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Twelfth Month, 1988

Dear Friend,

Who would have guessed it? Amid all the disheartening aspects of the presidential campaign now mercifully behind us, two of the most disheartening for this observer were one candidate's unending and scurrilous attacks on "liberals" and the other candidate's unwillingness or inability to defend the term. It has seemed to me that you don't even have to be a liberal of a current or uncritical sort to appreciate the distinguished heritage and substantive achievements of the tradition going by that name. But the voices speaking on behalf of liberals, their past and prospects, have recently been few and far between.

One such welcome voice, however, was a Quaker's, and it was raised in an unexpected place: The columns of the *Evangelical Friend*, in its 10/88 issue. Arthur Roberts, longtime professor of religion and philosophy at George Fox College, wrote in dismay that the term "liberal"

has been so savaged by public relations managers that candidates can't claim it for fear of losing votes. The word has become something to be mocked, a whip to keep people in line. Citizens avoid the term lest their patriotism or religious faith be questioned. Historically, creative tension has marked liberal and conservative politics, each guarding against excesses by the other. Political conservatives should be bothered (as well as liberals) knowing their turn will come.

But this is not only a quibble over political terminology, Roberts argues:

Quakers nurtured political liberalism. Our spiritual ancestors died for religious freedom, treated the Indians and the mentally ill with dignity, awakened American conscience to the evils of slavery and sweatshops, supported law instead of war, fostered reconciliation among nations and sought a just wage and a just price....Currently many evangelical Christians are political liberals in spite of powerful efforts to cram them into a superconservative mold. Jesus ought to instruct Christian conscience, not public relations firms.

Roberts finishes up by suggesting that, to "bind up the battered word 'liberal'", perhaps

Sensitive Americans may have to tell the image makers to bug off. Tell candidates we want 'liberty and justice' practiced in America and the world and not made into a loyalty oath....Tell candidates not to merchandize our fears, but to fulfil our hopes and the hopes of humanity. Tell them that government is for the people.

Well, I haven't seen it said any better in this depressing autumn, and my broadbrim is off to Arthur Roberts for being wiling to take up the defense of this beleaguered notion, and to the Evangelical Friend—itself the heir of a reaction against the liberalism of another day—for printing it. It goes to show that you can't judge an evangelical publication, or an evangelical, by the media managers' stereotypes. That's good news, and we needed it.

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Foger

Chuck Fager

PS. I hope you will be, pardon the expression, liberal in sending gift subscriptions to A Friendly Letter to Friends this holiday season. A form for this purpose is enclosed.

What new priorities for witness will 1989 bring to Friends? Already several items look important from here, and it seems timely to share five of them with you.

First off, warning flags should be going up among Friends about Kenya. This time it's not squabbling among the world's largest group of Quakers, as reported here before (AFLs #4, 16, 32, 39 & 48), though such quarrels still go on. Instead, it is the trend of recent political developments there that needs to be taken account of, in light of the plans of some outside Quaker groups.

Both Friends United Meeting and the Friends World Committee for Consultation have set major international Quaker gatherings for Kenya. The FWCC, at its recent Triennial in Tokyo, decided to hold another Friends World Conference in 1991, at three sites, one of them Kenya. Friends United Meeting has provisionally accepted an invitation from East Africa Yearly Meeting to host its 1993 Triennial.

A DISTURBING HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

However, many recent events in Kenya have pointed up a sharp decline in human rights and democratic values. How bad is it? Consider these items:

- * A recent Amnesty International report vigorously denounced the government for the arbitrary arrest and torture of dozens of peaceful political dissenters.
- * A prominent Kenyan attorney, Gibson Kuria, was arrested in 1987 the day after he filed suits challenging government mistreatment of other dissenters, held for ten months, tortured, and released only after an international outcry. When the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation awarded Kuria its annual Human Rights Award last month, the Kenyan government refused to allow either him or his wife to travel to Washington to receive it.

