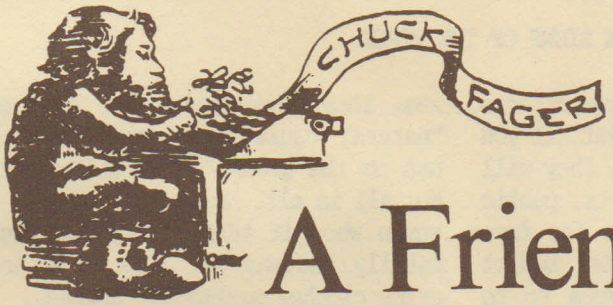


NEWS FLASH: The Search Committee at the Friends Committee on National Legislation has named a candidate to succeed retiring Executive Secretary Ed Snyder. It is Joe Volk, Peace Secretary of the American Friends Service committee. The recommendation must be ratified by the FCNL Executive Committee and annual meeting, but approval is expected.

A Friendly Letter

ISSUE NUMBER 102 ISSN #0739-5418 TENTH MONTH, 1989

Dear Friend,

Does the talk of a "war on drugs" make you uneasy? I believe it should, for many reasons. It is, for one thing, grossly hypocritical in the way it leaves out alcohol and tobacco, which legally kill millions more every year than all the illegal drugs put together. It skimps shamefully on treatment programs. And I very much doubt that this latest "war" will succeed better than earlier versions.

But most unsettling to me is the potential impact of this "war" on our civil rights and liberties. Anyone who took part in, or remembers, the movements of the 1960s for desegregation, peace, and other issues, ought to be equally uneasy. For we above all should remember how often drug laws were used then as weapons against dissent.

Planting an incriminating amount of marijuana or cocaine on someone's person or property is child's play for the authorities. And with ever more punitive laws, larger prison systems, and a constant fanning of hysteria about a fiendish "drug menace," I believe the machinery of an American totalitarianism is being constructed, piece by piece, right before our eyes.

But what is the alternative? Here, I defer to a much wiser and persuasive voice, that of *The Economist* of London. It is a distinguished international business weekly, devoted to free enterprise capitalism, its issues thick with glossy ads for multinationals. But it is also known for clear thinking and writing on important subjects; and recently *The Economist* examined drugs and the "war" thereon.

The resulting article, "It doesn't have to be like this" offers the best critique of current policies, and the most sensible set of alternatives, that I have seen in a long time, maybe ever. It was so impressive that I shelled out a pretty penny for rights to reprint it in this issue. Friends are not mentioned in its three pages. But I trust you will not think that by including it I am straying too far from my normal sectarian concerns. While we may be mainly a respectable and law-abiding bunch these days, Quakers should remember that the Society began amid, and has been repeatedly marked by, struggles against repression acting under color of law. And who knows when such a trial will come upon us again?

But let no one think I am an advocate of drug use. No indeed, and I am happy to say so. In fact, one of the few aspects of the newest "drug war" that seems wise to me is the educational efforts aimed at persuading users to stop and preventing non-users, especially youth, from starting. This campaign remains pitifully small next to the behemoth ad budgets for booze and butts; but it is better than nothing. And I want to offer again a modest Quaker contribution to this work, namely the following bumpersticker, produced by George Nicklin, a psychiatrist and member of New York Yearly Meeting:

say no to
DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO

These stickers are FREE; just send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: *SAY NO,* at my address. (Maximum of two, while supplies last.)

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

PS. I note with sadness the sudden death last month of Jack Willcuts, the retired Superintendent of Northwest Yearly Meeting, and a real Quaker statesman. His passing leaves a gap in Quaker ecumenical work that will be hard to fill.

 Subscription rates: US, Canada & Mexico—$17.95/yr; elsewhere—$20.00/yr.

CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA MEETING AND THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Downtown Philadelphia is full of historic sites: Constitution Hall, the Liberty Bell, the Betsy Ross House, and so on, all under the benign gaze of William Penn's statue atop the ornate city hall. This area also bustles with commerce and new development: City Hall is being renovated; a convention center is abuilding, and the 30th Street railroad station is being restored to its original art deco glory.

Friends have their pieces of this history and bustle too: Arch Street Meeting is just around the corner from the Liberty Bell, and has much-visited historical displays; nearby is the Free Quaker Meeting House, all that remains of a breakaway group which left to join George Washington's rebels.

