The recent Criminal Justice Salon hosted by the AEU Ethical Action Committee (EAC) was well attended and featured an informative discussion on what activities were being done by our societies and possible future actions for those wishing to become involved. EAC Chair Carolyn A. Parker opened the meeting by reviewing recent AEU resolutions and statements on Criminal Justice (2015), Systemic Racism (2017), Racial Justice (2020), and Promoting the Culture of Peace (2021). Each document lays out the problems we face and calls for overcoming them with conscious, direct action. The intersection of criminal, economic, and racial justice with the search for peace gives many areas that are in great need of reform. EAC member Jan Broughton facilitated the discussion which drew out examples of organizations that were working in these areas: bail reform (Community Justice Exchange), support for those incarcerated and recently released (Community Success Initiative, Out For Justice), prison reform (Showing Up For Racial Justice), and police reform (ABLE at Georgetown Law). Much of this work is done in partnership with existing groups and, notably, interfaith coalitions. The Poor People’s Campaign, whose platform includes a wide range of issues affecting the poor, has a strong agenda on criminal justice in its Jubilee Platform, Part I, #3. Visibly representing humanism in the community and making connections with diverse groups is one benefit of our activism.

One long term strategy highlighted during the Salon encouraged members to join local commissions and boards that are in a position to make policy. Bringing an ethical perspective to the table and having a direct influence on outcomes will expand the visibility of Ethical Culture and add more humanistic values to public policy.

The salon wrapped up with a show of hands for those interested in continuing the conversation through future ‘meetings.’ Anyone who wishes to join this group can contact the committee chair. The Ethical Action Committee will consider what more it can do to enable societies to engage in effective activism following requests for a skills workshop and guidance on letter writing campaigns.

Watch the recording on youtube

Sunday, October 31, 11:00 am - 12:30 ET

How does one find the courage to do good? What are the experiences, pains, and inspirations that drive us to do meaningful work? In "Journeys to Justice," hear from Future of Ethical Societies members, young adults spread nationally and internationally, about their personal pathways to working for social justice. Julia Julstrom-Agoyo, Katie LaClair, and Kai Lin Zhang will be our speakers for the day.

Kai Lin Zhang serves as the Executive Director of the New York State Assembly’s Asian Pacific American Task Force, where she has been leading various efforts over the past two years to help workers and small businesses during the pandemic, and support community-based organizations combatting anti-Asian violence. Kai is a member of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, and has been a participant in FES Future of Ethical Societies since 2014.

Katie was raised in the Essex Ethical Culture Society in New Jersey. She joined the Baltimore Ethical Society as an adult in 2012 and was empowered by her community to serve as Chair of the Ethical Action Committee, first at BES and then of the American Ethical Union, for several years. The social restrictions of the pandemic brought her to FES and the connections forged and ideas exchanged there inspired her to serve as a member of the AEU Leadership Committee with a focus on making space for and supporting diverse clergy leadership.

Julia Julstrom-Agoyo serves as Youth Representative to the United Nations for the American Humanist Association. She is currently pursuing a Masters of International Affairs at Columbia University, focusing on human rights policy and international conflict resolution. Julia grew up in Ethical Culture and remains deeply involved with the local and global Ethical Humanism Movement.

Music will be performed by Emma Pauline, a musician, artist and herbalist born and raised in Takoma Park, Maryland. They were brought up at the Washington Ethical Society, traveled with Northern Harmony, and graduated from Hampshire College with a certificate in ethnomusciology.

Read more here!
Open New Doors with Anti-Racism Book Dialogs

Last year, members of multiple Ethical Societies joined together to read and discuss anti-racist literature. This discussion group project was created by Jone Johnson Lewis, Bart Worden and the AEU Ethical Action Committee as part of the groundwork for an anti-racist framework for the AEU and our Societies. Registration is now open for fall 2021! One important goal of the project is to create a firmer foundation for the anti-racism work we do, as individuals and as members of Ethical Societies. Anti-racism work can be about individual growth and action, action as an Ethical Society, or a look at our own institutions.

Read more and register here!

Youth of Ethical Societies Fall Virtual Conference on Climate Change

Youth of Ethical Societies presents a Fall Virtual Conference on Climate Change! Join us October 23 at 2:00 pm ET for an online discussion on pollution, sustainability and improving our responses to climate change.

Register here!

Stay up to date with our Connections Calendar!

Please check our Connections Calendar for upcoming events from AEU and our Ethical Societies.

Join our Connections Forum (Google Group) to receive and share information on current events and ethical issues we face together.

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