

Sylff



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Profiles and Acceptance Speeches of the Awardees

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Profile of Amal Jadou

Ms. Amal Jadou is currently a Ph.D. candidate in international relations at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, the first university to receive a SYLFF endowment, in 1987. She was a recipient of a SYLFF fellowship for the 2001-2003 academic years. During the past year, Amal participated in the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, as a sponsored fellow. The focus of her scholarly work and her primary life interest is international negotiation and conflict resolution.



As discouraged and pessimistic as many people are when they experience and witness the vicissitudes of the Israeli-Palestine peace process, hope is strongly intact in the mind of Amal Jadou, a 31-year old Palestinian. In fact, her given name, Amal, means “hope” in Arabic, and is a name that she has more than lived up to in her thoughts and actions.

Born and raised in a small house in the Aida Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, a unit of, and owned by, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Amal has contrary views of her homeland. On the one hand she deeply loves the camp for the warmth of its people. On the other hand, Amal has a strong aversion to the camp, which she views as a symbol of oppression of her and her people. Being both a refugee and a woman, she describes herself as coming from the most disenfranchised sectors within Palestinian society.

Amal’s pursuit of education has been motivated by her strong commitment to facilitating positive change, a commitment that she acquired from her widowed grandmother, who raised three young children single-handedly. A strong believer in education, her grandmother was convinced that ignorance prevented Palestinians from realizing what was happening around them. From her mother, Amal learned that diligence will bring peace. Also, the seeds of leadership and sense of responsibility for society that had been planted by her mother later led Amal to become involved in many activities. In addition, her father’s support and encouragement gave her the strength to open herself to new experiences.

While obtaining university degrees in Palestine—a bachelor’s degree from Bethlehem University in 1995, and a master’s degree from Birzeit University in 2000—Amal began to open her eyes to the suffering of another people. In 1998, she lived for two months with several Native American families in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Despite the differences in culture and religious beliefs of the Palestinians and Native Americans, Amal discovered that these two very different peoples had much in common. This led her to focus on what she could and ought to do to contribute to the creation of a peaceful and better life for the future Palestine.

Upon returning home, she worked hand-in-hand with various people, including an Israeli lawyer who represented Palestinian political prisoners in Israel, and young people from around the world who, like her, were reaching out across cultural, ideological, religious, and gender boundaries. Through her experiences, she realized that there were groups of Israelis who detested the occupation of Palestine as much as the Palestinians.

Amal opened herself to Western culture through her best friend, a Canadian woman. Their discussions, which transcended their two cultures, led Amal to rein-

force her awareness of the important values of her own culture and religion, and concurrently to seek opportunities to experience and learn about another culture.

She was also influenced by a Palestinian friend, a young poet, activist, and ex-prisoner, who dedicated his life to working for the rights of political prisoners and for human rights in general. His poetry, dedication, and public service inspired Amal in her endeavors.

Amal was the first Palestinian woman to appear on Palestinian television, in 1997. She served as a newscaster and emcee of a political program in which she interviewed ambassadors, presidents, and prime ministers from nations all across the world. During that same period, Amal also served in several NGOs that focused on issues directly relating to refugees, women, and children. In addition, she became active in several political and social organizations in Palestine.

Amal's desire and need to study outside Palestine were triggered by the failure of the Oslo Accord and the eruption of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. The words of an American official during a January 9, 2001, news broadcast—"We have tried all means possible to resolve the Middle East conflict, but we failed"—struck her just days before the end of Bill Clinton's tenure as president of the United States. Amal made her way to The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy to pursue a doctoral degree, determined that she would contribute to peace-making and would work to end the suffering of her people.

Amal plans to return to Palestine after the expected completion of her doctoral studies in the spring of 2005. She is considering assuming a teaching position at Birzeit University, where she once studied. Ultimately her sights are set on holding a seat in the 88-member Palestinian Legislative Council, where she hopes to become a strong voice for women's issues and prisoners' rights.

"Amal presents a voice that is direct, but nonconfrontational. She respects the other's point of view. . . . She has used her very precious free time and has spoken at many schools, churches, and community organizations . . . [She is] an ambassador of goodwill for raising the awareness of the Palestinian struggle, and has contributed to a better understanding of Arab life and culture, particularly Islam. . . . Risking her ability to cross the border into Israel and to return to the United States, each summer Amal has returned to Palestine . . . to keep in touch with the political situation and so that she can maintain her credibility and not be a forgotten voice. . . . [S]he taught a course on negotiation and conflict resolution at summer camps organized in the Bethlehem area to students from Bethlehem University and Al-Quds Open University . . . teaching [students] how to listen and empathize—skills which will help them in the future and hopefully help empower them to break a chain of violence."

(Gerard Sheehan, Executive Associate Dean, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy)

"Using a strong, carefully crafted style of leadership, she is able to command the respect of both men and women within her community [as a member of the Aida refugee camp local committee, the elected body that represents the camp]. . . . Amal is among the more articulate Palestinian speakers our relief and aid organization has encountered. . . . [She] was invited to be a primary speaker at an international partnership conference, representing a liberal voice for her people—as a Palestinian, a refugee, a Muslim and of course, (surprising for outsiders, ignorant of this land's potential), a woman." (Mary Kate Maclsaac, Communications Manager, 1997-2001, World Vision-Jerusalem)

Speech for the SYLFF Prize Award Ceremony

Amal Jadou

Dear Friends, Sisters, and Brothers:

The Tokyo Foundation, its members and partners, as well as its distinguished chairman and executive directors, have made a difficult decision that makes a difference in my life. You have already made a difference in my life by standing up for justice and the pursuit of peace in my country by intervening positively in the cause of peace. You did so by believing in me, a young woman from a refugee camp, somewhere so far away from here. You granted me the opportunity to study in prestigious American universities such as the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Harvard Law School. You have taken me by the hand, removing me from the tiny refugee camp where I had been living and opening my mind to new horizons of knowledge and education. Now you are rewarding not only my hard academic work but also recognizing all those who are committed to a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, who continue to challenge the current cycle of violence and the mutual infliction of pain and suffering, and who continue to provide hope in the midst of darkness and fear. I am truly honored to receive this prize, which I view as a source of empowerment for individuals all over the world who share the values of justice, reconciliation, and peace.

