



# 60 YEARS *of* UNA-UK

*by* FRANK FIELD



The first session of the UN General Assembly, Central Hall Westminster, January 1946  
UK delegation from left to right; Ernest Bevin (Foreign Secretary) and his Minister of State Philip Noel-Baker  
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# Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Peter Dyson, Thelma de Leeuw, Leah Levin, Veronica Lie, Suzanne Long, Bob Lorimer, William Say, Sherie Snaith and David Wardrop, who have provided materials and useful information and given me the pleasure of working with them, as old and new friends. I would also like to express my warm thanks to Janet Blackman for her helpful comments at successive stages of the work. In view of his record service as UNA-UK Director for 23 years, we are fortunate to have a contribution from Malcolm Harper on his period in office.

# Introduction

This publication is a celebration of the collective efforts of UNA headquarters, regions and branches as a 'people's movement' for the United Nations. It is not intended in any way as a comprehensive history. Some months ago I was asked by Sam Daws to prepare a text along these lines, based on material from members (as requested in the January-March 2005 issue of *New World*), UNA archives, my own remembrances and experiences and as much information as I could obtain from past and present UNA workers. I have indeed been fortunate in working for the UN cause for more than 50 years as a UNA branch officer, Regional Officer, Director, UN consultant and as Adjunct Professor (International Institutions) in the Geneva Programme of Kent State University, Ohio. Above all, this experience has made me aware of the outstanding and invaluable service of countless members, working at all levels, who remain an inspiration to those who cherish our great cause. This short work is dedicated to them, in the hope that one day the progress for which they worked and dreamed will be realised.

# The First Decade 1945–1955

**"The League of Nations did not fail; it was the nations that failed the League"**

Sean Lester, last Secretary-General of the League of Nations, at the closing conference in Geneva in 1946

**"This war could easily have been prevented, if the League of Nations had been used with courage and loyalty"**

Winston Churchill in a letter to Lord Cecil, September 1939

The 19th century had seen the growth of peace movements, the first functional international organisations (Universal Postal Union and International Telecommunications Union) as well as the Permanent Court of International Arbitration. It had also witnessed a growth in the power of weaponry which was unprecedented in human history. When World War I began in 1914, following more than a decade of increasingly threatening conflicts in mainland Europe and an arms race involving all the major powers, it came as a great blow to the organisations and countless individuals who had worked for peace in Europe since the end of the Napoleonic wars. In 1917 H. N. Brailsford's *A League of Nations* was published and in 1915 the League of Nations Society was founded in England. Parallel societies were established in the Netherlands and the United States of America. In 1918 the League of Nations Society merged with the League of Free Nations Association to form the League of Nations Union (LNU). Its stated objective was to "tell the people of this country what the League of Nations is and what it does to support it".

On Monday, 4 September 1939 Lord Cecil, one of the founders of the League and a member of the LNU Executive, said that the "first great experiment is over, we must work for the second". The United Nations Association became the successor to the LNU. The first meeting of the 'United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' took place on 7 June 1945 at 11 Maiden Lane (the LNU offices near Covent Garden). Lord Cecil was present at this meeting of 21 members, as was Mr Charles W. Judd who was to become the first Director General. At that time delegates of 50 nations were meeting in San Francisco to finalise the United Nations Charter. Just as the League of Nations Union had preceded the League, so the United Nations Association preceded the United Nations. When

the Charter was opened for signature on 26 June, it was noted that it had a preamble, whose opening words are now so familiar: "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". This contrasted with "The High Contracting

## **Who introduced "We the Peoples"?**

History books covering the period tell us that General Jan Smuts, who led the South African delegation, was asked to produce a draft preamble indicating the aims of the new organisation, as the founding conference at San Francisco reached its conclusion. This, however, is only part of the story. Smuts, a keen League of Nations man, was both busy and wise and there were only days for the document to be prepared. Smuts asked Sir Charles Webster, a principal adviser to the UK delegation, who had held a similar position at the Versailles conference in 1919, to undertake this task. Sir Charles, a former professor at the universities of both Cambridge and London drafted the preamble that we know today. However, the story may not end there. In 1815 Tsar Nicholas I of Russia had proposed, under the influence of Baroness von Krudener, what became known as the 'Holy Alliance'. The text of the Alliance stated that "the precepts of Justice, Christian Charity and Peace... must have an immediate influence on the Councils of Princes and guide all their steps" (The Tsar, the Austrian Emperor, and the king of Prussia signed in September 1815. Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, called it "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense"). In its original form it proposed that individual citizens as well as governments should make a similar declaration. Its opening words were "We the peoples...".

This prompts an interesting question. Sir Charles Webster had written a paper many years before on the ideas of Baroness von Krudener. Was this in his mind as he hastily drafted the words that are now so familiar? Words which timelessly indicated that, if the United Nations were used to the full, it would be ordinary people throughout the world who would benefit, but if the nations failed, then billions of ordinary people would surely suffer.

**"... the United Nations is not a supranational authority. It depends almost entirely upon the willingness and capacity of the member governments to carry out its recommendations...The role of the United Nations is to enable them to act in concert, effectively and in the common interest....It means simply that the United Nations relies in the first instance upon the recognition the governments have given, by their membership in the organisation, to the principle that their national interest and the survival of their respective countries depend on its success."**

Trygve Lie, first Secretary-General of the UN, 1946-53. Taken from his 1954 publication *In the Cause of Peace*.

Parties" which had opened the League of Nations Covenant. The 'peoples' had been recognised and there was now a people's movement to support it.

Work in the early months of the new Association centred on re-establishing national and regional structures to support the new and revived branches which were rapidly becoming active. By 10 October 1945, it was possible to fill the Royal Albert Hall in London for a national inaugural meeting. The holding of the first plenary session of the UN General Assembly at Central Hall Westminster, from 10 to 11 January 1946, was a great encouragement. A large proportion of branch officers at this time had been LNU members. At the height of its influence in the mid-thirties, the LNU had a membership of approximately 250,000. For its first half-decade UNA, inspired by the LNU example, hoped and worked for comparable support for the aims of the Charter. By 1949 membership had peaked at 85,000. At the annual meeting of General Council in 1951, 191 branches, 10 regional councils, the Council for Education in World Citizenship (working in schools), the UN Student Association, national councils for Scotland and for Wales and 25 organisations affiliated at the national level were represented. In these early years meetings on various aspects of the UN Charter, particularly the 'veto' procedure in the Security Council and Chapter XI (non-self-governing territories), were at the centre of branch activities (please see appendix: 'Branch and Regional Contributions'). 1946 was a crucial year, with the establishment of UNESCO and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The International Labour Organisation (ILO), founded at the time of the League, became a specialised agency of the UN in the same year. In 1948 the World

Health Organisation (WHO) began operating and for many years support for these agencies represented the main development work of our Association.

On 25 June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The UN Security Council voted, in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to take collective military action against North Korea. This had never happened under the League. It produced strong reactions throughout the Association, both in favour and against. Many members who held Christian pacifist views left UNA, as did the Society of Friends, who were corporate members. This was greatly regretted by all members, most of whom had welcomed the historic action that the UN had taken. At the end of the conflict, in July 1953, Director General Charles Judd began his branch letter as follows: "For the first time in history, a duly constituted international authority has successfully resisted aggression against a small state – a thing the League of Nations never did – and has thereby made a third world war less likely".

