

NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

April 16, 2003, Volume 10, No. 13

THE PRAGUE POST

The Prague Post
April 9, 2003, page A2

'Anti-abortion group inspired by Slovak push'

BEFORE READING

In groups discuss issue of abortion. Should it be allowed? Should it be banned? Should there be any restrictions?

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions:

1. What revitalized the efforts of anti-abortion activists to outlaw abortions?
2. What is 'Movement for Life'? How many members does it have?
3. What were the results of the Slovak Parliament's discussion on abortion in March?
4. What does the Slovak Christian Democratic Party say about Slovakia's Constitution?

5. What does the Slovak Constitution say about abortions and what does the 1958 law say about it?
6. Does Czech law allow abortions? What are the restrictions?
7. What changes does 'Movement for Life' suggest in the Czech criminal code?
8. What should, according to Rybová, Czech Parliament discuss soon?
9. What does the group suggest?
10. Does the Czech Christian Democratic Party plan on introducing abortion-related legislation?
11. What does Mr. Ondráček say about abortions?
12. What does Mr. Uzel think about abortions?
13. Why does he think the abortion will not be banned in the Czech Republic?
14. What happened in Poland with illegal abortions?
15. How many abortions were per-

formed in the Czech Republic in 2002?

16. What are the reasons for the decline in abortions?

Discussion:

Read the following sentence again: "Rybová said her group also believes that such hormonal contraceptives as birth-control pills cause abortions." Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not? What do scientists say about this and what do they say about the time when a human being becomes more than a foetus?

Vocabulary:

abortion – potrat
to ban – zakázat
to amend – pozměnit, doplnit
to enact – uzákonit, schválit
to topple – svalit
to tally – spočítat
contraception – antikoncepce
to spur – pobízet, pohánět

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'Activists to buy forest lands'

BEFORE READING

Do you like walking in the forest, hiking in the mountains and riding your bike in the meadows? Are there such places near your town or village? Do you like it? Is your town growing and are new buildings being built? How does it affect the countryside? If you live in a bigger town, are industrial factories and new shopping parks built in places, where there used to be forests or meadows? How do you feel about it? How do the residents of your town feel about it? Can anything be done to protect the countryside?

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions:

1. How did Český svaz ochránců přírody (ČSOP) decide to protect land?

2. What project did ČSOP adopt? What inspired them?
3. What is the purpose and goal of this project?
4. How much did ČSOP raise in the first three weeks of the campaign?
5. How will this money be used?
6. What could happen if the land wasn't bought now?
7. Until what age is the forest protected from lumbering, according to the law?
8. Why was the forest in Bílé Karpaty chosen?
9. How long did it take ČSOP to research the Bílé Karpaty area?
10. How many areas is the ČSOP group researching now?
11. Why is land disappearing?
12. What does the spokesperson at the Environment Ministry say about disappearing land?
13. How much money has the Ministry contributed to ČSOP since 1998?
14. What do statistics say about tim-

ber industry and protected forests in the Czech Republic?

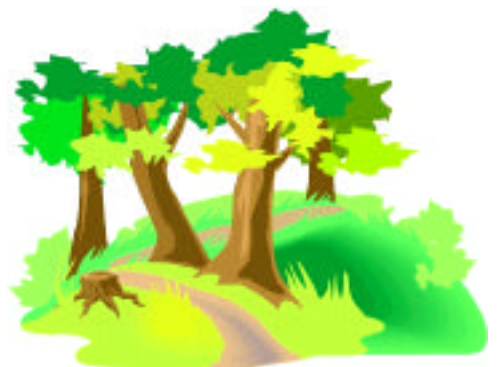
15. How many hectares of land is ČSOP hoping to get?

Activity:

Find out if you can get involved in the project or if you can help ČSOP.

Vocabulary:

to lumber – kácet, táhnout
logging – těžba dřeva
timber – stavební dříví, řezivo



REFUGEES

What does home mean to you?

Can you imagine being homeless? How would you feel? Can you imagine living without the things you are used to having around you?