I come to you from a small beautiful country that has a name and an identity. It has a long, continuous history and a distinguished language. It has been the cradle of several civilizations and religions. Prophets, pioneers, pilgrims, and poets have made it their destination. My people are one, fused by centuries of

history in my homeland, bound together by a collective memory of shared sorrows and joys and a unity of purpose and vision. We have our own songs and hymns, our folkloric stories, and our own poetry and images that all share a tint of melancholy that colors even our happiest moments. These are all important aspects of our national and cultural identity.

I come from a country that glows with the brightness of heavenly good news and celestial messages. It has given humanity a great deal of knowledge, art, culture, mythologies, and other forms of the richness of human expression. It has also experienced much pain. My country is called Palestine. Palestine has surpassed the local alphabet to enter the international lexicon as a synonym for the quest for freedom and liberty.

From my small country Jesus Christ rose to spread the light of love and peace to the whole world so as to end its suffering. With his birth, humanity's pursuit of a new historical era began. It all started there in my country. The land of my country has captured the love and the imagination of millions of people throughout history.

For more than one hundred years now, my country has been searching for its humanistic salvation. As one handcuff is broken from around the wrists of Palestine, it is replaced by a new one. My country is still searching for its stolen liberty. It is still defying an occupation that presses so heavily on its chest. Palestine is shaking under the blades of the occupiers. The hands of Palestine are waving, urging the world to end its silence to oppression and aggression. But my country will not die, because conscience never dies.

I am the daughter of a people who have been dispersed and massacred. Our villages have been destroyed. My people live in a diaspora all over the world. We live humiliated in camps. We live with our memories and our sadness—and with the keys to our destroyed homes.

I come to you only after breaking a tight siege, a siege of fear that prevails on the allies—a siege of continued pain and the groans of the dead, the prisoners, and the hungry. In my mind still echoes the hovering of the Apache helicopters as they drop tons of explosives on children and women in Nablus, Gaza, and Jenin. The scenes of uprooted trees live in my memory.

I come to you after witnessing the withering away of the green in my country. I have seen people humiliated at checkpoints and trodden upon by military boots. The cities, villages, camps, and neighborhoods of Palestine are separated from each other by 618 Israeli military checkpoints. To come to you, I had to pass through armed checkpoints and daily terror. I tried to find a hole in the huge “Apartheid Wall” that is being erected around us. The wall is stealing our land and our water, leaving my people in a large prison.

As I come to you, in my heart is the pain of my people. Each Palestinian household has suffered from death, injury, deportation, and/or imprisonment as a result of the occupation of our land. Since the beginning of the current intifada, 3,200 Palestinians have been killed, 6,300 houses have been demolished, and hundreds of acres have been expropriated by the Israeli occupation authorities. About 70 percent of my people live below the poverty line. My country is a war zone where war is waged daily on the humanity and dignity of each individual.

I stand before you in the fullness of such pain, but I maintain the pride of my people and their anticipation, yearning, and dreams of justice and freedom. For too long my



Interview with Joe Gainza of the American Friends Service Committee, Montpelier, Vermont, U.S.

people have been silenced, denied their natural rights, and their identity negated. Our rightful struggle against injustice has been slandered, and our present existence is only considered by the past tragedy of another people.

As I was growing up, for me the most painful aspect of the Israeli occupation was the denial of my people's existence, as we were victimized by the myth of “a land without a people” and described as “the invisible Palestinians.” In the face of such willful blindness, we refused to accept dissolution. Our continued struggle for peace and freedom is a testimony to our perseverance and resilience. We will not settle down until we reach a just peace.

I stand before you today not as a supplicant but rather as a torchbearer for the truth. I stand before you empowered by hundreds of United Nations' and other international organizations' resolutions, the latest of which was the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion to the General Assembly, saying that the majority of the separation barrier being built by Israel violates international law and the rights of Palestinians. My plea from Tokyo to the whole world is this: that the international community stand by its commitments to my people and end the Israeli occupation. I call on the international community to ensure that the Fourth Geneva Convention is applied

and respected in the Occupied Territories and that Palestinian mothers be able to deliver their babies in hospitals instead of at checkpoints. I ask the world to play an active role in setting free the 8,000 Palestinian prisoners who are currently languishing in Israeli prisons and detention centers, most of them detained without charge or trial, many cruelly mistreated and tortured in interrogations, guilty only of seeking liberty and defying the occupation.

The message of peace-loving Israelis and Palestinians is simple: End the occupation and end the suffering of both peoples; stop confiscating and stealing the lands of others to build settlements; end the death of civilians on both sides; end fear and insecurity; and end pain. Occupation exacts a high toll on the occupiers as well as on the occupied. Young Israeli men and women are being transformed into tools of a blind, violent, and oppressive regime. They are inflicting pain on their fellow human beings, who in turn react and inflict pain on innocent civilians, and thus the cycle continues. Pain knows no national boundaries, and no one can claim a monopoly on suffering. During the period of my education in the United States, I have marched in protest hand in hand with American Jews as well as with Israelis who detest the occupation as much as I do. These individuals are my natural allies against oppression. My call to the international community is the call of liberals all over the world: for the world to do its best to set us free and to not forsake or forget us.