The interest of branches in UNICEF had steadily grown since its creation and a very large number of branches began selling UNICEF cards every Christmas. In 1952/3 a large scale UNA/UNICEF campaign was held throughout the British Isles. Don Tweddle (South Eastern Regional Officer) became national organiser. He toured the country, using his remarkable speaking powers to enlist support wherever he went. His enthusiasm, energy and commitment were no less than an inspiration to the whole movement. At the local level, branches gained support from civic heads, religious leaders and a wide variety other organisations. Over five million leaflets were distributed as part of house-to-house collections. Success was such that it was possible for Charles Judd to announce in his November 1953 branch letter that, in response to UNA's great effort, the government had decided to increase its contribution to UNICEF from £100,000 to £200,000. UNICEF asked the National

During the final rehearsal for the Way Ahead pageant, Dag Hammarskjöld suddenly appeared unannounced on the stage with George Ivan Smith, Director of the London UN Information Centre. "As we realised who he was, there was an embarrassed silence," recalls one youth section member. "We were not expecting to get so close to the Secretary-General." For a few minutes he chatted informally to the cast, who were impressed that he had taken the trouble to come immediately after his arrival in London. Later we learnt that he had cancelled a short holiday in order to come to London for this event.

In 1946 the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was coming to an end. UN member states considered that its tasks which had begun during the war had been largely completed and that they were no longer prepared to provide the necessary finance. Thousands of children in war-torn Europe were still, however, dependent on UNRRA for daily hot meals. The former docker, trade union leader and Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, made a deeply moving speech in the UN General Assembly saying that something must be done for these children and for children throughout the world. He ended with the words, "let us not forget that mama is the same in every language". The vote for UNICEF was adopted and the new organisation was born. At the beginning of International Year for the Child in 1978, I spoke as a representative of the World Federation of UNAs (WFUNA) in the Economic and Social Council of the UN and quoted the closing words of Ernie Bevin. At the end of my contribution, a very enthusiastic lady approached me, wrung my hand and said, "I was Mr Bevin's Secretary - I typed that speech."

Secretary of UNA, David (later Lord) Ennals, who had strongly supported the campaign from its very beginning, to spend a year with them in New York.

In 1953 there was a major UNA membership drive. A travelling exhibition was prepared by headquarters and used at five centres: Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, and Portsmouth. In each of these cities there was a week of membership activities: house-to-house canvassing, talks to local organisations and public rallies. The 'Way Ahead Campaign', as it was called, culminated in a mass rally in the Royal Albert Hall in London on 17 December 1953. For many weeks before this event, volunteers from youth sections and branches in London, some 200 in all, had been rehearsing under professional direction to play crowd scenes in a pageant, specially written for the occasion. A narrator told the story, of post-war displaced persons, as young UNA actors moved across a half-lit stage. The creation of the UN was represented by a famous film star, Douglas Fairbanks Junior, who read the Preamble to the UN Charter. The stage was empty, the hall almost in darkness, as trumpeters from the London Symphony Orchestra played a fanfare; a moment of silence followed and then a spotlight picked up Mr Fairbanks as he walked to the front of the stage and spoke those inspiring words from memory. It was a magical moment. The pageant continued with a representation of the work of World Health Organisation,

which included a few of the 200 volunteers being given BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin) jabs, whilst the narrator explained the programme to protect children against tuberculosis. A representative of "we the peoples of the United Nations" was played by a young actor with a big future, Cy Grant. From a platform high up on the stage, which represented the UN building under construction, he acted the part of a worker who interrupted proceedings with 'comments of the common man'. Coaches had brought large numbers of members and potential members to provide a splendid audience which was estimated at around 4,000. After an interval there were speeches from Harold Macmillan (who was announced as Foreign Secretary the following morning!) and Dag Hammarskjöld, the new UN Secretary-General.

### **Myriel Davies OBE**

Myriel Davies joined the staff of UNA London Region as Campaigns Officer shortly after the Suez Crisis of 1956. London's Regional Officer at that time was Nancy Stewart Parnell, who, after long and distinguished service from LNU days, was in very poor health. I was Chairman of the Staff Guild at the time, and will never forget Myriel approaching me with a request to do what I could to discourage any pressure being put on Nancy to retire. Shortly after, Nancy said farewell to widespread acclaim and Myriel became Regional Officer. Few, if any, could have thought at the time that the region had appointed a lady as valuable and dedicated as was Nancy, and who would become the longest serving regional officer ever. From the very beginning she made an enviable impression on her colleagues for her dedication and balanced judgement. Her overseas tours to Geneva, New York, Rome and South Africa became an established part of UNA's regular year and brought hundreds of UNA members into contact with the UN and its agencies. Myriel retired as London Regional Officer in the summer of 1988 and became a full-time volunteer at UNA headquarters, working as Deputy Director until her final retirement in 1996. Her contacts with successive UN Secretary-Generals and high ranking UN officials were a great asset. Apart from being an outstanding speaker, she was excellent at personal relations and was as at ease with a Prime Minister as with a branch secretary. No doubt these qualities came from her deep Christian commitment. Her fluency in the Welsh language led to her frequent appearances on television and radio in Wales, almost always in the cause of the UN.

# The Second Decade 1955–1965

Because of their association with pre-war regimes, many refugees from Eastern Europe had been unable to return home at the end of World War II as Communist governments were now in power. Had they returned, their lives would have been in danger. By 1951, the UN's International Refugee Organisation (IRO), established in 1948, had found one and a quarter million new homes for these refugees in Europe and North and South America and had met labour shortages in mining, cotton and steel manufacture. In 1951 Dr van Heuven Goedhart, a former Dutch resistance leader, was appointed UN High Commissioner for Refugees. UN members were no longer willing to provide funds for anything more than legal protection, so his mandate was limited to providing this service for refugees, who by definition, had no government. Dr Goedhart, however, was not the sort of man to accept such restrictions. Refugees could not return home and they could not find new homes in other countries, so they had to settle where they were, in Austria, Germany or Greece. Dr Goedhart obtained \$3 million from the Ford Foundation in the USA for experimental projects, under which refugees would be trained and provided with tools to work, for example, as a car mechanic or a shoe repairer. The experiment worked and led to a four-year plan to clear the camps.

Dr Goedhart launched the United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund (UNREF) in 1954, with a target budget of \$16 million and a programme extended to include housing and the provision of jobs in small workshops. This target budget included provisions for a 'revolving fund' from which refugees could receive loans, mainly for housing, and repay them over extended periods, rather like a mortgage. The fact that nearly 10 years after World War II there were still over 70,000 refugees in European camps was an increasing concern throughout western Europe. Dr Albert Schweitzer, who was an internationally recognised humanitarian because of his work in Africa, had spoken of the need for urgent action. Kathleen Hume, later to win fame for *A Nun's Story*, had written a heart rending book, *The Wild Place*, based on her experiences as a welfare officer in a refugee camp. Who were these refugees and why were they still in camps? They were the 'hard core' refugees, rejects of the resettlement process. They were the men and women who had been discarded by the seemingly endless process of resettlement missions. Mostly they had a physical disability, were too old, or had been unwilling to leave a dis-

## **Eric Price CBE**

Eric Price Holmes was a leading LNU member of the London Region, whose anti-Nazi views had placed him on a German 'wanted' list by September 1939. After war service in military intelligence, where he reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, Eric took up his career at the Bar, and almost immediately became Chairman of General Council (now Annual Conference), a position he truly enhanced for more than two decades. Through many heated debates, on *apartheid*, unilateral disarmament, Suez and the Congo, he guided General Council with patience, understanding and an awareness, of both the subjects under consideration and the democratic spirit of procedure. On post-General Council delegations to the Foreign Office, he argued with impressive knowledge and determination, based on long experience. Mr Price Holmes was Chairman of London Region from UNA's beginnings to 1981. He had a quiet dignity, combined with friendliness, which made him a truly memorable man. Like his good friend and co-operator, Myriel Davies, he was a deeply committed Christian. He died in 1983.

abled relative. They kept papers showing past attempts to find new homes: records of dashed hopes. Some had left their homes as children, having been kidnapped and taken as slave labourers to Germany, some had been in concentration camps, and some still lived in camps that had once been concentration camps. Some had been crushed by their experiences, whilst others were examples of the strength and courage that the human spirit may attain in situations of adversity.

