

Quaker House Newsletter

Front-Line Peace Witness Since 1969

November 2003

Fayetteville, NC www.quakerhouse.org

Chuck Fager, Director

Dear Friends,

It's been a very busy fall: calls to the GI Rights Hotline keep coming in, breaking records. The war grinds on; peacework continues. Then there are unexpected House developments to cope with too (see box at right).

Let's look at a few of these briefly, starting with

STEPHEN FUNK: Two months ago, the Marine Corps thought they had Stephen Funk right where they wanted him: alone and isolated, a vivid example of the bleak and lonely fate awaiting anyone who would openly defy military authority.

Funk was court-martialed in September, charged with desertion. He had gone AWOL, made speeches to peace rallies, declared himself a CO and come out as gay. Convicted only of being AWOL, he was sent across the continent from his family and friends in California, to the brig at Camp Lejeune. Lejeune is a largely isolated post in an area of North Carolina that makes Fayetteville look like a cosmopolitan metropolis.

But it hasn't worked out quite the way the Marine brass figured. Sure, Funk is locked up. But he hasn't been alone, or isolated. His example is not one of defeat or failure.

Instead, so far it's a model of resistance and support: he's been visited every weekend since he got to Carolina. Hundreds of letters have poured in, supportive, heartening letters, from all over the world. He's received a number of books to supplement the brig's sparse and banal library collection. He's in good spirits, while counting the days. And there's more to come.

This continuing barrage of support has been coordinated through Quaker House. It's a daily task, which will continue for us until mid-February, when Funk is due to be released.

One other continuing task here has been monitoring the



Stephen Funk, Marine CO Resister

growing strain on the US military, a force that's being stretched past the breaking point in an ugly, pointless war. As casualties mount, the stress on military families is intense. One unintended result among others an increasing prospect of a return to the military draft.

EMERGENCY: NO HEAT!

On November 9, the furnace at Quaker House died. And this just as the temperature was diving into the 30s. (Well, that's COLD for here, where winters are supposed to be mild.)

The tech serviceman who came to look at it left shaking his head, and had me sign a sheet promising not to turn the heater on, as that would create a "DANGEROUS SITUATION." I believed him.

But replacing the furnace is not a simple matter, nor an inexpensive one. It raises issues of design, because the old furnace was not very efficient.

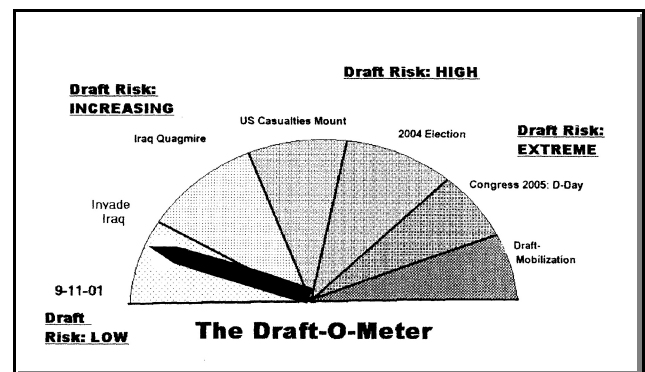
For now, we're making do with space heaters and wool socks. But we'll need your help when the bill for a new furnace arrives. Please consider a special gift to Quaker House to help us keep warm again! And thanks!

DRAFT: To track this pressure, we created the DRAFT-O-METER, a graphic measure of our sense of how close we are coming to a return of the draft. Before 9-11, for instance, the odds were very low. Since then, they have begun to rise.

Almost every time we talk in public about peace work, someone asks about the draft – is it coming back? When? My answers to these twin questions have been: *I think so*, to the first; but a guarded, *I don't know*, to the second. (If I really knew the future, I'd be in the stock market.)

But in the past month, various items of data have combined to revise this second answer. Here's what I now foresee:

Fifteen months from now –



Pressure for the Draft: Heating Up

1. If we're still bogged down in an Iraqi guerilla war. (And/or involved somewhere else as well.) And

2. If the current US regime has been returned to power in the 2004 election, with similar or stronger support in Congress;

3. Then I predict that a push to revive the draft will come in the 2005 legislative session.

Why? Because for a second term president, the first year of that second term is THE time to propose actions that will be the most difficult and controversial. (The "PATRIOT" Act will also be up for renewal then.)

(For instance, that was when Lyndon Johnson rammed through all his major legislative programs – and escalated Vietnam to full-scale war – in the parallel year of 1965 after his landslide election to a full term.)

2006 is a congressional election year, so that wouldn't work. (Johnson's activist drive stalled out in 1966.) And lame-duck presidents in their last two years typically lose leverage with Congress and the public rapidly, especially if there are cumulative scandals coming to fruition (and the current regime has many such that are slowly ripening).

And by 2005, the stress on the existing US military will be at a critical point, or beyond. It's not far from that even now, as we hear every day at Quaker House. (See letter, next page.)

