

AFSC



Q U A K E R S E R V I C E B U L L E T I N

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Northwest staff witness**'Freedom not apartheid' AFSC demands**

Kathy Flewellen of AFSC's Washington Office demonstrates with other AFSC staff at the South African Embassy.

"The slogan, 'Freedom Yes: Apartheid, No,' takes on sharper meaning when you feel the handcuffs around your own wrists," says Randy Carter, AFSC Southern Africa Program Director in Seattle, Washington.

Randy Carter, along with ten other AFSC staff and committee members, was arrested January 6 at the Honorary South African Consulate in Seattle. Their non-violent civil disobedience was part of an ongoing community witness against apartheid involving repeated demonstrations and the arrests of many community leaders.

In nearby Portland, Oregon, the Honorary Consul for South Africa agreed to resign on January 18 following five weeks of lunch hour demonstrations every Wednesday and Friday at the consulate office. AFSC helped organize the events which were

endorsed by a large number of community organizations, and which included several acts of civil disobedience at each demonstration.

"The magnitude of the evil of apartheid calls on us to make a dramatic response," says Ann Stever, secretary of AFSC's Pacific Northwest Office. She reports that the region's committee deliberated for many hours before concluding that civil disobedience was called for: "We considered the enormous risks taken by those in South Africa who advocate change. We believe that we, too, with our commitment to nonviolence and to justice, must take risks to dramatize the situation."

While AFSC encourages diplomatic relations with all countries, it opposes economic ties which directly or indirectly sup-

Continued on page 2



Photo by Richard J. Brown.

Militarism—youth speak to youth

"Poor and Third World youth bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of deepening poverty in the United States," says Jackie Ramos of AFSC's Youth and Militarism Program. "While military spending spirals out of control, job training and education resources are reduced, joblessness rises, and basic human services are cut back or eliminated. An "economic draft" operates in poor communities where military service seems the only option. Young people, particularly poor young people, lack an effective voice in the decision making about those issues which dramatically affect them."

In Oakland, California, five Third World women and men, ages 18 to 22, address these concerns as staff of AFSC's Peace and Justice Youth Outreach Project. Year-long they work in Oakland's schools and community, sharing their understanding of the impact of militarism and military spending on the lives of young people and their communi-

ties. In its first year and a half of existence, PJYOP youth staff have made 65 presentations to over 2,000 students, raised funds, established a Community Advisory Board and produced a brochure about jobs and educational resources.

In its work since 1982, the Oakland project has become the heart of AFSC's Youth and Militarism Program, a new youth thrust which also involves the work of other regions as well as national efforts. PJYOP serves as a summer training center where young people from other locations study the issues and learn the education and organizing techniques they will need when they return to their own communities and begin similar work. The youth staff of PJYOP develop the training program for their peers and carry it out, drawing on the resources of the community.

Peter Pagan is one of the six young people trained last summer. He now works with AFSC's

New York Metropolitan Office, taking the first steps in spreading the approach pioneered in Oakland. Two PJYOP youth staff accompanied Peter home after last summer's training and spent two weeks in New York helping him lay the groundwork for new efforts. Peter Pagan's first contacts included alternative high school committees, community organizations and youth groups. "I called them, we talked, and I went over and met them—in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens—and they referred me to others. I've given presentations before at least 100 people."

Says Jackie Ramos: "Youth are a vital factor in building any effective movement toward justice and peace. Youth leadership is the most effective strategy for increased youth engagement . . . it must be on their own terms. And as the role of Third World communities in the peace movement is defined, strong youth voices will be an important factor in this definition."

INSIDE
Florida undocumented workers**See page 4**

Hunger aid to Mali	p. 5
Supporting Central Americans	p. 6
Sawmills to Laos	p. 6
Mat-making in Vietnam	p. 7
Women's dialogues	p. 7

Working in the face of criticism

Editorial by John Sullivan, Chair, AFSC Peace Education Executive Committee

The American Friends Service Committee is seen by its friends and supporters as an organization earnestly and sometimes ably trying to advance peace and justice in this world. But, despite this positive aura, the AFSC is no stranger to criticism. Indeed, controversy seems to be a companion of all its days.

In my memory of more than a quarter-century of committee and staff service, there was never a time when AFSC was not being toasted or roasted—sometimes both at the same time by conflicting groups—for what the Service Committee chose to do or say or be. The AFSC can err and thus draw criticism on itself. But, in my opinion, such errors have been few over the years. They could not nearly account for all the controversy around AFSC. Then what are the reasons?

I think the reasons are such that AFSC and its supporters

may take heart from them. The controversy means that AFSC has moved into the hot areas of human affairs rather than to choose "safe" things to do or say. Many other organizations of good will shrewdly avoid matters that are touched by controversy. The AFSC is aware of but not deterred by that consideration. If it were, it would not have fed the striking textile workers of Marion, North Carolina, in 1929. It would not have run civilian public service camps in the 1940's. It would not have confronted McCarthyism in the 1950's. It would not have opposed the Vietnam war in the 1960's-1970's, or sought peace among the hostile governments of the Middle East. It would not be pointing insistently to the systemic causes of hunger while providing food assistance to Africans in the 1980's. Nor would it, over the years, have insisted that it is better to make friends than enemies of the Russians, and that it is better to take risks

for peace than for war.

What many critics of AFSC have not come to grips with is that the AFSC is a Quaker pacifist organization, that it marches to a different drummer than those who see the world as caught in a do-or-die struggle between ourselves and communism. The AFSC's actions are not well judged if its nature is not taken into account. AFSC's program work, its relations with governments, its relations with those that other people call enemies, indeed especially those that others treat as enemies, are all influenced clearly and directly by the perspectives of the Quaker religion and by pacifist analysis of the world and current events.

