



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

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FWCC/EMES Annual Report 2010

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Note: The formal annual report and accounts, prepared in accordance with UK charity requirements, are available as a separate document on request from the EMES office.

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What is FWCC?

The Friends World Committee for Consultation was established at the Second World Conference of Friends held at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in 1937. The concept of a world organization to express the sense of world fellowship of Friends arose as an important part of the evolution of the Religious Society of Friends in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This tentative development gained impetus from the 1920 Friends World Conference in London and the Young Friends Gathering in Jordans, England, held in the same year. No other organisation exists which links together Yearly Meetings around the world. Authority within the Religious Society of Friends lies at the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meeting/church level, leaving these groups potentially in isolation. Hence the vision arose of an organisation to keep Friends connected and in touch with each other across the diverse spectrum of the Society

FWCC was established to be a channel of communication among Friends, helping us to explore and nurture our identity as Quakers so that we can discover and be faithful to our true place in the world as a people of God. The current mission statement is: answering God's call to universal love. FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

Representatives appointed by affiliated yearly meetings and groups gather in plenary sessions every 3-5 years. Between plenary sessions, the Central Executive Committee which is broadly representative meets annually to continue FWCC's decision-making processes and to guide staff. The World Office in London is the centre of worldwide communications for Friends and supports the work of the Sections. It also represents Friends with outside international organisations such as the UN.

Europe and Middle East Section

The FWCC Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) was established in 1938 and now consists of 11 Yearly Meetings, several Monthly Meetings and other smaller national groups. Events such as the Annual Meeting, occasional International Family Gatherings, border meetings, seminars, peace and service consultations, the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (in cooperation with the Section of the Americas), and other activities, encourage mutual understanding, leading towards greater involvement of Friends. Two booklets, Meeting the Spirit and

Friendly Advice on Quaker Ways, have been produced and there is a quarterly newsletter, Among Friends. A small Executive Committee, assisted by the Executive Secretary, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. Among many other different interests, the Section also focuses on justice, peace and service issues.

Europe & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) are well-established, cooperating within the Section but remaining fully autonomous.

Some Quaker Addresses in Europe

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Report of the work of the Trustees, the Executive Committee for 2010-2011

The Executive Committee will have held 3 meetings between Annual Meeting 2010 and Annual Meeting 2011, on 24th-26th September 2010, 3rd-6th February 2011, and 21st April 2011.

The members, who served as the Trustees of the Registered Charity, have been: *Marit Kromberg (Clerk) until 6th February 2011 and Rachel Bewley-Bateman (Clerk) from 6th Feb, Neithard Petry (Treasurer), Janet Cameron (Ireland YM), Fritz Renken (Switzerland YM) and Jane Rose (Finland YM) served until 31st December 2011. Sue Glover Frykman and Jez Smith began their period of service on January 1st 2011. Marisa Johnson (Executive Secretary), also a Trustee, has prepared and attended all the meetings.*

We have had a year of consolidation and further improvement rather than exploring new directions. Thanks to the renewed grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, we have been able to further develop the Ministry

and Outreach programme. We are particularly proud of the development of the website which, in addition to being attractive and newsy, now has functions that are useful to Representatives and all who hold offices within FWCC-EMES. A small *Global Change Network* has been active during the year.

The Executive Committee has renewed the contract of employment of the Executive Secretary, who is now employed on a permanent basis in accordance with UK employment law.

Financial considerations

In 2009 we were grateful for part of the legacy from Canadian Friend Elizabeth Rossinger. EMES's portion has been invested and the terms agreed to in consultation with the QYP committee. The terms may be kept under review.

Even though EMEYF hoped to continue to be included in the EMES budget this has unfortunately not proved possible. We thus encourage and support EMEYF to increase their own separate fundraising efforts with YMs and other organisations, because we believe that this will give better transparency and improve their chances of finding funds elsewhere.

Full audited accounts for the year are available separately, and will be presented by the treasurer at the Annual Meeting of Representatives.

Policies and Procedures

As a further step in our *risk management* we have considered it prudent to introduce the function of an assistant clerk on a rotating basis. In future we hope to have one Friend serve as assistant clerk between meetings and until the end of the following Executive Committee Meeting. The compendium of policies and procedures will become available via the website for all those who need this kind of information.

Reflections

On taking my leave of EMES after six years, I would like to end by reflecting on my service. In 2005, out of the blue, I felt led to tell our Norwegian nominations committee that I was ready to serve outside Norway. At that time I had no idea that I would be involved in the revision of the FWCC Constitution, both at world level and within EMES, nor did I fully understand how deeply I would come to feel about some of the diverse projects and tasks that Friends are involved with all over the planet. It never ceases to amaze me

that the total number of Friends is fewer than a half million, all counted, and yet there is so much Quaker activity!

The work has been varied and exciting in many ways, but not overwhelming, as EMES has been blessed with very capable and hard working Executive Secretaries. The previous Executive Secretary, Bronwyn Harwood, had a vision for the future of pastoral care among old and new Friends and seekers in Europe and the Middle East, and it has been particularly rewarding to see her vision unfold in the Ministry and Outreach Programme. Thanks to generous support from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT), and the work of Marisa Johnson and Julia Ryberg, we have been able to implement and develop that programme. Thanks also to JRCT and Marisa's vision and hard work EMES now has a very attractive and serviceable website. I look forward to leaning back and watching it all grow.