And if we add to this scenario one more contingency, namely a further terror attack (real or imagined) on the US "homeland," the odds favoring this scenario rise measurably.

For those (Friends or others) who oppose a return to the draft, I propose that they/we begin work NOW to make a

History suggests the prospects of effective political opposition are substantial. The World War Two draft bill passed the House by a single vote. Even in 2005, with a re-elected president riding high, a return to the draft will be highly controversial; so the fight will be worth it.

And then if we lose, the same groups can turn almost on a dime to revive the large-scale Quaker campaign of draft counseling, and the smaller but important underground railroads smuggling rebel draftees out of the country, that were among the high points of our peace/anti-war witness in the Vietnam years.

It would also be a good idea for concerned Friends to read up on the experience of COs/resisters in the Vietnam era, which I think is the most useful model. Here are two books of particular value:

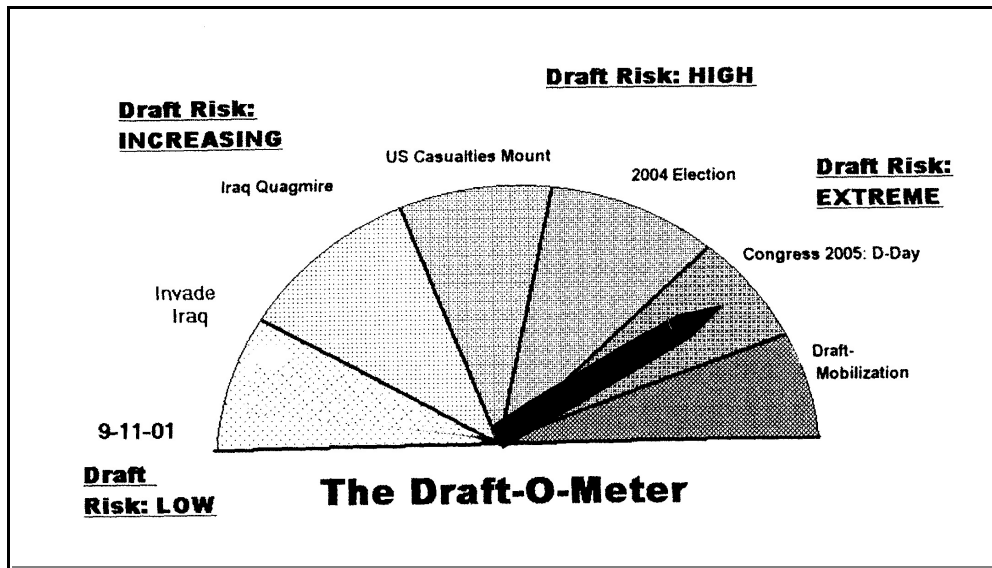
Friends in the Vietnam War, published by Pendle Hill, edited by your humble servant. There are many amazing and instructive true-life stories here.

Second, *In the Service of their Country*, by Willard Gaylin, Viking, 1970. Gaylin, a psychiatrist, conducted in-depth interviews with many imprisoned Vietnam-era war resisters, to chart the effects of this form of resistance on them and their communities. (The upshot: strong personal-community support made all the difference.) Excellent, sobering stuff.

My conclusion: if you are against the return of the draft, the time to get ready to stop it is NOW.

[More on this issue at our website:

<http://quakerhouse.org/draft-return.htm>]



D-Day 2005? Counting Down

“pre-emptive strike” against it, working quietly to gather other supporters into loose alliances which will prepare to wage all-out political struggle against it in the campaigns leading up to 2005 (demanding that congressional candidates go on record against it in advance, etc.).

If we permit ourselves to be caught unawares in the 2005 crunch, I fear it will be too late.

Now to yet another concern:

On November 10, the US Supreme Court refused to review the case of *Global Relief Foundation V. Snow, Sec. Of Treasury*, involving the seizure of assets of various Islamic charities under the “PATRIOT” Act. This decision, indeed the whole case, gives me the shivers. Here's why:

1. The government can now seize all an organization's assets on suspicion of supporting terrorist activity. Suspicion alone, BEFORE going to court or having an open hearing on any actual government evidence. And both “terrorist activity” and “support” are broadly and vaguely defined.

2. The groups can then be forced to drain their own assets to pay legal costs of SEEKING a hearing on the seizure, at which the government would be obliged to produce and defend its evidence. (That's what happened to these charities: preliminary litigation bled them dry.)

3. The government can (and did) stall an actual hearing indefinitely, until the organizations use up all their assets in legal fees and are broke and out of business. (See the

Washington Post, 10/31/2003; URL on next page.)

4. Thus an organization can be targeted, branded as “terrorist,” and run into the ground without the government being obliged to produce any actual evidence, or actually charging anyone with a crime, ever. (That’s what happened to the charities; two years later, they haven’t yet been charged with any crime, but they’re all broke and kaput.)

