GUNNAR JAHN
HENRY CADBURY
MARGARET BACKHOUSE

DRAWING ON SOURCES ETERNAL

Lectures given on the occasion of the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Religious Society of Friends in 1947

Introduced with excerpts from "The Quaker Peace Testimony and the Nobel Peace Prize," by Irwin Abrams

The unarmed only
can draw on sources eternal.
The spirit alone gives victory.
—Arnulf Øverland

INTRODUCTION

These excerpts from ***Irwin Abrams*** *'*[1] *article, "The Quaker Peace Testimony and the Nobel Peace Prize," are reprinted, with permission, from* The Pacifist Impulse in Historical Perspective, *Harvey Leonard Dyck, editor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).*

There was question as to whether the Society of Friends "could rightly accept nomination for a prize for work undertaken under religious concern."...The AFSC persuaded London Friends to give up their objections. Clarence Pickett, AFSC executive secretary, wrote that he agreed with them that "the Society of Friends is a religious body, and not a peace organization." But if its service agencies were to be recognized by the Nobel Committee as having made "a distinctive contribution to the ideals in the charter of the Nobel Peace Prize....should we categorically refuse in advance? We as Friends believe that we should appeal to that of God in every man. If the response is to recognize our way of life and peaceful spirit, we have some responsibility to let the Nobel Committee and the general public acknowledge their recognition."

...Clarence Pickett recorded his reaction [to news of the prize] in his journal: "It is very humbling to have so much

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THE WIDER QUAKER FELLOWSHIP
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and

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attention centered on the Society of Friends, and I hope it will give us a new sense of responsibility for the way in which we conduct our lives and our affairs, home and abroad, so that we may not too seriously disappoint those who long for another way of meeting the world than that of violence."...

[T]he Quaker representatives coming to Oslo...were Margaret Backhouse, who chaired the Friends Service Council, a former faculty member and warden of Westhill Training College in Birmingham, and Henry J. Cadbury, chairman of the AFSC and one of its founders in 1917, who was a biblical scholar and Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University.

Before these representatives arrived, Myrtle Wright [an English Friend who had lived in Norway since the beginning of the Occupation] and the Norwegian Friend Sigrid Lund went to see August Schou, the secretary of the Nobel Committee, who was making the arrangements for their hotel and for the customary banquet held on the evening of the award ceremony. They explained to Schou about the Quaker tradition of simplicity and asked whether this might be observed. He agreed to cancel the reservations he had made at the fashionable Hotel Bristol, so that Margaret Backhouse and Henry Cadbury could stay with the Lunds....

Henry Cadbury in his borrowed tuxedo, 1947. Photo: AFSC Archives

Margaret Backhouse and Henry Cadbury did attend the banquet in evening clothes, as was expected, but Henry wore a second-hand coat of tails borrowed from the AFSC clothing storeroom, which was destined to cross the Atlantic again with a shipment of used clothing and eventually to outfit a member of the Budapest symphony orchestra. The next morning Henry Cadbury was to be seen sweeping the snow away from the Lunds' doorstep.

As for the award ceremony in the great hall of the University of Oslo, traditionally held on 10 December, Henry Cadbury was pleased to find it very simple, "no pomp and circumstance." The king and his retinue were there, along with foreign diplomats and Norwegian dignitaries, but the program consisted only of an opening orchestral number, Handel's *Samson Overture*; the presentation speech by Chairman Jahn; his handing over of the scrolls and the medals to the two Quaker representatives, who made brief speeches of acceptance; and the concluding playing of the Norwegian national hymn. The king and crown prince then came forward to offer their congratulations, and when they left the hall, the ceremony was over....

In their acceptance speeches, Margaret Backhouse and Henry Cadbury made it clear that they were representing Quakers all over the world and that their work was made possible by the support of thousands who were not members of their small society. Margaret Backhouse emphasized that Quakers were very ordinary people and that "it was the strength given to the group" that had enabled them to maintain their testimonies for 300 years....

Henry Cadbury concluded by calling upon the Norwegians and other Europeans not to take sides with the United States or the Soviet Union, but to serve as a bridge of

understanding between the two. For this he was later "severely eldered" by the senior American diplomat in Oslo, whose major objective, after all, was to keep the Norwegians on the American side....

How were the prize funds to be used? ...There has long been a misconception that the funds were used in the AFSC purchase of $25,000 worth of streptomycin for the Soviet Union. ...[T]he Nobel funds were actually used for a number of peace projects, including a film, the expenses of the working party that published the pamphlet on the United States and the Soviet Union, and a Quaker mission to the Soviet Union in 1955. A small portion went to cover the expenses of Henry Cadbury's trip to Oslo to receive the prize.[1]

. . . The intention of nominators and of the Nobel committee in making its grant was to honor the Society of Friends as a whole, just as Clarence Pickett conceived of it, and not just its service organizations. The award was not given just for the relief work and certainly not for the peace testimony as such, although in the remarkable speech of Chairman Jahn there was full recognition that the relief work was a translation in deeds of the inner life of the Society and that the peace testimony was an integral part of the Quaker way of life.

