



WSBA World Peace through Law Section

October 2009

“Freedoms secured by the First Amendment — speech, press, religion, petition, and assembly — are absolutely indispensable for the preservation of a free society in which government is based upon the consent of an informed citizenry...”

- Alexander Meiklejohn, “Free Speech and Its Relation to Self-Government”

How to Win Human Rights Cases by Using UN Treaties and Offices of the Inspector General Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Please Note the Date and Time!

The Section presents *How to Win Human Rights Cases by Using UN Treaties and Offices of the Inspector General*, featuring noted civil liberties attorney, activist, and theorist, Ann Fagan Ginger, on Wednesday October 14, 2009, from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., at the WSBA Offices, 1325 4th Ave., Ste. 600, Seattle. Registration begins at 3:00 p.m.

Professor Ginger is the founder and director of the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute (<http://www.mcli.org/>) in Berkeley, California. Her work in human rights law has developed over an extensive career and includes rigorous analysis of the relationship between American law and international human rights standards.

The presentation includes

- Cases won in U.S. courts by using treaties, classified by subjects such as civil liberties, civil rights, criminal and election law; and
- History of the Constitutional Era of the United States, when the Founders recognized that the continued existence of their new nation depended on other nations following customary international law.

Cost: WPTL Section members, free; non-WPTL Section members, \$25; law students, \$10. Approved for 1.0 general CLE credit.

About Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute

The Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute uses Human Rights and Constitutional Law to promote within the United States fundamental human rights including the right to jobs, food, and housing.

In 1995, the Institute's Human Rights Reporting Project began using new U.S. treaties as new tools to work for human rights, full employment, economic conversion, and saving the environment. Since 1984, the Institute's Peace Law and Education Project has been using peace law and history to work on these issues.

More information: <http://www.mcli.org/about/>

Newsletter “Human Rights Now!”: <http://www.mcli.org/newsletter/>

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WTO – Ten Years After

(Press release issued by the National Lawyers Guild Seattle Chapter) From October 13-18, 2009, the National Lawyers Guild will hold its **Law for the People** national convention in Seattle, on the 10-year anniversary of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference and protests in Seattle.

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During the WTO meeting in 1999, an unprecedented 50,000 people came to Seattle to express their opposition to global capitalism. Overwhelmed by the scale of the protest, the opening of meetings was delayed as police attempted to clear the streets. The City of Seattle and its police force created a “no-protest” zone and imposed a curfew. The media published reports about the police force’s use of tear gas, pepper spray, and physical force to control the crowds.

About 600 people were arrested and taken to jail over 5 days, many for doing nothing but appearing in public places with anti-WTO signs. Guild attorneys immediately joined dozens of other attorneys and legal workers on the scene, negotiating the release of the WTO protestors and assisting with the criminal cases. Later, Guild attorneys were among the lawyers who filed civil lawsuits alleging that the activists’ rights were violated.

By 2004, the City of Seattle settled with 157 individuals arrested outside the no-protest zone during the WTO events, agreeing to pay them a total of \$250,000. In 2007, a federal jury found that the City of Seattle had violated protesters’ Fourth Amendment rights by arresting them without probable cause or hard evidence. That year, attorneys achieved a settlement of \$1 million from the City of Seattle for 175 protestors and successfully had their records sealed to protect their privacy.

In the 10 years since the “Battle in Seattle,” protestors and marchers across the country have known that legal observers and attorneys are willing to help them. “The Guild’s legal observer program is a prominent byproduct of the WTO,” said Heidi Boghosian, executive director of the National Lawyers Guild. “People know they can call the Guild and trust us to monitor police activity so that it protects their First Amendment rights. Our presence deters police overreaction.”

“Legal advocacy has helped reduce police violence against protestors. Law enforcement still makes mistakes, but we are seeing fewer lethal munitions used against passive crowds of protestors,” said Boghosian.

Local chapters train attorneys and law students in legal-observer techniques. The Guild also works proactively with governments to help them accommodate demonstrators. “Following Seattle, law enforcement and many local governments began to circumvent peoples’ right to demonstrate by passing ordinances that cordoned off people into protest zones far from the meetings. We observed the unlawful arrest of hundreds of people in order to remove the images of protestors out of the mainstream media. Now we work with government to mitigate these ordinances,” said Boghosian.

Currently the Guild is briefing officials in Pittsburgh as it gears up to host the G-20 Summit on September 24-25, 2009. President Barack Obama will chair this meeting of international leaders which represent 85 percent of the world’s economy.

More information: <http://nlgseattle.org/node/11>