



Around Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs

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Quakers at COP 15

In December ten Quakers from six countries attended the COP15 climate conference in Copenhagen as members and guests of Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), which is based in North America. We each came with questions in mind, and left with new questions.

Being at COP15 was challenging. As you know, the international community was not able to come to an agreement, and the web is full of hypotheses about why not. The “Copenhagen Accord”, put together through irregular channels that excluded both less powerful nations and civil society, is not an outcome document from COP15, and its place in the negotiations of nations is as yet neither understood nor tested.

The official negotiations were exasperating and disappointing, but evidence of civil society’s growing commitment was encouraging. We ten were among a crowd of 45,000 who came to Copenhagen to show our concern for the climate. It would seem that we had no effect on the negotiations, but they certainly knew we were there. I have a short story to tell that gives me hope every time I think of it:

Shortly after the Vietnam War, I went to hear American historian Howard Zinn. He told of a huge rally in Washington DC protesting the war, and reminded us that the then President had refused to meet with the people.

He said he had better things to do; he planned to watch football on television. I happen to have been in the crowd that went home in disappointment.

But a friend of Zinn’s in the State Department told him that behind the scenes there was panic. Phone calls flew

back and forth among the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department, and plans for a massive bombing that week were cancelled. It was clear to the decision-makers that the public would not stand for it. We had been effective after all, although there was no visible sign.

Our small Copenhagen Quaker group has dispersed to our various homes with renewed energy to continue working both locally and internationally. We are now writing up our thoughts and experiences for publication in QEW’s newsletter, BeFriending Creation, in early spring; these will be available on QEW’s website. (Go to: www.quakerearthcare.org) Now that the climate conference is behind us we are continuing our international collaboration by means of Skype.



Quakers demonstrating in Copenhagen: written inside the banner’s open letters are messages from the heart about climate change. If anyone wants to include their own message to be printed for future climate demonstrations - and there will be many - send them, along with your name and meeting to lin@phonecoop.coop

I can’t speak for the others, but here in the US, according to a respected poll, only 51% currently believe that human-caused climate disruption is actually occurring, down from about 67%. This is not an accident, but a result of both the work of the fossil fuel industry lobby and the selective coverage of climate issues by our media. We have a lot of work to do here.



And so do you, wherever you are. Our Earth is best understood as a living entity, whose health depends on the delicate interconnectedness of all the cycles and functions that support us and other beings. We don't manage the Earth, we participate in it, and the nature of our participation is a spiritual matter. It concerns who we are and how we relate to the ultimate ground of being, to God.

It is time for Quakers to think and pray together about the future of our planet, and to discern what we are called to do. And then, of course, we are called to do it. For this we need each other's support.

*Mary Gilbert
Friends Meeting at Cambridge (MA, USA)
Quaker Earthcare Witness Rep to UN*

This year's Programme Assistants



I started working for QCEA in October 2009 and attended the latest Council meeting where I already had the chance to meet many very interesting people. I'm currently covering the topics energy and climate change and I'm just finishing some research

on foreign policy drivers. I'm also responsible for the editing of *Around Europe*, the maintenance of the website and I sit on one of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office's working groups on gender, peace and security. In the upcoming months I will also work on the economic role of the EU in Israel and the Palestinian Territories as part of a bigger QCEA project.

I studied Language and History at the University of Freiburg, Germany, and have an MA from the College of Europe where I specialised in the EU's role as a global actor with a particular emphasis on sustainable development and energy security. Right afterwards I was lucky enough to attend the UN's Graduate Study Programme which convinced me to continue my commitment to sustainability, environmental protection and economic justice. I'm very thankful that I had the opportunity to engage in development cooperation on the ground in Togo, where I taught English and Maths in a high school and witnessed several ecological development projects.

I consider it a very rewarding opportunity to contribute to QCEA's fight against climate change and to engage actively with the EU institutions to ensure that when it comes to European decision-making, civil society has and will always have a voice.

Sonja

I started working for QCEA at the beginning of January, and will be devoting much of my time to (hopefully) continuing the really impressive work QCEA has done in the past on criminal justice matters. I am excited about getting my teeth into this brief, and continuing the long Quaker tradition of providing a voice to those people all too often-forgotten by society. I have also taken over the role of European and Middle Eastern Young Friends (EMEYF) Secretary; everything Anya and Calum have told me makes me believe I am in for a busy but fun-filled year.

I read History at the University of Cambridge, followed by a year at the Judge Business School. Since graduating in the summer I have lived in New York City working for an international education company, interned in London at a Westminster think-tank, and now face the challenge of overcoming my considerable shortcomings in French to ensure I can fully embrace everything Brussels has to offer. I am very much look-

ing forward to the challenge - and trust me, it will be a challenge!

Outside of work, I am a keen sports fan and will also be running the Edinburgh Marathon in May raising money for Alzheimer Scotland, and competing in the London Triathlon in August on behalf of Whizz-Kidz. Both are great causes that I passionately believe in, and I hope my efforts will, in a small way, help both charities to continue their crucial work.

If you have any questions, or just want to say hello, please do not hesitate to email me: jcasey@qcea.org. I look forward to meeting some of you over the coming year.



Joe



EUBAM: security, stability, support

The EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) supports security and stability in South Eastern Europe. It has helped ensure good quality border and customs services for people and businesses in Moldova, Ukraine and the EU since November 2005. EUBAM's mandate has been extended twice and currently runs until 30 November 2011.

