

AAA Committee for Human Rights (CfHR)  
Annual Report Year 2004  
Prepared by Samuel Martínez, CfHR Chair ('03-04)

**Introduction: Committee Background, Mission and Objectives.** The AAA's Committee for Human Rights (CfHR), established in 1995, is composed of 10 members, 8 of which are elected by the AAA membership and serve three-year terms, with 2 ex-officio members, the AAA President and President-elect (see Appendix A). The Committee's internal mission is to stimulate informed involvement in human rights among professional anthropologists through publications, panels, and other outreach. The Committee's external mission is to gather information on selected, anthropologically relevant cases of human rights abuse and to propose appropriate related action. CfHR efforts occur at the annual meetings and throughout the year through Committee Task Groups and case-specific actions. This report briefly describes actions and activities taken by the CfHR during the term year between the AAA Annual Meetings of 2003 and 2004. In the face of worsened budgetary constraints, the CfHR remains a productive and effective working body, but not without signs of strain in fulfilling its extensive mandate. With these difficulties in mind, the third and last section of this report highlights some of the organizational challenges now facing the CfHR.

## PART ONE: INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

**Institutional Memory.** As the tenth anniversary of the CfHR approaches, it has become necessary to devote conscious attention to improving the transmission of knowledge between past and present members of the Committee. There is also a clear need, for the benefit of future Committee members and students of the anthropology of human rights, to collect and catalogue the CfHR's documents and to gather a record of its members' experience. Three major initiatives were undertaken toward these aims in 2004, the CfHR Analytic History Project, the CfHR Document Inventory, and a workshop, "Charting Scholar/Advocate Strategies."

The CfHR Analytic History Project: Former CfHR Chair, Thomas Greaves, with the assistance of Bucknell undergraduate, Brian Conboy, solicited the recollections and advice of individuals who had served on the Committee or its predecessor, the Commission for Human Rights. Greaves and Conboy prepared and distributed a Topics List, of questions about the CfHR's aims, achievements, constraints and future opportunities, to each study participant, who then recorded and sent in their thoughts and recollections, either on audiotape or in typescript. These commentaries were then assembled and principal patterns extracted. A 107-page draft report of the CfHR Analytic History Project was submitted to the Committee in June 2004. It is hoped the effort will constitute a resource for the CfHR in future years, providing an institutional memory and experience that would be helpful to new members of the Committee.

The CfHR Document Inventory: With funding from the University of Connecticut Human Rights Institute, and with the assistance of Committee D.C. liaison fellow, Maria Weir, out-going CfHR Chair, Samuel Martínez, compiled a preliminary inventory of the records of the CfHR. Though the final, annotated list of the CfHR papers held at the AAA's headquarters is roughly 95 pages long, it was found that the CfHR holdings at AAA and the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) are too incomplete to be optimally useful to either the Committee or future students of anthropology and human rights, and must be supplemented with records held by former CfHR Chairs. Once a more complete collection is assembled at AAA headquarters, procedures will be established for transferring CfHR records to the NAA and making these available for consultation by scholars. It is anticipated that further external funds will be sought for the safe transfer of documents from former Committee Chairs as well as for cataloguing these items after they arrive in AAA headquarters.

Workshop – Charting Scholar/Advocate Strategies: The American Anthropological Association's Committee for Human Rights: CfHR Chair, Martínez, organized and convened this all-day event, on 19

November 2004. All present and former members of the Committee were invited to gather in San Francisco, to share their perspectives on past best practice and to suggest strategies for future action. The preliminary report of the Analytic History Project was the basic point of reference for discussion, supplemented by follow-up questions circulated by Martínez and Greaves. Though the participants were fewer than hoped for (former members, Janet Chernela, Sheila Dauer, Thomas Greaves, Barbara Rose Johnston, and Terence Turner, as well as present members, Charles Briggs, Laura Graham, and Samuel Martínez), the exchange was open, positive and thought-provoking. A record of the proceedings was made on audio tape, from which highlights will be extracted and shared among the CfHR (including the AAA President and President-elect) and the workshop participants.

### Other Internal Activities

CfHR Advisory Council. One recurring concern raised in the workshop in San Francisco was how the CfHR can communicate and consult more effectively with its emeriti. At the Committee's business meeting phone conference, 20 November 2004, the Committee approved inviting all its emeriti to a yearly meeting, to be held in conjunction with the AAA annual meeting.

