

# Voices

+ for media  
democracy

*Women's  
Institute  
for  
Freedom of  
the Press*

Washington, D.C.  
[www.wifp.org](http://www.wifp.org)

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*Summer 2015*

# About Our Staff

## Newsletter Staff



From left to right: Riley, Kavya, Cherrie, Yaara, Helena, Abeer, Martha

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# A Few Activities Since our Last Newsletter

by Martha Allen

## Ann Wright, Speaker at WIFP Event

Just after the publication of our last annual print newsletter, we had the pleasure to hear the dedicated activist Ann Wright speak about the Middle East. July 20, 2014 was also the launch of our booklet "Women's Voices for Peace and Justice in the Middle East."



Ann Wright discusses issues

## Ann Wright

Ann Wright has been a career military woman, a State Department diplomat and for years now, an influential spokesperson in the anti-war movement. On March 13, 2003, the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Col. Ann Wright sent a



Audience questions and discussion

letter of resignation to then Secretary of State Colin Powell. She travels and lectures on foreign policy issues and joined the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza.



Noa Shusterman, with the support of the WIFP staff, organized the event. Noa was one of ten dynamic young leaders in New Story Leadership for the Middle East.

Noa Shusterman, event organizer

Website: <http://www.newstoryleadership.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NewStoryLeadership>



### Walk to End FGM



WIFP organized a contingent as part of the First Walk to End FGM (Female

the-press/188651

As a preview to the Walk, WIFP sponsored a film showing of Moolaadé, a story of freedom, defiance, and tradition surrounding the practice of FGM. Global Woman PEACE Foundation, WIFP's partner organization, sponsors the Walk to End FGM. The 2015 Walk will be October 31. Global Woman: <http://globalwomanpeaceoutreach.com>

Genital Mutilation) on the National Mall on November 8, 2014. WIFP's director spoke at the event. We won first place raising funds for the cause, with proceeds going toward the opening of the Global Woman Center. The Center opening was held June 27, 2015.

Leading up to the Walk, WIFP was a Featured Organization by Press the President. The interviews & videos are still available: <http://www.pressthepresident.com/article/featured-organization-the-womens-institute-for-freedom-of->



Global Woman and WIFP Staff gather together after the preview



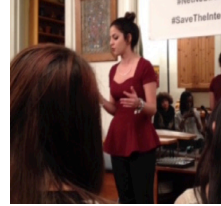
WIFP's Martha, Tanya and Sandy with Annie Wright, Walk speaker and FGM survivor (second from right)



## Open Mic Night



Some of the participants and audience gathered together afterwards.



Tanya Smith-Sreen's spoken word presentation impressed the audience

WIFP held an exciting Open Mic Night that included spoken word and music from some of our staff as well as works by others.



Sandy Somchanmavong and members of her band performed. She is the lead singer and guitarist for Ezra Mae & The Gypsy Moon

## Net Neutrality

After years of working for Net Neutrality, we all experienced a victory with the FCC vote February 26, 2015. WIFP participated in a rally that morning at the FCC and filled the hearing rooms with supporters for the decisive vote.



Prior to the vote and immediately after, some Representatives in Congress started hearings and legislation to eradicate the progress made toward an open Internet.

Cable, ISP's and their lobbyists continually use substantial resources and efforts to halt the efforts to ensure an open media. They want to control our Internet Connectivity. Therefore, the issue of Net Neutrality is still of concern. As the saying goes, "Freedom is a constant struggle."



February 2015 before the historic FCC vote in favor of net neutrality

Organizations and activists, including WIFP, had met with White House staff just prior to the President speaking out strongly - before the final vote - in support of Net Neutrality: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/net-neutrality>



**Being Billie**

WIFP co-sponsored the Premiere Screening of *Being Billie: Re-Imagining Billie Holiday*, April 5, 2015. Director Phyllis M. Croom joined special guests Poet Nikki Giovanni and Scholar Kimberle W. Crenshaw for a post-screening event.



WIFP Directors Elana Anderson and Martha Allen pose with Nikki Giovanni, Kimberle W. Crenshaw, and Phyllis M. Croom

**Women's Words Now**

April 26, 2015, featured Nana Farika Berhane, writer, cultural activist, and author of *I-LAN In Di Sun*; Elana Anderson, Ph.D., Associate Director of WIFP, artist and scholar; and Clare Verbeten, writer, scholar and activist.



Clare Verbeten's moving spoken word touched on personal family experience with FGM

Elana Anderson's powerful reading from Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah*



Nana Farika Berhane read passages from her book, sharing fascinating historical moments

**Shadows of Liberty**

WIFP was a co-sponsor of the film screening of "Shadows of Liberty," held at the AFL-CIO on June 5, 2015. The film reveals the extraordinary truth behind the news media: censorship, cover-ups and corporate control. WIFP's director, Martha Allen, spoke on the panel after the film showing.

**Out in the Night**

WIFP held a preview screening of the POV film "Out in the Night" June 13, 2015 at All Souls Unitarian Church, co-sponsored with their Social Justice Committee. African-American lesbians fought back against a threatening man and were charged with assault and attempted murder. The film examines race, gender and sexuality in our justice system.



## Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz Presented WIFP's Women and Media Award

### Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz Receives WIFP's "Women and Media Award" and Talks About Her Book: "An Indigenous People's History of the United States"



Roxanne led a discussion and answered questions



Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's presentation



Roxanne's discussion of her book



Alethea Russell presents Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz with award

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Ph.D., is the author or editor of seven other books, including *The Great Sioux Nation* and *Roots of Resistance*. She grew up in rural Oklahoma, the daughter of a tenant farmer and part-Indian mother and has been active in the international Indigenous movement for more than four decades.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Ph.D., is the author or editor of seven other books, including *The Great Sioux Nation* and *Roots of Resistance*. She grew up in rural Oklahoma, the daughter of a tenant farmer and part-Indian mother and has been active in the international Indigenous movement for more than four decades.

## Review of “An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States”

by Riley Horan

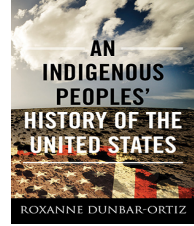
The unfortunate reality of our education system today is that it is crafted through a Eurocentric lens that paints the colonization and genocide of indigenous people in America as a brave feat of exploration that we celebrate throughout the year between Thanksgiving and Columbus Day. In her eye-opening account, *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*, author Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz articulates how the erasure and violence against indigenous people in the United States is not something that had a definitive start and end. She explains that it is an ever-growing part of the American story, often ignored and whitewashed with a narrative of exploration rather than massacre.

Throughout her book, Dunbar-Ortiz proposes the need to change our understanding and teaching of the foundation of the United States. First and foremost, the United States is a colonial-

ist settler-state that is built on the invasion and control of a land already inhabited by indigenous peoples. Dunbar explains how this issue carries through to the present in the lack of acknowledgement by Academia. “The main challenge for scholars in revising U.S. history in the context of colonialism is not lack of information, nor is it one of methodology... Rather, the source of the problems has been the refusal or inability

*“Dunbar-Ortiz proposes the need to change our understanding and teaching of foundation of the United States.”*

of U.S. historians to comprehend the nature of their own history, U.S. history. The fundamental problem is the absence of the colonial framework.” (Dunbar-Ortiz, 7) Dunbar-Ortiz discusses the importance of rewriting history through a lens that acknowledges the damage done, the strength of indigenous peoples’ resistance, and the dangerous effects of colonial entitlement



that is taught by society today.