[1]As for the use of the British portion of the prize, the Finance Committee of Friends Service Council minuted, "We recommend that the prize be used for special purposes in line with the terms of the Nobel Trust and not absorbed into our general income. This might enable Council to continue or to undertake pieces of work which for lack of finance might otherwise not be possible." Major projects it was used for included goodwill visits to Moscow and China, and the work of the East-West Relations Committee, set up to explore how to foster positive relationships between enemies. A small portion of the money was used for a Berlin peace conference.

THE QUAKERS

*Speech by **Gunnar Jahn**,[1] then-chairman of the Nobel Committee, at the presentation of the Nobel Peace Award*

Oslo, Norway, December 10, 1947

The Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament has awarded this year's Peace Prize to the Quakers, represented by their two great relief organizations, the Friends Service Council in London and the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia.

It is now three hundred years since George Fox[2] established the Society of Friends. It was during the time of civil war in England, a period full of the religious and political strife which led to the Protectorate under Cromwell[3]—today we would no doubt call it a dictator-

[1]Gunnar Jahn, also at this time the director of the Bank of Norway, delivered this speech on December 10, 1947, in the Auditorium of the University of Oslo. At its conclusion he gave the Nobel diplomas and medals to Margaret A. Backhouse, representing the Friends Service Council, and Henry J. Cadbury, representing the American Friends Service Committee. Both representatives of these two Quaker organizations, which shared the prize, responded with brief speeches of acceptance. The translation of Gunnar Jahn's speech is based on the Norwegian text in *Les Prix Nobel en 1947*, which also carries a French translation.

[2]George Fox (1624-1691), English religious leader and preacher.

[3]Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), Lord Protector of England (1653-1658).

ship. What then happened was what so often happens when a political or religious movement is successful; it lost sight of its original concern: the right to freedom. For, having achieved power, the movement then refuses to grant to others the things for which it has itself fought. Such was the case with the Presbyterians and after them with the Independents. It was not the spirit of tolerance and humanity that emerged victorious.

George Fox and many of his followers were to experience this during the ensuing years, but they did not take up the fight by arming, as men customarily do. They went their way quietly because they were opposed to all forms of violence. They believed that spiritual weapons would prevail in the long run—a belief born of inward experience. They emphasized life itself rather than its forms because forms, theories, and dogmas have never been of importance to them. They have therefore from the very beginning been a community without fixed organization. This has given them an inner strength and a freer view of mankind, a greater tolerance toward others than is found in most organized religious communities.

The Quaker movement originated in England, but soon afterwards, in 1656, the Quakers found their way to America where they were not at first welcomed. In spite of persecution, however, they stood fast and became firmly established during the last quarter of the century. Everyone has heard of the Quaker, William Penn,[4] who founded Philadelphia and the colony of Pennsylvania. Around 1700 there were already fifty to sixty thousand Quakers in America

[4]William Penn (1644-1718), English Quaker preacher and writer who applied his liberal ideas of government first to West Jersey's charter, then to the colony of Pennsylvania.

and about the same number in England.

Since then the Quakers have lived their own lives, many of them having to suffer for their beliefs. Much has changed during these three hundred years. Outward customs, such as the dress adopted by the early Quakers, have been discarded, and the Friends themselves now live in a society which is outwardly quite different from that of the seventeenth century. But the people around them are the same, and what has to be conquered within [individual men and women] is no less formidable.

The Society of Friends has never had many members, scarcely more than 200,000 in the entire world, the majority living in the United States and in England.[5] But it is not the number that matters. What counts more is their inner strength and their deeds.

If we study the history of the Quakers, we cannot but admire the strength they have acquired through their faith and through their efforts to live up to that faith in their daily life. They have always been opposed to violence in any form, and many [others] considered their refusal to take part in wars the most important tenet of their religion. But it is not quite so simple. It is certainly true that the Declaration of 1660 states: "We utterly deny all outwards wars and strife, and fightings with outward weap-

[5]As of 1994, the total number of Friends worldwide stood approximately at 304,000, with Kenyan Quakers being most numerous (104,500), followed by Friends in the United States (103,379) and Bolivia (24,982). Methods of tabulation vary among the different yearly meetings. These figures are based on membership statistics submitted by Friends groups to the office of Friends World Committee for Consultation, and appear in FWCC's handbook, *Quakers Around the World* (1994).—*Editors' note, 1997*

ons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world." But that goes much further than a refusal to take part in war. It leads to this: it is better to suffer injustice than to commit injustice. It is from within man himself that victory must in the end be gained.

It may be said, without doing injustice to anyone, that the Quakers have at times been more interested in themselves and in their inner life than in the community in which they lived. There was, as one of their own historians has said, something passive about their work: they preferred to be counted among the silent in the land. But no one can fulfil his mission in this life by wanting to belong only to the silent ones and to live his own life isolated from others.

