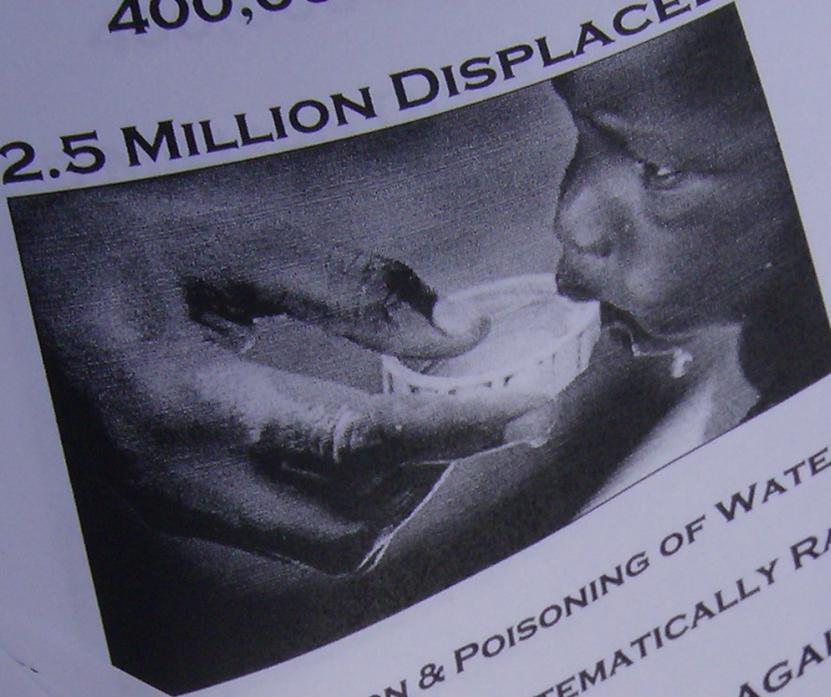




HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS | SPRING 2007

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HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

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Back and cover art courtesy of Shaun Levy

Letter From: Richard Wilson

*Director, Human Rights Institute &
Gladstein Chair of Human Rights*



Director Richard Wilson.

I'm delighted to report that Human Rights has recently been selected as one of the signature Interdisciplinary Initiatives of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to be targeted for future resources and growth.

This is a testament to the hard work of faculty in developing our teaching and research agenda, as well as the lively participation of an increasing number of undergraduate and graduate students. This

semester many seniors in the human rights minor are doing internships at local human rights organizations and there are two new initiatives which will allow students to gain international experience. Through the Study Abroad office, University of Connecticut students can now attend an intensive human rights focused program in South Africa called International Human Rights Exchange. Based at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, this program consists of four human rights-oriented courses plus an internship with a South African human rights non-governmental organization.

Also, we have arranged an internship at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague for a graduating senior, with financial support provided through a generous gift from former ICTY prosecutor Justice Richard Goldstone. We look forward to the fall semester and hosting our Visiting Gladstein Professor of Human Rights David Forsythe who will teach a seminar on "International Law and Human Rights," as well as our returning visitor from Budapest University, Professor Wiktor Osiatynski who will co-teach a new graduate course "Contemporary Debates in Human Rights."

Spotlight On Ruti Teitel

Visiting Gladstein Professor in Human Rights

By Krista Ostaszewski

Renowned authority on international law, international human rights and constitutional law Ruti Teitel was the fall 2006 visiting Gladstein Professor in human rights at the University of Connecticut.

The first Ernst C. Stiefel Professor of Comparative Law at the New York Law School, Professor Teitel's influential in the field of comparative law and political studies. Her book, *Transitional Justice*, published in 2000, examines the political shift of many countries from authoritarian to democratic rule.

Teitel has also published articles in law journals such as the Yale Law Journal, Cornell Law Review, and Columbia Human Rights Law Review.

In September, Teitel gave her introductory lecture to an impressive audience in the Student Union Theatre, titled, "For Humanity: The Emerging Shift in the Rule of Law in Global Politics."

Professor Teitel returned to UConn in October for the annual Human Rights Conference, "Humanitarian

Responses to Narratives of Inflicted Suffering."

There she presented her paper titled, "The Rise of Humanitarian Discourse: Constructions of Contemporary Suffering and the Loss of the Political."

Teitel was born in Argentina. She received a bachelor's degree with cum laude status from Georgetown University, and studied law at Cornell University. Professor Teitel is currently a member of the Steering Committee of Human Rights Watch Europe/Central Asia and serves on the Council on Foreign Relations.



Photo Courtesy of nyls.edu
Visiting Gladstein Professor Ruti Teitel.



