



UNA★USA
Johnson County Chapter

News and Events

c/o JC UNA
308 E. Burlington St. #245
Iowa City, IA 52240

February 2022



Night of 1000 Dinners

Tuesday, March 8, 6:00 – 7:00 pm via Zoom

This virtual event will feature international music,
dance, art, and a spoken-word presentation.

We will honor three women-led groups helping people in transition
and advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

**Inside Out Reentry Community
Iowa City Compassion
Open Heartland**

Proceeds will benefit these groups
plus the UN High Commission for Refugees

Tickets: \$25 (community members) or \$10 (students)

To purchase tickets or make a donation online

go to johnsoncountyuna.org

OR

Mail a check payable to JC UNA and your email address to JC UNA,
308 E. Burlington St., #245, Iowa City, IA 52240

***Ticket purchasers and donors
will be emailed a Zoom link for the event.***



From the President

by Jim Olson

Many thanks for supporting Night of 1000 Dinners, our annual



community celebration of International Women's Day. (see page 1). Please purchase a tick-

et, make a donation, and spread the word to your family and friends.

As preparations for this event continue, we are making some changes in the way we communicate with members and friends. Our traditional newsletter, edited by Katy Hansen, will continue, even as Katy steps down from this work after many years. Thank you Katy! We will send it by USPS mail, but we encourage members to sign up to receive the newsletter by email, following the instructions on page 4.

We will supplement the newsletter with emails, initially focusing on upcoming events and timely announcements. The board is weighing the possibility of an e-newsletter to supplement the traditional newsletter.

Our goal is to become more visible and to better inform and engage ever more residents of Johnson County.

Early Appeals of African Americans to the United Nations

by Barbara Eckstein

Since its creation, the United Nations has been a site for petitions from oppressed populations. Oppressed peoples in the United States have been no exception.

As early as 1946 the National Negro Congress sent a statement to the Secretary General about the treatment of African Americans within the United States.

The following year noted sociologist and intellectual W.E.B Du Bois presented to the UN a petition on behalf of the NAACP. Some 100 pages in length, "An Appeal to the World" sought to "show clearly that a discrimination practiced in the United States against her own citizens and to a large extent a contravention of her own laws, cannot be persisted in without infringing upon the rights of the peoples of the world and especially upon the ideals and the work of the United Nations." Walter White, a leader of the NAACP and a chosen member of the U.S. delegation to the UN led by Eleanor Roosevelt, disputed Du Bois's claims (as did Mrs. Roosevelt). White pushed Du Bois out of the NAACP.

Then in 1951, with the cold war already well entrenched, African American leaders again tried to persuade the UN to recognize the discrimination and violence against African Americans in the United States. This time that document was called "We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of

the United States Government Against the Negro People." It sought to present evidence that the treatment of African Americans in the U.S. fell within the definition of "genocide" established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 in the "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide."

The writers, including William L. Patterson, Paul Robeson, and, again, W.E.B. Du Bois, acknowledge that "the responsibility of being the first in history to charge the government of the United States of America with the crime of genocide is not one your petitioners take lightly." But, they argue, "If our duty is unpleasant, it is historically necessary both for the welfare of the American People and for the peace of the world. We petition as American patriots, sufficiently anxious to save our countrymen and all mankind from the horrors of war.... But if the responsibility of your petitioners is great, it is dwarfed by the responsibility of those guilty of the crime we charge. Seldom in human annals has so iniquitous a conspiracy been so gilded with the trappings of respectability." The writers marshal evidence of physical and economic violence to prove that their case meets the UN's definition of "genocide." The signers of the petition include not just noted intellectuals but also the families of victims of state and vigilante racial violence.

(Continued on page 4)

How the UN is Helping

by Caryl Lyons

Afghan people are experiencing a humanitarian crisis within their own country, especially since the Taliban regained power. One problem is that in order to limit the power of the Taliban, up to \$9.5 billion in Afghan assets have been frozen outside of the country. Though this may have been a logical step to take, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has asked that these assets be made available for humanitarian reasons. The entire economy is in “free-fall.” According to Guterres, “Freezing temperatures and frozen assets are a lethal combination.”