Chapter by chapter, Dunbar-Ortiz approaches the narrative of U.S. history through an Indigenous perspective. She uses this approach to show readers how the start of U.S. history is not with the discovery of the land as “A New World” by giving a brief overview of pre-colonial North America. This allows the illustration, not only of how prosperous the nation was, but also the drastic magnitude of what was lost as a result of the narrative of the European explorer. The demonization and dehumanization of indigenous peoples is one of the consistent measures that has been found spanning from some of the earliest administrations to the most present. A brief example given by Dunbar-Ortiz regards



today's military," [The military] also uses the term "Indian Country" to designate enemy territory and identified its killing machines and operations with such names as UH-1B/C Iroquois, OH-58DD Kiowa... Thunderbird, and Rolling Thunder." (56) In a chapter aptly titled *Bloody Footprints*, she writes how the usage of such language is nothing new and only serves to "recall the origins and development of the US military, as well as the nature of US political and social history as a colonialist project." (57) It describes that even histories most beloved presidents simply followed in the "bloodied footsteps" of their predecessors, at the expense of indigenous peoples and their land.

As time has passed, the attack on Indigenous peoples has not subsided, but rather began to take shape in policy. By 1890 the majority of all land in the United States had been divided and privatized and throughout the next century lawmakers passed an abundance of acts that furthered their personal agenda. With establishments including the 1887 Dawes Allotment

Act, the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, and the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, but more importantly in acknowledging the history of the United States through the Indigenous Peoples' narrative, is to know that for as long as there has been infringement on the lives of indigenous peoples, there has also been resistance.

As she explained in the beginning of the book, "Indigenous survival as peoples is due to centuries of resistance... Surviving genocide, by whatever means, is resistance." (xiii) The colonization of the United States, the imperialist policies that controlled indigenous populations for centuries, and the violent atrocities that led populations to fall by 90%, were not without a confrontation. It is this survival, and hope, that brought the formation of organizations and movements centered on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. There is not only a drastic need for the acceptance of loss caused by US imperialism and colonialism, but also a need for the acknowledgement that the Indigenous community is one that is still present today. In her conclusion, Dunbar-Ortiz looks to the

future. She addresses how the U.S. must accept responsibility for the creation of a society that is built on Indigenous Peoples' land while simultaneously ignoring and erasing the damage that caused. In the final push, Dunbar-Ortiz rightfully puts the place for change into the classrooms. She pushes for a change that does not center itself in a Eurocentric lens, but one that acknowledges the variety of populations in the United States, rather than comforting one with a story like narrative of shared land and freedom. A book that should be read by all, as it speaks to all, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz does a beautiful job criticizing the realities of U.S. colonialism, honoring acts of resistance to such colonialism, outlining a more truthful narrative of U.S. history, and addressing the need for an educational revolution.

*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (Beacon Press, 2015)



## Review of *The Goddess Pose*

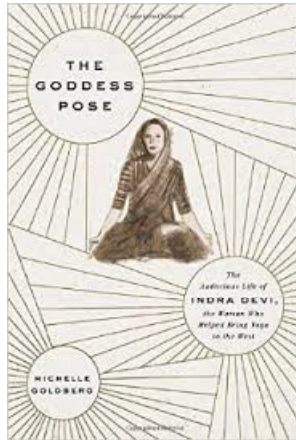
by Kavya Padmanabhan

Yoga, in our current culture, has become a way of life, a popularized method of exercise. However, the form of yoga practiced in the Western culture diverges quite a bit from the ancient practice in India. Michelle Goldberg, in her book *The Goddess Pose*, credits Indra Devi as one of the founders of the yoga many now practice.

The book documents Devi's life with regard to the utmost detail. Goldberg describes Devi's transition from a young actress to the internationally renowned yogi that she later became. As you follow Devi's transformations, you get a sense of the woman who animated some of the most powerful people—from Gandhi to Sai Baba, to some of the famous actors and actresses in the 50s.

Devi was born in Latvia, as Eugenia

Peterson, and lived much of her life as a refugee. She longed to devote her life to a passion, yet she could not figure out what that passion was for much of her early life. Goldberg describes Devi as a woman yearning to find her place in the world. Devi only found a passion in yoga when



she was in her 40s.

Goldberg paints Devi in multicolored strokes—she does not just focus on her yoga career. Instead, she depicts Devi as a lover, wife, teacher,

and student. Goldberg effectively describes Devi's yearning to become immersed in yoga and shows her transformation from a student to a teacher.

Devi was a celebrated actress in Berlin before she found her yearning for Indian culture. Finally, she traveled to Holland for a meeting of the Order of the Star in the East, a meeting for theosophists. This meeting propelled Devi to travel to India and to soon meet some of the most prominent figures in the yoga world.

Devi first started teaching yoga lessons in China, when she relocated there with her husband. These classes became so popular that she had to move houses to make room for the students who wanted to practice in her house. After the success of her classes in China, she moved to America and began to popularize Hatha yoga. She wasn't the only one teaching

yoga in the United States, however she was one of the most successful. Devi had a knack of being at the right place at the right time. She was able to socialize with many influential people who helped to propagate her influence and her career.

Devi had a way of capturing the hearts of those around her. Not many could resist her charm. Even as a ninety-year-old woman, she was still as active as she was when she was sixty. She traveled

from Russia to India to America to South America. Her affinity for yoga allowed her to become recognized around the world.

Goldberg depicts Devi as a woman who survived the world through her reinventions of herself. Yoga gave Devi her center—it allowed her to detach from the horrors of the time. Goldberg tells the story of Devi's life in an unbiased fashion, proving to be the journalist that she is. *The Goddess Pose*

enables the reader to get a complete grasp of Devi's life and her interactions with some of the most powerful people. Goldberg paints a well-rounded picture and shows how Devi's life experiences molded her into the internationally recognized woman. By doing so, the reader gets a full understanding of how hatha yoga became popularized and how one woman could make it happen.

*The Goddess Pose*  
by Michelle Goldberg  
(Knopf, NY, 2015)



### *Review of More or Less Dead: Femicide, Haunting, and the Ethics of Representation in Mexico*

by Cherrie Yu

The first thing that I saw when I opened this book was a picture of Paula Flores. She is the mother of femicide victim María Sagrario González Flores. The picture was a close-up of Paula's face, her eyebrows and forehead twisted uneven by the grief. After the picture was four paragraphs explaining Driver's relationship with Paula and the reason that Driver addresses the issue of femicide.

#### **Femicide**

Femicide, according to Driver, is "violence against women in all its manifestations" (p3), and in Ciudad Juárez a large amount of women were either disappeared or found dead, their body deserted in empty lots all round the city. Throughout the book, Driver emphasizes that femicide is different from other terms like homicide and femicide, and why such difference is important. Writer Charles Bowden believes that the distinction

between homicide and femicide is not useful, and that the term femicide takes the conversation away from the Juárez men who were killed. In a lot of other texts and documents that Driver studied, the terms "femicide" and "femicide" were used interchangeably. Driver noted that femicide means the killing of women and girls, while femicide indicates that the violence is gender-driven. The Juárez women were killed because they are women. Behind

the physical violence against women is the implementation of NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement), the local government who took no action against the mass killing, and the layout of the urban space, which is densely dispersed with deserted lots.

