



SCHOOL OF LAW RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES  
AUTUMN 2016

# Tribunals of the People: from the Vietnam War to the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka

**PROFESSOR GILL H. BOEHRINGER**

**DATE**

Wednesday 27 April 2016

**TIME**

11.30am - 12.30pm

**VENUE**

Moot Court, Building EO, Parramatta

**LUNCH PROVIDED**

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**ABSTRACT**

People's Tribunals (PT) are a form of human and environmental rights activism. The first modern People's Tribunal was the Bertrand Russell Tribunal which evaluated US policy and aggressive war in Vietnam. Since that time the Bertrand Russell Foundation has funded many People's Tribunals, for example the Palestine situation, the war in Iraq, human rights and psychiatry, and several on the military dictatorships in Chile and Brazil. In 1979 the Permanent People's Tribunal was established, with its base in Rome. The PPT has held more than 40 PTs on a wide range of issues.

This presentation will discuss the rise of tribunals and why they have increasingly been used in the current era to address issues of human and environmental rights and social justice. It will be argued that the rise of People's Tribunals is the result of high and rising inequality brought about by super-charged globalization, neo-liberalist ideology and practice, and the inability, or unwillingness, of state and international agencies to deal with the conditions people across the world find themselves in.

**BIOGRAPHY**

**PROFESSOR GILL H BOEHRINGER:** is former Dean of Macquarie University School of Law. Currently he is a member of the Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers of the International Association of People's Lawyers. He has served on People's Tribunals in Australia, the Philippines, and New York City, and was an Observer for the Permanent People's Tribunal at The International Tribunal of Conscience in Washington, DC. He is a member of the Panel of Judges for the Permanent People's Tribunal and sat on the Cambodia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka Permanent People's Tribunals on the garment industries in those countries, and in Mexico on the social crisis in that country. Gill is currently researching attacks on lawyers; corporate crime and regulatory capture in the Philippines; alternative justice systems (Kurdistan; Brazil); people's lawyers and people's struggles (Turkey and the Philippines); local people's tribunals and social movements. He has published over two hundred book chapters, articles and conference papers.

**COMMENTATORS:**

**PROFESSOR MICHAEL HEAD** teaches in the Law School at Western Sydney University and is the author of nine books, focussing on legal theory, state repression and public law.

**DR CATHERINE RENSHAW** researches human rights and democracy in Southeast Asia. She has written widely on these subjects and with Professor Ben Saul, is editor of *Human Rights in Asia and the Pacific*, Routledge, 2014. Her latest book, *Networks, Experts and International Law*, will be published by Cambridge University Press this year.