



Women, War and Learning

Hart House
University of Toronto
7 Hart House Circle
Music Room

Program of Events

Thursday, April 6th, 2006

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| 6:30pm | Welcome remarks
Professor Normand Labrie, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, OISE/UT
Professor Shahrzad Mojab, Women and Gender Studies Institute and Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology, OISE/UT |
| 7:00pm | Introduction of the Keynote Speaker
Professor Jacqui Alexander, Women and Gender Studies Institute

Keynote Speaker

Meredeth Turshen
Women, War and Learning: Beyond the Documentation of Atrocities |
| 8:00pm | Political Art as a Methodology
Introduction: Professor Rachel Gorman

<i>The Ghost</i> : A video directed by Shahrzad Arshadi based on the stage production by Rachel Gorman |
| 8:45pm | <i>The Drunks Salute You</i>
Dance performances by Ida Meftahi, Meaghan Giusti, Nikta Javanfar and Heather Saum |
| 9:00pm | Reception |

Friday, April 7th, 2006

Spoils of War: Education for Refugee and Displaced Women

9:30am Chair: Professor Joan Simalchik

Joanna Santa Barbara
Peace Education: Countering the War System

Egla Martinez-Salazar
Social Cleansing, Gender Violence and the
Criminalization of Agency in 'Peacetime'
Guatemala

Julia Dicum
Comparative Women's Oral Histories of
Education During War: Learner Experiences
of World War II and Afghanistan

11:00am - Break

Panel I: Gender, Conflict and Public Policy

11:30am Chair: Professor Haideh Moghissi

Ayşe Gul Altınay
From Enemies of the State to Partners and
Experts: Women Organizations in Post-conflict
Policy-Making

Nadera Shalhoub Kevorkian
Gender and Education under Military
Occupation: The Palestinian Case

Haifa Zangana
The Unfinished Struggle: Priorities of Iraq
Women under Occupation

1:00pm - Lunch

Panel II: Gender, Conflict and Public Policy

2:30pm Chair: Professor Linzi Manicom

Soheila Shahshahani
Share of Iranian Women in the Eight-Year War
with Iraq

Jacqueline Ismael
Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Women in
the Muslim World

Hayat Aziz-Alvi
A Progress Report on Women's Education in
Post-Taliban Afghanistan

Nahla Abdo
Life and Struggle Under Occupation:
A Feminist Perspective

4:00pm - Break

Women, War, and Learning: Convergence of Research, Policy, and Education

4:30pm Roundtable Discussion

Chair: Professor Shahrzad Mojab

Meredeth Turshen, Nadera Shalhoub Kevorkian, Ayşe Gul Altınay, and Haifa Zangana

Biographies - Speakers

Nahla Abdo is an Arab feminist activist and Professor of Sociology at Carleton University in Ottawa. She has published extensively on women, racism, nationalism and the State in the Middle East focusing on Palestinian women. Among her recent publications: *Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Challenges* (2004, with Shahrzad Mojab) and *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation* (2002, with Ronit Lentin). Professor Abdo is the founder of the Gender Research Unit at the Women's Empowerment Project/Gaza Community Mental Health Program in Gaza and a contributor to the establishment of the Women's Studies Institute at Birzeit University. She also co-founded Women Against Occupation and is an active member of the Steering Committee. nahlaabdo1@yahoo.com

Ayşe Gul Altınay teaches cultural studies, anthropology and gender studies at Sabanci University in Istanbul. Among her publications is a book in English entitled *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (2004) and an edited volume in Turkish titled *Homeland-Nation-Women* (2004). Her current research is on the struggle against gender-based violence in Turkey. altinay@sabanciuniv.edu

Hayat Alvi-Aziz is the Director of the International Studies Program at Arcadia University. She specializes in the Middle East and South Asia, particularly in the areas of human development, gender issues, political economy, conflict resolution and reconstruction, political Islam, and regional politics. Her publications include "The Non-Governance of Divided Territories: A Comparative Study of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Palestine," (*Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, March 2006) and "The Human Rights of Women and Social Transformation in the Arab Middle East," (*Middle East Review of International Affairs*). alvi-azizh@arcadia.edu