- * The Kenyan government this year abolished the secret ballot in voting for members of parliament, an action which produced the defeat of the few remaining members of that body who had been critical of the government. (Only one party is legal in Kenya in any case.)
- * The government also recently eliminated the independence of the judiciary; judges are now subject to removal at the whim of the president. It is now proposing to require all lawyers to be relicensed by the state each year, which would mean attorneys who, like Kuria, defend dissenters could be easily driven from the bar.

A TIME FOR HARD QUESTIONS

- * The law was also changed to allow police to hold felony suspects for 14 days before having to bring them before a judge, instead of the previous 48-hr. limitation(which was in its turn often ignored).
- * Kenya's strongman president, Daniel Arap Moi, has recently traded rhetorical salvos with some prominent church leaders, who have dared to question some of these actions, suggesting their freedom of religion could also be put at risk by such criticism.

The list of violations could be much longer. But this is enough to leave one asking: What is going on here? Where will this all lead? What will the situation be like in three or four years' time? And what should Friends elsewhere in the world, with our 80+ year history of connections in Kenya, be doing about it?

Attorney Kuria is described as no radical. Yet he told the Washington Post that "The erosion of constitutional rights in Kenya can go only so far. I can see a civil war. That is very clear. This is what those interested in the rule of law are trying to avoid."

These events and their implications were not discussed at th Tokyo sessions of the FWCC which decided to locate one site for the 1991 world conference there. Nor have they come up in the FUM General Board's discussions of its 1993 Triennial plans. But such innocence of a worsening political climate ought not to continue as these plans take shape. They raise many further questions which ought to be addressed by Friends planning these conferences, as well as any Quakers planning to attend or support them:

How bad is the human rights situation in Kenya? Despite these recent abuses, some say it is still better than in most other African countries; is this acceptable to Friends? Is the country in fact drifting toward civil war? (There was, incidentally, an attempted coup in 1982.) Will Kenya be a safe location for international gatherings in three or four years

WHICH SIDE ARE FRIENDS ON?

What is the role of Kenyan Friends in the public life of Kenya? There are Kenyan Quakers who are ministers and members of parliament; do they support the government's policies? (Most new repressive measures have been passed almost unanimously, which is an ominous sign.) And are there Quaker dissenters who are at risk, or suffering for their witness? If so, how can we support them?

If present trends continue, should Friends rethink the wisdom of such gatherings as those planned for 1991 and 1993? Or plan to make them forums for the vigorous defense of human rights there? (Would we not, for instance, insist on our freedom to denounce apartheid at any gathering would it be more prudent to follow the example of many big-time international evangelists and take

care to make such gatherings strictly "non-political," preaching only about the Light Within and the work of Christ in the soul?

These are not rhetorical questions; the answers are not obvious. But it does seem clear that finding some answers ought to be high on the agendas of FWCC and FUM, not to mention other Friends concerned with human rights and the health of the international Quaker family.

The next item is closer to home. Maybe too close: Some conservative pundits have claimed that the sanctuary movement is passe and moribund. Such claims were especially loud after a federal court convicted several of its original activists in Tucson, Arizona in a 1986 conspiracy trial. These reports, however, have proven to be quite premature, and this is both good and bad news.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BACK ON TRACK

The good news is that work to elp Central American refugees across the U.S. borders (both out of Mexico on the south and into Canada on the north) is continuing and widespread. In fact, Tucson Friend Jim Corbett, who started it all back in 1981 (yet was acquitted at the trial) said late last month that he is making sometimes two trips a week to help refugees through the border fence. Those who have trumpeted the movement's decease have mistaken a media event, or rather the lack thereof, for reality: the non-event is simply that after the trial the national news media lost interest in the movement; but real sanctuary work, which was not a media stunt, kept right on. If anything, its pace is picking up.

But therein lies also the bad news. Amnesty International has reported a sharp increase in death squad activity in El Salvador this ear; its right-wing ARENA party, ten linked to death squads, scored heavily in local elections last spring and may well capture the presidency early next year. And Corbett says he is expecting that the number of refugees fleeing the violence and privation of civil war, will soon increase. To them may be added larger numbers from Nicaragua, running as much from a collapsed economy as internal repression.

