

CONFERENCE REPORT

UNITED Conference **Equal Rights and Citizenship** October 14-18 1998 in Ireland

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1 Introduction

The conference "Equal Rights and Citizenship" took place in the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Co. Wicklow, Ireland from October 14-18 1998. The location was chosen for its isolation but also its proven ability to focus peoples minds to work and interact. The conference participants came from 26 different countries, representing 74 organisations which in turn represented an endless diversity of political opinion, social experience, working methods and backgrounds. They were linked in their desire to achieve a better Europe based on equality and freedom through anti-racism, anti-fascism and the promotion of tolerance in all its manifestations. In turn delegates were challenged and angered, uplifted and dismayed but overall they worked together to ensure that the issues facing Europe today were not left unspoken.

The promotion of equal rights does not happen by accident but through exploration and conflict. The Glencree Centre, in a unique way and in common with its overall goal of achieving peace, helped the conference train its attention and manage its conflict to create new ways of working and developing. This conference contained many activists new to UNITED conferences. This new energy was warmly welcomed and brought a revitalised strength to the work and the introduction of many new horizons to reach.

It is a challenge to bring so many activists together and each of us learned from the other. The UNITED Network itself will realise change through the key dialogues which were created by participants and as a result of the conference evaluation it will strive to create new ways to be fully inclusive.

2 Lectures, Presentations, Debates

IRISH TRAVELLERS: Achieving Social Partnership through Community Development

Thomas McCann (The Irish Traveller Movement)

Thomas McCann is a National Development Worker with the Irish Traveller Movement, and has been involved with Traveller issues for the last 15 years.

Firstly he gave us a brief description of Irish Travellers and their history.

Travellers are an indigenous minority who have been part of Irish Society for centuries. Travellers share a long history, cultural values, language, customs and traditions which make them a self-defined group. Their culture and way of life, of which nomadism is an important factor, distinguishes them from the sedentary (settled) population.

During the period of industrialisation, Travellers have lost their traditional roles in society. They had to gravitate to urban centres and develop different patterns of earning a living. Ireland was experiencing great poverty at this time and this caused negative feelings towards Travellers, as they were visible and therefore were easy targets.

During the past two decades they have, through a process of community development and social partnership, built a strong and effective lobby which has realised real change for their community. This was a necessary change because, in the past, special assimilation programmes were developed within which the nomadic style of living was not respected. What became known as the "charity model" was developed. It has good intentions, but supported a settled (not nomadic) way of life. Travellers and Traveller groups were not satisfied with that kind of approach and started working on a structure and development of a different kind of approach to the issue. They came to the conclusion that empowerment was needed, and in the mid 1980s adopted what is known as the "Community Development Model".

Community Development involves building strategies which give individuals the opportunity to take control of their own situation and become part of the decision-making bodies which affect them. It involves giving people a voice of their own and the opportunity to plan their own future. It works through partnership with the majority rather than simply assistance from them.

Since this model began, Irish Travellers have worked together with settled people. Today it represents a partnership between Travellers and settled people working on issues of racism, poverty, oppression and social justice. It has been a very successful way of building coalitions and reinforcing the identity of communities.

Today there are around 25,000 Travellers living in Ireland, 15,000 in Britain and a further 10,000 Travellers of Irish descent living in the United States of America. The main difference between Travellers and Roma and Sinti in other parts of Europe is that Travellers are indigenous i.e. native to Ireland, while Roma and Sinti are assumed to be descended from regions such as India. Irish Travellers have their own language, traditions and customs which are distinct from the Roma or Sinti communities and belong to the Catholic religion.

Connecting gender and racism

Dr. Ronit Lentin (Trinity College, Ethnic and Racial Studies - IRL)

The following is an edited extract from the paper presented by Dr. Lentin.

There is a relationship between racism and gender, and between racism and the way women are targeted in national liberation, wars, genocide, famines. When we evaluate the relationships between gender and racism a useful position is to view gender, 'race', ethnicity as well as class as an intersection of suppressions. In other words: Traveller and Muslim women are targeted as Travellers or Muslims by the state and its institutions, as women within the Travelling or Muslim community, and as Traveller or Muslim women within wider society, but also within the women's movement itself.

