

**THE JOURNAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS MOVES TO UCONN  
BY JENNIFER BARROWS**

The UConn community and Human Rights Institute have obtained the privilege of housing the “Journal of Human Rights” (JHR), originally founded by Thomas Cushman at Wellesley College. The journal is known for its tradition of “interdisciplinary diversity” and its strong attempts to create a wider range of awareness on human rights issues. The journal is published quarterly and accepts pieces from scholars in disciplines affiliated with human rights, as well as papers from underrepresented fields of study in the discussion of human rights.

Professor Richard Hiskes will be the new Editor of JHR and volume six is due to come out early in 2007. Hiskes is “currently receiving all new manuscripts being submitted for publication.” Guidelines for submissions can be found on the web site, <http://www.jhr.uconn.edu/index.htm>.

Professor Richard A. Wilson will serve as Associate Editor along with founding Editor Cushman. Professor Serena Parekh of UConn’s philosophy department is the new Book Review Editor while political science doctoral student Aaron Paterson will serve as the Managing Editor.

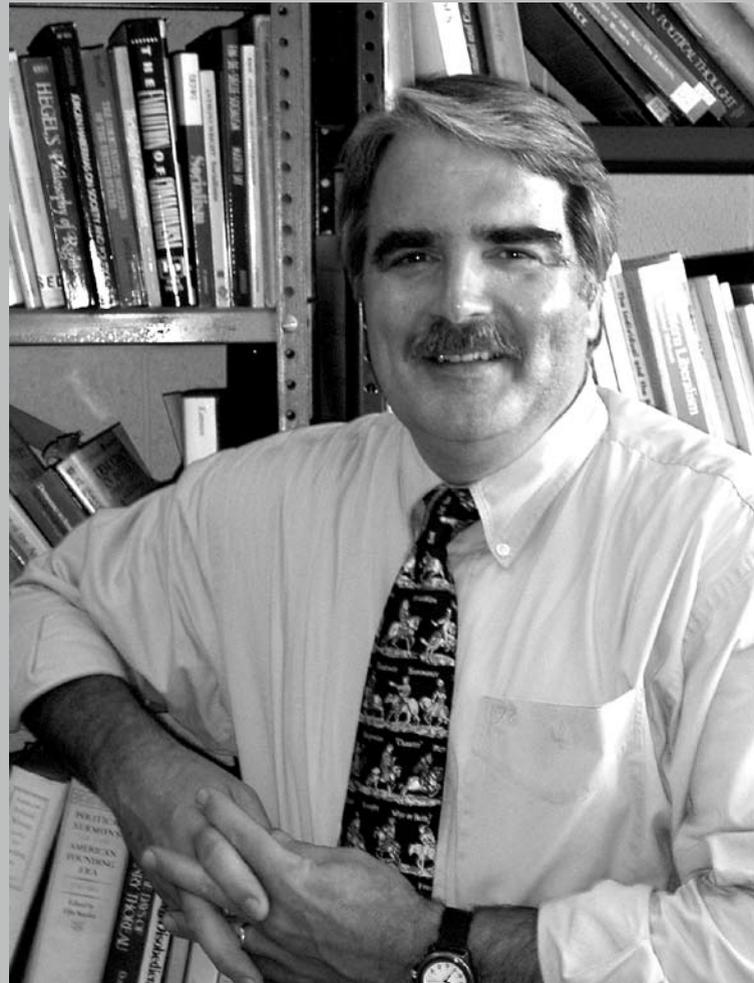
Hiskes calls the arrival of the JHR “a major increment in our human rights effort.” Hiskes claims that JHR will “bring attention to all of our human rights programs here and elevate UConn to one of the premier addresses for human rights research in the country.”

Parekh refers to JHR as a “cutting edge, interdisciplinary journal that covers a wide variety of topics in human

rights.” As the Book Review Editor, Parekh is responsible for coordinating reviews of the newest books in the human rights field. She hopes for reviews that are “more in depth than regular journal book reviews.” The goal is to give readers a more critical perspective on the topics presented by the books.

*(article continued on page 3)*

Professor Richard Hiskes, new Editor of the Journal of Human Rights | Image by Aaron Paterson



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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Human Rights Institute has two core missions: first, to coordinate human rights initiatives at the University of Connecticut and support faculty and students who study human rights; and second to promote a unique approach to international human rights scholarship based upon contextual and multidisciplinary research in the social sciences, humanities and law.

*Funded by the Human Rights Institute and the Undergraduate Student Government.*



Eleni Coundouriotis, Associate Director of the Human Rights Institute | LAV

**LETTER FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

In Spring 06, HRI approved an exciting new interdisciplinary initiative in Science and Human Rights spearheaded by Professor Anne Hiskes from Philosophy. This new program seeks to increase awareness and understanding among the faculty, staff, and students of the University of Connecticut of developments in the sciences and their implications for human rights from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The inaugural event will be a lecture series on “Science and Human Dignity” which will focus on the ethics of stem cell research and the implications for human rights.

Over the summer, we’ve been busy planning our fall conference on “Humanitarian Responses to Narratives of Inflicted Suffering.” Sponsored in conjunction with the program on Foundations of Humanitarianism, this is our largest conference to date. It is also our first conference that draws mainly from the humanities. Speakers will address humanitarian responses to private and public narratives of politicized suffering that has been inflicted by states, private political groups and also by more structural causes such as apartheid, colonialism, and social conflict. The main themes of this conference are: first, to understand the character, form and voice of the narratives themselves; and second, to explain how and why some narratives of suffering become part of political movements of solidarity, whereas others do not. The conference will be preceded by a student-organized film series “Why Do We Cry? Cinematic Representations of Global Suffering.”

