

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

October 2011

Mideast Nonviolence Offers Lessons for Washington

FCNL says : With the protests in Syria continuing in the face of brutal repression and the upcoming Palestinian initiative to seek U.N. recognition for an independent state, Washington has a lot to learn from the Middle East about the power of nonviolence. The Syrian Local Coordinating Committees (LCC), the umbrella grassroots network of young opposition activists in Syria, has issued a powerful statement against international military intervention and armed revolt that clearly has the Washington audience in mind :

Statement to the Syrian People — In an unprecedented move over the past several days, Syrians in Syria and abroad have been calling for Syrians to take up arms, or for international military intervention. This call comes [after] five and a half months of the Syrian regime's systematic abuse of the Syrian people, whereby tens of thousands of peaceful protesters have been detained and tortured, and more than 2,500 killed. The regime has given every indication that it will continue its brutal approach, while the majority of Syrians feel they are unprotected in their own homeland in the face of the regime's crimes. While we understand the motivation to take up arms or call for military intervention, we specifically reject this position as we find it unacceptable politically, nationally, and ethically. Militarizing the revolution would minimize popular support and participation in the revolution.

Moreover, militarization would undermine the gravity of the humanitarian catastrophe involved in a confrontation with the regime. Militarization would put the Revolution in an arena where the regime has a distinct advantage, and would erode the moral superiority that has characterized the Revolution since its beginning. . . . The objective of Syria's Revolution is not limited to overthrowing the regime. The Revolution also seeks to build a democratic system and national infrastructure that safeguards the freedom and dignity of the Syrian people. . . .

The method by which the regime is overthrown is an indication of what Syria will be like post-regime. If we maintain our peaceful demonstrations, which include our cities, towns, and villages; and our men, women, and children, the possibility of democracy in our country is much greater. If an armed confrontation or international military intervention becomes a reality, it will be virtually impossible to establish a legitimate foundation for a proud future Syria.

We call on our people to remain patient as we continue our national Revolution. We will hold the regime fully responsible and accountable for the current situation in the country, the blood of all martyrs – civilian and military, and any risks that may threaten Syria in the future, including the possibility of internal violence or foreign military

intervention. To the victory of our Revolution and to the glory of our martyrs. 29-8-2011
Quoted by Friends Committee on National Legislation



Personal News

Lisa Kerpoe says, "Look for me on PBS
In September I will be appearing on two episodes of Quilting Arts TV, which airs on some PBS stations. In episode 806 I demonstrate three "resists from the kitchen", including oatmeal, mashed potato flakes and rice baby cereal. In episode 809 I demonstrate using a brayer to create pattern and texture on fabric. Check to see if your local PBS station carries the show.

Both demonstrations are based on articles I wrote for Quilting Arts magazine. Download the articles on brayer printing and resists from the kitchen.

Lisa Kerpoe with Pokey Bolton on QATV set"

Robin is now at Washington U near St. Louis. She loves it and is very involved in activities. Danaya, Colette's granddaughter, is recovering well but it will take a long time, with more surgery, for a complete healing. Kate is packing up to leave for Tennessee. She will attend West Knoxville Friends Meeting, Knoxville. Marian has been out raking stones in the drybed channel north of the meeting-house so that they lie in the channel the water wants to flow in. This mystified passers-by on Eisenhower, some of whom stopped to watch for a bit.

Brackenridge Park

Leilah, of course, is Executive Director at Brackenridge Park Conservancy. The Park is a great place to see birds, migrant passerines, red-shouldered hawk, golden-fronted and ladder-backed woodpeckers, white-winged doves, wood ducks, yellow-crowned night-herons, carolina wrens, green herons, black-crested titmouses, carolina chickadees, and a variety of open field birds. Ask Michelle! The Zoo Boo is a San Antonio Halloween tradition. From 6:30 to 9:30 on October 30 and 31, bring your children 12 and younger (in their costumes!) for trick-or-treating, face painting, and other fun activities. On October 23, BPC will help host the world premiere of the San Antonio Jazz Suite with the San Antonio Jazz All-Stars, as well as the San Antonio Symphony and Youth Orchestra of San Antonio. For the whole calendar go to www.brackenridgepark.org/Calendar.