Nor was this attitude true of the Quakers. They too went out among men, not to convert them, but to take an active part with them in the life of the community and, even more, to offer their help to those who needed it and to let their good deeds speak for themselves in appealing for mutual understanding.

Here I can only mention some scattered examples [that] illustrate such activity. The Quakers took part in creating the first peace organization in 1810 and since then they have participated in all active peace movements. I would mention Elizabeth Fry,[6] John Woolman,[7] and other Quakers active in the fight against slavery and in the struggle

[6]Elizabeth Gurney Fry (1780-1845), English Quaker philanthropist and minister interested in prison reform.

[7]John Woolman (1720-1772), American Quaker preacher and abolitionist.

for social justice. I would mention the liberal idealist John Bright,[8] his forty-year fight against the principles of war and for the principles of peace, his opposition to the Crimean War,[9] and his struggle against Palmerston's[10] policies. Many other examples could be mentioned to show how their active participation in community work, in politics if you prefer, increased during the nineteenth century.

Yet it is not this side of their activities—the active political side—which places the Quakers in a unique position. It is through silent assistance from the nameless to the nameless that they have worked to promote the fraternity between nations cited in the will of Alfred Nobel. Their work began in the prisons. We heard about them from our seamen who spent long years in prison during the Napoleonic Wars.[11] We met them once again during the Irish famine of 1846-1847. When English naval units bombarded the Finnish coast during the Crimean War,[12] the Quakers hurried there to heal the wounds of war, and we found them again in France after the ravages of the 1870-1871 war.[13]

When the First World War broke out, the Quakers were

[8]John Bright (1811-1889), English statesman and orator; of Quaker stock; member of Parliament (almost continuously 1843-1889).

[9]The Crimean War (1853-1856): Russia vs. Turkey, England, France, and Sardinia.

[10]Henry John Temple Palmerston (1784-1865), English statesman; in office almost continuously from 1809 to 1865 as secretary of war, foreign secretary, home secretary, or prime minister.

[11]Napoleonic Wars of Conquest: 1803-1815.

[12]Finland was a Russian grand duchy at the time of the Crimean War.

[13]The Franco-Prussian War (July 19, 1870-January 28, 1871).

Workers in Europe unload relief supplies sent by Friends during post-World War I era. Photo: AFSC Archives

once more to learn what it was to suffer for their faith. They refused to carry arms, and many of them were thrown into prison, where they were often treated worse than criminals. But it is not this that we shall remember longest. We who have closely observed the events of the First World War and of the inter-war period will probably remember most vividly the accounts of the work they did to relieve the distress caused by the war. As early as 1914, the English Quakers started preparation for relief action. They began their work in the Marne district in France and, whenever they could, they went to the very places where the war had raged. They worked in this way all through the war and when it ended were confronted by still greater tasks. For then, as now, hunger and sickness followed in the wake of the war. Who does not recall the years of famine in Russia in 1920-1921 and Nansen's appeal to mankind for help? Who does not recall the misery among the children in Vienna which lasted for years on end? In

the midst of the work everywhere were the Quakers. It was the Friends Service Committee which, at Hoover's[14] request, took on the mighty task of obtaining food for sick and undernourished children in Germany. Their relief corps worked in Poland and Serbia, continued to work in France, and later during the civil war in Spain[15] rendered aid on both sides of the front.

Through their work, the Quakers won the confidence of all, for both governments and people knew that their only purpose was to help. They did not thrust themselves upon people to win them to their faith. They drew no distinction between friend and foe. One expression of this confidence was the donation of considerable funds to the Quakers by others. The funds which the Quakers could have raised among themselves would not have amounted to much since most of them are people of modest means.

During the period between the wars their social work also increased in scope. Although, in one sense, nothing new emerged, the work assumed a form different from that of the wartime activity because of the nature of the problems themselves. Constructive work received more emphasis, education and teaching played a greater part, and there were now more opportunities of making personal contact with people than there had been during a time when the one necessity seemed to be to supply food and clothing. The success achieved among the coal miners in West Virginia provides an impressive example of this work. The

[14]Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), president of the U.S. (1929-1933); during and after World War I headed U.S. food administration and war relief commissions.

[15]Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

Quakers solved the housing problems, provided new work for the unemployed, created a new little community. In the words of one of their members, they succeeded in restoring self-respect and confidence in life to men for whom existence had become devoid of hope. This is but one example among many.