Photo Courtesy of Julie Friedlander/The Daily Campus

Robin Romano showed slides of the child slaves who work in cocoa fields to raise awareness and promote fair trade.

Romano Raises Awareness Of Child Labor

By Shawn Beals

One million child slaves suffer in the cocoa fields of the Ivory Coast each day, driven by ruthless slave owners bent on making profits. The children, from all over Sub-Saharan Africa, are tricked into working in the cocoa fields with false promises of benefits and money, only to be sold into a well-organized and structured slave trade system.

"These children are held hostage night and day under the most deplorable conditions," said speaker Robin Romano, a filmmaker, photographer and human

rights activist. Romano's passionate speech at the Dodd Center's Konover Auditorium Sept. 27 was given to raise awareness about the problem of African child slavery. The event was also a celebration of his donation of 250 photographs to the newly formed "Romano Child Labor Archives" held at The William Benton Museum of Art.

Romano said child slavery in the Ivory Coast starts at bus stations in places like Mali, where youths looking for work are deceived by slave traders who take them to "warehouses," or temporary holding areas, then negotiate their sale to plantations.

Fifty percent of the world's chocolate is made from Ivory Coast cocoa, most of it for large corporations like Nestle, Hershey's and Mars, said Romano. These and other companies are opposing the decline of child slave labor chocolate because of the huge profits it promises. In 2003, M&Ms alone made over \$97 million in sales for Mars.

How can people help?

"Support fair trade," said Romano.

Fair trade sets a fair minimum price on a commodity, and is agreed upon by the demand in an area, or the necessary amount needed to sustain an income. Fair trade chocolate is not as widely distributed as fair trade coffee, but progress is being made, said Romano.

Romano said child slaves usually don't live past 30, and they generally don't move up in social standing. They are haunted by their past for the rest of their lives.

"Why shouldn't I take my privilege and help others who are less privileged? You can take responsibility, you can make a difference."

—Robin Romano, photographer, filmmaker, human rights activist

While making the film "Stolen Childhoods," Romano interviewed many child slaves about the experience and the lasting effects.

"My childhood was wasted," said one child. "I have nothing."

"Tell them when they are eating chocolate, they are eating my flesh," said another.

One of the biggest problems with the child slavery issue is political neglect, according to Romano. Children suffer from a mismanaged government and the United Nations' promises to reduce forced labor are not realized.

The chocolate companies and the Ivory Coast government do not want Romano making films because "they don't want people looking critically at their cocoa production."

"As long as major companies refuse fair trade, little will change," he said.

Dr. Peter Nicholls, executive vice president and provost of the University of Connecticut joined his colleagues in thanking Romano for his work and contribution to the university.

"Our strength in this area is evident and almost unparalleled in this country," said Nicholls about human rights.

"I came because this is an issue that I care about," said senior Joshua Schreier. "I have a human rights interest and also an interest in Africa."

At times optimistic, but moved by the plight of child slaves in Africa, Romano always fully believes in his



Photo Courtesy of Julie Friedlander/The Daily Campus

Romano is a photographer, human rights activist and filmmaker.

cause, and is driven by his ability to help those who are less fortunate.

"Why shouldn't I take my privilege and help others who are less privileged?" Romano asked, while also urging others to take action.

"You can take responsibility, you can make a difference," he said.

Romano will be going on his third trip to Africa to report the terrors of child slavery, relying on relationships he has maintained in his long-term commitment to human rights.

His film "Stolen Childhoods" played in 77 cities across the country and the exhibit will be displayed next in Brazil.

Please see humanrights.uconn.edu for a transcript of Mr. Romano's presentation.



Joshua Litwin/Human Rights News

Adam Nadel and Carol Jacobsen, members of the Visual Media and Suffering conference panel.

International Conference on: “Humanitarian Narratives Of Inflicted Suffering”

By Eleni Coundouriotis

The Human Rights Institute and the Humanities Institute hosted an international conference on “Humanitarian Narratives of Inflicted Suffering” on October 13-15. The conference was part of the

new interdisciplinary program on Foundations of Humanitarianism funded by the office of the Provost.

Historian Thomas W. Laqueur of the University of California at Berkeley opened the conference with his keynote address,

“Mourning and the Work of Pity in the Making of Humanity.” Professor Laqueur focused on the problem of the historical origins of a humanitarian sensibility by looking at the history of wars and tracing how memorializing dead soldiers has changed over time.

The emergence of a general demand that individual soldiers be retrieved from the field of battle and buried marks, for Laqueur, a shift in the definition of the human that coincides with a humanitarian sensibility.

