



The Olive Branch

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The Olive Branch is a publication of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Ball State University. Every issue, we shine a spotlight on people, events, campus groups, conferences, and organizations who are working towards a more peaceful world.



Niillas Holmberg: Saami Poet



Las Mariposas: The Mirabal Sisters

Las Mariposas: Sisters who Toppled a Dictatorship

Rafael Trujillo is infamous for being one of the cruelest dictators in the history of Latin America. He “won” the presidency of the Dominican Republic (DR) in 1930 through political maneuvering and torture, and his band of secret police kept the Dominican people in a state of submission for over thirty years. Those who opposed Trujillo would often be imprisoned, tortured and then disappear, presumably murdered. The end of Trujillo’s reign is primarily credited to the Mirabal sisters, popularly called Las Mariposas, which translates to “The Butterflies” in Spanish.

The sisters, Minerva, Patria, Maria Teresa, and Dede Mirabal—or Las Mariposas—were born into a small farming community. All of the sisters except Dede attended a university, and their education enabled them to envision their country free of Trujillo’s reign. The three sisters who attended a university married men they met at their school. Ultimately, these three sisters and their respective husbands became activists against Trujillo. This culminated in Las Mariposas creating a group called the Movement on the Fourteenth of June to oppose Trujillo, which was named to commemorate the people Patria saw massacred by Trujillo’s secret police on June 14th, 1959.



Rafael Trujillo

Dictator of the Dominican Republic
1930–1961

The Mirabals’ rise against Trujillo escalated at a party that the Mirabal family was invited to attend by Trujillo himself. The dictator was known for his seduction, abduction, and rape of beautiful young women, and Minerva was particularly beautiful. Trujillo approached her with clear sexual advances, but Minerva rejected him, slapping him in the face. The family fled from the party, but Trujillo’s anger followed them for decades.

Las Mariposas: Sisters who Toppled a Dictatorship

The Mirabal sisters and their husbands began working hard to topple Trujillo. They wrote and distributed pamphlets describing the people who had been killed by Trujillo, encouraging complacent Dominican citizens to rise up against their dictator. They gathered materials for weapons, and they made bombs out of firecrackers to use to assassinate Trujillo at a cattle fair in 1960. Their assassination attempt was exposed and the entirety of their activist group, the Movement of the Fourteenth of June, was imprisoned. Trujillo chose to release the women due to rising international pressure from the United Nations to appear ethical as a leader, but this assassination attempt made him decide that it was time to end Las Mariposas.



Las Mariposas: Patria, Minerva, & Maria Teresa Mirabal

The execution of the Mirabal sisters was a clumsy, brutal affair. Trujillo ordered their husbands to be transferred to a remote prison which required travel across the mountains. The sisters knew this was a trap, but decided to visit their husbands anyway. The sisters and their driver, Rufina de la Cruz, were stopped halfway through their journey and were subsequently beat and strangled to death and were put back in their vehicle, which was thrown off the side of the mountain. The obvious trauma on the bodies proved that this was not an accident, as Trujillo intended everyone to believe.

Las Mariposas: Sisters who Toppled a Dictatorship

Trujillo's cowardly assassination of three beautiful, beloved women had a greater effect on the Dominican population than any of Trujillo's prior crimes. Six months after the Mirabals' death, Trujillo was assassinated by a small group of Dominican men, a few of whom were members of the military. The DR was thrown into civil war and became a democratic nation in the late 1960s. The Mirabal sisters' martyrdom was the catalyst to this assassination—the women were commemorated in nearly every town in the DR, and a mural of their images was painted on the giant obelisk Trujillo built to symbolize his dominance in the DR in previous years.



Sculpture of the
Mirabal sisters

Museo Hermanas Mirabal

Salcedo, Dominican
Republic

Additionally, the United Nations created the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25th in memory of the Mirabal sisters. This day has been used to create international awareness of violence against women and young girls, which is considered “the most widespread, persistent, and devastating human rights violations in our world today” (The United Nations, n.d.). In 2009, November 25th became Orange Day, which aims to mobilize “civil society, activists, governments, and the United Nations (UN) system to amplify the impact of the UN general secretary’s campaign, UNiTE to end Violence Against Women” (The United Nations, n.d.). The legacy of the Mirabal sisters has spread far beyond the DR and has subsequently led to the pursuit of the freedom of every woman and girl who experiences violence.