EUBAM helps tackle smuggling, illegal migration and other cross border crime, in particular involving the Transnistrian segment of the Ukrainian / Moldovan border. Transnistria is part of the Republic of Moldova, but has been in a state of frozen conflict since 1992.

Mission HQ is in Odessa, Ukraine, with six field offices along the 1222km border, including the 470km Transnistrian segment. A liaison office is located in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau. The Mission is unique, in that it operates in two post-Soviet States simultaneously. Currently 19 EU Member States are represented in the Mission's European complement of 94.

There are also currently 103 Ukrainian and Moldovan staff. The UNDP, as the implementing partner, brings experts from a number of countries including two Central Asian Republics.

The Mission's role is technical and advisory; its main aim is to help the Moldovan and Ukrainian customs and border guards in improving their work in light of European Union best practices. EUBAM also supports confidence and trust building as a corner stone of effective integrated border management. But it also provides technical aid in support of international efforts to peacefully resolve the Transnistrian conflict.

Quakers have helped build peace across the world for hundreds of years. So, although the Mission's main aim is to build partners' capacity, it's worth explaining our conflict resolution role.

The Joint Customs Declaration (JD) is the best example. It was signed by the Ukrainian and Moldovan Prime Ministers in late 2005.

Moldova enjoys positive trade benefits with the EU. Under the Joint Declaration between Moldovan and Ukrainian customs, businesses in the Transnistrian region can also enjoy these. Bringing businesses back into the Moldovan mainstream gives Moldova and Ukraine a better idea of what's crossing the border and businesses based in the Transnistrian region a chance to thrive legally across the border, including into the

EU. Implementing the JD has also helped cut smuggling and increase customs revenues. EUBAM monitors its implementation at key border crossing points.

The Head of EUBAM is also the Senior Political Advisor to the EU Special Representative for the Republic of Moldova, Dr. Kalman Mizsei. Dr. Mizsei's mandate includes contributing, in close coordination with other international partners, to a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict whilst respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognised borders, as well as improving border and customs controls at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, particularly through EUBAM.

More efficient border guards and customs mean more secure borders. EUBAM's Deputy Head of Mission was also personally appointed as EUBAM's permanent representative on the Joint Moldovan-Ukrainian Commission on Border Demarcation in March 2008. EUBAM proactively supports the Commission's efforts.

As a knowledge hub, EUBAM works closely with international partners, including FRONTEX, the EU's border agency; EUROPOL, its policing coordination agency; the World Customs Organisation and with key partners in the EU Member States.

EUBAM understands that it must be seen favourably locally to thrive, so outreach programmes with universities, schools and the media help ensure EUBAM's support is properly understood.

Through EUBAM assistance, Ukrainian and Moldovan border guards and customs are practising far improved risk analysis techniques. Put simply, risk analysis means using their people, kit and procedures more precisely to solve problems. They are also applying improved investigation techniques and management methods.

But there is more work to be done. EUBAM supports the partner services' efforts to bring in modern management techniques, systemic reform and counter-corruption initiatives.

For more information, see www.eubam.org, become our fan on facebook or get in touch with me personally at matthew.taylor@eubam.org

Matthew Taylor
EUBAM Reporting and Communication officer
(and former QCEA programme assistant)



Equality Works

I believe that meeting for worship has brought the same awareness to all who have seen and heard the message that everyone is equal in the sight of God. (Ursula Franklin, 1979, as quoted in Quaker Faith and Practice, Britain YM, 23.32)

Quakers believe in equality; it is one of the Quaker testimonies which build on our experience and on our faith; in the nature of testimony, it is something Quakers endeavour to bear witness to in their lives.

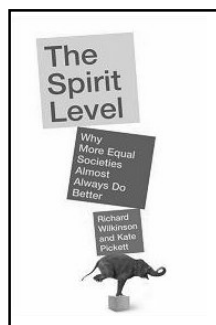
But it is one thing to believe in equality and another to prove that equality makes for a better society. The world we live in loves facts and figures; scientific evidence is a cornerstone of debate. So it is immensely gratifying to find an academic book that sets out in clear terms and in an accessible and readable way that equality makes for a better society.

The Spirit Level written by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett and published in 2009 by Allen Lane sets out the evidence that explains why more equal societies almost always do better than less equal societies. The basic question at the heart of the book is: is it poverty or inequality that leads to social ills? And by looking at a whole range of indicators in a wide range of countries, (principally countries that are western and industrialised), it shows how those countries that have more equality (rather than those with more wealth) fare better on mental health, drug use, physical health, life expectancy, educational performance, teenage pregnancy, violence, crime and imprisonment, social mobility, community life and social relations. In other words, social outcomes

against these indicators are almost always better in societies with less inequality. The book then also looks at these indicators in a comparison between the States of the US; there, the pattern is the same: States with less inequality fare better.

The book shows that inequality does harm to society and to individuals. It is a wake-up call to politicians and to civil society. Here is the agenda for social change. Here is the evidence that shows why things don't get better just because the rich get richer. In essence, it says the 'trickle-down' effect doesn't work; this is the post-Thatcher agenda where those of us who care about justice can stand up, be counted and not be written off as dreamers.

Richard Wilkinson, Kate Pickett and others have founded the Equality Trust which campaigns to gain the widest public and political understanding of the harm caused by inequality. Their website at www.equalitytrust.org.uk/ is full of resources - including the graphs from the book.



This is a book that should be read by everyone who wants to make a difference. It should be a compulsory text in secondary schools; it should be a compulsory text for anyone running for political office at any level. I cannot commend it too highly.

Martina Weitsch

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