A few blocks away, a steadily-expanding Friends General Conference has found new quarters in an up-and-coming building; and at 15th and Cherry stands Friends Center, a plain but appealing redbrick office complex built around the Central Philadelphia Monthly Meetinghouse.

SCENES FROM A PARALLEL UNIVERSE

Seen from this tourist/booster's angle, downtown Philly is an exciting place, and who could deny it? But there is another side to this urban ecosystem, almost like a parallel universe out of some sci fi story: it is the world of Philadelphia's homeless. Downtown is full of them. In a recent mid-day walk from Friends Center past City Hall, I passed half a dozen or more in as many blocks. Those who live or work here train their perceptions, as we all do, not to notice these grimy, mumbling, ragged figures much, wandering or passed out across the sidewalk. There is, after all, so much else going on; and anyway, what are we supposed to do?

This is not to suggest that Philadelphians are indifferent to the plight of the homeless. There are shelters here, and soup kitchens, and all those things the salaried lump under the sanitized heading of "services." And Friends too have been involved in these efforts from the beginning. And yet, if you question the policymakers, they will all admit that these efforts, public and private together, are far from enough; but in a time when budget deficits at all levels seem to be the evil twin of our self-image of prosperity, again, what can we do?

"I don't know what the solution is," says Helen File, the director at Arch Street Meetinghouse. On a typical night this past summer eight to a dozen homeless people bunked down in various nooks and crannies around the building. A year ago it was more like twenty. Every day she and the other staff must clean up after these uninvited guests, who leave trash, waste and excrement in nauseating abundance. It is the unpleasant part of a job she otherwise enjoys.

RUNNING AN UNWILLING HOTEL

It is the same at other churches in the neighborhood: the synagogue a block one way, St. Joe's the other direction, the Reformed church a few blocks up; when night falls, the homeless creep in like cockroaches. Even the big new federal building, whose first floor is set back under an overhang, out of the rain, often becomes a tent city.

"I don't know what the answer is," Helen File repeats. But from the evidence, society's answer seems unambiguous: Communities that have compassion help those they can; the rest are out of luck. And as testy as she can sound commanding a man preparing to relieve himself under a meetinghouse tree to go somewhere else, compassion is what Helen File offers as best she is able.

Every morning, speaking loudly and sternly when need be, she clears the vagrants out; likewise, in late afternoon, she rebuffs the early arrivals, telling them firmly, "the hotel isn't open." Normally she is promptly obeyed. But once last year, and again a few months ago, homeless people failed to move when asked. They were not being obstinate, you understand; the problem was, they were dead. One died of "natural causes," in an afternoon nap on the grass; not a bad way to go, all in all. But the other was a woman who, it turned out, had been fatally beaten; her dark skin and grimy clothes masked her bruises.

Those were, Helen File admits, hard to take. Not only was there the trauma of death on the doorstep, but in its wake came the police, the families, and, naturally, the press. And of course, with the daily traffic around the meetinghouse, it could happen again, anytime.

"You can read the signs of the weather," Jesus scornfully told his Pharasaic critics, "so why can't you read the signs of the times?"(Matthew 16:3) This past summer, while Helen File and the other downtown churches bore their daily burdens, a mile away Central Philadelphia Meeting, and through it the City of Brotherly Love, was treated to a more visible and extended sign-reading seminar involving the homeless, one which revealed all-too many pockets of spiritual illiteracy.

JEALOUS ON THE STREET

The lesson came in the form of two homeless men, who settled one day on the front porch of the Central Philadelphia Meetinghouse. The porch, which fronts on busy Cherry Street, is wide, covered, and no longer used as an entrance. In warm weather it is in many ways an ideal spot for squatters. The first of these "residents" to arrive was Vincent Thompson, a quiet person who tried out the porch in late Sixth or early Seventh Month(accounts vary), noted its advantages, and returned, inviting a friend of his to join him. The friend was named Jealous T. Street. When Jealous arrived, the reading lesson began in earnest.