Speakers from various academic disciplines as well as humanitarians from the field discussed the ways in which narratives depicting human suffering due to political repression or war gain their effectiveness. The conference was focused on issues of representation in works including Jihadi videos, testimonies of child soldiers, the language of human rights reports and literary genres of fiction

and memoir. The conference participants often took a critical look at the ways in which representations of suffering



Joshua Litwin/Human Rights News
Terence Ranger spoke about human rights in Zimbabwe.

are distorted for the purpose of shaping the political landscape. Most memorable in this respect was Rony Brauman's presentation on

humanitarian reporting about the tsunami in Indonesia. Brauman, a former director of Doctors Without Borders, demonstrated how the reporting on the tsunami reflected expectations about an appropriate story, rather than truthful reporting of the crisis. Presenters spoke eloquently of the power of narrative to shape memory. Peter Balakian's talk about his discovery of the history of the Armenian genocide through the silences of his family's history demonstrated powerfully the role of reading in shaping a humanitarian conscience. Questions about the relation between human rights and humanitarianism, and between imperialism and the emergence of humanitarianism dominated the roundtable discussion at the end of the conference.



Richard Wllson, Ruti Teitel, Rony Brauman, Elizabeth Jelin and J ames B. Stewart.

Joshua Litwin/Human Rights News

Is There A Place For Human Dignity In Science?

By Sarah Kopman-Fried

On Oct. 18, the Human Rights Institute and the Dodd Research Center co-hosted a lecture by Dr. Karen Lebacqz, titled "Human Dignity – Trump Card and Troublemaker." During her hour-long lecture, Lebacqz spoke broadly about stem cell ethics and bioethics in general, before taking questions from a large audience made up of UConn students and professors.

Lebacqz was brought to UConn through the Heinz and Virginia Herrmann Distinguished Lecture Series, which focuses mainly on the ethical and human rights implications of advances in the sciences. Lebacqz was a particularly appropriate choice for this lecture series, given her work as a commissioner on the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research while teaching at Berkeley. While the lecture focused a great deal on the scientific advances that have been made regarding stem cell research, many students were eager to ask Lebacqz questions pertaining to the controversial and political nature of this research.

"The lecture was extremely informative," said Alla Nebrat, a 3rd-semester business major. "It's so vital to learn the scientific background of current breakthroughs, like stem cell research in order to be able to understand both their potential uses and limitations properly."



Photo Courtesy of Julie Friedlander/The Daily Campus

Dr. Karen Lebacqz spoke about stem cell ethics and bioethics

Not everyone in attendance agreed with the approach of the lecture.

"While I believe the facts presented were accurate and very informative, I believe Dr. Lebacqz should have stopped short of fully endorsing stem cell research," said Leo Roytman, a 3rd-semester business major. "Students don't really feel as though they're getting a fair and balanced perspective on the issue when the lecturer is so blatantly a proponent of one side of the debate."

"So many people today react to controversial topics like stem cell research using knee-jerk reactions that don't help to further the debate at all," said Lauren Willocks, a 3rd-semester psychology major. "Having someone like Dr. Lebacqz come to campus is so important because it educates students on the facts of these scientific discoveries. Then, well-informed students can go and make up their minds as to whether the implications of this research are positive or negative."

A Discussion On Stem Cell Ethics



Joshua Litwin/Human Rights News

A lecturer in the Science and Human Rights program, Cynthia Cohen, spoke about the ethics of stem cell research.

By Krista Ostaszewski

Under the direction of Anne L. Hiskes, the new Science and Human Rights program hosted a lecture on Nov. 8 as part of the "Science and Human Dignity," series titled, "Of Mice and Humans: Creating Human-Nonhuman Chimeras in Stem Cell Research."

Presented at the Konover Auditorium, Dr. Cynthia Cohen, a distinguished bio-ethicist from Georgetown University, addressed the ethical concerns of stem cell research. With a focus on the creation of chimeras, an organism consisting of two or more tissues of different genetic composition, Cohen asks if chimeras that involve human genes can still uphold the requirement to respect human dignity.

After explaining the ethical concerns surrounding

animal interspecies combination, she moved to the sensitive topic of hosting human stem cells in non-human hosts. She explained that the creation of such chimeras is not to generate curiosity but instead to develop treatments by creating realistic models for human neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's Disease and study stem cell development and function. Such studies must be done in living hosts, she explained, though not in humans because the effects are unknown.

Cohen addressed the ethical issues that surround this type of stem cell work. Critiques and concerns arise when human embryonic stem cells are used in non-human hosts. Even though the human stem cells are not specialized, Cohen explained, they have the potential to become isolated and take over the host, resulting in a non-human host with human-like abilities.