The Second World War did not strike the Quakers personally[16] in the same way as did that of 1914. Both in England and in the USA the conscriptions allowed the Quakers to undertake relief work instead of performing military service; so they were neither cast into prison nor persecuted because of their unwillingness to go to war.[17] In this war, there were, moreover, Quakers who did not refuse to take an active part in the war, although they were few compared with those who chose to help the victims of war. When war came, the first task which confronted them was to help the refugees. But the difficulties were great because the frontiers of many countries were soon closed. The greater part of Europe was rapidly occupied by the Germans, and the United States remained neutral for only a short time. Most of the countries occupied by the Germans were closed to the Quakers. In Poland, it is true, they were given permission to help, but only on condition that the Germans themselves should choose who was to be helped, a condition which the Quakers could not accept. Nevertheless, they worked where they could, first undertaking welfare work in England and, after that, be-

[16]Friends in Europe are a notable exception.—*Editors' note, 1997*

[17]Some United States objectors to war (Quakers and others) were jailed during this period for refusing even alternative service; they felt any dealings with the military system implied a participation in war. —*Editors' note, 1997*

hind the front in many countries of Europe and Asia, and even in America. For when America joined the war, the whole Japanese-American population, numbering 112,000 in all, of whom 80,000 were American citizens, was evacuated from the West Coast. The Quakers went to their assistance, [and also] opposed the prevailing anti-Japanese feeling from which these people suffered.

Now, with the war over, the need for help is greater than ever. This is true not only in Europe, but also and to the same degree in large areas of Asia. The problems are becoming more and more overwhelming—the prisoners who were released from concentration camps in 1945, all those who had to be repatriated from forced labor or prisoner-of-war camps in enemy countries, all the displaced persons who have no country to which they can return, all the homeless in their own countries, all the orphans, the hungry, the starving! The problem is not merely one of providing food and clothing, it is one of bringing people back to life and work, of restoring their self-respect and their faith and confidence in the future. Once again, the Quakers are active everywhere. As soon as a country has been reopened they have been on the spot, in Europe and in Asia, among countrymen and friends as well as among former enemies, in France and in Germany, in India and in Japan. It is not easy to assess the extent of their contribution. It is not something that can be measured in terms of money alone, but perhaps some indication of it may be given by the fact that the American [Friends Service] Committee's budget for last year was forty-six million Norwegian kroner. And this is only the sum which the American Committee has had at its disposal. Quakers in all countries have also taken a personal and active part in the work of other relief organizations. They have, for

instance, assisted in the work of UNRRA[18] in a number of places such as Vienna and Greece.

Today the Quakers are engaged in a work that will continue for many years to come. But to examine in closer detail the individual relief schemes would not give us any deeper insight into its significance. For it is not in the extent of their work or in its practical form that the Quakers have given most to the people they have met. It is the spirit in which this work is performed. "We weren't sent out to make converts," a young Quaker says; "we've come out for a definite purpose, to build up in a spirit of love what has been destroyed in a spirit of hatred. We're not missionaries. We can't tell if even one person will be converted to Quakerism. Things like that don't happen in a hurry. When our work is finished it doesn't mean that our influence dies with it. We have not come out to show the world how wonderful we are. No, the thing that seems most important is the fact that while the world is waging a war in the name of Christ, we can bind up the wounds of war in the name of Christ. Religion means very little until it is translated into positive action."[19]

This is the message of good deeds, the message that men can find each other in spite of war, in spite of differences in race. Is it not here that we have the hope of laying foundations for peace among nations, of building it up in

[18]The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was established in 1943 to aid areas freed from the Axis powers; it was discontinued in Europe in 1947 and its work taken over by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Refugee Organization (IRO).

[19]The translation of this passage is taken from *The Friends Quarterly* (April, 1948), 75.

man himself so that the settling of disputes by force becomes impossible? All of us know that we have not yet traveled far along this road. And yet—when we witness today the great willingness to help those who have suffered, a generosity unknown before the war and often greatest among those who have least, can we not hope that there is something in the heart of man on which we can build, that we can one day reach our goal if only it be possible to make contact with people in all lands?

The Quakers have shown us that it is possible to translate into action what lies deep in the hearts of many: compassion for others and the desire to help them—that rich expression of the sympathy between all men, regardless of nationality or race, which, transformed into deeds, must form the basis for lasting peace. For this reason alone the Quakers deserve to receive the Nobel Peace Prize today.

But they have given us something more: they have shown us the strength to be derived from faith in the victory of the spirit over force. And this brings to mind two verses from one of Arnulf Øverland's[20] poems which helped so many of us during the war. I know of no better salute:

The unarmed only
can draw on sources eternal.
The spirit alone gives victory.
—Arnulf Øverland

[20]Arnulf Øverland (1889-1968).

Quakers and Peace

Lecture by ***Henry J. Cadbury***[1]

Oslo, Norway, December 12, 1947

In the last two or three weeks, I have been reading all I could about the views of Mr. Alfred Nobel on the subject of war and peace. His ideas were not completely consistent and unchanging. He seems to have had several views on this subject. Sometimes he thought that war would be stopped by the invention of more terrible weapons, though he did not dream of some of the weapons which are in existence today. Sometimes he thought it would be stopped by collective force, by arbitration, or by international law, and sometimes he mentioned international friendship. These divergent views of Nobel stress the fact that the struggle against war is a struggle which—if I may use a military metaphor—may be carried on on many fronts.