A further complicating factor is the transition to a new conservative U.S. president, who has said he will seek renewal of aid to the contras in Nicaragua, and is sure to be pressed by his own right wing to step up efforts to end what is seen as communist subversion in the region. What his initiatives will be, and how they will be received, is anybody's guess; but almost any new ventures are likely to yield a new crop of refugees.

To give George Bush his due, he had not been doing much saber-rattling about Central America as of when we went to press; but once he takes a break from talking about the deficit and the makeup of his cabinet, Central America can't be far down the list of difficult issues demanding attention.

WAITING FOR GEORGE'S SHOE TO DROP

There are three further aspects of this issue which should be of interest to Friends: One depends on the fate of certain high politically-appointed officials of the Naturalization Immigration and Service. One such highly-placed and very conservative figure, who was keenly disappointed when his prosecutors failed to convict Jim Corbett in the 1986 trial, reportedly hopes to get a green light for a new round of indictments. They wouldn't be too hard to set up, since Corbett still writes to the INS before every border run, to tell them he is planning to break the law. The 1986 trial, even with volunteer lawyers, cost a sanctuary defense fund over a million dollars. So the Bush administration's INS appointments, which are not likely to make the evening news, remain like a shoe, the dropping of which could echo very loudly in Tucson,

and elsewhere.

The second Quaker concern is a more immediate one, with a convoluted history. It involves the Quaker Volunteer Witness program of Friends United Meeting.

You may remember the browhaha over QVW which was reported on here in AFL #89 and 91, involving its refusal to appoint a well-qualified Friend who happened to be gay. This situation has for the moment turned out reasonably well, with QVW adopting a non-discrimination policy opening its ranks to any Friend who is willing to abide by its strict policies regarding sexual activity.

SAVING A GOOD IDEA

At any rate, it seems that the volunteer slot in question was slated to be under the aegis of Pima Meeting in Tucson, for the purpose of work with refugees. The slot was eventually filled; but Jim Corbett reports that in the wake of the controversy, financial support for it by Friends of Pima and Intermountain Yearly Meetings, both quite liberal, unaffiliated bodies unfamiliar with the complexities of FUM Quakerism, has waned. Pima Meeting will soon be deciding whether to continue the QVW program there, and much will depend on whether there is any prospect of significant financial support forthcoming for it.

For readers interested in refugee issues and sanctuary, let me recommend consideration of contributions to the Pima QVW program as a timely and strategic way of expressing your concern. Contributions can be sent to Pima Friends Meeting, QVW project, 739 E. 5th, Tucson AZ 85719.

Finally on this front, Friends are also setting out on what can be called the Battle of the I-9s. The I-9 is a government form, designed to help prevent the hiring of illegal aliens. We should all become familiar with the I-9,

because all U.S. employers must now fill them out for all new employees they hire. All new employees; that includes thee and me when we change jobs, and any Friend who hires people.

The I-9 is a creature of the last federal immigration law. But numerous employers of tender conscience see it as a violation of their religious principles. Among these, the American Friends Service Committee on 11/22 filed suit in federal court in Los Angeles challenging the I-9 requirement.

AFSC is soliciting other groups to join the suit. My guess is that lots of Quaker bodies, as well as other church and refugee groups, will sign on. The I-9 issue came up at the annual Friends General Conference Central Committee session in Tenth Month, and was threshed for hours. No one spoke in favor of it; the issue, as yet unresolved, was how far to go in defiance of the requirement, which could potentially subject FGC to heavy fines. We will hear more about the I-9 in 1989.

TRYING TO BREAK THE WEST BANK

The next item on this list is also not new: The fate of the Friends schools in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank. In one sense, little has changed there since a year ago: When we went to press the schools were still closed by order of the Israeli army; clandestine efforts to help students study at home were also being suppressed. Despite over \$150,000 sent by Friends to cover their loss of tuition due to closure through most of the last twelve months, the schools face another financial crunch based on the simple, damning reality that no classes equals no students equals no tuition. Several other church-related schools in the West Bank are in the same boat, and the World Council of Churches has launched a campaign to raise over \$1 million to bail them out.