Julia Dicum is a doctoral candidate in Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at OISE/UT's Comparative International Development Education Program and an external research associate of York University's Centre for Refugee Studies in Toronto, Canada. She holds a B.A. from the University of Toronto and an M.A. from the School of Oriental and African Studies. Julia's research interests include learning in war-affected and complex humanitarian contexts, innovative programming for marginalised children and youth, curriculum theory development, policy analysis, and the use of information communications technologies in remote environments. jdicum@oise.utoronto.ca

Jacqueline S. Ismael is a Professor of Social Work at the University of Calgary. She has published a number of works in *Canadian Social Policy*, *International Social Welfare* and *Social Development in the Arab World*. Her most recent work includes *Civil Society and the Oppressive State in the Arab World* (2001), *The Iraqi Predicament: People in the Quagmire of Power Politics* (2004, co-authored with T.Y. Ismael) and *Barriers to Reconciliation: Iraq and Palestine* (2006, co-edited with William Haddad). jismael@ucalgary.ca

Egla Martinez-Salazar was born in Guatemala to a poor working-class family. She is a Mestiza woman from the XINCA-PIPIL-Spanish speaking peoples. Her father, Manuel de Jesus Martinez and her grandmother Amalia Gonzalez first taught Egla the importance of education and that as a woman she had the right to use her brain and her spirit to dream and contribute to the building of a better world. From a young age, Egla was involved in social advocacy projects and organized a 'vacation secondary school' to help her peers struggling with academics. She worked with peasants, Indigenous Peoples and women in social justice and human rights-oriented activities. Egla studied law for two years in Guatemala and later, in exile, she studied sociology in the National University of Mexico. In Canada, amidst racialized poverty, she continued her university studies. She holds an honours BA in Women's Studies, a Masters in Environmental Studies and

a Ph.D. in Sociology. Eglá is an assistant professor in the Women's Studies Program at McMaster University. marsal@mcmaster.ca

Joanna Santa Barbara is a faculty member of the Department of Psychiatry and a member of the Centre for Peace Studies of McMaster University. She is past president of Physicians for Global Survival, an organization that works for the abolition of nuclear weapons, the prevention of war and a sustainable planet. Joanna teaches Conflict Transformation and Peace through Health in the Peace Studies program at McMaster. She has been engaged in work on mental health and peace-building in relation to war-affected children in Croatia, and is now involved in a similar project in Afghanistan. Joanna was awarded the Order of Ontario for her work in Peace Studies and peace activism. joanna@web.ca

Soheila Shahshahani earned her PhD from the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York. She is a faculty member at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, Iran. She is the Vice-President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, editor of journal *Culture and Human Being* (in Persian), and editor of *Anthropology of the Middle East* (forthcoming). Her research was primarily on women of the Mamassani of Iran (a pastoral nomadic population), but then turned to urban studies. She has published articles on the cities of Kashan, Varameen, Esfahan and Tehran. Her books on the Mamassani include *A Pictorial History of Iranian Headdresses* (1995) and *Meimand, An Ethnographic Study of a Grotto-Village* (2003). She is the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Urban Anthropology of the IUAES. soheila@morva.net

Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian is a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Women and Law School-UCLA, and a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Criminology/Faculty of Law and School of Social Work and Public Welfare at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She is an active Palestinian feminist, researcher and human rights advocate that initiated the first hotline for abused women in Palestine. Her main publications, theoretical and research interests focus on studying crimes against women such as Femicide (*Signs*, 2003), imposition of virginity testing (*Social Science and Medicine*, 2004), sexual abuse (*Social Service Review*, 2000), women and social control (*Social Identities*, 2004, *Violence Against Women*), and women, law and society in militarized areas between victimization and agency (*Women's Studies International Forum*, 2003; *Indigenous Peoples' Journal of Law, Culture & Resistance*, 2004). She has published three books in Arabic. The first examines the crime of femicide in Palestine (2002). The second is a co-authored book that elaborates on The Parallel Legal System in Palestine (2003) and the third book is entitled *Women, Political Violence and Loss* (2004). Her recent publications focus on the effect of political violence on women and children (*Social Service Review*, 2005). msnadera@mscc.huji.ac.il