Racism affects women differently. Women refugees and women asylum seekers are controlled in different ways than men refugees and asylum seekers. In some situations women migrants into Europe have been given pregnancy tests or have been forced to leave their small children behind when seeking work in Europe. Women migrants are often employed in the unofficial economy and are often the first to lose their jobs in times of recession. In several European countries women refugees have not been allowed to bring their male partners as relatives, while men were allowed to take their female partners. In Britain research has shown the clear disadvantage of women in the immigration process. In Ireland the refugee bill recognises that gender persecution is a ground for asylum yet fails to implement any provisions to assist women who have experienced gender specific torture before arriving in the country.

Racism is about power. Because racism intersects with gender and class inequalities fighting racism is important not only for members of minority communities but for all people wishing to tackle inequality. There is an urgent need for women members of minority ethnicity's to build coalitions and for anti-racist organisations to learn the lessons of social movements such as the women's movement and the green movement. Coalition-building is the most useful strategy of fighting racism and in overcoming ethnicity and class differences between women. As women we are the same but we are also different. In ideal coalitions the differences between people are recognised and given a voice. In good coalitions there is 'rooting' - each member brings with her the roots of her own membership and identity. Each member tries to "shift" in order to exchange with women who have different memberships and identities.

Campaigns in support of illegals

The purpose of this input was to create an overview of campaigns currently active and to create an overview of anti-deportation action throughout Europe. Given the complexity of the issues involved and the space available this can only provide a taste of each speaker's input.

Germany

Presented by Fritz Burschel ("Kein Mensch Ist Illegal")

It was reported that there is a worsening situation in Germany with an overall increase in both the number of people becoming 'illegal' and those deported as a consequence of it. Each new piece of legislation which is created makes life harder for the immigrant. In many cases the right of asylum has become so difficult to achieve that many people do not apply for it. Only 4% of all applicants receive positive decisions. In response to this the campaign 'No one is Illegal' began. Over thirty anti-racism groups worked on the campaign. Its chief aim was to publicise the issues of illegality and to build an independent network of daily life support groups. These dealt with issues of housing, schooling, helping people crossing borders, medicine and legal services, gender specific resources for women refugees. Difficulties arose due to the difficulties in representation. People felt that the spokespersons of the campaign were not representative enough of the people it was working with; migrants and refugees. To impact on this the 'Caravan' - a mobile event going through roughly a dozen German cities - was started which gave individual migrants the opportunity to take control of the campaign and create a voice for themselves.

France

Presented by Antoine Chassin (Fédération des Ass. de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés - FASTI)

France is currently experiencing a special situation with regards to the 'illegals' or 'sans-papiers'. A regularisation has been started, but the outcome has not been a positive one for everyone. People affected by this situation are organising themselves. After the recent change in Government in France the Social Democrats came to power. They suggested an independent regularisation programme which would encompass a global regularisation. However, this was considered too radical to succeed. The end result of this was that 20,000 people have been left out of the whole regularisation process. There are still many disputes about the strategies used during the regularisation process. There is now an ongoing fight against deportation. The mechanisms used for deportation have increased, incorporating methods which violate human rights such as the taping, drugging and tying up of deportees.

Switzerland

Presented by Anni Lanz (Bewegung für ein Offene, Demokratische und Solidarische Schweiz)

Stephan Auerbach (SOS Racisme / Centre de Contact Suisses Immigrés)

The Swiss perspective was reported from both the German-speaking perspective and the French-speaking perspective. The issues are similar but the individual actions to combat them are in some ways different. The inputs have been combined in this report. The legal framework of asylum and immigration has created a situation of undocumented persons in Switzerland. However the focus has shifted from their status to that of their legality. There are many opportunities for the exploitation of women, especially in the 'sex-tourism' industry. Many women find themselves working in this industry and although some receive a visa, they can not transfer that visa to other kinds of employment. They are thus trapped.