It became clear to me a few years ago that it would not be a good experience for my successor as Clerk of EMES to be plunged into the World Conference of Friends in 2012 as his or her very first experience of the Section's work with FWCC. For this reason I decided to step down before the meeting of the FWCC Central Executive Committee this year. I do not know whether this was the only reason; I may also have felt my age creeping up on me. However, it has felt absolutely right for me to have completed my service to EMES and handed over to Rachel Bewley-Bateman.

Marit Kromberg, Clerk

Report from the Executive Secretary

As ever, **travelling among Friends** took up a substantial part of time, and EMES resources. My first major trip of the year was to **Ramallah**, for the celebrations of the centennial of the Meeting House. The Meeting for Worship on 7th March was attended by well over 100 people, many of them locals, and some Internationals working in NGOs in Israel and in the Occupied Territories. It was a very moving Meeting, with many messages of greeting, including from the Mayor of the Ramallah Municipality, and messages of solidarity, thankfulness and hope. The most touching bit of ministry was a little play performed by the young people of the Meeting, which portrayed John Woolman visiting a slave-owning family of Friends, and refusing to take any food or drink that had been made by slaves, and choosing to sleep with the slaves in their quarters rather than in the comfortable bed offered him: a

poignant message from people living under ever more oppressive restrictions to their freedom of movement, and denied basic civil rights.

I felt very privileged to share in such a special moment with Friends, and to take part in the consultation event that followed, which looked at the future of the Friends International Center in Ramallah. The consultation asked a range of people to come and give their candid views on the situation and on the future of the area. Mustafa Barghouti, leader of the Palestinian National Initiative and an advocate of non-violent resistance, came to share his assessment of the current political situation and the lack of any prospects of a real peace process. A medical doctor, Mr Barghouti also has a dream of reducing smoking amongst Palestinians, but it is difficult to deliver a programme of health promotion and education in a community that does not have the benefit of the kind of infrastructure that a sovereign government can bring.

The consultation also heard from young graduates from the Friends School who had completed their education at prestigious universities in the United States, and were working for an international programme of Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions, which were seen as the only way of bringing true pressure to bear on the Israeli Government to end the occupation. Peace activists from the Hebron area told the consultation of the aggressive behaviour of extremist Israeli settlers, who attack villages with impunity, protected by a large military presence. The consultation also had the benefit of a conversation with a high profile Israeli journalist who has written extensively, and often critically, about the occupation.

There was some comfort in learning of some cross-communities solidarity initiatives, such as Wadi Fuqin/Tsur Hadasseh, a Palestinian village and neighbouring Israeli neighbourhood petitioning the Israeli High Court of Justice against the building of the "Separation" Wall, on the grounds that it will cause environmental destruction that will irreversibly damage the water springs in their area. Sadly, we learnt later from our Friend Linda Whittaker, who lives in the settlement of Har Gilo, that this challenge had failed.

Our **Annual Meeting of Representatives** took place in Bonn in April. In discussions, worship-sharing, ministry, acting, and even a sea-shanty, we explored, played and wrestled with the idea of "Eldership". We discovered the many "ships" that go along with Elder-ship: worship, companionship, mentorship, Friendship, leadership and discipleship, which is at the root of

"discipline", a word that many Friends struggle with these days, with its intimations of authority and hierarchy. Yet, with nurture and spiritual accompaniment, discipline can be the gift of helping each other live faithful lives. We were inspired by the presence of Jenny Routledge, a Friend from Britain Yearly Meeting who is developing a concern around Eldership, and her accompanying elder, Elaine Emily, from Pendle Hill, the Quaker study centre in Pennsylvania. We thought of Elders as midwives of the spirit – birth attenders who guide us as we bring forth the creative, spiritual potential in each one of us, with patience, attentiveness, skill, and, most of all, in faith.

In May I travelled to Kenya for the **International Planning Group for the Friends World Conference** (which met at the chosen venue, Kabarak University, Nakuru), the Africa FWCC Section's Triennial meeting at Mabanga, near Bungoma, close to the border with Uganda, and the FWCC **Central Executive Committee** Meeting, which was held in Nairobi. This was a monumental first exposure to Africa for me, with many contrasting experiences, and left me with a still unfolding new understanding of Quaker expressions of faith and practice.

The first of the **Yearly Meetings** I was pleased to attend was Switzerland Yearly Meeting, where I was asked to give a talk. I chose as a title *What is Jesus doing in Europe and the Middle East today?* – borrowing from a remark by Johan Maurer (with his permission!) about living in Russia to see what Jesus is doing there, and joining in. My talk was based on personal reflections on my own service as Ecumenical Accompanier in Palestine-Israel, as well as more general information about Quaker witness in the Section. I was very impressed with the keynote presentation, given by Jalka of Austria Quarterly Meeting, who spoke about her lifetime's work in conflict resolution.

Britain Yearly Meeting held this year's session at Friends House in London at the end of May. I was able to commute from home, and meet the visitors from other countries, as well as many British Friends. EMES shared a stall with QWRC and FWCC and I was able to sell some more souvenirs from the Ramallah Centennial celebrations. We heard many personal testimonies from Friends sharing *Why I am a Quaker, how I am a Quaker*.

In June I was very glad of the opportunity of joining Yvonne Kressmann of France Yearly Meeting, and several Friends, some of whom were in their teens, from German and Switzerland Yearly Meetings, for the vigil outside

Eurosatory, the largest weapons' fair in Europe, which takes place every two years.