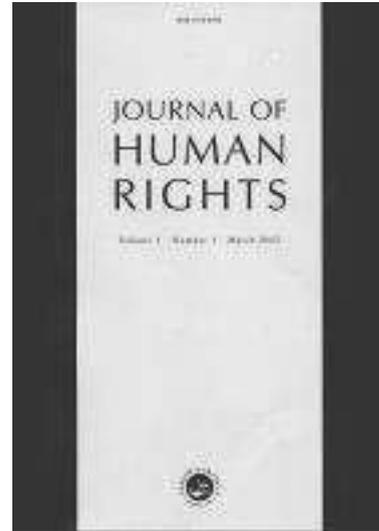
*(Continued from front page)*

Paterson, as Managing Editor, holds an administrative role. He will spend the majority of his time corresponding with potential contributors to the journal, organizing the review process and creating and maintaining an efficient record system. Paterson also designed and maintains the web site. He plays a small role in the acceptance process but observed that *“the responsibility is usually reserved for Hiskes.”*

Paterson described the importance of the journal to the university and the effort put in to obtain it. *“I see it as the culmination of a lot of hard work on the part of Professor Hiskes and Richard Wilson of the Human Rights Institute, who have worked tirelessly to realize the possibility of bringing an excellent international academic journal to the university.”*

Paterson also noted the financial support and encouragement of the Provost, Dean and President of UConn as crucial to the effort of acquiring the JHR. These different figureheads have *“established the university’s commitment to being a leader in the advocacy and study of human rights.”* Paterson notes that the journal will not only be a great academic resource for students, but also an attraction of international attention to the university.

*“This will only strengthen our reputation as a leader in the academia,”* Paterson said.



## TRADITIONALLY OVERLOOKED INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE LATIN AMERICANS DISCUSSED THROUGH “DAY OF REMEMBRANCE” EVENTS

On February 19, 1942 a human rights violation was set into motion that would affect thousands of innocent Japanese Americans and the lesser-known population of Japanese Latin Americans. On that day, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed into action Executive Order 9066, which sought to locate, deport and detain those of Japanese heritage living in North, Central and South America. **Spurred by the attack on Pearl Harbor and wartime paranoia and racial prejudice, the United States in tandem with Central and South American governments captured and then re-located these people to internment camps throughout the United States.**



Jerome Relocation Camp | Image is courtesy of wikipedia.org

This past spring, the Human Rights Institute in conjunction with the Asian American Studies Institute, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Asian American Cultural Center and the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center sponsored a Day of Remembrance which featured, “Claiming Our Human Rights: The Internment of Japanese Latin Americans in World War II,” a lecture presented by Grace Shimizu.

Shimizu is a founding member and coordinator of the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project. She seeks to educate people on the experiences of this civil rights violation to ensure that it will not happen again, or

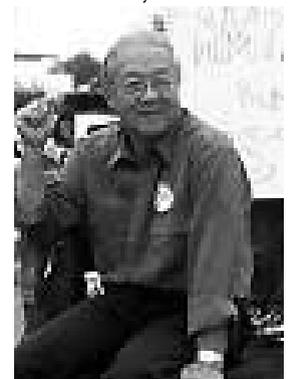
be forgotten. She is also a founding member of the “Campaign for Justice: Redress Now for Japanese Latin Americans!” (CFJ), which supports and assists former internees and their families to attain redress. CFJ is also heavily involved in education efforts to teach people about the incidents of Japanese Latin American victims during their deportation and detention.

During the lecture, Shimizu presented pieces of several documentaries concerning internment. *“Caught In Between: What To Call Home in Times of War”* compares the capture and detainment of Japanese Latin Americans to the recent assault on Muslims, Arabs and other people of Middle Eastern decent who were living in the United States after the September 11 attacks.

**These populations were used as scapegoats after the attacks on the United States. The people who were arrested were not necessarily involved. Thousands of people were taken “without charges, incarcerated for an indefinite amount of time,” explained Shimizu, as clips were shown of the Japanese Latin American incarceration facilities that spread across the country. In the case of the Pearl Harbor attacks, some people were interned for over seven years.**

*“Stolen Lives”* is a documentary that reflects on the hardships Italians and Jews had to suffer during World War II because of unjust discrimination. These more well-known incidents were examined in conjunction to the case of Japanese Latin Americans by Shimizu.

Art Shibayama | Image is courtesy of nccr-la.org



*“Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story”* depicts the life and struggles of Art Shibayama, a Japanese Latin American taken from his home in Peru during WWII. After the film Shimizu commented, *“The U.S. Government was using racial and ethnic profiling during the ensuing war to go ‘hostage shopping in Latin America,’”* as a means of prisoner exchange. The film depicted the persistence of remembrance within this community. Sixty years after his initial internment, Shibayama is shown fighting for just resolution. He says, *“I should not be denied by the US Government because I was not an American Citizen.”* Shibayama highlights that he was taken against his will and held alongside Japanese Americans.

In her lecture, Shimizu emphasized, *“lessons from the past are ... relevant today.”* Acknowledgement and apology to the minority populations that were forcibly uprooted from their families, homes and lives has not been given to thousands of men, women and children that were detained. Through the CFJ, Shimizu urges communities and forgotten victims to speak out in order to demand attention. Organization, education and litigation have been the means by which Japanese Latin Americans and others continue to fight to have their voice heard. Their mission to gain redress and speak out against these “ignored” war crimes persists, as new crimes against new “innocent enemies” are being perpetrated. For more information visit <http://www.campaignforjusticejla.org/index.html>.