Under these circumstances, it is most appropriate that the successive recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize should explain what their particular approach is. So I speak to you

[1]Henry Joel Cadbury delivered this lecture on behalf of the American Friends Service Committee (Philadelphia) in the Auditorium of the University of Oslo. Dr. Cadbury (1883-1974), American Biblical scholar, writer, and active Quaker, was Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University (1934-1954), director of the Andover-Harvard Theological Library (1938-1954), and chairman (1928-1934; 1944-1960) of the American Friends Service Committee, which he had been instrumental in founding. The text of his lecture is taken from *Les Prix Nobel en 1947.*

today of the Quaker way and illustrate it not only from examples of the present time but from three centuries of Quaker history. Sometimes people say in America: You Quakers with your experience must know what all the answers are (that is an American phrase). No, we do not know all the answers, but at least we know what most of the questions are. We have pursued this aim long enough to know what some of the problems are in the search for peace.

As Miss Backhouse has said, our approach to this question is a religious approach. Perhaps, in early days, our pacifism was largely based upon texts of the New Testament, upon the words of Jesus, upon examples from the Bible. But as our religious perspective has changed, our views in this matter have still remained the same. As our religion has become more philosophical, or has grown with education and knowledge of sociology and history, we still with good conscience cling to our traditional renunciation of war. We are not impressed by the prestige of war as an ancient institution any more than we were impressed by the holding of slaves. Both these customs date back before the dawn of history, but within a few generations we found it possible to lead to complete success the struggle for the elimination of slavery in the lands where Friends lived.

So we believe that war is merely a convention of social habit and we believe that these conventions of social habit are subject to change, as much as we believe in the transformation of individuals. Christianity and experience teach us that men and customs can be transformed. We believe that war is a habit, a curious habit, a somewhat accidental habit that men have adopted, although in other areas they have found different means for pursuing similar ends. In

your city you have order and custom and not anarchy, but between nations law does not exist, and war, so far from settling differences, is an extreme expression of anarchy.

That does not mean that wars are not waged for just ends. It means that we do not believe that war is the only way to achieve those just ends. We believe the means are not consistent with the ends, and the better the ends for which men fight, the less moral, the less effective is the method of war. In this particular area, mankind falls behind the standard we have accepted elsewhere. So on this point the Quaker is not an unrealistic perfectionist, but a practical moralist. He believes that this problem can be solved by other means. He believes this problem of war is a moral problem and that the force of religion is essential to its solution. The nature of religion on the one hand and the task of abolishing war on the other seem to us to fit perfectly with each other as task and tool should fit. Religion is concerned with the spiritual life of man. The elimination of war is a spiritual problem and so no wonder we cling in all stages of our religious development to this viewpoint.

It has come to us first as individuals—what shall I do, what is my duty? If an individual thinks that war is evil, we are so simpleminded, so naive, as to say: "If war is evil, then I do not take part in it," just as one might say, if drunkenness is evil, then I do not drink; if slaveholding is evil, then I do not hold slaves. I know that sounds too simple—almost foolish. I admit that that is our point of view, and this means, of course, that in every war some Friends have suffered not only fines, torture, punishment, or exile, but even the threat of death which, of course, is no more than the soldier faces, but in a different cause. William Penn[2] has described the Quaker position in these

few words: "Not fighting but suffering." Not all can follow this course, not all Quakers every time follow this course. We recognize that there are times when resistance appears at first to be a real virtue, and then only those most deeply rooted in religious pacifism can resist by other than physical means. We have learned that in the end only the spirit can conquer evil and we believe that in many recent situations those who have unwillingly employed force have learned this lesson at the last.

But in aiming to avoid any part in war, the Quaker meets an extremely difficult problem, especially with modern total war. Perhaps it will interest you to know what searchings of heart we Quakers have had, in order to discover what follows if one condemns war. Let me give a few illustrations.

In 1665 some English Quaker carpenters were building wooden ships on the Thames. They thought they were pacifists and had renounced war, and when there was danger of invasion by a Dutch fleet,[3] these carpenters were required to carry arms. Naturally, they refused to do so, but it never occurred to them that what they were building were warships. It comes slowly, this discovery. Before the First World War, military training was required of every young man in New Zealand. The young Quakers in New Zealand for the first time in their experience were faced with the problem of deciding whether, if war was wrong, training for war was equally wrong. A few years

[2]William Penn (1644-1718), English Quaker who founded the American colony of Pennsylvania, applying his liberal principles to its organization.

[3]During the war between England and Holland (1665-1667) over conflicting colonial and mercantile interests.

not keep those 2,000 pounds. In the end he found enough owners to pay them 3,345 pounds principal and interest on that ship, and there were still over 2,000 pounds that he could not dispose of. Although he advertised in the newspapers in Holland and tried to find the owners by the records and in every possible way, he was not able to do so. If you go to Amsterdam today, you will find a free school on Beerenstraat, with a picture on the top gable of the ship that was taken and my great-grandfather's initials on a stone over the door. As final payment to the unknown enemies in that city, the English Quakers gave this school.