Human Rights Fellows Program. In 2002, the CfHR initiated a Fellows Program in the Anthropology of Human Rights. Positions carry no stipends but provide recipients with strong experience in human rights work, possibilities for publication, as well as the opportunity to work closely with the Committee, government agencies, and human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The position of *CfHR Research Fellow* entails researching, documenting, and writing a report on a matter of concern to both the Committee and the recipient. The 2004 Research Fellow was J. C. Salyer, an anthropology student at the CUNY Graduate Center and former staff attorney of the American Civil Liberties Union. Salyer's specific interests include U.S. criminal justice ethics and immigration, priorities established by the Committee at its 2002 spring meeting. During 2004, Salyer wrote an essay, "Treatment of Non-Citizens after September 11 in Historical Context," to be published in an edited volume, tentatively titled, *National Security and International Migration: The Global Repercussions of US Policy*, being compiled by Martínez.

Salyer has agreed to extend his term as Research Fellow for another year. In 2005, his work for the Committee will focus on liaising both with NGOs working on civil rights issues raised by the US Global War on Terror and with human rights NGOs that have consultative status with the UN.

The *Committee Liaison Fellow* provides a link between the CfHR and Washington-based entities in the human rights community. The 2004 Liaison Fellows were Maria Weir, a graduate student in applied anthropology at the University of Maryland, and María Amelia Viteri, a graduate student in sociocultural anthropology, with a concentration on Race, Gender and Social Justice, at American University. During 2004, Weir organized contact information obtained by previous D.C. Liaison, Nicole Nowak, into a contact database, as well as helping with the CfHR Document Inventory. She also carried out an extensive literature review on the topic of HIV/AIDS and human rights, and submitted a bibliography on this topic to the CfHR, in the annual report that she and Viteri sent to the Committee, 20 November 2004. In that report, Viteri summarizes her research on two separate projects, conducted during 2004, one on heterosexual couples living with HIV/AIDS in Ecuador, and the other on Latino/a sex workers in the Washington, D.C. area.

In 2005, the D.C. Liaison Fellow will be Jennie Pasquarella, an anthropology BA and Georgetown University international human rights law student. She has special interests in labor and human rights, and brings extensive research and advocacy experience in Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil, with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the human rights NGOs, Global Exchange and Human Rights First.

Communication, Outreach and Education. The CfHR's internal mandate is to provide reliable materials with which professional anthropologists may stimulate involvement in human rights through writing and teaching. The Committee prepares or commissions publications, posts up-to-date reports, syllabi and bibliographies to the AAA Web site, has a human rights listserv ([humanrights-request@lists.aaanet.org](mailto:humanrights-request@lists.aaanet.org)), and

sponsors panels as Invited Sessions at the Annual Meetings. Materials are supplied by members of the Association, internally distributed among Committee members, and, once approved, are reviewed regularly for timeliness.

*Anthropology News.* With the assistance of *AN* editor, Stacy Lathrop, the following items appeared during 2004 as a result of CfHR initiatives:

- February: CfHR Research Fellow, Erin Kimmerle, reported on her experiences as Chief Forensic Anthropologist for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in its mission to Kosovo.
- April: CfHR member, Kathleen Williamson, contributed a summary of the Public Policy Forum she organized, on the US death penalty, at the 2003 AAA Annual Meeting.
- May: 2002 CfHR Research Fellow, Lorraine Chaudhry-Campbell and CfHR Chair, Samuel Martínez, published an annotated list of study resources on national security and international migration.
- December's *AN* carried two commentaries commissioned by Martínez: In "An Increasingly Divided Iraq," anthropologist, Daniel Rothenberg (DePaul University College of Law), presents a minutely-observed analysis of life for humanitarian aid providers in post-war Iraq, centering on how the security measures held to be necessary to protect international workers effectively undermine efforts to build consensus and understanding between the US occupiers and the Iraqi people. In "A Moral Imperative in Darfur," Eric Reeves (Smith College), while recognizing the complexity of the issues, makes a case for decisive Western-led humanitarian intervention in Darfur.

*AAA E-News.* The CfHR has utilized *E-News* to post a call for applications for CfHR graduate fellow, to solicit reports on breaking human rights issues, and to call for AAA members to submit their information for our on-line directory of anthropologists with human rights concerns. At our fall phone conference, we discussed with Lathrop the potential of using *E-News* to bring urgent human rights bulletins to the attention of the AAA membership more rapidly than is now presently possible through *AN*.

*2004 Annual Meeting Events.* All CfHR-related events were cancelled, because many session participants would not be attending the annual meeting in Atlanta. Possibly, many or all of these panels will be reconstituted and resubmitted for the 2005 Annual Meeting.

