

OBSERVER

Advocates Launch Investigations in Several Corners of the Globe

In a series of investigative visits, including trial and election observation, Minnesota Advocates has been working in recent months to respond to human rights crises in various parts of the world.

Mexico: Election Monitoring

Several members of Minnesota Advocates monitored the August 21, 1994, elections in Mexico. Mexico Project Director Sarah DeCosse and Partners In Human Rights Education Summer Fellow, Abigail Wertz (see p. 5), viewed the events in Oaxaca,

was sponsored through the Central and Eastern European Law Initiative (CEELI) of the American Bar Association. Although the Republic of Macedonia has so far avoided the bloodshed that has characterized other parts of former Yugoslavia, there is a need to take steps to defuse the tensions between ethnic groups there. The Macedonian population includes a large Albanian minority, as well as Turks, Vlachs, Serbs, Romas and others. Coy found that while basic protections do exist for minorities, significant steps must be taken immediately to avert further deterior-

Hicks and Staff Attorney Jim Coy visited Albania in June 1994 to investigate problems with the legal system as well as attacks against and harassment of journalists. The Minnesota Advocates' representatives noted growing political tension in the country which is resulting in an increase of politically-motivated threats and prosecutions. Several ex-political prisoners, for instance, were indicted this summer on charges related to a hunger strike they held to emphasize their demands for compensation for persecution under the former communist government. Hicks and Coy were also able to spend three days in the Serbian-controlled province of Kosovo, conducting follow-up work on a prior Minnesota Advocates project in that region.

"...growing political tension is resulting in an increase of politically-motivated threats and prosecutions."

a Mexican state which has suffered significant social turmoil, especially surrounding the rights of indigenous people. In addition, Minnesota Advocates Jim and Sally Martineau, Carla Hagen, Dan Gerdt, Shannon Rolf, and Dan Dugan were also in Mexico to observe the elections.

DeCosse has spent several weeks in Mexico this summer, resulting in three reports on various human rights problems in the country. (see p. 4).

Macedonia: Ethnic Minority Rights

In March 1994, Minnesota Advocates sent Staff Attorney Jim Coy to serve as a legal specialist with the Center for Ethnic Relations in Skopje, Macedonia. Coy's three-month visit

ration of ethnic relations in this critical crossroads of Central Europe. CEELI and Minnesota Advocates will continue to work together on conflict prevention in Macedonia.

Albania: Trial Observation

Chief Judge of Hennepin County District Court, Kevin Burke represented Minnesota Advocates as an observer at a treason trial in Albania in mid-August. Burke and Board Member Peggy Hicks watched the proceedings against five members of the Greek minority party in Albania, known as Omonia. The five men were charged with treason for espionage, spreading false propaganda and maintaining ties with the Greek secret services.

Romania: Preventing Domestic Violence

In May 1994, a delegation of four

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Director's Desk & Newsnotes

From the Director's Desk

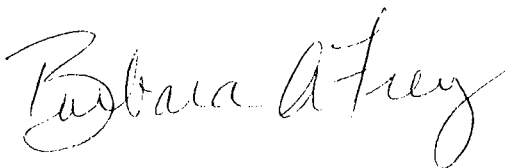
Evidence of the cheapening of human life is all around us. What more vivid example do we need than the slaughter in Rwanda to remind us of the fragility of institutions and the lack of political will to protect human rights?

Should we throw up our hands in despair? Should we circle the wagons and protect our own, leaving the rest of the world to fend for itself?

I challenge you to continue to pay personal attention to the world's issues. Despite the overwhelming problems that face us, there is lots of good news. We have come a very long way in this century toward a legal framework to protect human rights. An awareness of the human rights of women has started, if slowly, to turn around abusive attitudes and practices towards women around the world. Agencies like UNICEF are succeeding in saving massive numbers of human lives from preventable diseases. It seems to me inevitable that the trend toward human rights, as in the trend against slavery in the last century, is irreversible. The hunger for personal freedom is too great to put down. The end of Cold War, however, has brought a great deal of chaos to the international scene. The lack of an overriding discipline in foreign policy means that crises get attention only on an ad hoc basis. The overall appearance is one of messiness and disorder. Problems now need to be addressed at the local level, not by centralized mandate.

