

REAPING WHAT WE HAVE SOWN: "...the divorce rate around military installations has increased by as much as 60% [since the Gulf War], children of Persian Gulf veterans have been 'acting out' at school and substance abuse by the veterans and their family members also appears to be on the rise."

--Senate testimony reported in *Family Therapy News*, 10/1991.

A Friendly Letter

ISSUE NUMBER 126

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ELEVENTH MONTH, 1991

Dear Friend,

Can you bear another report about "Realignment"? I hope it's the last: an obituary and post-mortem. The obituary comes from Richmond, Indiana and the Friends United Meeting board meetings last month. There the proposal by Southwest Yearly Meeting to merge FUM with the Evangelical Friends International and slough off its five unprogrammed YMs in the process (cf. AFLs #119, 123, 125), was given a quiet, almost unnoticed burial.

And there's more good news: The board agreed to hold its sessions next spring in the form of a retreat, skipping most business to focus on prayerful and extended consideration of FUM's future, and the many issues it faces within its large and diverse constituency.

What a good idea, for a change. Approaching the tensions over biblical interpretation, homosexuality, women's spirituality and so forth in a spirit of mutual seeking and humility is bound to yield, at the least, an improved sense of community among the various YM delegates. And if this gathering will also look at some of the problems created by differences in religious culture between pastoral and nonpastoral Friends groups, then it could really get somewhere. Increasingly it seems to me that these structural differences could well be the unacknowledged source of half the troubles in FUM.

Here's what I mean: When a Superintendent comes to the FUM Board meetings, this is part of his job. He's a professional in his field, a former pastor, used to taking care of institutional problems by dealing with other professionals, mainly pastors and superintendents.

But at the Board meeting he is seated next to someone from one of FUM's mainly unprogrammed YMs, who is perhaps a librarian, or maybe a postal worker. She's an "amateur," taking time off to represent a yearly meeting which has thousands of members and dozens of monthly meetings--but not a single pastor.

The superintendent may find himself asking, quite sincerely, such questions as: *How do such people get anything done? And what is it that they do? And how do I work with them to get anything done here?* (At the same time, the unprogrammed librarian is probably looking at the superintendent and wondering much the same thing.)

Such questions lack the flash and sex appeal of wrangles over, say, Wicca or gay marriage; but they can be just as real, and problematic. So let us hope they too can find a place on the agenda of the FUM retreat.

Also at the board meetings, FUM General Secretary Steve Main tendered his resignation, effective next Sixth Month. The Board, however, decided not to accept it. Explanations for this from members varied, from anxiety that his departure would provoke some YMs to leave FUM, to wanting to let him finish out his three year term, to hopes that he might be able to adjust constructively to the reality of FUM shown by the demise of his "realignment" scheme.

This last is a very open question. Much of FUM's troubles have been due to the inability of some, such as Main, to accept the fact of its diversity and the refusal of its membership to submit to a creedal yoke as imposed by self-selected guardians of orthodoxy. This was shown decisively in 1987, when the call to reaffirm the Richmond Declaration of Faith was turned aside. Main almost refused reappointment then, doubting that FUM was sufficiently "Christian." His "realignment" push was another attempt to resolve the doubts by setting up a new creedal framework; and now it too has been overwhelmingly rejected. Clearly, seeking together, not submitting to imposed orthodoxy, is the way FUM has chosen to go. Can he, after all this time, get the message?

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

Correction and clarification: Two items in our last issue need clarification: One, Ardith and Dick Talbot were not brought to the FUM staff by Steve Main; they came before he was General Secretary; he did promote them to their current positions. Also, in Des Moines First Friends Church, there had been some membership conflicts and decline before the arrival of the pastor referred to in the article; but the main point of the report, about the near-demise of the church during his tenure, was as described.