## PART TWO: EXTERNAL INITIATIVES

CfHR action on specific human rights issues begins with background research and fact-checking via multiple independent information resources, adhering to practices and standards of evidence established by leading human rights investigators. When sustained investigation seems appropriate, "task groups" are formed, which recruit anthropologists and others with relevant expertise to carry out research and write reports. Each task group has at least one Committee member to report to the CfHR on the group's research methods and findings. Task groups typically generate detailed background reports and other publications, to be disseminated on the AAA Web site or through print media. Whether through task groups or more prompt investigations, the CfHR also drafts letters of concern and forwards these to the AAA President, to be sent on behalf of the membership to international leaders, policy makers and advocates, and drafts policy statements, for official adoption by the AAA Executive Board (EB).

### Actions Taken Independently of Task Groups

*Ache:* Following up on letters of concern sent in late 2003, letters were sent by Martínez, to leaders of the Uruguayan government, regarding threats to the traditional land rights of the Kuetuvy Ache group (see Appendix B). With the help of background research being conducted by anthropologists, Magdalena Hurtado and Richard Reed, the CfHR has broadened the scope of concern to other Uruguayan indigenous communities.

Raposa Serra do Sol: AAA President, Elizabeth Brumfiel, sent a letter of concern, to Brazil's President Lula da Silva, expressing the concern of American anthropologists regarding threats to the territorial integrity of the indigenous reserve, Raposa Serra do Sol (see Appendix C). The letter was researched and written by incoming CfHR Chair, Laura Graham, and urged President Lula to take the highly important step of ratifying the demarcation of this area, completed already 6 years ago.

Darfur: A CfHR statement on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan, was forwarded to the AAA EB. This statement was drafted by Martinez, and was revised substantially in consultation with a panel of leading area experts, including Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, Gunnar Haaland, Richard Lobban, Mahmood Mamdani, and Alex deWaal (see Appendix D). At its December 2004 business meeting, the EB agreed to return the draft statement to the CfHR for further revision, recommending that unspecified revisions be made in order enhance the statement's impact in policy circles. At the end of the 2004 calendar year, AAA External Relations officer, Paul Nuti agreed to prepare a first draft of the revised statement.

Apoena Meireles / Cinta Larga: Apoena Meireles, a leading expert on Brazil's indigenous peoples and former head of FUNAI, the government agency for indigenous affairs, was murdered in the Brazilian city of Port Velho, 11 October 2004. He had been sent by FUNAI to look into illegal mining within the Cinta Larga Reserve, and he was murdered on the eve of submitting an important official report on this situation. Inquiries made by Graham indicate that the motive of the murder seems not to have been political. AAA President Brumfiel sent a letter, drafted by Graham, to Brazil's President Lula da Silva, expressing the membership's condolences, urging a thorough investigation of the murder, and underscoring the need to resolve the Cinta Larga situation (see Appendix E).

Chixoy Dam: In July 2003, the AAA co-sponsored the attendance of former CfHR Chair, Barbara Rose Johnston, as a delegate to reparations meetings in Pacux, Rabinal, Guatemala. After more than a year of field and archival research, Johnston will publish the Chixoy Dam Legacy Issues Study in January 2005. A group of leading social impact assessment and resettlement experts and advocates, meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, reviewed and endorsed the study (see Appendix F), and the CfHR unanimously agreed to endorse Johnston's findings at its November phone conference business meeting.

Falluja: Martínez and AAA Middle East Section President, Daniel M. Varisco, jointly signed letters to leading members and staffers of the US Senate and House of Representatives, expressing the concern of experts in Middle Eastern anthropology and human rights, regarding the dire humanitarian situation in Falluja, Iraq, following the US-led military offensive on that city in November 2004 (see Appendix G). The letters were drafted by Jessica Winegar, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Fordham University, and Lori Allen, doctoral student in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Chicago.

Uncensuring Boas: Though the CfHR had no part in it, the Committee also wishes to recognize the outstanding contribution to the AAA made by CfHR member, Leni Silverstein, in preparing her report and resolution, adopted at the annual business meeting in Atlanta, lifting the AAA censure of Franz Boas.

### **Task Group Activities**

Andes Task Group (Coordinator, David Nugent): The CfHR approved posting a report to the AAA Web site, prepared by Lesley Gill, Professor of Anthropology at American University, regarding the Coca-Cola Company's alleged complicity in the murder of trade unionists and the violent suppression of trade union organizing by paramilitary death squads in Colombia.