The argument that Cohen based her ethical standpoints from is human dignity. The human dignity argument explains that humans have distinctive and valuable capabilities that include the ability to reason, make choices, express sympathy, interact in social relations and make moral evaluations. Cohen ended her presentation by discussing the voluntary guidelines she was able to create on the basis of the human dignity argument. She presented these guidelines as restrictive suggestions to the National Academy in Science Committee for stem cell research and the use of non-human hosts.

Cohen is currently a member of the Canadian Stem Cell Oversight Committee. She has served as Executive Director of the National Advisory Board on Ethics in Reproduction, along with serving as Associate for Ethical Studies at The Hastings Center and as Chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of Denver. Cohen has written or edited eight books and over 150 articles. Her most recent book is titled, *Renewing the Stuff of Life: Stem Cells, Ethics and Public Policy*, and is being released in April of 2007.

Why Do We Cry? A Hu

By Krista Os

A two-month-long film series titled "Why Do We Cry" sponsored perspectives on a variety of humanitarian narratives

A two-month-long film series titled "Why Do We Cry" sponsored by the Human Rights Institute featured six films that each took a unique perspective on a variety of humanitarian narratives and cinematic representations of global suffering.

"Prisoner of the Mountains"

This Russian fable, released in 1997, follows two Russian soldiers, Sacha and Vinia, as they are kidnapped in Caucasus and taken prisoner by a Chechen man who is assumed to be part of the Muslim rebels. The man hopes to exchange the Russian soldiers for his son, who is being help captive by the Russian army.

The story dives into the relationship of the two soldiers as they are imprisoned. Although both soldiers are from vastly different cultures, the relationship they form shows viewers stripped-down human emotion. "Prisoner of the Mountains" was nominated for an Oscar and Golden Globe for best foreign film, according to imdb.com

"Promises"

The second film in the series showed an alternative look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of seven Jewish and Palestinian children growing up in Jerusalem. An analysis of the conflict is given through the eyes of the younger generation. The opinions and views of these children give the viewer a sense of how deeply rooted the problems are and as a result, the loss of innocence that has occurred.

With children narrating the majority of the documentary, the film is able to capture the emotional and physical separation of the Jewish and Palestinian people of Jerusalem. The children speak of an environment of hate and disapproval that has socialized them to believe in the rift between the two ethnicities.

At the end of the film the director allows the Palestinian and Israeli children of the documentary to meet for the first time. Most of the children have had no contact with other children of the opposing ethnic group. At first the children are quiet and reserved, but they realize they are all alike. The film closes with one of the children saying, "Peace between you and me is impossible unless we get to know each other."

"Sometimes in April"

An HBO-produced and Raoul Peck directed film about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, "Sometimes in April," recreates a terrible historical atrocity through the eyes of two Hutu brothers. As the story progresses, the tension between the Hutus and Tutsis intensifies and the two brothers go through vastly different experiences that heavily impact their futures. The story begins years after the genocide, with one of the brothers narrating the tragic events of April 1994.

The narrator is a member of the Hutu National Military, and is married to a Tutsi. When the Hutus created



This Pulitzer Prize winning photograph caused criticism of Kevin

an uprising against the Tutsis and the President of Rwanda was killed, a climate of negative propaganda, mass hysteria and slaughter was created. Over a period of 100 days, more than 800,000 people were massacred.

As the film continues, the viewers connect with the torment of the narrator as he tries to save his Tutsi family while also trying to avoid persecution as a trader to his Hutu roots.

The film not only takes its audience through a whirlwind of emotions and powerful events, it is also a moving

Human Rights Film Series

taszewski

led by the Human Rights Institute, featured six films with unique and cinematic representations of global suffering.



Photo Courtesy of shutuped.com
Carter, as shown in the film 'The Death of Kevin Carter.'

unable to help, the men must stay calm as they remain stuck between unyielding warfare. Outside the battle, a media sensation is made of the two soldiers' story.

This comedic and dramatic war film gives personality and identity to the masses of soldiers. The film brings a sense of human understanding to war issues as the two opposing soldiers are forced to form a relationship.

"Long Night's Journey into Day"

Released at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival, "Long Night's Journey into Day" is a documentary by filmmakers Frances Reid and Deborah Hoffman, according to imdb.com. They examine the effects of over forty years of violent racial domination in South Africa. The filmmakers follow assorted cases in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate human rights violations during the apartheid era.

The film follows the trial of a South African policeman who admits to killing a South African activist in search of reprieve. It also follows the parents of a slain South African as they confront their daughter's murderer in a tribunal.