At the end of June I attended Norway Yearly Meeting. This was a very restorative experience, as I had no formal role, but could bask in the sun and in the company of Friends, some of whom I had already met, but many whom I met for the first time.

In July I met the European Pilgrims in Hampstead Meeting as they gathered together the night before their flight to the Northwest of the United States. I was really glad to be able to do this, as their excitement was infectious. The report of their very rich experience is contained elsewhere in this report.

Early in September I met the General Secretary of Church and Peace Marie-Noëlle von der Recke, and Hans Häselbarth, a German member of the Church and Peace board, at their request, during a visit they were making to London. As one of the traditional Peace Churches, Quakers are important in this movement. We talked about approaches to unity of purpose, and the importance of maintaining the witness of the Peace churches in the modern world.

Quaker World Relations Committee of Britain Yearly Meeting held a Conference that took place at the beginning of September and asked me to talk on the theme *Challenges and Joys of the wider family of Friends*. Preparing for this was a useful exercise for me, and it helped me to process and make sense of some of the more challenging aspects of my recent travels in Kenya. I used some texts from Paul's letters that particularly speak to me, and advanced the suggestion that perhaps Quakers in the Liberal tradition can see themselves as the Apostles, the bringers of "Good News", to today's Gentiles, just as Paul and the other Apostles saw his ministry as complementary, not in competition with, that of the Jewish/Christian churches in Jerusalem. To fulfil this, however, we need to be able to understand and articulate what the "Good News" we share is. What is our own understanding of "living a risen life" – a life that is transformed and an agent of transformation because of its conscious grounding in spiritual power? And how does it manifest itself in the world?

Also in September I attended Finland Yearly Meeting Autumn gathering in Muhos, near the home of our Friend Jane Rose, who very kindly and lovingly had me to stay in her home before and after. I was very glad to be there, and to

make a small contribution to the programme, through a workshop on models of membership. We all went away hopeful.

In October I travelled to Moscow, accompanied by Liz Sugden Seume of German Yearly Meeting, who acted as an interpreter for me. This was a one-week trip, and my first to Russia. Liz and I enjoyed the warm hospitality of Irina Sadykhova. We attended Meeting for Worship on the Sunday, and afterwards held a question and answer session with the Friends who were gathered there – about a dozen, plus a few visitors from abroad. We met the staff and some Board members of Friends House Moscow, and I also had the opportunity of travelling to Zserzisk, where Friends House Moscow sponsors a children and family project, with funding from the Radley Trust.

I was in Brussels in April and October for **QCEA** Council meetings, and have been in touch with them regularly as a member of the Policy Advisory Group on Israel-Palestine, which has been supporting the impressive programme of work that QCEA has undertaken in this area, the highlight of which was the conference in October, run jointly with Britain Yearly Meeting's Quaker Peace and Social Witness. We heard from Christian Berger, the EU Representative to the West Bank and Gaza and from our own dear Friend Jean Zaru, who in June had been awarded the Anna Lindh Memorial prize in Stockholm. Jean gave a profoundly moving speech from her own lifetime's participation in the struggle for a just peace. She urged us to act, to hope, and to believe in the power that can transform all things. QCEA have prepared a thorough and thoughtful briefing paper on Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, which should prove essential reading for all Meetings considering this issue. The paper itself does not take a position on the desirability or otherwise of BDS, but explores in great depth the issues involved.

I was sad not to be able to attend German Yearly Meeting in November, but this gave an opportunity for our nominated new Clerk, Rachel Bewley-Bateman, to represent EMES and begin the process of getting to know a larger number of Friends around our Section. Though already a well-known and experienced European Quaker, very active in the world-wide family of Friends through FWCC, Rachel was very pleased to take this opportunity, and be at the Yearly Meeting, which Julia Ryberg attended too.

In November I met Maurizio Benazzi of the Ecumenici group in Northern Italy. As a result, a group of Friends and seekers has just started to meet

regularly in Milan for worship after the manner of Friends. I would be delighted to see some development of the Quaker presence in my own country.

The Peace and Service Consultation took place in Kortenberg, Belgium, also in November, and took as its theme was drawn from Exodus 3:2 “And behold, the bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed.” Can we dedicate our life to burn with passion for peace and service, and not be consumed? We reflected on the many challenges and burdens that we encounter in our work and drew inspiration from the creative ways in which some communities respond to the challenge of polarized political extremism, the emergence of solidarity in some places, as in the example of Groningen in the Netherlands, where neighbours whitewashed the walls of a mosque that had been defaced by graffiti. We need to remain alert to the rise of intolerance in our own countries, and be prepared to stand in solidarity with anyone who may be targeted by discrimination – Jewish people, Muslims, Roma, immigrants or other minorities. I was glad to see that QUNO Geneva decided to investigate the conditions of Roma people in Europe, and was able to facilitate a visit by Rachel Brett and her daughter to the Friends Church (Evangelical Quakers) in Hungary whose work and witness is mainly with Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe.

There were two applications for **International Membership** during the year, both from Lithuania, where a new Worship group has been established. We hope that interviews can be arranged soon.

Three issues of **Among Friends** were published during the year, and they complement the more frequent news coverage we can now offer through the website. I am very grateful to Alastair Reid who continues to put the journal together for me, making the task much less daunting. We made progress with the development of Phase Two of the website, and now have an EMES forum and private pages on the website that can be accessed with a password. We also have a presence on Facebook.

I am grateful for the cheerful and kind support of Kim Bond, who continues to provide me with administration and secretarial support for one day a week, from the World Office in London.

