

BELIEF & STATE

Religion or Belief and Public Policy

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A newsletter of The Tandem Project, reporting on issues relating to the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

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CONFERENCE PREVIEW

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF and THE U.N. YEAR FOR TOLERANCE

The conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief and The U.N. Year For Tolerance will take place on 18-20 September 1995 in London, England. It will conclude a two year, sixty country study on member states compliance with the 1981 U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and will be a contribution to the 1995 United Nations Year for Tolerance.

Kings College

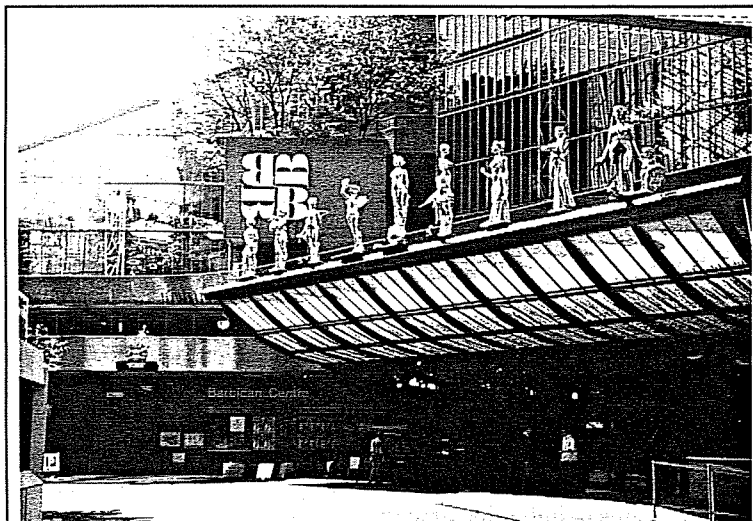
The conference will open on Monday, 18 September, at 6:00 p.m. in the Great Hall of Kings College, Strand WC2 R 2LS. The British Institute of Human Rights will host the opening session. The 50th anniversary of the United Nations will be marked by introductory remarks from a speaker to be named, followed by the opening plenary address given by The Honorable Jose Ayala Lasso, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. A reception will be held after the address. Participants in the conference will receive an invitation in the mail from The University of Essex Human Rights Centre and The British Institute of Human Rights, along with a map of how to get to Kings College.

Barbican Centre

Official conference registration begins at 8:00 a.m. in the Barbican Centre, home of both the Royal Shakespeare Company and the London Symphony. The Barbican Centre, within easy

walking distance of the historic heart of the City of London, has complete conference facilities and will serve as the venue for the conference on Tuesday and Wednesday. In early September, The University of Essex Human Rights Centre will mail all participants a conference packet that will include the conference brochure and a map of how to get around the Barbican.

Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. addresses will be given by Professor Kevin Boyle, Director of the University of Essex Human Rights Centre, Wivenhoe Park, England and Professor Abdelfatteh Amor, U.N. Special Rapporteur for the 1981 U.N. Declaration, Tunis, Tunisia. These will be followed by breakout room discussion groups of regional introductions on the Americas, Asia/Pacific, Europe, Middle



The Barbican Centre, home of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the London Symphony, and venue for the conference on Freedom of Religion And Belief and The U.N. Year For Tolerance.

East and Africa. The leaders of these discussion groups will be listed in the conference brochure. Tuesday afternoon the conference will hear two plenary addresses by Dr. David Little, Senior Fellow, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, USA and Karen Armstrong, Author and teacher at Leo Baeck College, London, England.

Afternoon addresses will be followed by breakout room discussion groups on "Indicators of Intolerance" from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Secularism, led by Professor Rob Tielman, Co-President, International Humanist and Ethical Union, Utrecht, The Netherlands and Matt Cherry, International Program Officer, Council of Democratic and Secular Humanism, CODESH, Buffalo, NY, USA; Women's Rights, led by Dr. Juliet Sheen, Deputy Editor, World Report, Sydney, Australia and Barbara Forster, Chair, The Tandem Project, Minneapolis, MN, USA; Religious Conflicts, led by Dr. John Taylor, Consultant on the Former Yugoslavia, Conference of European Churches, Geneva, Switzerland; Education, Children and the State, led by Carolyn Hamilton, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, England; and New Religious Movements, led by Dr. Eileen Barker, INFORM, London, England.

Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. Michael Cassidy, Corporation of London, will greet the conference. A spokesman for the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), will speak on the UN/UNESCO Year For Tolerance.

These plenary addresses will be followed by a plenary panel on "Working For Tolerance" from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The panel will be made up of Ulrich Bunjes, Youth Campaign, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France; Dr.

" In the twentieth century...improved communications are beginning to enable ordinary men and women to understand and appreciate systems of faith and belief that would once have seemed impossibly alien. The effect of this change could be profound: It has been compared to the revolution that science produced in the consciousness of men and women during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We shall never be able to look at either our own or other people's religions in quite the same way again".

