COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Ivan Genadiev
Undersecretary-General

Bobby Baigelman, *Chair*

The Ivy League
Model United Nations Conference
Nineteenth Annual Session

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILMUNC 2003

The Ivy League Model United Nations Conference

Rina Vazirani
Secretary-General

Linda Dong
Director-General

Alida Meghji
Chief of Staff

Narahari Phatak
Business Director

Shan Shan Cao
Undersecretary-General
General Assembly

Anita Butani
Undersecretary-General
Economic &
Social Council

Daniel Corren
Undersecretary-General
Crisis Committees
& Regional Summits

Ivan Genadiev
Undersecretary-General
Crisis Committes
& Regional Summits

Amit Vazirani
Undersecretary-General
Operations

Dear Crisis-lover:

If your strides for a good crisis have made you a gasping wanderer, then ILMUNC 2003 is the best energizer you could possibly desire. Welcome!

My name is Ivan Genadiev and I have the pleasure of ensuring that this year's crisis committees and regional summits run more smoothly than ever before.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am a sophomore, majoring in International Relations and German. My MUN involvement has a fairly recent history - I joined the International Affairs Association last year, starting off on a crisis committee. The dynamics of the experience made my interest grow exponentially. I have been doing crisis ever since, both as staff and delegate.

Yet perhaps one of the most significant things about me is that I am from Bulgaria. In case you do not know where Bulgaria is and/or what is so significant about being from there, please come and talk to me.

On a more serious note, you are always welcome to approach me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you for investing your effort in what promises to be the most exciting crisis simulation in the circuit.

Sincerely,

Ivan Genadiev
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Dear Delegates,

Welcome you to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of ILMUNC 2003. With the help of an excellent staff, I hope to make this year's committee better than any Security Council this conference has ever seen. However, the ultimate success of this body depends on the delegates and what they bring into the committee.

As for a little about myself, my name is Rob Baigelman, and I'm a senior in the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in Biology. I am hoping to attend Veterinary School next year. I am from South Florida, but I like to think of Philadelphia as a second home. I'm a diehard sports fans, with most of my loyalties lying with Florida or New York teams, although a few Philly teams have earned a place in my heart. I've been involved in Model United Nations for over 7 years now, and most of my experience has been with crisis committees. Along with chairing the Security Council at UPMUNC last year, I've also been on the secretariat of ILMUNC, our high school conference, for two years and currently serve as the club's Special Events Director.

If you have any questions at all about the conference in general or the committee and the format we will be using, please do not hesitate to E-mail me. You should also check the website, www.upmunc.org, for updated information. I look forward to seeing you all in November.

Sincerely,

Rob Baigelman
Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
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Rights of Racial Minorities

Introduction

In countless states around the world, racial discrimination has become an innate part of the legal, political and economic systems. Despite the clear moral and ethical concerns of racial discrimination, scores if not hundreds of years of acceptance of the practice has made it rampant and thus, requires that the international community step in and take a stand. Even in highly developed nations such as the US, this inequality can be noted. A recent report showed that 70 percent of all people that are pulled over by police from the interstate highways in Volusia County, Florida are African American or Hispanic. Only 5 percent of all drivers in this area are African American or Hispanic.[1] Racial discrimination is blatantly responsible for a large part of this discrepancy. Unfortunately, statistics like these that are found throughout the world illustrate the indisputable presence of racial discrimination even in modern times. This form of repulsive behavior extends throughout the entire global community with countless examples reported in media forums worldwide. The rights of racial minorities are being threatened on a global level, and it is the responsibility of the Commission on Human Rights to deal with the problem. As a grave and universal problem that affects all facets of society, we must consider this issue immediately and solutions must be created to assuage the inequalities currently forced upon human beings across the world.

Statement of the Issue

Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin is

an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the principles of the

Charter of the United Nations, as a violation of the human rights and fundamental

freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as an obstacle to

friendly and peaceful relations among nations, and as a fact capable of disturbing

peace and security among peoples.[2]

Discrimination can be defined as "the differential treatment of individuals considered to belong to a particular social group."[3] Racial discrimination is discrimination that is based solely on physical attributes such as the color of one's skin, or racial and ethnic background. This kind of discrimination is based upon the beliefs that these physical attributes are somehow related to superiority of intellect, culture, or character of one race to another. Therefore, in this respect, the racial distinction has moved from a biological foundation to a social one. But there has been no scientific evidence of any single race assuming greater inherent cultural or intellectual abilities. Still, from these false beliefs, people develop unfounded preconceptions of others that are irrelevant to any individual's abilities and virtues or vices and flaws. These false ideas are the building blocks of racial discrimination and directly lead to the infringement of the rights of minority groups. The prejudices and discrimination founded on race are present in all aspects of society, ranging from overt hostility and conflict between different ethnic groups to affirmative action. Inequalities in the workplace and in the economic sector or misrepresentation in politics, the justice system, the media, etc. deeply affect the everyday life of minorities. As a United Nations body that supports the equality of all human beings and believes that basic human rights should be granted to all individuals regardless of any biological, political, economic, or social distinctions, the issue of racial discrimination that impedes the human rights of individuals is vital to this committee. Therefore, to strive towards the ideal of all human beings being treated equally, the problem of racial discrimination must be tackled.