In 1955 UNA decided to run a UNA refugee campaign, similar to the UNA/UNICEF campaign of 1952/3. Mrs M. M. Lewis, a former primary school teacher and refugee camp welfare officer, was appointed to help branches in the coming campaign. She spoke at the Regional Officers Conference and introduced us to *The Wild Place*. Through her, we found the answer to the key question: "Why had the remaining refugees been rejected?". In her words, it was because they had "a dent or a bruise: that is a missing limb, had suffered from

### The beginnings of *New World*

As early as 1951, Don Tweddle, then South Eastern Regional Officer, had proposed a weekly UNA paper, to be based on *Liberal News*. In the autumn 1955, Bob Lorimer, the North Western Regional Officer, assisted by Don Tweddle, produced a trial issue of *World's News*, which was distributed to branches through regional officers. The initial print run in September was 25,000 copies, but more had to be printed. By 10 October 30,000 copies had been dispatched from Bob's office with a total anticipated demand of 40,000. It was clear that there was a demand for such a paper, in addition to the monthly *UN News* which was more of a journal with only occasional coverage of UNA activities. The National Executive Committee gave its approval to the paper on 13 December 1955. The title was changed to *New World* in September 1958.

tuberculosis, had a weak heart or were guilty of moral turpitude” (meaning they had given birth to a baby out of wedlock).

Following extensive storm damage in England in 1952, a group of volunteers came from the Netherlands to aid with the restoration work. The following year, there was extensive flood damage in Holland and David Ennals, National Secretary of UNA, led a 15-member team to help. Soon after planning for the UNA refugee campaign began, it was decided to run four volunteer work camps to assist UNREF housing projects in Upper Austria in 1956. Photograph No.1 is a view of the three-story block which UNA volunteers helped to build at camp Haid. Basically we provided much of the unskilled labour; undertaking site clearance and acting as bricklayers, plasterers, tile layers and labourers. Volunteers worked for a minimum of two weeks and came from UNA youth sections, the UN Student Association groups and, of course, UNA branch-



es. At any one time during the summer of 1956 there were about 100 UNA volunteers in Upper Austria. UNA received practical advice from Jean Inebnit, an internationally known figure in the work camp world and himself a UNA member.

On 26 July 1956 Egyptian President Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. This was a response to the withdrawal of an Anglo-American investment commitment to the construction of the \$1,400,000 Aswan High Dam project and was clearly a threat to the free passage of ships through the Canal which had been guaranteed under the 1888 Convention of Constantinople. Negotiations with the Canal Users Association continued in a climate of increasing tension throughout the summer. These talks were anxiously followed by the UNA National Executive, staff and branches. Sir Pearson Dixon, UK Ambassador to the UN, briefed headquarters staff and regional officers on the government position. On 29 October Israel invaded Egypt and attacked positions in the Sinai desert. On 30 October there was an Anglo-French ultimatum to Israel and Egypt to cease hostilities by land, sea and air, and to withdraw 10 miles from the Suez Canal (that meant that Israel would at least temporarily hold the territory taken, whilst Egypt would be forced to withdraw into its own territory). At a Security Council meeting the same day the USA proposed a resolution calling for a cease-fire and for Israel to return to the frontier. This was vetoed by the UK and France. On the same day, an Anglo-French task force sailed from Malta. On 31 October there were Anglo-French attacks on Egyptian airfields and UNA's National Executive Committee met and adopted a resolution, stating “we deplore the Anglo-French action in sending an ultimatum to Egypt and Israel threatening the use of force without the authority of the United Nations” and noting that the UK and France had “proceeded to the use of force” and had used “the veto for the first time on a resolution...which called on all members to refrain from the use of force”. At the same meeting of the Executive Committee, it was agreed, after some dissent, to call an emergency meeting of General Council at Caxton Hall, London on Saturday, 3 November. I was told at the time by Hugh Walker, Assistant National Secretary, that some doubt had been expressed as to whether it was technically possible to organise an emergency meeting at such short notice. Fortunately David Ennals had made all the preparatory arrangements in anticipation of the possibility of a positive decision. It is difficult to understand, after this interval of time, how great was the strength of public feeling. The Sunday papers were full of the news. We were in a great debate. Supporters of Prime Minister

Anthony Eden argued, “No appeasement - stand up to Nasser,” whilst UN supporters countered, “We must stand by our obligations - Eden has let us down.” General Council met and there was an overwhelming vote along the lines of the National Executive resolution. Branches all over the country responded in the next week, with probably the largest number of deputations to MPs in our history, with rapidly arranged and well-attended public meetings and letters to the local press.

### *Hungary*

Student and workers’ demonstrations in Budapest in October 1956 were interpreted as a threat by the Soviet Union which sent in tanks to quell the riots. During this period, UNA took a leading part in the ‘Convoy to Hungary’. On UN Day, thousands of young people filled Albert Square in peaceful protest. A new government led by Imre Nagy came to power towards the end of the month. At first the Soviet Union thought it could work

with the new government and withdrew its forces. When, however, Nagy permitted political parties banned in 1945 to re-establish themselves and announced that Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact, Russian troops returned to Budapest and began shelling insurgents in the capital on 4 November. The Soviet Union broke pledges of safe conduct and executed Nagy and other prominent figures in what was described as a ‘counter revolution’. An estimated 200,000 refugees escaped to the west. The conflict had been widely publicised in the western press and there was a strong sympathy and admiration for these people, who arrived when western Europe was still struggling to help refugees from World War II. From the viewpoint of the UNA refugee campaign, now in full swing, this proved to be helpful – sympathy for Hungarian refugees became sympathy for all refugees. Briefly stated, the campaign was a great success and raised over £400,000.

### *UNA Refugee Work Camps*

At about this time, in October 1956, a former guards officer who had lost both legs during the war came into UNA headquarters and offered his full-time services to help refugees. His name was Robin Howard and he was soon helping to prepare for UNA refugee work camps for 1957. By the summer he was running the small department in London and regularly visited our camps in Germany and Austria: his leadership was a model of efficiency and quiet compassion. The adjoining photographs are of our camp at Grossburgwedel, near Hannover. The aim as part of the UNREF programme (please see above) was to convert an old house into accommodation for single refugees and to build seven houses for refugee families. Part of a large old house was converted into a workshop for assembling Mullard radios. In 1957 we cleared the site of 60 large trees (see Photograph No. 2) and about twice that number of small trees and undergrowth which completely covered the site up to a height of four or five feet. On expert advice the ‘amateurs’ removed the trees, mainly silver birch and pine, by digging around them and then cutting the roots, before pulling them out with a four-handed wrench (Photograph No. 3). In an unused garage (Photograph No. 4) we made concrete tiles for the roofs of the new houses (approximately four times cheaper than factory-made tiles). There were two volunteers permanently on the site from 1957 and full work camps of about 20 volunteers in the summers of 1958 and 1959, by which time the work was finished and ready for refugees to move in. £10,000 from the UNA refugee campaign of 1956/7 went towards this project. World Refugee Year





### **David Hogget**

No volunteer sacrificed more than David Hogget, who had gained considerable experience of voluntary service in India. He fell from the roof of a building similar that pictured in Photograph No. 1. For days his life hung in the balance. A special service of prayer was held for him, at which large numbers of refugees were present: it brought the two communities, refugees and volunteers, very close together. David, though paralysed from the waist down, recovered, and in 1958 was awarded the Nansen medal for "outstandingly meritorious work" for refugees.

followed in 1959/60 and within a few more years the camps had been cleared. Dr Goedhart died in 1956.