### Media Morality

An interview between Driver and a cultural producer who has worked on Juárez femicide precedes each of the four chapters. Throughout the whole book Driver analyzed different forms of media, including photography, visual art, documentary, musical, fiction, journalistic writing, and other more obscure forms like video essay. Driver addressed the intersection between the real violence in Juárez and the representation of such violence in cultural productions, and that brings up the ethics of the representing violence.

The local government suggested that most victims are sex workers so their lives do not matter. These victims were thus deprived of their humanity and were only recognized for their mutilated bodies.

Driver criticizes a lot of cultural producers and media workers for exploiting the dead body of the female victims. The sensational, graphic and violent representations, Driver argues, further contribute to the objectification of the women. What artists, writers and journalists should do instead, Driver believes, is to restore the memories behind the dead bodies.

### Deconstructing the Border and Taking back the Space

The North American Free Trade Agreement resulted in the construction of hundreds of maquiladoras owned by big corporations in the city of Juárez. Juárez women work at these factories like machines and they often have to traverse great distances for work. When their bodies are exposed in the public space, they are subject to gender-driven violence and their lives are at risk. The borders, between the domestic sphere and the public space, between big corporations' capital and Juárez's poverty, between the authority of the local government and civilians, amass power on one side by depriving the basic rights of the other

side. The women belong to the latter.

Driver introduces a new term called ecotestimonios, which are graffitis, informal monuments, posters and other means through which families of the victims and activists tried to solidify the memory of the dead. These are powerful efforts to battle the anonymity of the victims and restore to them the basic humanity that is lost through the murder and the government's inaction. Paula Flores, the women at the beginning of the book became an activist herself after her daughter was murdered. To Driver, she is not just another crying mother. Driver wrote to her that, "Even though you are in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and I am in Lexington, Kentucky, I want you to know that you are part of my life." What being communicated was love, understanding and empathy, and those are the cure for the violence in Juárez.

*More or Less Dead: Femicide, Haunting and the Ethics of Representation in Mexico* by Paula Flores (University of Arizona Press, 2015)





GLOBAL WOMAN  
P.E.A.C.E.  
FOUNDATION

## Walk to end FGM in Washington, DC

Join the Walk to End FGM on October 31st, 2015 in Washington, DC.  
Sponsored by Global Women P.E.A.C.E. Foundation.

Female Genital Mutliation (FGM) is the intentional removing of the female genatalia for non-medical reasons. 8,000 girls are mutilated daily in the world and 228,000 are at risk in the U.S.

For more information, visit Global Women P.E.A.C.E. Foundation's website at : [www.globalwomanpeaceoutreach.com](http://www.globalwomanpeaceoutreach.com)

Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation is a WIFP partner organization that focuses on eradicating gender violence, particularly FGM. We encourage everyone to join the Walk and efforts to make this a safer world for girls and women.



WIFP participants in the first Walk to End FGM in 2014 (from left to right): Zenia Zeitlin, Jonathan Zeitlin, Martha Allen, Sandy Somchanmavong, Tanya Smith-Sreen and Delma Webb



# Women in Palestine and Israel

## Beyond Conflict

How can women influence the decision-making process and the conflict while being marginalized?

Four personal stories about women's influence and diverse roles in Israel and Palestine.

**Friday, July 17th, 7 pm**

1940 Calvert Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009  
*RSVP: ourmediademocracy@gmail.com*

**Abeer Shehadeh**

22, Palestinian-Israeli.  
Graduated from Haifa University with a degree in English Literature and Political Science.

**Yaara Elazari**

26, Israeli.  
Studying Music and International Relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

**Chen Bareket**

28, Israeli.  
Graduated from Hebrew University with a degree in Political Science and Sociology.

**Muhannad AlKharraz**

26, Palestinian.  
Fulright Scholarship at Wisconsin University studying Policy and Economics of Freshwater Resources.



## Working With Women's Rights Activists in Beijing

by Cherrie Yu

In the summer of 2014, after my freshman year at William and Mary, I returned to China for the first time since I went to college. I spent two weeks at home and then I moved to Beijing, half for the music scene there, half for an organization I found called Women's Voice. I sent them a personal introduction and my final paper from a gender study class, and ten days later they emailed me asking me to come into the office the following Monday.

### Women's Voice

The office of Women's Voice is on the 23rd floor of an apartment building on the northeast side of Beijing's central area. The first thing I saw when I walked in was a painting of a half-naked woman hanging on the wall with the caption "big brother is watching you" (he was indeed as will be proved). There was a kitchen, a bathroom, a living

room changed into an office area with four tables pushed against the walls, and two other rooms with a bunk bed, a futon, and more office tables and computers. There were drawings of cats all over the walls as well. Later I learned that this cat is the logo of Women's Voice, and all the drawings were made by Xiao Meili, an activist and a friend of the organization.



Offices of various other nonprofit organizations were dispersed in the same apartment complex. On the same floor was an open space called Yiyuan that has yoga classes, book club meetings and movie screenings occasionally. On the 26th floor was Beijing LGBT Center that offers

counseling service and free HIV testings. In the same building there was also Beijing Gender Health Education Institute.

My job as an intern was mostly updating the website of Women's Voice, functioning as a media monitor, scouring through major publishers and looking for articles that pertain to gender equality. Two other staff, Xiong Jing and Zhao Sile, took turns to manage the Weibo account of Women's Voice (equivalent of Twitter), whose followers have risen from twenty-five thousand to fifty-six thousand for the past one year. Ji Hang and Li Furui was working on a program protecting the rights of domestic workers, and Li was also in charge of the finance of the organization. And there was Lv Pin, one of the original founders of Women's Voice and the editor of the Women's Voice Newsletter. She usually only came into the

office every Monday for a weekly meeting. She talks fast and gets right to the point and it took me a couple of days to learn how to talk to her.

### Activists and Their Works

Closely related with Women's Voice is also a group of women and queers, most of whom born in the late 80s, who are called Bcome. They were initially formed in 2012 for the play *The Vagina Monologues*. They are famous for combining activism with street performance art. On Valentine's Day in 2012, Xiao Meili, the designer of the cat logo, Li Tingting and another college student marched down the crowded street of a commercial district in Beijing wearing bridal gowns splattered with fake blood and carrying slogans that called attention to domestic violence.

Their piece, dubbed

"the Wounded Bride," was followed by another one called "Occupy Men's Room" led by Li Tingting. This piece addressed the unfair ratio of male to female toilet stalls in public. In August 2012, Xiao Meili, Li Tingting and two other activists gathered in Guangzhou and had their



heads shaved clean in public while reading aloud a letter asking the department of education to explain the double standard in college admission. At the end of 2012, they turned their focus back to domestic violence: Xiao Meili, Li Tingting, Xiong Jing, Ji Hang and a number of other women activists posted semi-naked pictures of themselves covered in bloody

handprints online to collect signatures for a petition against domestic violence.

I was and still am amazed by these activists' awareness of the body. They brought a new layer of meaning to PARTICIPATION. When the activists' bodies are brought under the limelight, inspected, judged, teased, and abused by the onlookers, the activists themselves embody the victims that they are trying to call attention to. The participation of the body leaves zero space

between the activists themselves and the causes they are fighting for and I think that is real dedication.

### Feminism School

The summer that I was working for Women's Voice, Lv Pin was trying to put together eight weeks of classes that she called "Feminism School" including chapters like *Feminist Theories*,



Gender and Bodies, Feminism and Media Communication, Chinese history of Women's Rights Movement, Feminism and Culture and more. Lv Pin and Feng Yuan, another women's rights activist who has been active since the 80s, were the co-principals of the school. Most classes were taught by scholars who were associates of the organization.