Once again, we have been monitoring the **environmental impact** of our activities. We have collected and analysed information about all EMES (staff,

Executive Committee and Ministry and Outreach) travel, and attempted to measure the carbon emissions incurred. We have recorded a total of 114 journeys in 2010 (compared to 141 in 2009). Of these 54 were flights (59 in 2009) 47 train journeys (62 in 2009), 1 sea crossing (4 in 2009) and 10 car journeys (16 in 2009). In addition, there were two long coach journeys (over 500 km). Travel totalled 67,767 km (99,629 in 2009), using an estimated 19,288 Tonnes of CO₂ (23,718 in 2009). Although we cannot be 100% sure of the accuracy of these figures, we do find it helpful to continue to keep our awareness of the environmental impact of our activity to the forefront of our minds.

It continues to be a wonderful privilege to work with Julia Ryberg, and to rely on the support of the Clerk and Executive Committee members, two of whom, Jane Rose and Fritz Renken, completed their service at the end of 2010. I thank them both for all they have given EMES, and will miss them. There will be more changes in 2011, not least the completion of Marit Kromberg's term as Clerk, and the arrival of a new Clerk, Rachel Bewley-Bateman of Ireland Yearly Meeting, and two new members of the Executive Committee, Sue Glover Frykman of Sweden Yearly Meeting, and Jez Smith of Britain Yearly Meeting. I look forward to keeping in touch with the work and witness of Friends everywhere in our Section for another year, God willing.

Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary

Ministry and Outreach Development

Thanks to a second round of generous funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, it has been possible to continue development of the EMES *Ministry & Outreach* programme for three years from autumn 2010. We continue to develop resources and programmes that serve Friends and enquirers across the Section and that will be increasingly self-sustaining in the future. We continue to work in three areas: development of the on-line *Quaker in Europe* project in conjunction with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, development of resources for various kinds of ministries and cooperation with other Quaker organizations.

The *Quaker in Europe* online project, which is now in its fourth year, has been run once in Dutch, German, English, Hungarian and Russian, twice in Norwegian and Finnish, three times in Czech and four times in French. The training for facilitators has been run five times. Translations are underway in

several other languages. A comprehensive evaluation of the project is planned for the spring of 2011, revisiting the material generated a year ago in a preliminary evaluation and discerning how the project might be adapted and complemented by other online resources.

We have continued our exploration of various kinds of travelling ministries and what kinds of resources we can provide for these. We have discovered a broader need for learning about the structure of Quaker Meetings and about the various forms for Quaker interaction. We hope that addressing this need will serve Friends both as they travel amongst themselves but also as new groups are formed and older ones seek to nurture their faith communities. To this end, EMES sponsored a *Meeting for Learning* in June 2010. It was held at Svartbäcken in Sweden, with participants from more than 10 countries to learn about facilitation of worship sharing, meetings for clearness, threshing meetings. We explored the difference between eldership, clerking and facilitation. We considered the concept of Gospel Order and learned about our various contexts—especially those of Friends in former Soviet countries.

We have also discerned a need to provide new enquirers, who have no Quaker community nearby, with some sort of companionship as they learn about the Quaker way. To this end, we are developing a *Companion* programme that will link an enquirer with a more experienced Friend who has been prepared for this ministry. It will enable learning and exploration during a period of structured interaction, using various means of communication suitable to any given situation.

Thanks to the further development of the EMES website, the special section for the *Ministry & Outreach* programme will make various resources available there, hopefully also in interactive ways.

Plans are underway for an EMES-sponsored Russian-speaking gathering during 2011, with all planning and participation done entirely in Russian.

In my role as *Ministry & Outreach* coordinator, I am thankful to have worshiped and worked with Friends in travels to the Central European Gathering in Hungary, to the little group in Vilnius, in retreat and outreach events in Denmark, to German YM. I am aware each day of the wider network of Friends engaging in mutual upholding and encouragement through e-mail, Skype, on-line groups and telephone as we all strive to keep our Quaker

worship, fellowship and witness vibrant though we are often separated by distance.

Julia Ryberg, Ministry and Outreach Co-ordinator

Amari Play Centre, Ramallah

The Amari Play Centre is located in the UNRWA School for Girls in the Amari Refugee Camp in Ramallah, Palestine. Since its establishment in 1974, the Amari Play Centre has served the children of the refugee camps by providing preschool education for 5-year-olds.

For the scholastic year of 2010/2011 38 children have been enrolled, all of whom live in the Amari Refugee Camp.

Curriculum: Basic education, such as learning the alphabet in both Arabic and English, and basic mathematics are taught to the children through pictures, play and art work. In addition, basic concepts like colour, shape and direction are also taught. Self-respect and self-expression are encouraged by the teachers and are ongoing aspects throughout the academic year.

Cooperation with UNRWA: All activities are communicated to the Camp leader and advertised through the UNRWA Camp Leader's office. A programme was started in January 2009 with the Social and Welfare office at UNRWA in which a social worker from UNRWA goes to the Play Centre about twice a month or more in order to conduct awareness sessions with the children on issue like, self-esteem, self-protection, and communication with teachers, parents and peers. All these skills are acquired through arts activities. At the same level, the social worker meets with parents, mainly mothers, for awareness sessions on child behaviour and conduct. As it is not possible to combine the parents' sessions in our centre together with the teaching schedule, we asked the Youth Centre at the Refugee Camp if we could use their premises. This was welcomed. The social worker still conducts those sessions and is now able to work with the children on a more regular basis.