History

It is extremely difficult to pinpoint exactly when racial discrimination started. Racist beliefs probably emerged from the beginnings of mankind—racism and xenophobia developed with the discovery of groups that were different from oneself. Yet, there are a few telling trends in the distant history that do promote racial discrimination in these times.

The first of these trends is colonialism. As European societies became more and more advanced, technologies were developed that allowed countries to support long travels and expeditions that were unheard of in earlier times. Through these travels and expeditions, these explorers encountered people very different from themselves with distinctly different cultures. Many of these European countries, in an effort to gain economically from exploiting the resources and labor of these areas, started to conquer and expand into these lands while oppressing the indigenous African, Asian, and American peoples. These European countries sought to establish their imperial power using many different mechanisms that were often based upon the rationale that they were the "mother countries" and this was all "a 'civilizing' mission, whereby the assumed superiority of European culture was to replace 'primitive' backwardness in the process of 'civilizing' the 'native' peoples, who were characterized as childlike or mentally-retarded and therefore unable to take care of themselves".[4] Therefore, this kind of racist and prejudiced thinking was used to justify the actions of these European countries. They often asserted that the responsibility to civilize these otherwise inferior barbarians was the "white man's burden".[5]

The imperialists in these areas often stole the best lands and the best raw materials from the indigenous people while treating them with contempt, allowing them

less benefits and opportunities. For example, even up until the 1960's, in the territories of Kenya and Northern Rhodesia, the higher supervisory and managerial positions were allotted to the Europeans while the Africans had to perform the hard labor and worked in agriculture. The same kind of reasoning appears when examining the first arrival of Spaniards to America. The Native Americans had their lands stolen and were forced to live in unsanitary areas while being treated savagely and inhumanely even in their own homes. Although many colonies have been granted their independence and actions have been taken to amend these past offenses, hostilities and tensions still exist between these different racial and ethnic groups. A very important note to make is that in the process of decolonization, many different ethnic groups that had developed hatred for each other for centuries were forced to live together, thus much tension and dissent have not been assuaged.

Another situation that illustrates and also stimulated greater dissent between different racial groups was slavery. Racist attitudes became a means for one group to gain power and oppress another ethnic group. When the slave trade began, racist beliefs and prejudiced thinking became more prevalent than ever before. Slave-traders considered blacks to be inferior and not even human in order to justify their own actions. African Americans were used as machines, their freedom revoked from them and completely controlled by their white masters. First a business was built on these practices. Gradually, these traditions started to be ingrained into society and culture to become a way of life. While the abolition of slavery took place over a century ago, the scars of this devastation still remain today. Hostilities between whites and blacks continues to exist. Throughout this last century, the United States has been battling the backlashes and slowly restoring the dignity and rights of African Americans. Yet, racial discrimination still exists on both sides. African Americans are still trapped in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods and jobs, they have less opportunity for good education, are disproportionately underrepresented in politics and positions of power, are more prone to being involved in and being charged of crimes, and still must defend themselves against negative stereotypes created by the media and held by other ethnic groups.

As exemplified above, these distant occurrences have left a large mark in the development of racial discrimination and prejudice that still exist today. More recent episodes of extreme forms of racial or ethnic discrimination remind us furthermore of this problem and its far-reaching results. Two of these episodes include the Nazis in Germany and the policy of apartheid in South Africa.

In the mid-twentieth century, prejudice served as one of the most powerful Nazi tools to gain and maintain the support of the German people. Hitler created in people the ultimate form of racial discrimination—racial intolerance. His propaganda created an illusory war between "us" and "them". He created enemies out of anyone that

was different from them. Hitler advocated his idea of "the supreme mission of the German people to lead and dominate by virtue of their Nordic blood and racial purity; and the ground was thus being prepared for the acceptance of the idea of German world supremacy."[6] On the grounds that their race was superior to any other, Hitler gained support to terrorize, intimidate, enslave, and massively slaughter those that were not considered part of the German race. The Germans' persecution of Jews and other ethnic groups is marked in history as one of the greatest atrocities and violent incidents of human morbidity. Hitlerite Nazism perversely opposes the principles of human equality, inherent rights, and dignity that the United Nations stands for.