Since 1988, the Palestinian people and its leadership have responded positively to every just peace initiative in their pursuit of peace, and they have given birth to a resolution to create two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. We cannot be made to bear the brunt of other people's "no" and their violation of international legitimacy, their continued assassinations, confiscation of land, and settlement activities. The state of Palestine

must be born on the land of Palestine so as to reverse the injustice of the destruction of its historical reality and to set its people free. Palestine must be created as a state that includes all of the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The most significant principle that I have learned through my studies is the indispensability of the rule of law, at both the national and international levels. Only the rule of law is capable of providing accountability and guaranteeing justice. I am a strong believer in institutions, for they serve as safeguards against unilateral power and selfish individualistic interests. It is within these two parameters of law and institutions that a resolution to the Middle East conflict can be found. Only the involvement of the international community and the implementation of relevant international law can serve as a factor of balance between the two unequal parties. The interna-



Speaking at Christ the King Church, Burlington, Vermont, U.S.

tional community and international law are needed to silence the drums of war—a war that is taking a toll not just in Palestine/Israel but across the region. The regional client regimes that are seeking to maintain control are exploiting the lack of a settlement of the Palestinian question to continue to oppress their peoples and to deny them the right to participate in governance.

Globally, fundamentalist ideologues exploit the lack of a solution to the Palestinian problem in order to mobilize young men and women to get involved in terrorist actions. It is necessary to emphasize that artificial and unilateral solutions such as that reflected by the apartheid wall will not resolve the conflict and will only lead to greater violence and greater injustices, including the continuing theft of land and water, as well as to the creation of isolated ghettos, destroying the chances of a viable Palestinian state.

Another imperative for peace and stability in the Middle East is Palestinian nation-building on the principles of democracy, separation of powers, the rule of law, respect for human rights, institution building, and accountability. Occupation is a new form of slavery, and it should not be used as an excuse to avoid responsibility. The most important requisites for Palestinians today are our national unity and the chance for our young men and women to assume their roles in leading the nation. What is needed now is a leadership that has a new vision and that is able to formulate policies and strategies that will empower the people. Resisting occupation and building the nation must go hand in hand, so that a free, liberal, democratic, and open-minded Palestine can be established.

My pledge to you is that together with fellow Palestinians and activists from the Israeli peace camp, as well as with people from all over the world who believe in freedom, I will continue to work for the principles of justice, peace, reconciliation based on international



In Aida Refugee Camp with Taiwanese TV crews and children of the camp.

legitimacy, democracy, and reform.

Three years ago, in the statement of purpose portion of my application to the Fletcher School, I said that I was going to the United States to grow wings in order to fly. But I was naïve to think that I needed to grow wings. In my academic learning, I discovered that God had created me with the wings I need. For me to learn to fly, I merely needed to be trained in how to use my wings. I discovered that what I have learned is how to navigate better in a changing environment and how to keep my eyes focused on my goals. Fletcher was the ideal place for me to learn how to navigate. I thank The Nippon Foundation and The Tokyo Foundation both for the SYLFF fellowship that I received and for the continued support that enabled me to learn how to navigate more smoothly while keeping in mind not only the interests of my people, but also those of all humanity.

Thank you for listening so attentively.

Profile of Eglá J. Martínez-Salazar

Ms. Eglá J. Martínez-Salazar is currently a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at York University, which in 1990 became the 14th institution of higher learning to receive a SYLFF endowment. She received a SYLFF fellowship for the 1999-2000 academic year. The preliminary title of her doctoral dissertation—“Racialized Legacies, Contested Citizenship and Everyday Resistances: The Challenges of Guatemalan Mayan Women”—reflects her scholarly interests and commitment to improving the human condition.



Eglá, a naturalized Canadian from Central America, was born to an impoverished Mestizo family in eastern Guatemala, where indigenous peoples—Pipiles and Xincas—were forced to assimilate the customs and language brought by Spanish colonizers. At that time, Guatemalan society denied alternative histories and the cultural wealth and contributions of indigenous peoples, women, and the poor. Social justice requires, therefore, overturning the colonial legacy as an ongoing human rights commitment.

Eglá grew up speaking Spanish in a country where more than twenty-two Maya languages were spoken and where Arawak and other Garifuna languages also endured. To survive, her family was forced to work on cotton plantations, and she recalls being with them at age seven where the working conditions were severe but where she first met contemporary Mayas. This early and direct exposure to the fresh meaning of social inequality impacted her self in its entirety. In the late 1970s and 1980s, her world was forever altered by massive violence against poor and indigenous people by the Guatemalan army and militias supported by economic elites and international powers.

When she was thirteen, her family moved to a more-peaceful place, and her passion for education and social engagement flourished. She was elected president of the students association, and she organized various educational and recreational events in a town that lacked healthy entertainment for young people. Eglá also set up a school that would function during vacations to help students who had failed basic subjects. The result was a successful community youth project.

Later she studied at a teachers college and became an elementary teacher, amidst fierce state repression and while many of her peers in other schools were being kidnapped, tortured, and killed. Mayas in the western highlands were being massacred, and their communities were being occupied by forces of the militarized state. Eglá continued her social-engagement and humanitarian activities within the student movement, supporting human rights for common people, but she was unable to complete her studies because in 1981 her father was brutally murdered by soldiers attired as civilians.

Immigrating to Mexico, Eglá joined the Guatemalan human-rights movement there and worked with homeless and parent-less street children and adolescents. Work with the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission followed.

