

19. The ACLU/North Carolina Committee on International Human Rights

By: Slater Newman*

Our Committee was founded in 1989, at about the time that recently-elected ACLU President Nadine Strossen called for increased ACLU involvement in international civil liberties. (The founding of this International Civil Liberties Report may also have occurred at about this time). Not long after, our affiliate was among the founding members of the Human Rights Coalition of North Carolina, and has since, mainly through our Committee, been continually involved in its activities. Our Wake County and Western North Carolina chapters are among the 31 local and statewide groups which support the Coalition. (See current listing below).

The purpose of the Coalition is "to enhance among citizens of our state the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of human rights as elucidated in such documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution." The Coalition is affiliated with the Children's Rights Network, with the NGO Coalition for an International Criminal Court and with North Carolinians for the Ratification of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

1. This year Governor Easley and the Mayors of Asheville, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Greenville, Raleigh, Reidsville and Thomasville each issued a proclamation for Human Rights Day/Week and/or Bill of Rights Day. Events scheduled for this week included:

December 5 (Thursday). 6:30 p.m. Raleigh. NCState University Club. Seventh Annual International Human Rights Award Dinner honoring Mary-

Lou Leiser Smith of Chapel Hill, who has been a leader in education and advocacy for a just peace in the Middle East.

December 9 (Monday) 5:30 p.m. Raleigh. Rotunda of the Stste Capitol. Celebration of the 54th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the 211th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Speaker - Rev. W. W. Finlator, former National Vice-President of the ACLU.

December 10 (Tuesday) noon. Greenville. Pitt County courthouse. Reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Bill of Rights.

December 10 (Tuesday) noon. Raleigh. Wake County court house. Reading of gender-neutral version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Dutch-treat lunch, "birthday" cake and singing to follow.

December 13 (Friday) noon. Chapel Hill. Downtown post office. Reading of the Bill of Rights.

Most of the activities were sponsored by ACLU chapters and ACLU members (in communities in which there are no chapters).

During United Nations Week, the Coalition cosponsored (with the United Nations Association of Wake County) a public reading in downtown Raleigh of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by 5th- and 6th-grade students from the Emma Conn Global Communications Elementary School.

2. Our Committee is comprised of six members, two of whom are members of the affiliate Board of Directors. We have kept the ACLU/NC affiliate Board apprised of our activities through written (and sometimes oral) reports at each Board meeting, and have kept the ACLU/NC membership informed through

* Chair, ACLU/NC Committee on International Human Rights

articles we have prepared for LIBERTY, the affiliate quarterly newsletter.

3. We encourage each affiliate to establish a committee on international human rights. We would be pleased to help in any way we can. We encourage, also, the establishment of statewide (and/or local) human-rights coalitions. Toward that end a list of our Coalition's supporting groups is appended, indicative of the kinds of organizations which might participate.

Finally, we are interested in learning about the activities of committees on international human rights (if such exist) in other affiliates and about other statewide and local international human-rights coalitions.

Please contact: Slater Newman, Chair
 ACLU/NC Committee on International Human Rights
 315 Shepherd Street Raleigh, North Carolina 27607
 Phone (919) 821-2014 FAX (919) 828-2064
 e-mail: slaterpat@mindspring.com

Supporting groups are:

American Civil Liberties Union (North Carolina affiliate)
 American Civil Liberties Union (Wake County chapter)
 American Civil Liberties Union (Western North Carolina chapter)
 Amnesty International (Group 213)
 Community Church of Chapel Hill Community
 United Church of Christ (Raleigh)
 Interfaith Alliance of Wake County
 Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Committee
 National Association of Social Workers (NC chapter)
 North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers
 North Carolina AFL-CIO
 North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers
 North Carolina Association of Educators
 North Carolina Association of Human Rights Workers
 North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys
 North Carolina Council of Churches

North Carolina Human Relations Commission
 North Carolina NOW
 North Carolina Peace Action
 North Carolina Society for Ethical Culture
 Pullen Memorial Baptist Church: Peace and Justice Mission Group (Raleigh)
 Raleigh-Apex Branch, NAACP
 Raleigh Human Resources and Human Relations Advisory Commission
 Raleigh NOW
 Raleigh Peace Action
 Raleigh Religious Society of Friends
 United Nations Association (North Carolina Division)
 United Nations Association (Wake County chapter)
 United Nations Association (West Triangle chapter)
 Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh
 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Chapel Hill/Durham branch)