

Scholar Rescue Fund

A better, more peaceful, prosperous world depends on people's minds being opened to new ideas and new ways of thinking. Yet throughout history, those who seek to discover and share new ideas have suffered. Intellectuals and academics whose ideas threaten established orthodoxies have been persecuted. Authoritarians and oppressors of all stripes, knowing that the truth, if widely known, would undermine their power, will go to any length to maintain control, subjecting scholars to surveillance, threats, imprisonment, or worse, torture and death.

Today, the **Scholar Rescue Fund** supports fellowships for scholars whose lives and work are threatened, providing them with temporary refuge at universities and colleges in safe countries. There they will continue to share their talents and expertise with students, colleagues and the community at large, beyond the reach of intimidation and threats.

The Fund builds on work done by the Institute on an *ad hoc* basis since its founding. In the 1920's IIE's founder Stephen Duggan led the Institute in helping Russian students and scholars who had been displaced by the Revolution to continue with their education and research. In the 1930's, IIE formed the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars to rescue European academics from the Nazis. In later decades, the Institute assisted scholars from Communist Eastern Europe, as well as Chinese students after the 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising.

In 2002, IIE committed to make the rescue of scholars a permanent part of the Institute's work. Under the leadership of IIE Trustees Dr. Henry Jarecki, Jeffrey Epstein, and Thomas Russo, and with the support of George Soros and the Open Society Institute, the Institute established the Scholar Rescue Fund.

In his remarks on the Scholar Rescue Fund at the International Awards Dinner on September 25th, Dr. Jarecki cited the reasons he and his colleagues are so passionate about this project.



"We are protecting a heroic image of ourselves. By bringing those persecuted scholars to a safer place, we shine the light on those who terrorize them. We want the work of such scholars to continue without interruption. We know what they can do for us and what they have done for the world. And finally, and perhaps most significantly, we rescue scholars to have an impact on ourselves. We need to understand how and why scholar repression happens and we need to ensure that we here in the United States do not fail to defend and expand the freedoms we have."

Since its inception, the Fund has received requests from scholars in over 80 countries. Thirty awards have been made to date. Like earlier generations, many of the Fund's grantees will return home when conditions have improved to help rebuild universities and societies ravaged by conflict, repression and fear. The Fund recently received \$1 million from Ford Foundation, an important leadership gift toward an endowment goal of \$10 million that will provide hope and relief for future generations of truth-seekers in their time of need.

IIE Chairman Thomas S. Johnson (left) and IIE Trustee Dr. Henry Jarecki (second from right) at IIE's annual International Awards Dinner with rescued scholars Win Pe and Mande Semon. Win Pe is a famous poet, writer, scholar and educator in Myanmar, who fled the country after being placed under house arrest and interrogated for protesting government policies. Mande Semon is an agronomist and crop geneticist from the Ivory Coast who was accused of collaborating with an alleged participant in a recent coup that destabilized the country.