Three years following her father's murder, Eglá's older sister was kidnapped and tortured by the military, and then her younger brother was killed when he stepped on a land mine in a military zone while working with Maya people. According to Eglá, her family's case is only one tiny grain of sand in an immense desert of destruction and sorrow. More than 200,000 lives were lost, more than 43,000 citizens kidnapped, and more than 440 Maya towns completely erased from the national map during wave after wave of state and militia backed terror against Indigenous peoples and progressive Ladinos-Mestizos. She believes that her family's losses, although unforgettable and irreparable, gave her the strength to continue to believe in social justice as an ultimate goal.

A few years later, Eglá moved to Canada with her new family to find a safer place in which to live, but Canadian life was hard for her. In addition to having to learn another language, she was living in poverty in a rich nation and facing new forms of racism. Nevertheless, she began to participate in various community organizations dealing with the rights of immigrants, women, and the homeless. Working with people of different cultures, class backgrounds, sexual orientations, religions, and ages enhanced her vision of the world, and it demonstrated to her how lives are mediated and shaped by hierarchical relations of power.

In 1996, Eglá returned to university life to acquire new analytical tools that could contribute to critical knowledge of human rights and social justice, while working as a counselor and outreach worker at the Community Radio Collective, Toronto Rape Crisis Center, and the Hispanic Community Centre for the City of York. By 1999 she had obtained a master's degree in environmental studies at York University. Her scholarly work incorporated applied objectives that she developed in cooperation with national organizations concerned with women, development, and Indigenous peoples in Guatemala and Central America. She is especially grateful to Maya-Tz'utujils from Santiago Atitlán, who, in 1999, were the first to open their humble houses and to talk with her, defying an entrenched culture of terror.

"Ms. Martinez-Salazar is among the most prolific in terms of her scholarship through either publications or presentations to learned audiences." (John Lennox, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University.) She "is a truly exceptional individual who came to graduate studies at York University as a mature person who had developed very strong commitments to international human rights and to international development in periods of her life. At the core of this flow of activity was a deep commitment to improving the human condition. Idealistic in her goals and practical in her work, Eglá continues to promote a vision of a better world and is an inspiration to others." (Alan Simmons, Professor of Sociology, York University.)

"Ms. Martinez-Salazar is a warrior, a leader, and an activist concerned with the issues affecting men, women, and children through the impact of violence in our families, community, society, and globally." (Grissel Orellana, Crisis Line Coordinator, Latin-American Women's Program)

Speech for the SYLFF Prize Award Ceremony

Egla J. Martinez-Salazar

Distinguished members of The Tokyo Foundation and The Nippon Foundation, ladies and gentlemen: It is deeply and personally significant for me to receive this award. It means that socially engaged scholarship by public intellectuals working in the social sciences and humanities continues to be a central activity of theirs and one that is perhaps more relevant than ever.

I am very impressed by the dedication of The Tokyo Foundation and The Nippon Foundation in recognizing how critical social science research is in a period of history when its importance is being diminished by powerful interests.

I am committed to engaged scholarship, in which activity I am being nurtured by several mentors in the Department of Sociology of York University, Canada—a university where John Lennox, the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, encouraged me to accept the nomination for this award, for which he, Dr. Alan Simmons, and community worker Grissel Orellana offered their unconditional support.

To me, engaged scholarship means active



Maya-Tz'utujil women from the Association of Widows, *Kmucané* during her field work in 2002

involvement with others who are working positively toward the achievement of social justice through both the production of more-accurate knowledge and the formation of community partnerships. This means rigorously applying the most appropriate, critical, and innovative epistemologies, from which the everyday world is not left out but rather is linked to a web of social relations. Such an approach goes deeper and leads to a more-insightful analysis of the obstacles to change, the conditions necessary for rapid social improvement, and the possibilities, even minimal, of involving—as active participants in positive social, economic, and political change—those who are marginalized. I learned to value this type of scholarship during my fieldwork in Guatemala. It was there where I developed a more dynamic sociological imagination to see and to analyze—through sociological ethnography, deep interviewing, team-surveys, focus groups, and other methodological strategies—how, amidst extreme difficulties and paradoxes, many Maya women are recuperating and reconfiguring the Maya “cosmovision”, and seeking the right to historical memory as sites for building a more-inclusive society.

I, along with others, think that engaged research also reaffirms the indivisibility of human rights and citizenship rights—indivisibility that in practical terms means bringing to the center social, economic, and cultural rights as pivotal elements in eradicating poverty, exploitation, and subordination in all their dimensions.

It would have been easier for me to present to you a joyful speech about the great progress that it is being made to eradicate poverty and

exploitation in Guatemala and Latin America generally and about various human-rights successes in that region. However, it is impossible for me to ignore several urgent news messages that I received two days before preparing this speech and while I was drafting it. The messages related terrible happenings that illustrate the paradoxes of peace settlements in general and those concerning Guatemala, my homeland, in particular. Although peace settlements through cease-fires are important, peace cannot be built if the conditions of social exclusion remain the same or if they worsen. From 2001 to the present, more than 1,089 women, the majority being young and from the poorest sectors of society, have been cruelly killed in Guatemala. To mention just one incident, on July 5, 2004, private security forces hired by landowners attacked two Maya peasant children, a girl and a boy, 15 and 13 years of age, respectively. The girl, Maria de Lourdes, in addition to being beaten up, was raped. I asked myself, how can these crimes go unnoticed and become part of the normal way of life, and why is the humanity of these children being denigrated? These terrible things happened because the parents of these children are Maya peasant leaders who have used all the existing laws to demand that their social rights, such as land rights, be respected.