As a Quaker-based body, AFSC will seek to find the good and the potential rightness in all persons, perhaps especially in those who are distrusted by others. As an American organization, it will tend to criticize our

government more than others simply because it is ours, we can address it, and we want it to be better than it has been. The AFSC will go to "enemy countries" with offers of humanitarian aid when it is badly needed. It will especially go to those countries where our own government is inclined to withhold aid that is urgent. This is widely misunderstood by those who see the world in traditional terms of our side/their side, our friends/our enemies. "Love thine enemy" and "love thy neighbor as thyself" are principles which underlie any truly humanitarian service. They are inherently incompatible with the ideological view that pits ourselves as "the good guys" against "the bad guys," which is how too many view the world.

So, the AFSC lives with criticism and controversy. It would be a failure in its purpose if it did not.

Apartheid opposed

from p. 1

port the racist and inhumane structure of apartheid. The honorary consuls in Seattle and Portland are positions filled by U.S. citizens, primarily to promote trade and tourism. The consuls were approached, both privately by individuals and delegations, and publicly through demonstrations, urging them to resign.

Avel Gordly, staff of AFSC's Portland Southern Africa Program, reports that the demonstrations had considerable impact beyond the resignation of the consul. "Even more importantly," she says, "they illustrated how broad the opposition to apartheid is." Statewide media coverage in response to the demonstrations provided public education about apartheid and the links between Oregon and South Africa. Statements on the issue were also made in the courtroom hearings by those arrested. One observer remarked: "It's great to learn all of this about South Africa. I sure picked the right day to be in court."

"At first local merchants in the shopping area adjacent to the demonstrations were upset," says Avel Gordly. "But orga-

nizers talked with them. One restaurant received not only some lunch trade from the demonstrators, but hosted the post-resignation celebration afterwards."

In Seattle, where up to 1200 people have participated in the regular Sunday demonstrations at the consulate, the city and county have both passed resolutions condemning apartheid, urging the closure of the Honorary Consulate, and making commitments to divest themselves of financial ties to South Africa. A major department store has publicly agreed to stop selling the South African gold coin, Kruggerand, a bank has publicly stated its policy to refuse loans to South Africa and South African-related work, and the Seattle School Board has passed a resolution condemning apartheid and requesting that students be taught about it.

Elsewhere in the United States, including Atlanta, Georgia, Syracuse, New York, San Francisco, California, Baltimore, Maryland, and other communities, AFSC staff work to

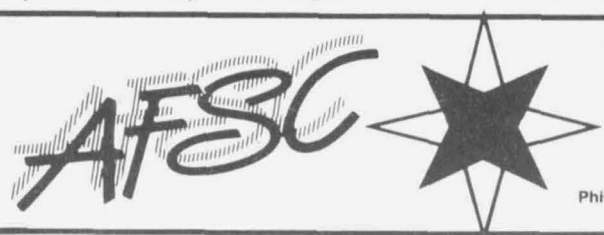


Diane Narasaki (left), AFSC staff in Seattle, demonstrates with an 18-member Asian delegation. She reminded the crowd that over 80% of South Africa's Asians stood in solidarity with the Black majority by boycotting an election that would give some representation to Asians while still excluding Blacks. Photo by Dean Wong.

educate the public about Southern Africa. They support organized community efforts to oppose apartheid, including work in schools, support of the cultural boycott against South Africa, public demonstrations, and programs encouraging divestment of monies invested in South Africa. "We have moved beyond the time of mourning about Africa," says Daki Napata, AFSC staff in Baltimore. "Now we are celebrating the birth of the beloved community that will

come from our work together, here and abroad."

Concludes Ann Stever: "Events have moved very quickly, and while the issue of South Africa is in the public's attention, we are working for policy changes at local and national levels which will have lasting impact. Just as AFSC's commitment to peace and justice in South Africa led us to years of quiet work before this period, we expect to continue long after the spotlight has moved on."



QUAKER SERVICE
BULLETIN

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PROGRAM BRIEFS



Building a Just Society

"Changing Men's Roles in a Changing World," was the topic of a conference sponsored by AFSC's New York Metropolitan office for men grappling with the strains of living in a society where new sex roles and values throw traditional concepts of masculinity into flux. About 200 men attended the conference. Some of the issues discussed included war and militarism, power and responsibility, pornography, emotional sensitivity, and heroes.

Amnesty International has asked AFSC's office in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to serve as a conduit for information on prisoners in the United States. Criminal justice staff are receiving communications from prisoners about cases of abuse and torture, which they collect, evaluate, and pass on to Amnesty International.

Prisoners in the Marion, Illinois, federal penitentiary have been under a strict lockdown for over a year following the killings of two guards and a prisoner in the penitentiary's "control unit." All prisoners have been punished with drastic restrictions of unprecedented severity. There have been beatings, regular forced rectal searches and denial of religious freedoms. AFSC has prepared a report, "The Lessons of Marion," which decries the inhumanity of such repression, as well as arguing that such measures are ineffective, even for their own purposes. With the report, AFSC hopes to increase public awareness and to promote better public policies.

An impact study on youth and justice, conducted by AFSC's New England Regional Office, has produced preliminary findings that indicate differential treatment of Third World youth in Massachusetts' criminal justice system. AFSC hopes to use the findings in community-based efforts involving youth to reduce the involvement of young Third World people with criminal justice institutions.