### ***Disarmament Enquiry***

In May 1960, UNA launched a Disarmament Enquiry as part of its ongoing efforts to develop a more informed public opinion on disarmament. It was based on two assumptions: (1) that a secure peace depends on comprehensive disarmament under an adequate system of inspection and control and (2) that public apathy, ignorance and opposition to disarmament provide an unfavourable climate of opinion for the formation of government policies. Over half a million questionnaires were distributed by UNA branches, trade unions and other organisations. 495,809 forms were returned. 472,718 were in favour of general disarmament under inspection and control. The most controversial question of all, "Should the People's Republic of China now be brought into negotiations for disarmament?", produced the largest positive vote of 473,873 in favour. The *Sunday Express* published an article suggesting that this was a considerable security risk, on the grounds that a positive answer would indicate to foreign spies that the person who had completed the form was likely to be pro-Soviet. The previous day, as national organiser of the inquiry, I had received a telephone call from a journalist working for the paper. In a long talk it became apparent that he was completely unaware that the Prime Minister

**"The dilemma of our age, with its infinite possibilities of self destruction, is how to grow out of the world of armaments into a world of international security, based on law"**

Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General 1953-1961

**"Future generations may come to say of us that we never achieved what we set out to do. May they never be entitled to say that we failed because we lacked faith, or permitted narrow self-interest to distort our efforts"**

Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General 1953-1961

### **Charles Judd CBE (Director General, 1945-64)**

As a young man Charles Judd fought in the trenches and took part in the unofficial 'ceasefire' of Christmas 1914. When he came out of uniform, as a survivor of the lost generation, he was determined to give the whole of his life to the League of Nations and later to the UN. John Garnett, son of the Secretary of the LNU and himself a UNA enthusiast, wrote in the January-March issue of *UN News* that "he stormed the country on behalf of the British Universities League of Nations Society". Through his work in schools, he brought the concept of world citizenship into the education of a vast number of people. Just before World War II, he became head of the LNU staff and during the war worked with Allied ministers in the London International Assembly. He was a polite and patient man. John Garnett thought he had "been too kind to committees", and in particular the Administration Committee who had spent much time "in discussing matters that in another age would have been the responsibility of the Chief Executive".

His working hours were unusual to say the least: from just after lunch until the early hours of the following morning. His wonderful secretary, the dedicated Audrey Davies, would arrive a few hours later to find a pile of papers which he had written the previous night. In the last 10 years when I knew him as a 'benevolent boss', he frequently visited branches throughout the country and wrote well-informed and interesting branch letters, as well as servicing the National Executive Committee. He took an interest in every aspect of the work of UNA. During my 10 years as Regional Officer I spent two holidays as a UNA refugee work camp volunteer. One day in Germany, I heard a voice behind me say, "I've got a request for a speaker from the Redhill branch." It was Charles Judd on a tour of the UNA work camps.

had spoken in favour of Chinese participation, as had the Prime Ministers of all countries in the Commonwealth. I offered to meet the journalist to brief him on the background to the enquiry and answer any further questions. This was declined. The journalist normally dealt with sport and was clearly in an unenviable position. Later that week, in a written parliamentary reply to the MP for Great Yarmouth, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said that there was no such security risk. The inquiry was funded by Philip Noel-Baker's Nobel Peace Prize.

### ***Development***

In December 1961 the UN General Assembly designated the sixties as 'The United Nations Development Decade'. The aim was to stimulate the economic and social advancement of developing countries – nearly two thirds of the world's people. The target was to accelerate the growth of world national income, so that by 1970 it would be increasing at the rate of 5% per annum. The previous year, UNA's General Council had adopted a resolution calling for a 10-year programme of development. This was principally the work of Gordon Evans who had been Economic and Social Secretary of UNA since October 1952 and who at the end of World War II had given up a promising career in the Bank of England to work as UNA's Eastern Regional Officer. In 1960 Paul G. Hoffman, Managing Director of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development, had published a short book entitled *100 Countries, 100,000,000 People*. This set out a detailed plan for assisting poor countries through increased aid, improved terms of trade and the reduction of trade restrictions. The book was optimistic in its outlook. It argued that, if in one decade the advocated steps were taken, then the 100 developing countries could reach 'take-off point'. This meant that after that date, aid and trade improve-

ments, whilst still desirable, would not be absolutely necessary to finance future development. It was a revolutionary and dramatic plan. As such, it involved substantial changes. Developed countries were required to give 1% of their GNP in aid from the beginning to the end of the decade. Seven-tenths of this 1% was to come in government aid. The book made it abundantly clear that improvements in the terms of trade and the removal of trade restrictions were vital to the success of the project.

At the 1961 UN General Assembly the commitment of the industrialised nations was substantially reduced to 0.7% of GNP; this would encompass all contributions, including non-governmental contributions, and these targets were to take effect gradually during the decade and not from the very beginning. The trade provisions were made at a time when the cost of industrial goods was rising considerably faster than the prices of agricultural produce. Development economists, like Hans Singer and Raul Prebisch, predicted that this tendency was likely to become worse year by year. Mr Prebisch, a distinguished Argentinean economist working for the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, led governments throughout the Third World in calling for drastic changes in trade restrictions. As a result of this pressure the first UN Conference on Trade

### **Hugh Walker**

Hugh Walker was a man who linked people together. A former grammar school master and LNU Regional Officer for London, he helped Charles Judd lay the foundations of the United Nations Association. As Assistant Secretary, he worked under a succession of leaders and was the personification of loyalty. Efficiency, attention to detail, politeness, and concern for branch officers were his hallmarks. He was a perfect link between regional officers and headquarters. This to a considerable extent was due to his active participation in the Regional Officers Conferences. For the 10 years that I was a Regional Officer, he seemed to me to be a friend and adviser to us all. In everything he did, including his running of annual summer schools in Geneva, he was ably supported by Betty, his wife and secretary. In the extremely difficult period between the departure of John Ennals as Director, and the arrival of Don Tweddle as his successor, Hugh was Acting Director. His task was very difficult, but he held headquarters together.

### **Audrey Davies**

Audrey Davies was the outstanding secretary to Charles Judd. She was a gentle and of course patient lady, who was liked by all. In April 1973, the Finance and General Purposes Committee made her Administrative Secretary in recognition of her abilities and past work. She became something more than a secretary, more than a personal assistant. She was an influential member of the Staff Guild. Audrey retired early in 1983, after 50 years service to the LNU and UNA. When Sir Leonard Behrens remarked, "Audrey is an angel", she quickly flashed back, "Not yet."

and Development (UNCTAD) was held in Geneva in 1964. It was a failure. Raul Prebisch said at the time that it had failed because the industrialised nations had not been prepared to take the necessary steps. Throughout much of the history of economic poverty and development and seven successive UNCTAD conferences, right up to the UN Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000, the basic problem has remained substantially the same.

UNA headquarters and Gordon Evans tried to arrange a broadcast and a television interview for Mr Prebisch in London but the BBC was not interested. Thus, from the beginning of the 1960s UNA played an ever more determined role in advocating change. Anila Graham, an experi-

enced development economist from India, played a key role in this work and was to be actively involved with UNA until her death in 2004. She was a remarkable woman with the unusual ability of being able to explain complex economic ideas in easily understandable language. She wrote many pamphlets and was a highly popular speaker in branches throughout the country. To a lady who asked her what the UN Development Decade meant to an ordinary British housewife, she gave this simple reply: "It means that you will be as willing to buy a bicycle for your son or daughter made in India, as you would one made in Coventry". UNA branches also played an active part in the Freedom from Hunger Campaign of 1962-63 (please see the feature on Don Tweddle on page 12).