Yet however familiar this depressing data now is, its larger

meaning has changed dramatically in recent weeks. On the one hand there is the Israeli political stalemate after last month's election; on the other are the PLO's acceptance of U.N. resolutions implicitly recognizing Israel's existence, and the declaration of a Palestinian state—all these have put the schools' fate in a new context.

My sense is that the PLO's new stance, though not enough to bring peace, is still a real and significant advance; Israeli assertions that it means nothing are unconvincing. Thus the question becomes whether Israel's government can develop the flexibility to explore and take advantage of the possibilities the PLO may have opened.

In the meantime, though, the Israeli policy vacuum is being filled by extreme Israeli nationalists, who aim to seed the West Bank and Gaza with so many new settlements that the territories will soon be de facto annexed, and any potential land-for-peace deal aborted in advance. The so-called "transfer" or, more plainly, expulsion of Palestinians from the territories is an integral part of this strategy; and the destruction of institutions serving them is an important aspect of the program.

THEIR FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL, AND OURS

Despite the tenacity of the year-old Palestinian uprising, or intifada, the expulsion plan is working; many students from the Friends schools have left the area for Jordan or other countries.

What should Friends be seeking to achieve in this tangled situation? A simple parochial interest in preserving schools which have served peaceably and with distinction for almost a century would be sufficient; but I believe this sectarian goal also fits into a larger purpose: Survival of the Friends schools(and the other church-related schools as well) will help sustain the Palestinian community against the threat of de

facto expulsion while the PLO's new openings are being tested and, hopefully, expanded.

At the same time, as important as dollars is whatever pressur Friends can bring on the parties to get further off the dime and start talking. In my opinion, the ball is now in the Israeli government's court, if and when it can resolve its own inner crises. But the new U.S. administration and Congress should also be targets for pressure. With a new administration, there should be a window of opportunity for new American initiatives, such as some tentative discussions with the PLO, urging it toward explicit recognition of Israel, along with pleas for a less knee-jerk reaction against the PLO openings by the Israelis.

The Quaker role in all this must not be exaggerated; we are bit players in a vast, complex drama. Even so, we are part of the script, and should play our role as well and faithfully as we can.

A TOUGH ROE TO HOE

Next on this list is another domestic matter: With four more years of a conservative Republican president ahead, the odds are increasing that the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade abortion decision will be reopened and modified, or even reversed. Thus it is not too early for Friends who are concerned with this issue to begin thinking ahead to a "Post-Roe" era.

I have argued in my essay Abortion and Civil War (copies are still available for \$5.00 postpaid from this address) that Roe's reversal would not end legal abortion in America, and I see no reason to reconsider that judgment. But reversal would touch off battles over the legal status of abortion in each of the fifty states. And it is also my sense that these battles would produce intense social conflicts, with consequences hard to foresee. Feelings run very deep here; many

Stay Awake, Friends.

The Friend of London explains how, with:

JUNE 24, 1988

THEFRIEND

An Uncomfortable but Friendly Friend

FOR seven years Chuck Fager has been disturbing the peace of the Quaker Augustans by raising questions we would rather evade-and sometimes by giving news that we have tried to avoid. It was in March 1981 that he issued, from Baileys Crossroads, Virginia, the first number of A Friendly Letter. Month by month the four quarto pages have provided (as he set out to do) an "easy to read" journal. Whether the publication has also enabled "the various groups of Friends to get better acquainted and move closer together" it is at this juncture harder to judge.

But undoubtedly Chuck Fager, a convinced Friend and a working journalist, has provoked conservative, liberal and evangelical Friends alike to think again about unquestioned assumptions. A Friendly Letter set out to cover such varied themes as "New service opportunities for young Friends", "The American Friends Service Committee and its critics", and "How liberal and evangelical Friends can get along", as well as featuring "This month in Quaker history" and "Quaker chuckles" in each

Chuck Fager began with an issue on the Law of the Sea Treaty, which seemed harmless enough. In the second he confessed that he might be rushing in where angels feared to tread in making a forthright analysis of the deep divisions within Iowa Yearly Meeting over the Friends Committee on National Legislation. This brought him a postbag ranging from incoherent anger to disbelief that tensions could possibly exist in our beloved Society.