Another recent episode of racial discrimination is illustrated in the case of South Africa and its apartheid policies. South Africa's population consists of four different groups: Bantus (indigenous Africans), Whites, Coloureds (those of mixed race), and Asians. In 1948, the National Party came to power in South Africa.[7] During the 1950's this party passed a group of racial legislation and policies. Among these was the Population Registration Act, which required that "every person in south Africa must be classified and entered in the population register according to his classification."[8] After the age of 16, every person had to carry with them an identification card that listed a person's classification. The Groups Area Act has been "referred to by members of the Government as the cornerstone of apartheid policy."[9] This act determined the different areas for the different ethnic groups to live. Under this policy, Bantustans were established. These were the homelands that were assigned to the African ethnic groups. These plots of land comprised "14% of the country's land, most of it too poor in quality to support the designated population (roughly 75% of all South Africans)."[10] Certainly, there was a great disparity and inequality between the size of the population and the amount of resources it was provided with. Within these areas, Africans were granted certain rights, but outside of their homelands, they suffered a great contraction of freedoms and privileges. Other more minor yet important acts were also passed, including the "Mixed Marriages Act which prohibited mixed marriages" and the "Reservation of Separate Amenities Act and the Immorality Act which prohibited sex between different ethnic groups."[11] All of these acts are considered main elements of the racist policies that were officially adopted by South Africa. This policy of apartheid openly adopted discriminatory views, promoting the superiority of the white race (although they were a minority), eliminating contact between races, providing less opportunity and resources to the non-white races, and excluding these groups from "participation in the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the country."[12]

This kind of openly discriminatory racial policy caused a great uproar within the international community. South Africa left the Commonwealth and became a

republic in 1961, after a dispute over apartheid. As protest, the international community imposed certain economic sanctions and embargoes upon South Africa. With support of the international and even domestic community to eliminate this social policy, South Africa gradually started to ban many of these policies by the 1990's while promoting a new social system. In 1993, all remnants of this apartheid policy were finally eliminated and a "multiracial, multiparty transitional government was approved" followed quickly by a free election in 1994.[13] Despite the end to apartheid, its recent eradication from South Africa's entire structure has not provided ample time to assuage much dissent that has been developing over the years between South Africa's different ethnic groups. Although progress has been made to reach a more equitable and just society, much racial discrimination still exists in this country today.

Relevant International Action

Because racial discrimination has been an extremely relevant and important problem that has touched all aspects of society and that exists in societies throughout the world, there has been much international action to try to eliminate this problem.

The Commission of Human Rights (CHR) has been involved a great deal with this problem. CHR considers racial discrimination so grave a matter that in 1947 it established a Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities that deals primarily with issues concerning racial discrimination. This committee meets annually for three weeks and discusses the problems at hand, draws up draft resolutions and then transmits these resolutions to CHR for further consideration.

This Sub-Commission also assigns Special Rapporteurs on specific problems that conduct studies that may help in drafting resolutions. Currently there does exist a Special Rapporteur for racial discrimination that is called the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Throughout the years, the studies that have been conducted and used by the Committee include "the *Study of Discrimination in Education*, the *Study of Discrimination in the matter of Political rights*, the *Study of Discrimination in the matter of Religious Rights and Practices*, the *Study of Discrimination in Respect of the Right of Everyone to Leave Any country, Including His Own, and Return to His country*, and the *Study of Discrimination Against Persons born out of Wedlock*, and a study of *Equality in the Administration of Justice*."[14] These are all United Nations publications and all address the problems of racial discrimination in respect to its specific aspect of society.

From these studies, and through many United Nations debates and committee sessions, a number of resolu-

tions have been passed and published. The most recent of these resolutions addresses Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance and was written in 1999. All of these past resolutions can be found on the website of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights at http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf. According to a draft resolution approved by the General Assembly's Third Committee (SOCHUM), the year 2001 was proclaimed the International Year for Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

From many of these draft resolutions, many different world conferences and conventions have been established. One recent conference was the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in South Africa in 2001. This conference hoped to provide countries with the opportunity to discuss the racial discrimination present in their own countries and to "focus on action-oriented and practical steps to eradicate racism, including measures of prevention, education and protection and the provision of effective remedies. The World Conference was intended as a unique and important opportunity to create a new world vision for the fight against racism in the Twenty-First century."[15] Unfortunately, the conferences lofty and idealistic goals were definitively broken down as the issue of Zionism as a form of racism was brought to the table. Many anti-Israel states argued that the Zionist tenants of the Jewish state were in fact a form of racism in themselves and should be recognized as such. This of course sparked debate and ire on the pro-Israel side, resulting in the premature departure of the Israeli and American delegations from the conference.

The above contributions of the United Nations to solving this problem of racial discrimination are only a few of the most prominent actions taken to date. While these impressive efforts represent much progress on the elimination of racial discrimination, clearly, as indicated by the South African debacle, there is much headway to be made.

Real World Considerations

There is one very important point to note when trying to solve the problem of racial discrimination. Although throughout this discussion we have referred to our goal as trying to "eliminate" all forms of racial discrimination, it should be recognized that this goal is built upon a noble yet unrealistic basis. First of all, it is nearly impossible, at least within our lifetime, to completely eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. The origin of discriminatory actions is discriminatory thinking, and while the actions may be easier to control, it is extremely difficult (and arguably immoral) to monitor people's thinking and beliefs. Therefore, a more plausible goal for our committee would be to *reduce* racial discrimination and its impact on the rights of racial minorities. Because racial discrimination is present in all facets of society, we must also evaluate its

effect in these sectors to develop possible solutions in reducing racial discrimination. Therefore, we will look at the racial discrimination in the political, economic and social spheres.