Although I am extremely joyful at receiving this award, it is also true that my pleasure is in part bitter-sweet. Talking to you is a privileged occasion to speak publicly about the continuing atrocities in my home country. It also is an occasion to express my solidarity with others in the world as a whole, particularly women and children in the occupied territories of Palestine, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia, to name just a few places where they suffer in ways similar to how people suffer in Guatemala.

When Cesar Chávez, the historic human-rights leader of farmworkers in the United States, was engaged in his first fast, in 1968, in protest to the spraying of pesticides on work-

ers, he received from Dr. Martin Luther King a note that said, “Our separate struggles are really one—a struggle for freedom, for dignity and for humanity.” Chávez stated that he was profoundly moved that someone facing such a tremendous struggle himself would take the time to worry about a struggle taking place on the other side of the continent. Because it is impossible for me to emulate Chávez and King, the least I can do is to share with you some issues that deserve our attention on an every-day basis. In my case, and as Emma Goldman said on July 9, 1917, “As a student of social wrongs, it is my aim to diagnose a wrong.”



Members of the community radio *La Voz de Atitlán*, in an event to celebrate the anniversary of dynamic and enduring community organization

Diagnosing and examining social wrongs has been facilitated by the doctoral fellowship I received in 1999-2000. In the winter of 1999, I was carrying out fieldwork in the Maya community of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, to complete my master’s degree, when I learned that I had been awarded a SYLFF fellowship, administered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies of York University. This was incredibly wonderful, for it meant that I could stop borrowing money from the state-sponsored student-loan program. By that time my debt had accumulated to a large amount, because poverty is a concrete condition for many, especially immigrants of color, working-class women, and First Nations peoples who, like me, live, work, and study in the First World. The problem of poverty has become

more acute since 1979, when there was launched a new economic order that values individualism over social rights to the point that higher education is becoming more a privilege for the few than a right for everyone. Within this context, the SYLFF fellowship also meant that I could focus my efforts full-time on my doctoral studies, improve my bilingual language skills, and take on new professional teaching work, which I did in 2000.

The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF) Program has had an enormously positive impact on my life and on my professional development. This fellowship also enabled an inner sense of certainty that the subjects that I am investigating and analyzing in my Ph.D. dissertation—colonial legacies and contested citizenship from and by Maya Women in Guatemala and its implications for a social justice-oriented peace—are worthy of effort. I also feel that, as a woman of color in Canada, as a human being from working-class origins, and as a Guatemalan Mestiza by birth, I can contribute to new scholarship concerning questions of human rights, active citizenship, recognition and redistribution.

My involvement with the SYLFF Program has had another positive and memorable impact on me: the opportunity to meet and to interact with committed and excellent intellectuals and scholars from different universities, many just finishing their studies, in particular individuals in charge of organizing the SYLFF-sponsored series of international conferences on global social inequality. I was fortunate to be able to travel to South Africa and to visit the town and the prison where Nelson Mandela and countless others fighters for humanity had been confined, and to see these places as memorials to their heroism and bravery. These remembrances are components of a world web of actions and ideals that create spaces of hope and the belief that another, better world is possible, at the same time of exposing the incongruity of the priorities of

the powerful for which war and the preparation of war are more relevant. As Betty Williams said in her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech of 1977, these priorities, which result in more than US\$500,000 being spent each minute on war and the preparation for war, allow eight people to die of neglect and malnutrition every minute.

My experiences since childhood and my more recent studies have led me to view socioeconomic rights as indivisible from civil and political rights. The bridges between these spheres are multiple and perhaps as yet poorly understood. My recent fieldwork in different communities in Guatemala, where I lived and ate with extremely poor families, especially those headed by women who were widows because of state-sponsored violence supported by the international superpowers, has reaffirmed in me the need to critically rethink social exclusion within the framework of human rights and social citizenship. Within this approach, human and citizenship rights must be seen as inseparable and as integral to all societies. Several impoverished and monolingual Maya-Tz'utujil widows captured this integrality from the conditions in which they have lived, using not conventionally sophisticated concepts, but rather the sophisticated words that come from everyday wisdom and pain. I summarize their thinking and reflections by linking several of their thoughts as follows:

It is nice to put good words on paper, words that protect people and words that say that I as a woman, as a poor person, and as a Tz'utujil have rights. But please tell me what would be the real purpose of these words if I remain poor and if my children cannot go to school? Or if I live in this piece of hut that is my house, and if I do not know where the body of my husband is? Or if, when I ride buses, go to hospitals and other places, I am treated like I am a stone, as if I am not human. The other day a bus

driver said, “Maria, get up because this miss (a well-dressed Ladina woman) needs a seat.” But I had paid the same fare that she did, and my name is not Maria. But his country thinks that all Maya women are named Maria. Well, tell me what the written words say when I do not have the resources to live better and when I am not respected as a person, as a woman? (Interviews and informal conversations during fieldwork, 2002).

I truly believe that as an academic I can contribute, even if just in a small way, to scholarship and to applied knowledge that can influence some international and national policies relating to social justice, human rights, human and ecological development, and democracy on a global scale. Also, I hope that I can continue to work directly with grassroots organizations and to help them to develop new ways of framing their efforts toward achieving progressive social change. In my doctoral fieldwork I was told by many Maya women—community leaders—that social justice might be ignored at the current juncture of history when issues of national security are central in both international headlines and the political agendas of nation-states throughout the world. The current juncture also promotes a view of democracy as being limited to formal elections and voting rights—without giving much thought to whether those elements alone can resolve crucial issues of hunger, preventable illnesses, violence against women, racism,



Maya-Tz'utujil children with disabilities supported by the community organization ADISA

environmental degradation, AIDS, and war.

