

Dag Hammarskjöld and the United Nations Library as a Library Promoting Peace

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May I first of all thank you for inviting me to join this Symposium. An occasion like this belongs in a very special way to me and all my colleagues who work as professional librarians with UN documentation.

Every morning when I am on my way to work I am reminded of Dag Hammarskjöld. I walk along the same streets as he did in his childhood in Uppsala, one of the oldest university towns in Europe and a former seat of Swedish royalty. I walk past the hill with the old fifteenth century castle which dominates Uppsala and overlooks the town's spires and gables. Here the Hammarskjöld family resided when Dag Hammarskjöld was a boy, and his father was the county governor.

Dag Hammarskjöld showed early signs of interest in books, and he spent much of his time in the castle library reading all the children's books available. Later he became a frequent visitor to the University Library nearby with its thousands of books and manuscripts.

When Dag was only nine years old, World War I began and his father became Prime Minister of Sweden. Little Dag overheard political discussions at the dinner table, and the

message of peace, freedom, and justice, as well as an understanding of the important work of the United Nations.