The commission brought together victims of apartheid looking for justice and perpetrators searching for amnesty. By examining the post-apartheid commission, the documentary confronts the truth of the country's violent and ruthless past in hopes of creating a more peaceful future.

piece that documents an important and tragic event in African history.

"No Man's Land"

Set during the 1993 Bosnian War between the Bosnians and Serbs, "No Man's Land" is the story of two wounded soldiers from opposing sides stranded in a trench together between enemy lines. Unable to escape, Kiki, the Bosnian, and Nino, the Serb, are forced to push their differences aside if they want to survive.

With a frustrated UN sergeant

"The Death of Kevin Carter"

The last film in the series, "The Death of Kevin Carter," documents the life of South African photo journalist Kevin Carter. The film was nominated for best short documentary at the 2006 Oscars, and won best short film at the Tribeca Film Festival, according to imdb.com. Director Dan Krauss shows the viewer the trials and tribulations of Carter's short life.

As a member of the "Bang Bang Club" during the early years of his photojournalism, Kevin Carter was best known for exposing human rights issues and other forms of political oppression through his ability to enter scenes of destruction and document them with photographs. With much of his focus on the apartheid era of South Africa, Carter was described by many as ruthless, but emotionally attached to his work.

One of his most famous photos shows a starving Sudanese child on her knees with a vulture lurking in the background. The controversial photo won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992, but also raised questions of Carter's integrity for leaving the child to the vulture.

The short film takes the audience through the emotional rollercoaster of the life of Carter, and the events that led up to his suicide. "The story is a cautionary tale whispered among photojournalists with a degree of suffering and violence," said Krauss in a question and answer session after the film.



Sarah Kopman-Fried/Human Rights News

UConn students gathered in Central Park with countless others in an effort to raise awareness about the genocide in Darfur.

UConn Students Rally For Darfur

By Sarah Kopman-Fried

Dozens of UConn students along with tens of thousands of other concerned citizens flocked to New York City's Central Park on Sept. 18 to protest the genocide currently being carried out in Sudan. The rally, which was sponsored by the anti-genocide group "Save Darfur" featured speakers ranging from former Secretary of State Madeline Albright to actress and advocate Mira Sorvino. The rally also featured a performance by the rock band O.A.R., along with speeches given by Darfur natives. The more than 10,000 people in attendance held

signs that proclaimed "Not on Our Watch" and chanted "Stop the Genocide." Meanwhile, pictures were shown of other Darfur Protest rallies that were taking place simultaneously in more than twenty cities around the globe.

According to 3rd-semester international business major Alla Nebrat, "The most tragic part about the genocide in Darfur is how little most of the world and especially most Americans know about what is going on. We could do so much to help by simply pressuring our government to take actions or put sanctions on the Sudanese, if only more people were involved."

As the UConn delegation walked through the streets of New York City with their signs that read "Save Darfur," many puzzled onlookers inquired, "Who's Darfur?"

Enna Khondkaryan, a 5th-semester psychology major, agreed with Nebrat, adding, "there is so much each one of us can do to help by raising awareness or fund raising or writing letters to our government representatives."

This sense of renewed purpose was echoed by 3rd-semester sociology major Allyssa Milan, a member of Idealists United, a UConn student organization that sent several students to the rally.

Idealists United later hosted "Die-In" to illustrate the number of people killed on a daily basis in Darfur. During the "Die-In," students lay

down while holding signs relaying facts about the Darfur genocide. According to Milan, "we need to find a way to personalize the message so

that college students on the other side of the world can relate to what is going on in Darfur."

Spotlight On Organizing For Darfur: Idealists United

By Jennifer Barrows

As the crisis in Darfur worsens and the majority of the UConn community continues to ignore it, a handful of students are taking action to raise awareness about the genocide and other human rights issues around the globe.

"There just weren't enough student-run human rights organizations on campus," said Mike Brand, a 7th-semester history and political science major and a human rights minor.

Brand, creator of the organization Idealists United, explained that the organization was created for students geared toward human rights. Idealists United mainly focused on the genocide in Darfur and women's rights issues this semester. They gave the opportunity for all UConn students to participate in the New York City rally. Idealists United also hosted a "Die-In," an unconventional way to raise awareness about Darfur, according to John Corkery, a 7th-semester bio-physics major and human rights minor.

Idealists United also organized a benefit concert, hosted by Tequila Cove. They raised \$600 and according to the staff at Tequila Cove, the event pulled in the biggest crowd they have ever

had for live performances. All of the money made was donated to a women's shelter in South Africa. Stephanie Samaha, a 7th-semester political science major and human rights and French minor, came to Idealists United with the idea.