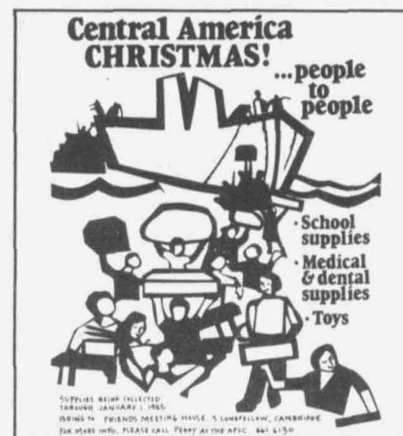


Making Peace

An AFSC-led delegation of 13 U.S. disarmament activists visited Jordan, the West Bank, Israel and Egypt last fall, hoping to bring a greater understanding of Middle East politics to the U.S. peace movement. AFSC Middle East Representatives, stationed in Jordan, helped arrange for the group to visit high-level government officials, and provided guidance and background for tour participants. The information and insight gained by the participants adds a new dimension to peace work in the United States and deepens understanding about how regional conflicts may escalate into nuclear war.

A "buswarming" was held on International Women's Day (March 8) to celebrate the refitting of the Martin Luther King Peacemobile, a project of AFSC's San Francisco office. The old London double-decker bus has been gutted and outfitted with new equipment, including solar panels. It will be used in the coming year to do outreach and education in U.S. Third World communities and senior centers about the effects of the military budget on the lives of women and children.

"Breaking the Silence," a four-day training seminar for organizers concerned about the Middle East, was sponsored in February by AFSC and Mobilization for Survival. Over 150 organizers from around the country, including approximately 25% Jews, 25% American Arabs and Palestinians, and 50% other peace activists came to the New York retreat to learn about the issues and about organizing skills for change. "We were encouraged by the enthusiasm," said Peg McCormack, AFSC coordinator of the event. "As a follow-up, we are planning an October action on Middle East peace alternatives."



Developing Strength

Thousands of people displaced as a result of military raids by U.S.-backed "contras" will benefit from AFSC's third shipment of material aid to Nicaragua, sent February 14. Included were: school supplies, medicines, an industrial washing machine for use in a clinic, thousands of buttons and sewing supplies, and 92 bicycles.

A special AFSC Christmas campaign in New England resulted in an outstanding number of donations for Central America, particularly from children. "Many concerned people fear we're heading to war," says David McCauley, AFSC staff in Vermont. "This is something they can do without taking sides. It's simply an effort to respond to the need there."

A new outreach effort directed toward school-age children has been announced by AFSC's Material Aids Program. Beginning fall, 1985, the program will seek to involve more children, both as volunteers and donors. The program will also be requesting more donations of children's clothes to better match the proportion of children in recipient groups. Educational activities are planned to help the general public better understand the societies to which shipments are made.

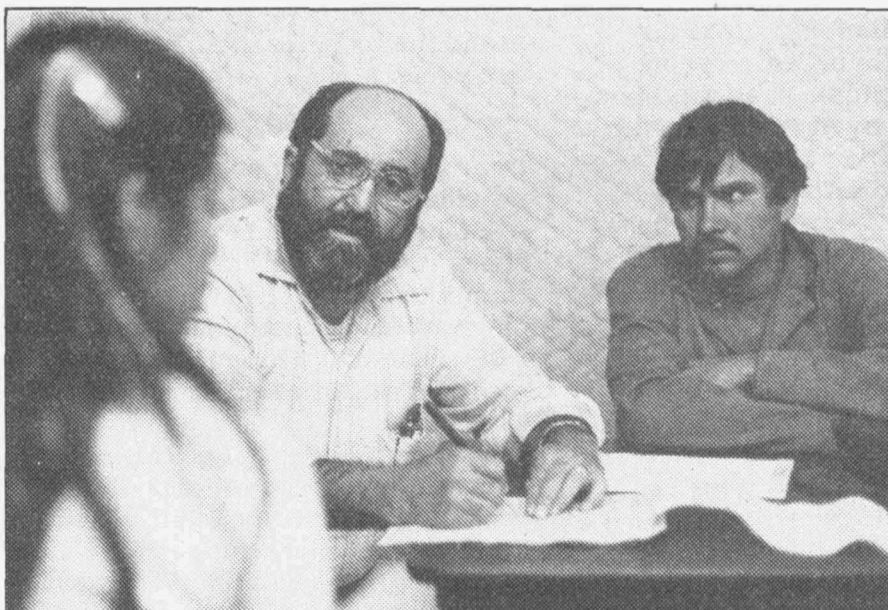
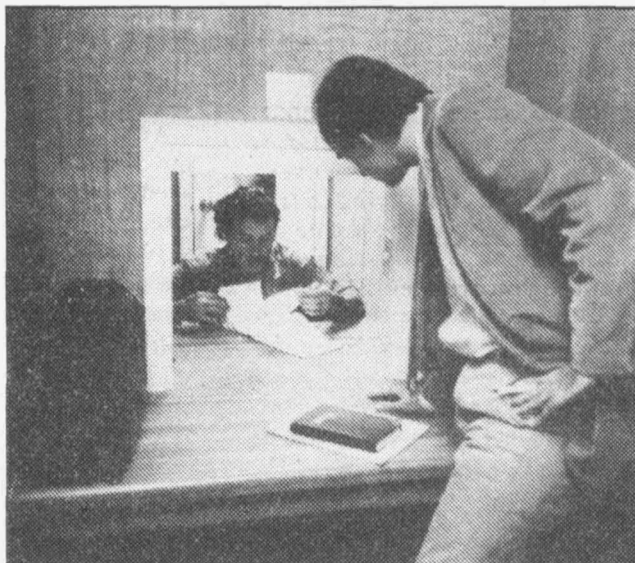
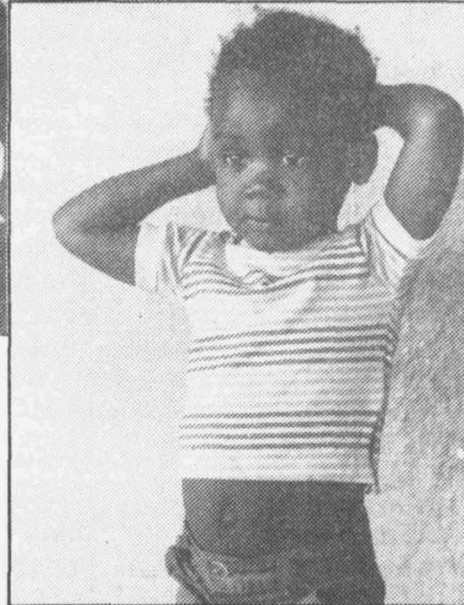
Over the past few years, with funds provided by Heifer Project International, AFSC has purchased over a million doses of vaccine for the draft animals of Kampuchea to protect them from the disease hemorrhagic septicemia. Now, AFSC is helping Kampuchea develop its own program of vaccine production. Four Khmer veterinary department workers have gone to Laos for nine months to learn the skills needed. AFSC is helping to build and equip a facility in Phnom Penh where the vaccine can be manufactured when they return in late November.