Grace Shimizu lecturing at the Dodd Center | Image by Fe Delos Santos

## ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS EXPLORED IN NIKE DOCUMENTARY AND LECTURE

To walk a mile in another man's shoes is a difficult feat to accomplish, especially when those shoes are made by Nike. Leslie Kretzu and Jim Keady have walked in the shoes of Nike sweatshop workers in Indonesia and have used that experience to further "Behind the Swoosh," an Educating for Justice Campaign. On Feb. 22, Kretzu and Keady visited UConn to share their knowledge about the campaign against Nike. The lecture began with a brief introduction from SUBOG, sponsor of the event, and then immediately launched into the documentary film.

Keady's story began early during his post-college pro-soccer playing days. When Keady was offered a chance to coach at St. John's University, the largest Catholic school in the country and host to one of the top college soccer teams, he thought he had been given the chance of a lifetime. Also a student of theology at St. John's, Keady encountered the nature of Nike production policies and began to actively campaign against the company. St. John's, like UConn, had a contract with Nike which required all sports teams to wear uniforms with the Nike logo. After publicly campaigning against Nike and refusing to wear his coaching uniform, Keady was fired in June 1998.

At this turning point, Keady joined with Kretzu to get a first-hand account of what life as a Nike factory employee truly entails. Living on Nike wages, \$1.25 per day, Kretzu and Keady lived in Tangerang, Indonesia in the exact conditions factory workers live in. Living in a 9x9 "cement box" as Kretzu called it; the two lived with football sized rats, fist-sized cockroaches and insufficient food. In the film Keady recalls how waste and sewage would overflow and come back into the house, how they had to share one bathroom, well and kitchen with 5-10 other families and the physical hardships endured trying to live on \$1.25 per day.

Keady proclaimed at one point in the lecture, that there is no way to "maintain human dignity" on this amount of money. Losing 25 pounds during his month stay in Indonesia, Keady recalls the constant exhaustion felt living on two meals of the lowest-grade rice and vegetables each day. At one point, Kretzu was overcome with a 104 degree fever. However, if she wanted to buy aspirin and a carton of juice with essential vitamins, she would have to forfeit eating for two days.



Jim Keady educating UConn students at the Student Union Theatre | LAV

The United Nations and the World Bank have marked \$2.00 per day as the global poverty level. Keady and Kretzu are pushing to obtain a living wage for factory employees; meaning a wage that provides a family with basic needs (food, water, healthcare, childcare, transportation, savings, etc.) and allows a person to live with basic human dignity.

Indonesian government officials even claim that their country's minimum wage is not enough for a single adult to meet basic needs; the current wage in fact only allows one adult to meet 55% of their basic needs. The country set the wage standard low in order to attract foreign investments, like Nike.

The pair easily recalled the difficulty of getting the workers to talk to them for the film; however, when

the Nike employees saw Keady and Kretzu's commitment to their goal, they began to build bonds of trust. The local people told Keady and Kretzu how they had to work overtime just to get by, even though they normally work 15 hours each day, 6-7 days per week.

**During the film Keady comments on the ever-present problem of poverty: if parents are too poor to send their children to school, how are they to rise above this standard of living, how can the cycle of poverty be broken?**

Keady and Kretzu's attempts to enter Nike factories are shown on film. Nike managers refused them access and also warned workers not to talk to the pair. Soon, Keady and Kretzu were being tailed by factory security, which in reality is the local mafia working in conjunction with factory bosses. *"The people,"* Keady comments, *"...want to fight for their freedoms, but they also want to be with their children."* He confirms that a *"culture of fear just permeates the air."* People like Dita Sari, a labor rights activist, are illegally arrested and tortured, sometimes even killed.

Nike makes every attempt to stop independent unions from forming. When these unions are broken up, the workers can't struggle for their economic rights; wage levels are not likely to rise unless workers are allowed to form independent unions and collectively bargain with the factory management. People like Sari are stopped by the 'local mafia' hired by Nike, from forming independent labor unions. Nike factory management instructs the 'mafia' to use physical force and to kill if necessary.

**The film explained that the employees I[do] want to work, they are proud of what they do and what they earn; they simply want to earn enough to live on.**

In the documentary Keady points out that Tiger Woods receives \$100 million to wear Nike's clothes; an amount that is worth more than the wages of 700,000

people. When shown the amount of money Woods earns in terms of Indonesian currency, factory workers realized that he makes enough money in a second to buy them a house.

Keady closes the film by saying that in Indonesia, Nike wants to maximize profits at all costs, even above challenges to humanity. He stresses that there should be respect for democracy and human rights in this country and in the business policies of U.S. corporations.

After the film, Keady and Kretzu explained why, of all the American-based businesses with business practices that violate human rights, they chose to focus on Nike. Nike's gross profits amount to more than \$13,000,000,000 and their net profits are \$1,200,000,000. Nike has roughly 900 factories in 55 different countries.

Since the initial breakout of concern over Nike factory conditions, the company has spent millions to tell the public that the problem is fixed. In September at the 2000 Olympics, Nike commended the public for becoming aware of the importance of protecting human and workers rights in factories, but a spokesperson discouraged the people's attempt to target Nike. *"Right issue ... wrong company,"* they said.

Keady and Kretzu also explained that the statistics in Nike's 2004 Responsibility Report are incorrect. The report indicates the number of factories that exceed Nike's code of conduct. Keady and Kretzu informed the UConn audience that factory managers know when inspections are happening. To prepare, they clean the factory and threaten the workers to reply to questions with limited, pleasant answers.

**Educating for Justice chose to focus on Nike, Kretzu explains, because Nike controls the sports industry, comprising 43% of it. Nike sets the bar and if enough people focus on the industry leader, Kretzu says, the**

industry will be forced to raise the bar.

