

## **Notes from the Chair: ISA-Human Rights Section 2009/10**

Dear ISA-HR members:

This has been my final year as chair of ISA-HR. I am pleased to hand over the reins to Sylvia Maier, who has been vice chair this past year, and has been invaluable help. I am glad to say the section will be in great hands.

We have had another productive year, so I will turn right to the updates on section activities.

### **ISA-APSA-IPSA joint conference**

I am pleased to announce that we have made great strides in moving forward with our joint conference with the human rights sections of APSA and IPSA. The conference: "Assessing the state of human rights nine years after 9/11," will take place on 19-20 June 2010 at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Thanks to the various committees, and particularly to Bethany Barratt for arranging for Roosevelt to host. We have several organizational committees which developed the topics, selected the panels, and are managing the logistics:

- Steering Committee

Chandra Lehka Sriram (ISA-HR Chair), Lilian Barria (APSA-HR Chair), Zehra Arat (IPSA-HR Chair), Silvia Maier (ISA-HR incoming chair), Bethany Barratt (ISA-HR and APSA-HR executive committee member), and David Forsythe

- Organizing Committee

Shareen Hertel, Chandra Sriram, Zehra Arat

- Logistics Committee

Bethany Barratt, Lilian Barria, Silvia Maier

We will have about 25 papers presented over the course of two days. We are hoping to select the best papers for either a special issue of a journal or an edited volume, and have had some interest from publishers on this.

### **Possible future event**

We are hopeful of doing a joint event like this every two years or so. One thought would be to have the next event in Glasgow in summer 2012 either right before or after a joint ISA/BISA conference now being planned in Edinburgh. Kurt thinks Glasgow can host. We are awaiting firm dates on the larger conference.

### **H-Human Rights**

Many section members are members of H-Human Rights, a listserv edited by section members, which includes calls for papers, book reviews, and discussions of research and teaching topics in the field of human rights. To subscribe, contact Kurt Mills.

## ISA Working group

For the second year, the human rights section proposed and was awarded the chance to run a working group. This is a new process, in which a group of agreed participants organize a day on a specified topic. This year the topic was:

“The Real Cost of Recession: Human Rights and the Economic Downturn”

Many thanks to Clair Apodaca and James O’Higgins Norman for their hard work on this.

## Elections

All were unanimously elected by electronic ballot.

**Secretary:** Dave O. Benjamin

**At-large Members:** Jennifer Abbassi and David L. Richards

Thanks as ever to Eric Leonard for his great work as elections officer. And many thanks to our outgoing excomm members for their service: Tristan Ann Borer as secretary and Bethany Barratt and Amy Ross as at-large members.

## Sponsorship: awards and the reception

- We are grateful as always to the *Journal of Human Rights* for its support and sponsorship of two paper awards: the Stephen C Poe best graduate student paper award, and the best faculty/professional paper award; it also offers the possibility of publication to the latter paper. Both awards include \$100 cash and a year’s membership in the section, and the winner of the Poe award can claim back up to \$300 for travel costs for the next year’s ISA. I should note as well that the journal is available to section members at a discounted rate—just \$35 for members.
- We are grateful to Oxford University Press Journals, which is sponsoring two items on behalf of two distinct journals. First, in the name of the *International Journal of Transitional Justice* and the *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, it provided funds to help support our annual joint reception. Second, on behalf of both journals, it has also sponsored a travel grant for a scholar from the developing world presenting a paper in a Human Rights section-sponsored panel.
- And we would like to thank our sponsors, Johns Hopkins University Press, on behalf of *Human Rights Quarterly*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, and Routledge publishers, who all generously supported the reception.
- And with regard to the reception, I want to offer particular thanks to my vice chair Sylvia Maier, who on behalf of us and ENMISA handled the thankless task of managing to organize a reception with very good food, notwithstanding the sky-high prices being charged here. So, thanks to Sylvia once again.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude on behalf of the section to all of our sponsors. Awards:

- The winner of the best faculty/practitioner paper award is Kathleen Staudt, PhD Professor of Political Science University of Texas at El Paso for her paper "Explaining the Persistence of Femicide Amid Transnational Activist Networks: Where Did Human Rights Theory Go Wrong?" Many thanks to the committee, comprised of Amy Ross, Bethany Barratt, and myself.
- The winner of the Stephen Poe Best Graduate Student paper is Joel Pruce, 3rd year PhD candidate at the University of Denver, Josef Korbel School of International Studies for his paper: "Outlaws, Rogues, and Robin Hoods in the Delivery of Human Rights Goods?" Many thanks to the committee, comprised of Sylvia Maier, Carrie Booth Walling, and James O'Higgins Norman.
- And the winner of the OUP travel grant is Elisa Tarnaala of the Universidad Externado de Colombia. She is presenting a paper on "Forced Disappearances and Transitional Politics in Colombia 2003 - 2010." Many thanks to the committee, which besides myself was Tristan Ann Borer, Sylvia Maier, and myself.

**\*\*A plea to panel chairs, discussants, audience members, and paper givers themselves to nominate papers for consideration for either of the two paper awards, as appropriate.**

#### **ISA Compendium update from Kurt Mills**

- First of all, it's out. It was available for viewing at the Blackwell booth
- 404 substantive essays and 25 section introductions comprising 7500 pp text
- Average % of section essays completed=60
- Our percentage was high: 76%
- Most of the rest of the essays not in the hardbound version will be in online version
- Additional items planned or underway for online version –
  - Video podcasts by authors on their current research in context of essay. It is potentially a great way to plug your book/research.
  - Comments section will be set up online, though it is unclear how it will be monitored for content.
  - Regarding individual sections doing their own volumes – this remains a possibility but it is unclear what that would mean. There would probably be a need for new content; one possibility is doing work with other sections for additional content.
  - Everyone who contributed will get copy of volume in which published and one year free access to online version.

#### **Future activities**

Last year I proposed that we think, as a section, about new activities in which we might engage to collaborate with others inside and outside ISA. The joint conference in June is the first example of these efforts coming to fruition. We hope it will be the first of regular collaborations with the other HR sections. At the business meeting and subsequent discussions amongst the excomm on email, we considered a book award, but determined based on experiences many of us had with similar awards that it would be too onerous at this time. However, there were a couple of other ideas which we might want to re-visit this year regarding collaboration:

- Promoting further collaboration with other relevant sections within ISA, which might include IL, IO, International Ethics, and Feminist Theory. This could be done through developing panels for the annual conference collaboratively (rather than only horse-trading after panel proposals are in). It could also be done, if there is interest, through developing a workshop proposal in tandem with another section.
- We could as a section seek to develop a workshop proposal to ISA. For either this or a collaborative workshop we would need active volunteerism on the part of the membership beyond the excomm to make it work.

In the meeting there was general support to this type of approach but no specific suggestions as to topics or sense of urgency on building such activities. The excomm will continue to discuss it.

**During the AOB section of the meeting the following announcements were made:**

- Jason Ralph, University of Leeds announced a September BISA conference on US Foreign Policy and Human Rights after President Bush. They are looking for two panels on HR and US foreign policy after President George W. Bush. He's also an editor of the *International Journal of Human Rights*, and they are looking for review articles, which they try to include in each edition. Interested colleagues can contact him: [j.g.ralph@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:j.g.ralph@leeds.ac.uk).
- Joel Pruce (University of Denver) announced that HRHW has redesigned their website (<http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/>). It includes book notes, working papers, the Roundtable on current issues in the field, the Topical Research Digest, and Review Essays.
- The *Journal of Mobilization* also seeks submissions in the field of human rights.

Thanks everyone for a great two years as section chair! I am sure you will provide Sylvia with the same support and participation.

Chandra Lekha Sriram, University of East London