### Surveillance and Police Warnings

On Sunday June 29th, before all the classes officially started, there was supposed to be a first meeting in the office of Women's Voice, attended by all the enrolled students and the principals. On the morning of 29th, I was with Feng Yuan at a UN related conference about Beijing+20, and I got a message from Li Furui that there was a change of location and that it was not safe to communicate through WeChat (an app equivalent to iMessage) or texts anymore. While I was

still confused, Feng Yuan took me away from the conference and hailed a taxi. We ended up on the empty second floor of a restaurant two blocks away from the office and Lv Pin was there. Then I learned that Women's Voice had received several warn-

*"The participation of the body leaves zero space between the activists themselves and the causes they are fighting for and I think that is real dedication."*

ings from the police to not host the classes. Around noon on 29th the police occupied our office to "prevent unlawful social gatherings." Lv Pin had to give me her laptop because she did not want the police to access her documents in case she got arrested. The rest of the classes of Feminism School were finished but with difficulty considering the pressure that the police exerted.

### Arrests

In March when I heard that five women's rights activists were arrested, I was surprised but I knew

that it did not come out of nowhere. The five women arrested were Li Tingting, who is a member of Bcome and who participated in "the wounded bride" and "Occupy Men's Room" mentioned above, Wei Tingting, who works for Beijing Gender Health Education Institute, Zheng Churan, who has been working against sexual assault on campus and employment discrimination against women, Wang Man, who works for Global Call to Action Against Poverty, and Wu Rongrong, who has worked on helping people with AIDs and hepatitis B.

They were planning on handing out flyers and stickers on International Women's Day to call attention to sexual harassment on public transportation and they were arrested on 7th of March in Beijing, Guangzhou and Hangzhou on the grounds of "picking quarrels and creating disturbances". Even though the women

have been released, their legal statuses are still criminal suspects. The police detained them until the last day they could without charging them. Not to discredit the Chinese and international allies pressing for their release, but it

It pains me just reading about how they were treated in prison. Wang Man suffered from a heart attack when being grilled by the police. Wu Rongrong was initially denied medication to treat her hepatitis B. She was also verbally



Courtesy of Free Chinese Feminists

seems to me that the police released them mostly because they failed to find concrete evidences of crime to charge these activists. According to their lawyers, they are still under police surveillance. They will have to notify the police wherever they go for the one year to come and the police have the right to arrest or question them any-time.

abused and locked up in a hotel room for eight hours. These women(I'm not only talking about the five arrested but a much larger group) still have a long way to go, and there are bigger prices to pay and more challenges to conquer, but I firmly believe in their strength to fight and their power of endurance.



## Anti-Rape Methods Advocated by Universities: Are They Good Enough?

by Helena Leslie

The statistics for female sexual assault on university campuses are shocking: 1 in 5 women in the US according to the New York Times, and 1 in 3 in the UK as reported by the Telegraph. Officials are currently swamped with an unprecedented number of reported cases, and have come under fire for turning a blind eye to the problems. Fortunately, some colleges around the world are attempting to ease this pain by opening up the conversation on assault in many unique ways. However, some argue that the tactics used actually victimize the women instead of preventing the attacks themselves.

Colleges have been under attack in the media due to some seemingly dubious handling of cases. Title IX, the federal

law in the US concerned with gender equality in education, advises that sexual assault cases be resolved within 60 days. Yet there have been instances at Columbia University where the cases lasted many more months and the situation was inflamed by bureaucratic fumbling. Perhaps the most well-known of these was Emma Sulkowicz's case. She took to carrying a

students at this College about the case. This is commonly referred to as a 'gag order'. One survivor, Sarah, stated that "getting raped takes away your freedom for the night; but Columbia's forced silence is taking away my freedom for the rest of the year". In a similar circumstance, Durham University in England refused to offer a women counselling after her attack. This

all adds to the reputation that universities are keen to sweep assault charges under the carpet.

Fortunately, some

Colleges are keen to change this perception and have launched campaigns to protect their students. The University of Exeter has created a Twitter campaign, #NeverOk, which promotes the idea that sexual harass-



Courtesy of Andrew Burton/ Getty Images

mattress around under the slogan 'carry that weight' until her rapist was removed from campus.

On top of this, neither the accused nor accuser are allowed to confide in any other

ment is unacceptable in any situation. On top of this, Exeter has introduced trained harassment advisors on campus.

Opening up the conversation more, a recent article published in the Washington Post argued that consent is not always as clear as it may initially appear: a mumbled 'yes' does not always mean just that. This situation is even more confusing when alcohol is involved; a drunken kiss doesn't always signal consent for sex. The University of California attempts to raise awareness for these issues by presenting live performances and videos to incoming students. Audience members are told to hold up green and red cards depending on whether they think both actors in the scene have given consent.

Going even further, several Universities have actively sought out methods to raise awareness in unique ways. Four male students at North Carolina State

University in 2014 developed nail polish which could detect Rohypnol, a common date-rape drug. The polish would change color if it came into contact with the drug, thereby alerting the women that their drink had been spiked. Their goal was to "invent technologies to empower women to protect themselves".

... "consent is not always as clear it may initially appear: a mumbled 'yes' does not always mean just that."

Adversely, behind this seemingly feminist language, many critics have slashed the invention as actually increasing the likelihood of victim blaming. Rebecca Nagle, the co-director of the activist group FORCE, argued that technologies like these limit women's freedom further. Alongside being advised to dress modestly and not go out alone at night, this nail polish could be seen as one more limitation. Furthermore, a victim could come under attack as not having done everything she could

to stop the assault if she wasn't wearing the nail polish. Another criticism of this invention is that it doesn't actually get to the root of the problem: it doesn't prevent an assaulter from spiking the drink in the first place. Therefore, this technology could be seen as misguided.

On the other hand, a recent trial published in the New England Journal of Medicine at first glance appears to be a step in the right direction. Three Canadian campuses launched a College Rape Prevention Program which trained first year female college students to avoid rape. By learning to assess a risky situation, taking self-defense classes and defining sexual boundaries the women "substantially lowered their risk of being sexually assaulted". The risk of rape of the 451 women who were randomly selected for the program was 5% lower than women who were just given brochures and a brief information session. This seems to suggest

that the program was highly successful in reducing the chances of these women being assaulted.

However, the criticisms for this course are also very strong. Firstly, the program had only trained the women to prepare themselves for an assault by a stranger and hadn't considered that the attacker might be an acquaintance, a far more common threat. Furthermore, the focus of this course may also be misguided: again the women are being told to take responsibility for their own safety

and this program doesn't combat the attacks in the first place. On top of this, it has been pointed out that an assaulter may merely move on



Courtesy of Alt Magazine for Women

to another women if the first one appears to have self-defense training. Therefore, while learning how to defend oneself cannot be a bad thing, the

program ultimately has the wrong aim.

On the other hand, it is welcoming to see universities opening their eyes to the problem of campus sexual assault and attempting to curb it in any way possible. Finally, attention has been brought to the seriousness of this matter and positive steps are being made at some schools; with rising numbers of activists speaking out this will only increase.