Farmworkers defe



ABOVE: Kanjobal refugees facing deportation. RIGHT: Haitian refugee girl. BELOW RIGHT: AFSC attorney Peter Upton consults with a client at the Krome detention facility.

AFSC photos Terry Foss.



AFSC staff Bartolome Colom (center) and Santuario organizer "Juan" (right) advise an undocumented woman about her rights and options.

"This freeze is devastating for farmworkers, and we haven't seen its full impact yet," says Bartolome Colom. "Thousands of Florida workers who depend on employment in strawberries and vegetables have had no income for weeks. Thousands more who usually pick oranges and grapefruit in May will have no work this year."

Bartolome Colom, director of AFSC's Florida Undocumented Workers Program, goes on to explain that lack of work in the citrus groves will cause large numbers of workers to travel to areas which weren't affected by the January freeze, only to find unemployment or underemployment due to this surplus of labor, and that wages are likely to be lower this year as a result. And, he quickly points out, the vast majority of these farmworkers have no access to unemployment benefits.

"But it isn't only the freeze," he explains. "Even in good times there is uncertain employment and farmworkers are subject to economic, legal and political forces that they have as little control over as they do over the weather." Adding to the uncertainty is the fact that many of Florida's farmworkers are un-

documented. They live with the risks and the stigma of the label "illegal alien."

Undocumented workers in Florida are a diverse group. They come from Mexico, Haiti, Jamaica, Guatemala, and El Salvador. They share with one another their separation from homeland and often from family. They frequently have come to the United States to escape extreme poverty and, in some cases, political repression or threat of violence in their own countries.

Since 1979 AFSC has worked with undocumented workers in Florida. The program was started in response to the exploitation of these people and to their extreme vulnerability to arbitrary and inhumane treatment in our immigration system. AFSC works to bring groups of undocumented workers together in protection of their legal rights.

"Undocumented workers are frequently victimized, yet they are determined not to be victims," says Bartolome Colom. "They are determined to better their lives."

Juan and Pedro [names changed] are two farmworkers who live east of Tampa. They personify the problems of undocumented farmworkers and their efforts to protect themselves and

Immigrants face legal tangle

U.S. laws, presidential orders, and judicial rulings provide a baffling mix of categories for the different groups of undocumented people in Florida—for the Mexicans, the Haitians, the Salvadorans, and the Guatemalans. These groups and sub-groups have differing rights, which may change with the political winds. The result can only be capricious in its division of groups of people and in its granting or withholding of legal protections or rights to services.

The enforcement of these complex regulations—large areas of which are subject to INS and judicial discretion—has devastating effects on individuals and groups of undocumented people. Under the imperative to save federal funds, the Justice Department has launched Operation SAVE (Systematic Alien Validation Evaluation). Under one portion of this inter-agency effort, Haitian workers who have held valid work permits are having

them systematically revoked by INS if they apply (as they are legally entitled) for unemployment compensation. Undocumented workers face the possibility of similar punitive action if they interact with a government agency or service.

INS is currently attempting to deport to Mexico a number of Mexican families in west-central Florida, all of whom have children who were born in the United States and are thus U.S. citizens. INS is also seeking deportation to Guatemala of a group of Kanjobal Indians. These descendents of the Mayans were subjected to systematic government violence in their mountain homes in northwest Guatemala, and have been caught between opposing forces in Guatemala's civil war.

AFSC, in cooperation with other agencies, seeks to assist all of these people to defend their legal and human rights.

nd own rights

their brothers and sisters. Both are from Mexico and have lived in the United States for several years. They share the limited space and the costs of a small trailer home—along with Juan's wife and three children and two other men. Both Juan and Pedro have been arrested by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and have spent time in the INS detention center at Krome. Pedro was physically threatened by INS officials for refusing to waive his legal rights and sign a voluntary departure form.