Jealous Street's biography, what elements of it have been established, follows a familiar pattern: a black Vietnam combat veteran, he worked sorting mail until about 1983, when his wife and family reportedly left him. Since he left his job, he has been in and out of

DRUGS

It doesn't have to be like this

Colombia is fighting a war against drugs. America is losing one. The rest of the world will lose too, if its weapon is prohibition. There are better ways

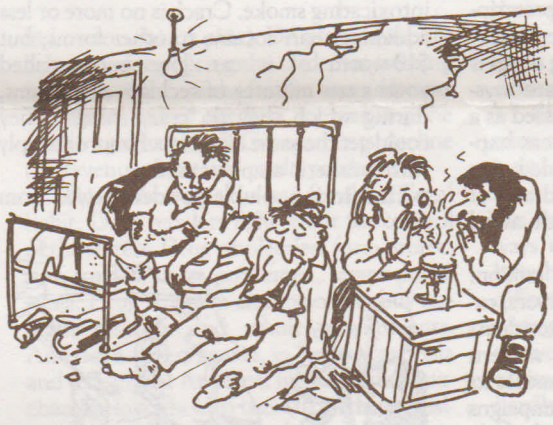
TOWARDS the end of 1988 a kilogramme of cocaine fetched about $12,000 in New York. A hard bargainer could get it for $8,000. Stockists were unloading and the price was falling fast. The import, sale and possession of cocaine are illegal in the United States, yet there was a glut of the stuff.

Back in 1980, one-kilogramme lots of cocaine hydrochloride cost about $60,000. In those days it was a foolish fashion for bankers and bond-salesmen, who sniffed it through rolled $100 bills after dinner while boasting of their good connections. Now it is sold adulterated at $10 or less for a cheap ten-minute thrill amid murder and mayhem in America's slums. Even that price still brings huge profits: a gramme makes four doses, so the kilogramme bought for $12,000 can fetch $40,000 on the street.

The drugs trade is a fine specimen of unrestricted competition, which efficiently brings down prices and pushes up consumption. Governments refuse to limit the trade by regulation, taxation and discouragement. Instead, by national laws and international conventions, they try to prohibit it. In 1980 the federal government of the United States spent just under $1 billion trying to keep heroin, cocaine and marijuana out of its domestic market. By 1988 it was spending almost $4 billion. Yet the retail price of drugs dropped even faster than the cost of policing rose. As prohibition failed, the volume of imports soared.

Funny figures

No one knows the arithmetic of the drugs trade. Retail prices can be fairly easily established by asking around in any American city. Since drugs traders do not declare their dealings to the customs or the tax-men, other figures on the trade are bogus. The American figures are especially odd, since 11 federal agencies (police, customs, coast-guard, Drug Enforcement Agency and so on), plus uncounted state bodies of one sort and another, competitively claim that the drugs problem is very serious, so give them more money and they can solve it. The first statement is true, the second false: either



way the "statistics" get swollen.

For example, a subcommittee of the United States Senate recently reckoned the global trade in banned drugs at $500 billion a year—an estimate credited to another estimate, in *Fortune* magazine. Of that, said the subcommittee, about $300 billion was earned in the United States, and about one-third of American drugs sales are of cocaine. So, hey presto, the American cocaine market is worth $100 billion a year, which, at $40,000 a kilo retail, implies imports of 2,500 tonnes of cocaine.

At a fair guess, it costs about $200 to produce one kilogramme. Transport from Colombia to North America costs about the same. Add a crude $1,000 for distribution expenses, including bribes and enforcement. Compare these costs even with the low 1988 street price, and it appears that along the distribution chain total American cocaine sales bring dealers tax-free profits of more than $95 billion.

Of such heroic arithmetic are scare-stories made. Yet—however uncertain the figures—cocaine is indeed clearly the most profitable article of trade in the world. In response to profitable American sales in the late 1970s, third-world producers planted extra acres, fitted out new laboratories and recruited better-armed sales forces. By the late 1980s deliveries had soared. To unload them, the middlemen had to cut their prices. They went down-market, hiring gangs to compete for distribution monopolies in poor areas,

By early 1989 the slums of the District of Columbia, seat of the most powerful government in the world, saw—or rather, took care not to see—about ten murders a week. Half were associated with cocaine trafficking. Politicians and journalists could hear the shooting. It hugely reinforced the anti-drug propaganda that was already fashionable with everybody from First Ladies to the musicians selling rap and reggae and salsa tapes to the ghettoes. The war on drugs flooded the media. The drugs continued flooding the slums of Washington.