Nongovernmental organizations like Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights can play an especially critical role during this era. We work directly with the grassroots to pressure for protection of human rights. You will note in this issue of the Human Rights Observer, a wide array of projects where individuals are having an impact on human rights protections -- by setting standards on human rights and the environment, documenting domestic violence in Romania, by assisting to create legal remedies for ethnic minorities in Macedonia, by representing political asylum applicants in the U.S., and by analyzing indigenous rights in Mexico.

Momentum for this person-to-person approach to human rights is building, just as political will seems to be waning. Nongovernmental efforts to protect human rights are creative and efficient (they have to be because of the scarcity of funds). The volunteers of Minnesota Advocates are motivated by a sense of the dignity of all persons. Their work is a testament to the notion that all human beings are valued -- not cheap.



FUNDING NOTES

The **Boehm Foundation** awarded a grant of \$2,500 to support the Death Penalty Defense Project.

The **Davis Foundation** awarded a grant of \$4,000 to support a trial observation mission to Albania.

The **Hennepin County Bar Foundation** awarded a grant of \$1,000 to support the Refugee and Asylum Project.

The **Minnesota State Bar Foundation** awarded a grant of \$3,400 to support the Refugee and Asylum Project.

The **Musser Fund** awarded a grant of \$10,000 to support the B.I.A.S. Project.

The **Shaler Adams Foundation** awarded a grant of \$15,000 to support the Domestic Violence in Eastern Europe.

The **Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet** awarded a grant of \$15,000 to support the Haiti Project.

The **Human Rights Observer** is published ten times a year by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights.

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Organizational Updates

Dorfman Play to be Staged

What might happen if a victim could put their torturer on trial? In Chilean Ariel Dorfman's play, *Death and the Maiden*, this is the situation in which Paulina finds herself. Dorfman wrote the Tony-award winning *Death and the Maiden* in 1991, shortly after a fragile democracy had been restored to Chile and the atrocities of the Pinochet regime were coming to light.

Minnesota Advocates is pleased to be the programmatic sponsor of the Lagniappe production of *Death and the Maiden*. Lagniappe, a local nonprofit theater company, connects the distinctive visceral and imaginative aspects of theater to social issues that have global as well as local importance. We invite you to *Death and the Maiden*, described by the London *Financial Times* as, "Magnificent... one of those rare plays which, with the simplicity of classical myth, seems to grasp the pulse of the century."

Though about the situation in Chile, this is a play for any society, including our own, where crimes of the past go unnamed and without a justice that would allow healing. As Dorfman himself puts it, "How can those who tortured and those who were tortured coexist in the same land? How do you reach the truth if lying has become a habit? How do we keep the past alive without becoming its prisoner? How do we forget the past without risking its repetition in the future? Is it legitimate to sacrifice the truth to insure peace? And how guilty are we all of what happened to those who suffered most?" These questions makes this a play which speaks to all of us.

Death and the Maiden will run at the Minneapolis Theatre Garage, 711 W. Franklin Avenue, from November 4-27, 1994, at 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and 2:00 p.m. on Sundays. For information call 612-341-3302. ■

New Faces and Names at Minnesota Advocates

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is pleased to announce the following additions to its program staff.

Cheryl Thomas, a former member of the Minnesota Advocates Board of Directors and a longtime volunteer, has been hired to staff the Domestic Violence in Eastern Europe Project. An attorney formerly with the Briggs & Morgan firm, Cheryl has been very active in promoting women's rights as human rights and was a driving force behind establishing the Domestic Violence Project.

Greg Gisvold, is the 1995 Minnesota Advocates Legal Fellow working on the Death Penalty Defense Project. Gisvold is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School, with a B.A. from Amherst College. Greg was a 1992 summer intern at Minnesota Advocates and worked during the 1993 and 1994 summers in Geneva at the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. ■

Minnesota Protocol to be Revised

An international group of volunteers is currently revising the *Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions*, which was originally published by the United Nations in 1991. The *Manual*, which was adopted by the UN as the standard for conducting death investigations, has come to be known as "The Minnesota Protocol." Publication of the revised edition of the *Manual* is expected in Spring 1995. ■

My support of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is important . . .