During the presentation, Kretzu and Keady explained, down to the cent, exactly how far Nike is willing to go to maximize profits. The latest pair of Air Jordans costs approximately \$200. For Nike to make a pair of Air Jordans, it costs \$16.25, and only \$2.43 goes towards labor. *“Labor is not a commodity,”* Keady said at one point, *“labor is people.”*

One way to ensure that Nike sticks to humane labor practices is to make their factories visible and accessible to independent NGO’s. Nike spokespersons proclaim that organizations such as Global Alliance have access to Nike factories; however, since Nike donates significant funds to these companies, they can’t be considered independent.

During the lecture, Keady and Kretzu pulled two volunteers out of the audience; one was a female lacrosse player at UConn and the other a male track member. Kretzu used the female volunteer to play the role of a female Nike employee (most factory employees are female).

This role-play demonstrated the ordeal women must go through if they want a day off for menstrual problems. The skit concluded with Kretzu explaining to the audience that most women do not want to go through the ordeal of obtaining a day off, and because of limited bathroom breaks (one per 15 hour shift), the women often wear long dark shirts to hide bleeding stains. **In order to obtain a day off, a woman must prove she is bleeding by exposing herself to a male medical professional.** Not only is this personally humiliating, Kretzu said, but the Muslim women she spoke to in Indonesia refuse to go through with the ordeal because such exposure violates deep, personal religious beliefs.

Keady and Kretzu closed their presentation with an explanation of ways students can get involved and help in the campaign against Nike. **Ways to get involved include going to the educating for justice website ([www.educatingforjustice.org](http://www.educatingforjustice.org)) and learning more about the issue, emailing three friends to tell them about Nike’s practices, showing “Behind the Swoosh” to friends, bringing up the issue in classes and joining UConn’s branch of United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS).** After their presentation, Kretzu and Keady sold anti-sweatshop shirts, the “Behind the Swoosh” video and took questions from students and staff who attended.

More information about other companies that produce their product in countries that keep wages at obscenely low levels and where independent unions aren’t respected can be found on the Educating for Justice web-site. **The site also explains how raising wages for workers will not force the cost of clothing and shoes to go up as well. The site also refutes the age old “well, aren’t these jobs better than no jobs” argument.**

For more information on Nike, other sweatshop issues, or how to get involved visit [www.educatingforjustice.org](http://www.educatingforjustice.org).



Volunteer UConn student on the stage with Leslie Kretzu | LAV

## ADMINISTRATION AGREES TO IMPLEMENT USAS POLICY, SURPRISING STUDENT COMMENTARY ON POLICY DEBATE

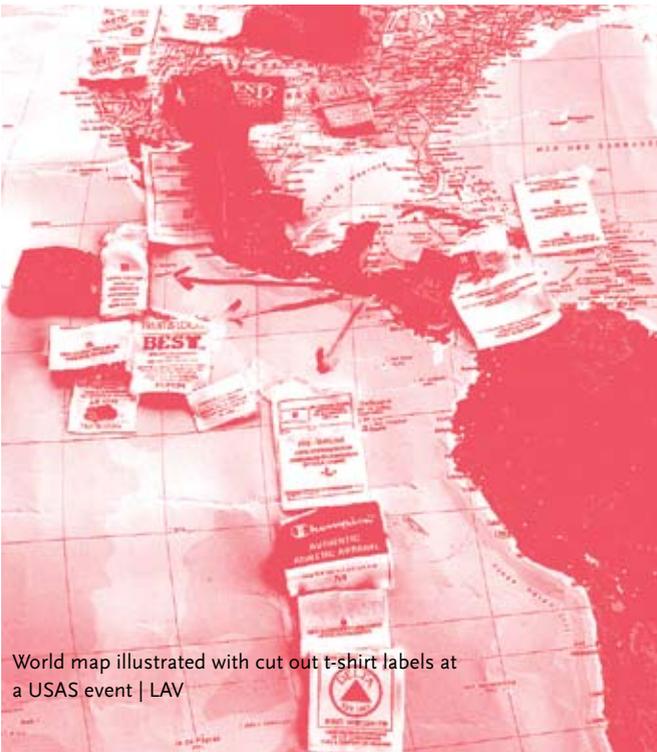
The demands of UConn Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), presented to President Austin in Oct. 2005, have been met. UConn has begun to work with about a dozen universities to implement USAS's proposal, called the Designated Suppliers Program (DSP), which demands that companies licensed to produce clothing bearing university logos source from factories in which workers are represented by legitimate unions or other worker associations, and which verifiably provide a living wage and decent working conditions.

As long as students continue to pressure those at UConn charged with overseeing the university's day-to-day actions on sweatshop-related issues to continue to pursue full implementation of the program, no apparel carrying our prestigious logo will be produced in a sweatshop over the course of years.

The students who have spent a year closely examining this issue and working hard to effectively incorporate labor rights into university licensing practices have been branded by the Daily Campus (DC) editorial staff as "insincere" in their efforts, which are apparently "shortsighted." A DC op-ed called USAS "problematic," and said that the group is "*committed to trying to end sweatshop labor through complaining and blaming corporations for their problems.*"

Efforts by students to end the university's complicity in egregious violations of the rights of workers producing UConn logo apparel in factories around the world are consistently derided as "misguided" or "idealistic," even "anti-American."

However, the USAS students who have been belittled and berated by their peers for having dreamy or ill-conceived notions about the way the world works have actually invoked positive change into their community. They have not only expressed concern for human rights but have actually committed time and energy to defending them.



