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**Quaker principles guide AFSC**

by Dulany Bennett,  
 Chairperson, AFSC Board of Directors

*"True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it. . . ."*  
 William Penn

Quakers have been led to action by their religious convictions since the 17th Century. Such action often has taken the form of dissent and challenge to the norms of society. This is the tradition that gave birth to the American Friends Service Committee during World War I and that has propelled its efforts for nearly 75 years.

**What are** the convictions that have led Friends and the AFSC into activism and dissent? Central to Quakerism is the conviction that there is a sacred quality to all human life, described variously by Friends as "That of God," "the Inward Teacher," and "the Christ Within." This conviction led early Friends to reject all wars and to take actions on behalf of the oppressed. It led them to oppose slavery, to work for prison reform, to challenge restraints on free expression, to object to participation in war, and to offer humanitarian service to those who suffered from war, regardless of their politics.

**The history** of the American Friends Service Committee has demonstrated the universal quality

Continued on page 3

*On the Gulf War*

**Actions for peace, moments of grace**

There was a brief period of time, measured in weeks, when not only the United States but the community of nations seemed prepared to learn new ways. Aggression could be rebuked, contained and sanctioned without resort to war. Someone called it a "moment of grace." This moment passed, irrevocably, on January 16, 1991, when a war of immense proportions was launched by the United States, under the color of international law, against the armies, land and people of Iraq.

**During those** weeks of hope, when alternatives to war were being supported by religious leaders, by former military chiefs of staff, and by great numbers of people across the land, the work we had to do seemed clear. Vigils and demonstrations for peace were organized by AFSC and by local and national coalitions of which we were a part. Our staff and volunteers worked to build unity and mutual respect among groups who differed in race, religion, economic status and politics—but who were united in their common desire to "stop the rush to war."

**When resisters** in the armed forces like Stephanie Atkinson decided to go public with their opposition to war, AFSC helped to amplify their voices so that others could hear and realize that they had a decision to make, too, which neither the government nor anyone else could make for them.

American Friends Service Committee staff members spoke at teach-ins, appeared on local and national radio and television, wrote op-eds and in other ways tried to fill the public knowledge gap about the region of the world where the armies were gathering. They stressed the terrible costs at home and abroad should those armies be forced into combat. Our work drew on AFSC's long history of involvement in the Middle East and our unique network of staff who have long focused their work on the conflicts and prospects for peace in that region.



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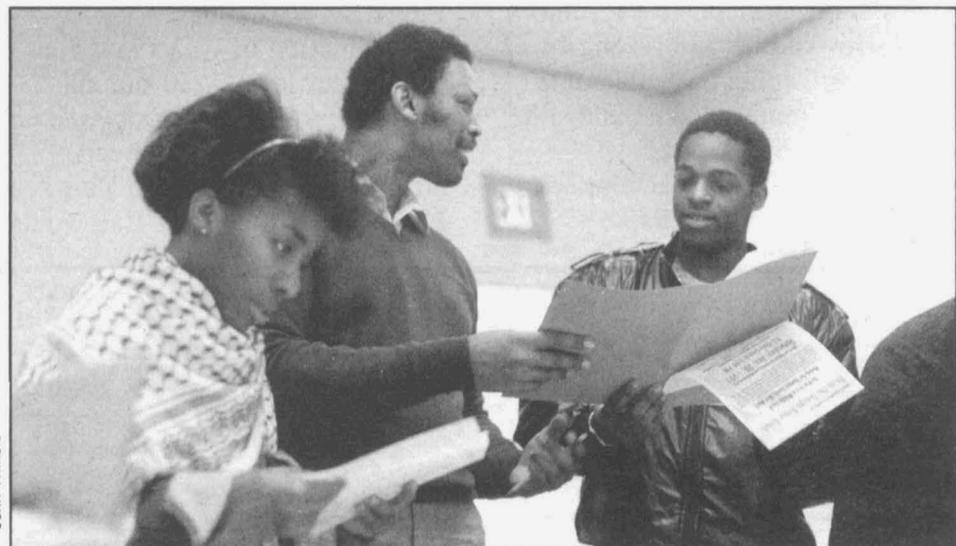
**On January 16,** when the war came, AFSC spoke out. We called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. The moment of grace had passed; the imperatives of war seemed to be in control. Public opinion shifted, so that those who maintained their witness for peace, even though numerous in the January marches in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere around the land, became once more a minority voice. The Congressional debate, so vigorous in early

January, was stilled by the fact of war, as was much of the debate in the news media.

**It was a time** of questioning for all in the peace movement. What are we called to do when war is raging? How can we adequately respond to this great betrayal of hope?

An early February consultation of some 50 AFSC staff from around the country sought answers. Their discussions revealed an enormous increase in

Continued on page 3



John Trimble

Leonard McNeil leads a workshop on options to the military.

# A costly war of choice

by James Fine

James Fine served as the director of AFSC's East Jerusalem Legal Aid Center from 1975-1978. He and his wife, Deborah Fine, were Quaker International Affairs Representatives for the AFSC in the Middle East from 1978-1982. Since that time, James Fine has visited the region periodically and has served on the AFSC Middle East Program Committee. He is currently an advisor in the Office of International Programs at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

The Persian Gulf war is over. Militarily it was an unqualified allied success that in some respects proved less costly than even the most optimistic analysts anticipated. The allies lost far fewer soldiers than expected, and the three-month time frame projected by military planners proved twice as long as needed to rout Iraq's armed forces.

But in other ways the final tally sheet more than measured up to the high costs anticipated. Between 50,000 and 100,000 Iraqis, perhaps 10% of them civilians, were killed. To gauge the impact of this death toll on Iraq, think of it as the proportional equivalent of 600,000 to 1.2 million American deaths, or between 10 and 20 times the losses the U.S. suffered in Vietnam. There were also large numbers of civilian deaths in Kuwait and some in Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Allied bombing laid waste Iraq's economic infrastructure — its roads, bridges, communications network, power and water plants — along with its military machine. Iraqi depredations and allied military operations in occupied Kuwait exacted a similar price.

Then there is the unprecedented environmental damage: 600 oil wells in Kuwait burning out of control, spewing soot and toxic chemicals into the air, creating pollution levels hundreds of times worse than anything ever experienced before and threatening the monsoon rains critical to agriculture in Southwest Asia and the Indian subcontinent; the oil slicks in the Gulf, almost certain to destroy shrimp and fishing industries, wiping out vulnerable plant and animal species, and still threatening to choke the desalination plant that supplies fresh water to eastern Saudi

Arabia; and the desert itself, sown with thousands of mines, cratered and trampled by the most concentrated bombing and armored movements in history.

In sum, a catastrophic — and entirely foreseeable — toll in lives, property and environmental damage.

**Necessary? Justified?** Wise? Or was there an alternative that could have reversed Iraq's aggression against Kuwait at a fraction of the cost?

Reliance on economic sanctions and diplomacy called for by the United Nations was the obvious alternative. Would sanctions alone have worked? Probably, given enough time. Denied the fruits of his conquest and the sales of Iraq's own oil, Saddam Hussein or his successors might have given up Kuwait without a fight. Now, of course, we will never know.

But we do know now that this alternative was never considered seriously by the Bush Administration. We know from Administration sources that the National Security Council first discussed offensive military options on Aug. 3, a day after Iraq's invasion. The same day, the U.S. began to press a hesitant Saudi Arabia to allow the deployment of an initial 140,000 troops on Saudi soil. (The American pressure came while the Saudis were talking privately of an interim settlement involving Iraqi withdrawal to disputed border areas). The actual timetable for the war, with the bombing campaign to begin in mid-January and the ground offensive in mid-February, was finalized on October 30. White House officials continued to insist publicly until after the November elections, however, that the aim of U.S. forces was only to defend Saudi Arabia and enforce UN sanctions.

The Administration's cold response to international diplomatic efforts paralleled its preparation for war. American pressure on the Saudis and the Egyptians for a quick condemnation of Iraq's invasion helped scuttle an Arab summit planned for August 5 that Saddam Hussein had agreed to attend, after giving assurances to King Hussein of Jordan that Iraq would

withdraw from Kuwait within a week.

As the crisis progressed, vehement U.S. opposition to discussing the Palestinian issue and repeated statements by President Bush and other officials that there was no flexibility or room for compromise sealed the fate of a series of Arab, Iranian, United Nations, West European, Non-Aligned and Soviet efforts to obtain a negotiated Iraqi withdrawal.

Secretary of State Baker's position on the eve of his January meeting in Geneva with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz insured the failure of the last major opportunity to avert war. Baker announced that the U.S. would not negotiate, but "explain to Saddam the choice he faces: comply with the objectives of the

Security Council or risk disaster for Iraq."

The Administration's belligerence was met at every turn, of course, by Saddam Hussein's irrational intransigence, and the result was assured.

None knew better than the Bush Administration what the result would be. The devastation wrought on Iraq was planned, the civilian casualties were inevitable, the environmental damage, including Saddam's eco-terrorism, was entirely predictable. Yet the Administration chose war. President Bush chose to pay the price, including a higher price in American lives than thankfully proved necessary, rather than give sanctions and diplomacy a serious chance.

Not a war of last resort, but a war of choice, that was the Bush Administration's Gulf War.

## Building for the Future

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Mali nomads construct a floodgate to control water going into the rice fields.

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## Principles from page 1

of such Quaker witness. From the beginning our work has been carried out and supported by a rich mixture of Quakers and people from many other religious traditions who share a commitment to practical work for peace and justice.

This issue of Quaker Service Bulletin includes substantial reports on the AFSC's response to the war in the Persian Gulf as well as accounts of programs in this country that address pressing needs in our communities. Each article portrays in contemporary terms the conviction that militarism and military responses to conflict distort and corrupt the values and priorities of societies even as they destroy lives and cities. The articles describe contemporary application of long-standing Quaker values and models of work that AFSC has developed over many decades.

As this publication goes to press, public opinion polls tell us that the AFSC's position against the war is supported by only a small minority in the United States. Yet we dare not be stilled in our efforts to challenge national leaders and international institutions to establish a new world order based, not on military might and shifting, cynical alliances, but on justice and on diplomatic, economic and political responses to aggression and military threats. We dare not be discouraged from challenging our fellow citizens to demand that our government learn new responses to international conflict, and that it commit itself to meeting the pressing issues of poverty, poor health care, inadequate housing and the other unmet needs in our own society.



Terry Foss, AFSC

Vigil in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## Actions for peace .....from page 1

numbers of calls for military counseling and draft counseling as well; staff and volunteers in AFSC offices across the country found themselves responding to hundreds of inquiries, providing counseling services, and training others at a rate not known before.

The cost of the war at home was becoming a more dominant theme of AFSC's work. On Martin Luther King's Birthday, staff at the national office organized a spirited demonstration at City Hall in Philadelphia, calling for peace in the Middle East and justice in our own cities. AFSC's Community Relations Division prepared fact sheets on the war's cost at home. In Chicago, AFSC demonstrated alongside local trade unions and health activists against the closing of the city's only hospital for the poor, with the slogan, "Shut down the war, not Cook County Hospital."

Staff also spoke of their efforts to respond to the war's toll on the the human spirit, and the healing

aspect of our work was affirmed. A staff member said, "In Denver we have gatherings where people with different political perspectives can express their feelings. We try to provide the other kind of peace that people need." In Atlanta, it was reported that the Black Human Rights Coalition, which had been formed in response to Klu Klux Klan activities, was now providing support groups for families with members in the Gulf.

In San Francisco, 48 hours after war broke out, the Interfaith Witness for Peace sponsored a prayer service at Grace Cathedral. At the end of the service, the head of the Board of Rabbis and a leader from the Muslim community embraced. These were moments of grace in the midst of the war, reported by the AFSC staff who helped to make them happen.

When the U.S. ceased its offensive, AFSC joined in gratitude for the end of the

bombing, but not in the celebration of U.S. military might. Staff around the country have sought ways of calling for a critical public assessment of the war's origins, its meaning and its aftermath. They have pressed for a generous response to the needs of the victims of the armed conflict in all countries of the region. They have monitored the treatment of those who took a conscientious objection position during the war and were threatened with reprisals.

They sought to combat discrimination and bigotry against Arab-Americans as well as anti-Semitism that rose to the surface of our society during the course of the Gulf crisis.

Reflecting on the war's end, staff members have noted the encouraging emergence of new partnerships in communities across the nation in response to the war. Community groups long engaged in local issues such as homelessness and problems confronting youth found themselves propelled into action on an international issue. Long-time peace activists found themselves linking their concern for war in the Gulf with this society's neglect of our own communities' needs. People of different races, from different communities and with different bases for their activism began to work together on shared concerns.

These beginnings of new alliances are a basis for the times ahead when AFSC and others, in the words of AFSC executive secretary Asia Bennett, will work for "a future which does not rely on massive military force and sophisticated technology, but on strengthened mechanisms for international conflict resolution and on pursuit of justice within and between nations."

by David Gracie, Peace Education Secretary

## Conscientious objector helps other resisters

On October 10, 1990, Stephanie Atkinson, age 23, resident of Carbondale, Illinois, was ordered to report for active duty in the Persian Gulf. At age 17, she had enlisted in the Army Reserves in large part to earn money for a college education. Her college training encouraged her to question her political assumptions, while her experience in basic training made her realize that she was conscientiously opposed to participating in war. When she received the order to report, she disobeyed it, began to fill out a claim for a conscientious objector (C.O.) discharge, and spoke out publicly about her resistance to taking part in a war in the Gulf. Following arrest by Illinois State

Police and confinement by the military, she was given a less than honorable discharge. Now an intern in the AFSC Youth and Militarism Program, Stephanie continues to speak out in opposition to the war and serves as a military counselor, providing not only advice, but also the courage of her own example to those who question their participation in war.

Stephanie says, "When I look back I realize how little I knew about myself when I joined the armed services. I had never heard of conscientious objection. I did not know that when faced with a decision that meant I would have to participate in war, I would not be able to do it. It was my

experience in the military that taught me this. I oppose all violence and now want to help others in the military having similar realizations to examine their values, resist and file for conscientious objection."



Terry Foss, AFSC

Stephanie Atkinson.

### Lessons of the Gulf War

This sixteen page pamphlet includes: AFSC's Statement on the End of the Gulf War; Chronology of the Gulf Crisis; The Gulf War: Casualties at Home; and two articles reprinted from Middle East Peace Notes: *Challenging the Myth-Conceptions* by Billie Marchik and *How Washington Went to War* by Jim Matlack.

To receive a copy send \$2 to AFSC Literature Resources, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

# AFSC staff respond to conditions created by war



Bill Pierre, AFSC

Director Maha Shamas (second from left) at the Legal Aid Center.

The cease-fire of February 27 did not end the very difficult economic, social and political challenges that have confronted people in the Gulf since the beginning of the crisis in August 1990. AFSC programs in the Middle East have also been challenged to find ways to continue their work in the face of severe obstacles.

Since August, Quaker Middle East Representatives Brewster and Anne Grace, based in Amman, Jordan, have documented and reported on the human consequences of the crisis and explored the changing diplomatic environment in the region. Soon after the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the Graces wrote several reports documenting the severe plight of transient evacuees, Asian, Palestinian and other Arab workers who fled Iraq and Kuwait.

In the three months following the Iraqi occupation, the Graces met with political leaders, diplomats, peace activists and others in Egypt, Syria, Israel, the West Bank, Tunisia and Europe. On the basis of their discussions, they wrote several reports on reactions in the region to the Iraqi occupation and to the U.S.-led coalition's actions. These reports were widely circulated to government leaders in the U.S., Europe and the Middle East as well as to peace activists and the press. In their visits, Brewster and Anne explored and then reported on the diplomatic efforts in the Middle East and Europe to bring about a peaceful resolution to the Gulf crisis.

In November the Graces returned to the United States for a three-week speaking tour. During the tour they spoke at Friends Meetings, at colleges and universities and at other events organized by AFSC regional staff. While in Atlanta, Anne Grace had the opportunity to meet with former President Jimmy Carter and the staff of the Carter Center. In all their speaking, the Graces stressed the need for and offered concrete diplomatic steps that could be taken toward a peaceful resolution of the Gulf crisis. At the same time, they emphasized the human consequences of the occupation and the probable tragic outcome for many peoples in the region should the crisis escalate to all-out war.

Brewster and Anne returned to Jordan early in January 1991, shortly before the beginning of the war. They left again on January 14 to set up

a temporary base in Limassol, Cyprus, where they could monitor events and judge the safety of travel in the region. From February 5 to 11, they went to Jordan for meetings with officials and informal visits with Jordanian and Palestinian friends. Later in the month they visited Israel and the West Bank with Catherine Essoyan, coordinator of AFSC program work in the Middle East.

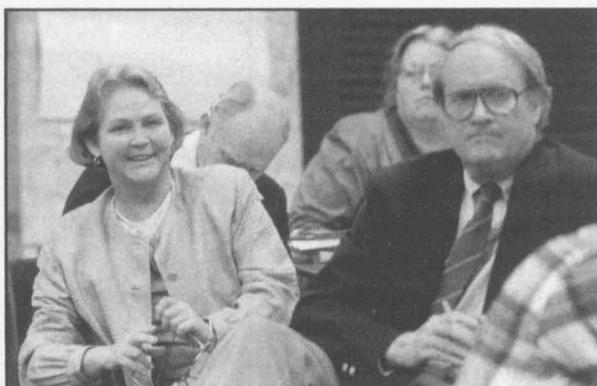
Brewster and Anne are writing a report on the present and future economic consequences of the war in the region based on their findings (available from AFSC's Middle East office, address below). On February 27, Brewster, under the auspices of Quaker Peace and Service, London Yearly Meeting, testified about the economic impact of the war on Jordan and the Occupied Territories before the British House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Graces returned to their Amman, Jordan base at the end of March, from which they expect as soon as possible to be able to make fact-finding trips to Iraq and the Gulf States, including Kuwait.

## LEGAL AID CENTER

Quaker Legal Aid Center Director Maha Abu Dayyeh Shamas was visiting her relatives in the U.S. when war broke out in the Gulf. She returned to East Jerusalem February 20 with her two young children. The Legal Aid Center was closed immediately after the outbreak of hostilities because the 24-hour curfew on the West Bank prevented staff from getting to work. However, the office was able to resume functioning by the end of January.

Haifa El Issa, the office manager, reported



Terry Foss, AFSC

Anne and Brewster Grace.

that immediately prior to the outbreak of war, the office was as busy as it had been in the beginning of the *intifada*. Since the beginning of the war, the staff lawyer has been extremely busy, mostly with emergency cases. During the period of extended curfew, lawyers urged the office to stay open to the degree possible, stressing that "the work should not be frozen" during that critical period.

## CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Gaza Quaker Early Childhood Education Program Director Mary Khass reported in early February that after more than three weeks under a very strict curfew over the entire Gaza Strip, "everything is still really tight." By the end of January, she managed to get a curfew pass which allowed her to drive to the Quaker office at the United Nations compound in Gaza City. Mary says that just getting to her office and doing her work made her "feel like a human being again," after being cooped up in her home due to the 24-hour curfew and under the threat of possible Iraqi missile attack. For several weeks in February, Mary and the Resource Center team prepared and distributed a series of weekly home activity packets to 1,600 Quaker Kindergarten children, confined to their homes under curfew.



Catherine Essoyan, AFSC

Packing kindergarten home activity kits during the war.

## PHYSICAL THERAPY

AFSC continues to recruit for a physical therapist to work with the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees in a local village clinic. The Union operated village and traveling field clinics even under curfew. After the outbreak of the Gulf war, the Union intensified its monitoring and reporting of the increasing medical and public health needs of the Palestinian community and provided information to residents concerning steps to take in case of gas attack from Scud missiles.

At a time of profound human suffering, economic difficulty and greater political uncertainty, the steady supportive presence in the region of Quaker Service staff and programs helps to convey a much needed message of hope.

by Bill Pierre, International Division

To receive the current report from Brewster and Anne Grace, write to: Bill Pierre, Middle East Desk, International Division, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

## AFSC aids Vietnam co-ops, water projects

As part of its effort to help Vietnamese recover from the U.S.-Indochina War, AFSC is providing small-scale capital investment to production cooperatives, sending supplies and equipment to rehabilitation centers, helping village communities with construction of dams, dikes and new water systems, and fostering post-war reconciliation between the U.S. and Vietnam.

### Aid to Rehabilitation Services

The AFSC established a rehabilitation center in Quang Ngai during the war. Since 1975 the AFSC has helped re-equip and supply four government rehabilitation centers in southern Vietnam including the Quang Ngai center now in Qhi Nhon. The centers each year provide about 10,000 prosthetic devices, braces, crutches and shoes. There may be as many as 60,000 amputees in Vietnam, not only veterans but farmers who run into buried mines when plowing their fields.

### Aid to Thanh Hoa

Thanh Hoa lies in Vietnam's "typhoon belt" where serious flooding and high winds create major hardship for villagers. Their crops are often destroyed in the storms and frequently their homes, schools and clinics as well.

In January, 1990 AFSC staff visited villages in Thanh Hoa hit by typhoons. They found the dike protecting Ben Ngao village had been severely damaged, causing salt water to flood and destroy the rice fields. AFSC responded promptly with a shipment of rice which was distributed on a "food-for-work" basis to villagers who worked over a four-month period to repair and strengthen the dike.

Help was also given to the Province's



Lady Borron

Fish farmers in Vietnam helped by AFSC.

cooperatives which produce items for daily use such as sleeping mats, jute rugs, screens and soap. AFSC provided basic hardware and a gift of small motors to help increase production. In addition, fish farming cooperatives were given funds to increase the number of their cages so they could grow fish to a larger, more marketable size.

### Water projects in Son La

The scattered villages in mountainous Son La Province are populated by ethnic minority people. The AFSC has taken a special interest in the Tai Dam, or Black Thai people, in part because the AFSC regional office in Des Moines, Iowa has contact with 3,000 Tai Dam refugees who settled there in the late 1970s.

Quakers were the first nongovernmental group to supply aid in recent years to Son La Province. One of the projects, which involves some financial assistance from the Tai Dam community in Iowa, is aid to the Thuan Chau

District Clinic. The district is building a rudimentary water system for the clinic, a vast improvement over carrying water by hand or head from a nearby source. Quaker Service representatives have approved the design and are importing the water pipe, pump and electric generator.

Because villagers have not had enough paddy rice, they have been forced to burn down trees and shrubs on the mountainsides to grow upland rice, a practice that has caused serious erosion and depletion of the soil. To help address the problem, AFSC provided materials to construct the Phai Ke dam. The province provided the labor. The dam was completed in June, 1990 just as monsoon rains hit. Over 100 irrigation systems in the province were damaged by floods that year, but the Phai Ke dam withstood the heavy rains with only minor damage, successfully channeling the water to the rice paddies for the wet season crop.

## Putting hope into practice: Gulf Assistance Fund

**Amman, Jordan, 6:00 AM:** A chartered Boeing 707 touches down at Queen Alia Airport after a long, all-night flight and glides into its bay. The captain gives the all-clear sign and the crew throws open the doors. There are no passengers — only crates and boxes filled with aid supplies provided by church groups in Europe and by the AFSC. Workers unload the carefully-packed cargo. Contents: high-protein biscuits, cheese, canned beef prepared according to Islamic law, tents and other relief supplies. One of the first emergency aid shipments from western nongovernmental organizations for refugees from Iraq and Kuwait will soon be ready for distribution.

**For refugees** who have managed to escape the bombing and privations of life in war-torn Iraq and Kuwait, help has to be concrete. Hope comes in the form of food, medicine, bandages, blankets and tents. Contributions to the Gulf Assistance Fund from AFSC supporters made it possible for the Service Committee to cover the costs of a shipment of antibiotics and other medicines gathered by Mercy Corps, a Portland-based medical group. Together with Danchurchaid (a Danish agency) and other groups, the AFSC shared the costs of the above-mentioned 38-ton shipment of relief goods destined for Amman.

**As a matter** of principle, the AFSC tries

where it can to work on all sides of a conflict. For several years, the Service Committee has provided ongoing support for an educational project in Israel that serves Sephardic Jews. AFSC has recently begun to support small income-generating projects in Israel as well. In the wake of Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel, the Service Committee made a grant from the Gulf Assistance Fund to Partnership, an Israeli organization based in Haifa, to assist it with packets of worksheets it developed for Jewish and Arab children to help them process their fears and channel their concern in the direction of coexistence.

**The faint scent** of soap and machine oil wafts from the AFSC Material Aids warehouse. The fifty-year-old clothes baling machine is doing extra duty as staff and volunteers ready shipments for Gaza and Jordan. "Hand-to-hand help embodies the spirit of Quaker service," says Material Aids staff Jean MacKenzie. "Our contribution is quiet. But it is concrete, and we know it can make a real difference."

Sitting in the basement packing room, Jean surveys piles of laundered used clothing, new sweaters knit by volunteers and barrels of donated soap destined for refugees in the Middle East. "Our volunteers are what keep us going." Students from Germantown Friends

School pack "personal hygiene kits" for refugees from the Gulf War. Others sort mountains of diapers donated by a local company. Donated clothing and blankets, as well as towels, toothbrushes, soap, and nail clippers for hygiene kits, arrive from AFSC supporters, Friends Meetings — even total strangers who have heard about the effort.

**The AFSC** is exploring additional channels for Quaker relief and reconstruction service in the Gulf as this publication goes to press. AFSC coordinates its work with other groups in the area to make sure Quaker aid is used efficiently and effectively to serve victims throughout the region.

**The need** continues: houses and schools in rubble; families terrorized by fighting; food and water in short supply; medicine and medical services nonexistent. The suffering caused by the Gulf War cannot be measured in human terms. The hope that comes from those who care can. It comes as carefully folded diapers and "hygiene kits" packed by schools kids. It comes as food, medicine and tents. It comes in the form of funds given to to rebuild, to rehabilitate, to mend lives.

by Thomas Conrad, AFSC Finance Department

## Central American refugees gain new protections

"We don't come here because we want to. We come here because we face death and persecution if we go back," Salvadoran refugee Juan Peñate told the Houston Post last December. It appears that Congress and the Justice Department have finally come to agree with Peñate. In November, President Bush signed the Immigration Act of 1990, a far-reaching package that, among other controversial measures, adopts a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Salvadorans who have been in the country since September 19, 1990.

"Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, is a mixed blessing," says Angie Berryman, coordinator of the AFSC Human Rights Program. "By adopting TPS, the U.S. government recognizes that Salvadorans are really refugees. We are happy for that. Unfortunately, the reprieve is granted for 18 months, followed by deportation unless the Attorney General or Congress extend the term."

The prospect of massive deportation after 18 months is mitigated by an agreement on the part of the Justice Department's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to reopen 150,000 cases of denied Salvadoran and Guatemalan political asylum petitions. According to Angie Berryman, "A class action suit, *American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh*, brought by churches and civil rights organizations against the government in 1985, charged political bias in the denial of political asylum to Guatemalans and Salvadorans. Last December the Justice Department settled out of court under favorable conditions for refugees."

In addition to the readjudication of those cases, the settlement in *American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh*, known as "ABC," frees Guatemalan and Salvadoran asylum



Terry Foss, AFSC

Central American refugees being interviewed at the Florida Undocumented Workers Program office.

applicants from detention and deportability, and gives them work authorization as they register with the Immigration Service.

One of the individual plaintiffs in the ABC suit, a Guatemalan Indian, was a client of AFSC's Florida Undocumented Workers Program. As part of the legal settlement, AFSC's Florida program received \$5,000 to coordinate educational outreach in six southeastern states.

Since the settlement of the case, AFSC offices in New Jersey, Massachusetts and Florida have been active in informing refugees of their new benefits, reaching them through churches, the bilingual media, English classes and special meetings.

New Jersey-based AFSC staff Denis Johnston says, "We are delighted to give good news to thousands of undocumented Salvadorans who have lived in constant fear of deportation. We have already registered many people." When asked about the risk of deportation at the end of the Temporary Status (TPS), Johnston replied, "For most

Salvadorans the most important benefit under TPS is work authorization. Later, they hope, ABC benefits may help them to secure permanent asylum."

Mario Dávila, of the Cambridge Refugee Program, believes the educational campaign on these opportunities will bring refugees a new awareness of their numbers and significance. "Through this registration drive, Salvadorans and Guatemalans are organizing their communities. This is one of the best parts of the legal breakthrough."

In spite of their limits, Temporary Protected Status and the American Baptist settlement are perceived by advocates as real victories, the result of a decade of struggle by refugees themselves and a network that includes the AFSC. Angie Berryman, AFSC Human Rights Program coordinator, says, "Until there is peace and economic reconstruction in Central America, Salvadorans and Guatemalans deserve full recognition as refugees."

by Aurora Camacho de Schmidt,  
Information Services

From Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean

## Economists meet in Mexico for dialogue

"The seminar gave a rare possibility to contrast very different experiences and views shaped by different environments," Polish economist Krzysztof Hagemeyer commented after an AFSC organized economics conference in Mexico last winter. The conference brought together 20 economists from Eastern Europe with their counterparts from Latin America and the Caribbean to compare notes on the economic transformation of their countries. The chance for free-wheeling dialogue across borders and regions was both a unique and welcome opportunity.

The Mexico conference continued the efforts of AFSC's East-West program to expand its exchanges to include Third World countries. The purpose of these exchanges has been to help break down barriers, in the faith that people, when brought together, will find ways to learn from and strengthen one another.

The idea for this conference arose when AFSC staff Michael Simmons and Corinne Johnson were in Poland a year earlier and witnessed the massive economic change and challenges facing the country. There they

realized that an event bringing together Eastern European economists with Latin American and Caribbean economists might yield rich insights for both groups.

The Mexico conference attendees found they shared some similar concerns. Among the most prominent was the desire for political democratization. Hand-in-hand with this yearning is a deep skepticism about the role of government in the economy. The experience of the Eastern Europeans was reflected in their view that the goal was to reduce—if not eliminate—the role of government in economic decisions. On the other hand, the Latin American and Caribbean participants were concerned that a free market should not ignore the social needs of the population.

Michael Simmons observed, "The primary economic issue confronting the countries of Eastern Europe is their dependency on the Soviet Union. They see their opportunity to alter this pattern through improved relations with the rest of Europe."

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are seeking ways to better their

bargaining position with the United States, especially regarding issues of debt repayment and access to the U.S. market. Through regional cooperation they hope to strengthen their negotiating position with the United States.

At the end of an intense week of formal discussions and informal conversations, the participants felt they had assisted one another in better understanding the challenge of economic reform. Through newsletters, publications and informal channels, many of the participants intend to keep in touch with one another. Participants expressed the hope that they might meet again in three to five years to share the lessons they would be learning in each of their countries.

A report, *East and South: Seminar on Economic Change and Prospects for the Future in Central Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean*, is available for \$2 from the East-West Program Office, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

# Mohawks, Denver citizens struggle for environment

The Mohawk Indian community of Akwesasne located in New York and Canada has been subjected to environmental assaults for many years. Those assaults, a result of the manufacturing boom after the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the mid-1950s, have had devastating effects on the traditional Mohawk ways.

Much of the reservation land can no longer be used for farming. Cancer-causing products, such as PCBs, have been deposited adjacent to the reservation and have leached into the soil. Other toxic materials have been regularly deposited into the waterways. Fishing on the St. Lawrence River, long important to Mohawk livelihoods, is now a hazard to Mohawk health, with the fish no longer fit to eat.

AFSC has worked at Akwesasne since 1987. In the latest phase of its work on Akwesasne environmental issues, AFSC has helped organize an aquaculture program. During the past year and a half, with technical assistance provided by faculty from the State University of New York and resources by AFSC, a number of Mohawk families began cultivating pollution free fish under carefully monitored conditions. This was seen as one way to respond positively

to this ongoing crisis in the Mohawk community.

The first year of the experiment has been a resounding success. The fish stock was found to be totally pollution free. There are now plans for increasing the quantity of the resource. And more Mohawk families want to participate in the project in the coming months.

In a related development, two years of work by the community-based **Neighbors for a Toxic Free Community** of Denver, Colorado has recently come to fruition. The city's industrial zoning ordinance has been changed in response to community pressures. Under the new legislation, two community representatives will be part of a seven-member environmental review board that will assess the affects of any new or expanding industry which could create or exacerbate an environmental problem.

**Neighbors for a Toxic Free Community**, which AFSC was instrumental in founding in 1987, started working on the ordinance after a serious defeat two years ago, when a local Hispanic neighborhood, Swansea, was unable to stop the construction of a medical waste incinerator.

AFSC and Neighbors have also been at the

heart of community efforts around the existing ASARCO plant, a Superfund site affecting the Globeville and Swansea neighborhoods, in north Denver. Increased levels of lead, cadmium and arsenic have been found on local schoolgrounds near the plant, which refines cadmium. Studies indicate that this contamination increases risks of cancer and other diseases locally. Again, poor, Black and Hispanic neighborhoods have been affected.

Responding to community pressure, the Colorado Department of Health has done blood and urine testing for cadmium, arsenic and lead for over 600 children in four neighborhoods near the plant. The city has also closed a local housing project and moved over 600 residents from a local housing project.

"Neighbors is still waiting for a projected clean-up of the plant," says Lorraine Granado, AFSC staff. "However, the most encouraging part of this," says Lorraine, "is to see that poor people in a local community can organize, learning the technical information needed, educating others, bringing together city agencies, talking to the media. People can organize and move mountains."

by Ed Nakawatase and Diane Shandor

## In Brief

### Marshall Islands youth tour Hawaii



Marshall Islands youth present health skit.

Hawaii AFSC recently sponsored a tour by "Youth to Youth in Health," a drama and singing group from the Marshall Islands. The young people, age 14 through 25, educate about teenage pregnancy, smoking, alcohol and nutrition through traditional Marshallese forms of song and dance.

"Young people are usually bored by another lecture by an adult," says Ho'oipo DeCambra of the AFSC Hawaii staff, "but having their peers

present these issues gets them involved and thinking."

AFSC also supports the work of the Native Women's Cancer Control Program in Hawaii which aims to reduce mortality from breast and cervical cancer. Through culturally sensitive programs, the staff expect to increase screening practices among approximately 1400 women on the island of O'ahu.

### 'Coalition for Justice in Maquiladoras' kicks off campaign

In earlier issues of QSB, you've read about AFSC's work to support the *maquiladora* workers along the Mexico-U.S. border. The pay is extremely low and the conditions are often dangerous in these assembly plants, which are largely U.S. owned.

AFSC has joined with 60 other organizations in the U.S. to call for a corporate standard of conduct in the *maquiladora* factories, based on Mexican health and labor laws. In February, press conferences in El Paso, Texas; Washington D.C.; and New York City launched this campaign.



Outside the maquila press conference in New York.

### Dulany Bennett appointed AFSC chairperson

Dulany Ogden Bennett, of Portland, Oregon, a veteran Quaker educator, was named chairperson of the American Friends Service Committee national Board of Directors effective January 1. She succeeds Stephen G. Cary, board chairperson the past 11 years, who resigned after more than 48 years of committee and staff service with AFSC.

**Dulany Bennett**, the former head of the Wilmington (Delaware) Friends School, serves as consultant to members of the National Association of Independent Schools and on the Board of Swarthmore College's Board of Managers. She is also chairperson of the Friends Council on Education, an organization that serves 75 Quaker schools in the United States and Canada. Over the years, she has been on numerous AFSC committees and participated in AFSC community service projects.



Dulany Bennett.

### School supplies needed in Lebanon

Boxes of school supplies are still needed to send to children in Lebanon. This is a perfect classroom project if you are a teacher. It is also a great activity for a student, youth or community group, or even your family and friends. The need is great. The long civil war in Lebanon has disrupted the education of Lebanon's children. Many school buildings

have been damaged, and with the economy devastated, students often can't afford basic supplies like pencils, paper and notebooks.

For a packet of information about the School Supplies Campaign, write: Myron Arnowitz, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Telephone: (215) 241-7166.

# AFSC housing work grows in new directions

There is no more vivid evidence of the failure of the present housing system than the fact of growing homelessness. AFSC's work toward establishing housing as a human right starts with that fact. In two places, at opposite sides of the country, programs work with homeless women, men and children as they seek to gain and keep decent housing.

In Oakland, California, AFSC began housing work five years ago by assisting residents of a threatened shelter to use nonviolent direct action to demand the city resources needed to keep it open. Groups of homeless people realized that the goal must be permanent housing, not shelters, which are only a temporary stopgap and can foster denial of the real housing crisis. The next stage for AFSC's Homeless Organizing Project (HOPE) was participation with the Oakland Union of the Homeless in a series of actions to protest denial of the right to housing and to demand use of abandoned government owned housing.

Today the steady, powerful activities of homeless people have created Dignity Housing West, a nonprofit housing development corporation which has been allocated land and over \$4 million in city and state funding to develop new housing for homeless families. An important aspect of development plans is provision of the social services needed by people who have been through the trauma of homelessness.

After occupying abandoned buildings to publicize the large inventory of housing repossessed by the Department of Housing and



Homeless people in California discuss next steps in organizing.

Urban Development, homeless families are now living in some of these units; the Union of the Homeless has a contract to operate these homes as a source of transitional housing and services for homeless families.

A new multiservice center funded by the Red Cross will provide transitional housing for 150 adults and children, as well as a range of social and health services. AFSC staff helped the Union of the Homeless and Travelers Aid obtain a contract to operate the center, with an agreement that more than 50% of the staff will be hired from the homeless community.

AFSC staff played a major role in the achievements to date. Now the challenge is to assure that homeless people, whose efforts have brought about these remarkable gains, will keep control of the housing and services and at the same time sustain the larger struggle to gain economic rights. To meet this challenge, AFSC is initiating a Homeless Training Institute to

help homeless people gain skills in community organizing, housing development, social services provision, fundraising and nonprofit management.

In Boston, AFSC operates My Sister's Place, an advocacy center for homeless women. Opened in 1987, My Sister's Place provides information and referral, benefits and housing advocacy and support groups. Formerly homeless women, as volunteers and interns, are offering their own experience to others in the struggle to solve homelessness.

A recurring problem of all programs that work with poor people is lack of information about benefits and services they may be entitled to, due largely to the failure of welfare offices to provide the information. My Sister's Place is using innovative ways of filling that gap. Volunteers, some of whom have been homeless, are visiting welfare offices wearing buttons saying "Ask Me About Shelter Rights." They are passing out information to an average of 300 families a week. The result is a major increase in requests for shelter and other emergency assistance.

It is fashionable these days in the nation's capital to talk of self-help and empowerment. Without the commitment of major resources to overcome decades of neglect, the rhetoric of self-help is a sham. Drawing on present and past program experience, we are addressing issues of national housing policy, joining in the call for a national response that will end the disgrace of homelessness and bad housing.  
by Jane Motz, Community Relations Division

## NEW RESOURCES

### Available from Literature Resources . . .

#### **Swords Into Plowshares—Economic Conversion and the U.S. Bases in the Philippines**

Written by Philippine economist Eduardo Gonzales, *Swords Into Plowshares* takes an honest look at the benefits and burdens of these bases, proposals for alternatives, and the conditions needed to make these alternatives viable and beneficial to local communities. \$1.25; 10 or more \$1 each.

#### **The Political Economy of Cocaine**

Written by economist Judy Claude for the AFSC, *The Political Economy of Cocaine* analyzes the drug trade, focusing on cocaine, and offers for consideration some ideas for changes in U.S. drug policies. \$2.50; 10 or more \$1.75 each.

#### **In Their Presence: Reflections on the Transforming Power of Undocumented Immigrants**

by Aurora Camacho de Schmidt for the AFSC. "This is a powerful indictment of employer sanctions, integrating a discussion of the spiritual mandate to extend compassion and justice to all members of the human family. . . ." — Kitty Calavita, University of California, Irvine.  
\$4.50 each plus \$1 postage.

#### **The Sun Never Sets—Confronting the Network of Foreign U.S. Military Bases**

How is "Operation Desert Storm" a model for future U.S. military intervention? Why does the U.S. deploy half a million troops abroad? How do foreign military bases undermine human rights, self determination and national sovereignty? These are some of the questions answered in *The Sun Never Sets*. The book describes the impact of bases on nations and communities, analyzes evolving U.S. foreign and military policies, and proposes non-military alternatives to continued militarization and foreign deployments. A chapter on bases in the Middle East is helpful in view of the Gulf War.

Elise Boulding, secretary general, International Peace Research Association, says, "This landmark book tells a powerful story of the development of U.S. security strategy over the past century. . . . The tragic consequences of pathological dependency on the threat of military force for dispute settlement are delineated in terms of the destruction of lifeways for whole societies. . . ." Published by South End Press, 1991.

\$10 plus \$3 shipping and handling.

#### **"An infinite ocean of light"**

In "An infinite ocean of light" Stephen Cary, retiring chairperson of the AFSC Board of Directors, gives a personal account of his 48 years with the Service Committee. He tells in a moving way how his life at the AFSC "has served to illumine and make real" the words of George Fox written in 1647, "I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love that flowed over the ocean of darkness, and in that also I saw the infinite love of God. . . ."

Stephen Cary takes us to Europe after World War II—to Auschwitz and to an Italian village—to Cambodia, Vietnam, El Salvador, Amsterdam and to a book-writing retreat at Haverford College. Evident in the telling is his deep feeling for people and for the AFSC.

Available from: Anne Credle, Information Services, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.  
\$.60 each, includes postage.

#### **Video - Miles from Peace**

*Miles from Peace* presents dramatic footage from the bases in the Philippines and surrounding communities, including interviews with a worker at the Subic Naval Base and women working in the entertainment industry in neighboring Olongapo. An "Organizers Packet" accompanies the video, which can also be used separately.

Available from: Disarmament Program, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. \$40 each; 5 or more copies \$32 each.

To order, write to: Literature Resource, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 241-7048.