Paula Richey and Walt Richey have made a gift to Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights in their wills. When asked why they thought it was important to support the organization with a deferred gift, Paula gave us these thoughts:

"We chose Minnesota Advocates for several reasons. First, we care about the human rights values that Minnesota Advocates stands for and the practical work that it does to give reality to those values. Second, we like to support organizations that have contributed to the lives of our children and ourselves. Working for Minnesota Advocates has enriched my life. And finally, Minnesota Advocates leverages its cash budget with low overhead and a very high number of volunteer hours."

For more information about making planned gifts to Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, please call Curt N. Peterson, CFRE at 612-341-3302; all calls will be kept confidential. ■

Mexico Project



Mexico Project Director Sarah DeCosse participated on a panel on "Human Rights and Democracy" at an international conference held in Taxco, Mexico

Mexico Project Director Speaks at International Conference

Sarah A. DeCosse, the Mexico Project Director, presented a paper on "Human Rights and Democracy" at an international conference held in Mexico from May 30 to June 3, 1994. The conference, sponsored by the Mexican National Institute for Anthropology and History and the Institute for Social Investigations of the National Autonomous University, brought together Mexican and international experts focusing on human rights, sociological, historical and anthropological concerns in rural Mexico.

Ms. DeCosse was on the final plenary session with Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Mexico's premier authority on indigenous rights issues and Enrique Leff, an economist with the United Nations Program on the Environment. Ms. DeCosse's presentation, delivered in Spanish, highlighted recent human rights violations in Mexico as part of the struggle to achieve democracy. Ms. DeCosse's paper has been submitted for possible publication by the conference organizers. ■

Mexico Project Releases New Reports

In May, June and August, of 1994, the Mexico Project released three human rights reports detailing important recent developments in Mexico.

The May report, **Stifling Human Rights Advocacy in Mexico: The Censure of Brigadier General José Francisco Gallardo Rodríguez**, explored the case of a highly decorated Mexican General who was imprisoned after publicly advocating the prevention and prosecution of military human rights abuses. Brigadier General José Francisco Gallardo Rodríguez has been detained since November 1993 and charged with "spreading completely negative ideas about the Mexican military" following the publication of portions of his thesis on the need for a military ombudsman in Mexico. While the Mexican government censures Gallardo and other human rights advocates, the military human rights violations in Chiapas are being treated with impunity. The Mexican military recently concluded a several month investigation of 128 cases of human rights violations documented by Mexican human rights organizations, and

announced that there was no military culpability in any of the cases. The Gallardo report demonstrates that in Mexico, human rights, rather than human rights violators, are on trial.

The June report, **The Mexican Coordination of National Public Security: A Discussion of Legal and Human Rights Issues**, analyzed a controversial new Mexican government office. Created by Presidential Decree on April 26, 1994, the Coordination was designed to centralize all federal and state police and military forces in Mexico under one central authority. The report detailed the criticisms of the Coordination, and illuminated human rights concerns raised by this concentration of police authority. A recent police operation ordered by the Coordination, where several individuals were illegally detained and homes ransacked, demonstrated some of the human rights criticisms of the new office. In light of the rising tensions leading up to the Mexican presidential election on August 21, the report suggests that the Coordination of National Public Security should be carefully monitored as a potential vehicle for continuing human rights abuses.

The August report, **Harassment of Human Rights Defenders in Mexico**, detailed an escalating series of harassment and aggression recently suffered by human rights workers in Mexico. The threatening activities have included the detention of human rights workers, illegal searches of the homes and offices of human rights activists, and accusations in the national media that human rights groups have offered financial support to, or have participated in, guerilla activities.