Now for Europe

American demand is probably falling (though not the murder rate: the fight for the remaining trade could well become still more vicious). So forward-looking drugs merchants are investing their profits in new markets. Japan's is potentially huge, and developing fast. The richest is Western Europe, even ahead of 1992. In drugs as in other leisure products, Europe's diverse countries have different tastes and offer different market opportunities. Spain's links of trade and culture with producing countries in Latin America make it a natural market for the Colombian cocaine industry. Italy is the native land of the mafia, which is losing its old grip on the North American drugs trade; heroin, the mafia speciality, is already rife in Italy, where it killed more than 800 people in 1988, half as many as in the United States.

In northern Europe, Chinese, Pakistani and West Indian gangs (not to mention the natives) have long competed for control of illicit markets. Imports are rising, prices dropping. European governments these days are spending much more on anti-drugs

law enforcement than they used to. Far higher is the price paid by the customers who die of overdoses or poisonous adulterants, by policemen, by ordinary citizens whose lives are intermittently put at risk and whose civil liberties sometimes curtailed in the losing battle to prohibit drugs.

Legal and illegal

Almost everybody takes some kind of stimulating drug. In 1988 the average Briton aged over 18 spent $50 on tea and coffee, $325 on tobacco and $750 on alcoholic drinks. These legitimate products please, or invigorate, or calm, or console; they change the taker's state of mind. So do various stimulants and tranquillisers that may (depending on local law) be available only on prescription. All are addictive, in varying degrees.

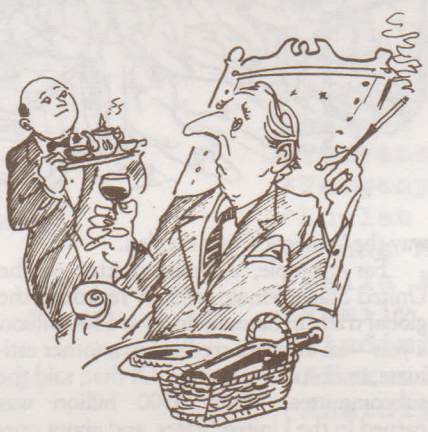
The demand for mind-changing drugs is irresistible, although their effects are mysterious. Alcohol, for instance, is classed as a depressant, but makes most drinkers happier. Alcohol abuse has been recorded ever since Noah, safe after his Flood, "drank of the wine, and was drunken", with awful consequences for race relations.

Cigarettes kill smokers by the million. Alcohol wrecks people's lives and livers, ruins families, helps cause most road accidents and most violent crimes in most western countries. Powerful advertising promotes its consumption, mild government campaigns (backed by discriminatory taxes) seek to diminish it. But outside the Muslim countries that forbid alcohol on religious grounds, nobody seriously suggests prohibition. That was tried in America between 1920 and 1933, and it failed.

Illegal drugs do much the same things as legal ones but more so; the difference that matters is legislative, not pharmacological. The law copes clumsily with "designer" drugs, invented by chemists and cheaply made in home laboratories. But the main traded products are easier targets, the traditional drugs derived from tropical plants:

- **Marijuana** (ganja, bhang, dope) is made from the leaves and seeds of Indian hemp; its concentrated (and so more easily smuggled) form is hashish. It may be smoked, drunk as an infusion or baked in cakes. It produces euphoria, disorientation, a heightened sense of rhythm and music and a lack of motivation and aggression. It has no important medical use, and people do not feel ill when they stop using it. Many American students find marijuana milder, easier to conceal and harder to detect than beer, which is equally illegal for most people of college age there. Marijuana consumption is widely tolerated even where its sale and supply are banned.
- **Cocaine** is the active ingredient of the coca plant, habitually used by Andean Indians against cold, hunger and fatigue. Medically, no good substitute has yet been found for coca derivatives in the relief of pain. Illegally, cocaine crystals are mixed with a neutral (sometimes harmful) powder and sniffed, smoked or sometimes dangerously injected. One eighth of a gramme in the bloodstream can intoxicate an inexperienced user into hyperactive euphoria. Regular users want more and more to get the same effect. Stopping its use may leave a craving as acute as that which some people feel after they stop smoking cigarettes. Regular use rots the nose and damages the muscles of the heart.

