

IS THIS HOW IT STARTS? "*Desert Storm shakes health industry: If Uncle Sam wants docs, draft is option.* Under the HCPDS [Health Care Personnel Delivery System], a little-known program administered by the US Selective Service, the military could register and draft physicians, nurses, dentists and dozens of other health professionals....."

--Front page lead article, *Healthweek*, 1/28/91

A Friendly Letter

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SECOND MONTH, 1991

Dear Friend,

In most years since *A Friendly Letter* began, the First Month issue has featured a pick of **Quakers of the Year**. That was my intention for last month, too; but amid the general confusion, it didn't work out.

Still, I hadn't forgotten it, and the rush to war had an ironic side effect of confirming and clarifying this year's nominations, which come in two related slates. The first name is also the first ever non-Friend to be Quaker of the Year, but the choice was inescapable. It is Mark Hatfield, U.S. Senator from Oregon.

Why Hatfield? Well, above all for his speech and votes during the debate on resolutions to approve the onset of war. Of the 99 senators present, voting, and talking, talking, talking, between 1/10 and 1/12, there was only one, one only, who spoke and voted entirely against the rush to war, and that was Mark Hatfield.

Let's hear some bits from his eloquent and angry floor speech on 1/12, as the debate over two Gulf resolutions was drawing to a climax. He had hoped, he began, that one of the resolutions *would clearly state the proposition for peace, as against...the proposition for war*. But neither did so. The Democratic resolution, while it called for giving the embargo against Iraq more time to work, also, on its first page, *authorizes the use of American military force to enforce the U.S. economic embargo...to defend Saudi Arabia...and to protect American forces in the region; clearly an authorization for war*. As a result, Hatfield said, *I find myself in a situation of having to vote against both of the resolutions, because...they do not offer us the alternative of peace*.

Challenging the "quick-victory" scenarios being bandied about (scenarios that become less credible every day), Hatfield, himself a former fighter pilot, demanded to know *What happens when the war does not go the way we want it to?...For those who find it uncomfortable to oppose a war before it starts, let me only tell you from very personal experience that this is nothing compared to how you will feel when we are in the midst of war*. Recalling his lonely efforts against the Vietnam war, he repeated that *there is nothing more difficult than being*

forced to choose between funding a war you do not support and cutting off funds for a war to which our troops are sacri ficing their lives....If we are going to send our troops into combat, we must be prepared for the worst case scenario...We must be able to look at our young men and women now on the frontlines and tell them that their lives are a legitimate price to pay.

But for his part, Hatfield declared, his voice rising in anger, *I am not prepared to do that. I am not prepared to do that now. And I will not be prepared to do that in the future. Not 6 months from now. Not 12 months from now. Not ever.*

(In the actual floor speech, as heard on the radio, Hatfield added a shouted *Never!* to this peroration; but it has been edited out of the *Congressional Record*.)

Hatfield concluded that *If we want to avoid war, then we ought to say so. Right here--and right now. And instead of playing this dangerous game of "maybe now, maybe later", it is my view that we ought to bring our troops home once and for all*. And with that, he went on to cast his lone double negative votes.

A heroic stand, in my view, but not a surprising one. Hatfield is the closest thing to a Quaker in the Senate, nay in the entire Congress. And this is more than a matter of affinity: His political model was Herbert Hoover, the first Quaker president; his campaign manager is a dedicated Friend. He has served on the board of George Fox College, and helped get federal grants for its Center for Peace Learning. And his Republican pacifism is unthinkable outside the state where evangelical Quakers have preserved a visible and meaningful Peace Testimony. It is these Oregon Quaker evangelical peace activists, too numerous to name, who are the other, and most deserving, **Quakers of the Year** for 1990.

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

SEEKING STEADFASTNESS: QUAKER PEACE WITNESS ON THE GULF TAKES SHAPE

Last month two hastily-organized gatherings considered Quaker responses to the Gulf War. From them some contours of a distinctive Friends' peace witness in this crisis began to emerge. At its best, this witness will be decentralized, variegated and depolarizing, with concern for its spiritual base and a resolute attitude.

(The second, smaller gathering of about 40 New England Friends was on 2/1, at Cambridge(MA) Meeting. Its themes and atmosphere, as reported by Doug Cox of Putney, Vermont Meeting, who clerked it, were remarkably in line with those of the first assembly, reported below.)

The Emergency Quaker Peace Consultation convened at Friends Meeting of Washington on the evening of 1/26, following a massive peace march earlier in the day. Press reports of the march repeated the typical low-ball government turnout figures (75,000, but don't believe it; 150-200,000 is closer). They also replayed many vapid "reminiscent of the 1960s" clichés about the appearance, expressions and behavior of some marchers, while noting patronizingly that among the actual '60s veterans on hand, time had thinned their hair and thickened their waistlines, etc., etc.

