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World Citizen Barred From India

Eighty-six year old Garry Davis, the renowned World Citizen who has traveled to India on his World Passport half a dozen times since Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru gave his blessings to the World Passport in 1956, was turned away by immigration officials in Delhi this week. The officials at the Delhi airport refused to issue a 14-day visa to Mr. Davis, despite the fact that they have authority to do so. Instead they bought him a return ticket and sent him back to New York City.

Davis was in India to attend the World Judiciary Summit at the 8th International Conference of Chief Justices of the World in Lucknow, India, December 7-11 2007. About 100 Chief Justices, Ministers of Justice, eminent lawyers, and other jurists from around the world are gathering this week in Lucknow to discuss ways of moving toward World Law.

"World Law is essential if humanity is to survive the twin threat of global warming and war," declared Mr. Jagdish Gandhi, Founder Manager of City Montessori School (CMS) which is hosting the World Judiciary Summit.

"The jurists were looking forward to hearing from Mr. Davis since he is one of the pioneering figures in the effort to evolve new global systems of law and justice that can outlaw war and protect our planet," Mr Gandhi continued. "We are very disappointed that he flew all the way here and now won't be with us."

Immigration officials objected to the fact that Mr. Davis presented a duplicate passport to them, complete with copies of previous visas. "Even though the original visas were indeed issued to Mr. Davis by the Indian Government, our regulations do not permit presentation of a duplicate passport for entry," an immigration official said at Delhi Airport.

"There was no attempt to make the duplicates visas look like originals," Mr. Davis said. "Any person who was trying to fool the officials would have changed the dates to make a visa that appeared current so they could simply pass through. The copies I presented were clearly copies, unaltered, presented only to establish the historic record of India's acceptance of the World Passport."

"It was impossible to present the original passport," Mr Davis continued, "The original passport with the original visas is still in the possession of the Indian Consular Office in Washington DC, who failed to return it to me in time to make my flight," Mr Davis said.

"I believe the delay was caused by the fact that the Indian government, for the first time, is outsourcing the visa process." Mr. Davis added. "The people at the outsource office know nothing about the world passport and its history."

Historically, India was the first country to recognize the World Passport and has issued visas for it many times over the years. In 1956, Mr Davis personally presented an honorary World Passport to Prime Minister Nehru, who called Garry's idea of one world very much in accord with the thinking of Mahatma Gandhi."

As late as last spring, when the visa process had not yet been outsourced, the Indian Embassy in Washington issued a visa to Mr. Davis in his World Passport. However that visa expired on August 7th of this year.

Mr. Davis was met by an Indian film crew, which was planning to make a video of his historic journey. As Mr. Davis was dragged away by authorities, the crew was ordered to stop any further filming. Nevertheless, **dramatic and startling footage of Garry's entry and then the reversal of policy by immigration officials is available to press and media.**

"When I heard that India had sent Garry Davis packing his bags back to the States without attending the conference I was saddened and disappointed because I was looking forward to his speech," said the honorable Benjamin J. Odoki, Chief Justice of Uganda. "When I heard him speak at previous judicial summits, I was amazed. Even though he is not a lawyer, he is a man with a new idea, a vision and a dream to change the world and make it one world, one citizenry. The judges attending the conference need to learn about this idea so they can persuade their governments to accept this World Passport so we can move freely throughout the world as brothers and sisters."

"One of the fundamental pillars of the rule of law in the world is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed unanimously by the United Nations in 1948," said Mr. Darra Prashant Avinash Alleear, Barrister at law in Mauritius and son of the Chief Justice of Seychelles, V. Alleear. "The World Passport is sanctioned by Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a shame that India, instead of moving forward, has denied Mr Garry Davis his fundamental right to travel freely."

"What possible threat to India could an 86-year old World Citizen present?" asked Mr. Raj Chandola, one of the organizers of the Judicial summit. "Why did the Indian government spend its limited resources paying for a return ticket to force out a man who came only to speak of peace in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi?" Mr. Chandola asked. "This is not only a loss to our conference, but also to India and to the world."