  Cheap cocaine may contain traces of the damaging solvents used in extracting it from the original leaves. Tiny volumes of it, mixed with baking soda to make "crack", may be heated to give off hot and harmful intoxicating smoke. Crack is no more or less addictive than cocaine in other forms; but $10-worth of it can give impoverished youths ten minutes of reckless excitement, during which they do crazy things. They could get the same effect much more cheaply with synthetic amphetamines.
- **Heroin** is a soluble powder derived from



poppies; opium is dried poppy sap, morphine an intermediate derivative, codeine is in every household. The opiates are medically irreplaceable painkillers, which work so powerfully on the central nervous system that stopping their use can cause physical distress as bad as a bad flu.

Prudently used, heroin need do no great physical harm: when doctors in Britain were free to prescribe it, some of them became addicts and still worked well at their jobs for decades. That was stopped because a few addicted doctors thought heroin so wonderful that they prescribed large quantities of it for others, profitably spreading their own addiction.

Most healthy people dislike heroin, but it can enslave the unhappy or the psychologically disturbed. As many as one in four of those who regularly use it feel ill if they do not take it, and will lie, cheat and steal for their supply; these are the addicts. Their craving may be chemically assuaged by synthetic methadone. Many doctors and prison officials think heroin addiction mainly a symptom of psychological disturbance, and try to treat it much as they treat alcoholism, gambling and other compulsions. But doctors are reluctant to treat addicts who, by admitting their addiction, are also confessing to a crime.

Addicted societies

Drug abuse may accompany social as well as personal disorder. Respectable citizens were scared by alcohol in England in the 1740s (and in Russia always), by opium in nineteenth-century China, by hashish in Egypt in the 1920s. North Europeans tend to drink rarely but in heavy binges, so Nordic countries tax strong drink hard. Southerners drink as much but more slowly, so Italians do not seem drunk and have weak anti-alcohol laws, but still damage their livers.

American politicians became convinced during the first world war that drink was wrecking the nation. In 1919 they amended the federal constitution to prohibit all dealings in alcohol, except for medical purposes. Drunkenness dropped, but a lot of people insisted on their beer or whisky. Some brewed the stuff at home, and brewed hangovers with it. Others bought certified liquor from Scotland via Canada, or from France via Cuba. The shippers, labelled as criminals, behaved as such. They "protected" truck-drivers and bar-owners, shot rivals, paid off local politicians and policemen.

The federal authorities caught the richest bootleggers mainly by tricks such as excessive income-tax assessments. As soon as they trapped one, another sprang up to satisfy the profitable demand. By 1933 the federal government gave up and legalised drinking again. The bootleggers, losing their tax-free profits, diversified into other illegal services such as gambling and abortion. As these too began to be made legal, so less profitable, the gangs went back to smuggling, and began with marijuana.

The Caribbean entrepots began to relive the bootlegging days that Hemingway recorded. Then in the 1960s the region acquired more small, poor, bribable governments. The marijuana transport and retail networks too made progress, brutally, by buy-outs and shoot-outs, into cocaine, which meant higher profits from smaller volumes easier to conceal and transport.

Britain's experience has been longer. In the eighteenth century cheap gin ravaged its crowded, already industrialising cities. Moralists were appalled at the degradation depicted by Hogarth, capitalists found that drink made their workers unproductive. So Parliament began to control the trade. Retail sales were limited to outlets supervised by local magistrates. The quality of spirits was stiffly controlled, to cut out poisonous adulterants. Taxes made strong drink much costlier than relatively harmless beer.

The system remains in place, modified (albeit too slowly) to match the changing

times. Now Britain certifies Scotch whisky that is smuggled to the prohibition countries of the Gulf, as though Colombia certified cocaine for export to New York. At home, alcohol's ravages increase when, as now, the government fails to keep taxes on drink ahead of inflation. Drinking remains a problem for private health and public safety. But the drinks trade is crime-free.

Crime-creating prohibition

Prohibition creates crime, and so gives rise to fiercer dangers than the medical and social ones it is intended to avert. True, the prospect of time in jail must prevent prudent people from ever trying drugs at all. But it is not the prudent who need protection.