Visions of God -- by Karen Armstrong

Harriet Crabtree, Director, The Inter-Faith Network, London, England; Sue Nichols, Chair, The New York Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief, New York, NY, USA; David Craig, Religion Programming Director, British Broadcasting System (BBC), London, England; Amnesty International, London, England and Tony Kozlowski, President & CEO, The American Refugee Committee, Minneapolis, MN, USA.

Wednesday afternoon breakout discussion groups on "Future Initiatives" will meet from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. There will be five discussion group topics from which the conference participants can choose to attend: Supporting the U.N. Rapporteur; Identifying Future Research Issues; Monitoring the 1981 U.N. Declaration; Promoting Educational Curriculum; and Linking Tolerance to Economic Development. Participants will be asked to pick a group on Tuesday morning when they register. Each group will have a chair identified at the start of the conference and participants will be asked to meet voluntarily one or two times in advance of the Wednesday afternoon meeting. Recommendations from the groups will be reported out to the Conference Rapporteur and may be published in the final World Report.

The final session will begin at 3:30 p.m. with two plenary addresses. "Strengthening Legal Standards," by Professor Natan Lerner, University of Tel Aviv Law School, Tel Aviv, Israel and "Educational Challenges," by Professor Frank Field, London, England. The conference will conclude with a "Call To Action" by Bertie Ramcharan, International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, Switzerland.

QUOTES

" The longer religious traditions exist, the more liable they are to internal disputes over the central tenets of the faith, and over the appropriate way to apply those tenets. Political or public enforcement of one set of beliefs over others appears to intensify conflict among the different points of view by institutionalizing intolerance and discrimination toward the excluded members of the faith. Examples abound in the Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist traditions, among others."

Bartlett Lecture, Tolerating Intolerance: Yale Divinity School -- by David Little

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO U.N. MEMBER STATES

Abdelfattah Amor, U.N. Special Rapporteur for the 1981 U.N. Declaration, has called for an educational curriculum on international human rights standards pertaining to freedom of religion or belief, and for increased awareness of United Nations goals in this field. To get a picture of what already exists, a questionnaire has been prepared by his office for U.N. member states relating to freedom of religion or belief in primary and secondary schools.

Governments will be asked such questions as: "Is there a constitutional or legislative definition in your country of the foundations of religious instruction?, What rules govern the

"Do school curricula and textbooks deal with freedom of religion or belief, including freedom of non-belief?"

preparation of school textbooks and, in particular, religious textbooks at the primary and secondary school levels?, Do school curricula and textbooks deal with freedom of religion or belief, including freedom of non-belief?, What common values and principles in relation to freedom of religion or belief should, according to your country, be taught in school curricula and textbooks?" Answers to these and other questions will form the basis for future recommendations by the Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Support

Key to the success of the questionnaire is the seriousness, accuracy, timeliness and enthusiasm with which member states provide their answers. Professor Amor will be addressing this focus on education in his speech to the London conference, as will Professor Frank Field, Chair, Geneva Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Professor Field will speak on the topic "The Educational Challenge: A Universal Curriculum on Religion or Belief." Two discussion groups reporting out recommendations to the final plenary session of the London conference will consider how NGO's may be of more support to the office of the U.N. Special Rapporteur and to the whole question of educational development.

CLINTON ON PRAYER IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The U.N. Special Rapporteur's questionnaire relating to freedom of religion or belief in primary and secondary schools is timely for the United States. President Bill Clinton addressed related issues in a speech on July 12 at James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia. Prayer in the public schools has long been an issue in the United States under the First Amendment's principle of "Separation of Church and State." In a number of decisions dating from the 1960's, the U.S. Supreme Court has barred organized prayer in the public schools. Some conservative Christian groups continue to advocate for more latitude for group prayer, while more liberal groups advocate a strict "separation" position.

President Clinton has been a long supporter of "voluntary" prayer in public schools, going back to his days as Governor of Arkansas. In his speech, Mr. Clinton expressed this view; "Religion has a proper place in private and a proper place in public, because the public square belongs to all Americans--the First Amendment--"does not convert our schools into religion-free zones." The President has sent a 25 point directive to the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education to summarize and clarify existing laws and principles.

Opportunity

President Clinton's address and memorandum to clarify the meaning of the First Amendment on prayer in public schools provides an opportunity to explore creative ways of furthering educational curricula on tolerance, understanding and respect between people of diverse beliefs.

The Religion or Belief Information Network (ROBIN) will publish the President's directive in ROBIN Reports on the Internet, and will call for suggestions on how interested persons and organizations may provide a direction for public schools in the USA and support to assist the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the 1981 Declaration to fulfill his education mandate.