# The Third Decade 1965–1975

The work camp movement or rather UNA International Service, as it came to be called, grew rapidly, with opportunities for volunteers in Britain, Europe and developing countries. The UNA International Service programme for 1966 included 30 overseas work camps as well as study camps in most parts of the UK. Much of the work was with immigrants in multi-racial areas. There were camps in Greece, helping to build rural youth clubs and provide water supplies. Naturally this work required experienced and qualified volunteers. One young civil engineer, the son of the chair of the Tonbridge branch, said, "I would have had to wait 10 years before being given such responsibilities in the UK." Southern Italy, Cyprus, Turkey, Poland and Morocco were all sites for UNA voluntary service, almost always in co-operation with local organisations. There were also opportunities for one to three years' service in Asia, Africa and Latin America, for suitably qualified volunteers and including over 50 new projects with UN agencies. One UNA member, Michael Askwith, now living in Cornwall, was a former UNA volunteer with the UN Development Programme (UNDP). He became a UN staff member, served for nearly 30 years, and held senior posts such as Resident Representative/Co-ordinator in the Congo (Brazzaville and Equatorial Guinea) He is still active as a UN consultant. In 1990 UNA International Service moved to York and in order to continue to be a recipient of government funding, became independent of UNA in 1993.

**In the final analysis, significant progress on all major international issues, be it peace development or the environment, depends on the political will of governments. The will of governments, in turn, largely depends on the will of the people. The world therefore needs the will of the people for more action, more understanding and more friendship among nations in order to make the earth a better place to live in. The United Nations needs your help. I need your help. Each human being needs his brother's help.**

Kurt Waldheim, UN Secretary-General from 1972-81, speaking at the 'Earth Day' ceremony 21 March 1972

The Stockholm UN Conference on the Human Environment of 1972 was well covered by UNA's *New World*. The text of the final declaration was printed in full, together with a most valuable article by Peggy Crane, UNA's Policy Secretary. It was based on a series of quotes from an unofficial pre-conference report by Barbara Ward, an internationally known economist and author of *Spaceship Earth* and Rene Dubos, a medical and environmental scientist. They were assisted by a

## **Don Tweddle**

Don Tweddle was a big man in height, enthusiasm and compassion. His six war years, which were concluded as a Wing-Commander in the RAF Regiment, included service in India, Burma, Singapore and Malaysia. These helped to form a man with a lasting awareness of the need for the United Nations and a sensitivity towards the vast numbers of people who suffer from poverty and disease. He became UNA Regional Officer for South Eastern Region in 1946, politely declining to use his war-time rank. He served with outstanding distinction until 1955, when he became National Officer for Scotland. In 1959 he was appointed Joint National Secretary of UNA with Bob Lorimer, leaving in the summer of 1961 to become General Secretary of the UK Freedom from Hunger Campaign (FFHC), under the presidency of the Duke of Edinburgh. He worked closely with many NGOs and 1,500 local Freedom from Hunger committees. Over £7 million was raised in three years for development projects. In 1964 he joined the staff of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome and for 5 years served as deputy co-ordinator of the world FFHC. In 1969 he was appointed Secretary-General of the Second World Food Congress, held in June 1970 in The Hague, with over 1,800 participants attending from 110 countries. In August of the following year, to his endless credit, he came back to UNA as Director, working in the aftermath of the Berkeley-Ennals conflict and facing a major financial crisis. Unfortunately ill-health forced Don to resign in 1972. He later became a member of the National Executive and served until June 1981.

152-member Committee of Corresponding Consultants in 58 countries, established for the purpose by the UN Secretary-General U Thant. Briefly stated, it looked at likely future pressures on the environment up to the year 2000, taking into account technology, development and population growth and ending with 'strategies for survival'. The authors wrote of the "jobs to be done which perhaps require, at this stage, no more than a limited, special and basically self-interested application of the global point of view. For instance, it is only by forthright co-operation and action at the global level that nations can protect mankind from inadvertent and potentially disastrous modification in the planetary weather system, over which no nation can assert sovereignty. Again no sovereignty can hold sway over the single inter-connected global ocean system which is nature's ultimate sink and man's favourite sewer. In three vital, related areas, this is now the undeniable case – the global atmosphere, the global oceans and the global weather system".

At this time lone voices throughout the world were beginning to change our ways of thinking: stretching us beyond internationalism to a perception of 'planet earth'. Governments were so slow to respond – and still are – after more than three decades. These final words come from Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos: "Alone in space, alone in its life supporting systems, powered by inconceivable energies...unpredictable, but nourishing, enlivening and enriching in the largest degree – is this not a precious home for all us earthlings? Is it not worth our love? Does it not deserve all the inventiveness, courage and generosity of which we are capable, to preserve it from degradation and destruction and, by doing so, to secure our own survival?"

In 1973, UNA joined Oxfam, War on Want, the Child Poverty Action Group, Help the Aged and the Society of Friends to lobby the government on a collective basis for increased aid to the disadvantaged in the UK and interna-



tionally. The photograph below shows one of two joint lobbies to 10 Downing Street (*circa* 1974) where Prime Minister Harold Wilson took part in lengthy discussions. During the mid-seventies, relations between Judith Hart, Minister for Overseas Development, and UNA and other NGOs were particularly close. One morning I received a telephone call from her: "I want you to come and lobby me, Frank". Similar calls were made to other NGOs and a proposed Treasury cut in overseas aid was averted. It gave us all a sense of having been useful. Later, this determined lady succeeded Dr Donald Hughes as Chair of the UNA Economic and Social Affairs Committee (ECOSA). Throughout her inspired leadership, ECOSA campaigned for UN economic and social institutions to be more cost-effective and dynamic, so that they could reach out more quickly to those in greatest need. Gordon Evans, Anila Graham, Benny Dembitzer, Granville Fletcher and Professor Hans Singer were active members of the committee during this period. William Say, who was Honorary Secretary of ECOSA from 1979 to 1992, remembers Judith with affection and as a no nonsense internationalist who strongly believed that the UN was the best and only way to achieve greater social justice and peace in the world. She resigned from the ECOSA Committee to become Chair of the National Executive. One of her lasting innovations was to introduce the rolling policy statement.

### *Disarmament*

The late sixties and early seventies were a period of growing arms expenditure and virtually no progress in disarmament negotiations. The two major proposals for general and complete disarmament of 1962, submitted by Premier Khrushchev of the Soviet Union and President Kennedy of the USA had resulted in a complete impasse in Geneva by 1964, after which only partial measures, such as a comprehensive test ban treaty, were being considered. In the public domain unilateral nuclear disarmament, led by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, commanded widespread attention. Not surprisingly, this was also a period of growing concern and frustration among national and international non-governmental organisations.

There had been an international NGO Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in 1972 and another at Bradford in 1974. The International Forum to End the Arms Race was held at York University from 28 March to 1 April 1976. UNA had played a leading role in its preparation: the Director of UNA was Chair of the Preparatory Committee, and thanks to the intervention of Philip Noel-Baker, vital funding had come from a Rowntree trust. Lord Gardiner, a former Lord Chancellor, had agreed to be president (see



From left to right: Lord Philip Noel-Baker, Lord Gardiner (former Lord Chancellor), unknown delegate and Frank Field

adjoining photo). Among the total of 346 who attended were representatives from peace organisations, religious groups, UNA branches, the co-operative movement, trades councils and trade unions, the Labour Party, the Communist Party, student and university groups, a 21-strong party from Japan, international NGOs, and international and local press. The final result of the four days was the Declaration of York, which called for “an international convention abolishing nuclear weapons” and “the holding under the sponsorship of the United Nations of a World Disarmament Conference with adequate representation of non-governmental organisations”.