ABORTION AND CIVIL WAR: PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER ROE

There is much in American Quaker history to be proud of. Battles for religious freedom, Penn's pioneering democracy, fair treatment of Native Americans, the near-invention of feminism--the list is a long one. And in this catalog, few items do more for our collective humble pride than Friends' work against slavery. For adults reading the history books, there is the Germantown antislavery minute of 1688; and few Quaker children can attend many sessions of their Yearly meetings without hearing tales of the Underground Railroad; plus there are a thousand fascinating, and often inspiring details in between.

Yet, in my experience, the typical treatment of this history among Friends today is unsophisticated, even naive. For one thing, we often forget, or don't know, how controversial such activity was among Friends at the time. Indiana Yearly Meeting, for instance, actually split in two in 1843 due to disagreements over whether lawbreaking (i.e., the Underground Railroad), was an acceptable Quaker antislavery witness. Similar controversies raged in other YMs, though they managed to avoid division.

SOWING SOME SEEDS OF WAR

For another thing, we are generally unaware of how much some abolitionist rhetoric and attitudes fueled the polarization and extremism which ultimately aborted the chance for a peaceful end to slavery and produced the Civil War. Anxiety about just such an outcome was a factor in some Friends' opposition to militant abolitionism; and who is to say they were mistaken? This is an important point, because slavery was ended elsewhere in the West without such internecine violence. Thus if Friends get some of the credit for the abolitionist movement, we also must take a share of the responsibility for its failure to manage a peaceful outcome.

Coming to terms with the nuances and ambiguities of this piece of our history is worth doing, just for the sake of an enhanced self-understanding. But in 1991 it should be of particular interest because the

same language, logic and outcome are being used as a paradigm for shaping current social struggles, in a deliberate and ominous way. We need to understand them, if we're to play our part more effectively this time.

To get at what I'm talking about, consider the following scenario:

In Eleventh Month, 1992, just after George Bush's re-election, Roe vs. Wade is reversed. The newest Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas, provides not the crucial fifth vote, but a sixth vote to match the original six-to-three decision with a mirror image rejection.

The next day, laws in Louisiana, Utah, and Guam go into effect, as planned, outlawing virtually all abortions. Clinics there close down, their staffs contemplate pink slips and polish up their resumes. Anti-abortion crusaders celebrate with an outpouring that threatens to dwarf the triumphalism of the parades after Desert Storm.

A NEW SHOW TRIAL

But soon enough, the anti-abortionists' euphoria fades. Many states still permit abortions; several even continue to pay for them. Traffic across state borders by women seeking abortions is heavy, just as it was in the last years prior to Roe. The anti-abortionists' job, it seems, is not done after all.

And then new threats appear. Underground networks of feminist do-it-yourself abortionists emerge in outlaw states, showing women how to do menstrual extractions, helping them get to legal abortion states, smuggling in RU-486 abortion pills from France, even conducting secret medical abortions with volunteer physicians. This work is done behind a screen of silence that would do credit to the CIA.

But not all pro-abortion work is clandestine. In Louisiana, a militant doctor sets up a makeshift clinic in her house, finds a volunteer patient, calls in the press, and performs an abortion. Arrested and charged, her case becomes an international cause célèbre, attracting hordes of media and activists on both

sides to New Orleans.

The doctor's first trial ends in a hung jury; abortion backers are hopeful. But at a retrial she is convicted, and a Catholic judge gives her the maximum sentence: 10 yrs in prison at hard labor, and a \$100,000 fine. Pro-abortion supporters are outraged and appalled; anti-abortionists are gratified: this shows they mean business.

But if the Louisiana conviction shows their potential strength, it is also an isolated victory: in most states, legal abortions are continuing. Attention soon shifts to these states. A few months after the Louisiana trial, Operation Rescue announces that its next major targets for demonstrations will be clinics in Camden, New Jersey, which have flourished since Pennsylvania's restrictive antiabortion laws were upheld.

HEEDING A CALL TO ARMS

Pro-abortion forces mobilize to counter the Camden protests. Angry exchanges, then shoving matches break out between the two groups; police struggle to keep them apart and the clinics open. Tensions rise.

Then, during the second week of the protests, the director of Camden's largest clinic leaves her home, gets into her car, turns the key in the ignition, and is blown to bits by a bomb.

The Rescue leaders denounce the bombing. But at the funeral, an angry feminist leader declares, "We will not stand for any more killing of women. Women will defend themselves and their rights. If the anti-choice forces want a second civil war, they will have one." She adds that she prefers nonviolence; but a few reporters are shown that she and her closest aides are all armed.

* * * * *

A second civil war? Isn't such talk a rhetorical exaggeration, inflammatory language like that alluded to above as an unfortunate aspect of the abolitionist movement in our Quaker past?

I certainly hope this scenario turns out to be exaggerated, though it

seems all-too plausible to me. (Take show trials, for instance: some may recall the celebrated case of Dr. Kenneth Edelin, a black physician who was convicted of manslaughter in 1975 after performing an abortion. His trial was in Boston; he was given a suspended sentence.)

As for talk of a "second civil war," of course it *is* inflammatory, but the imagined feminist militant above was only repeating a phrase that is already increasingly common currency among their anti-abortion adversaries.

For years in fact, leading anti-abortionists have made conscious and frequent use of the language and concepts of warfare, especially the Civil War. And if, as conservatives have long insisted, "ideas have consequences," the direction of their ideas, in this increasingly volatile and turbulent situation, is ominous indeed.

A PERSONAL ODYSSEY

My concern with this issue, however, is more than simply religious or journalistic. It is also personal: For a number of years in the mid-seventies I described myself as anti-abortion, or rather, "pro-life." (Nowadays, as part of my own reconsidered stance, I use the terms *pro-abortion* and *anti-abortion*, because they seem to me most truthful, and because the terms "pro-life" and "pro-choice" carry deliberate propaganda messages which I do not wish to perpetuate.)

At that time I considered the anti-abortion movement in a real sense an extension and successor of the civil rights and antiwar movements I had worked in during the 1960s. This conviction was strengthened when I met a number of prominent young anti-abortion activists who shared a similar background and outlook. Such people then included, it is worth noting, Jesse Jackson and comedian Dick Gregory.

In the summer of 1974, I was asked to conduct what were probably the very first workshops on nonviolent direct action as an anti-abortion strategy, at a regional conference of the National Youth Pro-life Coalition in Boston. The workshop made use of my then newly-published book, *Selma 1965*:

The March That Changed the South (Scribner's). When participants in those workshops later helped organize the first abortion clinic sit-ins, in a Washington, D.C. suburb, their early flyers cited this book as a source.

I did not join in any of these actions, though, and as the anti-abortion movement evolved into the 1980s, I began to have misgivings, as did Jesse Jackson, about its wisdom and direction. In the early 1980s, I reported on the forging of the alliance between the antiabortion movement and the new religious right, and this reporting very much deepened my doubts about the direction and promise of the crusade. When this alliance gave rise to abolitionist rhetoric and civil war imagery, I came to feel the movement was becoming more a part of the problem than a way toward a solution. Its leadership cadres seemed increasingly prepared to destroy our society in order to save it.

TOWARD A NEW CIVIL WAR

Finally, in 1987 I tried to express my sense of the tragic wrong turns taken by the movement, and my foreboding at its trajectory, in an essay. *The New Republic* published part of it, the sections dealing with my plea for a turn from what I call the "Prohibitionist" approach toward a "Persuasionist" effort like the campaign against the spread of AIDS. The title of the full essay, which some readers may have seen, was "*Abortion and Civil War*."

The "Civil War" in the title could have been taken from many pieces of antiabortion writing, going back several years. But in 1991 its use is particularly prominent and important in the work of Dr. James Dobson, head of the group Focus on the Family. Since the televangelism scandals of the late 1980s tarnished many of the stars of the religious new right, Dobson has emerged from the pack as one of their most formidable figures. He broadcasts on 1500-plus radio stations, publishes a magazine and a political action newsletter, and has sold millions of copies of books advocating his version of traditional family values. In his book, *Children at Risk* (Word Books, 1990), co-authored with former Reagan administration official Gary Bauer, he

gave new prominence to civil war rhetoric in the movement.

Children At Risk was on the Christian Booksellers Association's bestseller list for ten months, through last winter and spring, leading up to the disruptive anti-abortion protests in Wichita, Kansas, and is still selling briskly. Its rhetoric is forthright. "America is involved in a Second Civil War," shouts the back cover; the dust jacket proclaims that "*We are enmeshed in a civil war that will determine which value system will guide our nation. And someday soon, a winner will emerge and the loser will fade from memory.*"

Chapter Two, redundantly titled "*The Second Great Civil War*," asserts that "*Nothing short of a great Civil War of Values rages today throughout North America. Two sides with vastly different and incompatible worldviews are locked in a bitter conflict that permeates every level of society. Bloody battles are being fought on a thousand fronts....Open any daily newspaper and you'll find accounts of the latest Gettysburg, Waterloo, Normandy, or Stalingrad.*" There is much more of this throughout the book's 291 pages.

THE NEW CHORUS FOR WAR

Dobson and Bauer may be the most prominent such voices, but they are hardly alone. Richard Neuhaus, the movement's self-styled highbrow theologian, in his *The Naked Public Square* (Eerdmans, 1984) cites philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's thesis that our society is near the point where "*politics becomes civil war carried on by other means*," adding that "*...it is possible that our politics could become ...civil war carried on by means of civil war.*" Then there was Pat Swindall, former Georgia Congressman. His 1987 book, *A House Divided* (Nelson)--note the allusion to Lincoln's famous quote of Matthew 12:25, a common refrain--added to this litany a demand that the death penalty should be applied "*equally, consistently and expeditiously*" to all those who take life by abortion.

Conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan compared American society in 1988 to the West Bank, where Israelis and Palestinians claw at each other in mutual hatred. A similar

polarization, he said, "is behind America's second civil war, a war unlikely to remain civil very long." And Randall Terry, head of Operation Rescue, told an interviewer for *Time's* 10/21/91 issue flatly that, "We're involved in a cultural civil war."

Along with civil war rhetoric, the anti-abortionists also frequently use the Nazi holocaust as a guiding metaphor. Dobson and Bauer are typical: "...what would you have done as a citizen of Germany in the Second World War? The Nazi extermination camps were 'legal.'...This is the way we feel about the slaughter of 25 million unborn children....And someday, the moral issues involved here will be as clear to the world as the Nazi holocaust is today."

Perhaps so; but what should also be clear is that, if anti-Nazi Americans were called to wage total war on Hitler, not shrinking from dropping atomic weapons on his Japanese allies, why should anti-abortion Americans be expected to stick to nonviolence against an evil which they are continually told is at least as bad as the Nazi holocaust, if not worse? Last year Saddam Hussein was compared to Hitler, and we saw what happened there!

HITLER, HUSSEIN, AND US

No; while Dobson, Bauer, Terry and company frequently avow their dedication to "nonviolence," the images and logic of their rhetoric point unmistakably toward war, civil war. And when their followers discover that a reversal of *Roe v. Wade* will not in fact achieve their ends, I believe the internal stress on their version of nonviolent discipline will rapidly rise toward the breaking point.

The history of nonviolent movements offers plenty of support for such apprehensions. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. frequently had to struggle to restrain his angrier followers from retaliating against white violence; this I know from firsthand experience. And he did not always succeed. Indeed, in his final years, as the strain of Vietnam and urban riots pulled at our society, he felt he was losing this struggle on almost every side. Similar currents overtook Gandhi in India.

Is there a peculiar Quaker slant

on all this? If so, it won't be to line up all Friends on one side of the issue; we are as divided about it as any other group. Most (but not all!) unprogrammed Friends lean toward the pro-abortion side, while most (but not all!) pastoral Friends lean the other way. Those with strong convictions can hardly be expected to keep quiet about them; our whole tradition tells against that. But then, when the bugle blows, do we simply sign up with one "army" or the other and march off to the next battle in the "new civil war"?

In truth, once cannonballs fell on Fort Sumter in 1861, that's just what most draft-age male Friends did; and while it may be presumptuous to sit in judgement of them now, who would argue that this was the finest hour for the Quaker Peace Testimony? So if there is a lesson for Friends in that last go-round, I suggest it is that we should bend our efforts--from whichever point on the spectrum at which we find ourselves--toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Nice enough in theory, that; but what might it mean in practice? Rather than spin more scenarios, let's look at a living example, namely Friend Rachel MacNair of Penn Valley Meeting.

LIGHT IN KANSAS CITY

Rachel MacNair was raised a "generic Protestant," by peace-oriented parents. Joining anti-Vietnam protests brought her to Penn Valley Meeting in Kansas City at the age of 14, almost twenty years ago. From there she went on to Earlham College, where she was one of the first to graduate with a peace and conflict studies major.

She's still both a committed peacenik and a committed Quaker. But along the way, her opposition to killing in wars led to a conviction against killing in abortion. And in 1984 this combined with Quaker feminism to bring her to accept the presidency of a group called Feminists For Life.

Feminists For Life (FFL), which I remember as a still-embryonic circle of women back the 1970s, has grown steadily, MacNair says, to a membership of about 3000, with chapters in most states. (For more information, write

FFL at 811 E. 47th St., Suite AA, Kansas City, MO 64110.)

FFL's newsletter, *Sisterlife*, gives a good idea of what the group is about. The latest issue features an article by a "non-believing Humanist" explaining how opposition to the Gulf War has pushed her toward opposing abortion as well. MacNair contributes a critique of various current antifeminist notions, showing why she believes they not only help justify abortion but are also oppressive to men as well as women. All in all, not your usual rightwing screed--and not a hint of civil war talk.

This last is no surprise. MacNair dislikes "military metaphors," preferring images from Gandhi and Martin Luther King. FFL is part of the antiabortion movement's progressive tendency, which has been all but submerged in the dominant rightwing alliance of the movement since the early 1980s. *Sisterlife*, for instance, is printed on recycled paper; its masthead announces that it opposes equally "the violence of war, abortion, poverty, euthanasia, and the death penalty."

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LEFT

MacNair, by no means a rightwinger herself, is philosophical about this alliance: "It's the left's own fault if proliferers have gone with the right," she says. "They welcomed us, where the left kept telling us to take a walk." And she has a point: one of FFL's founders was expelled from the National Organization for Women when she spoke up about her antiabortion beliefs. Hardly NOW's finest hour.

Still, let there be no mistake: Rachel MacNair is an articulate, informed, militant and dedicated antiabortion activist. She's the antithesis of the stereotypical mushminded, ineffectual Quaker do-gooder. Rather, she's the sort of Friend that a real doer like Lucretia Mott would cotton to in an instant. (Indeed, *Sisterlife* regularly reprints anti-abortion statements by famous feminist foremothers; there are lots of them.)

While she hasn't joined the "Rescues", MacNair was arrested five times in earlier clinic protests. She says the Rescues help keep the issue in the

An Urgent Letter From Susan Stark

R.R. 2, Box 927-D
Canaan, NH 03741
603-632-4764

November 5, 1991

Dear Friends,

Hi. This is a cry for help!

If you've enjoyed Child of the Nuclear Age, and/or Rainbow People, and/or you're one of those many folks who have been urging me to do more recording and performing--here's your chance to help it happen.

We're 95% done with a new album, my third, Canción de la Loba (Song of the She-Wolf). This album is about faith, trust and courage, and I want very much to be able to share it widely. Among the songs on it are a new version of Live Up to the Light; Thanks, which is a tribute to The Creative Spirit; a love song, Kiss Me In the Sunshine; and that Quaker favorite, How Can I Keep From Singing? Eight of the songs came from Quaker songwriters.

The title song, Canción de la Loba, is a kind of tone poem by Christopher King of Hartford Meeting, and it offers a metaphor for some of the experiences of people in Central America. When I sang it for the Latin Friends at the Elspeat, Holland gathering of the Friends World Conference last summer, I was very moved by their response; many were in tears. I hope you will be moved by it as well.



For me, singing is the most immediate way, along with going into the Living Silence, that I know of to tap into the Spirit. Singing is my work, my calling, my bliss. It's a way to share my journey and my community with others. And there's an even more exciting aspect to this project as well:

Completion of Cancion de la Loba will mark the transition to a new stage in my vocation as a Quaker musician. It's been almost ten years since Child of the Nuclear Age was recorded. Now our children Satya and Krystal are in school, our house in the woods is (mostly) built, and I can look toward doing more concerts, more traveling, more dealing with music industry people, and more recording, to expand the audience with which I can share my music and my journey.

I've already made some very promising and supportive professional acquaintances. These include a Friend

and successful businessman here in New Hampshire who is working with me, and a fine and reputable entertainment attorney in Boston. We are proceeding, carefully and cautiously, to formulate a business plan and obtain financial backing for a full-fledged career launching effort.

The new album is a crucial preliminary to this process. We've gone ahead on faith, trusting that the money to complete it would be there through our fundraising efforts. That's been true up through the end of October! Many of you have responded joyously and generously, and \$11,000 has come in, mostly in the form of loans. However, we underestimated the time and expense that would be involved, and to finish the album we need \$10,000 more, and right away!

Right now I'm feeling both exhilarated and panicky about Canción de la Loba. Exhilarated by the quality and spirit of the album that is emerging, and panicky about getting it finished and honoring all these wonderful orders that keep coming in. If we can find the funds, we are within a few days' work of completing the master tape, so it can go to be duplicated. The cover artwork is done and camera ready. The whole thing is so close I can hardly stand it!

Part of the remaining funds needed will come from prepaid orders, which are coming in every day, in a heartwarming and delightful response to our recent mailing. (If you haven't placed an order, we hope you will do so soon. It's \$10.00 for cassettes--\$15 for the CD version, which we will produce as soon as we can--and \$2.00 per order for shipping. The earlier tapes are also available, at the same price.)

To meet the bulk of these final production costs, though, we must ask for more of our Friends to offer us loans or grants. For grants, I'm a project of Spectrum-Arts and Education for Peace, a nonprofit organization here in New Hampshire. Thus any gift can be tax-deductible, if made payable to Spectrum--earmarked for Susan Stark Music-Cancion de la Loba and sent to Box 295, Norwich VT 05055.

All donors and lenders will receive a copy of the new album. And loans will be repaid through from the proceeds of tape sales and concert fees; I'm hoping to do at least fifty concerts through next summer, and perhaps more. Loan repayment arrangements will be part of my business plan.

Won't you help me finish this album, whose quality and message we hope will engage the hearts and minds of many? My heartfelt thanks to you for all your past support, and your consideration now in helping me bring this dream to fruition.



Sincerely Yours,

Susan E. Stark

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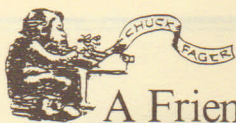
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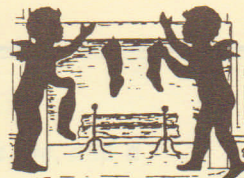


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media and the pressure on abortion clinics. Every clinic shut down, she says, means fewer abortions. In the meantime, other groups, like FFL, work to change people's minds and get anti-abortion laws passed.

