



Quaker  
Council for  
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Affairs

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# DOING WHAT LOVE REQUIRED



How Quakers in the  
1930s and 40s helped  
thousands of refugees —  
and what we can  
learn from them now

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## Upcoming QCEA report gives everyone a stake in building peace

QCEA is excited to launch a report that makes the case for peacebuilding at the beginning of 2018. The report responds to a question that senior officials often ask QCEA staff: *what civilian alternatives are there to military intervention, and have they ever really worked?* The report demonstrates that peacebuilding must be everyone's business, including government, civil society, and individuals. However, as good intentions are not sufficient, and there are no 'quick fix' solutions, the report first takes the reader through a process of self-reflection. Through concrete examples such as peace education and community-based security, the report demonstrates the range of activities that can be designed to transform conflict and build peace.

QCEA will launch its report through events in Brussels and other European cities such as London. QCEA will also launch a series of events linking geographic cases and peacebuilding tools. One event already took place in December on the prevention of election violence, a topic that is examined in the Democracy and Politics section of the report, and in the tool describing support for election monitoring and electoral frameworks. The report explains that, although elections can be mechanisms for the peaceful transition of power, they can also be charged with tension and potentially trigger violence when sections of the population do not feel represented by the process.

The December event examined the grievances underlying election violence in Kenya. It featured Kennedy Akolo, Africa Director at the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Akolo presented aspects of the work of AFSC that aims to address election violence in Kenya from a grassroots

perspective. Tobias Wellner, East Africa Programme Manager at Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) explained how civic engagement can address root causes and generate positive change, such as through civic education forums, public vetting events, and peace pledges. The event included 16 organisations, bridging civil society, faith-based organisations and EU institutions working on this topic in Brussels.

Our next events will be part of a new partnership with the Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YFPF) launched in 2018. The first event will explore how pre-accession negotiations can be a pathway for long-lasting peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and will take place in the first quarter of 2018. Another two events will follow and will help encourage a shift to rethinking security and showcasing nonviolent policy options to the policymakers of the future.



## Donations to QCEA match-funded this spring

*Thanks to a generous supporter, all donations made to QCEA this spring will be match-funded. In other words, **whatever we receive will be doubled**, meaning now is the perfect time to lend your support to our important work.*

*Donating is quick, easy and secure, and all contributions fund our peace and human rights projects. Your support is vital!*

**We accept donations via bank transfer, PayPal, Direct Debit and cheque.\***

[www.qcea.org/donate](http://www.qcea.org/donate)

\* CHEQUES FROM UK BANK ACCOUNTS ONLY.

## QCEA unites Quaker agencies for common effort to influence Europe's Africa policy



↑ Some of the people working to build peace and justice in the world on behalf of Quakers, in Brussels, Geneva and beyond. From left to right: Olivia Caeymaex, Kennedy Akolo, Tobias Wellner, Dilia Zwart, Laura Straus, Florence Foster, Andrew Lane and Sylvain Mossou. A small, faithful, determined group of people.

PHOTOS: KATE McNALLY

## Sanctuary Everywhere brings Friends together in Brussels



From 1-3 December, QCEA and QPSW hosted the *Sanctuary Everywhere* conference in Brussels. The event brought together almost one hundred Friends from across Europe to explore ways in which we can create societies which are safe and welcoming for everyone.

The conference was addressed by three keynote speakers, including Heather Grabbe from the Open Society European Policy Institute (above) who spoke powerfully on the increasing role of populism in European politics. Marigold Bentley (QPSW) and Dale Andrew of France Yearly Meeting also spoke, with a particular emphasis on Quaker work with refugees past and present (see page 4).

The conference also included workshops which brought members of our partner organisations, as well as EU staff, together with the attendees. And on Saturday evening, no less than 18 different individual projects were presented by those taking part – from an LGBT hotline in Russia to work with refugees in Huddersfield. The weekend left us with a sense of renewed confidence and the inspiration to do more.



## QCEA hosts European Court training day

The conference was followed on 4 December by a training day on the **European Court of Human Rights**. Almost 30 people stayed on in Brussels for a series of workshops in Quaker House, which were designed to build practical knowledge of this vital institution among those who might need it in their work as human rights defenders. The Court, founded after WWII, addresses human rights abuses across Europe.

# VISAS, VISITS & VISIONS

Friends' work with refugees in the 1930s and 40s

In light of the ongoing humanitarian tragedy in Syria, many Quakers have felt compelled to take action. Across Europe, hundreds of individual Friends, Meetings and Quaker groups are engaged in initiatives which respond to the struggles faced by refugees. Their work continues a long tradition of Quaker efforts to help those fleeing conflict and persecution – a tradition which, in turn, offers some worthwhile lessons for today. Here, we take a look at two notable examples from the 1930s and 40s, which culminated in the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the Quakers in 1947.