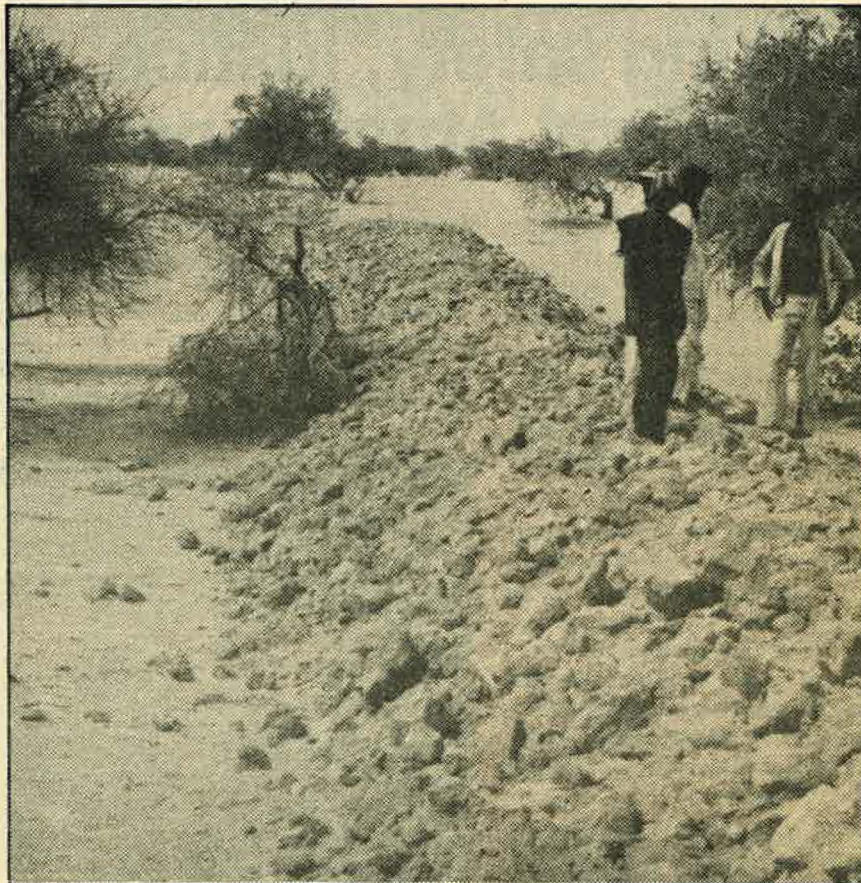
Juan and Pedro are volunteer organizers for Santuario, an organization of farmworkers which the AFSC is helping to start around the state of Florida. In addition to their work in the fields of west-central Florida, Juan and Pedro take every opportunity to talk with their fellow workers about their rights and about Santuario. They stress to other undocumented men and women their vulnerability when they stand alone, and the importance of working together to protect one another.

Through Santuario, Juan and Pedro and other organizers have helped hundreds of documented

and undocumented people understand their legal rights if apprehended by the INS. Many workers have contributed from their extremely modest incomes to a Santuario bail fund for members who are put in detention.

The role of AFSC in Florida has been central to the work of Santuario. AFSC staff have led training workshops for Santuario volunteers. An AFSC attorney and several paralegals provide legal assistance to undocumented workers who are apprehended and who wish to exercise their rights under U.S. immigration law. And AFSC staff stay closely in touch with the growing network of Santuario organizers, providing support, consultation and encouragement.

AFSC staff also link the work of people in Florida with that of other people, within AFSC and other organizations, helping those who struggle against similar situations elsewhere in the country. They compare experiences, document problems, and exchange strategies. They assure that the experience and insights of undocumented people in Florida are brought to the attention of policy makers as new immigration policies are framed.



Water retention dike. AFSC photo by David Negus.

AFSC program benefits famine victims in Mali

"The famine situation continues to worsen," says a report from David Negus, AFSC staff in Mali. "As I write there are over 50 people sitting or lying in front of the door to the house. The people are as hungry and desperate as those you are seeing in the media publicity from Ethiopia. They stay all day and all night now. There are no disaster camps yet, and we don't know if there will be any in the future. We are doing a lot to help ease the suffering, but the problems are overwhelming. I am frightened of what will happen in the next six months, and expect it will be worse than I can imagine. These are not dramatized impressions."