Profile

The speaker for the opening session of the conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief and The U.N. Year For Tolerance is The Honorable Jose Ayala Lasso. On 14 February 1994 the United Nations General Assembly appointed Sr. Ayala Lasso the first U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

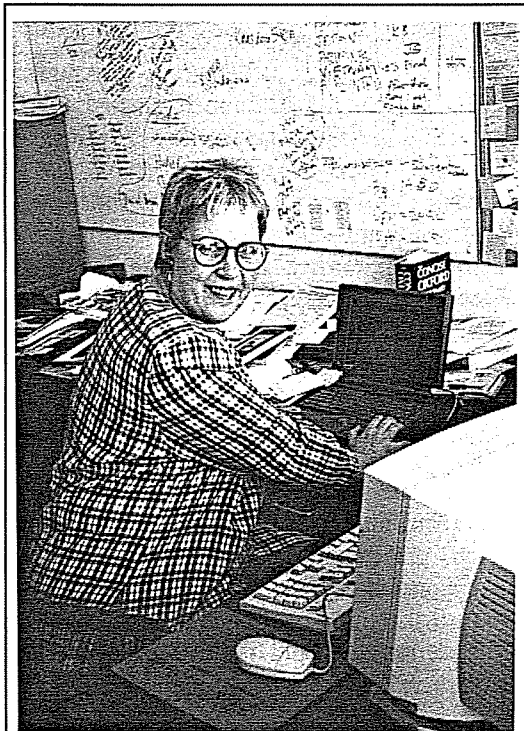
A national of Ecuador, Sr. Ayala Lasso was his country's permanent representative to the United Nations from 1989-94. He served as Ecuador's permanent representative to the Security Council during 1991 and 1992, and was president of the Council during August 1991 and September 1992. In 1992, he was chairman of the Security Council Committee, established pursuant to resolution 724, concerning the former Yugoslavia.

Sr. Ayala Lasso has served as his country's Ambassador to Peru, Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Economic Community (EEC), and has held several other foreign affairs positions at the Embassies of Ecuador to Japan, Republic of Korea, China and Italy. He was Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1977.

Registrants to the conference will receive a conference packet in the mail from the University of Essex Human Rights Centre. The packet will contain a conference brochure, maps and other essential information, including profiles on all the plenary speakers.

WORLD REPORT

CO-EDITOR PLAYS KEY ROLE IN FINAL PRODUCT



Juliet at her desk at the University of Essex Human Rights Centre with the country reports editing list in the background.

When the final words are written for a study on "Freedom of Religion and Belief - A World Report" and turned over to Routledge for publishing, sometime in late 1995, much of the

credit for the final product will go to Dr. Juliet Sheen. Dr. Sheen is Co-Editor of the World Report and a Fellow of the University of Essex Human Rights Centre until December 1995. Along with Kevin Boyle, Co-Editor, World Report, she has taken her keen eye and fine pen to the editing task of most of the country reports.

Juliet is well qualified for the job. She is a native of Sydney, Australia with a doctorate in English Literature. In 1984, Juliet was appointed by the Government of Australia to represent them at the United Nations Seminar on "Tolerance, Understanding and Respect in Matters Pertaining to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief." Dr. Sheen is an academic expert in the field of discrimination and in particular discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. She is the author of a 300 page seminal study on "Discrimination and Religious Conviction in New South Wales," and undertook a pilot country entry for the World Report.

Prior to joining the World Report staff at the University of Essex, Dr. Sheen was Senior Policy Officer for the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales, Australia. She has participated in numerous academic gatherings on discrimination in the Asia/Pacific region and is the author of many articles and papers.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

RELIGION OR BELIEF INFORMATION NETWORK (ROBIN)

The Tandem Project was founded in 1985 to promote implementation of the 1981 U.N. Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief. After ten years, experience has demonstrated a need for the organization to compile annual written reports and a statistical base on compliance with articles of the Declaration. The Religion or Belief Information Network (ROBIN) is designed to accomplish this task. The Tandem Project and Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA an academic institution assisting in the development of a prototype, will demonstrate ROBIN at the London conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief and The U.N. Year for Tolerance.

Rationale

Human Rights advocacy in the area of freedom of religion or belief rests on a firm foundation of established principle: the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Global implementation of this principle, however, must be anchored in the practical work of gathering and disseminating information on the status of this right in member countries, a necessity codified by the General Assembly in the 1981 U.N. Declaration.

Given the fact that this kind of information gathering and dissemination--which results in the harsh light of public opinion--has been and will remain the best weapon to secure the right of religion or belief, ROBIN proposes to maintain the network established by *Freedom of Religion and Belief -- A World Report*, but facilitate its efforts with up-to-date technology which matches the world as we know it: a constantly changing, interactive place, connected by instantaneously available information. Only by accessing current communications technology can the community which seeks to secure the right to freedom of religion or belief keep up with the necessarily changing global status of this right.