Can you imagine a situation when you would be forced to leave your home (or even your country) and have no idea where you could go? Can you imagine a situation when you would be threatened with guns?

Have you ever seen pictures from refugee camps? What do they look like? How did you feel about them? Can you imagine having thousands of people living in very poor conditions on few square kilometers?

Think about who is a refugee.

A refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..." (*from the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*)

It means that a refugee is someone who has fled his or her country because he/she fears persecution based on race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion. Refugees are forced from their countries by war, civil conflict, political strife or gross human rights abuses.

How many people do you think have had to leave their country because of the above mentioned reasons? How many people do you think have had to leave their homes but stay in their country?

There were an estimated 14.9 million refugees in the world in 2001 - people who had crossed an international border to seek safety - and at least 22 million internally displaced persons who had been uprooted within their own countries. (According to Human Rights Watch)

Do you remember some of the important rights for all people from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? One of them is the right to life.

Can you think of any countries that do not guarantee this basic human right?

The global refugee crisis affects

every continent and almost every country. In 2001, 78 percent of all refugees came from 10 areas: Afghanistan, Angola, Burma, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Eritrea, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, Somalia and Sudan.

Does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ensure the right to seek asylum in other countries for people whose rights are violated?

Throughout history, people have fled their homes to escape persecution. The right to asylum is included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Enshrined in Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the right "to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." This principle recognizes that victims of human rights abuse must be able to leave their country freely and to seek refuge elsewhere. In 1950, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created to protect and assist refugees, and, in 1951, the United Nations adopted the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a legally binding treaty that, by February 2002, had been ratified by 140 countries.

What countries, or continents, do you think, host most of refugees?

Asia hosts 45 percent of all refugees, followed by Africa (30 percent), Europe (19 percent), North America (5 percent) and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean (1%).

After reading the percentage, do you think that it is a fair sharing of the responsibility for refugees? Why do you think some countries do not want to accept refugees?

Governments frequently see refugees as a threat or a burden, refusing to respect the core principle of human rights and refugee protection. In the past 50 years, states have largely regressed in their commitment to protect refugees, with the wealthy industrialized states of Europe, North America and Australia adopting

particularly hostile and restrictive policies. Governments have subjected refugees to arbitrary arrest, detention, denial of social and economic rights and closed borders. In the worst cases, refugees are forcibly returned to countries where they face persecution. Since September 11, many countries have pushed through emergency anti-terrorism legislation that curtails the rights of refugees.

Now the opposition to refugees is also growing in traditionally generous refugee hosting countries such as Guinea, Pakistan and Iran, which are starting to close their doors to refugees, claiming that they are overburdened with their own problems and fatigued after years of sheltering millions of refugees with little international assistance.

The imposition of strict visa requirements for nationals of common refugee-producing countries make it almost impossible for refugees fleeing these countries to travel legally to Western countries. This means that asylum seekers and migrants increasingly turn to the services of opportunistic, corrupt, and dangerous human trafficking and smuggling syndicates who are able to circumvent routine migration controls, often with great risk to their life, liberty, and freedom.

Do you know about examples of this illegal entry to a country in order to find refuge there? Where do you think the wrong doing lies?

Do you think that it is not "our business" to take care of refugees or do you think that we have an obligation to help them? Discuss this question in groups and then share your arguments.



In Tanzania: Angelina Jolie followed a group of 91 separated children who had just arrived from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where human rights are violated.

RESEARCH:

Work in groups and find answers to the following questions. Use statistics, information from media, NGOs dealing with refugees, government, and the Internet. Use your critical thinking, but do not speculate.

Are human rights ensured for everyone in the Czech Republic?

What does the European Union say about the adherence of human right in the Czech Republic?

Give examples of violations of human rights in the Czech Republic, if there are any.

What is the situation for refugees like in the Czech Republic? Are there any places where refugees live? What do these places look like? What conditions do people live there in? Do they have access to health care, education, social offices, etc?

Are there any Czech organizations helping refugees in the Czech Republic? Name them. What about the international organizations focusing on human rights?

