

2003

Center News

Human Rights Brief

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief>

 Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Human Rights Brief. "Center News." Human Rights Brief 10, no. 2 (2003): 41.

This Column is brought to you for free and open access by the Washington College of Law Journals & Law Reviews at Digital Commons @ American University Washington College of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Human Rights Brief by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ American University Washington College of Law. For more information, please contact fbrown@wcl.american.edu.

CENTER NEWS

On October 3, 2002 the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Center) at the Washington College of Law (WCL) and the Open Society Institute hosted a tribute dinner for Aryeh Neier at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. The event brought together over 200 noted human and civil rights activists from around the world. Tributes were given by Professor Herman Schwartz of WCL; Gara LaMarche, vice president of the Open Society Institute; Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch; Robert Bernstein, former chairperson of the ACLU; Philanthropist George Soros; and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Nadine Strossen, current chairperson of the American Civil Liberties Union, served as the emcee for the event. Tom Gibson prepared a special animated clip for the event, and famed cartoonist Edward Sorel contributed original artwork as a gift for Mr. Neier. Proceeds of the dinner went to establish the Aryeh Neier Human Rights Fellowships at WCL. The fellowships will provide stipends for three students to conduct summer work in war crimes tribunals, truth commissions, and other bodies working to establish accountability for human rights abuses.

In the fall semester, the Center successfully launched a new program called "Munching on Human Rights." Munching is a non-credit lunch-and-learn lecture series designed to educate the Washington College of Law (WCL) community, particularly first-year students, about basic issues in international human rights and humanitarian law. Fall semester topics and speakers included "What Is the International Bill of Human Rights?", (Professor Richard Wilson); "What Is the Difference between Human Rights Law and Humanitarian Law?", (John Cerone, executive director of the War Crimes Research Office); and "Human Rights Monitoring and Implementation Mechanisms—A Guide to the Alphabet Soup," (Hadar Harris, executive director of the Center). The series will continue through the spring semester and begin with "A Road Map through the Regional Human Rights Systems," presented by Professor Claudia Martin.

Throughout the fall semester, the Center, American University, and Human Rights Watch co-presented a human rights film series. Among the films presented were *Afghanistan Year 1380*, which portrays life inside a Kabul hospital in the months after 9/11, revealing the treatment of Taliban prisoners of war, women's roles, and the effects of U.S. bombing in Afghanistan. Following the screening, Carol Yost, director of Women's Programs at the Asia Foundation, facilitated a discussion on legal reform in Afghanistan. The film series also included *The Pinochet Case*, which documents the proceedings surrounding Pinochet's arrests in London and Chile, as well as accounts given by victims of torture and family members of the disappeared. The series featured *Profit and Nothing But!*, in which Haitian director Raoul Peck explores the cost of globalized capital on the culture and economy of his homeland. The screening of this film was followed by a discussion on economic, social, and cultural rights, led by Randall Dodd, executive director of the Financial Policy Forum. Additionally, the series included the films *Haters* and *Of Rights and Wrongs*, both of which address the erosion of civil rights for people of color, especially Muslims, in the United States since 9/11. Bruce Fein, former associate deputy attorney general and general counsel for the Federal Communications Commission, facilitated a discussion afterward. The films *Gaza Strip* and *Human Weapon*, which depict the cost of Middle East strife to civilians, were also presented. Joe Stork, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch, directed a discussion after the screenings. A special feature of the film series included a panel discussion entitled, "Video and Human Rights: Four Success Stories," which featured activists who presented examples of video work that has supported human rights, including Nan Aron, president of Alliance for Justice; Sam Gregory, program coordinator of Witness; Andrea Holley, outreach director of Human Rights Watch; and Elisa Munoz, executive director of the Crimes of War Project. Finally, Action for Human Rights, the Women's Law Association, the Asian Student Association, Human Rights Watch, and the Center co-sponsored the screening of *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women*, which features the testimony of comfort women who



Aryeh Neier and Herman Schwartz talk during the dinner.

Credit: The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law

were forced into sexual servitude by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II, along with interviews of Japanese soldiers and recruiters.

During the fall semester, the Center sponsored several lectures by visiting scholars and guests at WCL. In October, Amaya Úbeda de Torres, a visiting scholar from the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, and the Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, presented a discussion entitled, "A Comparative Perspective on Human Rights Protection: The European and Inter-American Systems." Also in October, the Center and the International Visiting Scholars Program co-sponsored a panel entitled, "Criminal Procedure and Constitutional Reform in Times of Transition." The panel featured Judge Andrew Nyirenda of the High Court of Malawi; Ana Santa Cruz, adjunct public prosecutor for the Public Ministry of Peru; and Eldar Gojayev, chief inspector of the Ministry of Justice in Azerbaijan. In November, David Zonsheine and Noam Weiner, lieutenants in the Israel Defense Forces and leaders of Ometz Le'Sarev, or "Courage to Refuse," a movement comprised of Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve over the 1967 Green Line, presented "Conscientious Objectors in Israel." Mr. Zonsheine and Mr. Weiner spoke about their personal journeys toward refusal, their own experiences with the Occupation, and the precedent-setting case pending at the Israeli Supreme Court regarding the right to conscientious objection. Also in November, the Center and the International Legal Studies Program co-sponsored a talk by Mary Burton, a member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for South Africa, who shared her experiences and lessons learned from her work. 🍷



Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg addresses the audience at Aryeh Neier's tribute dinner.

Credit: The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law