Tensions often arise because, in our innocence, we do not believe that there are lines which we draw. And there are. Thus, when the pastor of Hinkle Creek Meeting,

Indiana, announced one Sunday in 1981 that he proposed that day and thereafter to administer holy communion, the result was an impasse with Western Yearly Meeting which (understandably) upheld the appeal of five members of the monthly meeting who had been displaced from their committee posts, for objecting to the innovation. Matters having got that far, it was perhaps inevitable, as described in Issue 20, that the meeting's bank account, property, the pastor's tenure, the style of worship and Hinkle Creek's status as a monthly meeting should all come under question.

Or let us consider A Friendly Letter, Issue 86—"A liberal Quaker meeting learns to draw the line," describing in detail the steps taken by a New England monthly meeting (carefully in accord with Faith and Practice) to disown a member whose actions, though sincerely held, were unacceptable. "How often have I heard it said among liberal Friends," wrote Chuck Fager, "that we have no business making judgments about the beliefs and actions of those among us as long as they are sincere seekers." Reflecting on meetings which had "ducked or fudged" such issues, he had been left "very doubtful as to the adequacy of the Sincerity Standard as a basis for a healthy Quaker community life." But how are we to move beyond the Sincerity Standard without sliding back into the "bad old days of dogmatism and mass disownments"? He has no easy answer, but he propounds searching questions from which it is difficult to escape. Chuck Fager's considerable contribution to our self-awareness, his stabbing our spirits broad awake, there can be no possible, probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

EDWARD H. MILLIGAN.

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THINK GIFTS:

on both sides feel lives are at stake.

In my opinion there are two levels on which Friends should be preparing for this eventuality: First, we should begin dialogue among ourselves about what the shape of "Post-Roe" abortion policies and ethics ought to be. An article in the 10/88 Friends Journal("A New Look at Abortion", by Nanlouise Wolfe and Stephen Zunes) may serve to begin this dialogue, and it suggests there is more ferment and less polarized intransigence on this issue among liberal Friends now than before.

Second, we should be considering how to bear our Peace Testimony in this conflict. If this is the bitterest domestic social conflict since slavery, as many claim, can Friends play any role beyond advocacy for whichever side we end up on? Should we not also prepare to be a presence in the struggle that bends it toward a solution that is peaceable, as well as just? The frequently cited parallels between and the antislavery abortion struggle should give us pause: that conflict ended in civil war; we should do what we can to prevent some parallel outcome this time.

THE ODDS AGAINST GORBACHEV

Finally on this agenda, there is the precarious future of what has come to be called citizens diplomacy. A product of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost, it comprises a spreading network of unofficial contacts of many kinds between U.S. and Soviet citizens. The extent and variety of these contacts have gone beyond the ability of any one person to keep track of; and they are steadily eating away at the foundations of the Cold War mentality on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Collectively they add up to some of the most exciting work for peace in decades.

Not long ago the director of Russia's U.S.-Canada Institute, Georgi Arbatov, summed up the Soviet intention in these openings with the pithy declaration that,
"We are about to do something
terrible to you. We are going to
deprive you of an enemy."

Fair enough. But I hope he realizes that every American student and tourist who becomes acquainted with a Russian is also depriving the Soviet war and internal security machinery of part of their reason for being, the mirror-image fear of U.S. imperialism. And that these mutual processes are likely to contribute to change *inside* our two countries as well as between them.

In theory this is all to the good; but in practice, the reports coming out of Russia almost every day (more detailed and informative now because of glasnost) bring to light new signs of instability in the creaky, repressive ruling edifice of the Soviet Empire. And while making no claims to expertise in Sovietology, I keep hearing the acknowledged experts in the field saying that Gorbachev is walking a tightrope without a net, and that events there, from food lines to rebellion in Azerbaijan, are shaking that rope beneath his feet.

BUILDING A QUAKER WINDBREAK

These reports make sense to me; in as hidebound and repressive a society as the Soviet Union, even the light of freedom at the end of the tunnel is a destabilizing force, and one that feeds on itself.