World map illustrated with cut out t-shirt labels at a USAS event | LAV



It could be by Union Labor | LAV

UConn Students Against Sweatshops and the national movement of which they are a part, should be commended for bringing universities to a more civilized place, pressuring UConn and many of its peers to adopt and enact the Designated Suppliers Program. USAS has taken what President Austin has called "*an important step as a national leader on sweatshop labor issues.*"

## A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

### FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

#### INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SERENA PAREKH

Serena Parekh is the newly appointed Assistant Professor of philosophy jointly appointed with the Human Rights Institute. Parekh recently received her Ph.D. from Boston College for her dissertation entitled, *“The Phenomenological Analysis of Human Rights in the Work of Hannah Arendt.”* Her writing can be found in several distinguished publications, one of which being the *“Journal of Human Rights.”* She has also received an award for her excellence in teaching from Boston College. Parekh continues to excel in her study of social and political philosophy with her research focusing on “themes of conscience” and women’s rights.

***As a new addition to the human rights faculty, what aspects of the Human Rights education would you look to enhance?***

*I think that the Human Rights Minor is wonderful. It has such a variety of classes, and I am just happy to be a part of it. I would certainly look to create more of an outreach to allow students to become aware of this excellent opportunity.*

***What classes are you teaching at UConn?***

*“I am teaching “Topics of Philosophy and Human Rights” as well as “Introduction to Human Rights” this semester and last spring I co-taught “Social and Political Philosophy.”*

***Are you involved in any other organizations within the human rights community on campus?***

*In addition to the Human Rights Institute, I also collaborate with the Women’s Studies program.*

***How have your experiences enlightened your study of human rights?***

*I was always very involved in politics in college, particularly in human development. I traveled to Guiana and participated in constructing a library in a remote part of*



Professor Serena Parekh | Image is courtesy of UConn Philosophy Department

*the country. Yet in the midst of that practical activity, I realized that there was still so much theoretical work to be accomplished. It was when I wrote my dissertation that I was finally able to link my interest in both philosophy and human rights together.*

***What aspect of human rights remains your personal priority?***

*I’m mainly concerned with theoretical questions of human rights. Recently, I have become increasingly interested in the societal usage of torture. I feel it is truly infiltrating our culture, both politically and socially. I find it interesting to approach students with this very different topic that is so alive in our world.*

***Why is the awareness of human rights important among students?***

*Because we live in a democracy, the government does what it perceives the public wants. By maintaining an awareness of human rights, I feel we can encourage the government to pursue policies that support human rights.*

***What is your perspective on the evolution of human rights***

*and act in a society. Yet many also take human rights for granted. I think that there remains a disconnect in society. For example, are students going to apply their beliefs to action? Will they be willing to work for companies that abuse human rights policies, or will they maintain the principles of human rights throughout their career? These questions are why I feel it is essential to teach students the importance of human rights today.*

**THE MARSHA LILIEN GLADSTEIN VISITING PROFESSOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS: DR. ELIZABETH JELIN**

The Gladstein Visiting Professor is a distinguished scholar with an international standing in the study of human rights who spends one semester each year at UConn. During that time, they deliver a major public lecture, teach a seminar in his or her specialty, and consult with faculty about the direction of UConn's human rights program and about developing new courses in human rights.

Dr. Elizabeth Jelin, Buenos Aires, Argentina, is a Senior Researcher at Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas of Argentina (CONICET) and the Director of the Graduate Program in the Social Sciences at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento and IDES, Buenos Aires. She was the Academic Director of the Program on "Collective Memories of Repression: Comparative Perspectives on Democratisation Processes in Latin America's Southern Cone" sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, New York, 1998-2002. Professor Jelin is a member of the Board of Directors of UNRISD. She is the author of "State Repression and the Labors of Memory," (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003), and editor of the series of books titled "Memories of Repression," (published in Spanish) covering comparative research on memories in six countries of South America. Her current research interests and publications are on human rights, citizenship, social movements, gender, family and memories of repression.



Dr. Elizabeth Jelin speaks at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center | Image by Malerie Schwanz

**INTERVIEW WITH DR. JELIN:**

***How does the field of human rights relate to your diverse array of interests and research, for example your study of repression?***

*At the more general level, throughout my career I have been concerned with studying societal processes linked to power and inequality and the movements that contest inequalities and exclusions, in their search for democratic participation, inclusion and societal recognition. Peoples were and are struggling for their rights, asking for a more equal distribution of resources, of opportunities, of power. What is interesting and analytically challenging is that at times they do so reinforcing their specific cultural and group identities based on ethnicity, gender, race, age or religion, thus expressing*

*what has been characterized as a paradox. How are demands for equality and for the recognition of difference to be combined?*

*At a more concrete level, in the region where I work, namely the countries of the Southern Cone of South America, violence, discrimination and repression towards indigenous groups, women and other minorities have deep historical and structural roots. There is also a history of revolt, protest and contestation of domination and power. For a long time, I have been interested in the study of social movements and grassroots participation in labor unions, in feminism and women's struggles for their rights, in ethnic and migrant movements.*

*Bringing the issue closer to my current work, during the 1970's, military dictatorships practiced state terrorism and repression at a scale that was unknown before. Human rights movements emerged and grew under these circumstances, being influential in the way transitions to constitutional governments took place in the 1980's and in the way the new governments dealt with the dictatorial past. I am concerned with the forms in which this repressive past is dealt with after transition, which involves issues of truth and justice, of memory and commemorations, of bearing witness and of the search for institutional and symbolic ways to come to terms with that past.*

***What aspect of the Human Rights Institute do you find most unique?***

*What I find interesting about the Human Rights Institute is that it has a very broad understanding of human rights. It is not concerned with a single country (be it the United States or any other) but rather the issues seen in different parts of the world that are raised by a human rights perspective. I have found the university's environment to be very intellectual and conducive to discussing issues related to human rights and humanitarianism. I've enjoyed that these discussions have combined philosophical, historical, cultural, political and sociological perspectives. I have very much appreciated the interdisciplinary nature of the Institute.*

