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# UNA-SF Courier



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The voice of the United Nations Association of San Francisco • [www.una-sf.org](http://www.una-sf.org) • Fall 2001

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## Dialogue Among Civilizations

**The United Nations Film Festival**  
October 25 to 28 at Stanford University

This year's United Nations Film Festival is a joint project of UNA's Mid-Peninsula Chapter and the Stanford Film Festival. Established three years ago, UNAFF screens documentaries by international filmmakers dealing with such topics as human rights, environmental survival, women's issues, children, refugee protection, homelessness, racism, disease control, universal education, war, and peace. The festival offers a unique opportunity to view films that are rarely screened for public audiences, since they are often too political for commercial theatrical release. For more information see [www.unaff.org](http://www.unaff.org) or contact Jasmina Bojic, Founder and Festival Director, [info@unaff.org](mailto:info@unaff.org).



## Young Professionals Group plans new Fall activities

The Young Professionals Group of UNA-SF brings together internationally minded individuals with the common goal of creating local action to realize the global agenda of the United Nations. We are exploring issues such as AIDS education, landmine awareness, responsible globalization—

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## Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Death of Dag Hammarskjöld

**Wed., Sept. 26, 5:15 pm**

(Registration 5:15 pm; program 5:45 pm)

### World Affairs Council

312 Sutter Street, San Francisco

Members \$7, non-members \$10.

Student members free, student non-members \$3.

Call 415-293-4600 for reservations.

**Ambassador Wilhelm Wachtmeister** was personal assistant to Secretary General Hammarskjöld when his plane crashed in the Congo in 1961. In his memoirs, Ambassador Wachtmeister describes his close work with the Secretary-General (whom he was scheduled to accompany on the fateful flight). Although he was an unexpected choice as Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1953, Hammarskjöld became an innovative peacemaker who "carved out a position in world politics subsequently achieved by no other Secretary General and by no other Swede," according to Peter Wallensteen, the Dag Hammarskjöld Professor of Peace and Conflict Resolution at Uppsala University. Please join the UNA-SF as Ambassador Wachtmeister journeys to America to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of Dag Hammarskjöld. The program is co-sponsored by the Consulate General of Sweden and the World Affairs Council of Northern California.

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# UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld: “You are only the lens in the beam”

— Ingrid Malm, Board member of the United Nations Association of Malmö, Sweden

Dag Hammarskjöld was said to come from Sweden to the United Nations “like a North wind which sweeps away all that is bad and brings good weather.”

In 1953, when he was elected Secretary-General, the political future of the UN did not look bright. The San Francisco Charter and its concept of peace seemed abandoned by member states and, many governments were reverting to *realpolitik*.

Hammarskjöld arrived on the international scene, feeling “free, able to rise and leave everything, without looking back,” as you can read in his book *Markings*, published in 1964.

He would need all his skills in the years to come. Only dedicated leadership and independence would restore confidence in the UN as a universal peace-keeping force.

He soon gained the confidence of the Secretariat staff by his firm line against outside interference. He reaffirmed it as an international service, true only to the Charter of the United Nations. He was at his best when standing up for the people who worked for him.

Dag Hammarskjöld came to love New York. “It is good for the UN,” he said, “to be working in such a vibrant city.”

The UN was to bring a healing influence to the world in all its diversities, and New York gave the people working in the UN a direct personal contact with this process in their daily lives.

Simultaneously, his proposal for peaceful uses of atomic energy opened up an important activity. President Eisenhower suggested an international scientific conference to be held in 1955 as a sign of improving East-West relations.

The world’s most high level scientists became enthusiastic



and the conference turned into a scientific and political triumph, giving the UN a new position in the scientific world.

Soon, political matters would absorb him for the rest of his life.

At the time, nobody knew that Hammarskjöld was in ongoing negotiations with his inner self, judging his own actions.

In his private logbook he wrote: “You can only hope to find a lasting solution to a conflict if you have learned to see the other objectively, but, at the same time,

to experience his difficulties subjectively.”

This, however, did “not mean fear of going on the offensive” or creating new options and new concepts for the parties.

In the Middle-East and the Suez crisis he initiated a new form of crisis management, a United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Egypt. The stationing of a UN force on a sovereign territory of a member state had never occurred before.

Later, Hammarskjöld set out the principles for creating a peace-keeping force and stressed that it could be done only by the consent of the member state. And, it should never be used as a means to force a solution to a controversial political or legal problem.

He was convinced that in the political field, the UN should concentrate on *preventive* rather than *corrective* action.

Before his re-election in 1957 he looked at his future role. “You are only the lens in the beam,” he wrote, and “you will be acknowledged by life according to your transparency, your capacity, that is, to vanish as an end, and remain purely as a means.”

The UN was in progress towards an international community in peace. His position as the only elected official rep-

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resenting all the member governments increasingly involved him in universal diplomacy.

Hammar-skjöld believed it was in keeping with the philosophy of the Charter to act to safeguard peace and security, and if necessary, also without such guidance. Preventive UN diplomacy could be crucial in overcoming deadlocks and in filling vacuums that might provoke action and counter-action. There were no comments from the member governments but mixed feelings would soon show.

He based his opinion on the concept that an international order was taking shape at the UN. The independence of the Secretary-General and the UN as a politically active organization could, if necessary, allow him to take particular measures in a conflict situation.

If the basic principle of internationalism in Article 100 was not respected, nor applied "what else could we have?" he asked.

Dag Hammar-skjöld was far ahead of his time. He travelled, he met people, he made personal contacts all over the continents. He was highly intellectual, he made friends and he came to understand and respect different cultures and different religions.

In July 1961 he spoke of the acceptance of a world community, for which all nations share a common responsibility to reduce the disparities in levels of living among nations.

Later, in August 1961, his last analysis of the UN was his most comprehensive and far-reaching statement. There were two conflicting basic views, he wrote.

The first envisaged the UN as a static conference machine. The second was a view of the UN as a dynamic instrument related to the needs of the present and of the future in a world of ever closer international interdependence. It opened the road toward constructive international cooperation. If adopted, the international and independent character of the Secretariat was decisive.

A few days before leaving for the Congo he paid his colleagues a warm tribute by saying "let us work in the conviction that our work has a meaning beyond the narrow individual one" and has meant something for man.

In 1956, Hammar-skjöld saw it as an imperative challenge for all governments to live up to the economic needs of the vast majority of people. He never ceased to stress the complex problems of world poverty.

Today, we have to fight the poverty gap.

In 1956 he had an idea, which he called "my favorite child." He wanted technical experts with the right kind of spirit to serve local people in underdeveloped countries until they were sufficiently trained.

Today, we have to fight the digital divide and to enact the *Global Compact* in corporate practices.

He would, no doubt, already in those years, have looked at us—the peoples—as world citizens with a common responsibility in a globalization process.

But we lost him. Dag Hammar-skjöld left New York on September 12, 1961 in order to find a solution to the Congo crises. His plane crashed on September 17 in Africa and, three days later, the parties agreed to a cease-fire.

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## Save these dates!

Exciting events are on the calendar for the Fall season:

**Thursday, October 18, 12 noon**, 3220 Sacramento Street, third floor, San Francisco — Kofi Annan's Washington Representative, Catherine O'Neill, will speak on "UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Second Term: The Priorities and the Unresolved Concerns."

**Saturday, November 10**—A major conference "Is the UN an Endangered Species?" sponsored by the Northern California Division of UNA, will be held at Stanford University. Major speakers have been invited to address today's crucial world issues and the UN's role in addressing them. More information will be available soon.

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## Young Professionals ... (< 1)

with the intention of developing special activities in San Francisco about them. All of these activities are undertaken in the spirit of fun, learning, and sharing!

The YPG is planning a Fall event to celebrate United Nations Day, October 24. Details are being finalized, so please check our web page for updates.

Also in the works, the establishment of a running charity, a children's program, and work with other young professional groups in the City.

Fernando Corridor leads the YPG—new members and new ideas are welcome. Telephone Fernando at 415-336-1576 or write to fernando@hellogoodtimes.com

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# Globalization and the United Nations

— **Victor Menotti**, International Forum on Globalization

*[Continuing a series of article reprints in the Courier from other organizations, this excerpt is reproduced by permission from [www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org). The IFG is a nonprofit organization, based in the Presidio of San Francisco.]*

More than fifty years ago in San Francisco, during the drafting process of the original United Nations Charter, dozens of non-governmental organizations (or NGOs, including the NAACP, the AFL-CIO, women's groups, and human rights groups) were very much involved in the negotiations. In fact, civil society played an instrumental role in seeing that particular responsibilities and functions were placed within specific institutions of the UN. Specifically, the UN's architects were careful to place the Bretton Woods institutions (or BWIs, which include the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (now the World Trade Organization, or WTO) under the control of the Economic and Social Council, or ECOSOC.

But in 1947, the UN General Assembly approved, without a vote, the agreement between the UN and the IMF, and another agreement between the UN and the World Bank, constituting a declaration of independence from the UN system. Their escape would fundamentally alter the balance of power between corporations, governments, and civil society by effectively reversing who was to be subordinate to whom.

In a 1994 report marking the fiftieth anniversary of the UN, former UN high official Erskine Childers noted that it was not the intended role of the UN founders to allow the BWIs to control macroeconomic policy. The ECOSOC commissions were to have the task of considering these matters, and their adoption was to be the task of the General Assembly. Childers went on to point out that, according to Article 58 of the original Charter, the General Assembly was to coordinate those policies. Moreover, according to Article 63, ECOSOC

should also coordinate their implementation by the specialized UN agencies.

The practical result of their self-declared autonomy is that the BWIs now restrict the participation of the UN's specialized agencies at BWI functions and meetings. Meanwhile, the BWIs actively participate not only in the meetings of ECOSOC, but also the meetings of the UN's specialized agencies. This massive bureaucratic dysfunction has produced today's international system that

institutionalizes corporate rights (as enforced by the BWIs) over the universal citizens' rights (as embodied by the UN).

## **UN's Disconnect Promotes Global Disaster**

Consequently, there is an enormous absence of policy coordination between the BWIs and the UN that has produced a tragic institutional disconnect. The results are seen in today's spiraling global crises, ranging from public health epidemics, social disintegration, and ecological collapse. For example:

- The UN World Health Organization (WHO) is in a pitched battle with the WTO's binding rules on intellectual property rights, known as the TRIPS Agreement. WHO programs designed to battle AIDS encourage governments to make medicines accessible to

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## Charter Day in San Francisco

The 56th year of the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco was observed at City Hall on Tuesday, June 26. The event was highlighted by a variety of activities chosen to express the meaning of this historic day.

The Honorable Delia Menez Rosal, Consul General of the Republic of the Philippines, gave the keynote address. Drawing on her extensive experience with the Philippine Mission in Geneva, she gave a stirring oversight of the importance of the organization in today's world. A chorus of twenty-five Philippine consular members presented a medley of folk and contemporary songs.

Mayor Willie Brown read the Charter of the United Nations to the assembled crowd of 225 persons.

We were pleased to present the students of the Model UN Club from Lowell High School who had won prizes in our annual essay contest: they are first prize of \$1500, Timothy Lee; second prize of \$1000, Sara Lam; and the third prize of \$500, Linda Truong.

We also honored distinguished educators for their contributions toward UN education: the California tenth grade curriculum has been greatly enhanced because of the work of Priscilla LaLone of Mariposa. Teacher Dr. Thais Da Rosa was honored for her work as faculty advisor with the UN Club at Lowell High School.

A newsreel made at the time of the Chartering in the city was shown. We were especially pleased by a performance of the Children's Dance Ensemble of the Presidio Performing Arts Foundation, directed by Vassilii Mountain, who performed United Nations Celebration in multi-national costumes. The choreography was especially commissioned for the UN Charter Day event.

The program was sponsored as part of the Story of San Francisco Lecture Series of the Museum of the City of San Francisco and the Programming Department of San Francisco City Hall. The event was produced by Bill McCarthy of the Unity Foundation.

people with HIV. Meanwhile, WTO requires nations to enforce the monopolistic pricing of medicines by global pharmaceutical companies, which too few of the poor can afford.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) work to promote sustainable management of the world's forestry and fishery resources includes training programs for governments to implement WTO rules for trade in natural resources. Environmentalists have roundly criticized WTO rules for intensifying resource exploitation while rolling back environmental protections. In this case, FAO has become the implementing agency for the BWI policies that confer new rights to corporations at the expense of governments' and citizens' rights.

- The UN Security Council, UNICEF, the High Commissioner on Refugees, and other UN agencies have spent much energy trying to keep Africa from spiraling into economic and political chaos. Yet the WTO predicted upon the conclusion of its Uruguay Round of agreements that, because of new rules increasing global competition for the com-

modities Africa exports, and newly required decreases in subsidies for the grains Africa imports, sub-Saharan Africa would lose another \$200 billion per year in capital outflows.

- Many of the UN's specialized agencies have for years encouraged governments to increase their national budgets for education, health care, social welfare. Yet the World Bank and IMF, through conditions set on their structural adjustment loans to poor countries, exert great pressure to slash national budgets. Their pressure can directly result in diminishing social programs. In Argentina, a wave of suicides by retired people continues because IMF-imposed austerity measures have cut monthly pensions to below poverty levels.

These and other issues were the topics of UN mega-conferences throughout the 1990s, all of which produced watered-down, non-binding declarations and unfunded mandates to carry out action plans that are set within the policy framework of an expanded global economy based on

enhanced corporate rights. The BWIs have created, and continue to expand, an economic system that directly enables large corporations to globalize their power over governments, leading to greater environmental destruction and poor people worldwide. If the current policy direction continues, such efforts will only exacerbate, not resolve, the very problems the UN seeks to address.

*For the continuation of this article, see [www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org).*



Take a look at our web site, [www.una-sf.org](http://www.una-sf.org)! Thanks to Tracy Castellano Boval and a volunteer from Chevron, Inc., we have up-to-date features. Check us out, keep up to date!



## United Nations Association of San Francisco

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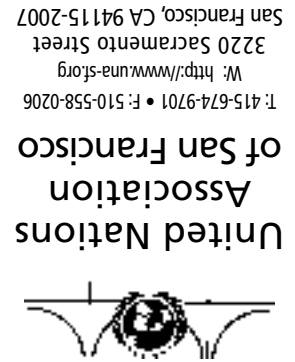
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**The United Nations Association of San Francisco** (UNA-SF) is the San Francisco chapter of the **United Nations Association of the United States of America** (UNA-USA), a national, nonpartisan, and nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing US participation in the United Nations system and to strengthening that system as it seeks to define and carry out its mission.

UNA-USA, based in New York City, carries out its action agenda through a unique combination of public outreach, policy analysis, and international dialogue.

UNA-USA has over 23,000 members and is the largest foreign policy association in the nation. Its nationwide network of 172 chapters and divisions reaches a broad cross-section of the American public.

UNA-USA provides information and educational services on the work of the UN and on global issues for students, scholars, Congress, and the media. Its publications, including *The InterDependent*, are available from its web site <http://www.unausa.org>. Each year UNA-SF coordinates the observance of Charter Day (June 26) and United Nations Day (October 24) in hundreds of communities across the nation.




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## Membership Application

[Membership in UNA-USA and UNA-SF includes a subscription to *UNA-SF Courier*, the national UNA-USA newspaper *The InterDependent*, invitations to special events in the Bay Area, and other benefits.]

Enclosed are my tax-deductible membership dues and contributions for twelve months:

- New membership       Renewal  
 Individual membership, \$35  
 Family or organization membership, \$40  
 Student membership, \$10  
 Limited income individual, \$20, or family, \$25  
 Sponsor, \$100       Patron, \$500  
 Additional contribution to support  
      UNA-SF chapter activities,      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
      UNA-USA national programs,      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to volunteer my services.

Special abilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
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(Send a copy of this part to UNA-SF)

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