Maintaining good contact with the local community: Most of the daily needs of the Play Centre, such as cleaning materials, bread, stationery, sugar, tea, coffee and sandwiches, are purchased from the small shops in the Amari Refugee Camp in order to help to sustain these enterprises.

Provision of food and milk: Sandwiches and milk are still provided on some days of the week. In addition, we ensure that bread and some Zeit and

Za'atar are available at the Play Centre in case there are children who come without sandwiches.

Picnics: Two picnics were organised for the children during the spring – one to the Family Centre and another to the Happy Child Centre. We hired a bus for both these outings within the framework of the budget.

Meeting with parents: We planned regular meetings with the parents once a month. As parental participation turned out to be low we decided and announced that Thursday would be a day when any parent could come and see how their children were doing. This proved to be more successful because the mothers now have the chance to talk to the teachers individually rather than in a group. Mothers also take part in the sessions with their children. At least two or 3 mothers turn up each Thursday.

Registration of the children: Registration for 2010 took place in April and May 2009. As we only take children who are 5 years old we ask to see their birth certificates as proof. Starting next year, we will be asking the parents to provide us with the immunisation certificate of each child so that we can add these to our records.

Certificates are awarded to the children at the end of the school year. The certificates are presented to the schools that the children will attend in the following year. Most of the children will go to the UNRWA School for Girls and the UNRWA School for Boys.

Teachers: Wafiyeh Atiyeh is the main teacher, and is still active and dynamic. She has been a teacher at the Centre since 1978. Reema is more of a support person than a teacher and takes care of the preparation of food, the cleaning of the toilets and cares for the children who need help of various kinds. Reema has been with the Play Centre since 2001. Areej is the assistant teacher and is one of the students who received her preschool education at the Play Centre. She has been an assistant teacher since 2004.

Supervisor: Muna Khleifi is the supervisor who is responsible for the teachers and for the administration of the Centre.

Muna Khleifi, Supervisor

Church and Peace

The Annual Meeting of Church and Peace was held at the Mennonite Seminary Bienenberg in Switzerland from 4th-6th June. Apart from the usual business (reports, finances, planning) the theme was “*Churches, Base movements and the Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*”. Two speakers introduced this theme: Elina Eloranta, Executive Secretary for Peace and Reconciliation of the Conference of European Churches’ Church and Society Commission (CEC-CSC) and our Quaker Representative in Brussels, Martina Weitsch.

Elina spoke to us about the review of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty and the nuclear policy of NATO. At its Assembly in Lyon earlier this year, the CEC decided to focus on nuclear disarmament as a priority. Although this primarily means monitoring the nuclear strategies of the USA and Russia, the CEC will also have special responsibility for critically analysing those of the United Kingdom and of France, as well as the (European) states hosting US missiles: Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. The challenge is to counter reasons for holding onto nuclear arms. C&P invited me to be its delegate at two expert meetings of CEC-CSC on this topic held this year.

The Assembly concluded that C&P should urge religious and social organisations based in Brussels - CEC, COMECE (Roman Catholic) and QCEA- to remind the European Union of its original calling: a peace project, and urge it to actively support Obama’s ‘global zero’ policy regarding nuclear arms and to continue to develop its ‘soft power’, as well as civil instruments for conflict resolution.

Martina gave us an excellent overview of the security strategies of both the European Union and member states. This clearly illustrated that ‘security threats’ as perceived by the EU and member states are shifting: from terrorism and nuclear threats to *economic security*, thus putting Europe’s economic interests at the heart of security strategy.

A number of workshops were held in smaller groups. One focused on the World Council of Churches project ‘*Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace*’ to which Church and Peace responded. Next year an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation will be called by WCC at Kingston, Jamaica. C&P requested me to put my name forward as a participant on behalf of C&P and invited me to develop a proposal for a workshop to be presented at

Kingston. Meanwhile, the WCC confirmed my participation and accepted the proposal. The workshop will be presented under the title: *Responsibility to Witness* and will highlight the living tradition of the peace churches' involvement in peace and reconciliation in areas affected by armed conflict.

Jan Schaake (IFOR President) and I held a workshop on *Energy security: resource or source of conflict?* We argued for the development of a pan-European security policy involving an oil and gas community (much like the former Coal and Steel Community), rather than continuing tensions and even conflicts around energy supply. In other words, a security policy that models on the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), rather than NATO.

Kees Nieuwerth, EMES Representative to Church and Peace

Global Change and Climate Matters

Friends are increasingly concerned about the challenges we are facing in today's complex world. The FWCC World Office has started a process called *Friends and Global Change* in order to explore the issues involved and discern ways in which Friends might respond.

EMES therefore decided to set up its own Global Change Group. It is composed of Friends from across the Section to "carefully consider the complex and interlocking challenges we are facing (climate-, biodiversity-, food-, water-, resources-, energy-, economic- and security crises) with a view to discerning openings for constructive and creative contributions for solutions by Friends – through the Section, through Yearly Meetings or through Quaker Agencies (FWCC, QUNO, QCEA)." Furthermore, this Global Change Group is to "contribute to the FWCC worldwide consultation on global change to be organised by the World Office".

EMES decided to set up this committee using the internet. Friends from Britain YM, Ireland YM, Sweden YM, Belgium and Luxemburg MM, France YM, German YM, Netherlands YM, EMEYF, QCEA and a Friend serving on behalf of EMES on the QUNO committee are now participating in this GCG.