According to Brand, Idealists United is open to any ideas or projects based on human rights. For example, he explained, Samaha came to the first meeting with the idea of raising money for the women's shelter. Idealists United leaves the agenda open for new ideas to be brought up throughout the semester.

"We're not trying to push any political agenda," Brand explained. "We all have varying views on how to fix human rights issues. We just wanted something to be done."

The organization wants more UConn students to become aware of human rights issues. Most students are not even aware that UConn has a Human Rights Institute. Corkery and Brand expressed their belief that all students should be required to take some type of introduction to human rights course.

Next semester, Idealists United is planning to host a human rights festival in conjunction with the Democracy for Education conference.



Photos Courtesy of Idealists United

UConn students participate in a "Die-In" on Fairfield Way to promote awareness about Darfur.

Learning From A Vast River Of



Photo Courtesy of William Benton Museum of Art

One of the photos from 'A Vast River of Suffering' by photographer Adam Nadel.

Suffering: Human Rights And Arts

By Shawn Beals

The William Benton Museum of Art's Human Rights Gallery offers a unique yet extensive portrait of suffering around the world.

Salvatore Scalora's exhibit, "Learning From A Vast River of Suffering: A Global Human Rights Epidemic" captivates and moves viewers with images and first-hand accounts of hunger, poverty, terror victims, global disasters and disease. Photographs lined the walls, showing people around the world who have been scarred, physically and mentally. They have not only lost limbs and blood, but husbands, wives, sons, daughters and friends. Their personal accounts share stories of lives that have experienced pain but must also move on with whatever is left.

"We must learn from these stories and their related statistics and facts," wrote Scalora. "If we can connect to the suffering of others, we can no longer view them as distant strangers, but rather as our global brothers and sisters."

Photographers including Philip Jones Griffiths, Pieter Hugo, Gillian Laub, Adam Nadel and James Mollison document terrorist bombing and shooting victims, civilian landmine victims and families torn by kidnapping to increase the awareness of the more fortunate.

Mass graves from the Rwandan genocide heaped with nameless skeletons were eerily pictured in the photographs of Pieter Hugo. As curator of the exhibit, Scalora displays images of children who will never play outside again due to an explosion of a fuel truck by a suicide bomber that killed several of their friends.

"I am just waiting to get out of the hospital so I can play again," said Hader Redha, an 11-year-old wounded in the truck explosion shown in a picture by Adam Nadel. "I told my mother to tell my brother not to play outside anymore."

One set of photographs by Philip Jones Griffiths tells of the long-term cancer risks from herbicides used in the Vietnam War to kill vegetation, but severely wounded people in the process.

Amjad, a Muslim refugee, saw his son shot in the head by guards in a photograph by Gillian Laub.

"Many times I try to imagine that what happened was a dream," said Amjad. "But I face the reality of my wounded son in front of me everyday. But during war, everyone pays a price."

While the violent stories stand out, other victims suffer and die each day because of hunger, poverty and easily curable diseases, living on less than one dollar a day. While 11-year-old soldiers hold automatic rifles, other children die because they do not have enough to eat.

Two films ran at the exhibit; "Disarm, A Documentary About the Landmine Issue," made by Mary Wareham and Brian Liu, and "God Sleeps in Rwanda," made by Kimberlee Acquaro and Stacy Sherman. "God Sleeps in Rwanda" deals with genocide in Rwanda in 1994 that

left the country with a population nearly 70 percent female, and chronicles the long-term effects on the population.

In addition to the photos and videos, computer stations were set up with digital images, including one with 31 graphic pictures of Iraqi prisoners tortured by U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The various images of the exhibit, "Capture the horrific human ravages of the Vietnam War, the Rwandan genocide, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the war in Iraq," said Scalora's exhibit statement.

The UNESCO Chair and the Institute of Comparative Human Rights at the University of Connecticut sponsored the exhibition.

"If we can connect to the suffering of others, we can no longer view them as distant strangers, but rather as our global brothers and sisters."

– Salvatore Scalora, curator, 'Vast River Of Suffering'

Discussion Of Political Legitimacy

By Jennifer Barrows

Dr. Andrew W. Corin visited UConn on Nov. 15 to present a lecture titled "Studying/Investigating the Causes of Conflict: Lessons from the Yugoslav Experience." Corin is a research officer for the International Criminal Tribunal.

Corin was introduced by Richard Wilson, director of the Human Rights Institute. Corin's work conducts research into the political and historical context of the war in the former Yugoslavia. A linguist and cultural historian, Corin was an adjunct professor at the University of California-Los Angeles prior to his work at The Hague.