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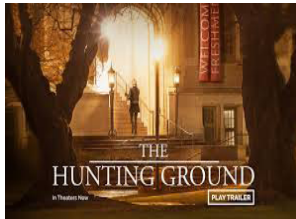
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## How Political Correctness Affects Rape Victims

by Kavya Padmanabhan

Recently we celebrated the birthday of the Title IX bill, which calls for the end to discrimination of women in educational settings. This bill has been used to combat the campus rape phenomenon. However, although work has been done to stop campus sexual assault, much more still needs to be done. Many sexual assault victims are silenced when they try to speak of their assaults. In a national study conducted by the Center for Public Integrity, the researchers found that, although the vast majority of sexual assault victims remain silent, over 95 percent of those who do report, “can encounter mystifying disciplinary proceedings, secretive school administrations, and off-the-record negotiations.” Many times, too, these policies lead to dropped complaints and gag orders, later found to be illegal. Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering’s documentary “The Hunting

Ground” illuminates this veil of secrecy surrounding rapes on college campuses. The documentary follows several women through their different colleges and shows a pattern of cover-ups and victim blaming



by the schools. The documentary addresses several key problems that are at the forefront of the controversy of sexual assaults on college campuses. Many of the rapes that occur on campuses are underreported. Many victims feel that they cannot tell the administration about their rapes. Often, they are accused right away of lying. Rather than just battling one attacker, the victim is forced to battle the administration in order to get his/ her story out. Less

than one third of cases result in the attacker’s expulsion.

Many administrations in colleges suffer from what the U.K. Home Secretary Theresa May has called “institutionalized political correctness.” Public officials, due to their need to not have any culture or community be subjected to public criticism or ridicule, actively ignore victims’ cries for help. Keeping the victims quiet allows for a semblance of peace on the college campus. This institutionalized political correctness manifests itself clearly on college campuses— if a certain college is subjected to much ridicule or criticism, they will not get as many people to apply to that college, meaning they will not get as much money as the prior year. This economic motive acts strongly to dissuade administration officials to get the correct statistics.

The “Hunting

Ground” is depicted as an exposé on rape culture on campuses. It is more than a work of art; it is a voice for those who are voiceless in our current culture. However, the Daily Bell writer Wendy McElroy provides a scathing review of the film. She writes, “It is part of a manufactured and coordinated hysteria about campus rape that imposes a politically-correct agenda and strips accused male students of due process rights.”

Right away, McElroy labels the film “politically correct”. McElroy’s aim, here, is to make the film seem meaningless. She uses labels like “politically correct” to make it seem as if The Hunting Ground is nothing more than an emotionally ridden film with little substance.

The Hunting Ground draws the viewer’s attention to the multitudes of victims that do not get reported in the media. Only very few do get the attention of the media. When they do, they are scorned

and ridiculed. Take, for example, Emma Sulkowicz, the alleged sexual assault victim in Columbia University who carried a mattress with her for the whole year. Google Emma Sulkowicz and the first thing that pops up is “liar”. Sulkowicz was raped in the beginning of her sophomore year and for two years she was forced to attend school with her rapist while the administration did not believe

*“... in a culture where women aren’t valued as real, they are assaulted, without consequence, ever 107 seconds.”*

her. She was not given the safety that she needed and so she created a performance art piece called Carry that Weight, where she carried a mattress around with her every day for the rest of her two years. In early June, 2015, after graduating, Sulkowicz created another piece. She titled the piece “Ceci N’est Past Un Viol (This Is Not a Rape)”. The piece is made up of three different parts: a “sex tape” that simulated Sulkowicz’s rape, an

introduction to the piece, and an open comment section. The piece asks the reader to take responsibility for their own actions; why were they there? What did they want to get out of seeing her rape? The comments section, too, provides insight in to what Sulkowicz was trying to accomplish.

According to The Sisterhood Blog writer Hannah Rubin, Sulkowicz is called “a liar,

a fake, a nut-job, a whore”. Those who were not involved in the rape feel that they have the power to tell

Sulkowicz what she should feel, what she should believe, what she should do. Rubin argues that when “we call Emma a whore and a liar—we say she is neither a ‘real’ artist nor a ‘real’ rape victim. By using this language, and this logic, we are asserting that she isn’t real either. It starts to make sense then: that in a culture where women aren’t valued as real, they are assaulted, without consequence, every 107 seconds.” A few weeks after the

performance art piece was released on the Internet, it was taken down by a cyber-attack.

Amanda Tawb, in her argument about political correctness, writes, "And yet, bizarrely, women's requests for safety online are often dismissed as 'politically correct' threats to free speech, rather than as a way to promote it." This harassment becomes an ideological censorship, Tawb argues. Journalists like Anita Sarkeesian, Megan McArdle, and Amanda Hess are routinely harassed for speaking out for women. Although Sulkowicz continues to be an advocate for the ending of sexual assault, she is harassed and discussed constantly in the media. Her statement about sexual assault prompted many to speak about her, opening her up to more persecution. Sulkowicz endures what many other victims cannot and do not. As soon as she announced herself as a sexual assault survivor, she was put under an intense spotlight,

given no safety online.

Political correctness has become internalized and now stands to do more harm than it does good. Many use the term to argue that those subjects labeled as "pc" hold no value. Sexual assault victims, too, are hindered by the term. Starting from their institutions to their published story, they are forced to face a backlash of criticism and their credibility is put in to question. It is due to political correctness that sexual assault is underreported on campuses.

Created in the 80s, political correctness was a way to avoid expressions or actions that were perceived to exclude or insult groups of people who were socially disadvantaged or discriminated against. However, as the times have changed, so too, has the meaning of political correctness. Now, political correctness has become a term that many use to dismiss ideas that make us uncomfortable. It has morphed in to a way to devalue

or belittle proponents for the ending of sexual assault. There is a wide disparity between the way political correctness is defined and how it is used. According to Tawb, it bears no meaning. Instead, when people use the term "politically correct", they are dismissing the whole conversation. These dismissed conversations are generally critiques where someone accuses their target of being an oppressor or perpetuating injustice. Viewing the media's coverage of sexual assaults on college campuses through a "P.C." lens, then, explains why much of the sexual assaults are unreported and what these victims must face in order to tell their story.





## Watch Your Language

### Combating the Normalization of Misogynistic Language

by Riley Horan

Yesterday as I sat on the metro with a feigned confidence that read, "I know exactly where I'm going and I completely understand the DC Metro system," a family sitting across from me caught my eye. What initially grabbed my attention was the two young boys playing a classic game of hold onto nothing and don't fall down, but what kept my attention was the youngest son's t-shirt that read "Boys Will Be Boys". A phrase that I've heard all my life to excuse boys teasing me, a phrase that I've watched age along with me to now allow men to reduce my existence to nothing but a distraction. A phrase that is used to playfully remove the responsibility of violence against women from men's shoulders and place it upon mine. To see a young child wearing this shirt embodies and contributes to the conversation surrounding the dangers of the

normalization of misogynistic language, and why combatting such language is a necessity in the fight to bring equality for women.

Linguistic sexism roots itself so deeply in society that it often is not recognized as an issue. In a society

*"Our language nurtures stereotypes, and the continuance of placing men, especially white men, on a pedestal at the expense of the women holding them up."*

where women hold the majority, we embrace a androcentric language, meaning a language established with heavily gendered words and phrasing that appreciates masculinity over all else. As it is so common it often seems to be an arbitrary issue to focus on, but the willfully ignorant acceptance in our everyday language can contribute to the generations of stereotypes that result in unfortunate realities including, but not limited to, the declining number of women

interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) professions. A 2007 study by the National Science Foundation reported that in fourth grade 66% of girls and 68% of boys showed an interest in science, but by eighth grade boys are twice as interested in STEM careers as women are. Our language nurtures stereotypes, and the continuance of placing men, especially white men, on a pedestal at the expense of the women holding them up.