The World Office developed a set of six queries addressing global change. As a group we started to share the ways in which these queries were received by us and our Quaker constituencies. Although they were much appreciated, it was felt that they were primarily asking in what way global change affects us – as individuals and as Quaker communities and what this means for our

spiritual life. It was felt that they call for a response at a personal or monthly meeting level. However, our traditional queries (in Quaker Faith and Practice) are not only aimed at our spiritual life, our worship and our life as a faith community, but also spur us on to engage in societal, political and international affairs based on that spiritual life and its fruits: the testimonies. So we felt there was a need here for a further set of queries (available on request) with an emphasis on exploring ways in which Friends might develop a corporate and action-oriented testimony in response to global change.

Meanwhile, most of the members of the Global Change Group have started what the World Office calls *global change clusters* – groups of concerned Friends within their own Yearly Meetings – to jointly consider the issues before us and send their reports to the World Office. At the same time we also view the Global Change Group as a cluster and will therefore also be feeding our contributions into the worldwide process.

Against the background of these two sets of queries about global change, we hope to continue to discern what the most pressing global changes are and what Quakers might be able to contribute internationally. In this respect, it is encouraging to see that both QUNO and QCEA are increasingly incorporating projects that address certain aspects of global change into their work programme. But we also need to continue to explore ways in which Friends might make a creative *and* distinctive contribution in this respect.

Kees Nieuwerth, Clerk/convenor EMES Global Change Group

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

This year, our focus has been on sending pilgrims from Europe to the QYP2010, which took place in the Pacific North West of the USA. Sixteen young Friends, aged 16-18, travelled from Britain, Ireland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden and the Netherlands, to join 12 young Friends from the Section of the Americas, and four adult leaders, for a month long pilgrimage. The theme of the pilgrimage was "Living in the Garden of the Spirit", and together the group learned techniques of compassionate listening, visited Friends meetings and churches, met with native Americans, stayed with local Friends, built a community, worshipped together, and explored their personal and collective Quakerism.

The pilgrims were challenged to deeply explore their personal relationship with Quakerism and with Christianity, and many returned with a new-found

appreciation for their faith. This process was a difficult one, which was helped by the close-knit community spirit. The trip was not without its problems, which made life at times very stressful for the leaders. We have discussed these at length, so that we can learn from them and put in place systems to smooth the process of future pilgrimages.

QYP has, unfortunately, in the past had a low involvement from evangelical and pastoral Friends. Whilst there were again few pilgrims from these backgrounds, the group visited and interacted with local Yearly Meetings from these traditions, and it is hoped that the positive experience they had from meeting the QYP community will encourage greater future participation. This year, one leader was from the evangelical tradition and contributed a lot with bible study which was greatly appreciated by the pilgrims.

We had an exceptional number of applications for places on the pilgrimage, which were all of very high quality, and unfortunately had to decline many of these.

Our legacy from Elizabeth Rossinger allowed us to offer bursaries to young Friends, and four pilgrims benefited from this financial assistance towards their fees. It also funded the travel for our two European leaders to join us for a committee meeting before and after the pilgrimage. This greatly assisted them in their preparation (spiritual, practical, and emotional) for what is a month long trial. Additionally, all four leaders met up a couple of days before the start of the pilgrimage, to give themselves more training and preparation time before the young people arrived. We intend to do this again on future pilgrimages. The legacy also gave us the confidence to budget in a climate of high air fares and unpredictable changes in exchange rates.

We will now begin work on the 2012 QYP, which will be hosted in Europe, with participation from the Section of the Americas. We have however also begun some consideration of the longer term future, and are investigating a range of possibilities to open up the experience to new generations of young Friends in a changing world.

We continue to feel blessed by the mutual support, laughs and friendship from each other in the committee, which makes our work a pleasure. We have met 5 times during 2010, and have also held two telephone conferences. We are very grateful for the clarity and organisation which Janet Entwistle contributed as clerk, and wish her well now that she has left the committee.

Reports from Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Groups

Austria Quarterly Meeting

In 2010, the Austrian Quakers held our usual three quarterly meetings. In May, we met alone in Leonding and discussed the theme of the future of Quakers in Austria. In October, we met in Linz, this time with the Bavarian Friends. The theme was “Ideas and Suggestions for the Conflict in the Middle East.” Our traditional Border Meeting met in December in Vienna to the theme of “Remembering and Forgetting.” It included Friends from Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic and was a very joyful gathering. Throughout the year and into early 2011, we also gave personal and group consideration to our financial contributions on the initiative of the Treasurer and Clerks of the German Yearly Meeting with the goal of increasing member contributions.

We had two notable outreach opportunities in October. A presentation to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Peace Testimony was held by Wiglef Pürschel in Vienna at the Albert Schweizer House. It was attended by 25 to 30 people and was well received. The Austrian national radio (Ö1) also featured Quakerism on a religion program and members of our group were invited to participate. The voices of three of our members reflected the diversity of thought among Quakers and gave listeners a good introduction to Quakerism. We hope that these actions will lead to more awareness of Quakerism in Austria and ultimately new members.

The Vienna group is still looking for more suitable premises in which to hold Meeting and to house our library (currently in storage). We continue to hold Meeting for Worship on first and third Sundays in a room in Don Bosco Haus at some distance from the city centre, but we will not be able to use this room indefinitely.