A three circle model of immigration has developed in Switzerland. This is based on concentric circles. In the centre are the European Union citizens and outside

this are the citizens of the USA and Canada and outside this in the final circle are all those other countries such as Eastern Europe and African countries. In certain regions, inspired by the "sans-papiers" in France, a movement has been established. In Lausanne for example this began at the end of 1996 by Ex-Yugoslavs who organised to try and fight for a better situation. Various actions have been developed to combat exclusion and create solidarity for undocumented people. These include the development of information leaflets and advice sheets, hotlines and greater overall organisation. However the key questions of free movement, non-exploitation and the protection of Human Rights remain.

Portugal

Presented by Manuela Tavares (SOS Racismo Portugal)

A few years ago a legalisation process has taken place. Of course this did not end all problems of "illegals" in Portugal. Recent changes of government and new policies of integration have seen a growth in problems for 'illegals' in Portugal. A distinct increase in racially motivated crime has emerged. This has been noted by the government and new legislation has been introduced. Overall anti-racist activity has been successful in creating a new awareness of central issues but greater co-ordination of the situation for those who fall under the label of 'illegals' is needed. Organisations are having difficulties in working together on this issue.

Greece

Presented by Thomas Miliou (AEGEE - Working Group Against Racism and Xenophobia)

In the Greek experience almost all immigrants are deemed 'illegal'. On 27 November 1997 a new law was created, which allowed for a regularisation process to begin. There are two levels of regularisation. The White Card is a status that is awarded to allow the individual a work permit but with specific limitations. The second status known as the Green Card provides for a longer period of legality, usually up to 4 years work permission. However there have been administrative difficulties with this arrangement. The 31st of May was the original deadline for authorisation of permission. When this was not reached in time the government has announced a prolongation. As the process is still not completed, a full analysis would be premature.

Stopping Deportations

Luke Rooney (National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns - GB)

The NCADC was formed in 1995 as a consequence of two campaigns which began in the UK in the mid 1970s. These cases concerned two men, one from Bangladesh and the other from Pakistan who had been facing deportation in 1975 and were the first people who openly and publicly fought their deportations.

These campaigns became national issues, receiving support from many sectors including trade unions. These campaigns lasted seven years before achieving success. As a result a number of organisations have been established to help others in their areas who are facing deportation. In 1985 as a result in the increase in demand for assistance and in an effort to combat deportation overall,

the existing local campaigns groups came together and established the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns.

Taking into account the individual circumstances of each case the NCADC operates by fully involving the family and friends of the individuals facing deportation. Due to the intense nature of the campaigns it is important that the individuals concerned are in control of their own situation and are empowered by the actions taken. It is also important to achieve the trust of the local community in the area where the "would be deportee" lives. For a campaign to be successful it is important to achieve media coverage and a local and national high profile. This can be difficult for the individual. They are suddenly made very public. It is also necessary to combat negative publicity which might appear. Individuals have to be made aware of this before they begin since it is very difficult to deal with. It is with this full knowledge that people are able to decide whether to take this campaigning route.

A campaign takes many forms but there are a number of very important structures which can be relied upon to help. If there are children involved the campaign approaches the school at the very beginning to explain the situation and to try and make the school involved. This is to help protect the child when their situation becomes public but also to help create solidarity for the child's family in the community. Other community bodies can also help such as local churches, mosques, youth groups etc.

The NCADC relies upon a network of legal advisors who are willing to become involved, usually at no cost. They are an essential part of every campaign and operate in parallel with the rest of the campaign activities.

The NCADC has been very successful during the past decade. It has realised the success of many campaigns and recognises that this is due to the ability to hand control to the individuals threatened by deportation. The NCADC is about empowerment. It grows with its experiences and learns to adapt to an increasingly difficult situation in the UK. It is this ability to adapt and be respectful to peoples needs which has kept it relevant.

Reconciliation in community conflict: The Irish Experience

Ian White (Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation - IRL)

Using the experience of Northern Ireland as a basis, Ian White set out the work of the Glencree centre and the conditions necessary for conflict resolution to be successful. He drew parallels with the linked issues of prejudice, racism and sectarianism.