Current Finances

Friends, the financial situation of the Meeting has improved after a single large gift. Our deficit (income minus expenses) for the year to date is now less than \$400 and we can hope the year's accounts will end positively.

Friends can make donations directly to the Treasurer, send a check to Meeting's mailing address, place it in the wooden box in the foyer, or arrange online or by a visit to their bank for a regular monthly check to be sent by the bank to Meeting.

Business Meeting

September Meeting for Business commenced with an advice of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice:

For our religious community to thrive, it is essential that we nurture our love for one another, maintain our spiritual unity, and live in harmony with the Spirit. These beliefs underlie every attitude and practice in our meetings for business.

The Casa Quaker Development Committee plans to develop 2-3 sketches of the entire property and will present them for comment, and will use this information to further engage the Meeting in the work.

The Finance Committee reported that the audit of the financial records for 2008, 2009 and 2010 has been completed without any financial problem. Meeting thanks George Pandzik and Jim Spickard for their efforts.

The treasurer submitted reports for July and August. He said that a change was made to how Operations Expenses and fund balances are summed to more accurately reflect these balances. \$6,000 was transferred from the Cash Flow Reserve to the Sinking Fund to reflect the fact that FMSA does not have any spare funds, meaning that any future expenses must be met from the Sinking Fund. Because of the zero Cash Flow Reserve, it is necessary to make Friends aware that FMSA will have to ask for an increase in per-person donations from \$90 to \$120 per month. Appreciation was expressed for the Treasurer's reformatting the report to be more readable.

The Clerk asked that committees should give their 2012 budget requests to the Finance Committee by Oct. 5. Some austerity measures are asked for from each committee in view of the shortfalls. She is appointing an ad hoc Committee for Digital Solutions to explore integrated technologies that can best support the Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, Recorder, and committees in Meeting's work, hopefully by December. Membership is currently George Pandzik, Bill Wilkinson, and Ken Southwood. Meeting hasn't received word about Quarterly Meeting. Inquiries are being made.

The Grounds Committee reported gratitude for the smattering of rain. The large hackberry in the stone circle was toppled by a light wind. There will be a workday, on Saturday, November 12, from 8am till noon, followed by a potluck lunch. The grounds committee hopes to engage two college student brothers to do the heavy work. If you have suggestions for that day, please tell Dan or Marian.

Meeting approved the following minute of New York Yearly Meeting submitted by Peace & Social Concerns:

Minute on observing the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks:

Ten years ago members of al-Qaeda used four passenger aircraft as weapons to kill nearly 3,000 people on September 11, 2001. The United States Government's response was to answer violence with violence. In the ensuing wars, hundreds of thousands more people have been killed. New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) urges everyone to recognize this anniversary as an occasion to remember that there are always alternatives to violence and that there is a Spirit in every human being which responds with gratitude to these alternatives.

The Religious Society of Friends has always upheld the way exemplified by Jesus, who taught us never to return evil for evil, but to love our enemies and pray for them, forgiving them every offense. We confess that we, being human, do not always fulfill this high standard. Nevertheless, we continually strive to discern the guidance of the living God who loves unconditionally, and extends unlimited compassion, comfort, mercy, guidance, grace and revelation to all who ask.

We testify to the world that we disown all wars and fighting with outward weapons for any cause whatsoever. These are never necessary. There are no "just wars." Among the weapons we

renounce are the tongue and the pen, when these are used to provoke prejudice and hatred. Neither will we be silenced by fear when we are called to witness against evil masquerading as good. We seek to build a world in which a just peace is possible. We seek the strength to support and keep faith with those who suffer for nonviolent acts of conscience. We live by the gospel of God's love for all. Join us.