Migrant Rights Task Group (Coordinator, Samuel Martínez): Activity revolved mainly around the preparation of a contributory volume, *National Security and International Migration*, edited by Martínez, growing out of a panel of the same name that took place at the 2003 AAA Annual Meeting.

New Task Groups: During its spring phone conference, the CfHR agreed to set up a task group on *Language and Social Justice*, headed by Committee members, Charles Briggs, Laura Graham, and Marco

Jacquemet. A Public Policy Forum, planned for the 2005 Annual Meeting, will provide a venue for developing this task group's agenda of research and action.

As an unanticipated outcome of the Darfur statement deliberations, an *Africa Task Group* has recently been initiated, under the leadership of new Committee member, Kamran Ali Asdar, and Mahmood Mamdani, Herbert Lehman Professor of Government and Director, Institute of African Studies, Columbia University. This task group aims to commission a series of studies on collective violence in sub-Saharan Africa, thereby developing the CfHR's capacity to place each crisis in a larger context.

### PART THREE: ORGANIZATIONAL CONCERNS

**Budget.** The CfHR finds its work severely hampered by funding constraints. Budget cuts since 2002 have reduced its number of annual face-to-face meetings from two to one and left the Committee insufficient funds to provide reimbursement for work-related expenses to its Fellows or sponsor AAA session participation by human rights professionals and representatives of indigenous groups. While on-going initiatives can be sustained on the basis of meetings conducted via phone conference, new initiatives and strategic thinking are set back when the Committee can have only one face-to-face meeting a year. And, even before 2002, funding was inadequate to make it possible for the CfHR to commission on-site investigations and otherwise realize its existing mandate, let alone develop new areas of work. In response to interest voiced at the 2004 CfHR spring phone conference, Martínez conferred with AAA staff members, Sandy Berlin and Richard Thomas, about forming an AAA Human Rights Fund. At the November business phone conference, it was agreed to form a sub-committee, to draft a proposal for an endowment and fund-raising initiative aimed at placing the CfHR's work on a more stable fiscal footing. In the interim, the CfHR reiterates its request that the AAA to restore our funding in 2006 to a level that will permit the Committee to gather in Arlington for a meeting in the spring.

**New Avenues of Work.** With present staffing of 8 elected members, it is already nearly impossible for the CfHR to maintain its existing commitments and fulfill the entirety of its extensive mandate. The desirability of further expanding the CfHR's concerns can only magnify the managerial challenges. Looking forward, there is agreement among the CfHR's members that they can and should do more to build lines of communication and collaboration with the leading NGOs and international inter-governmental organizations in the human rights field, with the general aim of facilitating the application of the best anthropological knowledge to the defense of human rights. With the assistance of AAA External Relations representative, Nuti, the CfHR also hopes to explore ways of using the AAA's newly-gained UN Consultative Status. Meeting these new challenges while keeping abreast of old commitments will require both innovative thinking and new sources of support.

**Indigenous Rights.** With the term of office of the Commission on the Status of Indigenous Peoples of South America (CSIPSA) possibly expiring in 2005, the CfHR urges the AAA leadership to take steps to ensure that the work of this Commission continues and is broadened to encompass indigenous peoples worldwide. The CfHR is in agreement that concerns for the status of indigenous peoples deserve full, institutionalized, status within the AAA. CSIPSA Chair, Tony Oliver-Smith, raised the potential problem of overlap between the responsibilities and concerns of the CfHR and any permanent AAA committee on the status of indigenous peoples that might succeed CSIPSA. Subsequent discussion among members of both groups and conversation with Oliver-Smith during the CfHR fall phone conference indicate that any overlap can be resolved through inter-committee communication. Lastly, the CfHR would urge that any discussion regarding the formation of either a permanent committee or three-year exploratory commission on the status of indigenous peoples should be broadly inclusive, involving members of CSIPSA, present and past members of the CfHR, Native American anthropologists, and representatives of international advocacy groups and indigenous organizations.

**APPENDIX A: AAA Committee for Human Rights Members, 2004-05**

**Members**

Kathleen Williamson (retiring 2004)

Leni Silverstein (retiring 2004)

Samuel Martínez (retiring 2004)

David Nugent

Marco Jacquemet

David Valentine

Laura Graham

Charles Briggs

**Incoming CfHR members (December 2004)**

Kamran Ali Asdar

Vilma Santiago-Irizarry

Kim Theidon

**CfHR ex-officio members:**

Elizabeth Brumfiel, AAA President

Alan Goodman, AAA President-elect

**AAA Staff Liaison:**

Richard Thomas, Membership Officer

