

The Brunswick International

Racism Conference Ends

DURBAN, South Africa (AP) - After more than a week of trying to end the acrimony that seeped throughout the world racism conference, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, visibly weary, sat down with a reporter and sighed.

"It is the most difficult conference that any of the professional delegates have been to," Robinson said Friday, the day the conference had been scheduled to end, but didn't.

Despite condemnations by the United States and Israel — both delegations left halfway through the conference — that the gathering was undemocratic and flawed, human rights workers and diplomats from other countries saw a meeting that left many disappointed but also achieved some limited goals.

"To have a global discussion on the problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances is itself a breakthrough," said Wade Henderson, executive director of the U.S.-based Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. "This was a modest and important step in a global journey toward human rights for all."

Others felt the meeting wasn't worth the trouble.

"It hasn't been a good experience for the world community. It has not been a good experience for the United Nations, and I hope

we don't have to see this happen again," Canadian Foreign Minister John Manley said in London on Tuesday, midway through the conference.

Human rights groups complained that few governments were willing to champion the causes of poor minorities or allow themselves to be criticized.

"The majority of countries were reluctant to focus attention on their own practices and many took a very cynical posture to the conference," Henderson said. "They had a willingness to accuse others of transgression without a willingness to admit to transgression within their own borders."

Conflict over the document led to seemingly tortured compromises in the conference's final documents.

A group of diplomats trying to come up with a list of victims gave up in the end and simply defined a victim as someone who had been victimized.

The stalemate on whether the conference would offer an apology for slavery ended with a strangely phrased compromise that included the word apology, but did not directly give one.

The Middle East debate, with Arab states demanding Israel be criticized for its "racist practices" and the European Union refusing

to single out any country, ended with a more generic recognition of the "plight" of the Palestinian people.

The way the U.N. conference treated other issues angered many rights activists.

Indigenous rights groups, angry about sections of the final declaration they considered "a racist assault upon indigenous peoples," called for a mass walkout.

Dalits, known as India's "untouchable" caste, were furious that a section condemning discrimination against them had been successfully blocked by India.

In the end, the conference produced a declaration and program of action that did not really criticize any one country, but urged governments to take concrete steps to fight discrimination.

The meeting marked the first time private human rights groups were allowed to participate in a U.N. conference. But their forum immediately preceding the U.N. conference was marred by almost constant anti-Israel demonstrations and occasional outbursts of anti-Semitism.

One group circulated a flier saying that if Hitler were still alive, the Palestinians' problem would not exist.

In a chaotic and confused meeting that ran late into the night, the human rights forum

adopted a document accusing Israel of engaging in "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" against the Palestinians. Jewish delegates trying to speak were shouted down with chants of "Jew, Jew."

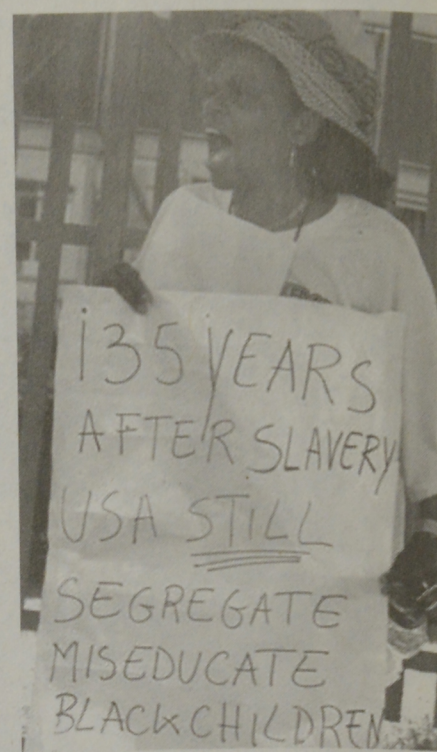
In the following days, more than 70 of the 166 non-governmental organizations at that meeting distanced themselves from the document, and Robinson said she would not recommend the U.N. conference use it as a blueprint.

With the U.N. conference documents now adopted, Robinson said "follow-up will be key." The human rights groups must now return home with the U.N. documents in hand to demand change, she said, adding that countries would report twice a year to the United Nations on progress made on their commitments to battle racism.

"We will not let government off the hook," Robinson said. "We will pin governments to what they signed onto today."

Human rights groups disappointed with the documents saw success in other places, in forging important links between disparate victims' groups and getting lesser known causes heard.

"Now we have international recognition ... this has been a big boost for us," said Bolimera, the protesting Dalit. "We have made our point."



An unidentified US Non Government Organization (NGO) attendee at the UN Racism Conference in Durban, South Africa, Friday, Sept. 7, holds a placard while shouting slogans calling for reparation for victims of slavery. (AP)

Nigerian Muslims, Christians Fight

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) - Muslims and Christians fought hand-to-hand Wednesday, Septemeber 12, in a market in Nigeria's northern city of Jos, witnesses said, scattering hungry customers at food stalls set up for the first time since a deadly rampage broke out five days ago.