## SPANISH CIVIL WAR 1936 – 1939

Following the military coup led by Franco in the summer of 1936, Quakers from Britain and America quickly instigated a non-partisan relief programme in Spain which was present for much of the civil war. This work continued until 1939 when the Nationalists cemented their hold on power, resulting in approximately 450,000 Republican refugees – both military and civilian – crossing the Pyrenees into France, in the middle of winter.

Edith Pye, a British Friend who was active in relief efforts, wrote: “The pass leading to Spain has been one solid block of refugees of all ages, wounded soldiers, and I understand they spent the nights standing, as one does in the tube in rush hours. The crowd simply got wedged tighter and tighter. These poor people have absolutely no shelter. It poured in buckets all last night and thou can imagine what it was like.”

To deal with this massive exodus, French authorities placed the refugees in camps in the south of France, and heavily promoted departure overseas to places such as the USSR, Britain and countries in Latin America. However, those wishing to move on still had to pass through the highly restrictive quotas and selection criteria to get visas; in the end only 20,000 Spaniards chose to leave France.

Of the majority who remained, many were children, who were placed in homes or centres. Many of these were run or supported by Quaker groups – notably the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) – which worked with existing local organisations to provide shelter and support for thousands of Spanish refugee children.



↑ AFSC relief workers in Normandy, 1946.  
PHOTO: AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

## WORLD WAR II, FRANCE 1940 — 1945

From 1940 onwards, tens of thousands of refugees gathered in unoccupied “Free” France, with many seeking visas for the United States. However, the American government had imposed strict controls and so, once again, many ended up in camps in southern France. Quakers from America, Britain and France itself – working together in a structure known as *Secours Quaker* – provided relief services from a head office in Marseille, as well as three delegations which had their roots in the earlier work with Spanish refugees (in Montauban, Toulouse and Perpignan). Their efforts included food programmes, supplies for children’s “colonies” and visits to internment camps.

*Secours Quaker* went from strength to strength, despite serious challenges: the American Friends in the Marseille office were detained for 15 months, for example, but their work was taken up by French colleagues. Following D-Day in 1944, additional delegations were opened in northern France, with Paris eventually becoming the coordination centre after liberation.

*“I have come out of the night and you fed me. For 22 months I have eaten out of a tin pail with a rusty spoon and you have set me down at a clean table with a china plate and a knife and fork and served me with your own hands. How to thank you?”*

A SPANISH REFUGEE IN FRANCE, 1941,  
UPON BEING FED BY A QUAKER DELEGATION

Their work did not, however, end with the defeat of Nazism. Much of northern France had been reduced to rubble; the fields were strewn with mines and disease was rife. Fifteen members of the Friends Relief Service and six from AFSC were based in Normandy, where they provided trucks for the transportation of supplies as well as the clearance of rubble from 1945 onwards (see photo, left).

On awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the Quakers in 1947, the Nobel Committee remarked that “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. [...] 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 in the spirit in which this work is performed.”

In other words, “doing what love required of them.”

*This essay is based on a presentation given by Dale Andrew, from France Yearly Meeting, at QCEA’s Sanctuary Everywhere conference in December. For a summary of the event see page 3.*

## What lessons for today?

*These stories are of Quaker experiences of relief efforts in the 1930s and 40s, but Friends continue this good work today – and many of the issues of the past remain equally true of refugee work now.*

### Collaboration

Success was achieved by working together with others, including local organisations.

### “Professionalisation” of aid

It’s worth considering that much of the work done by volunteers in the past is now the domain of formal organisations (UNICEF etc.) – how can smaller groups complement them?

### Visas everywhere...

Dealing with national administrations and their paperwork is a slow and unavoidable process.

### The work continues when the conflict ends

A ceasefire does not mean the end of suffering, as entire cities may need to be rebuilt or land made arable once again. Aid efforts need to “stay the course” in terms of morale / resources.