While at times I feel that as an academic there is very little I can accomplish for social justice, I believe that with the contribution of others I can promote the principle of bringing the university to the community and the community to the university. Some examples of this engagement exist in various Latin American countries. These efforts need to be nourished and extended by allocating resources—including human resources that include academics and social activists—for building more-fruitful partnerships within and across nations. These partnerships will produce new perspectives, fresh arguments that could nurture emerging research findings on social justice, and developments that can be shared among different social actors.

As part of my reformulation of social justice in light of social citizenship and human rights, I envision that it will be possible to set up collaborative research projects involving Latin American scholars and other academics to deal with critical public- and social-policy issues concerning poverty, gender inequality, sustainable development, and racism. It will be possible to use part of the information resulting from such projects as the content in community radio programs designed to reach people who cannot read or write. A portion of this work must be in diverse indigenous languages.

At a more personal level, I am committed to support the work of local Guatemalan Maya women's groups and associations that have not received any international or national aid and that are primarily constituted by impoverished Maya widows and their orphaned children, both being groups that were the hardest hit by the recent history of genocide and state terror.

My life as a journey for social justice continues, and I hope, in the time left to me on this Earth, to contribute in some small ways to various dimensions of social equity. I wish to end this talk by expressing my deepest and most-sincere thanks for your generosity, patience, warm welcome, and gracious attention.

Profile of Goran Svilanovic

Mr. Goran Svilanovic is the president of the Civic Alliance of Serbia and a member of Parliament. From November 2000 through April 2004 he served as the minister of foreign affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (later the country changed its name into the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro). He was a recipient of a SYLFF fellowship in 1990-91 from the University of Belgrade, the 10th SYLFF-endowed university. Goran's leadership has permeated—and continues to permeate—all aspects of his life as a scholar, activist, and politician.



Born in 1963 in Gnjilane, Kosovo Province, Goran earned bachelor's and master's degrees in law from the University of Belgrade. He also studied at the Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, and at Saarland University in Saarbrücken, Germany. At the latter's Europa-Institute, he engaged in in-depth study of both the essential values upon which the European Union was created, and the human rights guarantees of the United Nations and the European Convention on Human Rights. His focus on human rights was augmented and reinforced by research he conducted at the European Peace University in Austria.

Goran, a renowned antiwar and anti-nationalism activist over the past decade, founded the SOS Hotline for the Victims of Ethnic, Religious, Political and Trade Union Discrimination within the Centre of Anti-War Action in 1993. Shortly afterwards, he assumed the presidency of the Council for Human Rights within the Centre and provided legal assistance to individuals in Yugoslavia who were suffering from ethnic discrimination and the consequences of growing nationalism during the conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina.

Following the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord in Bosnia in December 1995, Goran joined The Civic Alliance of Serbia (GSS), a political party established in 1992 to participate in and promote the movement against war and nationalism in Yugoslavia and to advance respect for the human rights of all citizens of that country. He became the spokesman of the GSS in 1997 and its vice-president in the following year.

In 1998, Yugoslavia adopted the Law on Universities, a repressive law that totally eliminated the autonomy of universities in that country. Goran, who at that time was a teaching assistant at the School of Law, University of Belgrade, participated in a strike demanding repeal of this new law and reinstatement of academic and political freedom in the nation's universities. As a result, he and nine other professors were ousted from the Law School and few tens from other faculties of the University of Belgrade.

A few months later, in the spring of 1999, NATO forces bombed Yugoslavia. After the bombing ceased, Goran became president of the GSS, and that party joined the Alliance for Changes, a coalition of democratic parties. This alliance launched a new political struggle by organizing a series of public addresses and protests in the nation's big cities, thus encouraging citizens to rebel against the Milosevic regime.

At the time of the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2000, the GSS and other democratic parties formed the Democratic Opposition of Serbia. Although the

coalition won the majority of parliamentary seats, and although its candidate, Dr. Vojislav Kostunica, was elected as president of Yugoslavia, the nation's non-democratic regime refused to recognize those results. This led to mass protests. On October 5, 2000, millions of people poured into Belgrade and occupied the Federal Assembly Building and other key government buildings, thus ending Slobodan Milosevic's rule. Goran was in the first group of citizens to occupy the parliament building and to persuade the police to peacefully desist from breaking up the citizens' demonstrations.

When the newly elected Federal Assembly founded the first democratic Government of Yugoslavia early in November of 2000, Goran was appointed minister of foreign affairs. In that capacity, Goran presented the vision of a new foreign policy of a free and democratic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia when the Federal Assembly convened in 2001. "It was necessary," he recalls, "to open the country, to remove the UN sanctions, to reconcile with both [our nation's] neighbors and the most powerful countries of the world, to integrate into regional organizations, and to start the process of integration into the European Union." The new government succeeded in implementing Goran's vision within the next six months.

The government faced many other challenges, including cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), settlement of relations between Serbia and Montenegro, and the Kosovo issue. In addition to discharging his responsibilities as foreign minister, Goran became the president of the National Council for Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. "In this capacity," he wrote, "I am in a position to apply in the most direct way my faith in the absolute virtuousness of human rights, constantly promoting cooperation with the tribunal in a way that reflects full respect for the national interests of my country, in order to enable the holding of court trials for those responsible for war crimes."

At present, Goran also works with the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, the Centre for the Promotion of Studies of the Law, and other nongovernmental organizations. All of his endeavors are directly related to the promotion of human rights, the advancement of good relations between Serbia and its Balkan neighbors, and preparation for Serbia and Montenegro to become members of the European Union and NATO.

He has written more than 30 monographs and articles on civil law procedure, including *A Proposition for Renewal of Litigation Procedure* and *Civil Law Lexicon*.