5. The Supreme Court has now ratified the government’s ability to do all this.

Maybe these groups were supporting violence. But who knows? There was no public hearing, the key evidence was all kept secret. But they’re still out of business.

Do you see why, as the Director of a small nonprofit group which has experienced government spying and snooping, I find this precedent VERY ominous?

SOURCES:

Washington Post link:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49038-2003Oct31.html>

PATRIOT Act references: Sections 802 & 806

<http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/Section802.html#802>

ACLU analysis of these sections:

<http://www.aclu.org/NationalSecurity/NationalSecurity.cfm?ID=11437&c=111>

Initial court decision:

http://faculty.kutztown.edu/riley/Courses/Pol%20250/global_relief_foundation.htm

From Our GI Counselors:

Reported by Lenore Yarger

Many of the stories we hear from callers are troubling and reflect the difficulty of the Iraq occupation:

*We have talked to several soldiers and families of soldiers who have attempted suicide either prior to deployment to avoid going or upon return. At least one of these callers is in the process of getting discharged. Other callers have mentioned feeling suicidal at different times.

*We have also talked with several soldiers diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder, and two callers who were so desperate to get out that they asked about the consequences of shooting themselves in the foot.

*We hear that conditions in barracks in the United States are very poor (tent cities at Fort Benning, or soldiers living in once-condemned buildings). The media has begun covering the awful conditions at Ft. Stewart.

*Many families face hardship situations and are working to bring their family members home from the Gulf or prevent them from leaving. As these requests are often denied, we

have talked to many family members in crisis after their struggle with an intransigent military bureaucracy. In the Gulf, conditions are terrible:

*One soldier who went to a military hospital for help with depression prior to deploying was told to just go to Iraq and get help in the field. He says it is impossible for soldiers to get proper medical treatment for medical injuries in Iraq, not to mention psychological problems and depression. Other soldiers have complained about the same lack of medical help for mental health problems while stationed in the Gulf.

*A soldier with back problems was put on a profile (restricted duty) that said she was to go at her own pace. But when she failed to report to the medical unit quickly on a day when she could barely get out of bed, she was given an Article 15 (extra duty, etc). The doctors have strongly recommended that she be returned to the states, but her command is refusing to release her.

*Another soldier reported being made to drive for days and given amphetamines to make this possible.

*Conscientious objection claims are being mishandled in Iraq; one soldier’s claim was denied by his command without their going through the proper procedures. He plans on resubmitting.

From Letters to the Editor, Fayetteville Observer, November 17, 2003:

We all have loved ones in Iraq and we are ready for them to come home.

How many more soldiers do we have to lose in that country? The Iraqis don’t want our soldiers there. We went over there and bombed their country. Now our soldiers are losing their lives trying to rebuild that country.

My brother came home on emergency leave and made it back over there safely. But before he could get back to Iraq, 16 more soldiers died trying to get back home.

The billions that Congress is giving to rebuild the country should have been spent here at home on our senior citizens and our children. Not on people who could care less about the United States. Sept. 11, 2001, should have told the Bush administration that when they killed all those innocent people inside the Twin Towers.

Will Bush go to Iraq for a tour of the damage they are doing to our soldiers? And then decide whether or not to bring them home? Everyone knows that question is just a joke. But we need our husbands, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers home.

Yvonne Williams
Fayetteville

LONG-TERM SUPPORT NEEDED:

Have you considered including Quaker House in your will and estate planning?

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Return Service Requested

November 2003 – INSIDE:

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- ▶ GI Hotline Report–Trouble in the Gulf & At Home
- ▶ More Federal Repression

Quaker Chuckles

A Word to the Wise?

Speaking of matters agricultural, there was a Quaker farmer who had difficulty with a particular cow, who had a habit of knocking over the milk bucket when it was half full. One particular morning this happened once, and then again.

When it happened a third time, the farmer arose from the stool, walked around to the cow's head, and whispered in her ear thus:

"Friend cow, thee knows I will not curse thee. And thee knows I will not beat thee. But has thee considered that I can sell thee to a Presbyterian?"*

* (Some versions list other denominations.)

Crime Does Not Pay

A burglar broke into the house of a Friend who, though very mild-mannered, was a hunter.

The Friend, who was sleeping soundly upstairs, was awakened with a jolt by noise below. He got up and fetched his shotgun from its cabinet, and went to the head of the stairs. From there he could see the burglar making short work of the silverware cabinet.

"Friend," he called down, "I would not hurt thee for the world, but I must warn thee that thee is standing where I am about to shoot."

Thirty-Five Years of Active Peace Witness.

Since 1969, Quaker House has offered support for GI rights and conscientious resistance to militarism, as an expression of the Friends Peace Testimony. We depend on your tax deductible donations to continue this long-term peace work. Your help is needed this year more than ever.

Thank you for your continued generosity.