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation addresses mainly the relationships between Nationalism and Unionism in Ireland. The key to this is allowing people to open both their hearts and their minds. Before enabling people to deal with their conflict you must address their prejudice. In developing peace the Glencree Centre often struggles with misconceptions of peace. Peace is not just an idealistic view of the world and how we want it to be. In order to establish peace we must address some of the most difficult issues in society today. If peace is to be established you must understand and develop justice. To enable justice you must understand that everyone has rights and it is the

problem of rights which causes the centre the most difficulties in their work. Both sides in a conflict situation have rights. In a conflict situation when there is a right and a wrong side it could be quite easy to resolve, however in many cases of conflict there are two sides of human rights which are in contradiction to each other and that's where problematic conflicts emerge.

For those working in Glenree the definition of peace is not a utopia. Peace is not the place that we will arrive at if we are 'good' citizens. Peace is the active management of conflict. It is not the product of a process but the process itself.

The Centre creates the opportunity to see both sides and to bring both of those sides together. It strives to allow people to reconcile. Although it cannot create or make this happen it can create the most positive environment in which progress can be made.

3 Working groups

Anti-racism and interculturalism

This group initially looked at its objectives with the group. They had come together to share experience from other countries, exchange information about how issues are dealt with and build new ideas.

Participants wanted to discuss the move from monoculturalism to multiculturalism and how to best manage this transition. There are common issues between countries and regions. How can the group use its combined skills to overcome these issues?

Basic to any solution is the ability to respect other cultural identities through the implementation of an integrated labour market and through education. Practical methods should be used to empower youth to make decisions for themselves and to create an opportunity for young people to take responsibility for their experience.

Role models should be encouraged, i.e. black football players and other minority representatives going into schools and youth groups and talking to children. There are many other areas within which issues can be tackled such as sport, education, religion, gender, national and regional government and at the legislative level.

Roma, Sinti and Travellers

After the detailed insight on the situation on Irish Travellers presented by Thomas McCann and Davy Joyce (see lecture page 2), this working group was more of an informative type on the Roma situation in the Czech Republic and Romania.

In the Czech Republic, Roma are encouraged to move out of the country by T.V. programmes, showing the higher living standard in Britain or Canada. But for

those who stay the main concern is the education system. The education system discriminates against Roma children immensely. The example was given, that culturally biased psychological tests are given to Roma children in order to judge their intelligence. As a consequence of low scores the authorities are putting them in "special schools" for the mentally disabled.

In Romania a special study programme "Social Work for Roma" was introduced in Universities and Roma Student Associations were established. The association is running Cultural and Educational Projects, and training for Roma leaders. As an introduction the general characteristics of Roma people were given: They adopt the religion of the place they live; they were forced to give up traditional life in the early twenties; economic traditions are gone; education is a major change.

The main issues raised during the session were: how to establish networks and work at national and European levels; how to challenge laws in their constitutionality and how to fight for human rights for Roma.

The majority of advice given was by the Irish Traveller groups who managed to establish those networks and produce a document called "Task force on Travelling Community" which serves them as a basis for their work with authorities.

On the question of networks, local groups should be built first and then they should be linked into a national network. Groups then should identify supportive lawyers and barristers who would challenge laws and represent Roma rights. And finally it was concluded that for countries who want to join European Union it is necessary to have a proven record on human rights, in this case in relation to Roma. This is why it is important to develop a European Roma and Traveller Network which would then have influence on how European policies are developed and consequently applied in all member states.

Refugees and migration

This workshop sought to bring together the participants who are actively engaged in this field. Although there was great diversity amongst the group the difficulties faced seemed to become more and more similar.

The language of asylum is also quite diverse and could lead to confusion and so the group began by examining this and this gave a greater understanding of each participants work. A key concern was the use of temporary or what has become known as humanitarian protection. This temporary status has become more and more commonly used across Europe. It was agreed that these terms and descriptions could potentially harm the situation for refugees.

