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**MINNESOTA LAWYERS  
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

JANUARY 1987

## **ALINA RUTA ARRIVES**



Alina Ruta (left) arrived at the Twin Cities Airport with her mother on January 13 after receiving a visa allowing her to leave Romania and join her mother in Minnesota. Rodica Ruta (right) reunited with her daughter in New York on January 12. Alina was met at the Twin Cities airport by MLC Attorney Chris Solso, who first met Alina at the trial of her father, Ioan in Bucharest last October. (See "Update on MLC Cases", page 4)

## **MLC TO PRESENT 1987 ASYLUM CLE: SEEKS PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS**

The second annual Asylum Training Program will be held Friday, February 13, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Rare Books Room of the University of Minnesota Law School.

The program will address the basics of the asylum law and other forms of relief, the procedure for making an application for political asylum, and how to document an asylum case. The program will serve as training for volunteers in the Committee's Pro Bono Asylum Project.

The Committee has applied for 4.0 Continuing Legal Education Credits. The cost of the program is \$30; \$10 low income.

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I would like to make a reservation for the 1987 Political Asylum Training Program on February 13.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Make check payable to the Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee and return to the address below.

430 Marquette Avenue, Suite 402, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401, (612) 341-3302

A Minnesota Non-Profit Corporation with tax exempt status

# 1987 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ELECTED

The Minnesota Lawyers Committee elected its 1987 Officers and Directors at the January 13, 1987 meeting of the Board. Robert P. Sands, of Fredrikson & Byron was re-elected Committee President. Other officers include James E. Dorsey, Dorsey & Whitney, Vice President; Jean M. Boler, Minnesota Attorney General's Office, Secretary; James V. Roth, Leonard, Street & Deinard, Treasurer. Along with General Counsel, University of Minnesota Professor David Weissbrodt, the new officers will serve as the Executive Committee.

The following individuals were elected to the 1987 Board of Directors:

Nancy Arnison	Don Johnson
Arthur C. Benson	Thomas Johnson
Jean M. Boler	Victoria Johnson
D-M Boulay	Sheldon Karlins
Robert I. Burns	James Ladner
Honorable Michael Davis	Susan Lentz
James E. Dorsey	James McCarthy
Brad Engdahl	Deborah Kleinman McNeil
Nancy Etwiler	Raymond Meyer
Raymond Faricy	James Roth
Thomas Foley	Robert P. Sands
Wood Foster, Jr.	Jane Schoenike
Honorable Donald Fraser	Jack Setterlund
Thomas Fraser	Louis Smith
Honorable Isabel Gomez-Edwards	Christine K. Solso
Samuel D. Heins	Thomas Tinkham
Michael Unger	Professor David Weissbrodt

## BOARD APPROVES GUATEMALA MISSION

The Board of Directors authorized the Minnesota Lawyers Committee to undertake a fact-finding mission to Guatemala in Spring, 1987. The purpose of the mission will be to monitor and develop the Minnesota Lawyers Committee's habeas corpus project in Guatemala and to explore collaboration with the recently formed Guatemalan Archdiocesan human rights office.

Based on information provided by Amnesty International, Americas Watch and the Guatemala Human Rights Commission in Mexico City, the Minnesota Lawyers Committee has filed 40 habeas corpus petitions in the last year on behalf of disappeared persons. The project serves to provide a form of appeal other than simple letters and to publicize disappearances within Guatemala, manifesting international recognition of the problem.

The mission is scheduled for late March or April, 1987. Three representatives will be selected by the Executive Committee for the mission, considering such factors as Spanish language ability, relevant experience and availability to follow through on the mission upon return. Nominations should be submitted to Barbara Frey at the MLC office by January 30.

The Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee presents :

# "Central America Firsthand"

-- A Report of the Central America Travel Seminar --

Seventeen participants from six different states and Canada travelled in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador from November 28 - December 11, 1986 on a travel seminar sponsored by the Minnesota Lawyers Committee. Minnesotans from the group will discuss their experiences on

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 1987

AT 7:30 P.M.

TEMPLE ISRAEL  
2324 Emerson Avenue South  
Minneapolis

The program will feature a panel discussion by Senator Roger Moe, Representative Phyllis Kahn, Minneapolis Mayor Donald Fraser and Hennepin County Attorney Tom Johnson. The panel will be moderated by Arthur Naftalin.

Arthur Naftalin will present video footage he shot while on the Central America travel seminar.