After your research is done, prepare a final report about the human rights status in the Czech Republic and about the lives of refugees in the Czech Republic. Present this report to your class. You can use charts, maps, photos, etc.

Discuss your results. What can be done to improve this situation? Think about different suggestions for the government, NGOs and also for your school or your group. Choose three best suggestions and present them to appropriate organization. What will you, or your group, do?

What can be done?

This is an extract from an comment prepared by the Human Rights Watch organization published in the International Herald Tribune:

"... Politicians and the media have a responsibility to avoid inflammatory and negative portrayals of refugees and migrants that fuel public opposition and contribute to the rise in racist violence. Governments should protect the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and take steps to reverse policies and practices that discriminate against them. More must be done to educate the general public about the positive contributions that migrants, asylum seekers and refugees can make to their new societies."

What do you think about this comment?

Do you think that the cause of all these problems is racism, ethnic violence, racial discrimination, and intolerance? Discuss this question.

RESEARCH:

In pairs choose a country and do research: What happened in the following countries and why did thousands or even millions of people leave from them?

Afghanistan, Iran, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kosovo

Did the international community play an important role and helped in solving the problems there or did it neglect them?

IRAQ

What is the situation like in Iraq now? What about refugees? UNHCR has an initial planning figure of 600,000 possible Iraqi refugees.



KURDISTAN

What do you know about Kurdistan and its people? Can you find Kurdistan on your map?

The Kurds do not have their own state. They live in Iraq (north), Iran (northwest) and Turkey (southeast).

In the 1980's, the Iraqi regime destroyed the Iraqi part of Kurdistan, placed bombs there, and sent the Kurds to camps near big cities. In late 80's, 5,000 Kurdistan people died, because chemical weapons were used on them (napalm bombs among others). Many people were badly injured and wounded.

What happened in 1991?

The Iraqi regime occupied Kuwait and the Gulf War started.

In April 1991, more than 400,000 Iraqis – mostly Kurds – fled to the Turkish border over a three-week period after an armed uprising broke out in northern Iraq. They were scattered across the remote and inhospitable mountains straddling the Turkey-Iraq border. Many died as a result of bad weather conditions, difficulties in gaining access, and a general unpreparedness on the part of aid agencies, the Turkish authorities and donors.

The people that managed to get to

Turkey or Iran, live in extemporaneous refugee camps. Those who wanted to return, did not find their homes. Their homes were destroyed and the land is full of mines.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Often we hear that women and children should be specially cared for, BUT...

Women and children constitute about 75% of the refugee population.

80% of war victims are women and children. This number is much higher than number of soldiers - victims.

Women are very often mistreated by domestic violence and by sexual abuse (More than 20,000 Muslim women were raped in Bosnia, for example. Some women were sold.)

About 1.3 billion people in the world live in absolute poverty (for less than 1 USD per day). 70% of them are women.

GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

Do you know Angelina Jolie, the actress that starred in Tomb Raider and Girl Interrupted? Do you know that she is also a Goodwill Ambassador for the UN refugee agency?

Why do you think the UN appoints some famous people as Goodwill Ambassadors? What do they do?

The Goodwill Ambassadors travel to countries where human rights are violated and help people there, but especially raise awareness of the problems of the country to the international community.

But you do not need to be a Goodwill Ambassador to help other people.

What can you do to help people without their homes and without their country? Here are some suggestions:

- donate clothes
 - visit a refugee center
 - prepare presents for children in refugee centers
 - prepare a theatre or musical performance for people in refugee centers
 - organize public meetings where people will learn about problems of refugees
 - contact an NGO dealing with refugee people and volunteer for them
- Think of other ways.

How can you support understanding and tolerance?

Sources:
www.unhcr.ch
www.refugees.org
www.hrw.org

NOTE: Statistics on number of refugees vary between sources.

REFUGEE CAMP ISSUES

One of the biggest problems in refugee camps is health. Many people who have been running from their home country, without a place to bathe or sleep, are packed together in a small living space with the barest of essentials for survival. Refugee camps are not always in easy accessible places and don't always have the best access to food and water. Things that you may take for granted, like regular meals and water to wash your hands with can be difficult to come by at some of the more remote camps. Some camps are in good condition and have access to things that refugees need while they wait for their applications to be processed by the government of the country they have escaped to. But other camps are in disgraceful shape, where the basic needs of human life are a challenge to meet.

