



A Friendly Letter

Issue Number Sixty-one

ISSN #0739-5418

Fourth Month, 1986 KGB

Dear Friend,

Summer will be here soon, and with it the Quaker conference season; and one of this year's high points is sure to be the FGC Gathering of Friends. Set for 6/28-7/5, its site--Carleton College in Minnesota--represents a Great Leap Westward for FGC, and no little risk as well. This is the furthest away from Philadelphia that the Gathering has ever been held; and the big question is whether the turnout of Midwestern Friends will be enough so FGC won't take a bath on the session.

I hope that won't happen, because as always, there will be an amazing variety of Friendly activities to take part in, even a workshop on the Basics of Bible Study conducted by yours truly. Another highlight, which was just arranged and hence is not in the announcement brochure, is that the **National Peace Quilt** will be on display at the Gathering. The Quilt, with fifty squares, one from each state, is ten feet by thirteen feet of spectacular color, craftspersonship and witness, in which several Friends had a hand. The quilters have persuaded about half of the U.S. Senators to spend a night sleeping under it, and when it finishes traveling the nation, the Quilt will become part of the Smithsonian Institution's permanent collection. The Quilt, like the Gathering it will adorn, should not be missed. (For registration information, write FGC, 1520-B Race St., Philadelphia PA 19102.)

Another item not to be missed by well-informed Friends is the January-February issue of *Quaker Life*, which published several articles on the Richmond Declaration of Faith, anticipating that document's Centennial, which will be observed at the Friends United Meeting Triennial sessions next year at Guilford College. The articles all praised the Declaration as a masterly statement of mainstream Quaker belief, and look toward its centennial as a time for rejoicing by Friends.

There is, however, another side to the story, even in FUM. Indeed, a case can be made that the Richmond Declaration's history confirms the wisdom of Fox and other early Friends in rejecting creeds as dangerous and divisive; because rather than being a boon to the Society's reconstruction, it has been more an occasion of mischief, division and chronic conflict among us. This can be seen in the fact that several of FUM's original member YMs never adopted it, and that FUM itself could not agree to include the Declaration in its own *Faith and Practice*.

We will say more about this in a future issue. In the meantime, we must also point out with regret that in thus presenting only one side of an issue that is controversial even--nay, especially--in FUM, *Quaker Life* has regrettably once more operated in an unfair and unfriendly manner, something we have called attention to before. We hope the Triennial's observances will be more balanced.

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

LYNDON LAROCHE: THE QUAKER CONNECTION

It may be a good thing that two followers of Lyndon La Rouché won races in the recent Illinois Democratic Party primary. Since then the major media have been paying close attention to La Rouché, his dangerous political ideas and his shady and intimidating methods. One aspect of La Rouché's career that has received only brief mention, however, is his Quaker background. Yet it seems to me that understanding this brings us close to the core of who he is and what he is doing. I believe that because, for one thing, La Rouché himself has said as much. And for another, because my reporting on La Rouché, going back to 1973, confirms his development into an extremist ideologue was strongly affected by major events of modern American Quaker history. And not least, Quakers have been among his continuing targets.

(Take me, for instance. In 1974, he threatened me and the paper I worked for after I had uncovered this connection; his minions assaulted me to back up the threat. Then in 1980, while I was working as a congressional staffer in Washington, he published a slanderous report naming me as a "KGB mole" (see sketch, from one of his publications). A major piece of his "evidence" was my Quaker affiliation. The details of these incidents would fill many more pages than we have here; suffice it to say that in 1973 he did not intimidate me, though he did scare off my paper; and in response to the later Soviet spy charge I received a letter stating that there was no evidence for it signed by the Director of the FBI. These experiences, which are unlike anything else in my career, help explain why I am gratified to find the major media looking more closely into La Rouché's beliefs and activities.)

