

# A Friendly Letter

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Tenth Month, 1984

Dear Friend,

The response to the Quaker Poll in last month's issue has been extraordinary. As of this writing well over a hundred responses have come in, and more arrive every day. It looks as though we are on the way to having a very good sampling of Friends' opinion, with some surprises showing up among the results.

I am grateful to all of you who have taken the time to fill out the questionnaire, and especially want to thank readers who copied it and passed it along to others. At this point, however, pastoral Friends are underrepresented in the sample, which I think is unfortunate; *it is my hope to do justice to the views of as broad a range of American Friends as possible.* So again I invite and appeal to Quakers of all varieties, but especially pastoral Friends, who have not yet done so to fill out the survey and return it promptly. If you need extra copies, I have them; just ask and I will send one or two. The deadline for response is the First of Twelfth Month, so I can tally the results for that month's issue. Make thyself heard, Friends--don't be left out!

That was the good news. Now for a less pleasant report, but one which I am unable to pass by:

Just a few days ago, a high school senior from my Meeting visited Swarthmore College, which she was considering attending next year. As a "highlight" of her visit, she was taken to an "All-Campus Party" which featured free beer and rum-spiked punch as its only beverages. Asking why the drinks were free, she was told they had been paid for by the sponsoring organization with student activity fees, a device which managed to get around state laws against selling alcohol to persons under 21, as most there were. Not only were no alternative drinks available, the visitor was under continuous pressure from her student hosts to get drunk, until she left in dismay about an hour later.

Such entertainments are common enough at many American colleges, and as unedifying anywhere else as on a campus with as distinguished a Quaker pedigree as Swarthmore. Still, it was particularly disheartening to the young Quaker visitor that it happened to her there. And while I do not support the banning of alcohol, on campus or elsewhere, it does not seem too much to ask, of Swarthmore and other educational institutions, that when alcohol is served, alternative drinks should be made available, and that peer pressure to drink to excess should be firmly discouraged. It also seems a dubious procedure to have campus groups involved in the evasion (as distinct from the conscientious defiance) of state laws, and providing alcohol essentially without charge and in unlimited quantities. Such ground rules would not only help save lives; they would also have saved Swarthmore from dropping off the list of a talented and promising young Friend. (Note: As this went to press, Swarthmore officials had not responded to my telephone inquiry about this matter.)

Yours in the Light,

*Chuck Fager*

Chuck Fager



A U.S. Peace Academy has been a dream of Quakers and others for almost two hundred years but now, just as it is on the brink of reality, the dream could easily become a nightmare.

On 10/12 President Reagan signed an appropriation bill containing \$16 million for the establishment of a United States Institute of Peace. Proposals for such an agency have been offered repeatedly since 1792, when a call for a federal "Peace Office" was published by Benjamin Rush, a Friend who signed the Declaration of Independence, and Benjamin Banneker, a Quaker-educated black astronomer and engineer. The bill Reagan signed was the culmination of an organized nationwide lobbying effort, led by the National Peace Academy Campaign, which had been gathering support for almost ten years.

The Institute will be a semi-autonomous agency, patterned somewhat after the National Institutes of Health: rather than operating an undergraduate school like the various military academies, it will make grants, disseminate information developed in the peace and conflict resolution fields, and support a postgraduate fellowship program. It will be run by a 15-member Board of Directors, eleven of whom are to be nominated by the President by mid-Fourth Month, 1985 and confirmed by the Senate. (The other four Directors will be the Secretaries of Defense and State, the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the President of the National Defense University.)

### *The Potential Nightmare: A Right-Wing Takeover*

At first glance, news that an Academy/Institute proposal had finally made it through Congress would seem like undiluted cause for celebration and thanksgiving. But a reading of the law and some reflection on the political context into which the Institute is to be born yields sober second thoughts, and even apprehension.

The formation of the Institute's Board is the primary cause for concern. Who will make it up, and what commitment will its members have to peace research and conflict resolution? This is by no means clear. The legislation specifies that Board Members "shall have appropriate practical or academic experience in peace and conflict resolution efforts of the United States." But in a new discipline like this one, there are no settled definitions of what "appropriate experience" is. So who will get to decide? In the end, the decisions will be made politically: by the President and the Senate.

And what if, as now seems likely, the President who appoints this first Board is Ronald Reagan? In that case, the Institute will be midwived by a man who has long wanted to abort the whole idea. Furthermore, the Board nominations will be the product of a White House political process that has, among other things, turned the Environmental Protection Agency and the Civil Rights Commission inside out, drastically tilted the National Labor Relations Board, and even purged the U.S. delegation to the Law of the Sea negotiations of moderate Republicans.

Given this record, what kind of Board can we expect? Here's where the nightmare scenario comes into view: Suppose it turns out to be a collection of right-wing academics and gung-ho generals, anxious to remake the Institute into one more conservative think tank on the military-industrial-academic circuit? There is no shortage of ambitious and politically astute persons around Washington who would love to direct all that money the Institute will give away. And how could such an outcome be prevented?

### *A List Full of The Wrong Names*

For that matter, the administration only really needs to name five Directors to keep control of the Board. That's because three of the ex officio members (the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the Director of ACDA, are also political appointees). The remaining seven seats could be allotted among other groups as window dressing without affecting the power.