Goran's development into the internationally recognized leader that he is now is well summarized by the following words of Dr. Marija Bogdanovic, rector of the University of Belgrade: "As a SYLFF fellow with an excellent academic record, involvement in community activities, and strong leadership potential, Mr. Svilanovic gradually became one of the leaders of the movement for human rights and democracy in Serbia, serving as one of the key political leaders of the Serbian opposition that brought about democratic changes in that nation. He is now the leading political figure in Serbia and Montenegro."

Speech for the SYLFF Prize Award Ceremony

Goran Svilanovic

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests, friends of The Nippon Foundation and The Tokyo Foundation,

It has been fifteen years since I was honored to receive a SYLFF fellowship as a postgraduate student in the Law School at the University of Belgrade. The title of this fellowship at my alma mater, “*For the future leaders of the world*”, was very tempting and promising, particularly for a young lawyer at the very beginning of his university career. And I was proud.

At that time I dreamed of becoming a full professor of law, teaching Civil Procedure. Therefore, I used the fellowship to spend some time at the University of Saarbruecken in Germany to gather literature for my master’s thesis under the title “*A Proposition for Renewal of Litigation Procedure*”. I am grateful to you for providing for me this opportunity.

But one’s life is not to be predicted and not all dreams are to be fulfilled. The river of life sometime goes beyond our expectations, beyond our dreams. The Federation of Yugoslavia, that was putting together 22 million people of different ethnicities, six republics, two autonomous provinces, was splitting as a result of substantial changes in Europe—the fall of the Berlin Wall and break-up of the Soviet Union. The country’s elite in every republic and in every province was faced with the choice to introduce changes in society that would replace the socialist economy with a market economy, that would restructure not only the economy, but would also unavoidably reorganize the sharing of power in society and bring democracy to the people. Instead, they chose to introduce nationalist rhetoric in politics. They chose to reveal the beast of

national hatred. While claiming they were fighting for their people, their nations and their territories, they were fighting for their privileged position in society—against any changes, against the future of millions. The Federation of Yugoslavia was splitting along the lines of the republic borders, through a very bloody war that shook Europe in the 90’s. In Serbia alone, where I live, this war brought 1 million refugees, and thousands killed and wounded. Even more people were killed in Bosnia and in Croatia.

Local elites’ propaganda was successful in explaining all of these atrocities that brought misery to the people’s lives as a result of the



Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Admitted to United Nations Membership - November 1st, 2000

actions of “others”, those who belong to another nation, to another ethnic group. There was always somebody else to blame. In 1993, I joined the Center for Antiwar Action in Belgrade. It was a non-governmental organization that put together a group of people who wanted to stop the war, to raise their voices against the nationalistic propaganda, to act and help those whose basic human rights were violated—only because they belonged to another ethnic group, and because they were different—and to help those who were threatened because they did not want to go to war.

These same people, now close friends of mine, created the Civic Alliance of Serbia, a political party that set as its primary goal, not to mislead with propaganda and not to focus on what others do, but to try to find answers within the society we live in, within Serbia. This group decided to fight our own government that brought us all into the war, avoiding changes and avoiding responsibilities. I was honored to join them because they were a very small group of intellectuals in Serbia who insisted on rationalism as opposed to emotionalism in politics, who were most decisively against nationalism and against the war, and were first to say that the future of the country lay within the European Union and within NATO. Today, I preside over this political party, and am gratified that these goals are also shared by the strongest political parties in the country, by the vast majority of the political elite and by society of the new and democratic Serbia, after the changes of 2000.

But fighting for a cause always has its price. At the very end of 1998, the government introduced a new Law on Universities by which the autonomy of the universities was abandoned. A group of us, professors and teaching assistants in the Law School, went on strike to protest this law and to protest the dictatorship that was undermining freedom even in science. Ten of us were fired. It was very difficult for me to explain to my daughter, who was then 7, why I was no longer



The popular children’s marathon in Belgrade in 2003

going to my university every morning. It was even more difficult to envisage the future for my infant son who was then only six months old. Three months later, in March of 1999, the country was bombed by the NATO Alliance. I was drafted to fight against it. I never defended the government but defended my own family and other families in Serbia who were not to blame for what the government was doing in Kosovo.

The next three months were the most difficult for my family. However, what we experienced cannot be compared to what families of millions of refugees were going through or to the suffering of those who had lost their beloved relatives. It can never be even closely compared to the suffering of Bosnjaks, Croats, Albanians or Serbs who were victims of war crimes, such as in Srebrenica in Bosnia.

On the day the bombing ended I knew only one thing, it must never be repeated. A government must never be so irresponsible against its own citizens to involve them all in such a bombing. Pride is the smallest price to be paid to save one’s life. Life is a miracle, life brings everything we can imagine and much more than we can not even imagine while pride only feeds vanity. This is why brave politicians from a range of different parties gathered immediately after the bombing stopped and formed a coalition called The Alliance for Change. We organized protests throughout the country in order to introduce politics back into the country, to relieve people from fear and to provoke

early elections. We did it in order to oust the government from power and introduce freedom and democracy.

Although we won the elections in September 2000, the government decided not to accept the results and call for a rerun. That decision provoked protests all over the country. When we decided to organize a big rally in Belgrade on the 5th of October, I was not aware it was the day that would bring historic change to the country. Like other leaders who were bringing protestors to Belgrade from other cities, I came with thousands of very decisive men and women from Uzice, a city three hours by car southwest of Belgrade. When I called my wife to say I would return to Belgrade, she was calm, saying that our children were playing with her and that I should not return home until all it was over. She said: "It has to be over today. Do not come home until it is all over, one way or another." As a person, she is not even close to the Goddesses in Greek tragedies. She is not cruel, decisive or rude. She was a very caring mother that day, understanding that we as a family, likewise the entire Serbian society, had already crossed the line of no return. She felt something that we both were not able to rationally understand, that is, that it was The Day. One million people gathered in the main square of Belgrade, in front of the Federal Parliament.

