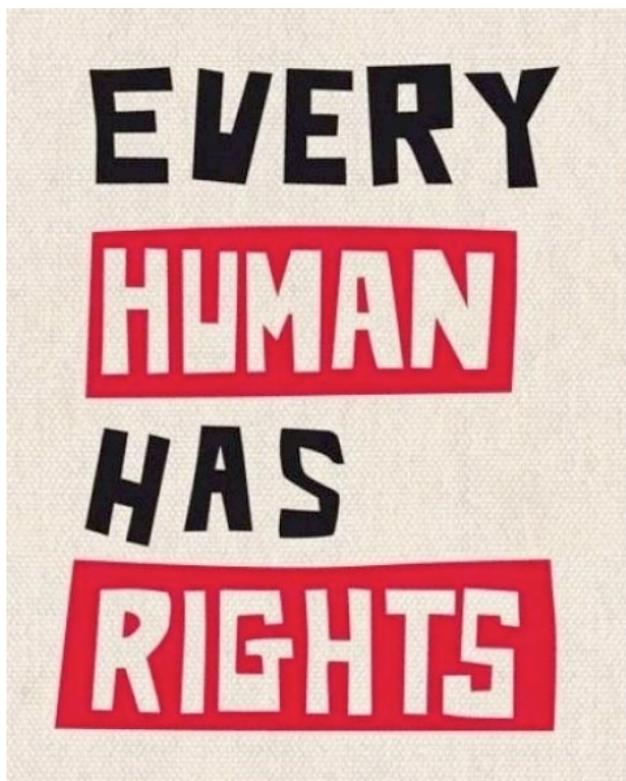
Contemporary philosophical debates about human rights have been described as a "three-cornered fight" between secular humanists, anti-humanists, and religious humanists. In this course, we will wrestle with questions about the nature and sources of rights by engaging in close readings of works by compelling champions of each of these three positions.

Do rights need no other court of appeal than human experience and reason?

Can we say with any confidence that being human means possessing inviolable rights, dignity, and equality?

Or do these terms only make sense within some kind of religious vision of personhood?

Why should these philosophical questions practically matter for rights advocates and others working for peace and justice in their communities and everyday lives?



*“A bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song”
-Maya Angelou*



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