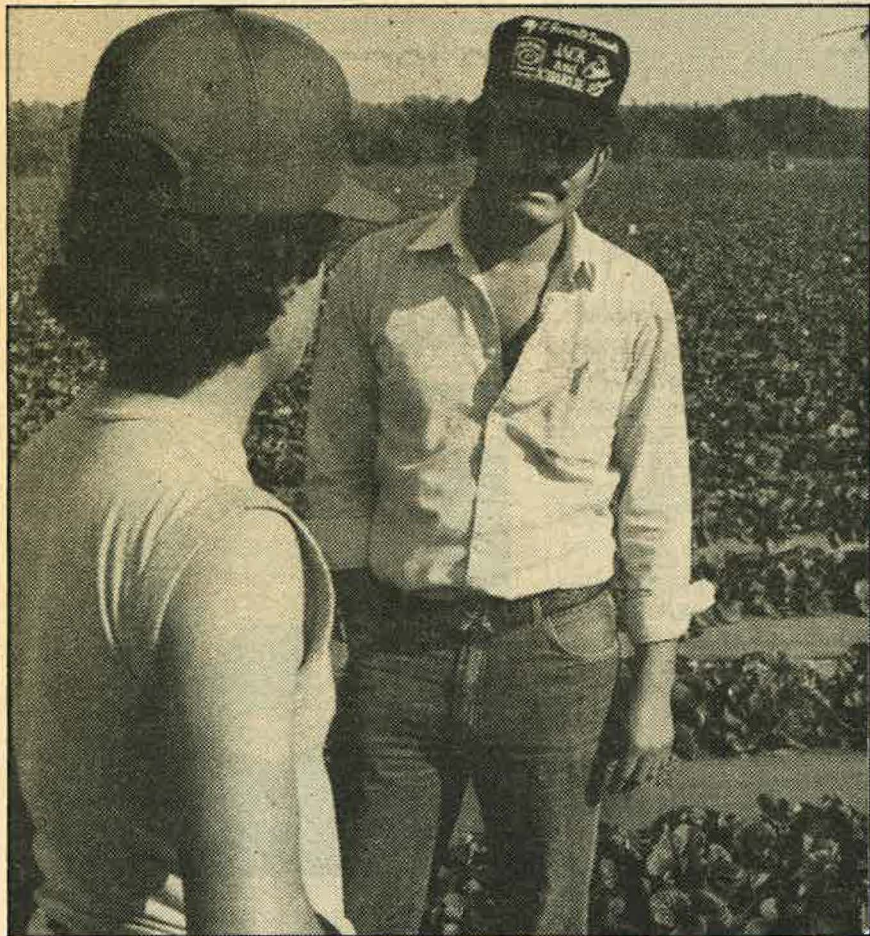
Finding ways to help people survive with dignity is the goal of AFSC work in Mali. AFSC has increased the number of water retention/irrigation projects from four to six and has hired additional workers. "By increasing the number of workers in the existing worksites, increasing the number of sites, and lengthening the time period during which the sites can remain open, we will be helping hundreds of people survive these drought years with dignity, and help lessen their risks in the future as they increase their possibilities of grain production," writes David Negus. In turn the salaries of the workers will allow them to pur-

chase food so that an estimated 1,500 people will benefit.

AFSC is also using \$10,000 to purchase locally-produced rice seeds to be planted at the worksites. There is often a lack of seed at planting time, and the seed which does exist is quite expensive. By purchasing large quantities from local suppliers in the coming months, AFSC can assure rice seed for those fields being improved.

AFSC is using an additional \$40,000 to buy grain. The grain will be distributed by the AFSC field representative, and by those local leaders around whom desperate people gather in times of difficulty—chiefs, religious leaders, government leaders. "This aid will be distributed carefully and thoughtfully, but its eventual positive effects can be significant and far-reaching," David Negus writes. He concludes: "By reacting quickly, we are helping to diminish the suffering which exists and is growing."

The critical food shortage in Mali has meant school canteens are not receiving their usual supply of grain, a supply which even during good years is inadequate. AFSC is providing emergency aid to keep open schools which otherwise would close due to the lack of food for the children.



Santuario organizer "Pedro" talks with worker in a strawberry field.

Seeking safety, justice for Central Americans

"Many North Americans feel a deep outrage about the escalation of U.S. military involvement in Central America. Harassment here in the U.S. of those helping Central American refugees is also increasing," says Angela Berryman, AFSC human rights staff. "The situation is urgent."

Responding to recent arrests of refugees from Central America and of members of the sanctuary movement who have helped them, AFSC has increased its efforts to provide public education about injustices in the administration of U.S. immigration laws and in U.S. military policies in Central America.

Information about the current situation in Central America is

provided by AFSC's two Central America representatives who live and travel widely in the region, communicating with many key groups in the area. Their work encourages better communication in the region, as well as offering a first-hand analysis to U.S.-based peace activists and AFSC's constituency.

AFSC has lent support to the sanctuary movement in its efforts to protect Central American refugees fleeing repression and danger in their own countries. There are now more than 170 sanctuaries in the U.S., 32 of which are Friends meetings.

AFSC staff recently participated in the Inter-American Symposium on Sanctuary and the National Consultation on Sanctuary, both held in Tucson,



AFSC staff Angela Berryman, as a member of a delegation of U.S. religious women, is greeted in El Salvador by a representative of the Mothers of the Disappeared. The visit commemorated the fourth anniversary of the killing of four American church women. Photo by Sr. Camille D'Arienzo, courtesy of Brooklyn Tablet.

Arizona, shortly after the arrests of sanctuary workers. "It raised my spirits to see over a thousand people united in a commitment to continue working for justice

through the sanctuary movement," says Angela Berryman. "The response was very ecumenical—we prayed in English, Spanish and Hebrew."

RESOURCES

SHOTS OF CONFLICT: Report from South Lebanon

This 25-minute slideshow offers an overview of the situation in South Lebanon since the Israeli invasion of 1982. Photos and recordings made by AFSC staff Chris George while on assignment in Lebanon vividly convey critical concerns, including security of civilians, activities of armed groups, the local economy, the Palestinian refugee community and the Lebanese resistance. This resource is particularly significant in light of Israel's recent withdrawal plans.

Available for \$75.00 from the Middle East Program, AFSC national office. Contact nearest AFSC regional office to inquire about rental.



HUNGER IN AFRICA: Some AFSC Perspectives

Why do so many countries in Africa experience periodic famine? This 11-page report looks beyond the immediate effects of the drought and analyzes the historical, economic and political factors that contribute to hunger in Africa. Also discussed are AFSC perspectives on relief aid and on development: what helps, what does not. Finally, what are the implications for citizens of the United States.

From AFSC national office; \$1.00 per copy, 75¢ each for orders of 10 or more.