First, with regards to the political sphere, restriction of participation in the political sphere can often greatly affect consequences for that group within all the other aspects of society.

In the political sphere, racial discrimination occurs on several levels. Essentially, and in its broadest sense, it involves the political domination by one group of another which is differentiated from it by race, colour, descent or national and ethnic origin, and in particular the imposition by the dominant group of its political conceptions and political organization upon other peoples.[16]

An example is the situation we mentioned above about the policy of apartheid in South Africa. The government in South Africa was dominated by a white minority which then was able to control and oppress the rights of the majority of the South African population. Some of the curtailments of rights in the political sphere include the right to vote and participate in elections, the right to equal access to public service, and the right of assembly; the right to form and join political parties; the right of petition.[17]

The second major factor in determining one's quality of life, influence, and status in society is economic standings. This, of course, is one particularly large area where the rights of racial minorities are found to be limited; equal access to economic opportunities and the potential for improvement within the economic sphere is incredibly limited. Often, as we have seen, many oppressed groups that are discriminated against are only awarded low ranking positions or hard, cheap labor. In history, the extreme of this practice was slavery. Many of the rights that are infringed upon in this economic sphere are the rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, to equal pay for equal work and to just and favorable remuneration, and finally the right to form and join trade unions.[18]

As for the social realm, discrimination may most directly affect day-to-day living situations. Often, these are the issues that most personally affect the populations of racially diverse states throughout the world. Many of the most important issues that must be addressed in the social sphere are the right to housing, the right to public health, medical care, social security and social services, the right of access to public accommodations, and finally the right to marriage and choice of a spouse.[19] In addition to these more tangible and institutional concerns, are issues relating to the rights of racial minorities to education and training as well as equal participation in cultural activities.[20] This might be one of the most difficult spheres to reach given that any international action taken could only deal directly with the political or economic situation and would take time to trickle down to these day to day issues.

Another more general issue to address when trying to reduce racial discrimination is current governments' dealings with indigenous peoples. This has been a large problem ever since the colonization by European countries. First off, because many of these indigenous populations have been segregated and isolated from the communities developing around them, assimilation of these people back into mainstream society is a very important issue to consider. Along with assimilation into society, integration, the "process by which diverse elements are combined into a unity while retaining their basic identity" is equally important.[21] Finally, pluralism, or "uniting different ethnic groups in a relationship of mutual interdependence, respect and equality, while permitting them to maintain and cultivate their distinctive ways" would be an ideal goal to attain.[22]

Possible Solutions

A very important role of the international community is to urge national governments to take a paternalistic role in society without infringing on their national sovereignty. It is important not to try to infringe on the country's national identities and to recognize the importance of cultural relativism. Moreover, we must work to avoid enforcing concrete moral rules or codes for countries without fully understanding a country's perspective on the issue. It is important to remember that the United Nations is comprised or influenced mostly by western culture, and so the dominant cultural identity is one that closely competes with many other demographically dominant cultures throughout the world. As a result of these considerations, a key question to address in this issue is the extent to which the United Nations should get involved in the issue of racial discrimination?

Despite this incredibly fine line between national sovereignty and human rights violations, legislation created by national governments to reduce racial discrimination has been able to include extremely controversial topics such as affirmative action and forced desegregation within schools. Other means to reduce discrimination and the infringement of people's rights are to set social consequences and rewards in order to promote racial equality. For instance, in many countries, prohibiting housing on the basis of race will be penalized by lawsuits or fines that effectively incentivize the private sector to avoid discrimination. Nevertheless, tackling more complicated issues will require more complex reward and penalization strategies that will not be easily adopted; on the whole though, national governments must take on a more active role in trying to reduce racial discrimination.

Of utmost importance in this discussion is consideration of the fact that racial discrimination is based upon racist beliefs. The only way to drive people's beliefs away from a racist foundation and towards more racially accepting ideology is through education. Society must be

able to set up campaigns for cultural understanding, and to teach multi-cultural awareness and understanding through schools to young children. Through understanding of different cultures, the perceived differences between different races and ethnic groups will be understood and recognized as valuable instead of threatening. This committee should consider possible steps forward in education that will help alleviate the loss of basic human rights by people throughout the world as a result of racial discrimination.

Conclusion

As this paper has addressed, racial discrimination has existed ever since the beginnings of mankind, and no amount of evolution thus far has been able to eliminate its distasteful effects. Racial discrimination is directly responsible for limiting the human rights of millions of individuals throughout the global community in various aspects of society. Every individual in this committee has at some point or will at some time in his or her life come face to face with racial discrimination. Its effects can be frustrating, humiliating, and can lead to disastrous human conflicts. It deserves our immediate attention and hopefully whatever resolution is reached in committee will bring each individual state and global community one step closer to resolving racial discrimination in the near future.