FMSA joins with NYYM's Minute on observing the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. A letter to this effect will be drafted and sent to NYYM.

Meeting closed in silence.

Miscellany

A thought – It was a drought in Central Asia which made steppes into semi-deserts that led to the the fall of the Roman Empire. It began great migrations both to China and to Europe – the Hunns and Goths. Where will the next great drought – or great floods – be?

___“My religion is truth, love and service to God and humanity. Every religion that has come into the world has brought the message of love and brotherhood. Those who are indifferent to the welfare of their fellowmen, whose hearts are empty of love, they do not know the meaning of religion.”

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the "Frontier Gandhi"

The Washington Post has suggested renaming Labor Day as Capital Day to reflect changing American values.

Chris Hedges writes in *Truthdig*: “Those of us who were close to the epicenters of the 9/11 attacks would primarily grieve and mourn. Those who had some distance would indulge in the growing nationalist cant and calls for blood that would soon triumph over reason and sanity. Nationalism was a disease I knew intimately as a war correspondent. It is anti-thought. It is primarily about self-exaltation. The flip side of nationalism is always racism, the dehumanization of the enemy and all who appear to question the cause. The plague of nationalism began almost immediately.”

Quaker school in the news : The *NY Times* reports that Kweku Adoboli's life journey started in Ghana, took him to Israel, and then on to an English Quaker school, Nottingham University, and employment as a trader in the Swiss bank UBS. There, he “rattled” European banks by being arrested on suspicion of losing the bank \$2 billion, perhaps in unauthorized trading in derivatives. He is described as “a really nice guy,” and we hope his school provided some of that, a product of “hard work and a globe-trotting education.” The police say he might just be sent home, released on bail, or charged with an offense. We doubt he learnt anything about derivative trading at Quaker school, but strong disapproval of risky commercial practices has long been part of Quaker history . Few Quakers are now engaged in commerce.

He has now been charged.

Kelly, an architecture student, did a term project on the meetinghouse. She took a number of photos. She says, “ My project went very well. I made an A in the class. This was due in part to your help. Thank you so much for your kindness. Peace, Kelly”

Her main focus in the presentation was the origin and tradition of the Quaker meetinghouse in San Antonio.

We have received a letter from a man who once worked with AFSC. He now works for

Oikocredit USA to combat, by microfinance loans, the injustices of poverty. As Executive Director, he is inviting Friends to invest in the organization. He invites us to visit their website at www.oikocredit.org.

Save Darfur Coalition and the Genocide Intervention Network have merged to form a new organization: United to End Genocide. It is now the largest activist organization in America dedicated to preventing and ending genocide and mass atrocities worldwide. Access it at www.endgenocide.org.

If you are up in Philadelphia on October 27, you will be able to go to Arch Street Meetinghouse at 1 pm to hear a talk by Carol Faulkner on “Lucretia Mott ~ Radical Quaker, Radical Abolitionist.” If you make a reservation and go at noon you can join others for lunch.

Peace May Break Out?

In the September issue of *Foreign Policy*, Joshua Goldstein writes of war and peace in this century. Despite all the conflicts, the past decade has seen fewer deaths than any in the past 100 years, a result even more remarkable if the increasing size of the world’s population is taken into account. He says that the 20 years since the end of the Cold War have seen rapid progress toward peace. The last war between major powers is the Korean war, 60 years ago. Violence is not tolerated or glorified as in the past.

He notes that America’s wars are smaller and less lethal. Civilians are not more likely to die than before. Recent technological developments have made war less brutal by being able to strike more accurately at a distance. Since Mao, China has been peaceful, its military not having fired a shot in 25 years. Peacekeeping has been more successful. Norms about war and protection of civilians have evolved rapidly.

Could it be that war may become “downright unthinkable?”

But . . .