References

The United Nations. (n.d.). International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 25 November. Retrieved August 24, 2019 from <https://www.un.org/en/events/endviolenceday/>

Niillas Holmberg: A Saami Poet for Peace

Born in Utsoji, Saamiland, musician and poet Niillas Holmberg grew up in the Saami indigenous tradition with his family. Saamiland is a region of northern Scandinavia that is inhabited by the Saami people of Arctic Europe. Most Saami people do not associate with the identity of their constructed region, which is currently within the geopolitical boundaries of Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

There are currently around 80,000 Saami people living in the Saapmi region (Northern Norway). About 20,000 of this population speak Northern Saami, which is considered a European minority language. Historically, there has been a great deal of forced cultural adaptation on the Saami people by the governments of Sweden, Norway, and Finland. However, the Saami have been granted more rights by their respective countries' governments over time.



Niillas Holmberg
Saami Poet & Musician

Holmberg grew up knowing that his Saami identity was important, but he began to feel distant from his cultural heritage after living in the city of Tampere, Finland during his teenage years. It was during this time Holmberg realized the numerous ways in which the Saami community and environment was being harmed—culminating in his desire to become an activist. Therefore, Holmberg moved back to the Saami region of Finland in order to stay connected to his roots, and to pursue his passion for environmental and cultural preservation in his work.

Niillas Holmberg: A Saami Poet for Peace

Holmberg developed an interest in music and poetry following his activism, as he believed it was a productive way to get his messages to reach a wider audience. His first poetry book, *Dego Livccen Oaidnan Iezan* (2009), was published by the time he was nineteen. To date, he has published five poetry books in ten different languages and is a member of four bands. Over the years, his works have become increasingly political in order to make an impact on the future of indigenous people and land.

It comes as no surprise that Holmberg's poetry is written in Northern Saami and is primarily focused on politics which involve the Saami people and other indigenous groups in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Holmberg is constantly inspired by the nature and peace of Saami-land, citing it as the main source of his creativity. Although living in his rural hometown is not conducive to a life of traveling, Holmberg desires to stay immersed in the culture.

Niillas Holmberg considers himself to be a spokesman for Saami and indigenous pride and culture. In his poem titled, "Indigenous Manifesto," that speaks to the problem of indigenous lands being abused, he writes: "stop throwing stones / for the water is me / when there is stillness I will show you / the flowers you have planted".

Holmberg's main activism revolves around the exploitation of nature, mining and fisheries, particularly in Saami areas. He hopes that his art will motivate younger generations and politicians alike to take action on frequently ignored Saami issues. Some of Holmberg's most outwardly political messages include his song of protest, "Gallok," against mining in Gallok, Sweden, and his continual activism against the Deatnu River Fishery agreements – both situations infringe on the fishing and land rights of the Saami people.

Niillas Holmberg: A Saami Poet for Peace

In addition to writing songs of protest, Holmberg utilizes his live performances to showcase and discuss current environmental and political issues that the Saami are facing. He also has been known to take part in public demonstrations, such as protesting the construction of a windmill park on Saami lands. In 2017, Holmberg started the Long Live Deatnu movement against the aforementioned Deatnu River Fishery and declared all fishing must stop in the Cearretsuolu region of Saami to protect native lands and tradition. His song “Ellos Deatnu” is about this movement.



Ultimately, Holmberg believes a focus on traditional values towards the earth is the best way to save the future of the planet and hopes to strengthen the connection between humans and nature. He uses his poetry as a form of non-violent protest for issues that often go unseen by the rest of the world. Holmberg hopes to strengthen and empower the force of the next generation to bring peace to the earth and Saami people alike—the fight for indigenous freedoms is never ending.

For further information on Holmberg and his work, visit: www.niillas.com

CONFERENCES

Association for Conflict Resolution: 2019 Annual Conference **September 18-21 | Tucson, AZ**

The theme of this year's conference is "Heal the Divide: A Focus on the Role of ADR Practitioners in a Divided Society."

