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IMADR

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

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Brief Report-IMADR Sympggium 9n ng Fgrmg 9f Ragism

"Racism is alive and well in old as well as in new forms. Nobody has a comer on racism and racial discrimination. They are present in every part of the world." Such statements were

. frequently made during a Symposium on New Forms of Racism held N ovember 4-6 in the Uni ted

Nations building in Geneva. The Symposium was sponsored by the International Movement against all Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and coordinated and chaired by Mr. Mario Yutzis (Argentina), member of the IMADR Board and Argentine Expert of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The purpose of the meeting reflected the stated aim of IMADR to realize the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instrument s in

close cooperation with the United Nations by contributing to the discussion of racism in the present

conjuncture of a new international order.

Participants from fourteen nations and five continents heard and discussed papers present ed

by representatives from the United Kingdom, Kenya, Senegal, Canada, Japan, the United Sta tes,

India, France, the Netherlands, Argentina and Ecuador.

The Symposium presentations, using analysis, personal testimony and description

surveyed a wide range of recent manifestations of racism. Discrimination related to color , ethnicity

and nationality is experienced in Europe by migrant workers and new immigrants and is bla tantly

. espoused by neo-Nazi groups on the rise in this area. Conflict and power struggles betw een ethnic

or tribal groups within nation states were cited by African members of the Symposium as increasingly troubling in spite of recent gains against Apartheid in South Africa. These conflicts

and resulting discrimination are intensified and further complicated by religious tension between

Islam, Christianity and traditional African religions. The United States faces growing re sentiment

among whites to the numerical growth and aspirations of African and Asian Americans, Lati nos

and other groups. Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States face continuing pres sures

on their lands and new forms of rejection of their identity as peoples in relation to the land.

Presentations on South America described the discrimination that results from the refusal to respect

cultural and ethnic differences and the difficulties facing indigenous peoples. The disad vantages

experience by workers from India in Fiji, the plight of Buraku people (a kind of Caste in J apan)

and the discriminatory results of economic development with its accompanying denigration of

non-modem cultures in the Western Pacific were some of the on-going manifestations of rac ism

described by Asian representatives.

Clearly many different approaches must be employed to check an increasingly subtle and complex problem: basic formation of person, education, legislation and enforcement, both nationally and internationally, will need to be refurbished and strengthened. At the close of the

Symposium, it was observed that non-governmental organizations such as IMADR have a significant contribution to make to the human rights work of the United Nations and nation states

by both naming and analyzing specific cases of discrimination.

Among general insights that emerged during the deliberations concerning these manifestations of racism were:

1) Manifestations of racism are increasingly complex because they are so closely interconnected with many other factors such as the history of colonialism, economic development

and disparities, relations between men and women, the concentration and use of power and religious differences.

2) Manifestations of racism call forth a multi-faceted approach as was represented by the Symposium participants (direct experience of discrimination; sociological, political, legal, and economic).

3) In the midst of a diversity of experiences and interpretations of racism, there continues to be a surprisingly strong moral consensus on the unacceptability of discriminatory behavior.

4) Finally participants began to look ahead to the challenges presented by their findings to seek ways of fighting all forms of discrimination and racism.

The participants included Mr. Therry Anderson (Canada), Mr. Michael Banton (United Kingdom), Mr. Theo Van Boven (Holland), Mr. Jephthah Gathaka (Kenya), Mr. El Hadgi Guisse (Senegal), Mr. Roland Kessous (France), Mr. Guillermo Maci (Argentina), Ms. Patricia Monture-

Okanee (Canada), Mr. Kinhide Mushakoji (Japan), Ms. Shanti Sadiq Ali (India), Ms. Myriam Schreiber (Belgium), Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen (Mexico), Mr. Luis Valencia Rodriguez (Ecuador)

and Ms. Loretta Williams (United States), Mr. Yutzis was aided by an assistant coordinator, Ms.

Rebeka Martensen (U.S.). Mr. John Stumme (U.S.) and Mr. Dan Martensen (U.S.) acted as rapporteurs and compiled this report along with Mr. Therry Anderson. A more extensive publication will be available sometime next year.