Corin's lecture consisted of one particular primary insight into the war. He carefully noted that this is not the only cause of the war and perhaps not even the key cause. Corin introduced this insight as the failure to resolve the confrontation between the rights of groups versus the rights of the individual prior to the violent outbreak. This factor has been given little notice until now, according to Corin and applies particularly to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Corin moved on from his constitutional evidence for the conflict between the rights of the group versus the rights of the individual to explain what he called,

"A Tale of Two Secessions."

The story begins with the secession of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1990, the Croats and Slovenes were threatening secession from Yugoslavia; the country was falling apart. Democracy was taking place in the same year the league of formerly powerful communists had dissolved. There was an urgent need to redefine the state.



Photo Courtesy of icc-cpi.int

Dr. Andrew Corin

On July 30, 1990, constitutional amendments were made which threw open the doors to debate secession. The amendment consisted of a definition of the state, naming the supreme organ of authority and announcing the council for Nations Equality.

After the amendments, there was still ambiguity about whether Bosnia-Herzegovina was a state of equal citizens or one comprised of three constituent nations, or both.

"It would have been easy to make this phrase unambiguous to eliminate contradictions," said Corin.

Corin explained the national identity complex of the Serbs and other nations within the former Yugoslavia, detailing the amplifying of these complexities due to the constitution's inability to resolve individual and constituent rights.



Photo Courtesy of lob.utexas.edu

A map of the former Yugoslavia.

Exploitation Of Mexico's Water

By Shawn Beals

A vast number of ancient cultures were built around devotion to the gods of water, a resource that has since become a commodity for political control and oppression of citizens in Mexico.

June Nash has done extensive anthropological work studying this struggle, as well as the effects of liquor and Coca-Cola on local governments and the correlating impact on people. During her lecture Oct. 25 at the Dodd Center's Konover Auditorium, Nash recounted her work and findings that indigenous people are suffering from the use of liquid resources as political leverage.

"She has opened up the doors of academia to women in the social sciences," said Tricia Gabany-Guerrero, associate director of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies.

"A natural resource, water considered a gift from the gods themselves, is now a contested commodity that exacerbates the gap between rich and poor," said Nash.

She said the control of water as a commodity began with Spanish conquistadors who blocked the waterways into Tenochtitlan, modern-day Mexico City, to dry up the city and use it to their advantage to conquer it.

Today, the state governments in Mexico use water to blackmail citizens into conforming.

"Water was piped to those who conform to religion and politics," Nash said. "Officials would cut off the water supply if people weren't behaving in their terms to their political sphere."

In recent decades, companies like Coca-Cola gave political parties free gifts for advertising their product, said Nash. The Coca-Cola Co. opened a bottling plant in Chiapas that only added to the scarcity and commodification of water.

With the use of indigenous labor, the plant produced Coca-Cola and bottled water with the intention of substituting for alcohol, which was abused regularly.

Nash said it was not long before local government leaders became eager to profit on the sale of water. Since it is not pumped into homes, it must be purchased in bottles. In 2004, local governments required the purchase of Coca-Cola products including bottled water.

"The city gets nothing in return for water that is pumped out for sale," said Nash.

Since 2004, steps have been taken by the Mexican government to alleviate the burdens placed on indigenous people with the growing scarcity of water, said Nash.

"Vicente Fox has released more ground water supplies than any other president," Nash said.

The World Water Conference was held in Mexico last year to "disseminate information about the water crisis," she said. In addition, the Central American Free Trade Agreement has made it necessary for companies that receive loans for

international resources to sell their products through private sources that will not raise prices.

"Water is not money, but life, and it ought not to be sold," said Nash.

She said a holistic analysis of



Joshua Litwin/Human Rights News

June Nash discussed Coca-Cola's exploitation of Mexico's water.

the water crisis is necessary to ensure equal distribution and to find solutions for the future.

"I learned more about water and how indigenous people live without it," said 9th-semester history major Miranda Bone.

Bone said the water crisis in Mexico is an issue she would continue to follow.

The lecture was given in honor of Robert G. Mead Jr., a professor at UConn for 40 years who was a "major contributor to Latin American studies in the United States," said Peter Kingstone, director of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies.



Joshua Litwin/Human Rights News
Professor Emma Gilligan is a human rights professor.

By Sarah Kopman-Fried

This semester UConn welcomed an exciting new addition to the faculty of the Human Rights Institute, Professor Emma Gilligan. A native of Australia, Professor Gilligan holds advanced degrees from the University of Melbourne and has also studied at Moscow University, the University of St. Petersburg and Georgetown University. Before coming to UConn, Professor Gilligan taught at the University of Chicago as a post-doctoral fellow. A Soviet history expert, Professor Gilligan has published a book, Defending Human Rights in Russia, reporting the struggle to achieve recognition of human rights in the post-World War II Soviet Union. Professor Gilligan currently holds a joint appointment at UConn, as a faculty member of both the history department and the Human Rights Institute.