Endnotes

1 Anti Racism Net, http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/arnindex.html

2 World Conference Against Racism, http://www.unhchr.ch/html/racism/index.htm

3 Hernan Santa Cruz. Racial Discrimination. New York: United Nations, 1971. 14.

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6 Cruz, 251.

7 Atlapedia Online, "South Africa", http://www.atlapedia.com

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10 Encyclopedia.com, "apartheid", http://www.encyclopedia.com/

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TOPIC TWO

Xenophobia and Nativism

Introduction

The World Conference against Racism (WCAR) is not a standing body of the United Nations, but rather an extraordinary opportunity "for the world to engage, for the first time in the post-apartheid era, in a broad agenda to combat racism and related issues."[1] Though WCAR as an entity in itself is relatively new, its mandate and philosophical roots date back to the founding of the United Nations, and include the UN Charter of 1945, the UN Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, and the 1963 adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Form of Racial Discrimination.[2] The objectives of the conference include reviewing progress made against racism, increasing the awareness about the perils of racism, studying the factors that lead to racism, and creating recommendations for further national, regional and international measures to combat all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.[3]

Statement of the Issue

Speaking at Oxford University in June of 2001, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated:

It is xenophobia, and the political manipulation of fear of foreigners, that pose the greatest threat to democracy, or at least the quality *of democracy. Immigrants, instead of being welcomed for the contribution they make to a productive economy and diverse society are too often portrayed as a threat, and procedures aimed at detecting 'bogus' asylum-seekers result in the harassment and detention of bona fide refugees.[4]*

The Secretary-General was far from overstating the detrimental effects of xenophobia. It is a problem that strikes at the heart of liberal democratic ideals throughout the world. Xenophobia violates our dearest concepts of liberty, equality, and opportunity. Sadly, it is perpetrated by countless people and organizations throughout the world, from shopkeepers to schoolchildren to heads of state.

One would think that xenophobia's prevalence in the world would facilitate in giving it a clear definition. Yet, the opposite is true—the endemic nature of xenophobia has made the phenomenon elusive. Some have defined it simply as the hostility, distrust, suspicion, and aversion that a society may demonstrate towards strangers, foreigners, or outsiders.[5] However, others believe that it has more vague and pervasive qualities. The brutal intolerance and cruelty to which Annan refers cannot be explained merely by conflicts of interests relating to economic and material factors; on the contrary, the decisive factors often derive from "culture, morality, religion, values, and associated emotions."[6]

Xenophobia and xenophobic tendencies ingrained in human beings is an undeniable reality. Undoubtedly, the world would not want to eliminate differences of culture, morality, religion, values, and emotions even if it could. Furthermore, it is impossible to abolish the fears and capacity for cruelty that are part of human nature.[7]

On the other hand, human civilization and enlightenment, conscience and morality, demand that we address the issue of xenophobia, and recognize its threat to the principles of democracy and equality that are so cherished by the United Nations and the WCAR. As the notion of "foreigners" and the fear thereof is dependent upon the presence of at least two nation-states (and more specifically, the exodus from one country to another), xenophobia is best dealt with through multilateral action. The World Conference against Racism, Racial, Discrimination, *Xenophobia[8]* and Related Intolerance presents the best chance at creating an effective plan for eradicating xenophobia from our states and our world.

History
Distant History

The problem of xenophobia is arguably as old as human civilization and nationhood. The date beginning of xenophobia in a particular state or region is related to the point in time when the target minority culture first arrived.

Much modern xenophobia has its roots—with nationalism—in industrialization and the formation of industrial societies. Prior to the industrial revolution, immigration and migration were in most cases fairly moderate. The demand for labor was relatively constant, and mobilizing large amounts of people in order to migrate was logistically very difficult. However, when industrialization arrived, all of this changed dramatically. Industrial technology increased the efficiency of production and demand for manufactured products. Consequently, firms quickly exhausted the native labor sources, and were forced to look for labor elsewhere. The accompanying major gains in transportation technological capabilities allowed individuals and ethnic groups to leave their native locations easier and faster in search of employment opportunities abroad, while communications technologies informed people of the better prospects and standards of living in the increasingly comparatively industrialized regions.

The economic and sociological context of this industrialization-to-immigration phenomenon is vital. Adam Smith argued that industrialization required a novel division of labor that is complex and persistently changing and turbulent. This new division of labor meant that persons (and especially immigrants) could rarely pass on positions and jobs from generation to generation. Moreover, the turbulent nature of rank within the economic system in an industrialized society hampered the erection of deep barriers of rank, caste, or estate. The social distance between groups within a society was severely shortened, and the distinctions of wealth and standing became more gradual.[9]

The extremely rapid transition from a homogeneous agrarian society with well-defined and insulated social ranks to a heterogeneous industrial society with hallow social ranks with little insulation between them was conceivably very jarring for some. Unfortunately, this turbulence, coupled with the seeming strangeness of new immigrants, in some cases resulted in xenophobia and nativism.