If you are not a pacifist, you do not have to face these problems of avoiding war and war implications as the Quakers do in all parts of the world when the whole civilian population is mobilized into war service.

Today there are millions of men in nearly every great nation who have taken part in war and they still believe that that war, or their part in it, was justified. As long as they hold that view they seem to me to be a risk against world peace. Those people who have once believed that war is justified can readily be persuaded that it will be justified again. While I am not mentioning the names of any nations, whether victor or vanquished, I believe it is true that this tendency to believe that war is justified creates in itself a danger to peace, and it is not lessened by what men have learned or experienced of the terrible damage that war can do materially, morally, or spiritually, or by what we know now that another war could do. I believe the greatest risk of war is in the minds of men who have an unrepentant and an unchanging view of the justification of past wars. So perhaps in a world like this there is room for a few thousand persons like Quakers who take

ago a promising young Quaker scientist was invited to take part in a government project, the purpose of which he knew very little. He suspected it was the creation of an atomic bomb and he refused, at sacrifice of great advancement in salary. A few years ago our Quaker boys had to choose whether they would engage in military service, whether, if they worked in the ambulance corps of the American Army, that was participation in war, or whether they would keep strictly out of uniform, serving as experiments for medical information or as nurses in insane hospitals, or foresters in remote camps.

My father was drafted for service in the American Civil War.[4] His choice was whether he would pay $350 to hire a substitute to fight for him or whether he would go to prison, and he had to decide whether paying for a substitute was much the same as taking part in war himself.

My great-grandfather, at the time of the Napoleonic Wars,[5] was a merchant. He had a share of ownership in a merchant ship. That ship turned privateer, without his knowledge, and captured a Dutch East Indiaman. His share of the prize was about 2,000 pounds. Now what would a Quaker do with 2,000 pounds captured in war? He was a wise man, and the first thing he did was to insure his share of the ship with Lloyds of London. As a matter of fact, the ship was destroyed by a storm on its next trip—but he still had 2,000 pounds that did not belong to him. Up to 1823 he and the Friends were still trying to find the owners of that Dutch ship because, as a Quaker, he could

[4]American Civil War (1861-1865) between the North (Union) and the seceded South (Confederacy).

[5]Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) of conquest.

the opposite view, who begin with the assumption that war is not and has not been and will not be justified, on either practical or moral grounds. Such persons may have time, interest, and desire to put their minds on alternative ways.

Of course, Friends have found it necessary to think through their position on this as on many awkward questions. For example, they have had to think whether this view is disloyalty to the state, and they have had to learn to distinguish loyalty to the policy of a government in power from loyalty to the true interests of a nation. Social responsibility to the community is a very similar question.

They have been met with the argument that war is the lesser of two evils. I will not admit the validity of that argument. We have heard time and time again for over three hundred years that "this war is different," that this time it really is for a purpose which was not successful in the last war. In thinking this over, we have mostly learned that war could have been prevented. I feel it is true what a president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, expressed. In 1936 he said: "We can keep out of war, if those who watch and decide...make certain that the small decisions of each day do not lead toward war and if at the same time they possess the courage to say 'no' to those who selfishly or unwisely would let us go to war."[6]

We have learned that few wars are justified by their results and that victory in war sometimes in itself makes difficult real peace.

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[6]Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945), U.S. president (1933-1945). The quotation is from a speech made at Chautauqua, New York, on August 14, 1936.

We have learned that the line between aggression and defense is a very difficult division to draw. We are told by atomic scientists that defense will require aggression, that is, taking the first step, and we have also learned that even in defense the moral standards of the more virtuous nation tend to sink to those of the aggressor.

But I do not wish to give the impression that our Quaker pacifism is either passive or negative. It is part of a positive policy. The prevention of war is an essential part of that policy. It is our belief that we must work for the prevention of war by all means in our power, by influencing public opinion in peacetime, as we try to do, by interceding with governments, as we try to do, setting an example of a disarmed state as William Penn and the Quakers did in Pennsylvania, and by encouraging international organization, as again that great pioneer William Penn did in that most early statement of the principles of world government,[7] *An Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe.*

Among those active and positive efforts must be included the international service of which Mr. Jahn and Miss Backhouse have spoken so extensively. This international service is not mere humanitarianism; it is not merely mopping up, cleaning up the world after war. It is aimed at creating peace by setting an example of a different way of international service. So our foreign relief is a means of rehabilitation and it is intended not merely to help the

[7]Published in 1693, Penn's *Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of a Diet, Parliament or Estate* proposed an international tribunal of European states, set up on a proportionally representative basis, to deal with international differences not settled by diplomatic means.

body but to help the spirit and to give men hope that there can be a peaceful world.