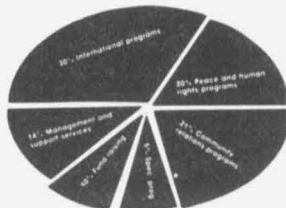
Children of south Lebanon play amid destruction. AFSC photo Chris George.

PEOPLE STILL LIVE HERE: Reconstruction in South Lebanon

Despite continuing violence and destruction in South Lebanon, people seek ways to rebuild their lives. This 14-minute slideshow, narrated by AFSC staff who worked in relief and

rehabilitation programs with the Middle East Council of Churches, describes efforts to ease suffering of people living in the area.

Available for \$50.00 from the Middle East Program, AFSC national office. Contact nearest AFSC regional office to inquire about rental.



AFSC's FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Where it comes from and how it is used

Based on 1984 figures, this updated flyer uses graphs and words to proportionally show the sources of AFSC income and how it is spent.

For a free copy, write Finance Department, AFSC national office.

OPTIONS FOR PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA: Background and Analysis

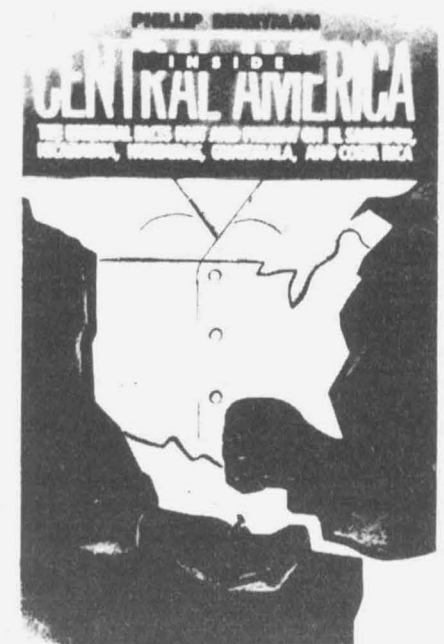
Originally prepared for use by reporters and editorial writers, this packet of information is now available for purchase. Nine publications focus on the possibilities of negotiations for resolving the conflict in Central America, including an analysis of the Contadora peace proposal and the U.S. State Dept. response, a chronology of Central America negotiations, a demographic chart of the region, and a bibliography.

Available from Peace Education Resources, AFSC national office; \$3.50 postpaid.

INSIDE CENTRAL AMERICA

Phillip Berryman's AFSC publication, "What's Wrong in Central America and What to Do About It" has been expanded and updated as of February, 1985, to make a 176-page, paperback book by Pantheon Press. Provides a thorough analysis of the situations in all Central American countries from the perspectives of the poor and unrepresented citizens who have suffered and struggled for change. Suggests a framework for a sound, negotiated settlement.

Available from Peace Education Resources, AFSC national office; \$5.95 each, \$7.00 postpaid. Inquire for bulk rates.



AFSC helps post-war rebuilding in Laos

"The Lao people are filled with a resilient spirit, despite what they have been through," says Wendy Batson. "Although it's been ten years since the conflict ended in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos, the tragic reality is that, to a large degree, stability has yet to become a part of people's lives." For over three years, Wendy Batson, with her husband, Bob Eaton, was responsible for AFSC's development programs in Laos and Vietnam, working within the framework of complex political realities, in a constant state of flux.

"The Lao People's Democratic Republic is the most fortunate country of the three," says Wendy Batson. "While they have some security problems, they have managed to attain a condition close to peace."

"AFSC's work in the more remote villages in the north has focused on reconstruction and reconciliation. Among these villages, the one permanent structure that many villagers have related to historically has been the Buddhist Wat (temple).

"These wats have served as the center of village life and activity, but suffered serious structural damage during the war. It was the decision of the villagers to rebuild these wats first. Yet the demand of the peasant labor cycle makes it difficult to find time to saw a sufficient amount of lumber manually.

"Quaker Service provided a small, simple, portable sawmill which can be disassembled and transported by two men, buffalo or boat. The lumber can also be used to construct temples, clinics and schools in several villages.

"So we not only contribute to small scale development, but we address the larger, more serious question of post-war reconstruction," says Wendy Batson.

Another AFSC project in Laos is the construction of small dams to improve irrigation and increase food production. Two such dams have been built and funds are now available for five more.

"Although Laos has the dubious distinction of being the most heavily bombed country per capita in Indochina . . . we never felt hostility. This says a lot for people's spirit and determination."



Vietnamese mat makers receive Quaker aid

In the Tan Thanh Mat and Reed Cooperative, Vietnamese village women use a wooden block pierced with a row of small upright nails to shred reeds into fibers, which they spin into twine on a manual spinning wheel. They then squat on mats on the floor—a posture especially hard on pregnant women—and weave the twine into rugs and sleeping mats. Good workers, even working ten hours a day and seven days a week, can barely earn a dollar a day through this manual process.

As a first step the AFSC arranged for Australian Quakers to provide the Vietnamese women with such imported items as gears, bicycle chaining, ball bearings and other materials needed to produce simple spinning machines as Vietnam is desperately short of foreign exchange. The AFSC is barred by the U.S. State Department from providing such assistance. The spinning machines will ease the women's work, allow them to produce much more twine and to earn more money.

As the next step AFSC hopes to arrange for materials for the construction of standing-frame looms. These would allow the workers to sit on benches during the long process of weaving, thus reducing physical strain and discomfort while increasing their productivity and earnings, and allowing for a modest degree of mechanization later on.