Her words were with me while I entered the Federal Parliament under fire, together with only a few other protestors who I did not even know. We were all crying from tear gas that was used by the police to break-up the riot. In the Parliament building, a group of 50 policemen, who until minutes before were shooting rubber bullets and throwing tear gas, were now shaking and scared to death. They only asked that we help and save them. That was The End, or The Beginning, a very new beginning.

I returned home at 6 a.m. My spouse, daughter and son were asleep. I joined them. After only three hours of sleep, the first thing I

did was to turn on the television set and to see if the national television station was still controlled by the people or had been retaken by the government. I was relieved to hear from the very few sentences being broadcast that the government was history.

Three weeks later, I was in New York to raise the national flag at the UN. One month later, on the 4th of November 2000 I was appointed foreign minister and served in three governments over three and a half years, until April of this year.

In spring 2001, I presented a new foreign policy to the federal MPs which first stated that Serbia and Montenegro wished to join the EU and was ready to fulfill the required conditions. Second, the new foreign policy stated that we would be a region-oriented country, paving the way for the reconciliation between the former Yugoslav republics and improving economic and political cooperation within the Balkans. Third, it noted that we would do our best to acquire a balanced relationship with the most influential countries in the World, and fourth, that we would try to preserve good relationships with countries in South America, Asia, and Africa, and to improve these relationships based on mutual respect of economic and political interests.

Looking back, I am honored to say that during my three and a half years as foreign minister, my country joined the UN, the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), and finally the Council of Europe. We are now included in all regional initiatives, including the Stability Pact, South-east European Cooperation Initiative, Adriatic Ionian Initiative, Central European Initiative, South East European Cooperation Process, and Black Sea Economic Cooperation. We did not have diplomatic relationships with Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina; our diplomatic relationships with Albania, the U.S.A., Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, were broken. Today, I can proudly say that we have excellent relationships with

each of these countries.

We inherited the UN sanctions, trade embargo, and embargo in trading military equipment. All these sanctions and embargoes are behind us, we have lifted them. We inherited a monitoring mechanism with respect to the human rights situation in our country that was introduced by the United Nations Human Rights Commission. There is no longer a need for this mechanism; it has been abolished because the country presented its first Report in accordance with its obligations under the International Covenant of the Human and Political Rights. We have ratified all optional protocols to the Covenants, and finally after acceding to the Council of Europe, we ratified the European Convention on Human Rights. Although not all dreams ever come true, some dreams are realized. While presiding over the National Council for Human Rights since 1995, I have dreamed of living in Serbia with a clean human rights record. I used my ministerial position to fill all of the legal gaps, to complete the legal framework and change practices. Besides the UNHCR, international NGO's such as Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch have also recognized the improvements made in Serbia since 2000 until today.

Being the first foreign minister of Yugoslavia (later Serbia and Montenegro) to ever officially visit Israel in more than 50 years, and the first to officially visit Turkey in 12 years, or to visit Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Iran, I tried to link Serbia and Montenegro with others in the world who are making many efforts to improve understanding between civilizations. However, following the priorities of our foreign policy which I myself defined, I focused on the Balkans. Being aware of the importance of regional cooperation, but also of the wounds that must be healed in respect to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, most of my time was spent on improving cooperation with neighboring countries, particularly the former Yugoslav republics. We signed a



Interview during the Campaign for the Parliamentary Elections in December 2003

border agreement with Macedonia and a preliminary border agreement on the Prevlaka Peninsula with Croatia, by which we have abolished the UN mission there.

Today, I am welcomed in any capacity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Croatia, and in Albania, and I keep going there because I see my future in improving cooperation among Balkan countries. It is what I would like to do in the coming years because there are remaining problems to be resolved. Before all, it is the status of Kosovo. As part of a broader issue, I am interested in the Serb-Albanian relationship. It may be of a crucial importance for the stability of the entire region. It is not only my perception. As is with many other European governments, the Japanese government is also aware of the importance of this issue for the peace and prosperity in the Balkans. Several months ago I visited Tokyo to attend a major conference organized by the government of Japan aiming to reintroduce world attention to the Balkans and boost economic cooperation and growth in the region. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the aid my country has received from the people of Japan over the last several years. We in Serbia and in Montenegro highly respect the Japanese and their generosity.

Sustainable peace and sincere reconciliation in the Balkans cannot be achieved unless those responsible for war crimes and other atrocities are punished. This is why as foreign minister I

agreed to chair the National Council for the Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal for war crimes. We sent 22 indictees to the Tribunal. Only a few remain. These were challenging political decisions because Serbian society is not yet prepared to fully understand that war crimes have been committed and that responsibility lies not only with those who committed crimes but also with those who commanded and did not do their best to prevent war crimes on time. This activity is not helping my political career and not improving my political approval rating. Nevertheless, I believe that this is something we all owe to the victims and their relatives, something we owe to the highest moral standards, and something we owe to our membership in the UN. It is a matter of personal political courage and re-

sponsibility; it is a matter of conscience. What else can leadership mean if not to put more and more effort into helping other people in society to understand and share the highest moral values, not only to follow but to be encouraged to demand more responsibility for themselves and to inspire them to ask to take the lead.

In ending this long speech, I would like to thank you all, to thank The Nippon Foundation for helping me when it was important, at the very beginning of my career. And my special thanks go to those who decided to award me now, while I am at another crossroads. I accept this award not only as recognition for what I did but as encouragement to do more and better in the future. Thank you.

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