***What do you feel has been your greatest contribution to the***

***University this past spring?***

*Perhaps the most important thing I have brought to the University of Connecticut is a South American perspective on the way societies in the region deal with the legacies of dictatorship and human rights violations.*

***In what way do you think the university could strengthen its Human Rights program?***

*I would suggest an increase in activities shared by students and faculty, beyond classes, in the human rights field.*

***What do you envision a university curriculum that highlights human rights issues to look like?***

*There are two parts of a human rights curriculum I believe every university should have.*

*First, a section of required human rights courses for all majors, focusing on the ethics of human rights. This is important for all fields and professions because it is part of the citizenship agenda. Engineers, lawyers, anthropologists, medical doctors, teachers or clerks all have to have a sense of what is involved in a human rights perspective.*

*Second, there should be a more specialized program on human rights issues for students to take up as a human rights major or minor, as a step in preparing them to work in various fields where the defense of human rights is at stake.*

***What courses did you teach this past spring?***

*I taught a Graduate seminar titled, "Memories of Repression and Political Violence: Struggles for Meaning, Truth and Justice." I also participated in some undergraduate classes*



An array of books by Professor Jelin at the office of HRI| LAV

#### HISTORY, MEMORY, CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS DISCUSSED IN GLADSTEIN LECTURE

Dr. Elizabeth Jelin, UConn's seventh Gladstein Visiting Professor gave a lecture on citizenship and human rights that was open to the entire university community on March 28. "Memories of State Violence: the Past in the Present," highlighted Jelin's current research.

Jelin's research on history and memory center on human rights issues. *"I am rather critical of too much memory. I am not glorifying the hundreds of memorial museums. I think that there are other things to be done and urgencies in life that need to be dealt with,"* said Jelin.

She went on to say, *"coping with a past involves multiple layers; healing, symbolic representations and institutional practices."* Jelin also noted that harsh repression results in added layers of coping and used Germany's history as an example. In order to 'normalize' the country's history, leaders in the 1970s and 80s rejected constant remembrance of their Nazi past. This neoconservative approach of converging temporalities involved policies that showed that Germany was a reliable and

moral nation. For example, November 9th was chosen specifically for the dismantling of the Berlin Wall so as to replace its former Kristallnacht connotation with a more moral history. In this way, the symbolic representation changed and, *"a new communist past replaced Germany's Nazi past,"* explained Jelin.

Closure was also discussed at length during the lecture. *"The passage of time does not imply closure. The passage of time is not lenient. The saying, 'as time passes, one forgets,' is not true,"* said Jelin. She emphasized that searching the past is a never-ending operation and that attempts of closure are always bound to fail. Her research involves the examination of these state attempts at closure and the motivations behind them. Jelin has concentrated on both the political elements involved in each attempt as well as their historical documentation.

More specifically, Jelin has focused her research on the development of the demands made by the human rights movement that were placed on political actors. These demands were never before central to the political actors before the human rights movement. Human rights actors played up suffering and framed human rights violations as state terrorism.

Persistent demands made by actors in the human rights movement have opened up new topics of discussion that are being talked about in new ways. Some topics include; sexual rights, unemployment and challenges to the notion of 'normalcy' in government. All of these issues are being put into a human rights context which changes discussions about them drastically.

Jelin concluded the lecture by saying, *"If the past is going to teach us something about the future we need to have history do something other than literalize."* The lessons come from examining many histories and coming up with generalizations said Jelin.

**A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:**  
**INTERVIEW WITH KATIE GREGORY**

Katie Gregory is a 7<sup>th</sup> semester Political Science Major from Mystic, Connecticut. She is a member of the Progressive Student Alliance (PSA), UConn Free Press (UFP), UConn's United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and Bring Coke to Justice Campaign.

*What is your role in each of the student groups that you are involved in?*

I primarily write for UConn Free Press but I also attend their weekly meetings where issues surrounding layout, distribution and advertisements are discussed, so I am peripherally involved in UFP production as well.

The Progressive Student Alliance is more of an umbrella organization that brings various student groups together. The PSA is mainly involved in event planning. Recently, Bring Coke to Justice, USAS and UFP have been heavily involved in PSA. Last spring these groups worked hard to help sponsor a PSA Democracy and Education Conference.

However, the Democracy and Education Conference was actually organized by students taking part in an interdisciplinary internship for class credit. The internship was titled, "Grassroots Organizing" and consisted of approximately six students.

UConn's United Students Against Sweatshops primarily discusses sweatshop issues and University policy so I attend and participate in weekly meetings as well as execute whatever plans are on the current agenda.

Bring Coke to Justice is similar in set-up to USAS.

*Can you elaborate on the newly formed Bring Coke to Justice group? What are the group's goals etc.?*

Bring coke to justice formed in Spring 06 and this group is really more part of a national campaign. The UConn group consists of approximately 40 students that are working on the campaign. This campaign has



Katie Gregory | by Alyssa Allaben

formed because the Coca-Cola Company has a really awful track record with human rights. In India they've drilled into the water system and have been depleting the groundwater so farmers' land is drying up. They have also been reselling the byproduct of the production disguised as fertilizer to farmers. This byproduct poisons the fields instead of fertilizing them and in India, even went so far as to seep into the groundwater which depleted the local community's water supply.

In Colombia Coca-Cola workers tried to unionize and the company funded paramilitary operations in order to avoid this.

Even within the United States Coke has a terrible track record. There have been accounts of Coke tak-

ing expired merchandise from white neighborhoods and driving it into black neighborhoods to sell it there. In Atlanta there was the largest racial discrimination settlement awarded against the Coca-Cola Company.