Women in the World: Time for a New Paradigm for Peace **September 24-25 | College Park, MD**

The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace presents this conference, which aims to deepen our understanding of women in relation to the inequalities they face while highlighting the progress women have made.

PeaceCon 2019 **October 2-4 | Washington, DC**

Conference participants will have the opportunity to engage in an array of activities structured around cutting-edge developments in the field of peacebuilding, from nonviolent action to technology and business.

Peace and Justice Studies Association 2019 Annual Conference **October 4-6 | Winnipeg, Manitoba**

The theme of this year's conference is "Re-Imagining Peace, Legitimacy, Jurisdiction, and Authority."

2019 Annual international Conference on Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding **October 28-31 | Bronx, NY**

The theme of this year's conference is "Ethno-Religious Conflict and Economic Development: Is there a Correlation?"

Kroc Institute Sustainable Peace Conference **November 8-10 | Notre Dame, IN**

This interdisciplinary conference will focus on four key themes: understanding violence, peacemaking, confronting injustice, and building peaceful societies.

PCRC 2019—Peace and Conflict Resolution Conference **November 15-17 | Bangkok, Thailand**

This conference is a forum, discussion, and networking platform for academics, governmental officials, and NGO Representatives, working in the fields of international relations, conflict managements, and peace studies.

ON AND OFF CAMPUS EVENTS

Every Brilliant Thing

Sept 20-22; Sept 27-29; Oct 4-7

Muncie Civic Theatre presents Every Brilliant Thing. This witty, new one-person play is a one-of-a-kind theatrical experience that shines a compassionate light on the impact of suicide and reminds us of all the things that make life brilliant.

3rd Annual NAACP Muncie Branch Freedom Fund Banquet **September 20th, 6:30 PM**

The NAACP Muncie Branch is presenting its third annual banquet at the Horizon Convention Center in Muncie to support the Freedom Fund. This fund is primarily used to support youth who participate in the ACT-SO competition, which is the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics. This is a yearlong achievement program designed to encourage high academic and cultural achievement among African-American high school students.

13th Annual White River Clean Up **September 21st, 8:00 AM**

The annual White River Clean up (WRC) has been responsible for removing 96,000 pounds of trash out of our river in the past 10 years. This is the largest single volunteer event in Delaware County.

5th Annual Hot Rods for Hunger **October 5th, 1:00 PM**

Hot Rods for Hunger takes place at the Muncie Mall. You can look at some cool cars and chat with community car fans. All the proceeds raised support the work of Second Harvest Food Bank.

ORGANIZATIONS

International Justice Mission

IJM is a global organization that protects the poor from violence in the developing world. IJM fights by rescuing victims, bringing criminals to justice, restoring survivors, and strengthening justice systems. The group meets Tuesdays at 6:00PM in the Student Center, room 301.

Cardinal Kitchen

Cardinal Kitchen is Ball State University's campus food pantry. The pantry is located on the second floor of the Multicultural Center and is available for use to all undergraduate and graduate students. The pantry is open the last three Tuesdays of every month from 5:00-8:00PM. Its mission is to ensure that no Ball State student goes hungry on our campus.

MOSAIC

MOSAIC is a social justice peer education program whose mission is to engage undergraduate students in open dialogues focused on diversity and social justice topics to promote awareness, change, and inter-group understanding. They can be contacted through the multicultural center, at mc2@bsu.edu for more information.

Feminists for Action

Feminists for Action is a group dedicated to the empowerment of women, men, and children through advocacy and education. They strive to educate others about issues in the global, national, and community level. They encourage thought-provoking discussions and work to organize events to benefit feminist causes. FA meets Tuesdays at 6:00PM in Schwartz Digital Viewing Room in Bracken Library.

Ethnic Theatre Alliance

The purpose of Ethnic Theatre Alliance is to explore worldviews of cultures, diversity, and social justice in order to educate members through Fine Arts. They do this in accordance with the Ball State University mission to create a community for the members to learn and develop worldview cultures so they may become better artists and people. They can be contacted through the Ball State Theatre department at theatrestu@bsu.edu for more information.