I do not know of any difficulty as great as trying to persuade governments to do what they do not intend to do. In the year 1941 in February, there were two American Quakers in the city of Oslo and two American Quakers in the city of London. What were they there for? To try to persuade both the British and the German governments to permit the sending of food and supplies to the children of the occupied countries. I myself was in London at that time, trying to get permission to go through the British blockade with food supplies for the children while my friends were here and in Berlin. We did not succeed. I sometimes think our purposes are best explained by our failures. But it is fun to try.

...It took us eleven months to get into Hungary. But we got in and we have been working there for about a year now. A drunken soldier finally helped to get us in. And we are doing relief in Hungary today as we wish to do it. But we often have been baffled and frustrated. Sometimes we have been helped by people who did not intend to trust us. We have finally found governments helping us, imitating us, and extending our services. It always interests me to find a government taking over what we have done.

We cannot measure how far our service has affected the people involved. It is hard to judge how far-reaching the results of our efforts are. We do know, however, that there is in our country, in America, and also in England, a large store of goodwill for the people of Europe as well as most tangible expressions of that goodwill. In America there are people who are mindful of the suffering and needs of

humanity. To elicit this from our fellow citizens has been for us Quakers a privilege, and so to give them a means of expressing ideals that they are half convinced are their own ideals too. We think that in doing so we may be rendering a greater service to America than to Europe and Asia.

But among those who need, we trust that our personal touch, the face to face contact of friendly American and British workers with those in need, is not only bringing food and clothing but bringing cheer and hope. It is very evident from the correspondence that we receive from Europe how much this means to many people. They say: It is not the food or the clothing that really affects us most. It is the confidence in man, the belief that somebody cares, that affects us most.

I may say that we find in governments too, that what cannot be done publicly can be done very intimately and privately with individuals, and that where you least expect it you will find help. We had some very extraordinary experiences with Nazi officials. When it comes to individuals, they usually understand what you are about. Perhaps some of those very officials had their lives saved in 1920-1924 by the same kind of efforts on our part.

So it is our hope that our service will help to cool the passions of hate and fear and give faith in man and that the awards of the Nobel Committee to our Quaker service may enable us and our millions of friends throughout the world to persevere in meeting that deeper spiritual hunger and thus promote the cause of peace, as was the intention of the founder of the award.

International Service of the Society of Friends

Lecture by ***Margaret A. Backhouse***[1]

Oslo, Norway, December 12, 1947

Introduction

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to two Committees of the Society of Friends. These have their headquarters in Philadelphia and London but are representative of the activities of Friends around the world, whether the line be drawn round the northern hemisphere from Scandinavia, through the American continent, Japan and China to India, or south from Great Britain, through western Europe, Africa and Australia to New Zealand.

The Society of Friends had its origin in England 300 years ago, but the zeal of early Friends quickly carried their faith overseas to many places, notably to the new communities of settlers in America. Consequently the larger groups

[1]This Nobel lecture was delivered in the auditorium of the University of Oslo by Margaret A. Backhouse, speaking for the Friends Service Council (London). Miss Backhouse (born in 1887), a former faculty member and warden of Westhill Training College (Birmingham, England) and a worker, lecturer, and international traveler for the British Friends, worked in the Friends Service Council (1942-1955) and at the time of her lecture was its chairman, as well as vice-chairman of the Friends Relief Service—two posts which she held from 1943 to 1950. The text of the lecture is taken from *Les Prix Nobel en 1947*.

of Friends are still found in Great Britain and the United States of America. Numerically the Society is small, only totaling approximately 150,000, but observers have often remarked that its influence is quite out of proportion to its numbers. We have undertaken the work in God's name and we humbly offer thanks to Him if it has borne abundant fruit. We also want to give public recognition with gratitude for the devoted work done by very many men and women, not members of the Society, who have united in service with us because they shared our attitude towards suffering humanity. Without their aid and a great deal of generous financial support from the public, the work done in the name of Friends would have been very limited. Besides this help the Society owes a great debt to the cooperation of other bodies such as the Norwegian *Fredsvenners Hjelpetjeneste* and similar organizations in other countries. With all these people we share the honour that has come to us in the award of the Prize, and we hope that in any future work we may still have their support.

Appreciation is always encouraging, and this award has brought to us much that is pleasurable, not only in the recognition but in the expressions of goodwill from many of our friends. This is stimulating at a time when the need in the world is growing greater and material resources at our disposal become less and more difficult to obtain. But there also comes a great sense of responsibility to respond to the confidence shown in us. We are very conscious of our human inability to make an adequate response and we pray for strength if God desires us to continue in the work.

Because this responsibility has been laid upon us, I wish today to ask your understanding of the principles that lie

at the root of the Quaker attitude to service and to show the resulting effect on the work undertaken.