There are other Bring Coke to Justice Campaigns that have ended contracts with Coke and basically what the UConn group is asking for is that our money not automatically go to this company. As students we don't have a choice right now. If you go to UConn, everything that you drink with the exception of milk, tea and coffee is produced by Coca-Cola. The group's stance is that we either want this company to completely clean up its act or we don't want to do business with it. There are companies in Willimantic that UConn could purchase from who have humane practices. This would also allow UConn to help support the local community. Coca-Cola products are actually expensive, so there are many alternatives to Coke products.

Above all, the group would like the choice to be left up to the students rather than have the university force them to support a company that has a history of gross human rights violations.

### ***How is the university reacting to this group?***

Coca-cola is really entrenched at Uconn. If you turn on a basketball game you'll see Coca-Cola banners. Coca-cola likes the university market because as a Coke representative said, *"If you can get a college student hooked, you'll have a customer for life."* So even though Coke doesn't represent a huge market segment at UConn it's a source of branding. Coke has a representative on campus so as soon as the Bring Coke to Justice group was formed; the administration went into meetings with this representative. And immediately there were these full page ads that coke started putting out in the Daily Campus.

The university has also assigned a liaison to work with this group; her title is Assistant Dean, Julie Bell-Elkins. She's the same person who's been assigned to work with USAS and now this Coke issue has been

referred to the standing sweatshop committee.

This committee is designed not to come to an answer by any certain date, which, if you're going to have a working committee is not what you usually do. In order for a committee to be effective you assign them timeline and they have a clear cut objective to support this, approve this or not etc.

The committee that is in place now is the second committee established by the President to look into sweatshop labor and now the Coke issue. The first committee concluded its research and was dispersed. However, once students started bringing up the issue again, after the original students who brought up the issue had graduated, the President got another committee going. The committee is saying a lot but essentially the way that they are set up is ineffective and it's been the same repeated response over and over again from the administration.

When USAS learned that this committee was being formed we said, okay, we want students to have a voice on this committee so they allowed 2 students to join the committee of 11. But the committee meetings are closed which means that you can't attend them if you are a student, faculty or community member and have input at the meetings.

### ***So then how does this work for a student voice?***

When Bring Coke to Justice wanted the student government to pass a resolution in support of the Bring Coke to Justice goal, the resolution would not have actually canceled the coke contract but it would have put a stamp of approval on the campaign. So, what some USG senators did after the first resolution was not passed was to draft another resolution that was to be referred to the sweatshop committee. The committee will then in turn refer those findings back to the student government and then USG will take those findings and decide to pass the resolution or not. So whether that's effective, I have my own opinion on that subject, but there's a lot of bureaucracy that goes on at this university.

### *How integrated is USAS with the University Taskforce on Sweatshops?*

Structurally they are two completely different entities and depending on whom you ask, either the student group or the administration's group you will get two different stories.

The administration (i.e. Julie Bell-Elkins) might say that the two are in close contact and have a very strong relationship with one another.

The students of USAS would say that it is possible to contact committee members and there's a relationship in that we can email them and Julie Bell-Elkins but as far as us presenting factual information and then having them reviewing it and say okay yes, or okay no, and give us some feedback, that we don't get.

This is hard because UConn USAS has taken advantage of the wealth of information that the national campaign affords us. We have brought in representative from the national USAS to speak and present information to the committee and Bell-Elkins.

There's a one-way communication relationship between USAS and the university taskforce, not a working relationship. They're doing their work at closed meetings the majority of the time. There is one meeting coming up that is open for public observation but if you are looking to be a student with a voice and to communicate your opinions to the people working on university policies, there is no real option of doing that.

### *Do you feel that your efforts are fruitless in both USAS and the Bring Coke to Justice group?*

I think that both are doable campaigns in that students on campus whether it's visible or not, do care about human rights issues. I think that if you ask the entire student body about their concern over human rights, the amount that would not care are in the minority, even though the voices of student government are heard the loudest and taken most seriously when

they are not always representative of the entire community. Students actually do care about these issues, so I think that there is a potential to really tap into that. But at the same time when the system is structured in such a way that you don't have a timeline to achieve objectives it's hard to accomplish goals and reflect on the work that's been done. These two groups really want to put pressure on the university by educating the community in hopes of changing the system.

We want to let the administration know that students care about these issues because students do. So that is the task. We want to reach out to people and let them know about these issues, especially with the development of the Human Rights Institute, programs at the Dodd Center etc. There are human rights related programs going on constantly but sometimes they're not very visible and people don't hear about them. Our goal in these groups is to make our university's actions align with our university's rhetoric.

### *Is there any one particular human rights issue you see yourself working on in the future?*

I'm really open to so many issues right now and I get very attached to causes but I feel I want to always be open to new causes and have very broad goals. Most recently, the Democracy and Education Conference was my die-hard cause. When I was working on it, I was thinking about it almost every waking minute. I know that I want to continue to work on issues related to human rights whether it's on issues surrounding equality or something more specific.

### *Who inspires you on campus and has anyone acted as a mentor to you?*

The students that I'm working with now in all of the various groups I am a part of inspire me. When I sit in on a meeting and I see that so many people are so passionate and are working so hard, that motivates me. Most of my professors have been mentors to me. They are such a wealth of knowledge. I really respect them and they too inspire me.

## BENTON'S HUMAN RIGHTS GALLERY CONTINUES TO SIMULTANEOUSLY SHOCK AND INSPIRE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

The William Benton Museum's third display in its newly opened Human Rights Gallery aims to open eyes about the global plague of child labor. *"Stolen Childhoods,"* a photography exhibition by director/photographer Robin Romano, attracted and shocked an unusually large crowd of viewers during its display from Jan. 17-Aug. 6.