A common and simple shift often made in combatting such language is the use of "y'all" over "you guys" when addressing a group. Unfortunately, the correction and explanation is often groaned over as oversensitive political correctness this being a term that follows members of an oppressed community to invalidate their plights by labeling their

requests for basic human rights as political and thus inherently debatable. It is never something that haunts members of a privileged community as their voices are automatically placed



on a more respected and listened platform. It shows why men complaining that “feminism” as a word is too exclusive are more understood than women wondering why the entire human race is called “mankind”.

Misogynistic language is everywhere and its usage is so normalized in today’s society that fighting it seems like the smallest battle one could pick. But what seems like a small battle can make a big change. Normalized misogynistic language has effects that are a long lasting reinforcement of male entitlement and supremacy. There is no part of today’s modern language that invites

equality. There is no part of being called a “sweetheart” in a conversation with co-workers that is meant to do anything except for to push women back into a place that men find less threatening. A critical eye of the language we use today will only result in a birth of an era that truly works to uplift women and sexual minorities, of all intersections, to equality.



Comic by Jon Dorn

Analyze everything you say, read, and hear. Think about why we accept male-centric language and question those who challenge it, rather than the other way around. Don’t be afraid to check people on what they say, and don’t be afraid to check yourself. Teach

to embrace power behind the phrase like a girl rather than weakness. Challenge a system that nurtures male excellence while reducing a woman’s title to her marital status. The foundations of our society are built upon the degradation of women so it is no surprise that language reflects that, and its level of normalization is no reason to leave it without address.



## Can you Hear Me Now?

*On Sexism in the US Music Scene and the Changes Being Made*

by Cherrie Yu

### Two Shows

I went to a queer punk show at Smash! Records in Adams Morgan. It was a small space divided up by the record racks and clothing racks, with a drum kit set up against the wall at the back of the store. Not long after seven the store was swarming with a queer crowd. Looking around I saw people in drag, mohawks of all colors, and rainbow bracelets and pins. At the show I saw KATHERINE, a two-piece band from Columbus Ohio, who describe themselves as “dirty loudmouth.”

With Kathryn (they/ them) on the bass and Catherine (she/her) on the drums, KATHERINE is a really straightforward band in both form and content. They were singing about feeling threatened under the male gaze in “get out” (your eyes digging into my skin/this always happens again/you refuse to let go); in “ask first” their mantra-like spoken word about consent (makes me crazy when you look at me/ makes me crazy

when you touch me/ ask before you touch someone/ I don’t owe you anything) eventually burst into heart-wrenching screams; in “Walk Home” they assumed the identity of a cat-calling man in the verse, asking a girl “do you have a boyfriend” and telling her “I like that ass,” and the chorus was just the repetition of the



*Picture of Katherine taken at the show*

angry question, “do you think your fucking cock gives you the right?”

Once they started playing, I was excited. Even though I was not able to make out most the words they were singing, I was excited about the sounds that they made filling up the space with so much power, and about detecting in their

voices the same anger that I have experienced. Then I asked myself, having been going to four shows a week since I moved to DC, when was the last time that I saw an all female/queer group delivering feminist messages like this? The answer was never.

The day after I went to DC9 to see a band called Rozwell Kid. I’ve liked them for a long time and I bought the ticket a month before the show. It was late and when I got there, and they were finishing up their set with a song called “Kangaroo Pocket,” one of my favorite songs off of their most recent LP.

I recognized the catchy riff when the doorman was checking my ID and I almost couldn’t wait to get in to hear the rest of the song. I can still remember how my excitement just subsided bit by bit after I got into the venue. The two guitarists just plunged into a self-absorbing solo. There was one boy standing at the very front of the crowd, dancing

and twitching and swinging his arms around to the music, keeping the rest of the crowd five feet away from him. I felt tired the moment I went in. There was something boring and trite about that *mise-en-scène*. Men doing guitar solos on stage; men playing music to other men; men taking up all of the space. Has it always been like that? The answer is yes.

### **The History and the present, as discussed by Hopper and AcArdle**

The music critic Jessica Hopper had a book called *The First Collection of Criticisms by a Living Female Rock Critic* that came out this May. The book contains 40 essays selected from Jessica's criticism career that started when she was 16. The first of forty is called "Emo: Where the Girls Aren't." Jessica first decided that emo music from the early 2000 were mostly "myopic songs that don't consider the world beyond boy bodies, their broken hearts or their vans." Then she went on attacking the whole canon of rock history, saying that "men writing songs about women is practically the definition

of rock n roll," which is a startling truth that most people either do not realize or do not talk about. The content and the intention of the music directly affects the relationship between the music and its listeners. Men listen to other men's music and they go on writing more music about their own feelings; while women and girls can only relate to this whole canon of male sentimentality and artistry as the subjects of the other sex's art. I think this is a huge discouragement to women's participation in making music. But again, there is not enough discussion about this. Jessica listed song after song by bands like the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and Big Black, whose lyrics abuse, shame and even brutalize women, but "no one takes that impact seriously, let alone notices it. It is 'just' music."

In an article called "Just the Singer" by Alanna AcArdle, the former lead singer of the band Joanna Gruesome, she confirmed the discouragement that women face in the male-dominant music industry. She talked about people judging her appearance

instead of her musicality, about people attributing her lyrics to the other male band members, and about men explaining to her feedback on her guitar fuzz pedal before she went on stage. She wrote that, "art—divided by the racist, capitalist patriarchy into highbrow and low—has white men filling up the space in the former category, while women are relegated to the latter." This is still happening in the DIY (Do It Yourself) scene. You go to a house show and four bands out of five you see are white boys playing guitars. It is a problem that very few people even bring up, let alone criticize, because again it is "just" music.

### **Standing Up, Speaking Out**

On the other hand, there definitely are groups of female and/or people of color musicians and amazing allies, getting more and more attention especially in the past three years. Girlpool are Harmony and Cleo who finished high school not very long ago. Their music, especially their first EP, delivers some strong, empowering and feminist messages that half a year ago a major publisher like NME (a British music

journalism magazine) would only dare identify as “cynicism”. In “Blah Blah Blah,” they brought up how female sexuality is expected to be passive (you like me in my underwear/ but when I try to kiss you you got scared). “American Beauty” is a song straight up about sex and they demand their pleasure like queens! “Slut-mouth” is a heavier song that deals with slut shaming (I heard you had a slutmouth/ from the boy down the street), institutionalized gender inequality (I go to school everyday/ just to be made a housewife one day), and consciously fighting against the societal pressures (I don’t really care about the clothes I wear/ I don’t really care to brush my hair).

Another group is Malpartado Kids from Providence, Rhode Island. If you go to their Bandcamp, you would notice the Paul Robeson quote “the artist must elect to fight for freedom or slavery” in all caps under their profile picture. I saw their performance at DC Union arts. The lead vocalist Victoria Ruiz was singing and shouting in

both Spanish and English and their live show was multimedia—there was Victoria jumping around screaming, DeFrancesco on the percussions, and a video projection on the wall. The videos were footages of protesters



in Latin America being killed by the police and their bloody bodies being dragged around the street, or cartoons of Christopher Columbus drawing the map and conquering new lands, and between songs Victoria never stopped to catch her breath. She kept on talking about racism, about sexism, about gentrification, about Baltimore and Freddie Grey. They are as political as they are musically brilliant.