Religious Foundations of Service

...The Society was born in a period when much that bore the name of religion was corrupt and very far removed from the teaching of Christ, and in the unrest of the times men were seeking for the foundation truths that would give them freedom of spirit. For years the young George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, had been seeking this freedom with an ever-increasing sense of hopelessness. He could find no help from the formalism of the Church of his time, and its religious leaders used argument or subterfuge that left him more and more conscious of his own inability to find a solution to the evil of the world. In 1647 the burden was lifted from him, not by a conviction that he was without sin, but that within his own soul he had the God-given capacity for Christlikeness; that within him he had a measure of the same love and life, of the same mercy and power and of the same divine nature. He spoke of this measure of the divine in man as the "Light of Christ within." He found that the spirit of Christ could speak directly to him and evoke within him the power to choose his way through the evil of life when he was willing to follow the light. He found too that this capacity lay within every man and that the light could shine through all men. This did not make him believe that all that men did was fundamentally good; this was obviously untrue, but that there was within every man something fundamentally good, that could be developed.

Upon this basic truth all the principles and actions of the Society of Friends are founded. Each man is seen as having intrinsic value, and Christ is equally concerned for the

other man as for me. We all become part of the divine family, and as such we are all responsible for one another, carrying our share of the shame when wrong is done and of the burden of suffering. In this way a brotherhood is founded [that] renders impossible a lack of regard for others and, as in a family circle it is the weakest or the most in need that calls out the greatest desire to help, so the forgotten and suffering people of the world appeal to the hearts of Friends. It must not be thought that we flatter ourselves that we have this sense of oneness with humanity to such an extent that we are always alert to the needs of the situation, or that we have power to meet all the needs that we recognize. We do, however, believe that, in responding to the call of God by using the little sympathy that we have got, more will be given us. The great American Quaker, John Woolman, who worked untiringly for the freedom of slaves, speaks of training oneself to "enter into the condition of others." For this reason Friends have been prominent in social reform and in relief in times of special emergencies.

...[T]here are less spectacular outcomes [than our emergency work] of [the Friends'] belief that all men belong to the family of God. This conviction necessarily leads us to believe that all war is wrong. It is therefore not enough to make efforts to repair the damage that it does, but there must be positive methods used to appeal to the intellectual reasonableness of man. There must be understanding of the problems of relationships, and men must learn to live "in the life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars." Friends will be found active in adult and youth education but perhaps their unique contribution in the intellectual field of peacemaking has been made through the Friends' International Centres. Over a period

of 27 years these have been established in many of the great cities of Europe and at some of the international cross-roads of the East. The aim of such centres is one of reconciliation and creative peace-making, and a great variety of activities have resulted. Here men and women can come, seeking together the truths of the spirit, and find freedom of converse on neutral ground where conflicting views can be discussed in friendship. These Centres are staffed by people drawn from at least three and sometimes more countries and in themselves demonstrate the possibility of international understanding when united by the same spirit. From them Quaker ambassadors of peace can go out to plead with authorities or act as reconcilers in times of crisis.

...[Many of our activities] reveal methods and motives shared by all people of goodwill, and the Society of Friends makes no claim to the monopoly of any of them; rather would we proclaim the universality of the truth that binds us together and pray that the day may quickly come when all men will seek first the kingdom of God.

Presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1947. Left to right: Henry Cadbury, Margaret Backhouse, Gunnar Jahn. Photo: AFSC Archives

Acknowledgments

The full texts and most of the footnotes of Gunnar Jahn's presentation speech ("The Quakers"), Margaret Backhouse's lecture ("The International Service of the Society of Friends") and Henry Cadbury's lecture ("Quakers and Peace") appear in *Nobel Lectures: Peace* (3 vols.), Frederick Haberman, ed., Amsterdam, London & New York: Elsevier, 1972. ©The Nobel Foundation. Reprinted with permission.

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About the Prize Recipients

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is an independent Quaker organization with service, development, social justice, and peace education programs in 22 foreign countries and 43 places in the United States. Founded in 1917, the AFSC works in partnership with people of many races, religions, and cultures. Its work is based on the beliefs that there is that of God in every person and only love—not violence—can overcome evil. The AFSC works with immigrants, undocumented workers, small farmers, farmworkers, and refugees. It advocates all over the world on behalf of people who are hungry, poorly housed, homeless, or unemployed, and it promotes peace, justice, and reconciliation in many practical ways. *(American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479, U.S.A. Telephone: 215-241-7000, Website: http://www.afsc.org)*

Quaker Peace and Service (QPS)—formerly Friends Service Council, founded in 1927—is the international department of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. Our aim is to build international peace and reduce violence. In the interests of peace, we advance social and economic change and reduce poverty and injustice in the world. QPS supports long-term programs that work on the tasks of reconciliation at all levels, including the victims of wars or violence. We help reconciliation work in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, including Northern Ireland, Britain, and at the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland. *(Quaker Peace & Service, Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, United Kingdom. Telephone: 171-663-1000, fax: 171-663-1001, e-mail: qps1@gn.apc.org)*

Gathering at the 1947 presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. Photo: AFSC Archives

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