William Collins, in San Antonio’s *N. Central News* (courtesy of www.otherwords.org) pointed out that contractors now do much of the work near the front, drones take the risks of action, reporters only see action if attached to a unit, US soldiers’ atrocities are played down, and the cost of wars are not included in the budget. He points out that a GI in Afghanistan costs \$1m a year, the cost of 17 teachers here. Then he quotes AFSC’s hope for a budget of \$2m, the Pentagon’s costs for a minute, and that 3/4 of the cost of the two wars so far would pay all 15.3m unemployed Americans \$50,000 each.

Plain and Not so Simple

In the days of plain speech, a little Quaker girl scolded her doll, “Thee little you, thee!” A non-Friend, thinking he had mastered the tongue, said to two sisters, “I never can tell thee apart unless I see thee together.” Another, on leaving, said, “I am glad to have met thee, and I hope I will see thee again – all of thee.” Any of us might make the same mistakes nowadays.

Poley and Poley, *Friendly Anecdotes*

Our Website

Jim and James (don't get them wrong) have revitalized the website. It can be reached at four different domain names:

www.sanantonioquakers.org

www.sanantoniofriendsmeeting.org

www.friendsmeetingofsanantonio.org

www.quakersinsanantonio.org

It is complete, up to date, and with good links, all of which explain our meeting and Quakers in general. Visit it and see. Thankyou, James and Jim.

Pendle Hill

Pendle Hill, of course, is in Lancashire, England. It is where George Fox had this experience in 1652:

“ As we traveled we came near a very great hill, called Pendle Hill, and I was moved of the Lord to go up to the top of it; which I did with difficulty, it was so very steep and high. When I was come to the top, I saw the sea bordering upon Lancashire. From the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places he had a great people to be gathered. As I went down, I found a spring of water in the side of the hill, with which I refreshed myself, having eaten or drunk but little for several days before.

At night we came to an inn, and declared truth to the man of the house, and wrote a paper to the priests and professors, declaring the day of the Lord, and that Christ was come to teach people Himself, by His power and Spirit in their hearts, and to bring people off from all the world's ways and teachers, to His own free teaching, who had bought them, and was the Saviour of all them that believed in Him.”

But now there is a Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania, a Quaker Study Center. Pam Poe describes how she gets her writing projects done at Pendle Hill. She lived within a couple of miles of Pendle Hill and thought it was a convent. One day she passed by and some one had decided to hang up a sign that read “Bookstore Open to the Public”!

“So I thought it would be interesting to stop by and see what the nuns were reading...” She was supposed to be writing a doctoral dissertation. “Well, the day I passed by Pendle Hill for the first time, I had begun to despair of ever getting anywhere with my dissertation. The research interviews had already been completed and logged, but my poor advisor was stuck with me, a former musician and video producer, who suddenly had to learn how to write for academic audiences. You can only do so many loads of laundry and dishes before it starts to look like that's all you'll ever do. Goodness, I couldn't even guess what a literature review was when I started my doctoral work.

So several years into the process, I felt completely paralyzed by the whole thing, with just the vaguest idea of what I needed to say. That sign led beyond the bookstore and my first Pendle Hill workshop to my first experiences with Quaker worship. Somehow that amazing quiet, the

supportive silence, coming a few times every week to worship, listening and talking with people, and visiting the library created the magic I have come to see as an inevitable part of Pendle Hill. Whatever seems utterly impossible when you enter the grounds starts to look plausible, then possible, and finally, mountains begin to move. It's unbelievable.

I didn't have an official role, so I came to worship a few days a week that summer, visiting the bookstore and the library, talking with others at lunch about what they were working on, and then I wrote for hours. I also occasionally met with a woman who had been a pastor and was also attending worship while going through a similar struggle with her graduate thesis. At the day's end, I would go for a swim or have a yoga class in nearby Swarthmore. The days I was not at Pendle Hill were spent in libraries, cafes, and bookstores, but it all worked together. That first draft of my dissertation was completely done by the end of August! Now it's already been four years since I earned my Ph.D."