UNLIKE THE SIXTIES, FOR ONCE

But to this observer(a '60s survivor bearing most of the aforementioned stigmata) the key features of the rally were some rather distinct **differences** between it and the anti-Vietnam marches of a generation ago:

Take symbols, for instance: the most visible symbol in the march was the American flag. Or slogans; while there was much sardonic humor on display, the most common (nearly all on handmade placards) spoke of **supporting the troops**, but by ending the war and bringing them home swiftly and alive; **Peace**, another recurrent message asserted, is **Patriotic**.

The presence in the march of many military family members underlined this: being there was not an

act of disloyalty to their loved ones at risk; quite the contrary.

The importance of symbolism in war is shown by George Bush's repeated assertions that "*This will not be another Vietnam.*" Judging from the 1/26 march, it looks as if this promise may apply to the peace movement too: Back then we protesters foolishly abandoned the most potent symbol of American values to the hawks, and many of us treated GIs as if they, and not the war they were forced to make, were the real enemy.

These were immature, self-defeating reactions, which cost the antiwar movement dearly. This time, it seems, we're off to a better start.

THE WAR CLOSEST TO HOME

Turnout for the Consultation also augured well: With less than three weeks' notice, more than 400 Friends registered, completely filling Washington's large meeting room. They came from 93 meetings in 24 states, including Friend Brian Douglas, who flew all the way from Juneau, Alaska to take part. (But only a couple came from programmed or evangelical meetings, though many were notified.) Further, despite ample opportunity, almost no time was wasted in self-indulgent political speechmaking. The tone was serious and the sessions productive.

Perhaps this seriousness was another result of the heavy presence of the older-and-weightier-but-possibly-a-bit-wiser '60s alumni. Judging by some of the comments and anecdotes heard during the Consultation, maybe it was also influenced by the fact that this war is hitting close to home for many of us. Consider a few of the reports:

♦ During First Day worship a conservatively-dressed middle-aged man rose to recall marching against the Vietnam War as a Friend twenty years ago with his two young sons. He was, he said, very grateful to be able to have done that. Now these sons were adults, he went on, and both were in the military, as medics. They were not in the Gulf yet, he said, but they

expected to go almost any time. In that situation, he concluded, with emotion trembling in his voice, he was now even more grateful to be among Friends witnessing against the war. (In a smaller, spillover meeting held in an adjoining room, a mother stood and told a similar story.)

♦ Another mother told of the shock when her daughter came home from first grade full of the news that everyone was to wear red-white-and-blue clothes to school the next day, because a video was to be made of them singing patriotic songs, to be sent to the general in Saudi Arabia. And **she**, the girl added excitedly, had been chosen as class leader for the performance.

Why me? her mother lamented. How could she let her daughter join in such a militaristic display? But how could she explain to a six year-old why she was uneasy about it? The next day, she kept her daughter home, over loud objections, and filed a complaint with the school.

FENDING OFF THE FLASHBACKS

♦ A Quaker teacher spoke with deep feeling about having in his fifth grade classroom an Iraqi, a Palestinian, and a Jewish student, and of grappling with the crosscurrents of reactions as the war continued.

♦ A Friend was reprimanded by his supervisor at work for attempting to put up flyers about the antiwar march. Another Friend, employed in publishing, has declined assignments to help prepare publications that she felt were mainly war propaganda. How many times can she do this, she worries, before her job is in jeopardy?

You get the idea. There were also reports, particularly from among the veterans of anti-Vietnam protests, of strong emotional reactions to the coming of war: depression, nightmares, flashbacks of painful memories.

It is no wonder, then, that a repeated theme in the discussion was that Friends should avoid speech or actions that promote polarization

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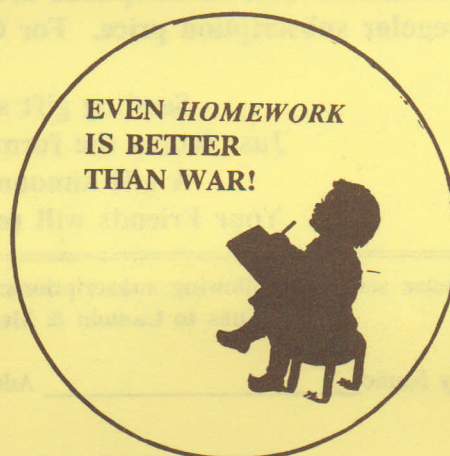
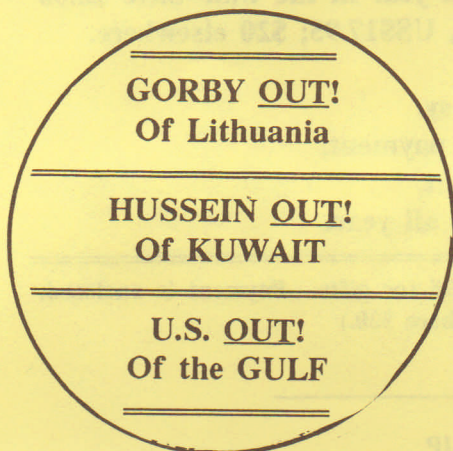
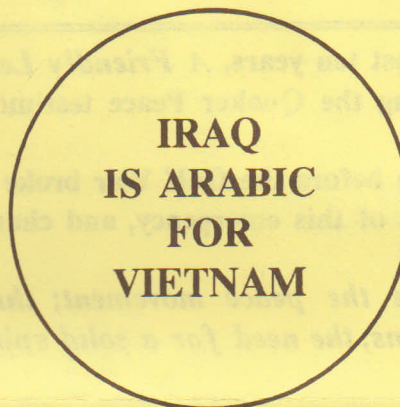
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between those supporting the war and those opposing it. It is not only bad tactics; it doesn't fit the truth of our situation, or our values.

This predicament may also account for the fact that many Friends spoke of the experience of gathered spiritual community they found at the Consultation as its most significant outcome. "For now, I don't feel so isolated," was a repeated comment.

All was not simply warm fuzzies, however. On First Day, more than a dozen interest groups gathered to generate ideas and start networks. They reported back, not to formulate some grand strategy (this was, after all, a group of Quakers), but to share ideas, evoke more thinking and encourage local response. Here are a few of the topics addressed and suggestions offered:

FINDING STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

♦ Addressing the need for local meeting response to the increased personal and spiritual needs of members in wartime. Many meetings reported increases in attendance, suggesting this seeking of community support is a widespread phenomenon. Responses could take the form of midweek worship-sharing meetings, in which attenders could process their reactions. Or it could include outward witness: In Baltimore, Stony Run and Homewood Meetings mounted a candlelight vigil one night as war approached. The vigil was repeated, first weekly, then oftener, with growing attendance and even media attention, till at last report it was running five nights per week, followed by a brief meeting for worship.

♦ Offering support to those with family members in the Gulf. A Washington Friend overcame much trepidation and organized a prayer/discussion group among her coworkers, most of whom are black, and many of whom have family members in the military. Many concrete needs were surfaced there.

♦ Related to this, demand is growing for trained counselors to work with GIs pursuing CO claims or hardship cases. This was deemed to be

more of a problem than draft counseling, as George Bush has repeatedly stated he does not intend to reinstitute conscription (but remember: *Read His Lips*). Several organizations are conducting counselor training programs, and all report being swamped with inquiries--and all need money. (Three of these groups are: CCCO, 2208 South St., Philadelphia PA 19146. Western Office: PO Box 44249, San Francisco CA 94142. NISBCO, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington DC 20009. And WRL, 339 Lafayette St., NY 10012.)

♦ Speaking Truth to Media was another strongly-voiced concern. This is more than the old complaint about underreporting the size of marches.

GETTING THE TRUTH SPOKEN

(Though this is bad enough: Besides minimizing the DC march, the national media all but ignored a rally of equal or greater size in San Francisco the same day). Many Friends, including this one, were most upset by the way journalists have knuckled under to the Pentagon's censorship, management and sanitizing of war news, and ideas were discussed for approaching local and national media to plead and prod for more truthful and inclusive coverage.

Such truth-speaking could begin with dogged publicizing of the cost of the war: David McReynolds of the War Resisters League calculated that at over half a billion dollars a day (there are, incidentally, no reliable figures publicly available yet), that's **over \$300 per month for every American household!** This incredible "off-budget" expenditure, when the federal government pleads poverty whenever health and childcare, or jobs and education and housing needs are mentioned, is truly outrageous.

♦ Quaker-Muslim-Jewish dialogue (trialogue?). We were urged to speak with and listen to persons and groups from all the major faiths in the Middle East. This might lead eventually to some useful role in lessening tensions in the region, though we have much to learn first.

♦ Networking and mutual support: The idea of developing a national

information clearinghouse on peace action among Friends was raised; its purpose would be to diminish the sense of isolation, and share what we're doing; but it is not clear yet how this might be done, or by whom.

