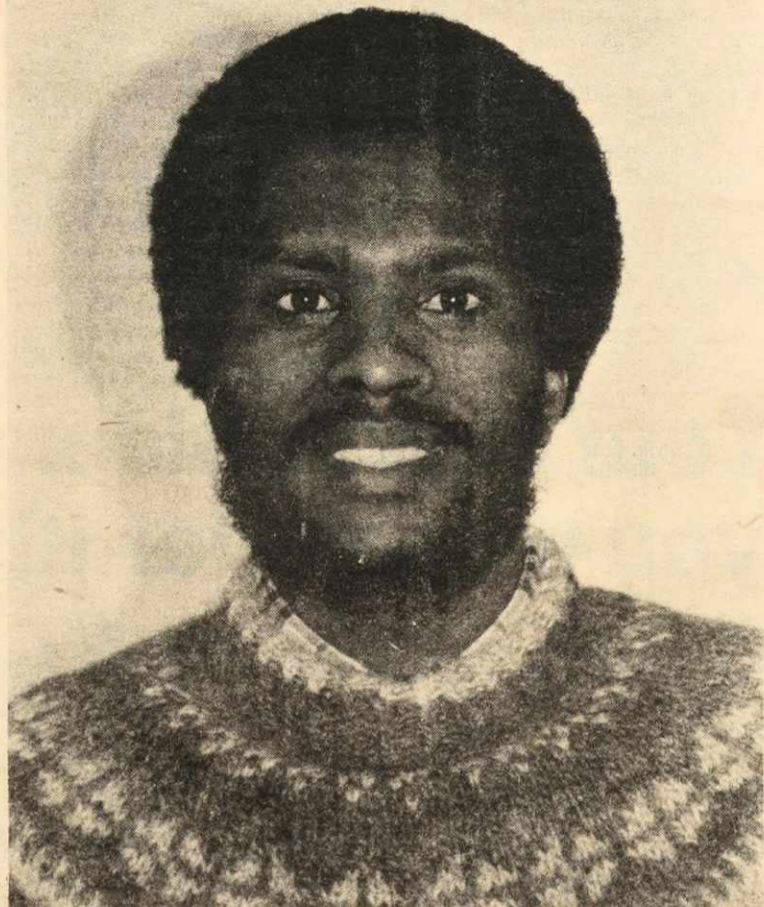


North - South Youth Assembly links Canada with the Third World



Moshier/Dal Photo

Karanja-njoroge, president of the North-South Youth Assembly
by M.L. Hendry

Our profound desire is to live in a world, not of competition, but of peace and understanding.

Young people from around the world joined together in Montreal late in August to discuss how the human race can implement a just system of sharing the world's riches.

The first North-South Youth Assembly, held from August 30 through September 4, linked 120 Canadian delegates with 75 foreign delegates, most of whom represented Third World nations.

"Food and hunger", "Natural

and non-renewable resources and their utilization" and "Work opportunities, trade and employment" were the three themes discussed by the Assembly.

Chosen by non-governmental agencies (such as YMCA, Red Cross, CUSO) in their respective countries, delegates were selected on the basis of knowledge of international, especially North-South, relations.

Karanja-njoroge of Kenya, currently a part-time student at Dalhousie and Mount Saint Vincent, was elected president of the Assembly.

"At an international level young people have no independent voice," said Karanja-njoroge. "International forums for youth are mainly in various camps of ideological leaning."

The Youth Assembly was a broad representation of young people with a common goal, he said. "We achieved a major victory in getting them to discuss and agree on basic problems of mankind."

"It would be a miracle if we all agreed on solutions," said Karanja-njoroge, "but the first step was made in almost unanimously identifying the nature and magnitude of the problem."

The three most significant resolutions, according to Karanja-njoroge, were:

1) Declaration that all youth of the world must unite and seek a concerted effort to bring an end to world starvation, mass deprivation and poverty.

2) Support for involvement of women, especially the average woman of the poor world, in development decisions.

In the Third World, especially in Kenya, Karanja-njoroge said, true and viable development can only be done with women participating. "Women in my country are the backbone of the home and the family, and we must recognize this", he said.

3) A declaration that education is a right for every child.

A new education order hits at the very tenet of societal development, Karanja-njoroge said. "Education cannot exist in a vacuum. Without support from the political organization it becomes useless. In the poor nations of the south education is nothing more than reading and writing, a colonial education. Society has not internationalized. We must look for a way of integrating education

with development objectives and social and political realities," he said.

The first copy of the 65 Resolutions of the Youth Assembly was presented to Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations. When asked what role he thought was best suited for the Assembly, Waldheim replied, "to mobilize political will among world leaders to seek changes and lasting solutions to world problems."

Assembly resolutions were also presented at the Cancun summit.

"The Assembly was an extraordinary opportunity to confront the points of view of youth of different cultural origins", said British delegate Tommy Shepherd. "It gives us the means, in our respective countries, of putting pressure on our governments and rallying more and more people to the necessity of establishing a dialogue with the rest of the world."

Young people should educate themselves, said Karanja-njoroge. "It's dangerous to dismiss Ayatollah Khomeini as a lunatic, you thereby dismiss 10 million people offhand," he said. "We should ask, 'Who is this man? How did he come to be where he is?' I believe we have a lot to do with who Khomeini is, with who killed Anwar Sadat. I will not ignore for a moment that America, the Israelis, his friends, have killed Sadat. People make jokes-how it's Colonel Moammar Khadafy. 'What is happening?', one should ask. You become a fuller person if you ask these questions. This is what University should do.

The North-South Youth Assembly was first conceived by the founder of Canada World Youth and Katimavik, Jacques Hebert, who thought it feasible to bring together young people from all over the world to see how their thoughts compared with what world leaders are doing.

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