### Priorities

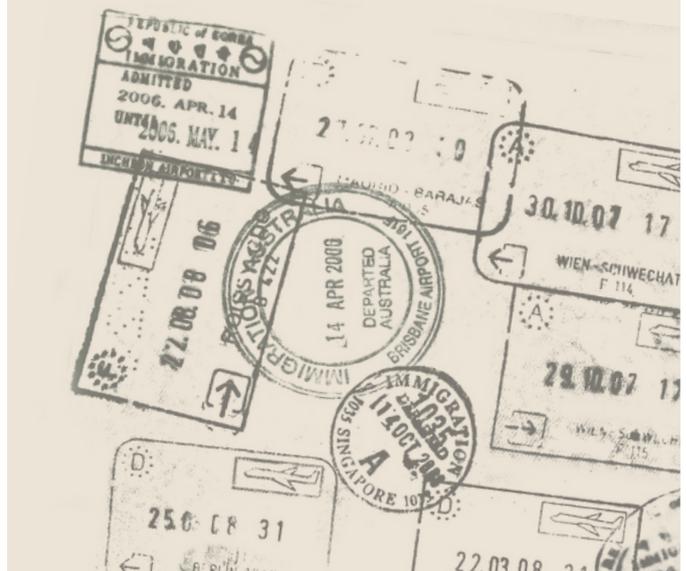
Who comes first when resources are scarce? Children? Families? These are tough but necessary decisions.

### Life is more than food and health

Constructive activities to alleviate enforced idleness are vital when working with refugees

### Moving out, moving on

After the Great War, British and American Friends set up a network of Quaker “embassies” or Centres. Other approaches evolved after WWII. What does the future hold for today’s efforts? What determines when to withdraw, other than lack of continued funding?



# Helping the Helpers

## A QCEA PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS WHO WORK WITH REFUGEES

Care for migrants and refugees often becomes more and more stressful over time. Volunteers frequently experience symptoms of secondary or vicarious trauma when working with people exposed to violence and exploitation. Common symptoms of vicarious trauma include depression, isolation, emotional withdrawal, difficulties with sleep and problems with concentration. *(For more information about vicarious or secondary trauma, see our interview with Dr. Leyla Welkin in the Nov-Dec 2016 issue of Around Europe.)*

QCEA is working with a group of Quaker psychotherapists trained in trauma treatment to develop a project which will address the needs of volunteers who serve refugees and migrants, with a view to enabling them to avoid the long term effects of secondary trauma.

Participants will be people providing a range of services to migrants around Europe. The aim of the project is to give participants skills that will enable them not only to address their own trauma but also to avoid re-traumatisation. A second aspect of the project is that it is hoped that participants will go on to train others to address their trauma, establishing a network of trained individuals who can support each other in ongoing service.

It is important to note that this is not a project to train lay therapists. Rather it is a support programme designed to develop psychosocial skills centred on self care and mutual support.

The project will gather participants and organisers three times for face-to-face meetings in intensive institutes. Between these meetings, participants will work remotely with the organisers and each other.

Organisers of Helping the Helpers are donating their time to develop and deliver this project. The cost of the running the three institutes and the online supervision will be relatively high. We are currently identifying possible sources of funding for the project.

***If you think you might be interested in sponsoring one of the participants, or for any other information please contact [kate.mcnally@qcea.org](mailto:kate.mcnally@qcea.org)***



## Taking stock and looking forward on our refugee rights work

Across Europe, migrants are increasingly being detained as part of efforts to return more people to their country of origin. For the past year, QCEA has been engaged in work to raise awareness of this phenomenon, and to propose alternatives.

On the occasion of International Migrants Day, on 18 December, the European Commission (Home Affairs and External Affairs departments), European Parliament, national governments, and NGOs met to discuss the ongoing problem of child immigration detention. We organised the meeting with our partners UNICEF, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Platform for Undocumented Migrants (PICUM). We discussed how we can end child immigration detention, with particular emphasis on improving legal procedures, and how to include child protection authorities in migration processes.

Building on our research and published report of July 2017, QCEA has been working hard to encourage alternatives to detention, including appropriate care for children, to be implemented across Europe. This meeting shared some of the specific measures that are needed, including:

- a range of care options (e.g. kinship care)
- case management tools
- child protection expertise at every step
- good quality information for children, guardians and families
- more evidence about the comparative costs

Other factors are important too – not least, of course, the political will of Member States. There is a common understanding of the need to make the case for alternatives to detention. And, while the conversation is not always easy, there is a commitment to continue to work together in 2018.

# time for truth.

'Fake News' was named as the Collins Dictionary official Word of the Year for 2017. It's a phrase famously overused by one populist president, but he is not alone.

Attacking different opinions as 'fake news' is a tool used particularly by populist politicians to keep their supporters focused on particular information sources. It builds a wall of suspicion around the diverse and pluralist voices that are needed for democracy to function.

The irony is that whilst it is particular populists that are regularly calling criticism 'fake news', it is *their* parties and supporters who are making use of this tactic to push their agenda of polarisation.