Another important topic was that of the various centres of detention being developed or already existing in most countries. Although there are common characteristics in different countries the issue of detention in Hungary received special mention for its poor condition. Similarly in Switzerland and Germany admission centres control the freedom of movement of people by allowing them out for stipulated times during the day.

A key area of importance is the relationship between the asylum policy of the EU and the countries which are due to join. For example the control of the German government on Czech policies through the payment of the Czech government to

keep people out. Overall the group agreed that the erosion of the right of asylum must be stopped. If this basic right is lost then there is nothing to fight for.

Anti-fascism and the extreme right

The work of fascists is like an ice-berg in society. 2/3's are below the surface while the 1/3 above is seen as harmless and respectable. It is the work of the anti-fascist to expose the remaining 2/3's.

Fascism, like racism, takes many forms and is not easy to expose. The public face of the football hooligan and the skinheads hides the difficulty in reaching the subculture underneath. An example of the danger in exposing this threat was outlined. A German film maker produced a film called "The Bomb is Ticking." It was filmed partly in a bar and gave an understanding of the subculture of fascism and (neo)nazis. It sought to educate the public about the existence of these groups. Even though this film received a very restricted viewing, groups of neo-nazis smashed and attacked the bar in which it was filmed.

Participants outlined how widespread and common fascist ideology is within political parties in countries such as Hungary, Croatia, Italy and Germany amongst others.

The key to fighting fascism is education and legislation. Anti-fascists must find ways to challenge the views of fascists and examine what legislation works and what doesn't. Cases against fascists often fail in the courts. Why is this? Where are the shortcomings in our laws? All this must be documented and worked on. Changing legislation is not enough on its own. We must challenge the illness which fascism has created in society.

Death at our borders

This working group was not only discussing the growing problem of deaths at our borders, but also legalisation of illegals as a continuation of the morning forum.

Already at the beginning of the workshop it was mentioned that it was important to stress out that the deaths of refugees do not occur just at the border or before they reach the border, but inside the territory that they reached too, due to the threat of deportation.

Greece was singled out as the country where many deaths occur on the border between Greece and Turkey, and also in the sea. Greece has very strict immigration control measures and for example Albanians are deported on the spot.

Portugal which has introduced measures of legalisation of all illegals few years ago, now is facing a problem of deportation of those people based on the fact that now they can be located.

Czech authorities are learning fast about this "Fortress"-side of the European Union, especially being potential candidates to enter it. Germany sends back people by the bus load and Czechia deals with them by sending everyone back to their countries of origin.

On the question of legalisation there were different views expressed. For some legalisation is the only way to integrate refugees and "illegals". It also gives them a sense of empowerment. On the other hand if we ask legalisation for all, it will never be accepted and there is a danger in creating hopes for people in question which can not be fulfilled. So it is important when running big campaigns for legalisation to run other small ones which will fight for different options.

Exposing the extreme right

The "exposing the extreme right" session was held in two parts. The morning session mostly dealt with different possibilities of how to search for the information, while the afternoon session dealt with the issue of how to use the information gathered against the extreme-right.

It was agreed that the main sources of information are:

- 1- anti-fascist articles in the mass media
- 2- fascist newspapers: in this matter there is a moral dilemma as you have to pay for their publications and in that way you are supporting them, so if you have to buy, limit yourself just to necessary numbers
- 3- information provided by police: considered questionable as the police are not trusted enough
- 4- web sites: a discussion took place on how to get information from the internet about future actions which still can be prevented

To carry on your work you also have to know and to be able to recognise fascist symbols, as well as to know the meaning of words and symbols.

Once we have gathered information it has to be spread by all means, directly and indirectly:

Direct ways of spreading information Indirect ways of spreading information:

- 1- publishing your own magazine, brochure, etc.
- 2- creating your own site on the internet
- 3- organising press conferences, training etc.

Indirect ways of spreading information:

- 1- through local, national press and media
- 2- to lobby authorities: MP's, politicians, police etc.

Therefore it is very important to develop a good, coherent media strategy and to establish good relations with the press and people in charge.

Also it's been agreed that a good European network would be useful for this line of work, as well as a European monitoring unit which would centralise information for a complete international network.