The young and the foolish are exposed to special risks when several different drugs are classed together as illegal. The state says marijuana is much worse than alcohol, and must therefore be banned, with stiff penalties. Young people see their friends smoke it, and try it without much harm. They may therefore believe the whole law is an ass and imagine that heroin, subject to similar bans, is similarly harmless, which it is not.

Governments compel producers to indicate the alcohol content—and, for wine at least, the quality—of their drinks. Banned drugs are simply banned; their quality and purity depend on no more than the seller's good faith, which may not be great. Cheap crack, or the even cheaper cocaine sold as *basuco*, is often poisonously tainted by ethylene or even petrol used as a solvent in its making. That can kill. In southern Italy the mafia sells heroin at 10% concentration, in the north at 50%. Southern addicts visit the north and kill themselves with one injection, like a beer-drinker who might unknowingly gulp a pint of whisky.

Governments that ban drugs cannot also tax them; they thus abandon the most effective means of controlling their abuse. Britain's differing tax-rates divert demand from hard spirits to less harmful beer, but not from heroin to marijuana (nor from marijuana to beer, if you think that desirable, which many wouldn't: a joint costs less in London than a pint). Drugs impose public costs—for policing the trade, for treating its victims (such as the heroin users who get AIDS from shared needles), for warning the public against abuse. Governments decline the revenue that taxes could produce.

Drug-takers steal to pay for their illegal habit. Drug retailers fight it out for control of the streets. Drug wholesalers form protection squads, bribe policemen, tempt politicians. Drug shippers and exporters buy aircraft, arsenals and whole governments. America's covert agents, in South-East Asia and in Central America, have too often exchanged favours with them. The drugs business is the basis of much of the world's petty crime, and of some of the world's largest criminal conspiracies.

Vast untaxed profits amass in the conspirators' hands and trail off into peaceable tax havens. The latest intergovernmental fashion, enshrined in a new United Nations convention, is therefore to beat the conspirators by taking away their profits. That sounds good. But the world is awash with crypto-dollars, avoiding tax or evading exchange-controls; it is impossible to sort the drugs money out from the rest without attacking the banks that big countries protect. So far, the main target of America's prosecuting zeal is a bank owned by Saudis, inspired by Lebanese, managed by Pakistanis and blaming any regrettable misunderstandings on its outpost in Panama.

American politicians are frightened of drugs wars on their streets, and so they should be: they have the most heavily armed urban population in the world. Drugs wars in poorer, less resilient countries terrify their politicians with even better reason. Lebanon is awash with weapons, many of them paid for by the poppy crop whose precious sap keeps the Afghans fighting too. In Colombia judges and newspaper editors have faced a choice: collaborate and get $100,000, resist and get a bullet in your son's head. Now it is the authority of the state itself that is at risk.

The ooze of corruption from the illegal trade threatens bigger nations such as Pakistan and Brazil. Hard-working Jamaicans can make money flying fresh flowers to the United States; but smugglers slip ganja into the flower-pots, so the American customs search the flowers for so long that they die.

Legalise and control

Drugs are dangerous. So is the illegality that surrounds them. In legitimate commerce, their sale controlled, taxed and supervised, their dangers proclaimed on every packet, drugs would poison fewer customers, kill fewer dealers, bribe fewer policemen, raise more public revenue.

For drugs as for alcohol, different societies need different remedies. The present international ban compels all to adopt the same blanket policy: to pretend that they can stop the trade, so forcing it into the evil ways that it now follows. Only the Dutch have had the courage to break away, treating different drugs differently and selectively applying social and medical remedies rather than criminal. Holland is permissive; yet few of its youngsters die of drug abuse (and hardly any get AIDS from infected needles). Drug-related crime is under control.

Legalising the drugs trade would be risky. Prohibition is worse than risky. It is a proven failure, a danger in its own right. *The Economist* advocates its replacement with more effective restrictions on the spread of drugs. In summary, we want to legalise, control and strongly discourage the use of them all. Give it 20 years, while today's drugs squads turn their energies to things that actually do some good like helping little old ladies cross the road.

GET IN ON
THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

For more than four years the Quaker U.S.-U.S.S.R. Committee has been at work, with a joint committee of American and Soviet editors and writers, to assemble and publish, in both countries, a book of stories and poems which will provide citizens of each country a literary opening into the lives of people on both sides of the polarized divide that has riven the world for more than forty years.