*"I was a bit taken aback when I learned that child labor happens here in the US,"* said Albert Valerio, a 4th semester psychology and biology major, *"The fact that there is no law that can prevent all of these instances from happening in the US is disturbing."*

Through the exhibit, Romano takes viewers on his five year travel through eight countries: Brazil, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal and the United States. In each country he films and photographs the different instances in which child labor occurs, such as trash dumps, quarries, brick kilns and rug-making factories. According to Romano, at least 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen are involved in child labor.



Robin Romano | A toddler screams for her mother who is scavenging for food and things to sell for money such as scrap metal, Bekasi Dump, Bekasi, Indonesia | All images in this article are the courtesy of the Benton Museum

One particularly poignant section of the exhibit showcases West Bengal, India, where Romano provides a glimpse into the life of a 10-year-old girl. She must carry more than half her bodyweight in materials hundreds of times a day and manufacture thousands of bricks by hand.

The photographs and film in the exhibit are so raw and revealing that Romano experienced some hardships in gaining them.

*"One time, [Romano] was in a rug factory to capture working conditions and ended up suffering from a broken arm after factory owners beat him with a baseball bat because they did not want the film or footage to get out,"* said Michael Crutchfield, an 8th semester political science and sociology major and human rights minor, who interned with Romano.

Crutchfield was honored to intern for Romano because he has a deep respect for his work, his cause and how he is reaching his goals. For example, Romano independently finances his own films.

The medium (film) was integral to Romano's message and desired effect. *"It's that one-to-one connection in this exhibit that is so moving. Media throws a lot of numbers at us but it tends to be meaningless"* said Benton Museum Director Sal Scalora. *"But if I showed you one child not starving because of a dollar a day donation or a child not dying of a disease because of a \$2 inoculation, it becomes more personal."*

Scalora was introduced to Romano's work by Richard Wilson, Director of the Human Rights Institute. Wilson featured Romano's documentary, *"Stolen Childhoods,"* in the Economic Rights Film series held in conjunction to the Economic Rights Conference in Fall 2005. *"I contacted Romano because I was very moved by his documentary and web-site. I felt his work was the perfect thing for the Gallery,"* said Scalora.

The exhibit is being used as a gateway to connect students to the world and for them to also realize that child labor does affect them, according to Scalora.

*“In the post-September 11th world, it is easy for us to overlook issues and concerns which do not seem directly related to threats against our nation and our way of life. Child labor is such an issue,”* said Romano in a press release.



Robin Romano | A 10 year old boy works at a light bulb factory for 12 hours a day in Bihar, India



Robin Romano | Young Mexican migrant worker picking onions in Texas for a penny a pound

The common misconception is that child labor occurs only in third world countries, but *“Stolen Childhoods”* proves this to be false, said Scalora. For example, in one section of the film a family describes the dangers of child labor in Texas. Pesticides, snakes and scorpions replace the common images a child sees in his or her childhood, says the featured family. According to *“Stolen Childhoods,”* an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 children in Texas produce 60 percent of the seed stock and 25 percent of the onions used in the United States.

*“‘Stolen Childhoods’ provides an understanding of the causes of child labor, what it costs the global community, how it contributes to global insecurity, and what it will take to eliminate it,”* read [www.stolenchildhoods.org](http://www.stolenchildhoods.org).

*“If you aren’t aware, then you can’t help, but if you are, then you can make educated decisions,”* said Scalora. *“There are plenty of ways for students to get involved in fighting child labor. Joining the campus’s committee on sweatshop labor, visiting links in the lower lobby of the Benton Museum on the computers, mailing letters to clothing companies or looking up a relief program, such as ‘Doctors Without Borders’, is a start.”*

## COMMENTS FROM THE FEATURED ARTIST (ARTWORK ON BACK COVER)

**KEDON BECKFORD**, AN 8TH SEMESTER MOLECULAR CELL BIOLOGY MAJOR, IS FROM BRIDGEPORT, CT. HE PLANS TO WORK IN PEDIATRICS AS WELL AS WRITING AND ILLUSTRATING CHILDREN'S BOOKS. BECKFORD FINDS IT VERY IMPORTANT TO RENDER HIS SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY IN ALL WAYS POSSIBLE.

### ABOUT THE ARTWORK

"THIS PIECE IS A DIGITALLY REWORKED PHOTOGRAPH OF A RELATIVE OF MINE ON THE STEPS OF AN ABANDONED HOUSE. IT WAS INSPIRED BY MY EXPERIENCE IN VOLUNTEERING AT A LOCAL RESCUE MISSION WHERE I SPENT TIME WITH SOME UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN. IT SYMBOLIZES SOME OF THE HARDSHIP THAT THE UNFORTUNATE YOUTH OF TODAY GO THROUGH. MANY ARE UNDEREDUCATED, UNDERFED, AND UNDERDRESSED. I HOPE THIS PIECE HELPS PEOPLE MAKE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CHILD'S THOUGHTS AND SITUATION. I WANTED THE PIECE TO BE OPEN-ENDED ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE TO FORMULATE THEIR OWN IDEAS ABOUT THE CHILD'S SITUATION. I HOPE THAT THIS ARTWORK SERVES AS A CONVERSATION PIECE FOR PEOPLE TO DISCUSS THE STRUGGLES OF UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN AS WELL AS AN INSPIRATION FOR PEOPLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SITUATION."

## 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; and three credits of Internship. More than six credits may not be taken in one department.

Internships must be 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 through an internship will be based on completion of a portfolio in which students synthesize their professional 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](mailto:richard.hiskes@uconn.edu).