The Making of A Friend Into an Enemy of Friends

La Rouché's parents belonged to Lynn Meeting in Massachusetts, a pastoral group in New England YM. His father, Lyndon Sr., had been a CO in World War One. He was also a fundamentalist in theology, and very conservative in politics; so as New England Friends in the 1920s and '30s moved steadily away from the older Orthodoxy toward the more liberal views epitomized by another New England Friend, Rufus Jones, Lyndon Sr. resisted the trend. He also objected to the talk of reunifying the Orthodox and Wilburite YMs, and came to despise the American Friends Service Committee with a special venom. Nor was he quiet about this; indeed, in Tenth Month, 1941, Lyndon Sr. was ejected from Lynn Meeting and then disowned for disruptive actions, including publishing broadsides attacking Friends of differing views. His wife and teenaged son, Lyndon Jr., then resigned. Still identified as Friends, they worked in a fundamentalist skid-row mission in Boston. They later took it over and renamed it the Village Street Friends Meeting, which had no connections to any other Quaker body. Lyndon Jr. was still an officer of this meeting in 1973. His father occasionally visited other meetings; I recall seeing him at Cambridge Meeting at the end of the 1960s, exhorting us to back President Nixon on Vietnam, and to put our troubles onto the Living Christ.

From Fox To Marx--And Beyond

His family's vehement struggle against reunification and theological diversity in New England Quakerism was elliptically described by Lyndon Jr. in a long 11/7/1978 article in his paper, *New Solidarity*. The article speaks of "a bitter factional struggle within the Society of Friends," one in which "intelligence-mode 'dirty tricks' operations were employed against resistance to 'this neo-Gnostic intrusion by 'traditionalist' religious Quakers. This process, he said, had resulted in 'the wrecking of the Society generally....' The arch-villain in this campaign of subversion, he insisted, was the AFSC, which had been created by the British Secret Intelligence Service to provide cover for various of its spy projects.

In a followup article (11/10/78) La Rouché told, again elliptically, of his other formative Quaker experience: Like father like son, he began World War Two as a CO, in an AFSC-run CPS camp. What did he think of it? "In every respect," he wrote, the AFSC administration of these camps was a 'soft' model of the Nazi concentration camps." He added that "the effects...of AFSC administration is[sic] psychopathologically analogous to...the mental aberrations produced by the Nazi camps." He speaks of three factions among the camp inmates, "the 100-percenters" (the 'ins' with the AFSC), the '2-percenters' (the 'political' opposition to the AFSC administration), and a confused, variegated mass of inmates between the two." He no doubt was among the "politicals", who regularly lost out at the camp meetings

held--and, he asserts, rigged--by the AFSC. "To learn to despise the AFSC under these conditions," he insists, "was to discover the unbridgeable dividing line between bestiality and humanity. Every principle of pagan, oligarchical evil poured out as the ideology of the AFSC administrators and their '100-percenter' claques within the camps."

Indeed, there were many complaints from the COs about having the camps run for the government by AFSC and other religious groups, and the system was eventually changed. But in the meantime, many of the COs turned to resistance and prison; others volunteered for noncombatant military service. But as for La Rouché, CPS not only reinforced his hatred for the AFSC and its liberal Quakerism; it was there that he found an alternative: Marxism. He took to Communism avidly, then jettisoned not only his parents' religiosity but their pacifism as well, quitting CPS and joining the army. After the war he joined the Socialist Workers Party and took the *nom de guerre* "Lyn Marcus." He kept that alias until 1974, when my research unearthed his real name and Quaker roots--that's what he threatened me for. A few years later he shifted his identification from that of a "leftist" to the "right."

Quakers--Still on his Target List

But his political notions do not easily fit into "left" and "right" categories; and charting them is not our present task. But this sketch of La Rouché's Quaker background may begin to show some parallels which can help illuminate his otherwise bizarre career. He wrote recently that "[I] spent my childhood and youth in preparation for the Friends ministry." The father-son pattern of a dissident prophet rejected by fellow-believers and then returning to pronounce judgment on them is too evident to miss. For that matter, his self-image as a lonely visionary bearing witness against persecution and fanatical opposition is a familiar one in Quaker annals. This hardly explains all of his career, of course; but in my view it is an essential piece of the puzzle.