Recent History

Though xenophobia has been a problem for centuries, the increasing ease of transportation and communication have contributed to a dramatic resurgence in the past years, and "despite the efforts undertaken by the international community at various levels…xenophobia and related intolerance, ethnic antagonism, and acts of violence are showing signs of increase."[10] This trend towards increasing incidents of xenophobia is being felt especially harshly in Europe, where xenophobia has found its way in political platforms and policies.

One example of the politicization and subsequent domestication of xenophobia is the campaign of Jean-Marie Le Pen, a far-right Front National party candidate for president of France. In some respects, Le Pen was a typical conservative politician. He favored law and order stances such as zero tolerance and dismantling gangs, fiscal plans that would significantly lower taxes, family values including "respecting life from its origin to its end," and protectionist trade policies. However, parts of Le Pen's (and his party's) platform were more than just conservative; they advocated institutional xenophobia. One plank of the platform pledged to "reverse the current of immigration" through giving preference to French and Europeans in housing, jobs, and social services, expelling all immigrants in irregular situations, and ending the regrouping of families and the automatic acquisition of French citizenship. Le Pen also promised to fight the influx of immigrant labor and resist the "new world order" imposed by the United States and the United Nations.[11]

Riding on a stream of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, Le Pen won enough votes in the first round of the presidential election to face Jacques Chirac in a run-off election. Though he was defeated by Chirac in the run-off, Le Pen's success in the first round managed to send shock waves through the continent. Sweden's Prime Minister, Goran Persson was not alone in stating that he hoped "that all democratic powers will unite against right-wing extremism and xenophobia." Leszek Miller, prime minister of Poland, added that "Le Pen did nothing to hide his suspicion towards an open Europe, a tolerant Europe, and in his rhetoric he constantly underlined his hatred of foreigners." However, reflecting a series of far-right election successes in Austria, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark, Filip Dewinter of Belgium's Vlaams Blok stated that "It's not surprising that French voters are moving to a far-right party. They have the same problems of security, of immigration and political corruption."[12]

Far right wing politics and xenophobia reached a boiling point in the Netherlands in May of 2002, when Pim Fortuyn, the leader of the far-right Pim Fortuyn List party, was assassinated while leaving a television studio nine days before the national election. Fortuyn was known for his anti-immigrant policies and politics, which closely resembled those of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Jorg Haïder in Austria, and others in Italy, Germany, and Denmark. Over 20,000 took to the streets in The Hague to mourn the death of Fortuyn, though it appears that his policies, if not his person, will live on, as they reflect the sentiments of many of his countrymen. In fact, on August 23, 2002, more than three months after Fortuyn's murder, the Dutch Immigration Minister (a member of the deceased's party) stated that he wanted to deport Dutch citizens with criminal records who are from Moroccan and other immigrant families.[13]

Jean-Marie Le Pen and Pim Fortuyn stand as a few of the many candidates for office that make xenophobia a political issue. Yet, xenophobic undercurrents may also be seen in the policies of established governments, particularly in the way that governments deal with refugees. The policy of many governments in Europe of randomly dispersing asylum-seekers to designated accommodations across a country leaves refugees isolated, socially excluded and vulnerable to racist attacks. Research has shown that such dispersion tends to cause deep-rooted xenophobia in rural, coastal, and port regions to surface. In spring of 2000, the United Kingdom's Home Office and Ireland's Department of Justice followed suit, adopting a dispersal policy for refugees.[14] Furthermore, in May 2001, the UK's Home Office also granted immigration officers permission to discriminate against a list of ethnic groups, including Tamils, Kurds, Pontic Greeks, Roma, Somalis, Albanians, Afghans, and ethnic Chinese.[15]

Political activities and governmental policies, while not responsible for all incidents of xenophobia, in many cases have consequences that are difficult to ignore. In Glasgow, Scotland in August 2001, a Kurdish refugee was stabbed to death in a racist attack, and an Iranian asylum-seeker was seriously injured in a subsequent stabbing attack. Between August 2000 and January 2001, there were seventy racially motivated attacks on asylum-seekers in Glasgow alone.[16]

Unfortunately, recent incidents of xenophobia and violence against immigrants and refugees have not been confined to the United Kingdom, or even Europe. Major public acts of xenophobia have been documented in Australia,[17] Guinea,[18] the Russian Federation,[19] and Bangladesh[20] during the past three years. [21] The popular opposition to asylum-seekers is exemplified in recent happenings in the Netherlands, which have included these events:

- *October 1997: After it was announced that 100 asylum-seekers would be housed on the Frisian island of Vlieland, 460 of the 800 islanders signed a petition against them.*

- December 1997: Soest. Following resistance to the arrival of 370 refugees, a fire was started, probably deliberately, in a complex earmarked for the refugees.