One-on-One With

How did you become interested in the study of human rights?

My initial interest was Russian literature, especially Tolstoy and his endeavors to see the death penalty eliminated as a form of punishment. My interests eventually began to extend into Russian language and then naturally into the politics of the Soviet Union. Specifically, I became interested in the post-World War II "Thaw Period" where many of the crimes of the Stalinist regime became apparent. This was also the period of time when the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was issued, so I became extremely interested in what this UN declaration actually meant for the people on the ground and how they were affected by the human rights movement.

What brought you to UConn?

UConn has offered me a position that I could not have gotten anywhere else. This is entirely unique because it allows me to pursue both of my interests. As a history professor I can pursue my interest in Soviet history and at the same time as a member of the Human Rights Institute, I can teach and write about the evolution of human rights discourse. And, of course, the [Human Rights] Institute is embarking on some very interesting plans now and it is just amazing to me how privileged UConn students are. When I was

growing up there was no such thing as a human rights minor but here at UConn, students are being encouraged to take these sorts of classes which is just fabulous.

What are you working on now?

Currently I'm teaching the history of human rights course as well as working on a new book about the war crimes that have taken place in Chechnya since 1994. The book is going to be published by the Princeton University Press as a part of their "Crimes Against Humanity" series. In this book I'm trying to understand the motivation of the Russian armed forces in Chechnya, as well as the consequences of their actions, especially on the civilian population. It's important to begin some sort of a conversation on this because the Russians are calling this an "anti-terrorism campaign" and are labeling the effects of their actions on the civilian population as just sort of collateral damage. However, there are a growing number of people unwilling to accept this as an explanation, who are beginning to question whether the Russians are inflicting more damage in order to punish the collective on purpose.

What advice do you have for students about human rights?

For those students who are already involved with the human rights program at UConn, I would

Emma Gilligan

advise them to constantly be checking in with the [Human Rights] Institute, as there are so many new programs and opportunities that are constantly being added for students to take advantage of. For the students in the program, it is so important for them to take classes like the history of human rights, so that they have a historical consciousness that will allow them to build arguments for human rights once they get into the public sphere. For the rest of the student body [who is not currently involved with the Human Rights Institute], I would still recommend that they at least try to take a human rights class. It is so important to study human rights because human rights, as we understand them today, shape our history by shaping how we behave towards one another. Because human rights are so intimately linked to the types of lives we lead and the types of behaviors we exhibit, I would say that any student who really wants to be a good citizen or who cares about human dignity should be taking a human rights class.

How has studying abroad shaped your human rights perspective?

Students MUST study abroad. Studying abroad is

essential to education as a human being. It exposes you to different cultures, ideas, and rituals of living, and it teaches you to be sensitive to views that are not necessarily your own. Most importantly, studying abroad can teach students that not everyone in the world thinks about things in the same way.

Where would you recommend that students look to study abroad?

As far as human rights go, students really have two options. If students want to look at human rights as an institution, they can go to Geneva or The Hague or another European capital. On the other hand, if students want to see the effect of human rights discourse on the local population and really get involved in the ground work, then they should probably go to Latin America or Asia.

Professor Gilligan is a valuable addition to UConn's Human Rights Institute. In addition to the history of human rights, Professor Gilligan will be teaching a course on genocide after World War II, beginning in Spring 2008. She is also currently working to develop a class on the history of torture in the twentieth century.

HUMAN RIGHTS MINOR REQUIREMENTS

The Human Rights Minor is an interdepartmental, interdisciplinary plan of study requiring fifteen credits of course work at the 200-level. Students take six credits from Core Courses in the minor; six credits from Electives (Group B); and three credits of internship. More than six credits may not be taken in one department.

Group C internships are with a human rights-related agency, organization, or group. Internship sites can be tailored to fit individual students' interests and goals. The internship enables students to enrich and assess what they have learned in the classroom through practical experience. The final grade for credits earned in Group C will be based on completion of a portfolio in which students synthesize their internship experiences with knowledge gained in the course work they have taken to fulfill the requirements for the Human Rights Minor. The portfolio may consist of an analytical paper or papers, a media production (e.g., photography or video) or some combination of these.

Further Information

Please visit <http://www.humanrights.uconn.edu/> or contact Professor Richard Hiskes, Director of the Minor in Human Rights at 860-486-2536 or by email at richard.hiskes@uconn.edu.