The forum, in spite of many difficulties, had kept comprehensive disarmament at the forefront of international NGO thinking. Their frustration was the frustration of the 77 non-aligned states in the United Nations, whose determination produced in 1978 the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament with representation and speeches from international NGOs. Its final document is still relevant. After referring to progress in negotiations on bacteriological weapons and “excluding particular areas from the arms race”, paragraph 17 goes on: “The fact remains that these agreements relate only to measures of limited restraint while the arms race continues. These partial measures have done little to bring the world closer to the goal of general and complete disarmament”. This is a perfect statement of UNA’s disarmament policy since the 1950s.

**"We know that the question of human rights and the question of peace are closely related. Without recognition of human rights, we shall never have peace and it is only within the framework of peace that human rights can be fully developed"**

Dag Hammarskjöld

A crucial area of concern in UNA’s thinking and campaigning on disarmament was the economics of disarmament: what would replace this huge manufacturing and trade sector and how could this be achieved? In the early 1960s UNA widely publicised a book written by Sarah Childs of the Economist Intelligence Unit, who often spoke to regional councils and branches. Later, UNA formed a specialist group, that included the economist James Meade, to produce publications on the subject. These included a commentary on the Economist Intelligence Unit’s work in this field.

### *Human Rights*

The human rights provisions of the UN Charter had been truly epoch making: “to promote and encourage universal respect for human rights, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”. Such an aim is quite common but remains unrealised in the 21st century. It would have been unthinkable and even derided in 1919 but by 1945 it had become an aim of courage and vital for the future of human kind. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 answered the cynics’ question, “What are human rights?”, with some precise answers. Many, including enthusiasts such as Eleanor Roosevelt, the first Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights, considered the next stage, a legally binding international convention, to be unrealistic. UNA, however, took a very positive view from the start. The completion and opening for signature in 1966 of the two UN International Covenants (Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) came as an exciting challenge to headquarters, regions and branches alike. UNA supported Human Rights Year and in 1968 established a UNA Human Rights Committee to campaign, among other things, for the ratification by the UK, of both covenants and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Martin Ennals, the outstanding Secretary of Amnesty International, who gave it a truly international reputation, was its Chair.

In 1973, Leah Levin was appointed Secretary of the UNA Human Rights Committee on a part-time basis. This began a most fruitful period for this important body. On Human Rights Day 1974 the Committee sponsored a one-day seminar for human rights groups to discuss common interests. The need for improved communication and co-operation, to achieve greater effectiveness, was recognised by all present. Talks quickly began on appropriate means, which all agreed, needed to be flexible. The only potential obstacle was whether UNA wanted its own initials included in the title. It was

### **Leslie Aldous and Gordon Evans OBE**

Leslie Aldous was a 'backroom boy'. Originally a journalist, he joined the staff of the League of Nations Union (LNU) in 1923 and for the greater part of his career was Information Officer for both the LNU and UNA. In the forties, fifties and sixties, he produced monthly information notes on practically every political problem facing the UN. They were absolutely invaluable to all speakers. He was a popular speaker himself and took meticulous care in the preparation of his talks, always giving a quick glance through an evening paper to keep on top of developments. After the early years of *New World*, he became its editor and worked in this capacity until approximately 1970. His friend and colleague, Gordon Evans, mentioned elsewhere in this publication, worked in the same room and as Economic and Social Secretary wrote information notes and booklets, as well as servicing relevant committees. For several decades he was Chair of the very active and influential Westminster UNA. He was the founder of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the UN. Gordon was awarded the OBE in Human Rights Year, 1968.

quickly made clear that this was not a requirement and 'The Human Rights Network' became a reality. It grew from strength to strength - by 1976 there were 40 member organisations and by 1980 this figure had risen to 90. At approximately the same time, 1973/4, Leah Levin was working to establish, with the support of Lord Avebury and others, what became the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

Early in 1977 the UNA Human Rights Committee suggested to the Foreign Office that there should be seminar on human rights in foreign policy. At the beginning of June, largely through the efforts of the UNA Human Rights Committee, the network organised a one-day seminar on this subject with 45 participating organisations. Later the same month, the Foreign Office itself organised a seminar on the same topic and invited a number of members of the UNA Human Rights Committee to attend in their individual capacities. In April 1977 the Committee organised a pre-General Council meeting, on 'Human Rights - Touchstone of Development'. In the 21st century this may register as an early example of an awareness of development as a human right. It was in fact a continuation of the work of Gordon Evans, Economic Secretary of UNA since 1948.

In 1976 the Secretary-General of WFUNA submitted a paper, written by Gordon on 'Development as a Human Right', to the Economic and Social Council of the UN. In the 1990s it was quoted by the Director of the UN Centre for Human Rights as the beginning of UN thinking on this subject.

Key members of the Committee in the 70s and 80s included Martin Ennals, Nigel Rodley (now a Professor of Law at Essex University and a former UN Special Rapporteur on torture), Bill Seary (who represented the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, which did all the administrative work for the Human Rights Network), and Cecil Evans. The UNA Human Rights Committee ended its independent existence in 1992 when it became part of the Policy Committee. In 1991 Suzanne Long joined the UNA staff and took over the administration of the Human Rights Network, which was discontinued in 1997. In 1981 Leah Levin prepared *Human Rights: questions and answers* for UNESCO. There have since been four editions, the most recent in 2004. It has been translated into 31 languages.

A key issue for UNA, throughout our existence, has been women's rights throughout the world. In this, we have, since 1957, been supported and greatly assisted by the Women's Advisory Council (WACUNA). The Council played an active role in both the preparation and marking of International Women's Year in 1975, its representatives serving with the Director on the preparatory committee and various sub-committees. Its membership is drawn from women's national organisations and women's sections of national or international organisations, together with individual membership for women recognised for their involvement in relevant activities. WACUNA thus has contact with 75,000 women who promote their aims through discussions involving major organisations and institutions, which work for improvement of the quality of life for women worldwide. The Council meets four times a year and is represented on the UNA-UK Board (originally the National Executive). WACUNA regularly puts forward resolutions to UNA-UK's Annual Conference and seeks to ensure that women's perspectives are integrated into the policies of the UK government, in the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which encourages recognition of women at all levels of decision-making in society. Since 1995 WACUNA's programme has followed the Platform for Action arising from the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995. It also focuses on the Millennium Development Goals.

# UNA 1982–2004: some thoughts and activities

by Malcolm Harper, Director of UNA-UK from 1 January 1982 to 17 September 2004

## *UN/UNA anniversaries*

In 1985-86 and in 1995-96 we celebrated (I use the word advisedly) the 40th and 50th anniversaries of both UNA (which was created in June 1945) and of the United Nations.

In 1985, *The Times* published a sponsored (we had to fundraise for it!) report, on the UN on day one and on UNA on day two. Members gave us £10 donations to get their name included in a full-page advertisement in *The Guardian* on 24 October which celebrated the UN and invited membership of UNA. The result was modestly encouraging. On 26 June 1985 we held an interfaith event in Westminster Abbey, with Prime Minister Thatcher reading an extract from the Christian Bible and leading members of other faiths from their sacred writings. On UN Day, Geoffrey Howe, who was Foreign Secretary, planted a special tree in Whitehall Court, as did David Ennals, who was Chair of UNA at the time.

On 10 and 11 January 1986 we held a two-day national schools' Model UN General Assembly at Central Hall Westminster (on the anniversary date of the first plenary session of the UN General Assembly in 1946). We insisted that South Africa should be included and built a debate and resolution on *apartheid* into the agenda. One school, representing Poland, asked – right at the start of the Assembly – why South Africa's credentials had been accepted. The President agreed to debate the issue during the afternoon of the second day. When the question was put at that point in time, the South Africans marched out of the chamber.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali sent a special message to UNA which we were able to use in a variety of ways.