At the end of the session there were still some questions which needed discussion. The questions raised were: Where do you draw the line at what is right-wing extremism? Is fascism ideology or not? How did extreme-right political parties get so important in some countries and regions?

There were many answers to the last question: lack of interest, not taking danger seriously, denying the new face of nationalism, absence of decent social politics and social programme, traditional political parties losing touch with ordinary people and leaving the difficult areas to right wing extremists.

Anti-racist hotlines

This workshop provided information for the participants who wanted to hear more about the anti-racist hotline set up in Austria and what to do in the case you want to set up a similar one in your country.

The anti-racist hotline in Austria was set up one year ago and mostly provides legal advice, active listening and seminars. They receive around 200 phone-calls monthly concerning racial discrimination and racist incidents. Almost one third of all complaints are against the police. The problem in this type of complaints is that they are seen as internal matters within the police department.

One of the ways to have more influence on the police force and to make them more open is to organise seminars for the police concerning this matter. The problem that the hotline faced is that it is still a more or less closed institution. The hotline will start disseminating information via E-mail in the very near future.

Anti-racism in sports

This working group was one of two optional working groups that were organised according to the wishes of the participants.

One of the most successful projects in the area of racism and sports is "Show Racism the Red Card", which uses famous players and stars to express their resentment towards racism.

Participants have further expressed other actions which took place in their own countries.

For example in Germany, the club management sat down and discussed issues with the supporter clubs. A book was published, which was written by players and related their experiences of racism. Schools use sports as a link for raising awareness amongst the children. They organise competitions amongst schools which aim to get school kids and organisations to act on racism. The competition is sponsored by the football club.

The main debate in relation to this issue was whether using "stars" is useful. It's been concluded that it isn't the only solution. Sport plays an important role in society and children look up to the stars and in that way it's useful to have role models with a positive views.

Detention centres

Detention Centres are becoming increasingly worrying for the NGOs working on this issue. This workshop informed firstly about the situation in some countries in relation to detention centres established there, and then moved

on to discuss some solutions in order to fight such establishments or improve the current procedures and treatment of detainees.

Germany receives about 130,000 asylum seekers annually. There are 16 states in Germany and each one has at least one detention centre. Once a person is detained, he or she is not reachable anymore, and you might not know when the deportation will take place. There are several thousand people detained in Germany. They shouldn't be detained more than 6 weeks, but the reality is that they stay detained sometimes from 3 - 18 months.

In England, at present there are about 1000 detained, and usually they are already detained at the port of entry. There are no figures to show for what length of time, but it's known that 100 have been kept in over a year. England receives about 40,000 asylum applications yearly. A "White Paper" has been produced which should officially lay the groundwork for firmer, faster and fairer procedures. The Anti-Deportation Campaigns are fighting this paper as worse than ever.

Finally, the following actions have been proposed:

- 1- put pressure on security companies to improve standards
- 2- connect a hot-line to the centre which will allow a support group to link with appropriate support group
- 3- establish contacts with priests, doctors etc. who could intervene to get information in and out
- 4- raise awareness through the media
- 5- internationalise press campaigns
- 6- get in touch with human rights groups in countries to which detainees have been sent back
- 7- set up airline campaigns: write to them for support in stopping deportations

Long term strategies

During the Long Term Strategies working group participants discussed practical points about the future of the network.

The UNITED network would ideally be financed by a lot of smaller institutions and by its own members. To reach such a healthy basis, a lot of work will have to be done and creative ideas are needed. A few of the ideas that came up were: a European benefit concert, collecting 1000 DM from all of the countries, support from businesses, sponsoring and asking participants at conferences to pay for their own travel costs.

A longer discussion took place around the difficulties of corporate sponsoring/funding. Many human rights organisations have the problem that most sponsors do not have a clear conscience when human rights are concerned. Shell, the oil company, was quoted as a company that might be willing to give money, but which would not be acceptable to members.

The creation of a new network against racism by the EU was discussed as well. Main points of concern were: - independence (90% of funding comes from the EU, too close involvement of the Commission);

- effect on organisations in Member Countries (creation of fights around participation);

- exclusion of non-EU Member States.