These reports are available for purchase by calling Minnesota Advocates at 612-341-3302. ■

Partners in Human Rights Education

12 Partners in Human Rights Education Fellowships Awarded

A Fellowship Program awarded 12 grants to Partners Project participants to work in human rights organizations this summer. The Partners worked in seven countries, including Australia, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States. These Fellows now bring their experiences back to the classrooms with a new perspective and understanding of human rights:

Patricia Black
Pat Fucane Centre, Derry, Ireland

Celine Fitzmaurice
Borderlinks, Tucson, Arizona

Sara Gurwitch
California Appellate Project, San Francisco, California

Lisa M. Kois
International Women's Rights Action Watch, Minneapolis, Minnesota

S.R. Nithy
International Service for Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

Dawn Annette Pauls
Indian Social Institute, New Dehli, India

Jennifer Prestholdt
UNHCR, Geneva, Switzerland

Donna & Bob Rose
Amnesty International/Save the Children, London, England

Paula Schwartzbauer
Comm. Admin. of Justice, Belfast, Ireland

Abigail Wertz
Center for Human Rights Tepeyac, Oaxaca, Mexico

Gwen Willems
Human Rights Centre, Sydney, Australia ■

Students Create Projects in Partners Classes

The following poem was written by Ruth Fox, a fifth grade student at Glen Lake Elementary School in Edina, Minnesota. Some of the students at Glen Lake Elementary used creative writing projects to express the principles they learned during their Partners in Human Rights classes.

FREEDOM

People don't think of
The freedom they have.
Freedom is like a stream
Never ending.
Freedom is like an eagle,
Never hunted.
Freedom was, and
still is today,
A gracious peace in the
Stillness of the night. ■

Upcoming Partners in Human Rights Education Project TRAINING SESSIONS

Twin Cities
(at the University of Minnesota Law School, Minneapolis)
September 17
October 8

Duluth
October 1

Grand Rapids
October 29

All trainings will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. New volunteers are required to attend one training session. Please call Partners in Human Rights Education at 612-626-0041 for more information and to sign up for a training date.



Noted civil rights attorney William Kunstler participated in the Partners in Human Rights Education Project Recognition Event held at the University of Minnesota in May. Here, Mr. Kunstler congratulates Partners Fellowship recipient Sarah Gurwitch, while (from left to right) Partners Project Steering Committee members Barbara Frey, Rama Pandey, Ken Tilsen look on.

Death Penalty Defense Project

Death Penalty Defense Project volunteers have been very active in recent months, working on projects which address a variety of issues.

Volling Visits Philippines to Set Up Training Program

Project Steering Committee member Jim Voling travelled to the Philippines in June to meet with members of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG). His visit was requested by FLAG as the death penalty has recently been reintroduced in the Philippines. Voling consulted with the FLAG staff and will assist them with a training session in October, 1994.

Volunteers Claim International Law Violated in Texas Case

Volunteer attorneys have drafted an *amici curiae* brief and a Motion to Intervene for submission in a Texas capital case. Cesar Fierro, a Mexican national, was sentenced to death for the 1989 murder of a taxi driver in El Paso, Texas. Fierro's conviction was based upon a confession obtained by El Paso police after he was told that his parents were being held in a Juarez, Mexico jail and would be tortured if he did not confess.

The *amici* brief, signed by Minnesota Advocates on behalf of 10 human rights organizations, was based on the International Convention on Torture, which states that the threat of physical harm to another in itself constitutes psychological torture.

Volunteer attorneys also drafted a Motion to Intervene on behalf of the Mexican government. In clear contravention of Convention protections, the state authorities who arrested and charged Cesar Fierro never informed him of his right to contact Mexican

Consular officials, nor did they notify the Mexican Consulate of Fierro's arrest.

Volunteers on the briefs included Faegre & Benson attorneys Jim Voling (Project Chair), John Bessler, Tom Bottern, Mike Cheever, John Connelly, Betsy Hendricks, Nestor Ho, Wayne Rice, Sid Spaeth, and Karen Wilson, and solo practitioner John Grzybek.

Fierro's execution, set for August 10, was stayed by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals on August 5.

Blues Benefit Raises Funds

With a move from Saint Paul to Minneapolis, the 3rd Annual Blues Benefit continued its reputation as a "FUNdraiser." A full house enjoyed the blues performed by The Groove Brothers, while copies of Sister Prejean's book and T-shirts designed for the Project were sold, raising more than \$4,000 to support the Project.