Participants will speak about current conditions in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$10 or \$25

Donations will be used to create a Bond Fund to release Central Americans from border area detention facilities. The Minnesota Lawyers Committee's Pro Bono Asylum project will offer free legal representation to those Central Americans who are bonded out of detention.

## CASE UPDATE:

### ALINA RUTA ALLOWED TO EMIGRATE; IOAN RUTA'S APPEAL DENIED

Approximately one hundred people were on hand to greet 16-year-old Alina Ruta upon her arrival January 13 at the Twin Cities airport from Bucharest, Romania. Ms. Ruta has been asking for a passport to leave Romania since last winter, when her mother Rodica defected on a business trip to the United States. After a 30 hour trip, including delays in Bucharest and Frankfurt, Ms. Ruta arrived in New York City on January 12, where her mother had flown to meet her. The Rutas spent part of a day in New York City seeing the sights, including the Statue of Liberty, before boarding a plane to the Twin Cities.



Alina Ruta (left) and her Mother Rodica

Lawyers Committee member Christine Solso was at the airport to meet the Rutas' flight along with dozens of members of Rodica Ruta's White Bear Lake church. Solso was a familiar face to Alina because of her October visit to Bucharest to observe the trial of Alina's father, Ioan Constantin Ruta. Also at the airport were members of Congressman Bill Frenzel's staff. Congressman Frenzel has been active in advocating for passports for both Ioan and Alina Ruta.

Trial observers Solso and Sam Heins, and Executive Director Barbara Frey met with Alina and Rodica Ruta on January 19 to discuss information Alina had concerning her father, Ioan, who remains in detention in Jilava prison in Bucharest. The Rutas were notified that Ioan's appeal from conviction on bribery charges had been denied on Friday, January 16. Alina Ruta reported that her father's health condition remains serious. Prison officials did not allow Alina to bring in medicine or warm clothes for her father. Ioan told his daughter that he was not receiving proper medication and that he was suffering from the cold winter in prison, where there is no heat.

Letters requesting clemency and family reunification may be sent to President Nicolae Ceausescu, Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, Romania; cc: Minister of Justice Teofil Pop, B-dul Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, 33, Bucharest, Romania; bcc: MLIHRC. A model letter may be found in the November Membership News.

## CASE UPDATE:

### MN ATTY GENERAL ISSUES FARISANI APPEAL

On January 13 Minnesota Attorney General Skip Humphrey, announced an interreligious appeal for the release of Dean T.S. Farisani who has been imprisoned in Venda, South Africa since November 1986. Joining Humphrey at the Capitol press conference were Monsignor James Habiger, Executive Director of the Catholic Conference of Bishops, Rabbi Stephen Pinsky of Temple Israel,



From left, Monsignor Habiger, Attorney General Humphrey, Rabbi Pinsky and Bishop Beekmann

Bishop Darold Beekmann of Southwest Minnesota American Lutheran Church and the Reverend Robert Lucas of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities area.

More than 800 postcards with signatures of Minnesotans were returned to the Attorney General's office and subsequently sent to South African government officials.

In the week following his arrest on November 22, 1986, Dean Farisani is known to have been taken to the hospital on at least three occasions. In December 1986, lawyers representing Dean Farisani's wife, Regina Farisani, applied to the Venda Supreme Court for an order invalidating his detention and restraining the police from assaulting him. This appeal was dismissed though reasons for the judge's ruling have not yet been given.

Farisani's situation is particularly distressing because of the torture he has suffered in the past at the hands of South African police. In 1981, Farisani was detained and brutally tortured. Farisani described his detention experience in his presentations to the Minnesota Lawyers Committee in the Twin Cities in May and October 1986. Farisani's wife and church leaders in Venda have continually sought access to see him but the Venda authorities have refused any visits. The Lawyers Committee continues to call for appeal letters (See December Membership News) demanding proper charges and treatment.

# CASE UPDATE:

## MEIMAN GRANTED VISA FOR TREATMENT

Soviet refusnik Inna Meiman arrived in Washington D.C. from Moscow on Monday, January 19 to receive treatment for cancer at Georgetown Hospital. Meiman, ill since 1983, has had four unsuccessful operations in the Soviet Union on a cancerous growth on the back of her neck. Soviet officials have repeatedly denied Meiman and her husband visas to emigrate, and conceded to a medical visa for Inna only after terrific pressure from the West.

Meiman was a former professor of English at Moscow University, and an author and translator of many books. She married Naum Meiman in 1979, a long-term member of the Helsinki-Watch Committee who had been denied a visa to emigrate to Israel. Soviet officials have refused to grant a visa to Mr. Meiman to accompany his wife to the United States for medical treatment. Physicians involved in the case view Mr. Meiman's absence as having a severely detrimental effect on the chances of Inna Meiman's recovery.