But wait a minute, I hear you say--what about her meeting? Penn Valley is a very unprogrammed and mainly liberal meeting, part of Iowa Conservative YM's new wave. (See AFL#60 for background on Iowa YM.) Surely her views are not typical there?

True enough; and here we get to an important point. MacNair's work and views are no secret at Penn Valley, as are the pro-abortion views of some others there. When the issue comes up, she speaks up. But mostly she doesn't. This despite the fact that she is not alone there in her views; one quiet but firm supporter, she says, was a gay Friend who recently died of AIDS. Moreover, while she has given many interviews and speeches on FFL and abortion, she has not proselytized much among Friends elsewhere either.

THE SOCIETY AND THE SOCIETY

Her reticence here is significant, I think, because of a factor she did not articulate: Penn Valley Meeting's role as her base community through thick and thin for almost twenty years. It is where her six-year old son has gone to child care and First Day School since he was born. She affirmed this factor when we talked about Desert Storm: "*When the Gulf War broke, Friends meeting was the place to be, just to keep your sanity,*" she says, voicing a sentiment heard from many a Quaker.

At the same time, she seems to sense the fragility of these bonds of community. And few issues are as destructive of community today as abortion. If Penn Valley is like most such meetings, pushing this issue there could easily tear it apart, as Indiana YM split in 1843, or leave her isolated from it. And what would that accomplish?

As it is, Penn Valley's support for MacNair, without agreement, is impressive. Last year, for example, her application for special needs adoption was rejected. Asking why, she was told an anonymous informant had warned

the social workers she was "unstable" and liable to advance her views by violence (e.g., clinic bombings).

MacNair appealed the rejection and asked the meeting for help. In response, Penn Valley drafted a letter to the adoption agency attesting to her stability, respect for the views of others, and longstanding commitment to nonviolence. The letter was drafted by a lesbian Friend publicly committed to pro-abortion positions. Several individual Friends also wrote supportive letters. MacNair won her appeal.

You can't buy that kind of solidarity; nor could a recommendation from Feminists For Life, with its partisan stance, have carried the same weight. So MacNair's relatively subdued presence in her meeting highlights in microcosm the larger thesis of this essay:

NONVIOLENT, OR PRE-VIOLENT?

If there is a distinctive Quaker contribution to be made in this struggle, in which we are ourselves divided, it is most likely to be in the area where we fell short in the abolition struggle--in helping keep the struggle as peaceful--or at least as minimally violent--as possible. Protecting the larger social fabric is as important in its way as the smaller circle of a meeting; the Civil War is the proof of that.

Rachel MacNair insists, as I expected she would, that even with the militancy of Operation Rescue, the anti-abortion movement has remained mainly nonviolent. The "*overheated rhetoric about war*" is just talk, she says, and not something to worry about. She adds that the few identified clinic bombers have been universally condemned by antiabortion leaders.

To some extent she has a point: apocalyptic hyperbole is a staple of rightwing rhetoric, especially for fundraising. But overall I must beg to differ. This case, I believe, has gone too far. The language and concepts have become part of the common currency of the movement, and are pushing it as a social force in paths that, once entered on, are difficult to stop. I have read comments by

antiabortion leaders which were very coy about opposing clinic bombings. For another, my reading of antebellum Quaker history suggests otherwise. And not least, in my experience in the civil rights movement under Dr. King, when violent rhetoric came in (not from him), the movement began its slide into the dark night of riots and a white backlash that continues to this day. Listen to Randall Terry rant about "*FemiNazis*" and calling a Wichita clinic director a "*demonized baby-killer*" who should be "*doing hard time*"; Dr. King never talked about George Wallace that way.

So Rachel MacNair would be a Quaker CO in Dobson's civil war; good. But she should be working harder to prevent it. Neither Dobson, Bauer, Buchanan, Neuhaus nor Terry has any real combat experience. MacNair is well-positioned to point out how they are playing with fire and dynamite.

BOTH SIDES NOW--OR SOON

Pro-abortion groups have been slower to pick on up the "military metaphors," but they are catching up. For that matter, Operation Rescue supporters have complained bitterly of brutal treatment by police dragging them away from their demonstrations. Gary Bauer says he received numerous death threats after defending "traditional families" on a TV show. So the potential for violence from the other side is very real too.

All that's lacking now, to continue the analogy, are equivalents to Dred Scott and John Brown. Anti-abortionists consider *Roe* their Dred Scott decision. But pro-abortionists will think that way about its repeal. And *Roe*'s days seem clearly numbered.

As to John Brown, I read of his name being evoked during the Wichita Operation Rescue actions last summer. This could only have been done by a person dangerously ignorant of history: Brown did take his abolition crusade to that state, in 1856--and left a pile of corpses in his wake. Not for nothing did they call it "Bleeding Kansas."

Another portent? I don't know. But Brown had his Quaker fellow travelers too. Ideas have consequences, Friends, and I'm worried.

INSIDE: Life In America After Roe--
Gearing Up for the "Second Civil War"

Forwarding & Address Correction Requested

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter
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THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

By 1838, it was risky to advocate the abolition of slavery in much of the South, including North Carolina, and Harriet Peck knew this as well as anyone. Peck, a young Rhode Island Friend, was a teacher at the New Garden Friends Boarding School, then only a year old.

How risky was it? Well, the bloody Nat Turner slave rebellion in 1831 had left most slaveholders very anxious about their security, and they had taken strong steps to prevent or suppress any new rebellions. The atmosphere this paranoia produced was described by a keen-eyed Yankee visitor, Frederick Law Olmsted, thus:

"In [southern cities], the citizens are as careless and gay as in Boston or London, and their servants a thousand times as childlike and cordial...as our servants are with us. But go to the bottom of this security and dependence, and you come to police machinery such as you never find in towns under free government: citadels, sentries, passports, grape-shotted cannon, and daily public whippings for accidental infractions of police ceremonies."

Besides keeping the slaves in bounds, southern lawmakers had also moved to keep subversive ideas out of their minds. William Lloyd Garrison, Yankee editor of the abolitionist paper **The Liberator**, was indicted in

absentia in North Carolina for stirring up insurrection; not to be outdone, the Georgia assembly put a price on his head. To further neutralize such seditious literature, it was made a crime to teach slaves to read or write.

Notwithstanding all this official opposition, in Eleventh Month, 1838, the Womens Yearly Meeting of Friends in North Carolina sent a petition to the state legislature which urged it to mandate "*the speedy termination of slavery in this state.*" Behind this petition (which the male solons, of course, ignored) was a steady, if discreet drumbeat of agitation by the New Garden School teachers, Harriet Peck among them.

But Peck and her colleagues did more than talk. She regularly circulated copies of **The Liberator** and other antislavery broadsides. Soon she had helped set up a weekly school for local slaves, in open defiance of the law. And she often confronted local slaveholders with the need to repent for the sin of slavery.

Somehow Harriet Peck managed to do all this without facing personal violence. What more would she have done, how much better would she be remembered, if she had not caught pneumonia in 1839 after a visit to a plantation, and died at the age of twenty-five?

QUAKER CHUCKLE

An older Friend was walking past a revival tent, and, hearing loud preaching from within was drawn by curiosity to enter. There he saw an evangelist prowling the aisles, fervently denouncing the devil and his works, and urging his hearers to do the same.

"Stand up, if you hate the devil!" shouted the preacher. "Stand up to old Satan!" One by one all the spectators rose. All, that is, except the plain-dressed

Friend at the end of the back row.

The evangelist made his way to the rear and leaned over the seated Friend. "Won't you stand up, too?" he shouted. "Don't you hate the devil?"

"Yes, friend," the Quaker replied, "I hate the devil, and I would kill him too. But I see there are several clergymen present, and they have their families to support."