Finally I want to mention Spoonboy, a project of the D.C. based musician David Combs. Never listened to his music before, I went to Spoonboy’s last show on

June 4. As I pushed my way through the crowd, I was genuinely surprised to hear David talking about “the harm that the patriarchy has done” and that “the gender binary as something we should fight against” after he finished a song. That was the first time in my life that I heard a white male musician talking about gender norms and the patriarchy on the stage. After the concert I listened to his album *The Papas*. This whole album is about his struggles against the socialized and institutionalized expectations of being a boy. They are songs full of frustrations and traumas and pains, and they are as personal as they are political. And then I thought about that show he played and I remembered all the young boys standing in the front rows, the excitement on their faces and the cheers and singing along when David started playing his hit song about fighting against the patriarchal traditions that are passed down from fathers to sons. I felt hope.



*Classics and Me*

by Helena Leslie

Studying women's liberty in an Ancient History degree drew me to interning at WIFP: the history of women's issues is interesting alone but useless unless it helps inform modern perspectives. WIFP does a fantastic job of recruiting young international journalists to promote change. Currently we have the chance to celebrate the successes of feminism as we anticipate the introduction of a woman's face on the American \$10 bill. This achievement appears most prominent when compared with the realities of ancient Graeco-Roman life. To many it is inappropriate now to make jokes about sexual harassment. By contrast, many ancient comedies rest on the hilarity of non-consensual experiences. The wildly popular *Epitrepontes* by the Greek comic Menander featured an upstanding man unwittingly raping his future wife in a drunken encounter. Unaware that he is to blame, he plans to banish his wife for allowing herself to be raped. The play ends positively as it becomes clear that she

had not been fouled by a stranger, merely her husband, and is allowed to stay. It seems pretty obvious that a "comedy" of this type would not sell in the modern age. This lack of respect goes even further when we see that women were deliberately and harmfully excluded from political life. Classicist Mary Beard brought this to life in a speech on the public voice of women. She highlighted the classical theme of deliberately ignoring the female voice: from the mutilation of Philomela's tongue in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, to the near forced-remarriage of Penelope in Homer's *Iliad*. Having faced significant criticism in the media for her appearance and prominence in academia, Beard explained that some had attempted to silence her in her own career. Significantly, the fact that she was able to give such a speech demonstrates just how far we have come. Through this, she signified the need to respect classical literature whilst condoning its misogynistic aspects.

This, it seems, is the way to be a Classicist and feminist simultaneously. It has become clear to me that ancient works must be appreciated from a distance, and that placing arguably sexist writers like Ovid on too high a pedestal could be damaging. Knowledge of Greece and Rome also helps me contrast and appreciate current realities. Modern acts of female courage and power are seen as even more fantastic in my eyes: the forced silence of Classical women compared to the possibility of a female American president in 2016 seems an incredible leap. Therefore, while there are clearly many more issues to resolve until we can announce the world free from misogyny, we should take a moment to appreciate all those who have aided women's movements.



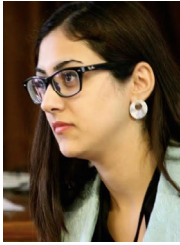
Voices from the Middle East

by Abeer Shehadeh and Yaara Elazari

Yaara and Abeer are WIFP interns participating in New Story Leadership program of 2015 that selects young emerging Israeli and Palestinian leaders and trains them into a team ready to help build a better future for their two communities.

They are organizing the WIFP event "Beyond Conflict" and editing a booklet sharing stories of women's challenges in Israel and Palestine (see invitation on pg. 13).

**Do you know who you are?!**



Abeer Shehadeh, 23, is an Arab Israeli and Christian. She graduated from Haifa University with a degree in English Literature and Political Science. Abeer deals with the difficulties young Palestinian women have in Israel while attempting to obtain high educational, social and professional positions. Abeer is invested in women writers and literature, and loves books.

Identity is regarded as one of the most press-

ing problems for Arab Israelis. Many writers have written poems, articles and books about it. Arab Israelis, especially women, do not find themselves belonging purely to any certain group. Their voice faded away long time ago. It did the time they were convinced that the only thing they need to care about is surviving and they have no chance of fighting to express their voices or be who they are. They were, and still are, taught to pursue careers that are not related to the Conflict or to politics at all. I can very much relate to this and the story I am telling you has led to understand how crucial the problem of identity is for us. "My name is Abeer Shehadeh, and I come from a Christian Arab family in northern Israel. I am a gradu-

ate of the University of Haifa in politics and English Literature and I am passionate about creative writing, which is what my project for change that I am working on now as part of my participation in New Story Leadership is about." This is how I would introduce myself if someone asked me now to tell them a little bit about myself. Who you are should be an easy question to answer. However, sometimes it is not. In NSL, we believe in the power of our story to change the world and I will be writing briefly about my story. My story is a bit different from other stories for the simple fact that it does not have a certain point where it started, and it definitely did not end yet. It is not located in a specific place or related to a specific

I really am. Instead, they want to define me in terms of nationality and citizenship. My parents, being tolerant and liberal, have always taught me the value of love, forgiveness, understanding and respect. I grew up being totally naïve about the situation in my country. I believed that very soon, the conflict would be resolved. I believed that Israelis and Palestinians would understand that wars and violence are never the solution. I waited for this day like a kid waiting for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve.

At nineteen, I enrolled in the University of Haifa planning to get a degree in English literature and mathematics. I wanted to distance myself from politics because I believed that Israelis would never accept me. Then I met some Jewish students and really got to know them in my classes and extracurricular activities. My attitude changed. I decided to try taking an active part in social and political clubs at my

university.

Then my moment of truth came at my first club meeting, where I was asked to define myself. I told them my story and they all stared at me. Then they asked: "But, wait a second, are you a Palestinian or an Israeli?" I froze. What should I say? Why do I have to choose? I never thought I would be labeled as a Palestinian or an Israeli. I have a national Israeli Identification and passport, but my family is Palestinian. I have just realized that I am in stuck in the middle of two opposing groups. After a long pause, I stammered: "I am both." Then they froze. After some debate, I realized that in their minds, you cannot belong to both. I do not blame them, but now I understand that I should not wait for people to accept new possibilities. That day, my quest began to make this possibility come true.

Gandhi said: "Be the change that you wish to see in the world", and this is

what I decided to do. I might not be able to influence millions of people but I could definitely start with the people around me. That was a turning point in my life. I switched from mathematics to political science and philosophy. More importantly, I believed in myself and in what people my age can do to repair broken politics. I keep asking myself is this: Do we need a nation or a country to belong to? If yes, why don't I, and many others, have this chance? If not, then why wouldn't we all be considered as human beings, simply citizens of the world? Can we really consider ourselves as "citizens of the world", or is it just a term used to avoid living with the complexity of our identity?



## Capturing Moments in the Conflict



*Yaara Elazari, 26, is International Relations and Music Education student in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Yaara is a flutist at heart, music teacher and a researcher in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She is mostly interested in women's leadership in the Middle East.*

Like many others, I too am a victim. I am a victim of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is making people suffer at this very moment. I am one of many victims from both sides in a conflict, which exposes us to death all the time.

When I think about the conflict between Israel and Palestine, clear images of faces I have known come to my mind. Images

of those who are not with us anymore. Those whose lives were taken in a moment, creating black holes in the hearts of their loved ones. When I walk down a street in Israel, I can imagine those small black holes in people passing me. I know that the conflict touches everyone. It doesn't pass a house either in Israel, or in Palestine.