This gloomy forecast gains plausibility from a reading of the lists of prominent supporters of the Peace Academy Campaign. To be sure, there is a sprinkling of retired generals; but mostly they are people like actors Ed Asner and Paul Newman; politicians like Atlanta Mayor



Andrew Young, and activists like Helen Caldicott and Seattle's tax-resisting Archbishop Hunthausen. Similarly noticeable among organizational backers are such names as SANE, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the World Peace Tax Fund. For that matter, on a list of 13 endorsing religious bodies, only one, the U.S. Catholic Conference, is part of a large denomination; and only a single, tiny denomination had two endorsing groups--who else but us Quakers, with Friends United Meeting joining the AFSC.

There are precious few radicals here, but liberal peaceniks aplenty. And this sort are, needless to say, not Ronald Reagan's favorite kind of people. And to think that Reagan, or his New Right supporters, will sit back and allow such a despised constituency to shape this new Institute into an adjunct to the peace movement it largely represents, strains credibility.

#### *Where Help Might Be On The Way*

Can anything be done to head off such an institutional kidnapping? Interviews with people who know the ropes of such selection processes indicate that they go on almost entirely behind the scenes. The major players will be White House staff and a handful of Senators. Some interested outside groups will be putting in their two cents worth, and there will be jockeying, negotiating and horsetrading until a final list is hammered out.

In such a closed-door procedure, there are normally few handles within reach of plain citizens who are anxious to avoid seeing a good idea go bad. But this time we may have one possible point of access, through Oregon Republican Senator Mark Hatfield. Hatfield, who like Reagan is favored to be re-elected next month, has been a staunch supporter of the Academy/Institute concept, and played a pivotal role in winning passage this year. He holds a powerful committee post, and enjoys good relations with both the White House and the peace constituency; and there is even, need I add, a significant Friends' population in his home state.

Hatfield is touted as the Senator who will be most active and influential in the Board negotiations. Letters, minutes and petitions could be directed to his office (U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510, with copies to your own Senators) with a good chance of getting to the right place to make their messages count.

#### *Lobbying For Integrity--And For Quaker Seats*

What could such communications usefully say? Two priority concerns are evident:

1. Insisting that the Board must not become the captive of political circles hostile to the Institute or the field it is meant to help develop; and
2. The promotion of distinguished candidates for the Board.

In these circumstances, an additional priority is the clear need for an independent watchdog group to report on the Institute's development for the sizeable national constituency which supported its creation. The obvious candidate for this job is the National Peace Academy Campaign itself. At this writing, however, the Campaign is unsure what to do next: disband or seek a new form and role. Its staff and Board will meet in Eleventh Month to consider the future. I believe they should be urged to continue as a watchdog group. Readers who agree ought to let them know (at 110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Suite 409, Washington DC 20002).

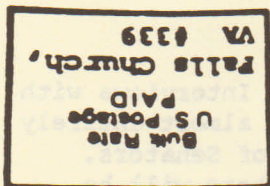
Speaking more parochially as a Friend, here is one more suggestion: That Friends should suggest **Friends** as potential Institute Board members. Considering our record in this area, and the number of Friends still active in it, there ought to be some "Quaker seats" on that Board in much the same way that other groups lay informal claim to various other slots on important government panels. Among the names that come immediately to mind are Kenneth and Elise Boulding, founders of American peace research; and Landrum Bolling, former Earlham president and Quaker diplomat. And there are numerous others.

Even at best, the Institute Board won't be anywhere near as liberal as the Institute's founding constituency. But if it can be preserved from a right-wing hijacking, and have members open to its field, there may be hope that the Institute may make a real contribution toward achieving the high goal encompassed in its name.



INSIDE: DISASTER AHEAD FOR  
THE NEW U.S. PEACE ACADEMY?

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### THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

Tenth Month has been a busy time for legislation affecting Quakers. For instance, among the other bills signed into law by President Reagan this month after Congress adjourned was one making William and Hannah Penn honorary U.S. citizens. This bill was brought forward by the Senators from Pennsylvania, in connection with the recent observances of the 300th anniversary of the commonwealth's settlement.

The adjournment of the 98th Congress also marked the last appearance of the current Quaker membership in Congress. At the beginning of the term there were two, Edwin Forsythe of New Jersey and J. Kenneth Robinson of Virginia, both Republicans. Forsythe succumbed to cancer some months ago and Robinson is retiring, leaving none at the end of this session. (One other member, Rep. George Brown, a California Democrat, was raised a Friend but lists himself differently now.) Whether there will be new Friendly solons to replace them we will know soon.

Other Quaker-oriented legislation adopted in this month has not all been as complimentary as was this latest measure. For instance, it was in Tenth Month, 1656 that the fathers of Massachusetts Bay Colony wrote the first of their anti-Quaker laws, forbidding Friends to enter their territory under threat of whipping and jail terms. Twelve months later the law was amended to include penalties for anyone caught "entertaining" a Quaker, and to permit cutting off the offending Friends' ears or boring through their tongues. The next Tenth Month the statute was again revised, allowing banishment of Quaker intruders under pain of death, a sentence the authorities were ready to carry out.

### QUAKER CHUCKLES

Speaking of Quaker legislators, in his book John Bright and the Quakers, J. Travis Mills recounts a story of two Friends who paid a visit at the turn of the century to the Speaker of the U.S. House, Joe Cannon: "They found Uncle Joe sitting at his ease, smoking a big black cigar, thumbs under his armpits and feet on his desk. 'Did thee know...' said Cannon, 'That I used to be a Quaker?' 'No, Mr. Speaker, I did not.' 'Well, I was, and I married out of the Meeting, and I was visited by a delegation of Friends. They said to me, 'Joseph, thee will have to come before a Meeting and say thee is sorry.' 'I can't do that just now, seeing I've been married only three days, but if you will call again at the expiry of twelve months, mebbe I shall be better able to satisfy you.'"