On a more personal note, Irene Schuster, our EMES representative, has been out of action since the fall due to ill health. We are thankful for her slow but steady recovery and we continue to hold her in the Light.

Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting

Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting continues to thrive. Meeting for Worship is held in Brussels every Sunday and Wednesday, in Luxembourg approximately every month and in Flanders occasionally. Every first Sunday, Children's Meetings are held and there is a 'bring-and-share' lunch which is always a time for lively discussion.

The annual Weekend Residential Meeting was held at Kortenberg Abbey from 18 to 20 June and was attended by 22 people. The theme was 'Quaker Living', and the event was centred around reflections and discussions led by many members of our community on such topics as 'Living Sacramentally', 'Simplicity', 'the Environment', 'Justice' and 'Equality'. The feedback from participants was very positive.

Two study groups meet monthly in the home of members of the community. A programme of Sunday 'Meetings for Learning' (discussion groups) was also organised on themes as varied as 'an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace' and 'Disability in Belgium'. Regrettably, these have not been well-attended this year.

Members of the Meeting organised a book sale at the local 'Fete' in October. As well as being an outreach activity, this raised €245 for the Protestant Social Centre, Brussels, with which the Meeting has a long-standing connection.

At Meeting for Worship in Quaker House, Brussels on Sunday 17 October 2010, Bob Ward and Lynn Scott celebrated their marriage to one another in the presence of members of their family and friends, and Friends and attenders of the meeting.

The 'Life of the Meeting' Committee continues to keep an eye on the Meeting's pastoral and spiritual needs. In response to its concern about the right holding of Meeting for Worship, the Monthly Meeting in December 2010 adopted a text (see below) whose aim is to be a 'gentle reminder' to all members of our community about the part they can each play in maintaining our Quaker tradition of worship.

Text adopted by Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting on 12 December, 2010.

- *Consider how you can prepare yourself throughout the week for Meeting for Worship. How can you arrive with 'heart and mind prepared'?*

- *Meeting for Worship begins when the first person enters the room. Enter the building, and the Meeting room, in this spirit.*
- *Meeting for Worship is communal. Individual meditation or reading can inspire, but can also hinder you from being truly present. Consider your thoughts and actions. Do they foster or hinder the collective worship?*
- *Powerful ministry can be silent. If you feel moved to speak, check that the message is coming not from you, but through you. It is unusual for the Spirit to move the same person to minister twice in the same hour. There will be time after the Meeting has closed for spoken contributions that may not be Ministry, yet could have value.*
- *Spoken ministry stems directly from our lived experience. It is most effective when concise. Standing may help you deliver your ministry with clarity. After spoken Ministry has been offered, allow a period of silence so that Friends may absorb it.*
- *During announcements and at other times, some Friends use electronic devices to store information; while these can bring order to a busy life, some find them a distraction. Consider the effects on others of your reliance on gadgets.*
- *Remember that Meetings for Business are also Meetings for Worship; do you take part in a worshipful manner?*

Paul Holdsworth, Clerk

Britain Yearly Meeting

How can we do justice to the Quaker life and work of 14,447 adult members, 8330 attenders and 2,237 children, from 476 local meetings in 70 Area Meetings? We have chosen to write about just 2 aspects, both of which follow on from last year's report to EMES.

First – our decision made at Yearly Meeting in York in 2009, to seek changes that would enable same sex and opposite sex marriages to be treated in exactly the same way, has progressed faster than many imagined.

We had left York with huge expectations and a sense of much hard work ahead. A suggested amendment to a proposed law on equality was put forward with a view to ending the current ban on the use of religious premises for, and the use of religious words in, the celebration of civil partnerships.

The briefings provided by our staff at Friends House were well-used by many speakers in favour of the amendment, who referred to our support for equality and the decision made at Yearly meeting. The passing of the Equality Act will not give exactly the same treatment to same sex and opposite sex marriages, but it is a significant step towards what we proposed in York.

Michael Bartlett, our Parliamentary Liaison Officer, said, “Quiet processes work best when supported by a confident voice at a national level. Translating the decision of York 2009 into legislative change has involved detailed engagement with policy at a legal and political level (including the balancing of equality and liberty)... In communicating our needs to ministers and their civil servants in a timely and courteous manner we sought to ensure that what we say in the media and what we communicate to Parliament have alike been rooted in the spiritual insights of BYM and Meeting for Sufferings.”

Second – the hard work we had done in preparation for the Copenhagen summit in 2009 is continuing. In February our Quaker Peace & Social Witness department began a new three year programme of work on Sustainability and Peace, aiming to increase the understanding and commitment of Quakers in Britain to environmental sustainability.