Besides that, the La Rouché-Quaker antagonism is a persistent one. His attacks on the AFSC quoted earlier came in 1978; my "KGB Mole" ordeal in 1980, some seven years after I had written anything about him. More recently, La Rouché has tangled with Friends in Loudoun County, Virginia, his current base of operations. Loudoun County has had active Quaker meetings since the 1700s. The county, about an hour west of Washington, used to be known as a quiet place; but now its citizens, including Friends, are increasingly nervous as they have seen La Rouché and his followers in action. For example, in a leaflet distributed last fall in Leesburg, Loudoun's main town, La Rouché cited his ancestry to declare, "I am an expert on Quakerism," and then denounced Goose Creek Meeting as part of a "nest of Communist fellow-travelers." Later, members of the meeting were called by people who give phony names, then pumped them for information about certain attenders; such inquiries are very common La Rouché tactics, a way of getting data to be used in other harassment efforts.

Seeking That of God Even In Lyndon La Rouché

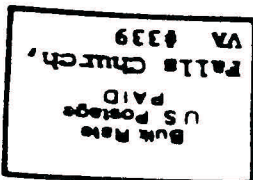
To be sure, my sense of the importance of this whole subject is strongly colored by my experience. And there is one further, unexpected chapter of it that deserves mention: one First Day morning a few years ago, when I arrived as usual for worship at Langley Hill Meeting, there sat Lyndon La Rouché, Sr., on a front bench; I remembered him at once from his visits to Cambridge more than a decade earlier. He was very old then, retired and widowed, staying with a daughter who lived in the area. Attending our meeting apparently became one of his only outings. He spoke, usually briefly, every time he came, usually quoting Whittier, and often telling us of his sense that a great war was impending. It was not easy, given my experiences, to sit with him week after week; and the content of his messages bothered some others. Yet it was evident too that we were ministering to a lonely old man on the last lap of his life's journey. So I held my peace; and when he died, several Langley Hill Friends gathered with his daughter at an informal memorial meeting. For me this became a practical opportunity to meditate on the meaning of Jesus' advice to love our enemies.

How to apply that advice in dealing with the son is not so clear. My experience, and that of many others, suggests that he is a dangerous man, and a persistent one. Moreover, recent news reports indicate his group is the object of several fraud investigations. He sees himself as the target of paid assassins, and is surrounded by heavily armed bodyguards. It is not easy to foresee a peaceful--never mind Friendly--conclusion to his story.

POSTMASTER: Time-dated material
Please expedite delivery

INSIDE: THE HIDDEN QUAKER HISTORY
OF LONDON LA ROUCHE

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter
P.O. Box 1361
Ballleys Crossroads, VA 22041



THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

In Fourth Month, 1655, a law went into effect making it a crime for a British citizen to refuse to take a loyalty oath. With it began the persecution of Friends for their refusal to do so. One of the most dramatic of the many courtroom confrontations described in Fox's Journal involving oaths occurred in 1663:

Fox was given a Bible by a Judge Turner and directed to swear: "Then said I, 'Ye have given me a book here to kiss and swear on, and this book which ye have given me to kiss says "Kiss the Son"; and the Son says in this book, "Swear not at all"; and so says also the apostle James. Now, I say as the book says, and yet me imprison me; why do ye not imprison the book for saying so? How comes it that the book (which bids me not swear) is at liberty amongst you, and yet ye imprison me for doing as the book bids me?" Fox won the rhetorical battle, but not the legal one: "As I was saying this to them, and held up the Bible open in my hand, to show them the place in the book where Christ forbids swearing, they plucked the book out of my hand again; and the Judge said, 'Nay, but we will imprison George Fox.'" "

QUAKER CHUCKLE

Speaking of Fox, test your knowledge of his life. Here are excerpts from a final exam given recently to seventh and eighth graders at Langley Hill Meeting:

2. As a young man of 19, Fox felt God calling him away from home, to a period of wandering and religious seeking which lasted more than three years. During these years he was often tempted to_____.

A. Impair B. Compare C. Repair D. Despair

3. Finally, Fox said he heard a voice telling him "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy_____;"

A. Permission B. Ignition C. Rendition D. Volition E. Condition

11. When Fox refused a commission in Cromwell's army, what reason did he give?

A. He might get hurt B. He was a lousy shot
C. He didn't like the uniforms D. The pay wasn't enough
E. He lived in that life and power which took away the occasion of all wars.