The Human Experience is now available in the American edition, published in cloth by Alfred A. Knopf.

Among the Authors in the book are the following:

*Garrison Keillor
*Alice Walker
*Wendell Berry
*Bel Kaufman
*Robert Penn Warren
*Donald Barthelme
*Adrienne Rich
*Mary Gordon
*John Updike
*Henry Taylor
*Joyce Carol Oates
*Jon Sayles

*Yevgeny Yevtushenko
*Yury Kuznetsov
*Andrei Voznesensky
*Tatyana Tolstaya
*Yevgeny Vinokurov
*Ruslan Kireyev
*Yunna Moritz
*Bella Akhmadulina
*Vasily Belov
*Vladimir Sokolov
*Alexander Kushner
*Anatoly Shavkuta

This book is an example of Quaker witness in a most creative and yet practical form. It offers enjoyable and provocative reading for individuals, and surely should be in every meeting's library.

To order *The Human Experience*, use the order form below.

- -

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shelters around town. Unlike many other street people, he did not drink or smoke. But he did behave in ways that to many people seemed strange, even crazy. To be specific, Jealous was loudly, assertively, some said obnoxiously religious.

His distinctive religiosity showed itself as soon as someone from the staff of Friends Center asked him to vacate the porch. He refused, declaring that he had been told to come there by God, his Father, and he would not leave until told to do so from on high.

This response left the Friends Center staff somewhat nonplussed. It was not uncommon for homeless persons to sleep in Friends Center doorways, but typically they moved on when daylight came. At this point the Friends Center staff decided to seek help from the Meeting. The Meeting's first response, as one might expect, was to form a committee, named—what else?—*The Ad Hoc Committee to Respond to the Use of Cherry Street Porch by Jealous and Vincent, Two Homeless Men.*

MOLE STREET VS. JEALOUS STREET

The Committee took almost three months to reach unity on what to do about Jealous and Vincent and how to do it. Meanwhile, the two expanded their quarters, dragging large refrigerator boxes and milk crates onto the porch and setting up a makeshift camp. They spent much time seated in two chairs, reading and studying the Bible. But Jealous also occasionally preached loudly to people passing by on Cherry Street.

He made an impressive, and to some a threatening figure: Burly and bearded, he wore an old drill instructor's hat on which was emblazoned the words *JEHOVAH* and I AM THAT I AM, and carried a long wooden staff. He also made some crude signs with markers on pieces of cardboard, mainly Bible quotes. And he often arose early in the morning to perform vigorous exercise, especially by skipping rope. Jealous and Vincent usually went to a nearby soup kitchen for most meals, and to a nearby McDonalds to use the bathroom. But the longer they stayed, and in particular the more visible Jealous became, the more disturbed many people in the neighborhood, and at Friends Center, became. Especially upset were many residents of Mole St., a block-long mini-neighborhood just a few feet away from the porch. Mole Streeters began to complain to the Meeting. Loudly.

By late in Eighth Month, when the pair had been there more than six weeks, the local press discovered them, and a series of newspaper articles and TV reports brought the situation to the public eye, increasing the pressure on the Meeting and the Friends Center Board, which had formed another committee.

These reports generally focussed on two topics: the colorful Jealous, and the seemingly confused and endless decisionmaking processes of the do-good, ineffective Quakers. They climaxed in a 9/18 editorial in the *Enquirer*. Headlined, *Paralyzed by faith*, it declared harshly that

SPURRING ON A PARALYZED SNAIL

"the Quakers' snail-like deliberations over what to do have become part of the problem, instead of the solution. At some point, admiration for their Christian restraint and tolerance must give way to something else—even, perhaps, anger at their well-intentioned paralysis."

Maybe so; certainly the committees lacked the long experience, and thus the thick skin, not to mention the organizational simplicity which serve Helen File well at Arch Street. Still, by 9/23, the committee was finally ready: A delegation went out early in the morning, took down the cardboard camp and the signs, and told Jealous it was time to go. They were ready to meet violence with nonviolence; but he didn't resist. They found Vincent a room in a welfare hotel; Jealous said he didn't need any help and was last seen striding up 17th Street, a trash bag on one arm, a chair on the other, and I AM THAT I AM on his drill instructor's hat.