Two of the basic things that people need are food and water. People require a minimum of 5 litres of water a day for survival and this is not just water for drinking and cooking, this is water for bathing as well. This is the bare minimum that a refugee camp can provide a person. Ideally this should be increased to 15-20 litres a day. **Challenge yourself to survive on only 5 litres of water in one day. How did it work out? Were you able to keep clean? Do you think you could live like that for a week? A month?**

Water needs to be immediately available and easily accessible. However, when you think that at the best refugee camps there is one tap for every 200-250 people, odds are high that people will have to wait around 2 hours to get the water they need for basic survival.

Water and the environment play an essential role in the spread of many communicable diseases and epidemics. Poor hygiene and lack of safe water are the chief causes of diarrheal diseases, a major cause of death among refugee populations. Since faecal material is the major cause of water pollution, everything possible should be done to prevent such pollution.

Washing is very important. People are more likely to become ill as a result

of dirty eating utensils and from eating food prepared with soiled hands then from drinking contaminated water. In refugee populations, most diarrheal diseases are caused by cholera. Cholera is extremely contagious. Of people infected with cholera, the majority do not have symptoms and up to 50% of severe cases die. In Gome, Democratic Republic of Congo, during the first weeks of the Rwandan refugee influx in 1994, it was estimated that there were between 58,000 and 80,000 cases with 1000 cholera-related deaths per day of an estimated population of 500,000 to 800,000 refugees.

In extreme cases of lack of water, life is simply not possible. You can live without food for 30 days, but you can only go without water for 3 days before you will die of dehydration.

Less extreme shortages also have an impact on the health of a population. Minimal amounts of water or even dirty water can provoke an increase in the incidence of numerous diseases due to a lack of personal hygiene. Good personal hygiene requires a sufficient quantity of water.

A lack of hygiene, particularly of hands and food, allows the transmission of these diseases from which infected individuals (sick people or carriers) to uninfected individuals. These so-called "dirty-hands diseases" are: diarrheas and dysenteries, cholera, typhoid fevers, hepatitis A and various helminth diseases. Most of these diseases can spread epidemically in concentrated populations, like refugee camps. These water-borne diseases form part of the group of "water-washed" diseases as well. They may also be transmitted by any of the feco-oral routes, dirty hands, dirty food, dirty water, etc.

Besides these diseases, water is also involved in the transmission of "water-based" diseases (in other words, those diseases of which the causative agent passes part of its life-cycle in an aquatic plant or animal). Water may transmit diseases caused by worms what are usually contracted by contact with infested water (washing clothes, bathing, etc.) but sometimes via the

oral route. The bacterial disease Leptospirosis is contracted primarily by contact with water contaminated with the infected urine of various animals (principally the rat), but also by drinking such water. All the infectious diseases transmitted by water - with the exception of Guinea worm - are linked to the pollution of water by the excretions of humans or other animals.

Malnutrition is also a problem in refugee camps. Malnutrition is a disorder resulting from not having enough food, or enough of the right food for a long time. Everyone needs good food to be healthy. Refugees and displaced people are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition because they are forced to flee on short notice and do not have enough time to bring much food with them. Sometimes they must travel for days or weeks with little or no access to food.

Children under 5 years of age are most at risk because they are growing rapidly and have a hard time fighting off disease. Malnutrition can have long-term effects by stunting growth or causing mental retardation. It is a key factor in the deaths of six million children each year. Pregnant and nursing mothers are the most vulnerable because they need more calories and nutrients than other adults. Because they are usually isolated and have a harder time accessing food, the elderly are also at high risk. Malnourished adults are more susceptible to serious diseases like tuberculosis because their bodies are weakened.

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WORKSHOP

DEAR TEACHERS, YOU CAN BOOK SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2003,
IN YOUR CALENDARS FOR A WORKSHOP
ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION