

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

--WESTMINSTER--

Twinned with UNA Connecticut For World Peace, Disarmament, Development and Human Rights
JOINT PRESIDENTS: THE BARONESS COX OF QUEENSBURY, LORD RUSSELL-JOHNSTON, THE LORD JUDD OF PORTSEA



Annual Report 2003-2004

Westminster UNA has shown this year that it can conceive and mount important events to promote the United Nations. However, these activities have stretched branch funds so we are asking our members to support our work through buying tickets for the Grand 2004 Draw. Remember that, after the initial year, subscription renewals are totally allocated to UNA Headquarters so we turn to you, our members, to assist fund the branch's programme.

Our Activities

World Water Day

2003 marked the UN International Year for Fresh Water (IYFW). Following Westminster UNA's proposals to mark World Water Day 2004, we welcomed the decision by UNA to host the launch of *Listening* published by the Water Supply & Sanitation Consultative Council (WSSCC) in the IMO Conference Hall. Peter Adamson, editor of *Listening*, told 120 participants that despite agreeing the Millennium Development Goals, we need a new approach to 'community participation' rather than further technological proposals. "Let's measure ends, not means" he stated, "We must listen more to the voices of those on the ground, especially women".

Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen International Law Lecture

Westminster UNA invited Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, to present the Second International Law Lecture. Speaking to an audience of 350 in the Old Theatre of the London School of Economics, he reviewed the application of law to the Palestine refugee problem. "Ignore the law and a just resolution will continue to elude us", he stated. Following his lecture, the Bar Council's International Committee hosted a dinner for him and other guests of Westminster UNA. This annual event goes from strength to strength. For the text of Peter Hansen's lecture, see www.una-uk.org

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

In the first event of its kind worldwide, Westminster UNA conceived and organised a conference at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI) on 2 June to 'pay tribute to all the men and women who have served in UN peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.' The conference programme and the Cenotaph wreath-laying ceremony is enclosed. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office contributed towards the cost of this event which we intend to repeat in the coming years at the invitation of RUSI.

2004 Peace Calendar

Westminster UNA distributed 1400 copies of the 2004 United Nations Peace Calendar to schools in Westminster and to racial equality councils, education authorities, embassies, churches, mosques and synagogues throughout London.

UNA Annual Conference

We like to think that much of the success of the 2004 conference was due to Westminster UNA's intervention at the 2003 conference, showing how the over-long UNA Policy Statement could be shortened, making for more time to properly debate branch resolutions. The shorter 2004 Policy Statement took much less time to discuss, making for a more enjoyable conference. This will be published in *New World* shortly. Four members of Westminster UNA's Executive Committee were elected to UNA's National Board which comprises only eight elected members together with representatives of regions and allied bodies. Our members are Nilesh Parekh, Michael Rossi, William Say and David Wardrop.

The World Conference against Racism (WCAR)

In response to a call from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for evidence of progress in Member States following the 2001 conference in Durban, Westminster UNA has submitted its document "*WCAR-The dozen first steps we could take in the UK*", introduced at our meeting in December 2001. This was augmented by documents collated by Greenwich Council for Racial Equality giving insight into how local bodies seek to address racial issues at every level.

Westminster City School

We have set out to build on the branch's special relationship with Westminster City School, in memory of its late Deputy Headmaster, Rick Ballanger. During the year, the Chairman addressed the school's VIth Form and Debating Society and we hope to strengthen this link during the coming year.

UNA-Connecticut

Westminster UNA retains close links with our twin, UNA Connecticut. Alicia Heyton of Westport, Ct, acted as their representative at the Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen International Law Lecture. Committee members will be visiting Connecticut in the balance of 2004.

"Education for Peace - the challenge facing the international community"

We were pleased to join the Royal African Society, the Royal Commonwealth Society and UNA in hosting a meeting in October addressed by Martin Lees, Rector of the University for Peace.

United Nations Day Collection

Westminster UNA collected £1469, thanks to members who shook tins on UN Day at the Tate Britain and other locations. On 24 March, members were out again, assisting the UNA London & South-East Region hold a collection at Canary Wharf. We urge members to join us this year for as well as raising funds for UNICEF and UNA, we reduce our Regional Quota - the highest in the country - by every pound we collect. The planning and organisation of all this work is due to the untiring energy and collected wisdom of Helen O'Malley to whom we owe so much.

2005 - the UN's 60th anniversary

To mark the UN's 60th anniversary, Westminster UNA plan to hold the third Steinkraus-Cohen International Law Lecture and the second conference to mark the International Day of UN Peacekeepers as well as distribute the 2005 UN Calendar for Peace. We are considering staging musical events and organising an inter-faith initiative to review how well the world's faiths encourage support for UN Conventions and its other initiatives. We welcome your ideas on this.

Our Funds

Westminster UNA cannot maintain this degree of activity without more financial support. I have already mentioned that, after the initial year, annual subscription renewals pass directly to UNA Headquarters. So we must turn first to you, our members. Please support our Grand 2004 Draw, this first-ever appeal for funds, as generously as you can. We won't let you down!

David Wardrop, Chairman

25 June 2004