Project Honors Sister Helen Prejean, Author and Advocate

The Death Penalty Defense Project presented an award to Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., in recognition of her work with death row inmates. The award was presented following the Project's training seminar, "Vagaries of the Mind: Mental Health Evidence and the Death Penalty," which was approved for 3 CLE credits. The seminar's faculty included Richard Burr, Director of the Capital Punishment Project of the NAACP's Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Dr. Kathleen Wayland, a clinical psychologist at Duke University Medical Center who is currently working on capital punishment litigation for the California Appellate Project. ■



Sister Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*, addressed the death penalty seminar after receiving an award in May, 1994.

Missions *continued from page 1*

Minnesota Advocates investigated the problem of domestic violence in Romania. The delegates, including Project Coordinator Cheryl Thomas, Elizabeth Bruch, Ann Taylor, and Robin Phillips, found widespread evidence of domestic violence and little social support for its victims. There are no shelters, no hotlines, no specific services of any kind for victims of domestic abuse in Romania. The delegation met with the medical and legal communities, as well as conducting some interviews with victims, to gain background on the nature and extent of the problem.

Groups and individuals in Romania have now mobilized to respond to the problem, but need significant international support. Minnesota Advocates is working with ANA, a women's rights group in Romania, to increase public education on the issue of domestic violence and on the international standards that exist to prevent this fundamental violation of human rights. Future steps will include suggested legal reforms to encourage prosecution and to provide necessary social and educational support to prevent domestic violence. ■

Donor Information

Summer Interns & Volunteers: Thanks!

Many thanks go to the dedicated volunteers and interns who spent their summer vacations working in the Minnesota Advocates office:

Georgiana DeForge, a Minneapolis Technical College student, provided secretarial assistance. **Kenisha Draper**, a Twin Cities high school senior, provided general office assistance through the Summer Intern Program for Urban Youth. **Therese Gales**, a graduate of Notre Dame University, worked on the BIAS Project. **Megan Himan**, a Stanford University sophomore, worked on the Mexico Project. **Pradeepa Jeeva**, a Twin Cities high school junior, worked as a general office volunteer. **Leona Shaw**, a graduate of the University of Michigan, worked on the BIAS Project. **Sheila Starkey**, a 3L at the University of Minnesota Law School, worked on the Refugee and Asylum Project as a Minnesota Justice Foundation summer clerk. **Anton Steenkamp**, an attorney from South Africa and recent LLM recipient from the University of Notre Dame, worked on a variety of legal and minority rights issues. **John Tonsager**, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, worked on the Mexico Project. **Beth Wiberg**, a sophomore at Gustavus Adolphus College, worked on the BIAS Project. **Kimberly Wick**, a senior at the University of Minnesota, helped us negotiate our way on the information superhighway.

Anyone interested in volunteering with Minnesota Advocates should call Cynthia Breslauer at 612-341-3302. ■

Yes, I want to help prevent human rights abuses.

Individual

- \$75
- \$40
- \$20

Family

- \$100 Lawyers, other professionals
- \$50 General public
- \$30 Students, low income, senior citizens
- \$150 Associate
- \$250 Sponsor

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Telephone - day _____ evening _____

- Check if recent change of address.
- I am interested in volunteer opportunities.
- I would like to be contacted about making a bequest or other deferred gifts to Minnesota Advocates.
- My employer will match my gift.

For more information please call 612-341-3302.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

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INTERNS & VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Development/Public Affairs: Interns and volunteers are needed to assist with implementing marketing and fundraising strategies. Please call Curt Peterson at 612-341-3302 if you are interested in volunteering.

Publications: Interns and volunteers are needed to assist with the sales and marketing of publications. Must be able to work in our office 5-10 hours per week. Knowledge of Word Perfect 5.1 required. If interested please call Cynthia Breslauer at 612-341-3302.

Administrative: Interns and volunteers are needed to work in our office 5-10 hours per week providing administrative assistance -- everything from answering phones to A-Z filing. If interested please call Cynthia Breslauer at 612-341-3302.