More than half of the Afghan population depends on life-saving assistance. Among others, these three UN agencies are working on this crisis: the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and the UN World Food Program (WFP).

Food insecurity. Some 22.8 million people, or 55 % of the population, are expected to be at emergency levels of food insecurity between November, 2021 and March 2022, and 8.7 million are facing starvation. Up to 42% of children have acute malnutrition, worst in urban areas. UNICEF is working both to prevent malnutrition and to treat those already malnourished, perhaps as many as one in two children in 2022. The WFP is undertaking its largest humanitarian re-

sponse ever to try to prevent or reduce this large-scale catastrophe.

Health. Health concerns include measles (60,000 cases in 2021), polio, diarrhea, and COVID-19. UNICEF has given large numbers of measles vaccinations. Access to clean water both for drinking and for washing and cooking is very limited. As many as eight in ten Afghans must drink contaminated water.

For a more complete picture of Afghanistan in 2021, you can google the UNICEF document *Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation Report, November, 2021.*

Onset of winter. People are making “desperate choices” in terms of winter clothing and heating. Some are burning their possessions to keep warm. UNICEF donations will help to provide warm blankets, winter clothes, and fuel during the next months. Children living at a high altitude are most at risk.

Women, Girls, and Education. Girls are being kept from education beyond 6th grade in many places. UNICEF is working on ways to

prevent violence against women and girls, forestall child marriage, and promote women’s access to health care. Guterres has made an urgent plea to the Taliban to recognize the human rights of women and girls. “No country can thrive while denying the rights of half the population,” he said.

The economy. In addition to the 2.6 million Afghan refugees, 3.5 million people are currently displaced internally. Over 500,000 Afghans have lost their jobs, and this may soon rise to 700,000. UNHCR assists displaced Afghans, both in and out of Afghanistan, with shelter, food, water, and other necessities. UNICEF is using cash transfers to help families deal with COVID, drought, winter, and displacement. During the week of Jan. 21, 2022, the UN sent \$32 million to Afghanistan to fund humanitarian aid.

For a more complete picture of Afghanistan in 2021, you can google the UNICEF document, *Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation Report, November, 2021.*

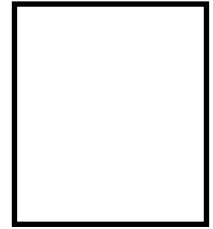
For more information, or to donate, visit:

UNICEF www.unicefusa.org/

UNHCR www.unhcr.org

WFP www.wfp.org ,

Or say “Alexa, make a donation to World Food Program USA.”



GO GREEN

If you would like to receive this news-
letter electronically, please email

unajohnsoncounty@gmail.com

We will continue to send you a paper
version unless we hear from you.

Address Service Requested

Early Appeals of African Americans

(Continued from page 2)

Mr. Patterson, head of the Civil Rights Congress, presented the petition at a UN meeting in Paris while Mr. Robeson simultaneously presented the petition in New York City. Professor Du Bois intended to go to Paris as well, but the U.S. government denied him permission to travel. After Mr. Patterson delivered the documents in Paris, the U.S. State Department required him

to surrender his passport. Mrs. Roosevelt, at the meeting in Paris, again repudiated the claims made in the petition.

Nevertheless, the international press covered the delivery and contents of the petition as did the African American press in the U.S. The mainstream U.S. press largely ignored the incident and the document though *The Chicago Tribune* made a point of denouncing it. The

affiliation of the Civil Rights Congress with the Communist Party made it especially difficult for the petitioners to win balanced coverage in the U.S.

Though the United Nations did not accept the petition, it did provide a site at which such a petition could be directed.

The United States ratified the UN Convention on Genocide in 1986.

UNA Membership Renewal Form

Please be certain your membership is up to date!

(Your membership will expire on the date shown on your address label.)

Membership Rates: \$50 Regular Member, \$25 Introductory Member, no dues for youth 24 and younger by joining on line at unausa.org. Please return the information below with your check **payable to UNA-USA.**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Send to: UNA
308 E. Burlington St, #245
Iowa City, IA 52240

Make check out to: UNA-USA

Circle: New Renew

- Send my newsletter:
by regular mail or
- email (to save trees)