Of course concern about UNITEDs existence were expressed. UNITED will have to play its own role, regardless of the new developments. However, confusion has been created already and should be avoided.

Racism and youth work

This was one of the optional workshops. Participants expressed a desire during the conference to have a workshop on this subject.

It was pointed out already at the beginning of the workshop that the biggest problem is to work against subtle forms of racism.

Different kinds of youth work were discussed:

1- 'empowerment' of young people without addressing sectarianism and racism: general youth work: camps etc.

2- 'empowerment' of young people addressing sectarianism and racism: working together with immigrants, exchange schemes where groups visit each other.

3- youth work around commemoration, raising historical awareness: visiting work camps, exhibitions, commemoration ceremonies, anti-fascist guided tours.

Work against sectarianism and racism can be divided in three groups:

1- with nazis and skinheads: accepting youth work , street work, football supporters

2- without/against nazis and skinheads: protest, taking down election posters, discussions

3- in political structures: right to work, immigrant concerts

The general message at the end of the workshop was that it is not good to condemn thoughts and ideas of youth that at first instance seem racist, instead we need to question why the things are the way they are. We cannot just 'give up' on extreme-right youths, but need to give them a reason to change their attitudes and discourse.

Situation in Kosovo

An additional workshop focusing on the ongoing situation in Kosova was initiated by the Eastern and Central European delegates. It was very focused and rather than try and answer all questions, it attempted to highlight specific issues of greatest concern.

Because the majority of humanitarian organisations have left the region due to the conflict there, remaining organisations must double their efforts in this area. However since humanitarian assistance is largely provided by Governments, NGO's must ensure that they are aware of what measures their own countries are taking to ensure that humanitarian assistance can reach Kosova.

As a result of the conflict the region has become a refugee producing area.

Pressure must be brought to bear on both Western and Eastern countries to ensure that they meet all their international obligations and assist these

refugees. The only neighbouring country which has not closed its borders at this stage is Bosnia but since NGO's there are also collapsing a great deal of solidarity work is needed.

4 Campaign working groups

November 9, International Day Against Fascism and Antisemitism

This workshop focused its attention on the theme of the Kristallnacht day of action. There were concerns expressed as to whether the day was fully representative and if not how to move that forward. There are difficulties when trying to involve specific communities in some countries and this was felt to make the day in some ways redundant. It was considered important that the day be refocused.

Using the Holocaust and the "Kristallnacht" pogrom experience as the root, the day should then be used to highlight and protest more recent atrocities and bring history to bear.

Many organisations are involved in the Kristallnacht action day across Europe and these actions were recounted. An urgent e-mail protest against Yugoslav and Croatian governments was decided. It is important to plan well in advance to ensure that each organisation can network with others and therefore energise each others actions. Next year's theme should be based around Resistance. Particularly resistance against social exclusion of migrants, refugees and other minority groups.

"Kristallnacht" Commemoration

On 9 November 1938 a massive nation-wide pogrom started in Nazi-Germany, later named "Kristallnacht". It left many Jews dead in the streets, hundreds of Jewish businesses and synagogues destroyed. It marked the beginning of the Holocaust. Since 1988 commemorations have taken place, not only to remember the victims from 1938, but also to campaign against the rise of neo-nazism and racism in Europe today. UNITED has involved a large variety of groups and organisations in this European-wide campaign, symbolising the diversity of people that have been victims of fascism and that struggle against it today. We focus on the same date and the same theme, as much as possible, to increase the publicity and impact of our statements.

European-wide Action Week Against Racism - 13-21 March 1999

People participated in this workshop chiefly to find new campaigning ideas and to share their own experiences. The anti-racism week has become very important on the anti-racism calendar and delegates wished to ensure that this intensity would not be lost.

It was recognised that there are always difficulties in mobilising people and that organisations must work to attract new people and groups to participate in the week. Anti-racists must find a strong balance between promoting

multiculturalism and anti-racism, ensuring that education is at the core of all activities.