OFF-CAMPUS GROUPS

- A Better Way
- AWAKEN
- Edible Muncie of Delaware County
- Islamic Center
- Muncie Action Plan
- Muncie Human Rights Commission
- Muncie Interfaith Fellowship
- Muncie OUTreach
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- YWCA
- Whitely Community Council
- United Way of Delaware County
- Blood N Fire
- Ross Community Center

ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUED

Student Action Team

SAT is an organization made up of general members and housing and residence life representatives. This organization is dedicated to volunteering and supporting Ball State University.

Spectrum

Spectrum's goal is to provide an anonymous, healthy and safe place for Ball State University students and surrounding communities who are discovering their sexual orientation to help find an understanding network of support. Spectrum meets Thursdays at 8:00 PM in SC 310.

Students for Life

Ball State Students for Life (BSSFL) is committed to the protection of all human life; from conception until natural death. They strive to educate members and the Ball State University community about why they value life in all its forms. They strive to respond with love, compassion, and support to those who suffer from restrictions of life. BSSFL meets every other Monday at 6:00PM in ETRC2 which is in the basement of Bracken Library.

BSU COUNSELING CENTER SUPPORT GROUPS

Every year, hundreds of students, faculty, and staff members use the services of the Counseling Center at BSU. This comprehensive services office provides free and confidential psychological and career resources to students. Call (765) 285-1736 or stop by Lucina Hall, Room 320.



Understanding Self and Others

Group members explore patterns of relating to self and others by discovering understanding and acceptance of themselves and others. Discussions vary greatly from depression, anxiety, relationships, family concerns, eating issues, alcohol abuse and/or personal growth. The groups thrive on diversity as members discover the common bond through emotional experiences. This group meets weekly and has sessions two times per week: Mondays 3:00-4:15PM & Wednesdays 3:00-4:15PM. The start date will be announced soon.

Weight Not, Want Not

Weight Not, Want Not is a supportive group for women with eating disorders or body image struggles who want to explore effective ways of coping. Its time is to be determined by availability of group members.

Safe Haven

This therapy group provides a safe place for LGBT students to explore and discuss patterns of relating to self and others by discovering understanding and acceptance of themselves and others. Topics of discussion vary greatly from coming out, finding support, relationships, family concerns, depression, anxiety, and/or personal growth. Safe Haven meets every Wednesday 3-4:15PM.

Surviving and Thriving

Surviving and Thriving is aimed to help sexual assault survivors. In this group, students share their experiences, find ways to cope, and gain perspective. This group meets Thursdays 3-4PM.

Loss and Grief

This group aims to provide a supportive environment that includes discussions about normal grief and loss and the tasks involved in the grieving process. Times and start date will be announced shortly.

Building Resilience

This four week workshop helps you learn useful skills to empower you to build resiliency when things feel out of control. The group meets on Mondays 4:00-5:00PM.

Owning Your Ups & Downs

This 4 week skills group will help you build and practice your ability to manage stressful situations through focusing on how to utilize and implement 4 new healthy coping strategies. This group meets Tuesdays at 4 PM starting 9/10/19.

ABOUT US

The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies is an interdisciplinary center whose mission is to pursue research on structural, cultural, and direct forms of violence and conflict; to implement nonviolent strategies to resolve conflict; to offer mediation services to individuals, groups, and organizations; and to train people in conflict resolution, mediation, peace-building, leadership, meditation, and sportspersonship skills. The center also pursues public diplomacy, sports diplomacy, and cultural exchange as part of local, regional, national, and international projects designed to promote mutual understanding, appreciation, cooperation, and respect. Our services include monthly events, newsletters, the Muncie Interfaith Fellowship, meditation classes, mediation training and services.

Staff Members

Director: Lawrence Gerstein, Ph.D.

Research Fellow: Gerald Waite, M.A.

Curriculum Coordinator: Steven Hall, Ph.D.

Outreach Coordinator: Beth Messner, Ph.D.

Graduate Assistant: Aashna Banerjee

To include your events in the newsletter, please write to abanerjee@bsu.edu

Come visit us!

Address: Our office is located at 310 McKinley Avenue, Muncie, 47306.

We are the white house across the street from the campus shuttle bus stop at the BSU Student Center!

Our doors are open:

Mon/Wed: 9 AM—4 PM

Tues/Thur: 9 AM—1 PM; 2 PM—4 PM

Fri: 10 AM—2 PM



Follow us!