The Network

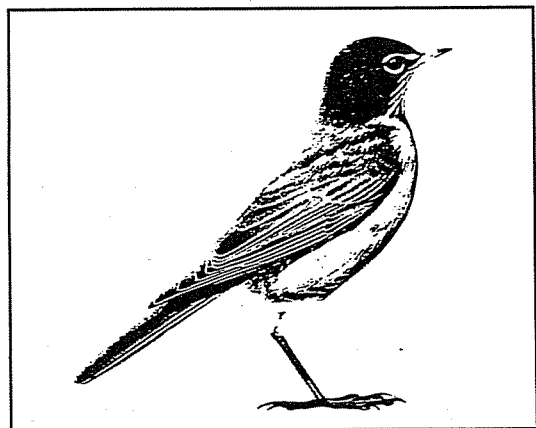
The Tandem Project has created ROBIN to address this critical need for constantly updated information addressed to United Nations decision makers, leaders of religions or beliefs and the international human rights community. The Tandem Project is seeking knowledgeable and interested partners as ROBIN advisers,

researchers and monitors of country reports. ROBIN has devised a system of instantaneous, interactive, worldwide collection and distribution of information using electronic means on the World Wide Web, the latest communications technology over the Internet.

ROBIN Reports, a published written form of the network, includes United Nations reports as well as country and research reports, and will service clients whose needs dictate non-electronic delivery of the most current information on freedom of religion or belief (Third World clients, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, the U.N. Human Rights Committee, and selected U.N. member states as well as academic institutions, religious leaders, media and members of the general public who cannot access World Wide Web technology.

Development

ROBIN's introduction will be staged over a five year period: ROBIN I (1995), a prototype developed for the World Wide Web, will demonstrate the capabilities in one country (USA). ROBIN II (1996-97) will report on eighteen countries in six regions of the world, based on needs and capabilities identified in the World Report. ROBIN III (1998-2000) will expand the completely evolved prototype into a fully developed, global information network reporting on all United Nations member states.



Persons not attending the conference who want more information on ROBIN can write The Tandem Project (address on masthead) or: Tel/Fax (612) 825-2842; e-mail: mroan@maroon.tc.umn.edu. World Wide Web: <http://www.hamline.edu/~robin/>.

NEWS AND VIEWS

BOSNIA REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

The American Refugee Committee (ARC), Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA has launched a major initiative to rebuild homes, apartments, markets and community buildings, and to promote ethnic/religious reconciliation in three Bosnian communities hard hit by the civil war. ARC is headed by Mr. Tony Kozlowski, former director of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) in Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Kozlowski will speak on the relevance of the ARC Bosnian project to building tolerance, understanding and respect between people of diverse belief at the London conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief and The U.N. Year for Tolerance.

Building a New Peace

The Bosnian Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project, funded by a \$2 million grant from the US Agency for International Development, is among the first concrete steps to solidify the Bosnian Federation of Croat and Muslim peoples at the local level. People who were once bitter enemies are putting aside their weapons and picking up hammers to build a new peace. ARC staff and locally hired employees will make repairs to 80-160 homes, 25 apartments, 2 markets, and a kindergarten classroom in a community building.

Three Communities

The project is targeting the cities of Novi Travnik, Fojnica, and Zepce-Zavidovici. Each one of these communities is currently divided into Croat and Muslim Zones with a buffer between the two. The reconstruction projects will bring both ethnic/religious factions together to rebuild war-torn neighborhoods. In some communities, 40-60% of the buildings are damaged.

Linking Tolerance to Economic Development

There are other promising projects beginning to take place along the same lines as the ARC program. Norwegian aide organizations are sponsoring social and economic projects as a result of appeals during the Lillehammer Winter Olympics. The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) have started similar inter-faith, reconciliation, development programs as a result of the Copenhagen conference on U.N. development. The Council of European Churches (CEC) is also involved

in a Bosnia program. It is the intent of The Tandem Project that the discussion group on "Linking Tolerance to Economic Development," at the London conference, will come up with ideas and recommendations to strengthen this growing movement to link development to better understanding and respect between people of diverse beliefs.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Columbia University Program on Religion, Human Rights and Religious Freedom in New York has hired a program coordinator and will begin the academic component of their first year for East European Fellows in Religion and Human Rights in September.

Dr. Elizabeth Cole, formerly with the National Forum Foundation, has accepted the position of Program Coordinator and began on July 17.



Judy Gearhart, Sara Huong, Paul Martin and Daica Skrobola, staff for the religion and human rights program

The first program participants will arrive in late August. In addition to courses on religion, the participants will receive a wide variety of lectures on The Development of International Norms of Human Rights Associated with Religious Freedom and Tolerance. The Columbia Program on Religion, Human Rights and Religious Freedom is funded with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.