♦ More concrete was the proposal for travelling peace "museums," portable displays that could be easily set up in meetinghouses, shopping malls, schools and other places. This idea came from Tom Hughes of Great Falls, Virginia, who with his wife Meredith developed a Potato Museum that drew nationwide attention. He believes younger people (and many older ones too) lack a sense of context and history for peace action. Friends have the history, but usually we don't see it, or share it much in an informational way with those outside. (This project is already getting underway; for a sample, see **Quaker Chuckles**, on the next page; for information write Peace Museum, Box 791, Great Falls, VA 22066.

SNAPSHOTS OF THE BIG PICTURE

♦ On Saturday night, counsel was offered by a panel of three longtime activists: Joe Volk of the Friends Committee on National Legislation noted that after a flood of antiwar calls and letters to Congress during the prewar debate, the phones had since fallen silent; it is time to call and write again. And Dave McReynolds, of the War Resisters League, pointed out that the current show of public support is deceptive; in fact the American establishment is deeply divided over the war, which presents opportunities for new alliances and creative forms of protest, if we can seize them.

Jim Matlack, of the American Friends Service Committee, called us to nurture our spiritual roots and to be steadfast in our opposition, despite the rush of prowar sentiment now sweeping the public. "The war is still wrong," he reminded us.

Steadfastness, spiritual roots, varied forms, local emphasis: these seem to be the salient features of early Quaker peace witness on the Gulf War, as expressed in these gatherings. For my money, they add up to an encouraging prospect.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS--
BRING THEM HOME NOW!

FIRST CLASS MAIL

INSIDE: A REPORT ON THE EMERGENCY
QUAKER PEACE CONSULTATION,
AND OUR FIRST NON-QUAKER
QUAKER OF THE YEAR

Address Correction Requested

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter
P.O. Box 1361
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THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

Wormwood Scrubbs is a name right out of Dickens; what else could it be but a British prison? There in Second Month 1917, William Littleboy was beginning a term as a draft refuser. Numerous other Quaker resisters ended up there, and it was said that one of the largest Friends meetings in the London area in those years was gathered behind Wormwood Scrubbs's dreary walls.

Littleboy was over thirty, had long been an active Friend, and had just finished his training as an accountant. In the early months, Littleboy's letters to his family were full of optimism and even humor. The prison, he wrote, was *"more like a camping opportunity than anything else....I am disposed to laugh at one thing after another...I suppose when wars...are all things of the past, the world as a whole will shout with laughter as we are constantly tempted to do."*

When wars are all things of the past. Littleboy exemplified the liberal progressive worldview of so many educated persons of his time. As one historian described them, they believed that *"the war would end only when a sufficient number of people became convinced, by argument or example, that war, as an affront both to human reason and the Divine Will, was always wrong...."*

For many liberals this optimism was shattered by the course of the war. William Littleboy was no exception: He spent 28 months in prison, and he soon came to doubt that war was, in fact, becoming obsolete. But this loss of illusions did not lead him to despair; instead, he found his inward life deepening, and his understanding of Quaker pacifism becoming steadily more religious. *"Our message,"* he wrote in 1918, *"must center in God. We shall grasp it only as we begin to understand Jesus...."*

Twenty-five years later, Littleboy was Clerk of London yearly Meeting during another world war. A statement he made then expresses the deeper view he had come to after his years in Wormwood Scrubbs: *"The whole world is drawn into common suffering. Is there no way out of its evils but by waging war more ruthlessly? War is evil and wrong; military victory will not bring true peace. Cannot our common suffering make us aware of our common brotherhood? Let us turn from the terrible deeds we do to one another and seek one another's forgiveness. The way of friendship can overcome evil. We see it perfectly in Jesus Christ. Its cost was the Cross. The loyal spirit which faced the Cross showed us the triumphant power of God. For us as children of a common Father it is time to follow His lead."*

QUAKER CHUCKLES

Friends Tom and Meredith Hughes, who are working on the idea of portable Peace Museums(see inside), began their project at the 1/26 peace march, by writing down many of the striking and amusing messages they saw on posters in the crowd. Here is a sampling of some of the more memorable, though not necessarily the most Quakerly, ones they recorded:

The Crusades are back--can the Inquisition be far behind?

What if Kuwait's main export were broccoli?
Smart bombs cannot replace intelligent diplomacy.
Kuwaitus interruptus--George Bush pull out!

[On a large dog] Pets Against War/Millie, Where Are You?

The New World ODOR stinks!

If Saddam Hussein had used poison gas on abortion rights groups, George Bush would be appointing him to the Supreme Court.

My country invaded Indochina, Central America and the Middle East and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.

This is a bombin' nation.