With the porch now empty again, most of those concerned breathed a sigh of relief, and there was some hope that the local press would lay off the Quakers for awhile. On the same day Jealous was evicted, Central Philadelphia's Clerk, Arthur Larrabee, published an eloquent rebuttal to the *Enquirer*'s editorial. The paper, he said,

"claims that we are paralyzed by our faith. Not so. Rather, we are empowered by it. Our faith is a lighthouse which has kept us on a steady course as we make our way through a sometimes dark night of indifference to the needs of those around us who are in danger of drowning."

And a few days later, looking over the signs and debris Jealous left behind, stored in an obscure corner in case he returns and wants anything, it was hard to see just what all the shouting had been about. Sure, the committees took awhile, in the Quaker fashion, to sort out concerns and issues. But in the meantime, Jealous and Vincent had not destroyed any property; they had not stolen anything; they had done no violence to persons. They had occupied space that is mostly unused. What crime, then, made them headline news during those weeks, beyond the fact of "trespassing?"

WEATHER REPORT: CONTINUED COLD

From here one wonders if it was not simply their visibility that made them most intolerable? Did their anomalous presence on the well-kept porch surface some normally-ignored sense of fear, uneasiness, maybe even guilt in many well-trained urbanite minds, move it up where it is not so easy to overlook?

A clip from the *Philadelphia Daily News* may have summed up this exercise in reading the signs of the times perhaps best of all. The headline was as follows: *Unfriendly Persuasion: Threatened, Angry Neighbors Want Quakers to Boot Squatter.* Directly beneath this article, the next headline read: *The Top Prize in the California Lottery Reaches $55 Million.*

What does the weather look like to thee, Friend?

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MLA

THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

In 1692, Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law specifying that each township in the colony was to have in residence what was called "an able, orthodox, Learned minister", educated at Harvard College, to maintain the colony's established Puritan religion. Further, such ministers were to be furnished with a salary, parsonage and meetinghouse, all paid for by taxes on the town's inhabitants.

Most towns in the colony complied. But the townships of Dartmouth and Tiverton, in Bristol County, were populated, as the legislature put it, by "quakers and other irreligious persons, averse and opposite to the publick worship of God and to a learned orthodox ministry...." The other "irreligious" types there were mostly Baptists; and despite many theological differences, the two sects were agreed that they wanted no part of a Puritan ministry supported by their hard-earned money. So, as the legislature noted indignantly, these towns had worked long and hard to "find out ways to elude the laws provided for the support of such...to the encouragement of irreligion and prophaneness."

This conclusion was, of course, greatly exaggerated; Quakers and Baptists have never been much good at the encouragement of prophaneness. But it was true that whenever colonial officials asked whether the towns had appointed a minister as required, the selectmen blandly replied that, indeed, they had. But on closer inspection, these "ministers" always turned out to be, not "able, learned orthodox" Harvard men, but Quakers and Baptists, who preached as the Spirit moved them, without pay.

Such effrontery was intolerable. In 1702, a new law decreed that in towns where local tax assessors refused to levy the required taxes, higher authorities would do it for them. And thus, on 10/12/1702, the Bristol County Court wrote to Harvard College asking that ministers be named to fill the pulpits it was determined to create in the rebellious towns. Unfortunately, such was the reputation of the towns, that not one of the available "able, orthodox learned" Harvard men stepped forward to take up what was sure to be a thankless post. But this was not the end of the matter; more next month.

QUAKER CHUCKLES

A Friend was once in the habit of preaching in meeting every week, on whatever verse of the Bible his finger fell to when he opened the book. This continued until one First Day, when the Bible was opened, his finger fell on Matthew 27:5—"and Judas went out and hanged himself." Somewhat shaken the Friend decided to stretch his rule, flipped a few more pages, and let his finger fall again. He was not comforted to see that it had landed on Luke 10:37, to wit: "Go ye and do likewise."

Hearing a stirring message on helping the poor, a woman Friend went out determined to act. Across the street from the meetinghouse she saw a disheveled street person. Rushing up to him, she shoved ten dollars into his hand, and much affected, said only, "Godspeed." The next First Day, after meeting, the same man was waiting; but this time he gave her a hundred dollars. "Your advice was great, ma'am," he said. "Godspeed finished first at the track and paid 25 to one, and here's your share. Say, who's your pick for the Derby?"