WE NEED A CAMERA, and

Adding machines with tape
 Camcorder
 Cassette recorder
 Coffee pots
 Flip charts
 Laptop computers
 Office furniture:
 side chairs
 desks
 computer chairs
 book shelves
 Office equipment:
 file cabinets
 computer tables
 Overhead projector
 New telephone system
 Television
 VCR

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation of any of the above items please contact Cynthia Breslauer at 612-341-3302.

1994 Awards Dinner

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights celebrated its Tenth Annual Human Rights Awards dinner on July 26 at the Minneapolis Hilton. This year's theme, *Protecting Our World's Children*, was aptly demonstrated by the evening's honorees: **James P. Grant**, Executive Director of UNICEF, and Brazil's **Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua**, represented by Tereza Cristina R. Franco.

Volunteer awards were presented to **Jean-Robert Cole**, for his work with the organization's Haiti Project and a member of the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights Board of Directors; **Sandy Falkman**, a teacher participant with Partners in Human Rights Education; **John Grzybek**, a volunteer attorney who has worked with both the Refugee and Asylum Project and the Death Penalty Defense Project; **Ilean Her**, a recent University of Minnesota Law School graduate who has worked with the Refugee and Asylum Project; **Robin Phillips**, a volunteer attorney who helped establish the Domestic Violence in Eastern Europe Project and participated in an investigative mission to Romania for the Project; **Peter Thompson**, a volunteer attorney who was a team leader on the War Crimes Project and has worked on many projects over the past decade including the Refugee and Asylum Project and the Haiti Project; and, **James Volling**, a member of the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights Board of Directors and an original member of the Death Penalty Defense Project Steering Committee.

In addition to the awards and speeches, dinner attendees viewed the premiere of a videotape, narrated by Minnesota native Garrison Keillor, which celebrates the first 10 years of Minnesota Advocates. Copies of the organization's just-published annual report were also available. ■



1994 Human Rights Awards recipients James P. Grant and Tereza Cristina R. Franco, the National Secretary of Brazil's Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua (National Street Children's Movement).



Partners in Human Rights volunteer teacher Sandy Falkman showed off her award along with several of her students who attended the dinner.



Master of ceremonies Mike Maus, former host of the Minnesota Public Radio program "Worldview," displayed a copy of the 1994 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights annual report.

Photos by Bill Cameron and David Wheaton

Highlights Children's Rights



Asylum Project volunteer and recent University of Minnesota Law School graduate Ilean Her attended the awards dinner -- in the middle of taking the bar exam -- to receive her volunteer award.



Left to right: Minnesota Advocates board member Sam Heins, Hennepin County District Court Judge LaJune Thomas Lange, mayoral assistant Willie Wesley, Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton and attorney Sam Kaplan socialized at the reception prior to the awards dinner.

Minnesota Advocates Thanks the Supporters of the 10th Human Rights Awards Dinner:

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Thanks also to the volunteers who helped make the 1994 Awards Dinner a success! ■

Human Rights and the Environment

By David McDonald

Our taxi careened back and forth as we climbed into the Himalayas towards a town named Tehri and a man named Sunderlal Bahuguna. In Hindi the word is "atithi", an unannounced guest, and that is how we arrived in the early darkness. But in India a guest is like a god and we were invited into the tent: a tall, bearded Minnesotan and his Indian journalist friend.

Inside, twenty or so men gathered around the Gandhi-like man with the long, wild, white beard and the single solar battery lantern. Construction had recently resumed on the massive dam that was to bridge the swiftly flowing Bhagirathi River, a tributary of the most sacred river in India, the Ganges. The dam would submerge these men's homes and the entire town of Tehri.

I had come to India to explore project possibilities for Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights in the area of human rights and the environment. The Tehri Dam project was just what I was looking for. It had first won governmental approval in 1992; an earth and rock filled dam, 260 meters high. If it is completed, over 100,000 people will be displaced, essentially becoming environmental refugees, and 123 villages will be inundated by water. On the positive side, the Dam will provide 2,000 megawatts of electricity and store enough water to irrigate 270,000 hectares of land.