Meredeth Turshen is a Professor at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University. She holds a D. Phil. in comparative politics from the University of Sussex in England. She has written three books, *The Political Ecology of Disease in Tanzania* (1984), *The Politics of Public Health* (1989), and *Privatizing Health Services in Africa* (1999), and edited five others, *Women and Health in Africa* (Africa World Press, 1991), *Women's Lives and Public Policy: The International Experience* (1993), *What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa* (1998), *African Women's Health* (2000) and *The Aftermath: Women in Postconflict Transformation* (2002). She serves as Co-Chair of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, as Treasurer of the Committee for Health in Southern Africa, and as contributing editor of the *Review of African Political Economy*. turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Haifa Zangana was born in Baghdad, and has lived in London since 1976. She worked with the PLO in Damascus-Syria in 1975. As a painter and writer she had participated in various European and American surrealist publications and group exhibitions, with one-women shows in London and Iceland. *Through the Vast Halls of Memory*, her biographical novel was published in English by Hourglass in 1990, and published in Arabic in 1995. Three collections of short stories followed: *The Ant's nest* (1996), *Beyond*

what the Eye Sees (1997), *The Presence of Others* (1999). Her novel *Keys to a City* was published in 2000 and *Women on a Journey* in 2001. haifa_zangana@yahoo.co.uk

Abstracts

Nahla Abdo - Life and Struggle Under Occupation: A Feminist Perspective

Women living under different forms of colonialism, including military occupation, find themselves having to carry a multiplicity of tasks just in order to survive and provide for their families. This has been the situation in the Third world throughout history, including people in countries today such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. The Palestinian case remains unique in terms of its prolonged history of being under military occupation. Along with their difficult conditions of life and survival under Israeli military occupation, Palestinian women have been and continue to be actively involved in resisting occupation in various ways. This presentation focuses on Palestinian Jerusalemite women and the double jeopardy and strong resistance they face against Israeli occupying forces.

Ayse Gul Altinay - From Enemies of the State to Partners and Experts: Women Organizations in Post-Conflict Policy-Making

This presentation will explore the intricate relationship between issues of gender, ethnicity and nationalism in conflict and post-conflict situations, focusing on Turkey. Based on ethnographic research, this paper examines grassroots women's organizations in the Kurdish dominated southeast and discusses their role in the transition from a State of Emergency to a normal, legal political system. How do local feminist groups situate themselves in relation to the state, local political parties, and to feminist groups in other parts of the country? How do they analyze the connections between ethnicized violence and gender-based violence? What are the legal and political means they have developed to address the multiple axes of violence in their lives? How do they relate to the state as partners in the fight against gender-based violence after having suffered from state violence for many years? The presentation will address these questions from the perspectives of women who have struggled in the multiple borderzones of the state, the feminist movement, and the (transnational) Kurdish nationalist movement.

Hayat Alvi-Aziz - A Progress Report on Women's Education in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

Since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, a new democratic government led by President Hamid Karzai has been installed, elections have been held, and women's rights and freedoms have expanded. More girls' schools have been built and operated, but not without facing major obstacles. Violence, insecurity, and crime have increased and in addition to suicide bombings, these events are ominous signs of the risk of Afghanistan spiralling into before-seen cycles of insecurity and militancy. The adversities arising from the new wave of violence affect the female population most acutely. Already, Afghan women are frightened to venture outside. Just as the education sector was making some progress, the current realities pose major impediments to post-conflict reconstruction and rebuilding. Still, many Afghan women and organizations are determined not to allow the country to regress towards the primitive, misogynist, fanatically militant environment they emerged from. This paper examines the progress and setbacks of the education of Afghan women since the end of the Taliban regime until the present. This study highlights the struggles of Afghan women to gain and preserve their basic rights and freedoms, in particular the right to be educated.

Julia Dicum - Comparative Women's Oral Histories of Education During War: Learner Experiences of World War II and Afghanistan

In this paper, I extract the oral histories of my female participants and speak of their unique perspective of going to school during a war as children, civilians, and later as refugees in countries of first asylum and in Canada. Drawing on critical theory and participatory praxis, the study seeks to examine policies and

practices in education in complex emergencies from the perspective of the learner and therefore aims to expand on the methodological use of oral histories in educational research.

Jacqueline Ismael - Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Women in the Muslim World

The construct of *post-conflict reconstruction* is theoretically bound to Western models of sustainable political, economic and social development, and ideologically bound to neo-liberal interests.

