

# **GIULIO PAGANO**

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## **What is your role in the Inner Life Working Group?**

My role is to collect data on life imprisonment. I search through the Constitutions and the Criminal Codes of different countries, and analyse online journal research papers, with the goal of obtaining information on life imprisonment. More particularly, I want to find out whether it is prescribed or abolished, if there are any exceptions, if the Supreme Courts ever expressed any judgement on the matter. In the case of countries that allow life imprisonment, my goal is to obtain information also on the living conditions of the lifers. In many cases it is like a wild goose chase, but it is an important task. Knowledge is what we aim at, and knowledge is what we want to spread, no matter how difficult it is.

## **How did you get involved in the project “Life Imprisonment: Right to Hope”?**

It was about 6 months ago that I started to get interested in the cause of life imprisonment in Italy. During this months I had the chance to visit a prison facility in Padua, where a lot of lifers were held. After that visit, I wrote some thoughts on the topic, nothing serious and nothing academic-like. In September 2014 I presented my notes to the professor who founded this project (which I didn't know at the time) and this professor inspired me in the first place (life imprisonment was a topic of his course on “fundamental rights”). I wanted an opinion of what I had written. The 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 we met for the first time. He told me about the project and that he was looking for a student that would participate actively. I

accepted. After that time, we met at least once a month, other students joined us and we became a larger group. Now my professor, my group partners and I meet every week.

## **Why did you decide to work for the lifers cause?**

I think I have always been a sensitive person, and as far as I remember I was always against Death Penalty. When I was 13 my mom gave me as a gift a poster made by Jean-Michel Folon: it portrayed a judge with a guillotine instead of his mouth, and the words written “contre le peine de mort”. I knew since I was little that I wanted to develop my life to human rights. But I never understood the gravity of life imprisonment until I was older and I had started my university. If I had always seen life imprisonment as a valuable alternative of the disgusting death penalty, now I had the means to realize that life imprisonment not only was a terrible sentence but also even worse than death penalty. It was a sentence that deprived men from their right to hope for a different future. I could see finally life imprisonment for what it really was, a mere excuse for not dealing with reality, a way to avoid dealing with serious crimes, and a get-away from the State responsibility in the re-habilitation of all detainees, even the worse ones.

## **What is the most exciting project you have been a part of while working in the Inner Life Working Group?**

The most exciting project was going through papers written by Italian lifers about their detention conditions. It was exciting but in the same time it was not an

easy task. While reading I could feel all the atrocities and unhuman conditions that this people had to go through. It made me understand how much thin the line is between justice and revenge.

**What do you do besides working at the ILWoG?**

Besides getting my bachelore's degree, I love history, especially the history between the two World's War.

**What are you reading right now?**

I am reading "World of Yesterday" by Stefan Zweig. Next on the list: "The dead stay young".

**How would you sum up life imprisonment in three word?**

Hopeless, pointless (meaning that it does not provide for lower crime rates),