- 1 March 1998: De Klomp. A firework bomb was thrown into a hotel where refugees were due to be accommodated.

- May 1998: Venlo. A housing association due to accommodate 200 refugees in an empty block of flats received dozens of threatening phone calls. Around 1,400 people signed a petition against the refugees.

- 23 August 1998: Amsterdam. Local government bowed to pressure and desisted with a plan to house 50 refugees in a former old people's home.

- 23 August 1998: Kampen. Local residents closed down the street and occupied a building reserved for fifty refugees.

- 19 February 1999: Stadskanaal. Mayor and councilors were threatened with death after it was announced that an AZC would, possibly, be relocated to the area.[22]

Analysis

Admittedly, issue of xenophobia is extremely complex, and it is unlikely that an easy panacea will emerge from any analysis of the problem's history. However, thinking critically about xenophobia and its causes in the modern world—and particularly in the last ten years—can give provide some insight and hopefully spawn some steps towards a solution.

A Challenging, Complex Issue

The most challenging aspect of xenophobia is its complexity. Both history and psychology argue that fear of the strange and unfamiliar is a part of human nature. Since xenophobia is in many cases a manifestation of the fear that is hardwired into most people, it is difficult to combat at its roots.

Yet, xenophobia is about more than human fear. A variety of real, physical and material factors serve as precursors to xenophobia. These include preservation of economic and opportunities, physical safety and security, and quality of life. Any one of these factors may convince even the most tolerant individual to lash out at the closest, newest, or most vulnerable person. In an unfortunate number of cases, that person is a migrant or a refugee.

When psychological, historical and material factors meet, the resulting situation is anything but positive, yet not necessarily unforeseen. History can tell which situations tend to breed the conditions for xenophobia, if the requisite elements are present. Two things must happen for xenophobia to occur:

1. An individual must, either willingly or unwillingly, leave his or her native country

2. That individual must be the victim of an act of violence, discrimination, or intolerance because of his or her nationality

Understanding the causes of these two events in a migrant or refugee's life can go a long way in obtaining a working knowledge of xenophobia.

Displacement and racism: sowing the seeds of xenophobia in the country of origin

Obviously, in order for xenophobia to occur, the victim must originate from some location other than the "scene of the crime." Though figuring out this fact does not require a genius for deductive reasoning, it remains a very significant element of xenophobia. Migrants and refugees leave their home states for a myriad of different reasons, as numerous as the number of migrants themselves. The underlying logic is simply that migrants and refugees believe they can have better lives in another country. Such migrations have been going on for thousands of years, and have only increased with the rapidly accelerating capabilities of transportation systems in the past two centuries.

What distinguishes this current discussion of refugees, migrants, and xenophobia from the age-old topics of exodus and immigration is the question of *why? Why* do people leave their home nations? Sadly, for a large number of migrants and refugees, the *why* of exodus is beyond their control. For many of these people—who often go on to become victims of xenophobia—racial discrimination and violence force them to leave their home countries. This phenomenon is all too common for residents of countries such as Burundi, Burma, Bhutan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia.[23] There is not enough room in this document to even begin to describe the acts perpetrated against ethnic minorities in these states.[24] An essential, though difficult, task is to ensure that future generations are not forced to leave their home states, and that existing migrants and refugees are allowed to return with as soon as possible.

While displacement is a central component of xenophobia, in order for xenophobia to be seen, as act of violence, intolerance, or discrimination must be occur or be suggested against a migrant or refugee. This action is taken by a member (or members) of the individual's host nation or community. A key to begin solving the problem of xenophobia is recognizing that changing the thoughts and beliefs of individual citizens of host nations one-by-one is impractical and probably impossible.

Relevant International Action

Treaties

Two treaties that have been entered into force by member states of the United Nations are especially pertinent to the issue of xenophobia and racial discrimination. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, enacted in January of 1969, [25] [26]

United Nations Action

Action of the World Conference against Racism

Not surprisingly, the most explicit action on an international scope taken against xenophobia so far has been

that of the World Conference against Racism, which last met in September of 2001 in Durban, South Africa. The conference's objectives included producing a declaration that "recognizes the damage causes by past expressions of racism and that reflects a new global awareness of modern forms of racism and xenophobia."[27] While the Programme of Action devised by the 2001 WCAR is far from perfect, it represents the largest effort made by a multinational assemblage to address comprehensively address xenophobia and related intolerance. The Programme of Action's statements are particularly insightful and hopeful, challenging the messages that have since been communicated by far-right politicians such as LePen and Fortuyn. The conference's recommendations with respect to migrants and refugees include:

· Inviting international and national NGOs to include monitoring and protecting human rights of migrants in their programs and activities

· Requesting that states extend to migrants and refugees their human rights obligations and protections of their own citizens under international treaties and actions