Reconstruction programs focus on the development of political and economic institutions and are the domain of international financial interests, mediated by international agencies such as the World Bank and IMF. Social reconstruction programs focus on relief and rehabilitation programs for women and children and on the physical reconstruction of health and education institutions and they are the domain of humanitarian NGOs mediated by international agencies such as UNICEF. How do these programs articulate with each other, and what are the outcomes for the *social reconstruction* of viable households, neighborhoods and communities - the locus of everyday life for the majority of women and children in Muslim society? While women are focused on in post-conflict discourse almost exclusively in terms of their role in the formal sector of institutional reconstruction, virtually no attention has been given to their role in the informal sector, composed of household, neighborhood and community networks. These are the domains of everyday life for the majority of women and children in Muslim society. War's destruction of communities and neighborhoods breaks down the social fabric of relational connectivity in Muslim societies and intensifies social polarization. Given the absence of a discourse on informal sector reconstruction, a research project was initiated to explore the issues related to its reconstruction. Utilizing a Delphi framework to explore expert opinion, a panel of 18 leaders in the field of post-conflict Muslim societies was organized. This paper reports the findings based on the first round of interviews.

Egla Martinez-Salazar - Social Cleansing, Gender Violence and the Criminalization of Agency in "Peacetime" Guatemala

Since the 1996 signing of the Peace Accords in Guatemala, there has been a production and reproduction of a discourse of peace in which democracy and citizenship are reduced to formal electoral politics. Peace is celebrated as the enabler of a rule of law, represented as a 'first'-time gift from the civilized modern world to a backward and violence-inclined society amidst aggressive neoliberal policies. The promoters and agents of the official discourse of peace, on the other hand, individualize the increased assassinations of women by framing them as 'crimes of passion' or 'gang revenge'. The harassment, persecution and criminalization of progressively organized Indigenous and non-Indigenous activist citizens are similarly framed as the killing of alleged 'common criminals,' most of which are impoverished people. Based on data collected through fieldwork in Guatemala, genealogical analysis of the colonization, racialization and gendering of state terror, and critical discourse analysis, this paper analyses the politics of peace, its gender, class and racial connotations and its implications on women, especially the majority forced to live in increased 'peacetime' marginalization.

Joanna Santa Barbara - Peace Education - Countering the War System

This presentation will examine the importance of peace education in post-war settings. We propose that this contributes to lowering the probability of recurrence of violent conflict. There will be case examples from Sri Lanka, Croatia and Afghanistan, including attention to evaluation of such efforts. We will raise the question of the importance of universal peace education in countering and ending a dysfunctional and ruinous war system.

Soheila Shahshahani - Share of Iranian Women in the Eight-Year War with Iraq

Over the duration of the war, women have played different roles as victims of war, as participants in war, as part of institutions that have become responsible for the families of martyrs and war-afflicted populations and sharing in support for government and NGO's. This presentation examines the long-term effects of the war on women and even unborn children.

Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian - Gender and Education under Military Occupation: The Palestinian Case
Manal, Salwa, Siham and Arin's voices:

"I am not going to school next year because the construction of the wall has made it difficult to reach Jerusalem. I need to walk so far every day, and then find a taxi to take me to school....we have no income...and it will be very hard... I had better stay home."

"I will do all it takes to reach my school. My school is all I have."

"I am afraid that if I need to walk this far to reach school, my brother will not allow me to go back to school next year. He saw me yesterday crying and screaming at the soldier. He vowed that if that happens regularly, and I begin to run and hide between the hills and barriers to get away from soldiers in order to reach school, he'd see that I stay home for good."

"I called my grandmother and asked her to help me pay for the transportation expenses, and she will give me the money. I will go to my same school."