Women's dialogues in Iowa: creating understanding, alliances

Any remark that puts down homosexual people will not go unchallenged if it is made in the presence of one of the ninety-plus participants in the "Lesbian-Nonlesbian Dialogue" held December 11 in Des Moines, Iowa. The pact always to respond to homophobic behavior was one outcome of the day-long conference designed to create dialogue and forge alliances among women of the area.

Other outcomes included a plan for four more evenings of dialogue culminating with a celebration in the summer. Sixty-eight women signed up for future events. The first follow-up dialogue, "Women and Sexuality: Our Cultural and Historical Roots," was held March 14. Those involved continue to include about 50% lesbians and 50% other women.

"There was a tremendous amount of energy," reports AFSC staff Mikel Johnson who helped organize the dialogue as part of a larger effort in AFSC's North Central Region to hold events that empower women and foster dialogue among them. "We feel good about this program as an example of how we can carry out our affirmative action plan. . . . These events are bringing in a wide range of new people who haven't been involved with us before."

Another conference, "Sorrow and Strength: Women and Children Speak," was held December 8 to address issues of women and militarism. First-hand perspectives were provided by a woman from Kampuchea (Cambodia), a woman from Namibia, a family from El Salvador, and a video tape made by women from the

Middle East. Mikel Johnson observed that many of the women participating in such events have come back from previous AFSC activities and continue to return.

"As my experience in Washington grows, I am struck by a fundamental truth. While working in Washington gives us proximity to decision-makers and focal events in the formation of national policy, the 'forefront of the struggle' is wherever you find yourself. . . . No place is so remote that it is not a crucial testing-ground for faith and witness. Each of us can seek to advance the coming of the Peaceable Kingdom through local efforts wherever we are situated."

Jim Matlack, Director
AFSC's Washington Office

East-West conciliation—small states speak

While the superpowers talk should their "junior partners" be condemned to silence? Recent program initiatives by AFSC's Peace Education Division have sought to highlight what smaller states in the East and the West can do to defuse superpower conflict.

New Zealand's government took a bold, positive unilateral step in February by announcing a ban on port calls by all nuclear warships.

In a letter to New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange, AFSC Executive Secretary, Asia Bennett, expressed strong support for the New Zealand initiative and dismay at the official U.S. reaction.

East German church members hosted AFSC staff Asia Bennett and Thomas Conrad last fall at their countrywide *Friedensdekade* or "Ten Days for Peace." Representing AFSC and the U.S. National Council of Churches, Asia Bennett and Thomas Conrad met with Quakers, religious leaders and local peace activists in the Mecklenburg district of the German Democratic Republic.



Stephen Cary (left), AFSC Board Chairperson, and Thomas Conrad (center), AFSC East-West staff, speak to a reporter during visit to the Belgian Embassy.

"In addition to smaller encounters, we took part in a women's evening, met with East German conscientious objectors in Rostock and answered questions about our peace movement and U.S. foreign policy from a large audience at a 'talk show' in Schwerin," said Asia Bennett.

In January, the AFSC convened a delegation of disarmament, religious and arms control

leaders to meet with the Ambassador of Belgium urging that country not to permit deployment of the U.S. cruise missile on its soil. Belgium has been under strong pressure to station 48 of the nuclear-tipped missiles there despite strong public sentiment against them. The AFSC-led group included representatives from the Federation of American

Scientists, the Freeze, physicians' organizations, the National Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

"The Belgian government now has a unique opportunity to create real momentum for the upcoming U.S.-Soviet arms talks by taking an independent step," said AFSC Chairperson Stephen Cary, who headed the delegation.

Rice hullers ease women's work in Guinea Bissau



A woman's day in rural Guinea Bissau begins at 4:00 a.m. Her first task: to prepare the food. The staple in Guinea Bissau is rice, which requires vigorous pounding to remove the hulls. Women may pound rice anywhere from five to eight hours a day. Now, in some villages, women have seen a dramatic difference in their lives as a result of the rice-hulling machines AFSC has placed in seven villages.

The small, diesel-driven machines can hull more rice in 15 minutes than a woman used to get pounding six hours by hand. Not only are women saved hours of work, but they can process additional rice for sale.

People come by canoe from miles around to use the machines. One rice-dehuller may serve as many as ten villages. Committees formed by the women coordinate use and maintenance of the machines.

Program director Paulette Nichols writes, "There has been an unbelievable response from both men and women to the machines. The men are pleased because they now have more time with their wives who aren't nearly as tired at the end of the day. And the women have more time for their children."

With the time saved from pounding rice, the women can

also participate in other activities such as taking courses in literacy, bookkeeping, gardening, and animal husbandry. One woman decided to raise chickens; another to study health care so she can better care for her family.

The rice-hulling machines are one example of a small, inexpensive project that has widespread benefit. The AFSC plans to place seven more machines in other villages in the near future.

■ Africa Hunger Aid ■

Recent, generous contributions have allowed AFSC to send additional hunger aid to Africa including:

Ethiopia—grain shipments from Kenya; food purchase and transportation to the isolated, disputed areas of Eritrea and Tigray; plans to provide staff help for agricultural development.

Mozambique—food relief; seeds for April planting; food relief for Mozambican refugees in Zimbabwe.

Somalia—opening up of new land for agriculture through water resource management and improved farming techniques.

Mali—see story on page 5.

AFSC is providing hoes, training and start-up grants for seeds and fertilizer so women in Mali can grow vegetables for family use and for sale. (Traditionally only men have gardened.) Once underway, the gardens become self-sufficient.