

A Friendly Letter

Issue Number Eighty-Three

ISSN #0739-5418

Second Month, 1988

Dear Friend,

Let's take a poll: You might have seen a report, in the 1/88 **Friends Journal**, on a recent informal dialogue between delegations from Friends General Conference and the Unitarian-Universalist Association. But you probably did **not** see the letters about it in the Unitarian magazine, the **U-U World**. I did though, and they were very enthusiastic about it. In fact, two wanted **action** instead of just talk between the two bodies. As one writer summed it up:

"I hope for eventual organic union...religious liberals need, more than ever, to consolidate their strength. I am not at all put off by minor differences in our background, and I think the name, Unitarian-Universalist Friends, has a nice ring to it."

I found this a very provocative suggestion. So, here's the question: Do **you** think "eventual, organic union" between FGC and the UUA would be:

- A. A **good** idea,
- B. A **bad** idea, or
- C. Have **no opinion**, and
- D. **Why**, or **Why not**? (Briefly.)

Related questions to ponder: Are Quaker-Unitarian differences really only minor? Can all FGC Friends be considered "religious liberals"? How does "Unitarian-Universalist Friend" sound to **you**? Let me know, and I will report the results, plus my own views, soon.

One other report needs to be updated: Last month we noted a rumor that FGC was on the verge of moving its offices out of Friends Center in Philadelphia. But the verge was as close as they came: Money concerns reportedly soured that deal, so FGC will be staying awhile at what some call the Quaker Vatican; but they're still looking.

Speaking of staying put, a booklet arrived recently from the prolific pen of Kenneth Boulding, Friend extraordinaire of Boulder, Colorado. It is a collection of autobiographical **Sonnets On Courtship, Marriage and Family**, published by Peaceable Kingdom Press, Box 5337, Bloomington IN 47407, for \$2.50. "In a century of tragedy," he writes, "it may seem almost indecent to record products of a very happy life. I met my princess, we were married, and with a few footnotes, lived happily ever after." Indecent? Hardly. Here we can sample only four of my favorite lines, from Number XXV:

"'Shall ye be happy in so vast a night,
How dare ye light a lamp when no stars
shine!'
But they who hold a torch need fear no
dark,
They can outlast the flood, who build an
ark."

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

THEY COME IN FORCE, WITH STEALTHY STRIDE

It would be all too easy to make a joke out of the latest revelations of FBI spying on groups that have challenged the administration's foreign policy, especially regarding Central America. At least, it would be easy as far as Friends are concerned.

Let's recall the background briefly: In 1981 the FBI began an investigation of a leftwing group called the Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), purportedly to find out whether it was sending aid to guerillas there. No evidence of such aid was ever discovered.

Yet despite its lack of results, the probe rapidly turned into a nationwide fishing expedition, involving surveillance of groups of many sorts which had little or nothing to do with CISPES. The whole thing came to public notice last month with something of a splash, when the Center For Constitutional Rights (CCR) in New York released a sheaf of documents the FBI had been forced to release as the result of a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.

The FBI's program was a sweeping one, authorized as a "Foreign Intelligence/Terrorism" inquiry. It included intensive physical surveillance, photographs, wiretaps, infiltration of meetings and monitoring of many other kinds of activity. In addition, the CCR had collected reports of more than 100 unsolved break-ins and burglaries during the past four years at offices and churches where protest activities were being organized.

And They've Got a Little List

It is not clear at this writing to what extent the FBI may have been involved in these burglaries, but they had the classic marks of intelligence "black bag jobs": Few valuables were taken, but many files and other records were stolen or destroyed.

FBI guidelines on domestic investigations supposedly rule out such break-ins without warrants. But CCR pointed out that investigations in the "Foreign Intelligence/Terrorism" category permit such "unconsented physical surveillance," as official jargon calls it. It is also known that the FBI has made increased use of "free-lance" private intelligence operators, who could have carried out some of the break-ins without having to worry about restraining regulations.

Among the documents released by CCR was a list of over 130 groups. This list had

been sent to all 59 FBI field offices to indicate who needed surveillance. Many of the groups on it were political, and so quite far to the left. There were also human rights and labor groups, including Amnesty International and the United Auto Workers. But at least 37 of the entries on the list were religious organizations, running the gamut from Catholic to Jewish to Muslim, with more Catholic than any other.

And of these 37, four were Quaker: **Twin Cities Meeting** in Minneapolis, MN; the **Dallas, TX, Friends Service Group**; the **Friends Peace Committee** of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; and a vaguely identified "**Friends Religious Society**" in Chicago. Other documents indicated that Friends from the **Jacksonville, Florida Meeting** and from **Oklahoma City** had also been targeted.

Forward On The Foe?

Just how intensive the surveillance of Quaker groups became is not yet clear; most documents had large areas blacked out, and many more have yet to come out. Even so, many aspects of this surveillance of Friends are little short of preposterous.

For one thing, it is not exactly difficult to find out what these groups have been up to: when I made phone calls to members of almost all the affected groups, they spoke openly about their efforts, and to some of them I was a complete stranger calling out of the blue. Besides which, most of them haven't exactly been trying to hide what they were doing. As Mary Day Kent of the Friends Peace Committee ironically put it: "We spend so much of our energy trying to communicate with the government anyway, and it looks like only the FBI is paying any attention."

Then, too, the list of their activities is neither very long nor, for that matter, very radical. It comes down to about what you would expect: Involvement in the Sanctuary movement by Dallas and Twin Cities; donations to various relief and reconstruction efforts by Jacksonville and 57th Street Meeting in Chicago. All had held meetings and discussions on Central America, and there was a Quaker-sponsored vigil at the Post Office in Oklahoma City. Most had had only minimal contact with CISPES, except for the Friends Peace Committee, which had been in coalitions with it in the Philadelphia area.

And not least on the silly side, there is Friends' organizational style, of which we

A SPECIAL REPORT ON JERRY FALWELL

With Jim and Tammy Bakker gone, and scandal now engulfing TV preacher Jimmy Swaggart, Rev. Jerry Falwell and his television ministry are emerging as the biggest survivors in this controversial field. But what of Falwell? Can his own record stand close scrutiny? And what are his plans for the future, especially once his close ally Ronald Reagan leaves the White House? Has he really "retired" from the Moral Majority and the New Christian Right?

Chuck Fager has looked into these questions, and put his answers into a special two-part, 25 page report. It examines Falwell's record of questionable fundraising tactics; it analyzes his newly-published autobiography for clues as to what drives Falwell; and outlines the hushed-up scandal that has demoralized the New Right.

This report is available now for \$5.00 postpaid. Use the coupon to order.

ORDER FORM

Please send me _____ Copy(ies) of Chuck Fager's Special report on Jerry Falwell. My payment of \$5.00 per copy, postpaid, is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

Mail to: Falwell Report, P.O. Box 1361,
Falls Church VA 22041

THREE SURPRISING STORIES ABOUT
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.--

- * Was Dr. King a Socialist?
- * Why was he so unafraid of death?
- * What did he learn from Gandhi about going to jail?

In 1965, Chuck Fager was a civil rights worker in Selma, Alabama. There he worked under Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., watching him closely during very tense hours, and spending a night with him in the Selma jail.

On 2/8/1986, Chuck Fager spoke about these experiences at Foulkeways, a Quaker retirement center in Pennsylvania. His talk, which recounted incidents not published anywhere else, focussed on the surprising answers to these three questions. It was also expertly recorded, and is now available on cassette for \$5.95 postpaid. Use the coupon to order:

— — — — —

ORDER FORM

Please send me ___cassette(s) of Chuck Fager's talk on Dr. Martin Luther King. \$5.95 is enclosed for each copy.

Send to: NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ ZIP _____

Send to: Fager Tape, P.O. Box 1361
Falls Church VA 22041

are so (humbly) proud, and which would make us surely one of the weakest links in any effective guerilla support network. Take Sanctuary, for instance: some meetings labored for months over whether to participate; and some who did have since spent more months reconsidering their action.

No, what the feds didn't understand is that any terrorist group dumb enough to look to us for real support would soon be out of business; by the time we got through with them they'd think they were trapped in a **Far Side** cartoon, and look to the FBI with relief. Perhaps this explains why no one I spoke to could recall any hard evidence of actual surveillance, though most took it for granted. After all, even FBI agents must occasionally realize when their time and our tax money is being wasted.

What, Never? Well, Hardly Ever

Only one group, the Friends For a Non-violent World (FNVW) in Minneapolis, reported any physical intrusions: A window was broken by a steel BB shot some time ago. But then, it is not officially a Quaker group, though it was started by and is still closely associated with local Friends.

Maybe this explains why no one seemed very worried about being watched. "We've talked about how to respond to this sort of thing at Twin Cities Meeting," said John Martinson of Minneapolis, "and my suggestion is that we put the FBI on our mailing list. Let's send them our minutes and newsletter." Ellen Danielson, former clerk of Dallas Meeting and a Sanctuary activist, was proud to see the Dallas Friends Service Group on the list; Lodrick Harris, Jacksonville's clerk, felt much the same way.

But the lack of real secrets to hunt for does not explain the one major, glaring omission from the documents. Reading through them, I kept asking, "But, **where is the American Friends Service Committee??**" Here was a probe in which the FBI Director sent a special letter to a Florida field office, telling them **not** to stop tracking the activities of tiny Jacksonville Meeting, which is lucky if it gets ten people at worship on a

First Day morning. Yet the closest thing to a major player the Society of Friends has in the field of organized troublemaking, especially on Central America issues, didn't even make the Bureau's top 130. I don't get it.

This is more than a puzzle; it's an insult. I called AFSC in Philadelphia and demanded an explanation. After all, the group **must** be slipping when it spends fifteen million dollars of God's money every year on social activism and yet the FBI, which was once all over it like a rash, doesn't even notice. But all their spokesperson had to offer was chuckles and references to the fact that the AFSC has twice sued the Bureau over earlier spying and won. With this record, he wondered, maybe the Bureau decided to walk the line this time. A likely story.

When The Foeman Bears His Steel

But if the FBI surveillance of Quakers as revealed by CCR seems scripted more by Gilbert and Sullivan than J. Edgar Hoover, that is not true of other groups on their list. Many activists have received death threats; many churches and other groups have had their offices broken into or vandalized. One church in Cambridge, Massachusetts has been burglarized no less than nine times.

Even my own beloved Langley Hill Meeting was touched by this. In 1986 we decided, after the usual lengthy deliberation, to put a series of crosses on our lawn to commemorate and protest the unnecessary deaths in Central America. When the Washington Post, some months later, took note of their presence, they were soon knocked down in the night, and rightist slogans spray-painted on the road out front. It was no big deal--or was it? The crosses did not go back up.

Perhaps that is why my own response to the overall rather ginger treatment of Friends in this latest round of federal spying is to think it merits both gratitude and some self-examination. Certainly it should not lull us into letting it pass without protest. If they can get away with it this time despite the exposure, we'll regret it sooner or later.

ARMOUR & LAMONT INDUSTRIES
GWYNED VALLEY, PA 19437

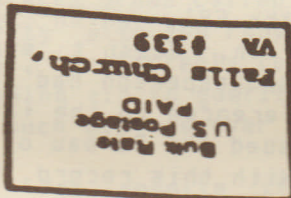
DOES NOT STAND FOR FRIENDLY

INSIDE: THE F IN FBI

Balleys Crossroads VA 22041

P.O. Box 1361

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter



THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

A.J. Muste died on 2/11/1967, in New York. He had been a key figure of the American peace movement since before World War Two. One history of the Vietnam protests describes him as "arguably the single most important person to oppose the war in the early days." He was also a Friend, though this was little known in his later years. Trained as a conservative Dutch Reformed pastor, he joined Providence Meeting in Rhode Island during World War One when he discovered Christian pacifism.

Then, in 2/1919, Muste joined the famous textile workers strike in Law-

rence, Massachusetts. This started him on a long detour through left-wing politics, which took him to Marxism and talk of revolution. But a mystical experience in 1936 brought him back to religious pacifism to stay. A longtime staff member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Muste's formal ties to Friends lapsed about 1960. Yet he still spoke of himself as a Quaker, and to The Society as one of the family.

Muste was often arrested in peaceful protests. A week before he died, he was tried on charges of blocking the way to New York's draft induction center.

QUAKER CHUCKLES

How Dry He Was

Many years ago, when Friends were among the pillars of the Temperance movement, two travelling salesmen were talking about experiences on their mid-western circuit, and one mentioned a Quaker settlement in Iowa. "Now there's a dry town for you," he declared.

"You mean you can't buy liquor there at all?" asked his companion.

"Only for snakebite," the first salesman affirmed. "And there's only

one snake in town, too. The last time I was there, I waited in line for half the day, but by the time I got to him that darn snake was too tired to bite."

The Light Began To Dawn

One afternoon during World War Two, a local dignitary visited a Quaker CPS camp, and watched the men at work on an irrigation ditch. After awhile he turned to the camp director and said, "Are these men really conscientious objectors? They look perfectly normal to me."