These quotations reflect some of the voices of Palestinian young women sharing their perception of the effect of political violence on women education in Palestine. Their voices challenge the existing epistemologies and literature on women's education in conflict zones, and call for a serious inquiry not only in analyzing the process of knowledge production, but also in examining the policies based on such theoretical constructions. The current paper will discuss two main issues. The first issue will review the existing experiences and literature on gender and education in conflict and war zones, and the second will map, review and analyze the case of Palestinian women's education under military occupation. I will focus on the interaction between the effect of deprivation and restriction of education on women and its impact on Palestinian women's survival strategies when facing the brutality of occupation. The paper hopes to reveal not only the historical attack against the educational system in Palestine (Abu-Lughod 1999; Tibawi 1956; Hadad 1980), but its present impact including the barriers (spatial, political, economic and cultural) in getting education when restrictions on movement and other abuses- including sexual abuse- are increasing. Data from a recent study reveals that many girls are not allowed to attend school because of sexual vulnerability. Restriction on the mobility of girls is rooted in patriarchal control of female bodies and sexualities, but as the data will show, cultural norms are challenged by young girl's national ideology that encourages them to fight back by making their journey to school a new site of resistance. The data (based on personal interviews, focus groups and participatory observation) reveals the way in which young women construct a counter-hegemonic discourse and activism against military occupation by reaching their educational institutions despite their hardships. The paper will challenge existing literature by showing that although political violence might exacerbate familial and social control over women's bodies and reinforce the need to preserve and protect a culture from external threat and extinction, military violence could also bring women to create new methods of fighting back. I will conclude by stressing the need to refrain from constructing totalizing ideas about women and education in conflict and war zones, and propose building feminist-sensitive policies for the creation of oppositional consciousness, intervention and activism.

Meredeth Turshen - Women, War, and Learning: Beyond the Documentation of Atrocities

This paper will address two of the many pressing areas in which we need more research, comparative analysis, and activism: first, the need to integrate the new literature on men and masculinities into our understanding of gender shifts in war-torn societies and second, the need to integrate the findings of studies of ethnic conflict with research on gender relations in ethnic groups and the location of ethnic groups in society, especially minority groups. Both issues have important implications for education and for the reception of refugees.

Haifa Zangana - The Unfinished Struggle: Priorities of Iraqi Women Under Occupation

Before the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003, more than half of Iraqi university students and a substantial proportion of faculty were women. Fields such as engineering had better representation of

women than they do in most Western countries. Now, in a country where educational facilities have been destroyed and academics are targeted, 50% of girls do not attend school. Lack of security, poor sanitation, polluted water, decline in health services, and violations of human rights are the daily reality. Iraqi women's historical struggle against colonial domination, and for national unity, social justice and legal equality, has been reduced to bickering among a handful of "women leaders" over nominal political posts. Under these circumstances, what are Iraqi women's priorities? What about the need to ensure the full participation of women in political, economy, and educational sectors? How do they perceive the work of local and international women's NGOs? What about international women's peace initiatives?

Biographies - Performers

Meaghan Giusti came to Toronto five years ago from Sudbury, ON to start her professional dance career. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance from York University where she studied under professors and choreographers such as Andrea Nann, Yvonne Ng, Carol Anderson and Holly Small. She is currently doing her masters at York. As a choreographer and performer she has presented her work this year for Sudbury's Earthdancers and for Toronto's fFIDA International Dance Festival.

Nikta Javanfar was born in Tehran, Iran and immigrated to Canada at the age of three. Nikta is an accomplished musician and a competitive gymnast. Dance, however, has always been at the forefront of Nikta's artistic output. She has had many years of training in Jazz, Tap, Creative Modern, National Dance, but her focus is Ballet. Her teachers include Catherine Glasser, and Helen Cherry. Studying under distinguished dancer and instructor, Ida Meftahi, Nikta has had the opportunity of cultivating her talent in Persian dance to the fullest. She won first place three times for performing Persian dance in classical folk dance category at the Kiwanis Festival and has performed at the Iranian Festival in Ottawa in 2004, and fFIDA International Fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists, 2005.

Ida Meftahi is a dancer, choreographer, dance teacher and a researcher. She started her dance training as a child and pursued her advanced dance education with Farzaneh Kaboli, the lead dancer of National Folk Dancers of Iran before the 1979 revolution. Ida mastered various styles of traditional and folk dances and had several performances with Farzaneh Kaboli's dance group in Iran. After she came to Canada in 2000, Ida has been performing and teaching. She has performed many times in Canada and appeared on CBC television. Ida is currently studying towards her Master of Arts in dance at York University and conducts historical research on dance in Iran.

Heather Saum is originally from Saskatchewan and her interests include burlesque performance studies, choreography and dance education. She is currently completing her M.A. in dance at York University and has studied with Olivia Tailfeathers and Davida Monk.

This event was made possible by Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto Social Justice Cluster (Faculty of Social Work and OISE/UT), Centre for Diaspora and Transnationality Studies, Centre for the Study of the United States, Dean's Office (OISE/UT), Toronto Women's Bookstore, Comparative, International and Development Education (OISE/UT) and the Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology.