



# QUAKER BULLETIN SERVICE

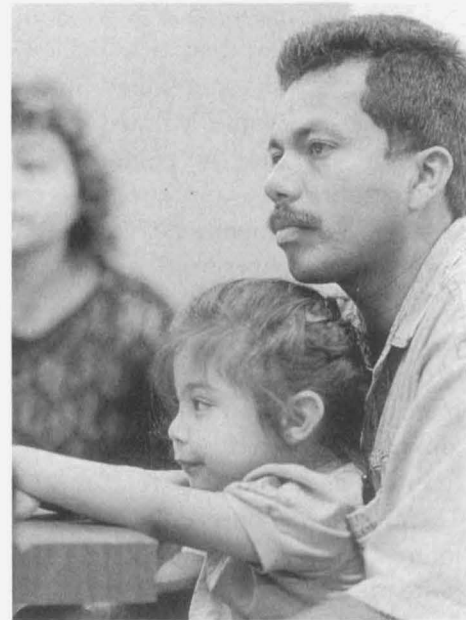
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## Face to face with immigrants' lives

*Willie Colón Reyes, a staff writer in the American Friends Service Committee's national office in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, recently visited the AFSC's Central American Political Asylum Project in Miami, Florida. The purpose was to do research for a fundraising brochure for the project, which faces an \$80,000 cut in grant money. The trip became more than a research project for Willie, and his personal experience, as well as the program itself, is described here. —Ed.*

by Willie Colón Reyes

**H**E ANSWERED with a hesitant "yes," and the look on his face betrayed how much that admission cost him.

I was helping administer an anonymous survey in Spanish in Fort Myers, Florida, as one of the services of AFSC's Central American Political Asylum Project (CAPAP). The survey contained the question, "Have you gone hungry since you've been in the United States?" No one had — or at least, no one was willing to admit it, until this young man from El Salvador. He was in his mid-20s, not much younger than I, with a medium build similar to my own. Since my parents uprooted themselves from Puerto Rico and moved to New York City, it occurred to me as I sat with this young man that it wouldn't have taken much for our places to be reversed. But here we

were, with my asking questions he couldn't read and his painful reply.

Before I visited the CAPAP office, I had an intellectual understanding that their work was important. Facing this proud young Salvadoran, a mirror-image of myself, I knew it in my gut.

CAPAP, based in the AFSC's Miami office, files legal claims to help Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees stay in the United States. Applications include political asylum cases and family-based visa petitions. CAPAP's staff includes two lawyers, two paralegals, a legal clerk, and an office manager. In 1995, they served more than 2,000 people and filed more than 700 applications with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

TERRY FOSS



**Top of page:** Enrique Gonzalez, AFSC staff person, helps Central American immigrants work through legal hurdles in southern Florida. **Above:** Martha Mendes (left) and Enrique load up paperwork they will need for a visit to Homestead, Florida.

As a bilingual member of AFSC's Communications Department, I was glad to take on this assignment, but I nonetheless felt a bit nervous. How would I be received by the Miami staff and the people they serve? Would the street Spanish I learned as a kid in New York City be ridiculed by people who spoke Spanish as a first language? And how would I ever communicate with people who spoke indigenous tongues of Central America?

I found out the first day I spent in the CAPAP office.

Far from being seen as an intruder, I was welcomed into the office and promptly put to work by Carmen Gonzalez, the office manager. She asked me to help compile

the annual statistics of how many people the office served in 1995.

Then, with a mischievous grin, Amada Orendain, lawyer and manager of the project, announced, "Since you speak Spanish, you can help us with this survey when you go to Ft. Myers." Survey? No one had told me about a survey. It turned out to be a six-page questionnaire to help the INS determine how U.S. immigration law affects people's day-to-day lives.

So, I spent a day and a half compiling statistics, listening to Carmen and the other staff members field dozens of phone calls, watching the steady stream of people in and out of the office — from law students helping research cases to immigrants

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## Love: no easy commitment

**R**EMEMBER WHEN you were a child and saw for the first time someone different from yourself? Childlike, you brought open curiosity to the scene. Perhaps you touched someone whose skin was a different color from your own. Maybe you felt hair that had a very different texture.

Was the person your own age but significantly taller or shorter? Did you have trouble understanding because she "talked funny?" It's possible you even felt some jealousy as, fascinated, you longed to be like the person who had captured your attention.

Do you remember sharing your experience with your parents or older siblings? How did they react?

I ask these questions because, in the process of raising my own children, I came to realize that they did not see differences as negative or fearful. Their reaction, consistently, was interest, curiosity, and even fascination. I discovered that children have to be taught prejudice and fear of the other.

Rodney King's plea, "Can't we all just get along?" comes to mind especially in the face of current public rhetoric that makes enemies out of the poor, immigrants, people of cultural backgrounds other than that of the dominant white culture in our country. The plea to "get along" is a poignant one and somehow minimalist. My plea is that we learn to love one another, by which I mean show respect, interest, compassion, curiosity, and a real willingness to work together, to be together, to care for the other's future and well-being as much as for our own.

But the mandate to love one another is too simplistic. We need tools and training and a childlike curiosity that make growth and exploration a part of our lives in a way that is rarely valued in our culture. The mission of the AFSC is peace and justice, which can only happen as we learn to love one another. Often we characterize our work as seeking to "see what love can do." And it is remarkable to experience the results of that kind of work in various communities around the world.

One of the phrases in AFSC's mission statement is "we see no person as our enemy." It's a much easier goal to state than it is to practice—AFSC staff and committee members struggle with

acknowledging and honoring the humanity of people who espouse ideas and ways of operating that undermine the very basis of our work. Much public rhetoric these days seems to identify enemies as those who are different in some way from the dominant culture—immigrants, people of color, the poor. The charge is made that "those people" are stealing America, undermining the economy and making "us" insecure.

At the same time, we seem more and more dependent on military might and weapons for our "security," never questioning the fact that resources that could create jobs, homes, educational opportunities, and a better life for us all are being, in effect, stolen from the people to create weapons of mass destruction. Beyond that, we are now living in a culture in which children absorb the "truth" that weapons provide security and power. This is a truly tragic situation and one we must address.

Can't we all just get along? Can we live in the power of a love that frees us to see no person as our enemy? If that love can motivate our work, our relationships, the way we approach problems and conflicts, then the need for weapons and military security would diminish and we could begin

to tackle, together, some of the major social and economic problems in the world that threaten us in subtle and real ways.

My plea is that our motivation for service and building community must be love rather than fear, hope rather than despair, equality and respect rather than dominance. It's a vision that requires hard work, commitment, and a constant awareness of the well-being of the other.

My vision is of children and adults being curious about each other, regardless of color, size, status, class, gender, or other conditions. They see one another as interesting, as friends, partners, and members of the same human family. They squabble, they differ, they work it out, they go on. They inspire one another. And the future they are building is one they can hand to their children with pride and love. This is what peace and justice looks like. I believe it is achievable, and I know that we must do all in our power to make it a reality.

*Kara Newell*

Executive Director, AFSC

*The mandate to love one another is too simplistic. We need tools and training and a childlike curiosity that makes growth a part of our lives.*



## Childhood in Germany shaped dedication to AFSC

**E**LSE FERNSLER first encountered the Service Committee as a refugee child in Germany in 1919. In those days, harsh living conditions and strict food rationing meant an inadequate diet for most Germans. As a response to the crisis, AFSC and British Friends established hundreds of feeding centers all over the country, at one time serving more than a million people every day. Else, who was dangerously underweight, benefited from nutritious hot lunches at school, which supplemented meager meals at home. After more than a year in this limbo, the family left to find a new home in the United States, a journey across the ocean that took 17 days.

Decades later, Else connected her childhood memory of being fed with her exploration of Quakerism. She joined a Friends meeting in New Jersey in the 1940s and continued her connection with the AFSC. For years, she packed clothes to be shipped all over the world through the Material Aids Program at the AFSC's national headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When she lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she became clerk of the Clothing Workroom Committee. Later in Philadelphia, she volunteered in Central Files (now Archives), which became a paid position she held until retiring.

"Other than my family, AFSC is my life," says the 83-year-old Else from her home in Crosslands, a Quaker retirement center near Philadelphia. She became one of Crosslands' first residents in 1977 and organized used clothing drives for Material Aids.

Then Else saw another way to benefit the AFSC as it became clear Crosslands residents, going through life transitions, had goods in addition to clothing that needed to find new homes. Else became connected with AFSC's monthly Recycle Sale at national headquarters, where used clothing, household items, books, artwork, furniture, and jewelry are sold, with the money going to AFSC program work.

Now, along with help from other Crosslands residents and cooperation of the Crosslands' administration, Else coordinates an extensive program, sometimes putting in more than eight-hour days. Her neighbors know she can help dispose of belongings, and staff members and new residents benefit, too, in finding inexpensive ways to furnish their homes. Recently a woman who had lived abroad for many years arrived at Crosslands with no furniture. Else found a donated sofa, several easy chairs, and other items to make the new apartment comfortable.

In no small measure due to Else's devotion, the Recycle Sales in Philadelphia have raised more than \$150,000 for the Service Committee. And she's not done yet. "I'm going to do this as long as I am able, because everyone benefits, donors and buyers alike. And I believe the AFSC is just a wonderful organization."

See related stories on pages 4 and 5.

BOB ZEARFOSS



Else Fernsler

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**Assistant Editor:** Willie Colón Reyes  
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**National Office:**  
1501 Cherry Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 241-7000  
<http://www.afsc.org>

#### AFSC Regional Offices:

**Southeast Region**  
92 Piedmont Avenue, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Middle Atlantic Region**  
4806 York Road  
Baltimore, MD 21212

**New England Region**  
2161 Massachusetts Avenue  
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Chicago, IL 60605

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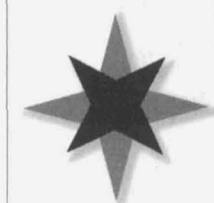
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1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 1501  
Oakland, CA 94612

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# Giving peace a chance

**P**AT FARREN, editor of AFSC's *Peacework* magazine, recently received the Courage of Conscience Award from Peace Abbey, one of the nation's highest-profile peace centers.

The award is given to people who work for peace, whether with quiet courage or outspoken efforts. Among the former recipients are Benjamin Spock; Muhammad Ali; Peter, Paul & Mary; Mother Teresa; and Rosa Parks.

Pat has spent the past 23 years editing *Peacework*, where his notebook full of ideas, contacts, and schemes for future issues is legendary. *Peacework* is published by AFSC's New England Regional Office in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It focuses on nonviolent action and provides information to help those involved in peacemaking work together, share ideas, and publicize activities. Pat calls this "empowerment journalism."

His involvement in peacemaking started as a child in upstate New York. His parents were active in the Catholic Worker, and Dorothy Day was an occasional visitor to their home. He joined the

Peace Corps in 1966 and went to the Ivory Coast. When he came back, the Vietnam War was in full swing. He applied for selected objection status, his request was denied, and he was drafted. When he refused to go, he was sentenced to two years' probation and ordered to find social service work. During those years, he married the woman who is still his wife: Glenda Alderman, an old friend from the Peace Corps.

He took over *Peacework* in 1973 and puts out the monthly magazine with help from associate editor Patricia Watson and an energetic cast of volunteers and student interns.

Pat Farren's own courage goes far beyond his work for peace, however. His personal life is colored by the specter of cancer, to which he lost his youngest son at the age of eight. Now cancer threatens his own life: he is undergoing radical treatment for a malignant brain tumor. In a speech shortly after diagnosis of his illness, he said, "Rather than getting hit by a bus while crossing the street for lunch, I have the exquisitely temporal luxury of apprehending that life is finite and of making adjustments necessary to claim my time, to seize it, to move with it,



Pat Farren (right) receiving the Courage of Conscience Award from Peace Abbey director Lewis Randa. Glenda Alderman, Pat's wife, is seated between the two.

to mark its passage, and to gather myself for its conclusion."

He has responded to this challenge by encircling himself with loving, committed friends who join him in prayer and in his visions of healing. This bears a similarity to his approach to editing *Peacework*, in which he has also built a community of people who work together toward a common vision.

Although *Peacework* deals with issues such as the war in Bosnia and nuclear disarmament, Pat said in an interview with the *Watertown Press* that his mission isn't so much about battles as it is about kindness. "It's

not about not punching someone," he said. "It's about radiating a respect and love for God."

Keepin' On: Political Journalism, Personal Illness, and Community, a 24-page booklet of Pat Farren's talk at the Community Church of Boston, is available for \$1 per copy from *Peacework*, AFSC New England Regional Office, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140; telephone: (617) 661-6130; fax: (617) 354-2832; e-mail: [afscnero@igc.apc.org](mailto:afscnero@igc.apc.org). Sample copies of *Peacework* are free and available from the same address.

## Face-to-face with immigrants' lives (Continued from page 1)

looking for help, and feeling intimidated by the endless rows of shelves stocked with forms.

I discovered that the bulk of immigration law work revolves around complicated paperwork, not *L.A. Law*-style court cases.

I felt relaxed and totally engaged in the work. But as the outreach visit to Fort Myers drew near, my nervousness returned. I prepared to become a part of program work, rather than being an observer.

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The Catholic Hispanic Social Services building in Fort Myers is a small, modern, one-story building with two main rooms, a kitchen, pantry, and a series of smaller offices. CAPAP's paralegals, Martha Mendez and Enrique Gonzalez (no relation to Carmen), are regulars. Each month they make two outreach visits, alternating between Pahokee, Okeechobee, Homestead, and Fort Myers in southern Florida. These visits are often the first contact CAPAP staff have with immigrants and refugees trying to stay in the United States.

The two-and-a-half-hour drive to Fort Myers took us through the Everglades, and in between trying to spot alligators, I grilled Martha and

Enrique about their work and these outreach visits. I learned that:

- Some outreach clients are so eager to get help they start their wait for CAPAP staff at 10 a.m., although they know Martha and Enrique won't arrive until 4:30 p.m.

- Enrique is caught in a frustrating dilemma. "I'm Salvadoran, so many Salvadorans think, 'Oh, he's one of us. He'll help us get asylum.' But some of these people have fraudulent or frivolous claims for asylum. I have to screen these types of claims out, regardless of whether or not they're fellow countrymen or countrywomen. If I don't do that, the project loses credibility."

- The time spent with each client can vary from 15 to 45 minutes. And Martha noted, "Sometimes people come in and say, 'I just have one or two little questions,' but they end up spending more than half an hour with me!"

When we arrived in Fort Myers this afternoon, the waiting room was crammed with thirty to forty people. Martha did a presentation on basic immigration rules and regulations that whittled down the crowd, but it still would be a long evening. It would not, however, be a dull one.

Many of the people knew each

other. There was an air of easy camaraderie that made it seem more like a family gathering than a legal consultation. And, like the CAPAP staff, these people latched on to me as another potential source of help.

Martha and Enrique settled themselves at opposite corners of the large back room. The stream of people seemed endless. They came in alone, with interpreters, and with entire families to talk about their cases. The wide range of questions boiled down to: How can I get asylum?

As I administered a few surveys on the side, I experienced some of the frustration that CAPAP staff deal with every day. Why hadn't I realized many of the immigrants would not be able to read or write in any language? Or that they would fear being found by the INS if they completed these surveys? I was dismayed by my naïveté, but like Martha and Enrique, I did my best.

We got back to Miami at 1 a.m., and once in bed, I fell into an exhausted sleep. However, I was determined to get the full CAPAP experience, so I made it to the office by 9 a.m. the next day. As Martha and Enrique made clear, compensatory time in the CAPAP office is more theory than reality.

There are so many other impressions from my visit to the CAPAP office that have stayed with me: the chatty Salvadoran man in his mid-50s that I met during the Fort Myers visit; the changing INS rules that make CAPAP's work that much harder; Amada's story about a Guatemalan woman who fled her country after being raped by a guerrilla soldier and who was finally granted asylum in the United States; the fifteen-page asylum application that made me break into a cold sweat; the constant sense that there was so much to do and so little time in which to do it.

When I returned to Philadelphia, a coworker told me about a quote by writer and philosopher Elie Wiesel: "No human being is illegal." After my experiences in Florida — and especially after meeting that young Salvadoran whose hesitant "yes" cost him a bundle of pride — the truth of Wiesel's words is perhaps the most lasting impression of all.

If you would like to make a financial donation to CAPAP, please make your check payable to the American Friends Service Committee and mail to CAPAP, 1205 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143.



*Stille Helfer* (quiet helpers) in Germany:

# 'We were given more than we gave.'

*The story of Quaker-led relief work in post-war Europe is told in a new traveling exhibit that opened in Berlin this year. Some of those who were part of the post-World War II effort revisited the sites and recalled how those days changed their lives.*

## Germany revisited—1996

by Stephen G. Cary

IT ISN'T OFTEN we have the chance to return after half a century to the scene of events that helped shape our lives. To have the opportunity is a gift — one given to fourteen U.S. citizens and seventeen British who were among those who were part of Quaker efforts to ease the suffering of the German people in the wake of World War II. This group, of which I was a part, was invited to return to Germany in January 1996 for the opening of the American Friends Service Committee's commemorative exhibit, *Stille Helfer* ("silent helpers"), at Berlin's Deutsches Historisches Museum. For all of us, it was a moving experience.

The exhibit itself, after two years of preparation, is a stunning collection of photographs and memorabilia documenting Quaker service in Germany after both world wars. It was mounted with major assistance from German Friends and generous support from the German government, which is working to remind its citizens that even after the unspeakable excesses of the Nazis, there were many who came to help, and among them were the Quakers.

The government's support and appreciation run much deeper than money, we discovered by listening to the words of the president of Germany, Roman Herzog, who hurried back from

Francois Mitterand's funeral in Paris so he could speak at the ceremony marking the opening of our exhibit.

Many things gripped us on this return visit. Reliving experiences with friends we hadn't seen for many years and poring over pictures of familiar scenes and faces left us awash in nostalgia, but reminded us, too, of the human cost and the cruelty of war, which had once so engulfed us.

Berlin itself was the first shock. For those who had visited in the intervening years, the absence of the Wall, the absence of hassles upon entering the Soviet zone, and the thrill of passing unobstructed through the Brandenburg Gate were paramount, but it was those who hadn't been back since the late '40s who had real cause to marvel.

The desert that had been Unter den Linden—where men, women, and children scrounged for scraps of wood or cultivated little patches of ground in an ocean of destruction—is once again a beautiful, wide, forested boulevard across the heart of the city. The shattered buildings, the mountains of rubble, the endless, ugly, empty wreckage of war were gone, replaced by handsome newness and bustling streets in the western part of the city.

East Berlin made a different impression: clearly less prosperous, with a few stunning examples of pretentious Stalin-renaissance architecture and an aura of dinginess. This scene is now relieved by a skyline of massive cranes marking a furious building program as the city prepares for the return of the government to Berlin.

We found, too, a reborn nation, vexed by daunting problems, but one we wouldn't have dreamed possible fifty years ago: a Germany in warm alliance with its once-bitter enemy France, and a leader in the emerging European community. Gone is the aura of despair, the drabness of life, the humiliation of the cigarette economy, the fending for oneself in a society without fabric or order. Now, thanks to a generous peace, outside assistance, and their own industriousness, the German people appear to be a prosperous, confident lot.

Perhaps our picture was distorted. President Herzog's remarkable candor about past German crimes in his speech at the exhibit's opening and the selection of places for us to visit may have overstated the readiness of the country to come to

terms with its Nazi past. We were given three powerful reminders of this. We first visited the beautiful—if intentionally partial—restoration of Berlin's largest synagogue on Oranienburgerstrasse, torched by a Nazi mob on Kristallnacht, standing silently on a raw, cold

day in an open court that once magnificently seated 2,000 of the faithful in its sanctuary. We then went to the Museum of Human Resistance, formerly headquarters of the German High Command on what is now Stauffenbergstrasse, and now a memorial to all those who resisted Hitler. Finally, towering above all else, was our visit to Bergen-Belsen, the concentration camp where many thousands met cruel and agonizing deaths.

For two of our members, this last visit had special meaning, because they had been members of the first civilian relief unit to enter Belsen five days after its liberation by the British army. Their stories—and an army film from the liberation, when there were 10,000 bodies and 10,000 dying among the 50,000 starving, wretched human beings in the camp—moved us to silent tears in a spontaneous meeting for worship at the close of the liberation film.

These events were interspersed with visits among German Friends in Berlin who gave us a walking tour of East Berlin, and in Bad Pyrmont, the center of German Quakerism, where we shared in Sunday worship, and a four-hour bus trip through the old Soviet zone. All this led up to a final group meeting when we shared impressions of our week together.

What struck me with special force that evening was the degree to which each of our lives had been changed by our long-ago service in a devastated land. We came to help, but quietly and imperceptibly we were ourselves helped, given more than we gave, and returned home enriched by the act of serving. Renewed recognition of that reality was for me the greatest gift of our week together.

*Stephen G. Cary was commissioner for Europe for the AFSC after World War II. Since those years, he has served the AFSC in many capacities, including 12 years as chairperson of the AFSC Board of Directors and Corporation. He is now retired as vice president at Haverford College.*



Top of page: Serving food after World War II. Above: Barbara Graves and Susanne Plum pause over an exhibit at *Stille Helfer*.





Above: Outside of the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin.

Below: Hugh Jenkins and Beth Dearden visiting Bergen-Belsen memorial.

## 'Small roles in historic drama'

One of the Friends from the United States who participated in the opening of the AFSC exhibit in Germany was Barbara Graves, who now lives in Oakland, California. From 1948 to 1953, she and others worked with Germans to establish neighborhood and student centers. In a letter to her friends after the exhibit's opening, she offered "snapshots" of the event, excerpted here.

by Barbara Graves

I AM STILL HEAVILY under the weight of the experience, which I think must have been impressive beyond expectation for everyone concerned. Neither we nor the organizers knew quite how this memorial to the horrific era of German history of fifty years ago would be received by the German public. Public response to the central exhibit exceeded expectations, even optimistic ones.

From entry to exit, preparations and performance went like clockwork, with many touches of humor and individual attention in spite of our demanding schedule. The honors go to Tom Conrad and Katharine Winings in AFSC; Brenda Bailey and her colleagues in Quaker Peace and Service of London, and German Friends Lutz and Ute Caspers, with tireless help from Lore Horn, co-clerk of Germany Yearly Meeting, plus, I'm sure, many others.

Day 2: We met in meeting for worship with German Friends. Deeply graced. After formal opening of the exhibit, there was a reception offering the same menu as the *Quäkerspeisung* in the early 1920s: hot chocolate and Quaker rolls baked according to the original recipe used when AFSC, Friends Ambulance Unit of England, and several thousand German coworkers fed a million children a day during the grimmest years. The exhibit itself contains photos, diaries, bits of clothing, and other artifacts of the relief period. It is worth a couple of hours' attention, especially if one pauses to reflect, as one really must; it is compelling in its bare realities. It will be at the Historical Museum for a month

and then tour twenty other German cities.

It is obvious, as we had been told, that the German government paid very careful attention to this event. What was startling to me was the depth and thoroughness with which German officials understand Quaker history, the weight they gave to humanitarian and theological lessons drawn from the quiet witness of Quaker and non-Quaker workers in their country at a time when Germany presumed itself to be seen as the monster enemy, with good reason.

Day 4: Brenda Bailey led us on foot through the black of night to the famous Bad Pyrmont Spa swimming pool, where almost every one of us donned rented swimsuits and plunged in for a delightful swim in the warm, healing waters along with dozens of the local folk! New perspectives on Steve Cary, Don Gann, Margaret Mossman, Hugh Jenkins, Brenda Bailey, et al!

Day 6: The momentous event today was our visit to the memorial at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. This camp killed people by withholding food and shelter in the bitter cold, killing by starvation and disease and hard work, rather than with gas chambers. Two members of our group, Hugh Jenkins and Beth Dearden, had been among the first to enter the camp after the war ended. Hugh now quietly, with obvious difficulty, described the scenes.

That night we gathered for last sharings, which included great appreciation to our hosts and coordinators, reflections on the multitude of lessons learned, and a palpable humility surrounding our own individual small roles in the historic drama we'd been reminded of so poignantly.



## 'Their approach was never missionary'

The following remarks are excerpted from Roman Herzog's tribute to Quaker relief work in Germany at the exhibit's opening on January 11 in Berlin. He is president of Germany.

by Roman Herzog

One of the most important events in the immediate postwar era is in danger of being forgotten by the younger generation: The Quaker aid for Germany, which began fifty years ago and protected many thousands from the terrible consequences of hunger and malnutrition, cold and homelessness in the year of famine, 1946.

The winter of 1945 had been a time of utter dejection for many people in Germany. Helplessness and despair robbed many of all hope. During the last years of the war, people had put up with living in ruins and cellars and making do with little food and clothing. What followed was the terrible realization of the horrific crimes committed by Germans. Germans were met with deep contempt all over the world when pictures from the liberated concentration camps were made public. The sense of shame at the unimaginable suffering inflicted upon millions of people had a paralyzing effect on many of our fellow citizens. At that time no one expected the peoples of the victorious powers to provide compassionate help for the Germans now living in destitution.

It is only against the background of the contempt felt for Germany during these years that one can appreciate the importance of Quaker relief work. . . .

The first postwar helpers came to Germany as early as 1945 in the wake of the Allied troops.

Teams of British Quakers evacuated civilians from areas affected by fighting and distributed food. A small group of Quaker helpers entered Bergen-Belsen concentration camp five days after its liberation. Along with others, they started work in the midst of inconceivable human suffering. They transferred the dead, evacuated children and ill prisoners, gathered food in the surrounding villages, and helped organize supplies for the survivors. They also supported war victims: German refugees, prisoners of war, and the needy civilian population. It was precisely the equal treatment given to all those in need that characterized the human greatness of this help and of those dispensing it.

A more lasting impression than being provided with food during this difficult period was the good will and active charity demonstrated by Americans and Britons who had been condemned as enemies just a short time before.

Their approach was never missionary.

Their aim was always to bring together people of different religions and to jointly translate into reality the ideals of charity and brotherly love. It was the silent work done on a small scale, often unnoticed by the general public, rather than spectacular successes, that was in keeping with their thinking. This corresponded to the Quakers' idea of active Christianity marked by tolerance and modesty.



# Markers & Milestones

<http://www.afsc.org>

Those of you who are hip to computer/techno jargon know that <http://www.afsc.org> can mean only one thing: AFSC now has its own site on the World Wide Web. If you like to surf the computer Internet — or even if you're just a casual browser — check out the AFSC home page at the "web" address listed above. Comments and suggestions about the page are welcome and can be sent to AFSC's e-mail address: [afscinfo@afsc.org](mailto:afscinfo@afsc.org)

## Welcome to Joyce Miller

Joyce Miller is the new director of AFSC's Community Relations Division, which deals with domestic programs such as immigration and economic justice. She previously worked as director of the Office for Institutional Diversity at Bryn Mawr College. Joyce's long history with AFSC began in 1969 as a summer intern. She returned in 1970 as a community organizer with



Joyce Miller

the Southeastern Public Education Program. She joined the executive committee of AFSC's New England Regional Office and has since worked on many AFSC committees. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School.

## Human costs of border policies

A new study reveals that hundreds of undocumented immigrants die each year trying to cross the border from Mexico into the United States. The study, "Migrant Deaths at the Texas-Mexico Border, 1985-1994," was conducted by the Center for Immigration Research at the University of Houston and sponsored by AFSC's Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Project. It states that as many as 330 undocumented people die each year trying to cross into Texas. A majority of these migrant deaths are never officially registered. Through the use of statistics, the study sheds a harsh light on human costs of U.S. border control measures. For a copy, contact the Mexico-U.S. Border Program, Community Relations Division, AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479; telephone (215) 241-7134; e-mail: [RKamel@afsc.org](mailto:RKamel@afsc.org).

## Congratulations to Hawai'i office!

Hawai'i's House of Representatives passed a resolution on January 23 that honored and commended AFSC's Hawai'i office for its more than fifty years of peace and social justice work. That work includes the office's efforts on behalf of same-gender marriage, Japanese Americans in-

tered during World War II, and issues of sovereignty for Kanaka Maoli in Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian communities.

## New Affirmative Action director

Not to be confused with the singer, Michael Jackson recently joined AFSC as the new director of Affirmative Action. Michael comes to the position after three years as director of community and family relations for the Devon, Pennsylvania-based Devereux Foundation, a residential treatment program for adolescents and young adults with emotional and physical disabilities. He has extensive experience with diversity issues.



Michael Jackson

## And the Nobel nominee is ...

The AFSC's nominee for the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize is Maha Ghosananda, the Supreme Patriarch of Cambodian Buddhism. Maha worked toward reconciliation when the Khmer Rouge was ousted in 1979, organized world days of prayer for peace, and is a leader in the effort to eliminate land mines in Cambodia and other countries. AFSC, as a co-recipient of the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize, is entitled to make a nomination each year. This year's recipient will be announced in the fall.

# RESOURCES

**AFSC poster: "What do you see when you look into people's faces?"** We see that of God in everyone." 16"x23." Three colors. Cost: \$10. **Order below.**

**Silver Rights: A true story from the front lines of the civil rights struggle.** By Constance Curry, with an introduction by Marian Wright Edelman. Published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. Story of one family's courageous thirty-year struggle for quality education for Blacks in Sunflower County, Mississippi. Excellent addition to Black history and women's history collections. Price: \$21.95.

**Hear Our Voices: A resource directory of immigrant and refugee women's projects.** Compiled by Claire Jung Jin Yoo. Published by AFSC's Nationwide Women's Program. Comprehensive guide to advocacy, economic development, organizing, legal assistance,

To place an order or get an AFSC publications catalog, contact Literature Resources, AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Phila., PA 19102, or call toll free 1-(800) 226-9816; (215) 241-7048; FAX: (215) 241-7275. Make checks payable to AFSC, Literature Resources.

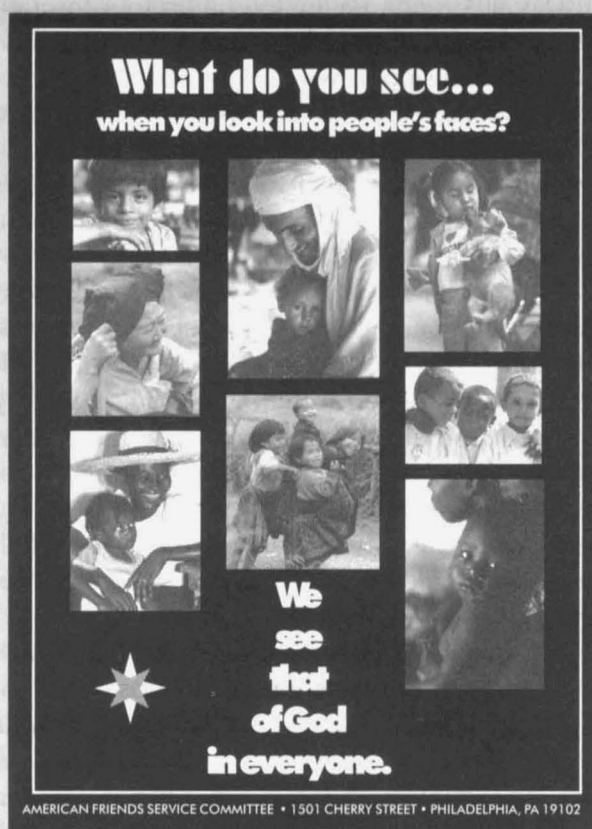
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social services, research, job training, and education programs for immigrant and refugee women in the United States. Price: \$10.

**Jobs, Income and Work: Ruinous trends, urgent alternatives.** By Holly Sklar, published by AFSC's Economic Justice Program. Discusses the impact of the changing economy in the United States. Contains current statistics, tables, graphs and charts. Highly readable and accessible, an important book for understanding the potential impact of policies proposed in state and federal government. Price: \$7.

**Making Soldiers in the Public Schools: An analysis of the army JROTC curriculum.** By Catherine Lutz and Lesley Bartlett, published by AFSC's Youth and Militarism Program. Comprehensive study of the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp program. Challenges school boards and administrators who are thinking of adding or continuing a JROTC unit to take a closer look at the curriculum and carefully examine the costs. Findings include: How JROTC drains resources from other educational programs; how the JROTC curriculum falls below accepted pedagogical standards; and differences between JROTC's study units on citizenship and history from standard civilian texts. Price: \$3.50.

**JROTC: The Military in America's High Schools: Developing Citizens or Soldiers.** Video produced by the Center for Defense Information. Looks at both sides of the debate surrounding the JROTC program in public high schools. Interviews Pentagon policy makers, JROTC instructors and students, educators, and activists. Excellent supplement to *Making Soldiers in the Public Schools*. 30 minutes. Price: \$19. Video available only from the Youth & Militarism Program, (215) 241-7176.

**Building Movements, Shattering Myths: Arab and U.S. women confront violence.** By Jan Abu Shakrah. 32-page booklet describes Arab women's tour of U.S. communities, where they explored common patterns and shared experiences unique to each society. Includes photographs and bibliography of articles, books, and videos about women's issues in the Middle East. Price: \$5.



# How do we respond?

by Esther Conrad

**W**HAT DOES IT MEAN for us to eliminate the social safety net in the United States? That is the question facing U.S. citizens in light of proposed legislation to drastically alter social policies set in place in the past sixty years. At the heart of the debate is the federal government's role in assuring that people who need assistance receive it.

Many legislators and people in power propose destroying this long-standing guarantee and making major cuts in social programs. This is in the name of balancing the federal budget and returning power to the states. As such proposals come closer and closer to becoming reality, we must look into the eyes of those who will be hurt. And we must ask: Why do so many people in power consider it to be in their interests to target the most vulnerable members of our society?

The answer to this question reveals a fundamental trend throughout our country and the world toward ever-increasing economic inequity and racism. This trend is at the root of the legislative and moral crisis we face today.

In human costs, proposed federal legislation would exact an enormous price. Here are a few examples: Undocumented mothers would no longer be able to receive food stamps to buy groceries for their children who are U.S. citizens. Some immigrant children would not even be able to buy school lunches, much less obtain free ones. Teen-age mothers would be ineligible to receive cash welfare assistance. A family would be denied assistance after five years, regardless of whether any member held a job.

Underlying such proposals is a shift in principle from making decisions based on fairness to making decisions based on how to save money and shrink government. This is not a subtle shift; it is stated outright in proposed legislation for reducing the Earned Income Tax Credit, which would raise taxes on working poor families and individuals. It is also the justification for restricting and eventually abolishing legal services for farm workers and other poor people and for cutting off federal benefits to legal immigrants, as well as those who are undocumented.

Despite the stated intention of these measures to save money and cut bureaucracy, there is an effort to target people of color, immigrants, women, children, and poor people. This motive is thinly disguised, if at all. Preferences for the rich, the corporate world, and the military establishment blatantly take precedence over the good of all. For instance, while proposing to raise taxes on low-income people in the name of balancing the budget, many in Congress seek to cut taxes of the rich and continue providing billions in corporate subsidies. Even more astounding, Congress increased the military budget by \$7 billion more than the Pentagon actually requested, while cutting billions of dollars from housing, environment, and child nutrition programs.

Such contradictory thinking is particularly evident in legislation involving immigrants and immigration enforcement. The common thread in these measures is anti-immigrant sentiment and harshness, not genuine efforts to cut costs or shrink bureaucracy. For instance, Congress proposes spending millions of dollars to add thousands more Border



ILLUSTRATION FROM STREET SPIRIT

Patrol agents along the Southwest border. It also proposes adding a costly national computer database and a complex process to verify the legal status of workers and catch those who are undocumented.

In contrast, policy makers plan to require schools, hospitals, and most social service agencies to spend an inordinate amount of time and money gathering detailed information about every student's, patient's, and client's legal status. This is intended to save money by denying services to immigrants — legal and undocumented alike. Overall, savings would be small, especially considering the cost of the additional paperwork, but to an immigrant family, it would mean fearing to take a sick child to the hospital because of the threat of deportation. The logic behind this and other measures clearly doesn't weigh costs against savings. Rather, the thrust is to remove, discourage, or make miserable one entire group of people, whether or not they are legal residents.

The impact these and other proposed changes would have upon people's lives is immense. The impact they would have on our social contract — which operates from a base of fairness and equal opportunity, rather than advancing the cause of the privileged — reaches to the roots of who we are and what we stand for as a society.

In light of Quakers' and the AFSC's steadfast witness on behalf of economic justice, we must consider the prospect that our government may no longer be willing to share responsibility for those in need. We are called to stand with the people who will be hurt by these changes. And, we are called to search for the forces behind such outright attacks on the most vulnerable members of our society. In finding answers, we will find our deepest challenge in responding to the crisis we face today.

*Esther Conrad follows social policy legislation at AFSC's office in Washington, D.C. She graduated in 1995 from Stanford University.*

## North Korea Flood Update:

# Support pours in for AFSC relief efforts

One family decided during dinner that all four of them would fast. A group of young Friends in Long Beach, California, sponsored a bowling event called Bowl-A-Rice. And a community group in Colorado donated \$900 earned the previous year through bake sales, babysitting, and other activities.

These are just a few examples of the outpouring of support for AFSC's appeal for aid for the people of North Korea. In 1995, unprecedented floods devastated crops in that country, causing widespread hunger and starvation. Reports put the North Korean grain deficit at 3.5 million tons.

AFSC has tried to raise money and consciousness in three ways: seeking financial assistance from foundations, urging groups to sponsor Bowl-A-Rice fund raisers, and asking individuals to fast one day a week for four weeks and donate \$15 for each day of fasting. Groups in Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco have either held a Bowl-A-Rice event or plan to do

so in the near future. Thus far, AFSC has raised close to \$10,000.

"We want to build constituencies and provide an outlet for people in the United States to act on their spiritual leanings," says Chong-Ae Yu, assistant program coordinator for AFSC's Asia Programs.

Due to a number of factors, North Korea will likely need another two to three years of outside help. As a result, AFSC's long-term strategy includes reaching out to young Korean-Americans, which has led to fundraising parties in people's homes and in private clubs in the Korean-American community.

"The younger generation of

Korean-Americans generally experiences less impact from the Cold War mentality and so is more open to our efforts," Chong-Ae Yu explains. "Their willingness to help furthers the process of reconciliation between North and South Korea by reaching across the divided line in this way."

In addition, AFSC is asking rice growers and corporations in the United States for donations of rice, helping other humanitarian groups make the appropriate contacts in North Korea, and facilitating Washington state's efforts to provide relief in the form of rice and money.

## For more information

Two reports provide more information about the situation in North Korea: "The Politics of Food Aid to North Korea," written by Edward Reed, AFSC's Quaker International Affairs Representative in Asia, from information provided by South Korean agencies; and "North Korea Flood Update," by AFSC's International Division. To get one of these reports or for more information about AFSC's relief efforts, contact the AFSC Asia Programs, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479; telephone: 215-241-7154; e-mail: idasia@afsc.org. To make a financial contribution, please see the last page of this issue of Quaker Service Bulletin.

## Newspaper provides forum for homeless people

by Willie Colón Reyes

IT'S A COLD, RAINY FRIDAY night on Telegraph Avenue. Not many people out. . . . On the brightly lit corner on Channing Way, Ray and Lester are sitting on the sidewalk, leaning up against Mrs. Field's Cookies. Lester is hunched over with his hood up. Ray, with his blue watch cap and long white beard, sits cross-legged in front of a paper cup. His sign, on a torn piece of cardboard, makes the appeal: "Could you please spare a little change? Thank you. God bless you. Have a nice day."

This is the opening paragraph of a story entitled "Is It Illegal To Be Poor In Berkeley?" which appeared on the front page of *Street Spirit* recently. This monthly newspaper, based in the AFSC's office in Oakland, California, is about "Justice News & Homeless Blues in the East Bay," as its logo declares. Each issue is filled with news, art, and creative writing by and for homeless people and their advocates.

"The paper is hard-hitting and has exposed injustices in a number of Northern California cities," says Terry Messman, editor of *Street Spirit* and coordinator of AFSC's Homeless Organizing Project (HOPE), which publishes the newspaper. "It has been an important voice in alerting the community to how the homeless are being treated."

# STREET SPIRIT

With homeless street vendors selling 18,000 copies of *Street Spirit* a month, that voice is clearly reaching an audience. "I see its monthly sales as \$18,000 of justice," Terry says.

The newspaper, which does not accept advertising, sells for \$1 an issue. Az Razzaq, a formerly homeless man, coordinates the team of homeless vendors, who keep all the proceeds of their sales. Several vendors have saved enough money from *Street Spirit* sales to move off the streets and into their own apart-

ments. Past articles have dealt with Sacramento's anti-camping law, homeless people with AIDS in Berkeley, and San Francisco's controversial Matrix program, a series of city ordinances that target the homeless in that city. *Street Spirit* isn't just a news outlet, either; it's also a creative outlet for the homeless. The paper regularly features poetry, cartoons, and other art work by homeless people and advocates.

"We get so much positive feedback about this paper," Terry says. "The public tells the vendors how important this is. The vendors are selling 50 papers a day and coming back for more." Not everyone has welcomed these efforts, however. "Police in downtown Oakland have harassed, cited, and fined the homeless vendors for the 'crime' of selling this newspaper," Terry says.

In a letter of protest to Oakland's city manager, Terry and Wilson Riles, Jr., regional executive director in AFSC's Pacific Mountain Regional Office, noted that, "... vendors have been trained and oriented in how to interact with the public in a positive manner. [They] are trained to manifest a positive, polite, and

friendly attitude when selling the paper; to remain clean and sober; and to refrain from using any aggressive sales pitch. ... This police action punishes the very people who have made a commitment to stop panhandling and have made a very positive effort to pursue gainful employment."

A recent court ruling turned the tide in favor of the vendors. With the help of Osha Neumann, a lawyer and advocate for homeless people, AFSC won a case involving a vendor who was fined \$270 for selling the paper. Not only was the fine dismissed, but the court ruled that citing the vendors was an unconstitutional breach of their First Amendment rights. "So we're telling Oakland's city manager and police that they can't harass the vendors anymore," Terry says.

Despite unexpected problems such as the police action in Oakland, Terry's enthusiasm for the project hasn't wavered. "I love doing this," he says. "*Street Spirit* is an effective tool for policy change because the people in power read it. It's important to uphold the rights of homeless people by protesting and holding nonviolent demonstrations. However, a newspaper gives the homeless and homeless advocates a direct voice and an ongoing forum by which to shape the debate about homelessness in this country."



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID ADAMS © 1983 FROM STREET SPIRIT

## Special Occasions.... deserve special gifts.

For the next birthday, anniversary, wedding, or graduation in your circle, make your present a contribution to the AFSC. Here's a sampling of programs you can support:

### Haiti

Since the return of President Aristide, AFSC projects in the remote Grand Anse area of Haiti have moved forward. Much more could be accomplished with the purchase of a truck to take supplies to scattered community stores.

**Your gift of \$25** will help buy a truck for rural development.



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### New Mexico

Farm families on the arid lands of New Mexico—Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo—struggle to hang onto water and land rights while piecing together livelihoods. The AFSC helps with training, support, and supplies for community projects. For instance, we supply wool yarn at cost for weaving rugs, sold to supplement farm families' incomes. And a new recycling center is helping reduce landfill wastes.

**Your gift of \$50** will supply materials for one rug.

### North Korea

Devastating floods last year in North Korea severely affected the country's ability to feed its people. Limited outside aid means widespread hunger continues.

**Your gift of \$75** will feed 23 people for a month.

We will send our beautiful "iris all occasion" card notifying the recipient of your generous gesture. Thank you!

- ☐ \$25 for Haiti
- ☐ \$50 for New Mexico
- ☐ \$75 for Korea
- ☐ \$\_\_\_ for all AFSC programs

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1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

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