· Encouraging nations to inform migrants and refugees of their rights, as well as educating their own citizens about the positive contribution of displaced persons to their host society

· Calling upon states to facility family reunification in an expeditious and effective manner

· Urging countries to take concrete measures to eliminate xenophobia and related intolerance in the workplace and remove employment barriers for migrants and refugees

Having made concrete suggestions for the elimination of violence, prejudice, and discrimination towards displaced persons, the 2001 WCAR also recognized that the factors that make individuals leave their home nations in the first place need to be addressed. Correspondingly, the conference suggested that historical injustices that create migrant and refugee populations must be addressed on international, national, and local levels. These include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

· Building or strengthening democratic institutions
· Poverty eradication
· Promotion of foreign direct investment
· Agriculture and food security
· Human resource development, including capacity-building

Endnotes

[1] "World Conference Against Racism to Open in Durban, South Africa on 31 August." United Nations Press Release. 27 Aug. 2001, 1. This and many other helpful background documents are available on the WCAR homepage, http://www.un.org/WCAR

[2] Ibid, 3.

[3] "Objectives of the World Conference Against Rac-ism." World Conference Against Racism Homepage. World Conference Secretariat. 23 July 2002 http://www.unhchr.ch/racism/00-objctv.html

[4] Annan, Kofi. Cyril Foster Lecture at Oxford University. Available at http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefsources/231016 and http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sgt2287.doc.html

[5] Josephine Wtulich, American Xenophobia and the Slav Immigrant, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 4.

[6] James Will. "A Christian Theological Perspective on Ethnoreligious Conflict." The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistance. Eugene Weiner, ed. (New York: Continuum, 1998), 117-118. This should not be construed as an official, mandated definition of "xenophobia" to be used in ILMUNC resolutions and other documents.

[7] After the end of World War II, some scientists suggested that the atrocities of the Holocaust could be explained by the presence of a so-called Facism-factor that was present in only a small fraction of humans. Researchers at Yale University attempted to confirm this hypothesis by holding a study where subjects would be asked to administer a series electrical shocks to (what they thought were) other human beings. Contrary to the hypothesis, over two-thirds were willing to administer lethal amounts of electric shock.

[8] The World Conference against Racism, Racial, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance is WCAR's official name. Emphasis on the word "Xenophobia" has been added for effect.

[9] Gellner, Ernest. "Nationalism and industrialization." The Ethnicity Reader.Monserrat Guibernau and John Rex, eds. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997, 57-58.

[10] "Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination." United Nations resolution. A/RES/52/111 http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/52/a52r111.htm

[11] "Programme: pour un avenir francais."site official de Jean-Marie Le Pen. Le Pen President. 14 July 2002. http://www.lepen.tv/3/projet.htm. Note that this website is in French, but may be translated easily (though not terribly accurately) through http://www.altavista.com

[12] "Le Pen vote shocks Europe" BBC News. 13 July 2002. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1942929.stm

[13] "Dutch Legislator Proposes Deporting Criminals." Reuters. 24 Aug. 2002. Available online through the New York Times Homepage, http://www.nytimes.com

[14] Fekete, Liz. "The dispersal of xenophobia." Institute of Race Relations Homepage. Institute of Race Relations. 3 June 2002 http://www.irr.org.uk/dispersal/

[15] "Refugees, Asylum seekers, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons." Human Rights Watch Homepage. Human Rights Watch. 21 Aug. 2002 http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/race/refugeepresskit.html

[16] ibid

[17] Australia was criticized by the United Nations in

July of 2000 for its mandatory detention policies and for not informing, or allowing NGOs access to inform, detainees of their right to seek legal advice.

[18] Guinea's President Lansana Conte, in the fall of 2000, made a series of inflammatory public speeches in which he blamed refugees for the nation's growing insecurity. Consequently, police, soldiers, and civilians attacked thousands of refugees, resulting in the arrest, detention, beatings, and gang rapes of thousands of refugees.

[19] In September 1999, city and regional officials in the Moscow area began a repression of suspected migrants from the Caucasus. Moscow police rounded up more than 20,000 non-Moscovite minorities and expelled thousands from the city. This was followed by residential raids, arbitrary detentions, identity checks, and violent acts.

[20] The Blangladeshi government expelled 250 undocumented Rohingya families in early 1999, after villagers claimed that they were taking their jobs.

[21] See note 15

[22] Hoppe, Mieke and Liz Fekete. "Populist anti-asylum movement born at Kollum." Institute of Race Relations Homepage. Institute of Race Relations. 3 June 2002 http://www.irr.org.uk/kollum/index.html

[23] See note 15

[24] However, a great deal of information is easily available on the United Nation's homepage, http://www.un.org.

[25] Available online at: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm.

[26] Available online at: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/m_mwctoc.htm.

[27] "World Conference Against Racism to Open in Durban, South Africa on 31 August." United Nations Press Release. 27 Aug. 2001, 1.