Populists appeal to widespread grievances in society, blaming an enemy and trying to exclude other opinions. In 2017 populists took power at a local level in large parts of Europe, and are now part of national coalition governments in Austria, Greece and Norway.

Populist politics has real consequences. For example, in the weeks since Austria's new coalition has formed it has announced that asylum seekers arriving at the Austrian border will have any money in their possession confiscated.

2018 holds the prospect of further populist gains in elections in Belgium, Hungary, Italy and Estonia.

## QUAKER CALL FOR TRUTH

Since the movement's birth in the 17th Century, Quakers have valued truth as one of their main principles. Early Quakers used the word truth as a way of describing their belief in the way that God can work deeply within people, and they were sometimes known as Friends of Truth and Publishers of Truth.

Quakers believed in speaking truth at all times, even avoiding flattery and indirect language. Fake news, lies and stereotypes are an offence to this Quaker concept of truth, - as well to most other people's concept of honesty and truth.

## COUNTERING HATEFUL STORIES

Leaders (across politics, faith, business, trade unions and other civil society) must be sure enough in their convictions to confront xenophobic, othering, and fear creating populist narratives. As Gandhi argued, there are some truths to which we must be uncompromising witnesses. That all people have value, and deserve to have their human rights protected, is perhaps the most fundamental of all truths.

One of the biggest challenges for today's media is how not to become a platform for stereotypes and falsehoods – when colourful political forces provide regular controversy which attracts the attention of readers. Regulation, and self-regulation will help. Counter voices are also needed, from public figures and citizens. Remember: keep the email addresses of newspaper editors close!

## UPHOLDING THE TRUTH IS MORE THAN JUST SPEAKING OUT

Of course, Quakers do not have a monopoly on truth. Neither do other socially active faith groups, nor the broader liberal-left. Building common ground between different groups in society is one of the most effective antidotes to those populist forces that promote 'Us verses Them'.

This means: (1) building common ground between social groups who might be marginalised and ignored alone, but who can finally be heard when working in solidarity with each other, and (2) finding common ground with populist voters – most of whom also feel ignored.

So, next time you are at your local refugee, carbon divestment, LGBTI or homelessness action group – think about which other groups you could show solidarity to – whether or not they are able to offer the same support to your issue in return.

And, next time you spend time with someone with opposing political views, listen harder to learn more about why they hold their views and what you have in common.

*Find out about the new German law on online hate speech, and a big decision for the European Commission in 2018 about whether to propose something similar. See the recent QCEA blog: [qceablog.wordpress.com](http://qceablog.wordpress.com)*

# Bulgaria takes the reins

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union rotates among EU Member States every 6 months. If the UK had not voted for Brexit, the EU would just be finishing 6 months under British leadership. From January 2018 it is the turn of Bulgaria. This is an opportunity for Bulgaria to influence the European Union's political agenda and chair high level discussions between ministers of EU Member States across the full range of range of EU responsibilities.

So what does this mean for human rights? QCEA and other human rights advocates have met with Bulgaria to discuss this. They say their human rights priority is the protection of the rights of children, especially disadvantaged children, their inclusive education and participation in the decision-making processes. They will also focused on gender equality and the protection of persons with disabilities.

The Bulgarian Presidency will also seek to make progress on the matter of the EU's accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as its accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. They have also identified ethnic and religious discrimination, including anti-Semitism, and freedom of speech and expression as needing EU action.

Bulgaria's government has been criticised recently for corruption, as well as its reluctance to confront authoritarian tendencies in other EU countries, particularly Poland. The country also remains the Union's poorest Member State. However, despite turbulent times in at home and in Europe as a whole, we are hopeful that the Bulgarian Presidency will be an opportunity to move the human rights agenda forward.

## GUIDE TO THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS



PHOTO: SAMYN AND PARTNERS (CC)

## What is the Council of the EU?

The Council of the European Union is one of the major legislative institutions of the EU. Whereas the Parliament represents the *citizens* of Europe in EU decision-making, the Council represents the interests of Member State *governments*. Both institutions must debate and approve new European laws before they can be passed. The Council's views used to carry more weight in this process, but reforms have afforded the Parliament more powers and in most cases they now play an equal role. Also, in the past, the Council required unanimity to make decisions, but nowadays they use a majority system in order to streamline decision-making and prevent one country blocking things for everyone else. These changes are good for democracy and for efficiency, but they represent a shift away from cooperation between nation-states to something more supranational – and as we know, this worries some Europeans. The Council's business is overseen by each Member State in turn, for six months at a time (*see left*). Its HQ is the striking Europa Building in Brussels (above), which opened last year. It's meant to symbolise the "heart of Europe" but is usually called *The Egg*.



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