

NATIONAL CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR UNITED NATIONS DAY  
700 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

SUGGESTED RADIO SPEECH for 15-minute program on local radio stations on United Nations Day, October 24, 1949.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The United Nations is four years old -- a husky youngster who has stopped three wars, found homes for more than two hundred thousand displaced persons, helped feed four million children in Europe, halted a cholera epidemic in Egypt, adopted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and invoked a Convention against Genocide -- just to name a few of his prodigious accomplishments.

Not a bad record for a four-year-old! Without the UN, half a billion people, one quarter of the world's total population, might today have been involved in war. The bitter differences that have sprung up between nations since the end of World War II might have already cost the world a staggering loss in human life, had not the UN been successful in confining international disputes to the assembly hall and the conference table.

But mediating international differences is only one part of the job. UN's major tasks, besides maintaining world peace, are to work socially, culturally and economically for higher standards of living among all peoples; to act as impartial arbiter among nations; to bring into the field of international relations the age old human dream of brotherhood upon which all true Democracy is based.

Americans are great ones for wanting to know "what's the score?" UN's score on all these assignments is high: Peace or at least a truce in Palestine, Kashmir, Indonesia; resettlement for displaced persons; rehabilitation for the world's handicapped; supplementary meals for millions of children and nursing mothers in Europe and Asia; food and economic missions to Greece, Poland, Siam; a trusteeship council to protect the rights of dependent peoples; an international court of justice. The scoreboard isn't big enough to chalk up all the successes.

This is no mere program of high-sounding aims, either. These are facts accomplished. And they are only a fraction in UN's all-out campaign against the four horsemen: War, Disease, Plague and Famine.

UN Agencies and Commissions wage their fight on many levels, from soil conservation to human rights, from calory charts to Genocide. UN observers and technicians work endlessly, compiling statistics, offering expert advice, sending material aid. America, which embraces people of so many faiths and backgrounds, has always known what teamwork did to build our nation. Today we are learning what United Nations teamwork can do to rebuild a world.

In 1946, UNESCO, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, undertook a pilot project in Haiti -- an attempt to bring "fundamental education" to that small Caribbean country, nine-tenths of whose population could neither read nor write. But a people ridden with tropical diseases make bad pupils. Hunger and flood and polluted water are not conducive to good scholarship. To UNESCO, therefore, fundamental education meant, first of all, draining swamps, repairing flooded roads, cleansing wells, cultivating impoverished earth. UNESCO was not equipped to do the job alone. It required high-precision teamwork. In answer to UNESCO's call, technicians from half-a-dozen UN Agencies converged on Haiti. UN's Food and Agricultural Organization sent soil experts; the World Health Organization took care of inoculations. Only after UN teamwork had reclaimed the land and built up the health of the people, were they ready for books and pencils.

Such strategy is sound. UNESCO's charter reads, "...since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." The pattern is a simple one. First the fundamentals - health - food - good water - roads; then libraries and schools.

I have mentioned the World Health Organization, known as W.H.O. A vital member of the UN team, WHO has piled up a brilliant score in the prevention and cure of disease all over the world. It got off to a flying start in 1947 when it checked a raging cholera epidemic in Egypt in six weeks. It next moved into Greece and went after malaria, number one disease killer of that country. It did such a fine job that the malaria rate in Greece has been cut from eighty-five per cent to five per cent. In some areas malaria has been wiped out altogether. Currently, WHO is planning to examine 50,000,000 children in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East; about 20,000,000 of them will be vaccinated against tuberculosis. A first-class battleship costs about \$100,000,000. A T.B. inoculation costs ten cents. The mathematics of our time is grimly clear.



There are 13 specialized UN agencies. Nothing that human beings require for healthier, happier lives has been overlooked. A Declaration of Human Rights has affirmed for peoples everywhere the right to life, liberty and the security of person. A law against Genocide has outlawed the mass destruction of a people because of race, nationality, religion or political belief. A World Trade Organization has worked out a tariff program to stimulate international trade. An International Bank has been established to finance reconstruction and development projects. There is an International Aviation Organization, a Monetary Fund, a Universal Postal Union -- even a World Meteorological Organization.

But no matter how effective UN agencies are in their work of development and reclamation, the ultimate success or failure of the United Nations depends on its member nations -- and especially on the United States. For good or ill, we in America have been catapulted into a position of leadership, of responsibility. Depending on what we do or do not do, to a large extent the world will survive or perish.

In order to fulfill this tremendous responsibility, however, we in America must first put our own house in order. For example, how can we advocate equal rights and opportunities for people of all nationalities and backgrounds through the UN when we tolerate discrimination in some parts of our country? We provide funds for UNESCO to promote education for all, all over the world; yet certain schools and colleges here establish "quotas" limiting the education of certain of our own citizens. And even in our most progressive cities there is discrimination in employment and housing. These are ugly blots on our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

On the whole, America has kept a pretty clean record in dealing fairly with peoples of all nationalities who have made their homes here -- especially when you compare our record with some other countries. But we don't want to be good only by comparison. We must make sure that our blessings of liberty are available to everyone. World Peace begins on our block, in our neighborhood. It means giving everyone -- no matter what church he attends or what the color of his skin -- the same square deal you'd expect for yourself. It means speaking up against persecution and oppression anywhere. It means not slandering anyone because of his nationality. It means working together with men of good will of all groups, of all nations for our common objective -- a full, free, abundant life.

In the past four years we have seen what the United Nations can do. Its achievements have been numerous and important enough to convince the most confirmed skeptic that world cooperation is no mere idle dream. UN has aimed high and has proved that no project is too big -- and none is too small -- where the welfare of mankind is concerned. But so far we are only at the beginning. What UN can do in the future depends on you. If you and I, as Americans and as individuals, support the United Nations wholeheartedly and live its principles in our own lives, then we may rest assured that our children will grow up in peace and security.

For we and the people of all countries are the backbone of the United Nations. We give it sanction. Without our full support the intricate structure of world cooperation, which UN has built, will totter and crash. Without our full confidence in the UN and the things for which it stands, the hope for world peace dims and our civilization faces disaster. World cooperation or world chaos: the choice is ours. God grant us the wisdom to choose wisely.

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