The plight of Inna Meiman was the subject of an award granted to Lisa Paul, a University of Minnesota graduate, at the 1986 Human Rights Award Dinner of the Minnesota Lawyers Committee last June. Inna Meiman was Paul's Russian language tutor while Paul was in Moscow in 1984-85. The two women became close personal friends and when Ms. Paul returned to the United States she began to advocate on behalf of Inna Meiman.



Minnesota Lawyers Committee President Bob Sands awarding a certificate of recognition to Lisa Paul at the 1986 Human Rights Awards Dinner for her efforts on behalf of Soviet refusnik Inna Meiman.

In December, 1985, Lisa Paul went on a 25 day hunger strike to gain support for her cause. Paul's strike drew the interest of Senators Paul Simon and Gary Hart, and Minnesota Congressman Jerry Sikorski. Senator Hart and Lisa Paul were in the delegation that met Ms. Meiman's plane at Dulles airport on January 19. The Minnesota Lawyers Committee has extended an invitation to Ms. Meiman to visit Minnesota if her health permits.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

As is evident by the Case Updates in this Newsletter, it has been a good news/bad news month for the Minnesota Lawyers Committee. While Alina Ruta and Inna Meiman gained a measure of freedom from repressive situations, Ioan Ruta and Dean T.S. Farisani continue to languish in prison.

A recurring question about our efforts on behalf of human rights victims, such as trial observation, letter writing, and press coverage, is what impact will your actions have? That is a question that can only be answered anecdotally by describing those occasions in which international pressure has had a significant result.

Rodica Ruta recently stated to us that she felt the Romanian officials did not want to allow her daughter Alina to emigrate but felt forced to do so by the international attention focused on the case by the Minnesota Lawyers Committee and other interested groups. Inna Meiman made it known, en route to the United States for cancer treatment, that the first person she wanted to thank was Lisa Paul, who as a University of Minnesota student, went on a 25 day hunger strike to gather support for Inna's efforts to obtain a visa from the Soviet Union. Dean Farisani stated during his visits in May and October 1986 that letter writing saved his life in past periods of detention.

These kind of stories make our efforts worthwhile. And while we can never answer with certainty the recurring question about results, we do know that without action there certainly will be no result.

*Barbara A. Frey*

## LAWYERS PREPARE FOR PHILIPPINES TRIP

Prospective travelers met on January 14 to discuss the upcoming Philippines Travel Seminar. The meeting, at the home of Jack and Jackie Rosholt, gave an overview of the purpose and itinerary of the upcoming trip.

The trip is scheduled for February 22 to March 8, 1987 and is sponsored by the Minnesota Lawyers Committee and organized by the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College. The purpose of the trip is to offer participants a look at the social transformation process today in the Philippines, with special focus on the human rights issues of the present and former governments.

One of the highlights of the trip will be the witnessing of celebrations of the anniversary of the "People's Revolution," and the ascent to power of President Cory Aquino. Travel participants will spend several days in Manila meeting with lawyers, representatives of the Aquino government, U.S. Embassy officials, peasants, former political detainees and other social groups. The seminar will divide into smaller groups to travel to different regions of the country to gain other perspectives on the Philippine situation. Minnesota Lawyers Committee members will be asked to make connections with Bar Association representatives and Filipino human rights lawyers regarding mutual concerns.

Spaces on the travel seminar are still available. The cost of the trip is \$1995 including all expenses. Participants will be housed in modest accommodations in Manila and the provinces. Ms. Dorothy Friesen, who has travelled and worked in the Philippines over the past nine years, will lead the trip. For further information contact Minnesota Lawyers Committee representative Nancy Arnison at 339-0661.

# MLC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, January 29, 1987: "Central America Firsthand," a report of the 1986 Central America travel seminar will take place at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Israel, 2324 Emerson Avenue South, Minneapolis. (See advertisement, page 3)

Friday, February 13, 1987: The second annual Asylum Training Program will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Rare Books Room, third floor of the University of Minnesota Law School. The cost is \$30 for lawyers, \$10 for low income. The Committee has applied for 4 CLE credits. (See story, page 1)

Saturday, February 28, 1987: Amnesty International Midwest Regional Conference featuring keynote speaker Andrea Lyon of the Homicide Task Force of the Cook County Public Defender's Office from 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. at the University of Minnesota Law School, 229 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis.

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