Sunderlal Bahuguna has made opposition to the Tehri Dam his cause. Bahuguna achieved national and international fame as leader of the Chipko movement that developed the tactic of hugging trees to stop them from being cut down and from a series of long marches through rural India collecting support for the protection of forests. He has pledged to

stay in his shanty beside the Bhagirathi river no matter what happens. I was invited into Bahuguna's shanty where he prepared a simple meal for me and my friend. He discussed his "battle" to stop construction of the Dam, using the "weapons" that Gandhi had given him: fearlessness against fear and selflessness against greed.

As the youngest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas are prone to earthquakes, and a severe earthquake rocked the region around Tehri as recently as October 21, 1991. On the way to Tehri, we had passed through the towns of Haridwar and Rishikesh, important pilgrimage sites for India's Hindus. A large earthquake could destroy the Dam and wipe out Haridwar and Rishikesh where over 200,000 people live. The powerful earthquake that hit central India and killed tens of thousands just before I left Minnesota reinforced the apprehension I felt about this possibility.

The next morning I went to visit Mr. Virendra Saklani, an 80 year-old Tehri advocate and lawyer who was one of the original activists opposing the construction of the Tehri Dam. Mr. Saklani spoke of his opposition to the Dam since 1967 and of seven smaller dams that were 60% complete but lying idle because of the diversion of resources to the Tehri Dam. Had they been completed, these smaller dams would have been generating power for some years now, would not have displaced people, and would not have submerged any villages or forests.

Mr. Saklani's comments led me to ponder again whether development is inconsistent with the protection of the environment and the preservation of human rights. At the Earth Summit, the world began talking about "sustainable development"; devel-

opment that is not harmful to the environment. Is a large dam located in an earthquake-prone zone of the Himalayas the type of environmentally sound development that should be encouraged? Obviously not.

What is needed are smaller dams like those mentioned by Mr. Saklani rather than a single big dam. A series of small dams could provide much of the same electricity without the human suffering caused by the displacement of people and the ecological damage of a large dam and reservoir. An earthquake would not have devastating consequences on a series of small dams.

As advocates of human rights, we need to support people like Sunderlal Bahuguna and Virendra Saklani who seek more sustainable paths to development. We need to encourage our government and international development agencies like the World Bank to commit resources to sustainable development that is environmentally sound and respects human rights. We need to focus human rights bodies' attention on the detrimental effects of projects such as the Tehri Dam. ■

Meeting of Experts on Human Rights and the Environment

In the last few years, there has been a growing body of literature and interest in the problems of the environment and its relation to human rights. The United Nations, environmental groups, and human rights groups have begun to struggle with the link between preservation of the environment and the promotion of human rights. For human rights groups, a consideration of the link between human rights and the environment has pushed these groups beyond their traditional con-

continued on next page

cern for civil and political rights into the less defined area of economic, social and cultural rights.

In August 1989, the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities ("the Sub-Commission") asked Mme. Ksentini, an Algerian lawyer and technical expert for the Sub-Commission, to study the problem of the environment and its relation to human rights.

Experts met in May 1994, at the UN Headquarters in Geneva to provide Mme. Ksentini with a draft declaration of principles on human rights and the environment. Mme. Ksentini will submit her final report to the Sub-Commission for its approval in August, 1994. The final report and appended draft declaration of principles will be adopted by the Sub-Commission at its general meeting in August 1994, then be forwarded to the full Commission on Human Rights. ■

David McDonald is a partner and chair of the environmental law section at the law firm of Briggs & Morgan in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is also the recent past chair of the Minnesota State Bar Association Environmental Law Section. As a Minnesota Advocates volunteer, he has spearheaded the organization's work on the environment and human rights. He attended the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the 1992 session of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. In spring 1994, he served as rapporteur for a U.N. meeting of experts on the environment and human rights. ■

If you would like more information about Minnesota Advocates' work on human rights and the environment, please contact David McDonald at 612-223-6592.

The B.I.A.S. (Building Immigrant Awareness and Support) Project

Minnesota Advocates is sponsoring a conference titled "The American Community: Melting Pot or Boiling Point?" with the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum on October 7 - 8, 1994. There is a growing perception that the American community is breaking down and that Americans are more aware of what separates them than what unites them. These perceptions are of particular concern as Americans debate issues of legal and illegal immigration to the United States.