We don't all need a Ph.D. but Pendle Hill has been a great help to many people in search of many different things. Go to www.pendlehill.org to find out more. What a pity it's so far from here.

There are hills there.

FCNL

FCNL tells us in its August/September newsletter that more US policymakers that ever before agree with FCNL that war is not the answer and are looking for more non-violent ways of addressing global problems before they erupt into violence. It wonders why the US continues to invest in fighting, not preventing, wars. One reason is that policymakers and the public often cannot imagine other options. Here are FCL's suggestions for preventing genocide and mass atrocities:

US agencies should be better able to detect potential atrocities earlier rather than later.

The US needs to provide better training, incentives, and support for Foreign Service officers: Training in conflict prevention and resolution, early warning, mediation, negotiation, post-conflict recovery, and multilateral cooperation should be broadly available and required for advancement.

Development aid to support programs to reduce tensions, empower local civil society, and reduce the appeal of violent extremism must be managed and sent to local civilian leadership to help mitigate existing conflicts.

Congress should refocus security aid to support effective local justice mechanisms and keep weapons out of the hands of human rights abusers.

The US should pay all its UN dues on time and make multilateral peace operations more effective.

In the particular case of Kenya, where 2012 elections may heighten tensions the US should:

Establish a strategy to prevent and respond to violence, coordinating with the international community.

Encourage implementation of constitutional reforms and emphasize accountability for perpetrators of violence.

Support grassroots peacebuilding and monitoring of elections with local partners.

Focus development assistance on the root causes of violence, particularly rural and with youth, women, and leaders.

Support ensuring an accountable and effective justice system. Monitor police units receiving assistance to ensure they protect, not harm, Kenyan citizens.

These are rough summaries of FCNL's recommendations. You can obtain the newsletter from FCNL at 245 Second St., Washington DC 20002 and you can email to fcnl@fcnl.org.

Thought for October

. . . The great insight of our spiritual traditions is that we – especially those of us who enjoy political freedom and relative affluence – are not victims of society: we are its co-creators. We live in and through a complex interaction of spirit and matter, of the powers inside of us and the stuff “out there” in the world. External reality does not impinge upon us as an ultimate constraint: if we who are privileged find ourselves confined, it is only because we have conspired in our own imprisonment. The spiritual traditions do not deny the reality of the outer world. They simply claim that we help make the world by projecting our spirit on it, for better or for worse. If our institutions are rigid, it is because our hearts fear change; if they set us in mindless competition with each other, it is because we value victory over all else; if they are heedless of human well-being, it is because something in us is heartless as well. We can make choices about what we are going to project, and with those choices we help grow the world that is. Consciousness precedes being: consciousness, yours and mine, can form, deform, or reform our world. Our complicity in world making is a source of awesome and sometimes painful responsibility – and a source of profound hope for change.

Parker J. Palmer, “Let your Life Speak”

Calendar, October, 2011

Meeting for Worship is held on Sunday at 10 a.m., followed by refreshments and a Forum discussion at 11.30, usually lasting until about 12.45. Children are invited to join worship for the first fifteen minutes, after which they may go to join with the Young Friends program. Child care is available during Forum.

- 2. Sunday Potluck lunch at 11.30.**
- 6. Thursday Midweek Meeting, 6.30, meetingroom.**
- 9. Sunday Forum –Spiritual Quaker Process: M&O Queries in Small-Groups.**
- 16, Sunday..... Meeting for Business.**
- 20, Wednesday Midweek Meeting, 6.30, Julia’s house.**
- 23, Sunday Forum – Jilani Chaudri: 9/11 effects on San Antonio Muslims.**
- 30, Sunday Forum – Val Liveoak: her recent work in Latin America.**

Each Thursday, at 4-5 pm, a silent peace vigil is held at the corners of S. Flores and Commerce, one block west of Main Plaza near City Hall.

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Meeting telephone for meeting times or to ask for other information: (210) 945-8456