At the regional and branch levels, a wide range of activities were organised. A key feature of UNA has always been membership involvement in policy-making. This is done throughout the year, but especially at annual meetings, at which branch and regional representatives debate their foreign policy resolutions with the policy ideas coming from the executive and the specialist committees. UNA has always prided itself on this grassroots approach to policy formation and in the way this fosters a lively concern with international affairs at all levels of the membership.

In 1995, we set up a national committee which Lord Geoffrey Howe chaired. We held a special ceremony in Westminster Hall where the Queen awarded medals to

a number of British peacekeepers and UN civil servants. Former UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar represented the UN Secretary-General. Prime Minister John Major spoke and leading politicians, diplomats and others were present. It was followed by a reception at Buckingham Palace and a special concert, which the Queen attended, at an open-air venue in north London. On UN Day, there was a special commemoration in St Paul's Cathedral and in January 1996 there was a concert of music and readings in Central Hall Westminster which was attended by Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali who had earlier planted a commemorative tree outside the Hall. The next morning, 10 January, another two-day schools' Model UN General Assembly opened.

In April 1995, the well-known actress Prunella Scales came for half a day to be photographed with as many UNA branch secretaries as could get to London so that they could use the pictures for local publicity in their media. The previous year, UNA member David Clarke and I had walked 1,000 miles from John o'Groats to Land's End in order to publicise the forthcoming anniversaries whilst raising funds.

## *Arms control and disarmament*

Throughout the period, arms control and disarmament remained key issues for UNA. In April 1982 we organised a lobby of Parliament in the build-up to the UN General Assembly's Second Special Session on Disarmament, held in New York in June. A staff member, Bridget Fitzgerald, was at the Special Session and fed back daily reports by telex which UNA sent to a network of activists who took up key issues with their MPs and others.

The following months saw the UNA-led 'Let's Freeze this Winter' campaign which lobbied hard against the deployment of Pershing and Cruise missiles by NATO and SS20 missiles by the USSR on the grounds that they would create a four-minute delivery period and would thus be totally inimical to all that the UN was trying to do to de-escalate the arms race. We set up and ran for some years the Disarmament and Development Network which promoted understanding of the links between massive levels of military and much smaller levels of development expenditure.

During the 1980s we maintained a vigorous approach to UN-centred initiatives, participating in the lobbying at the Third UN Special Session on Disarmament in



1998 and networking with a wide range of other NGOs in this field. When the Cold War ended and many people appeared to believe that disarmament had been achieved, UNA maintained its work (although it was much less popular than it had been) and, in 2000, held its own 'People's Special Session on Disarmament' in Birmingham, at which a draft agenda for a Fourth UN Special Session was drafted, discussed and agreed. This was sent to the UK government, to the UN and to all UNAs via WFUNA. It also led to a grant of £120,000 over three years being allocated to UNA so that this work could be continued. Work on small arms and light weapons became much more of a leading issue and UNA played a creative role in pursuing controls on them. We also strove to promote the widening of the UN arms register and to argue that it should be a mandatory requirement on all UN member states to submit reports to the UN disarmament secretariat.

We played an active role with 'Landmine Action' and others in lobbying for the adoption of the Ottawa Convention outlawing anti-personnel landmines. More recently, at the invitation of UNA-USA, we became the UK partner for the very imaginative Adopt-A-Minefield campaign which they had established. A number of our branches – Stockport and West Oxfordshire among them – held major appeals in support of programmes in Cambodia and Moçambique respectively – and found many valuable spin-offs for their ongoing branch activities.

### **UNESCO**

When, in 1985, the UK followed the United States and withdrew from UNESCO, UNA, which had campaigned vigorously against such a withdrawal, immediately set up an informal all-party working group in the House of Commons which brought together MPs, peers and specialists from all of UNESCO's major areas of activity. It was superbly run on voluntary terms by a UNA activist, Rashid Kareh, and continued to work for British re-entry until this was achieved in 1997, eleven and a half years after the group had been formed! Since the UK's return, UNA has played a valuable role in support of the UK National Commission for UNESCO and currently houses its small temporary secretariat.

### ***Environment and development***

Throughout the period, UNA was deeply involved with promoting awareness of and support for the UN's work for sustainable development and environmental protection. This work really took off in a major way after the Brundtland Commission's report, 'Our Common

Future', was published in 1987. In the build-up to the UN 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and in the follow-up to it, UNA played a major role and finally created a programme, 'UNED-UK' – this became the major British inter-NGO support group for all this side of the UN's work and had a special emphasis on Agenda 21 (which had been adopted at the summit) and the work of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (which had been created to get agreement on the implementation of Agenda 21). UNED-UK developed into the Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, which came to assume an ever-greater international focus and, finally, with the agreement of both parties, became independent of UNA.

### ***The UN and conflict issues***

Another central aspect of UNA's programme concerned the work of the UN, both during and after the Cold War, in the realm of conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding, and – more recently – in conflict avoidance. In 1989, Nicholas Gillett, an active UNA member and a descendant of John Bright MP, who had staunchly advocated the resolution of conflicts by arbitration rather than war, launched an appeal on the centenary of John Bright's death. A fund was established to enable UNA to employ a staff member to research aspects of this wide range of issues and to give UNA information and expertise for its educational and lobbying work.

UNA spent much time looking into specific conflicts – either threatened or actual – and making proposals to the UK government (not least in its capacity of permanent membership of the UN Security Council), to the UN Secretary-General, to other governments, to WFUNA, to other UNAs and the like on possible models for making progress towards a just and lasting peace.

The John Bright Programme staff and I, occasionally accompanied by others, made a number of visits to trouble spots in order to gather information and to speak with UN and other personnel on the ground. Such visits included Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Middle East, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, northern Uganda and Yugoslavia. Other countries in crisis were included in UNA's brief, such as Burma, East Timor and Kashmir.

Our biggest disagreement with the UK government was over Iraq and the invasion of 2003 which we held to be illegal. We were able to maintain a dialogue with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Mission to the UN in New York, putting up a range of proposals for consideration at different points in the saga. We had not been so far apart from government policy since the Falklands/Malvinas crisis of 1982.

### *Human Rights*

We maintained a continuing programme in the human rights sector, looking especially at the role the UN was playing in such ongoing issues as *apartheid*, the rights of women, children and minorities (including ‘forgotten’ people like the Twa in central Africa and the Romany community). We had people at the annual meetings of the UN Commission on Human Rights, attended Foreign Office briefings, lobbied the government and produced briefings on key issues. We lobbied hard for the adoption of UN human rights conventions and the International Criminal Court.

### *Africa*

With the UN stressing the urgent needs of Africa and the fact that Africa was the poorest region of the world and was making less progress in the struggle against endemic poverty than anywhere else, UNA became increasingly involved in the broad campaign for African development. The struggle against *apartheid* fully engaged us; but a tragic list of countries were embroiled in internal conflicts – Angola, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Moçambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. We tried to develop links with national UNAs where they existed in order to give them what support we could and played a very active role in securing full refugee status in the United Kingdom for the Secretary-General of the UNA of Zaire, Cissa wa Numbe Gaston, and his family when they were forced to flee as a result of their human rights work in the east of the country.

We carried on a dialogue over many years with the relevant government departments, with key UN personnel and agencies, with academics, other NGOs and the media in an effort to promote awareness and understanding of the UN’s role in Africa.

### *Education*

We played a major role in the development and widening the number of schools and universities participating in model UN exercises. We lobbied hard, with the Council for Education in World Citizenship and others, for the inclusion of the UN and citizenship in the national curriculum, an issue in which Twickenham UNA had initially played a key role. We continued to produce materials for schools and saw our links with primary schools start to develop. One of the most imaginative ways was the running of model General Assemblies, known as MUNGAs, and model Security Councils, up and down the country in universities, colleges and schools, even at primary level. Disarmament and the arms trade, as well as world poverty, were frequently the key issues chosen by the young participants.

For the UN’s 50th anniversary we negotiated with the UN50 Secretariat in New York an international structure for teaching materials about the UN right across the curriculum, in which David Barrs, who chaired our Education Committee for some years, played the key role.

We always saw such education – and more informal adult education initiatives – as an important part of our work. To that end we developed a very positive working relationship with the National Union of Teachers.

### *The World Federation of United Nations Associations*

Throughout the period we were active in the work and programmes of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), which faced a variety of often demanding challenges over the years. I served on the Executive Committee throughout my term in office as UNA-UK’s Director and chaired the WFUNA Executive Committee from 1995 to 2000. John Ennals had played an enormous role in the creation of WFUNA in 1946 and, until his death in 1988, played a very creative supportive role both to me and to the Federation.

# Postscript

by Frank Field

Whilst no sensible person could claim that the past 60 years have been 'glorious' for UNA, no just person could deny that the basic aims of the 'peoples movement for the United Nations' have been sound, and that, again and again, UNA has shown a greater grasp of issues and a greater vision than have successive governments. Sixty years have seen UN membership grow from 51 to 189. The wider 'UN family', including the specialised agencies, is now concerned with virtually every aspect of international relations. Though the machinery requires change, a greater challenge rests in the extent to which it is used. Lord Robert Cecil, a principal founder of the League, when challenged by a reporter with the question, "Will the League work?", responded, "Have you ever seen a spade work? You have to pick it up and use it." The member states of the UN have to be persuaded to follow this path. As never before in human history, the machinery for international co-operation is there, for the settlement of disputes, the fight against hunger, poverty and preventable disease, the protection of the environment and human rights. All of these could respond to the power of co-operation, if the machinery were fully utilised. It is our job to gain public support for this

enterprise, for the sake of every one of "we the peoples of the United Nations".

In the October-December 2004 issue of *New World*, Sir Richard Jolly, then Chair of UNA-UK, gave a warm welcome to the new Executive Director, Sam Daws, and expressed the profound gratitude of the Association to Malcolm Harper. Sam began his work in September 2004, facing great challenges, including a grave financial crisis, but with considerable personal assets: a UNA member for 18 years, experience of the United Nations in New York and a commitment to the cause. His address as Executive Director designate to Annual Conference in April 2004 made a great impression. He spoke of the need for change and promised "a tangible difference within 12 months; to our website, to *New World*, to the way that headquarters responds to your questions and needs, and to UNA's public profile". Those aims have, I believe, been achieved. Working with staff at the headquarters, for the first time for very many years, I sense a new spirit, which reminds me of my own early days in the Association. In the last few years, I have been aware of sorrow and disappointment in fellow members of a small Association facing seemingly insuperable odds. Now I am aware of hope, and a will to succeed.

# Appendix: Branch and regional contributions based on materials sent to UNA-UK headquarters

## *Chelmsford Branch*

The interest of Jean Johnson, Secretary of Chelmsford Branch, began during the war, through the publications of the Army Education Corps, and continues through her work with UNA, right up to the present time. She has been particularly active since 1995. Branch publications include the *Preamble to the UN Charter and the Golden Rule*.

## *Sheffield District Council*

Among the papers received were two tributes to Gertrude Ward, who for over 50 years, until her death in 1990, was an active campaigner for the League and the UN. She used her wealth, inherited from her father, T. W. Ward, a well-known steel merchant, to finance LNU and UNA causes in Sheffield. These included, in 1938, a Trust fund for the LNU. She provided for a young organiser and an office, which sent volunteer speakers from UNA branches in the city, to address hundreds of meetings in the area.

The papers also record the early years of the forties and fifties, when there were six branches in Sheffield, with individual memberships varying from 50 to over 200. Each branch had a programme of “speaker meetings, discussions, debates, bazaars, garden parties and jumble sales *etc*”. UNA’s Sheffield District Council attracted audiences of several hundreds to hear leading politicians. There were also weekday lunch hour meetings in the City Hall with large numbers of sixth formers being bussed in from local grammar schools. There were conferences especially for members of branches of Council for Education and World Citizenship in local schools during school holidays. The university branch of the United Nations Student Association ran its own programme.

## *Chichester Branch*

On 6 April 2005, the branch celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dag Hammarskjöld in ‘Revisiting an Era’, a programme of words and music illustrating his life, work and interests.

## *Southampton*

An anonymous contribution has been received, giving UNA extracts from the Girls’ Grammar School magazine and the local paper. The six short articles from the school magazine covering the period 1946-9 demonstrated that

there was an active school UNA, with programmes that included: fundraising for girls schools in France and Czechoslovakia, study of the UN Charter, UNESCO and participation in regional and national conferences. The local paper reported a significant meeting of the Southampton branch of UNA held in October 1946, during the first United Nations week. The mayor read messages from the Bishop of Winchester, Prime Minister Attlee and Winston Churchill, who wrote: “With 50 other nations, we have pledged our word to the Charter of the United Nations Organisation. It is our duty to make sure that it has effective support and loyalty”. The speaker was Air Vice-Marshal Bennett, legendary wartime air navigator, ‘Pathfinder’, and Chairman of the UNA National Executive Committee. He spoke of the Campaign Week then in progress as “part of a campaign that has been going on for thousands of years – a great campaign of evolution, of a system of law and order on this earth”. It was building up to “the last great assault...the achievement of establishing world peace”.

## *Chesham and Amersham*

In 1982 after many years of fundraising, the branch realised a dream in the form of a £14,000, 70-foot steel hulled canal narrow boat, fully equipped with a lift for wheel chair users. The aim of arranging day trips and one-week holiday cruises for the disabled, on the Grand Union Canal, could now be realised. The whole project produced a lot of local publicity and support, including that of the mayors of both Chesham and Amersham. The name of this boat of UNA enterprise? New World, of course! For the UN 50th Anniversary, the Chiltern UN 50 Group sponsored a range of commemorative china, made in the Chilterns.

## *Lymington Branch*

In 1980 the branch instituted a series of lunch-time meetings and with some trepidation asked Professor Rotblat, then a famous nuclear scientist, if he would agree to speak. “Yes” was his very welcome reply. Publicity was arranged, the largest meeting room was booked, and “filled to overflowing”. The branch is still in existence.

## *London Region 1995-2005*

For geographical reasons, as well as the enterprise of its leaders, the region was able to play a valuable role at the national level, during this period. There were two suc-

successful initiatives which, apart from the financial gains, promoted the image of UN peacekeeping among peoples and organisations that we seldom reach. The 'Peacekeeper Rose' was a project initiated in 1990 by David Wardrop and Myriel Davies, to mark the 50th anniversary of the UN, still five years ahead. After much work, and co-operation with Mr Harkness who bred the rose, it was previewed at the New York Flower Show in February 1995 and launched at the Chelsea Flower Show the same year. It won two international gold medals and remains in catalogues to this day.

The 'Peacekeeper Teddy Bear' was launched by Prime Minister John Major to show support for the UK 'blue berets' in Bosnia. Over 30,000 were sold.

In 1996 the London Region organised a two-day conference on the UN System-wide Special Initiative for Africa: an attempt to co-ordinate the various UN agencies and programmes into a more streamlined operation. Speakers included K. Y. Amoako, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, and Stephen Lewis, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF. A follow up conference was held in 1997, after which David Wardrop successfully advocated the regular publication of the programme's progress and, at a third conference in 1998, persuaded the UN to pay for a stand at Olympia, at which the agencies could show what they were doing.

*We are enormously grateful to Frank Field and the other contributors to this publication. This report is not intended as an official or a comprehensive UNA-UK history. The views expressed in this pamphlet are not necessarily those of UNA-UK, but we hope that it gives a flavour of the work and life of this remarkable membership organisation over the last 60 years.*





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