America is historically a rich composite of ethnic, racial and cultural groups which have traditionally found common identity not because of shared language, physical characteristics, religion, and customs but despite them. When Alex de Tocqueville visited the United States in the early 1800's he discovered a country which had successfully integrated peoples of different backgrounds and beliefs. "How does it happen," he asked "that in the United States, where the inhabitants have only recently immigrated to the land which they now occupy, and brought neither customs nor traditions with them there; where they met one another for the first time with no previous acquaintance; where, in short, the instinctive love of country can scarcely exist; how does it happen that everyone takes as zealous an interest in the affairs of his township, his county, and the whole state as if they were his own?"

Some argue that the spirit of unity and sense of common identity which Tocqueville observed has withered. Others might wonder whether it ever truly existed. Participants in the October conference will explore: What,

if anything, binds Americans together as a nation? How do we rebuild community? How can we strengthen national unity while capitalizing on our diversity?

The conference will be held Friday October 7 from noon to 9:30 p.m., and on Saturday October 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Featured speakers will include Professor Lawrence Fuchs from Brandeis University and author of "The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and the Civic Culture;" Andrei Codrescu, author and commentator on "All Things Considered," National Public Radio; and, Michael Novak of The American Enterprise Institute.

Please call Nancy Arnison at 612-341-3302 for further information about the conference. ■

Youth Education on Immigration and Refugee Issues

In recognition of Human Rights Day, a workshop will be held on December 10, 1994 to train teachers and Partners in Human Rights Education teams to work with immigrant and refugee materials in the classroom.

Curriculum development teams from the B.I.A.S. and Partners Projects are developing materials for use in grades 1 - 12. In addition, the B.I.A.S. Project has produced an extensive annotated bibliography analyzing the educational materials currently available on these topics. The existing curriculum materials touch on refugees, but do not cover the larger immigration picture.

For details about the bibliography, curriculum materials or training workshops please call Nancy Arnison at 612-341-3302 or Kristi Rudelius-Palmer at 612-626-0041. ■

Calendar

Partners in Human Rights Education Project Training Sessions: in Minneapolis on September 17 & October 8; in Duluth on October 1; in Grand Rapids on October 29. For more information please see page 5 or call 612-626-0041.

Thursday, September 8: "Domestic Violence: A Human Rights Issue," a benefit to support the Domestic Violence in Eastern Europe Project will feature Sheila Wellstone. The event will be held at the home of Cheryl Thomas and Roger Heegaard in Minneapolis from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. For more information please call Cheryl Thomas at 612-341-3302.



Tuesday, September 13: "The 1994 Mexican National Election: A Firsthand Perspective." This free brown bag lunch talk by Minnesota Advocates election observers will be held at noon at the law firm of Popham, Haik, Schnobrich & Kaufman, 33rd floor board room, 222 S. 9th Street, Minneapolis. For information call 612-341-3302.

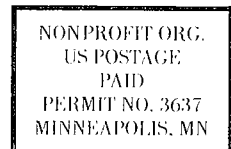
Tuesday, September 20: Dr. Gary King will discuss the current situation of political prisoners in the Philippines at a free brown bag lunch program. The talk will be held at the law firm of Leonard, Street & Deinard, 150 S. Fifth Street, Minneapolis. The photo of political prisoners at left was taken by Dr. King in July, 1994.

October 7-8: "The American Community: Melting Pot or Boiling Point," a conference sponsored by Minnesota Advocates, will be held at the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum in Minneapolis. For more information please see page 11 or call Nancy Arnison at 612-341-3302.

Sunday, November 6: Performance of *Death and the Maiden* will benefit Minnesota Advocates. For information about the play see page 3.

Saturday, December 10: A workshop for Partners in Human Rights Education participants on working with immigrant and refugee materials in the classroom. For more information see page 11 or call Nancy Arnison at 612-341-3302 or Kristi Rudelius-Palmer at 612-626-0041. ■

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