Police fired tear gas and live ammunition to quell Wednesday's fighting at the main market, which persisted for 1 1/2 hours. The extent of any new casualties was not known.

The Nigerian Red Cross estimates that fighting between Friday to Sunday claimed 165 lives in the hilltop city of several million, 225 miles north of Nigeria's capital, Abuja.

Residents say the toll is likely much higher in the violence, which left tens of thousands of homes, church, mosques and shops in smoking ruins.

Nigerian police — fearing a high toll would raise tensions — have played down the bloodletting and

confirmed only 51 deaths.

Jos resident Susan Akele said in a telephone interview that commuters were turned back from the city center Wednesday by road blocks — some set up by police, others by armed gangs.

Nigeria — Africa's most populous nation — is split into an overwhelmingly Muslim north and a predominantly Christian south, with tension between them increasing.

Many people were running out of food. Missionary Craig Ewoldtof Saline, Mich., said he and other missionaries had been buying and distributing food to some impoverished residents until shortly before the latest violence began.

It was unclear whether news of the Tuesday's attacks in Washington and New York had influenced the resurgence in violence.

Some Christian residents said armed Muslim men in one neighborhood had

been celebrating the assault on the U.S. by gathering in the streets to shout: "Allah be praised, down with Christians!" The claim could not be independently confirmed.

President Olusegun Obasanjo condemned the U.S. attacks in a state TV address Wednesday the nation of 120 million.

Residents have offered different explanations for what started the conflict Friday. Some said it broke out after a Christian woman tried to cross a street outside a mosque where Muslim men were knelt in Friday evening prayers, touching off an argument.

Introduction of Shariah, or Islamic law, in several northern states more than a year ago heightened tension between Muslims and Christians. Since then, northern Nigerian communities have repeatedly exploded into violence, often killing hundreds at a time.

Terrorism large and small

Alex Bailey and Geoffrey McCormack

The Brunswickan

There can be no question that the deaths resulting from the terrorist attacks on Tuesday are horrific and unjustifiable. Discussion in the major media about terrorism has never addressed what exactly constitutes a terrorist act.

When particular groups commit large acts of violence against a state it is referred to as terrorism. When states commit large violent acts against people, it is not referred to as terrorism, rather, attempts are made to minimize or justify the actions.

The US has condemned the events of Tuesday as being terrorist acts. George W. Bush has stated that "...terrorism will not be tolerated... [and]...has to be stopped." Former Secretaries of State William Cohen and James Baker described the event as a "...cowardly act..." that attempted to "...threaten democracy and freedom..." Senator John Warner stated that the terrorists responsible for the attack "are a common enemy of the civilized world."

To put things in perspective, the US is responsible for carrying out some of the most atrocious acts of terrorism and aggression in the world, which have been condemned in international law. It ought to be realized that much of the US foreign policy is violent. CIA car-bombing in Beirut (1983), US military actions in Honduras (1982-1990), Nicaragua (1987), Panama (1989) are a few examples of US hypocrisy, which is unjustifiable.

Within the mainstream media, however, the parallels between actions of terrorist groups and state jingoism have never been established. The result is that the US is not portrayed as being a terrorist state. The media response to the acts of aggression on Tuesday was thus predictable.



WORK-STUDY



STUDENT INFORMATION

Work-Study is a subsidized work program designed to assist students with the high costs associated with post-secondary study. The program will also provide students with an opportunity to gain valuable skills/experience in an on-campus part-time employment situation.

Due to the number limited of available positions, program eligibility will not guarantee employment.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is restricted to full-time UNB *undergraduate and graduate students* with demonstrated financial need. Students must also be in good academic standing (*GPA of 2.0 and over from the most recent assessment year*) to be eligible for program consideration.

PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Step 1:** CONTACT the UNB Financial Aid Office at 453-4796 between September 10th-20th, 2001 to set up an appointment for a "Financial Assessment" to determine program eligibility. Once financial need has been determined, the Financial Aid Office will forward your name to the Student Employment Service.
- Step 2:** VIEW the available positions from September 10th - 21st, 2001, at Student Employment Services (SES) located in the Neville Homestead or by accessing the SES web site: www.unb.ca/employment.
- Step 3:** SUBMIT up to a maximum of 8 resumes and covering letters **NO LATER THAN September 21st, 2001 (4:00pm)** to Student Employment Service (Neville Homestead).

PLEASE NOTE: *Work-study positions are for 10 hours per week, \$8.00 per hour.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Financial Aid Office
Alumni Memorial Building, Room 3
Telephone 453-4796

Student Employment Services
Neville Homestead
Telephone 453-4620



Deadline for "Financial Assessment" is Thursday, September 20th, 2001
Deadline for Applying to the positions is Friday, September 21st, 2001