Many individual activities were shared and these were expanded upon by the group. The key was to develop networked activities across Europe while also staying relevant to each group's local needs.

Action Week Against Racism

21 March is the Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations. During the European-wide Action Week Against Racism thousands of people take part in all kinds of activities, like demonstrations, festivals and discussions. We show what we want to work for a world without racism and intolerance. UNITED coordinates the activities on a European level and publishes lists of activities all over Europe. European press is alerted to this special event and campaign materials are spread around. European Cooperation during campaigns develops an even greater motivation, inspiration and more publicity, which strengthens the anti-racism movement.

Action point: At the Vienna conference the proposal was made to publish all annual reports of anti-racist organisations around 21 March.

Refugee Day - 16 June 1999 (since 2001: 20 June)

Participants to this working group were all active on issues around refugees and asylum seekers. However, many had not yet organised anything around 16 June. They agreed to go on with the on-going refugee campaign and the International Refugee Day.

So far, they had appreciated the campaign materials, but they brainstormed on some new slogans. The secretariat was requested to work on a database on media contacts everywhere in Europe, to approach the UNHCR, Ms Mary Robinson (High Commissioner on Human Rights) and Ms Sadako Ogato (High Commissioner on Refugees) for cooperation. We should make clear to all participants that "this is a de-centralised campaign, co-ordinated by UNITED".

Refugee Campaign

In response to the worsening situation of refugees in Europe, a long term campaign has been launched in support of refugees. It includes research into the deaths of refugees trying to enter Fortress Europe and lobbying for a just immigration and asylum policy. European-wide activities center around 16 June, the International Refugee Day

5 Social Program

The social programme was structured around the centre to ensure that people had as many opportunities as possible to network (and not get lost). On the first evening the participants delved into a "break the ice session" designed to get everyone relaxed and informally introduced. This carried on well into the night with games, drinks and music. The second night hosted the information market

where delegates presented their organisations, exchanged experience with local groups and organisations, displayed materials and backed this up with more drink and music even later into the night.

Friday night brought a trip to a local pub for many of the delegates organised on the day by Luke. This proved a huge success with the locals and the delegates got a chance to taste a real Irish pub and join in with the music. Although it wasn't planned, if it had been left out we would have sorely missed it. Those who stayed in the centre had a rare quiet opportunity to watch some related videos provided by participants and indulge in some more political discussion.

Saturday night was a huge event combining the talents and skills of the participants in the regular intercultural evening with the amazing talent of the band 'Different Drums'. This band which was organised by the Glencree centre brings together musicians from both sides of the political divide in Northern Ireland and erupted into a passionate and incredible display of music. Needless to say the dancers among the delegates got the chance to show off their skills. Sadly this was our farewell party.

6 UNITED for Intercultural Action

UNITED for Intercultural Action

European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees

Racism, nationalism, fascism, discrimination, asylum policies... all of them have a European dimension even though they often look like pure national issues. Reports from all over Europe demonstrate the increasing dangers facing migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities. Often these dangers are increased by undemocratic intergovernmental decisions like the Schengen Treaty. Strangely enough, racist and fascist organisations have strong European links from Portugal to Russia, from Sweden to Italy. Fortress Europe needs to be fought at local, regional and European levels - it cannot be fought on one level alone.

Linked through UNITED, hundreds of organisations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from all European countries, work together on a voluntary basis. They base their cooperation on common actions and shared activities on a mutual respect.

UNITED is and will remain independent from all political parties, organisations and states, but seeks an active co-operation with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe.

Through the UNITED network organisations meet each other, work on common actions and share information. Europe-wide action weeks, campaigns and such are planned and discussed on UNITED conferences. Like-minded organisations find each other on such conferences and work together on specific projects on specific topics. The workers in

the secretariat are in constant contact with the network organisations, ensuring that information and proposals for action are transmitted rapidly. Information is received from more than 2300 organisations and mailings are sent out to about 2500 groups in Europe.

If you want to get involved... Discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know that you would like to join or receive information. And add us to your mailing list!

More information you can find at www.unitedagainstracism.org or write to info@unitedagainstracism.org

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