Assuming that the experts are right, it seems the citizen diplomats are in a race against time: striving to weave their work deeply enough into the fabric of U.S.-Soviet relations that they will be able to survive the fall of Gorbachev and the demise of glasnost. History shows that in the nest of intrique behind the Kremlin walls such things can occur overnight: any morning now we could wake up to find Gorbachev managing a tire factory in Minsk, and glasnost gone from the official Soviet vocabulary.

If (I am tempted to say when) that happens, what will become of citizens diplomacy? Depending on how bad it gets, those projects that have developed enough of a constituency and track record on both sides will have the best chance to survive. Friends are participating in various of these efforts; but we have one which is a home-grown pioneer in the field, that I believe we should have special interest in.

This is the Quaker U.S.-U.S.S.R. Committee, and in a few months we will be seeing the first fruits of its labors: the book *The Human Experience* will be published, in the U.S. by Knopf and in Russia by a major Soviet publisher.

We have spoken of the Committee and their book before (and will do so again). With The Human Experience in the pipeline, they are already at work on a second jointly-produced volume, dealing with children, and there are dreams of a series of such jointly-developed and published books, as a bank of glasnost windows to further open up these two people's visions of each other.

MAKING BOOK ON A NEW ERA

If (or when) the wind changes, this Ouaker project should be strongly-positioned to survive-if its efforts pay off in the meantime. In the short term this seems to mean two things: The chronically-broke Committee deserves more financial support from us than it has yet received-(send contributions to the Committee at 1515 Cherry Street, PA 19102), Philadelphia enthusiastic promotion of the book when it appears, to get it into as many libraries and readers' hands as possible. Unless it unaccountably turns out to be a terrible bomb, I intend to do my part in this; and you should too.

All in all, 1989 looks like another year designed to keep busy Quakers as busy as ever.

LOB NINETEEN EIGHTY-NINE INSTDE: FIVE QUARER AGENDA ITEMS

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THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

As Christmas approached in 1981, the Southside Presbyterian Church of Tucson, Arizona was considering whether to become the first open sanctuary church for Central American refugees. It had already informally sheltered several hundred refugees; but this proposal, brought by its pastor, John Fife, would mean openly defying the U.S. government, which deported virtually all such refugees as illegal "economic migrants".

Such a decision was, of course, a weighty one; discussion and study of the legal and religious issues involved was intensive, in preparation for the congregation's annual meeting in late First Month, 1982.

But study and discussion took a back seat to living symbolism at their Christmas Eve candlelight service. A new set of Salvadoran refugees had arrived that day, Fife announced, a family husband, wife, and infant son. "This is what the Bible calls a sign," he preached. "Christ is present in the refugees and in sanctuary." The family was delivered to the church by Jim Corbett, the Quaker goat rancher who had started the new "underground railroad" a few months before. The father had escaped the death squads with only hours to spare, leaving his pregnant wife behind, but ended up in a U.S. detention center, facing deportation. Corbett had gotten him out on bail, and then went to the Mexican border to bring in his wife and the newborn child.

That same night, Jim Corbett attended a weekly vigil for social justice in Central America at the Tucson federal Building. There he was asked to read from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2, verses 7 and 8: "She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn. There were shepherds in that region, living in the fields and keeping watch over their flocks by night...."

Southside Presbyterian Church later voted to become the first open sanctuary church, 79 to 2.

QUAKER CHUCKLE

A Friend died and to her great relief found herself at the pearly gates facing St. Peter. After finding her name in a large white book, St. Peter asked, "What were your theological views?" On being told they were Quaker, he said, "Well then, go down the hall and you'll see a door marked 'Quakers.' That's where you belong."

The Friend dutifully walked down a long hallway past several large doors marked "Catholics," "Methodists," "Jews," "Buddhists," and so forth. At the very end of the hallway she came to

another door, marked "Quakers." It was the largest of all the doors.

Opening it, she saw inside a vast multitude.
"This can't be right," she thought. "The Society of Friends is a tiny group." Back she went to St. Peter, to ask how the Quaker section of heaven had gotten so big. "Very simple," the doorkeeper replied. "Whenever we ask someone about their theological views and they're rather vague on that point, that's where we send them, and they seem to fit right in."