When I think of the conflict I recall moments. The moments my phone rings. The moment I see the news, the moments of silence right after that.

Shortly after I arrived in DC I woke up thinking that all was safe, I was in Washington and having a great time, until the reality of the conflict invaded my life once again. A Palestinian shot 18 bullets toward a civilian car, hitting three young Israelis coming back from a basketball game. My friend, Malachi, was injured severely and for 5 hours I was crying and hoping desperately for him to live, to recover. Then,

the news came that he had died.

He was 26 years old, an innocent participant in this conflict. An excellent student, dear friend, loved by his family. His death left a big black hole in the hearts of his family, his friends and in mine.

Speaking about Malachi, the fact that he is not with us anymore is unacceptable for me. The thought that his death will not bring a change, and will bring suffering for more people is terrifying.

As I begin to perceive the value of the loss from taking the life of Malachi, I had to ask myself some questions. Did the shooter know who was in the car? Did it matter to him? Anger began spreading in my body. The action of taking a life, without consideration of who it is, reminded me that the conflict can exist only when our lives are measured in political value. In our conflict, Malachi's life had only significance for the side he was born on, and because he was

born on that side, he was killed.

A child is born without choices. They cannot choose their father and mother, sex, color, religion, nationality or homeland. Whether they live under an autocratic or democratic regime is not their choice. From the moment born, their fate is decided by the nation's leaders. It is the leaders who will decide whether they live in comfort or in despair, in security or in fear.

The terror attack caught me in the middle of the process of the NSL program. I had to confront my anger and grief with my ideas and values, which brought me here in the first place. It was my new Israeli-Palestinian friend, Abeer, who heard about the news and was there for me, and consoled me through the hard hours. While I was far from my family and friends, not able to attend the funeral, or the "Shivaa" (The Jewish week of mourning for the loss of a loved one), I found myself challenging myself with

explaining what I feel to Palestinians. As the week went by, long moments full of emotions changed into thoughts. I decided to express my thoughts and feelings in an event I was to speak at, named "Encourage: voices from the Middle East". Feeling obliged to speak up about what I was going through, I addressed my leadership back home from that stage. "I want to ask, to plead and demand from you – you have to change our story's ending. You have the power. Let the young generation be a part of your decisions, listen to our voices. The voices of the victims, who cannot accept being victims anymore. And especially for those victims, like Malachi, who now only has me and his family and friends to speak for him. I am here to speak to you from his heart and from the heart of his family. Imagine their grief." I continued by expressing my feelings, about being a part of this conflict. Being a victim closes your ears and hearts to the pain

of others. You narrow your life to concentrate on the loss and fear, searching for ways to avoid it. Feelings of self-defense, revenge, and hatred overcome you. This is what the conflict is driven by. The suffering is the conflict's fuel.

But I am not your usual victim. I came to Washington DC this summer with nine members of New Story Leadership team, who share the same unusual way of dealing with this conflict. We are not able to let ourselves linger in the whirlpool of the conflict anymore. We came with the decision to make a change in ourselves, and bring it back with us to our communities, and to build leadership that is based not only on shared suffering, but also on shared hope.

How do I find hope in all of this darkness? As of right now, I don't have a solution or answers to offer, even to myself. I didn't come here to tell wrong from right, white from black. All I have to share is my human feelings and emotions,

as raw as they are. I see in my team the courage to share how we feel, even if we come from different sides of the conflict, and that brings me hope. That is not the end, but at least it's a start.



WIFP's Abeer Shehadeh and Yaara Elazari



Group picture of the keynote speakers

Outstanding talks by WIFP's Abeer Shehadeh and Yaara Elazari -- and others from New Story Leadership for the Middle East at "Encourage Part II: Voices From the Middle East" at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. NSL's Shay Ater and Mohammad Al-Hroub also spoke, moderated by Sivan Atzmon and Eman Abushabab.



Both Abeer and Yaara gave keynote speeches



Excellent panelists included Cara Mazetti-Claassen, Sibusisiwe Maseko, Dr. Boaz Atzili, Dr. Mohammad Cherkaoui, Marc Gopin, Dr. Mañana Gnodidze-Swanson, Fr. Josh Thomas and Prof. Stef Woods.

NSL's Founder, President & CEO Paul Costello welcomed the audience, explaining that this session is Part II of the successful Encourage Conference in Jerusalem this year, a conference that brought together alumni to showcase their progress since completing the program.

The program demonstrated vision of hope and progression towards a new story of the current young leaders (5 Israeli and 5 Palestinian). shared suffering, but also on shared hope.

## Women in the decision-making process in Israel

by Yaara Elazari

Analyses of women's roles in the public sphere and politics in Israel shows an unsettling picture, though it has been improving in the last decade.



Picture of Golda Meir at White House in 1973

Although Israel was one of the few countries in which women were able to achieve high positions in parliament at the time, showcased by Golda Meir, Israel's first and only woman elected as a Prime Minister, she is an exception to the overall absence of women in policy-making in Israel.

Since the state of Israel was established, only 17 women have been ministers in the Israeli government and only 14 women have been vice ministers; there has not been a govern-

ment with over four women at the same time. In the current government, which formed in May 2015, women constituted three out of 21 people (14%), and in the Knesset (parliament) 29 out of 120 (24%), which is an improvement of two new women compared to the last parliament.

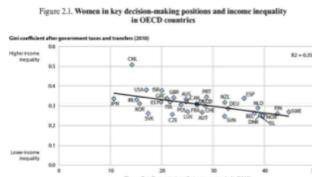
Women have never headed the Ministry of Defense, Economy, Interior and other most significant ministries. In comparison to other states, Israel is ranked 95 out of 133 in the world forum for gender equality. In the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Israel is ranked as 29 out of 34 countries.

*How does political representation of women affect society?*



Women constitute a core element in gender equality and democratic governance. Yet equal access to power, decision-making and political leadership is not only a matter of fairness and good governance. It can also have a positive impact on economics and social outcomes, delivering sustainable growth and development.

The data, based on research by the OECD, shows a relationship between the representation of women in parliaments and the level of inequality in OECD countries. The conclusion is simple: enabling women to become decision-makers will increase income equality.



## WIFP Celebrates the Supreme Court's Ruling on Gay Marriage



Picture of the celebration outside the Supreme Court taken by WIFP staff

WIFP was front and center outside the Supreme Court on Friday, June 26th, when the court ruled that no American state can ban same-sex marriage. This historic decision heralds a win for gay-rights activists across the US. We were among the hundreds of people who lined with streets on the Hill to hear the ruling, and waited until dark to see the White House lit up in rainbow colours. It was an emotional and exciting day as we witnessed this turning point in history.



The White House was lit up in celebration of the decision



Picture showing the multitudes of supporters outside the Supreme Court

## Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press Associates

The following individuals are some of the hundreds of associates of WIFP. Many have been with us since the early days of the 1970s. Not all of those we work with are Associates, but the network of Associates helps us experience continuity in our endeavors over the years. We've shared projects and ideas. We've lent each other support. We continue to look forward to the energies of the newer Associates joining with us to bring about a radical restructuring of communication that will bring about true democracy in our countries.

.....

**U.S.A.**

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Elana Anderson, Martha Allen, Tanya Smith-Sreen Sandy Somchanmavong and Delma Webb



Alethea Russell, Clare Verbeten, Elana Anderson and Martha Allen



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