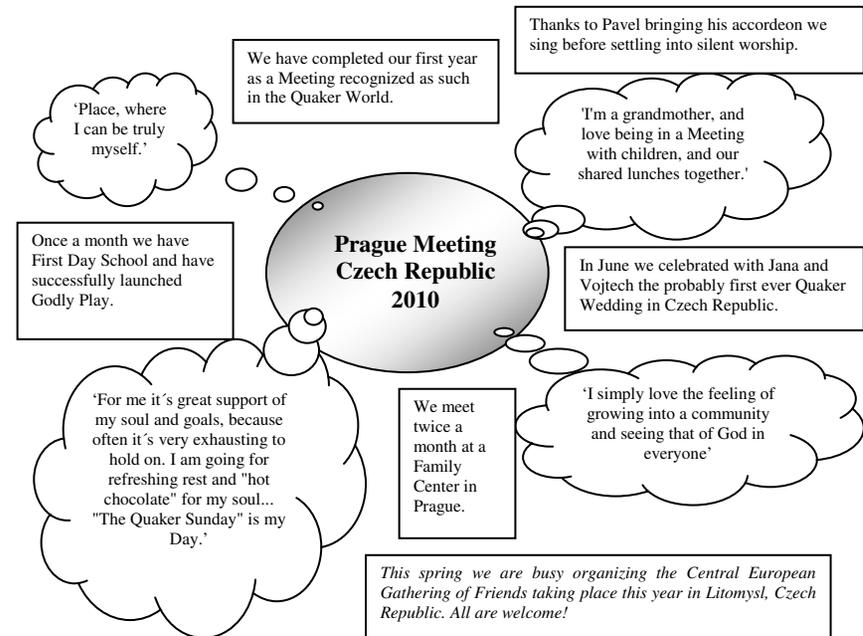
The programme aims to explore our own behaviour and ways of being in the world, the role of our economic system, and the relationship between violent conflict and our failure to live sustainably in the world. It will also support Friends to respond to climate change and bear witness to sustainable living. The programme has emerged from a long history of seeking an ordering of the world that respects the integrity of all creation and responds to the increasing need which Friends feel to act on sustainability and climate change.

We are fortunate to have more regular news from our Yearly Meeting in *The Friend*, our weekly independent newspaper, and through *Quaker News*, a quarterly publication available online at www.quaker.org.uk/qn. Also, see www.quaker.org.uk/bymtrustees for our BYM Trustees annual report and financial statements.

Finally, the Yearly Meeting Planning Committees have been working hard to arrange another Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2011 – this time to be held at The University of Kent, Canterbury – we hope to be joined by many visitors.

Jez Smith and Mary Waldmeyer, Representatives

Czech Republic, Prague Meeting



Arne Springorum, Clerk

Denmark Yearly Meeting

The first English Quaker visiting Denmark was the twenty year old John Hall who in 1657 met King Frederik III but was later put in prison. In 1875 a group of 6 Danes applied for membership of the Society of Friends and the first Danish Yearly Meeting was held in 1879. However, historically the total number of adult members has never exceeded 60-70 persons.

The present number of registered Danish Quakers is only 30. Almost half of those are above 70 years of age and not more than half of the listed members are actively participating in our activities. 40-50 friends of Friends are regularly being informed of our activities through a newsletter. In Copenhagen a meeting for worship is held every Sunday.

In 2010 two retreats were arranged in different parts of the country to allow isolated Friends to meet with the larger group of Friends living in the

Copenhagen area. We always send representatives to Norway and Sweden Yearly Meeting and this year was no exception.

During the year internal problems have taken up much of our time. We have started anew and will also use our Yearly Meeting held in 2011 for inspiration.

Mogens Clausen, Clerk

Estonia

As in 2009, Meeting for Worship in Tallinn has been held very irregularly, and on an ad hoc basis, often when visitors got in touch asking to worship with us. In 2010, we had 6 Meetings for Worship. There are currently 5 regular attenders from Tallinn: 2 Estonian, 1 Finnish, 1 English and 1 American.

Each member continues to be active in his/her own way with previously mentioned endeavours. This year the Meeting also took part in the One Minute of Peace campaign for the United Nations International Day of Peace, which was led by Roland Rand, one of our attenders and head of Diverse Faiths Alliance (DFA). You can see/hear our TV/radio message on the EMES website. Roland was able to attend the QCEA Summer Study course in Brussels this year.

He also organized an international conference on religious topics was held in Tallinn on 16 May called 'Religious Dialogue'. The conference focused on the development of interfaith dialogue and collaboration. The aim was to find constructive forms of cooperation among different faiths so that differences do not obstruct but rather enhance multicultural relations in our society.

In addition, Tallinn Worship Group members had a Friendly meeting with visiting Prof. Nigel Dopver from the UK. He introduced us to his book 'The Ethics of War and Peace – Cosmopolitan and Other Perspectives'.

Perhaps the biggest effort this year, however, was getting a translation done of a Bachelor's thesis by Päivi Randver, a former student of Myra Ford's, on Quaker history so that it could be put on the EMES Estonian website. As far as we know, this is the only paper that has been done in Estonian on the Quaker movement.

Our small group welcomes all who visit Tallinn.

Myra and Steve Ford

Finland Yearly Meeting

In various ways our community is gaining strength, and yet we still struggle with our diversity of beliefs, experiences and expectations. Our physical distance from one another is another challenge to our sense of being a community, and understanding and appreciating the current issues for different individuals and worshipping groups. Yet some of our conversations with each other seem to be deeper as we explore our experiences of and with the spirit. Membership has been stable, though we have welcomed new inquirers and attenders among us.

Throughout Finland we continue to have four active worshipping groups: in Helsinki, northern Finland, Tampere and Turku. Northern Friends have recently re-committed to meeting regularly and alternatively between Oulu and Kokkola to share the travel and the opportunity to meet together. Tampere Friends meet twice per month, and Turku/Åbo Friends meet fortnightly too. Every week on First Day in Helsinki we meet in the same rented premises we began to use last year.

Our newsletter editorship changed hands but the newsletter continued to be most ably produced and published in 3 languages, and distributed by email, post, and in large print version. This is all possible thanks to the contributors, willing translators among us, and the layout skills of the editor. The newsletter feeds our conversations about what is important to us seeking spirit-led lives. Discussion on the public unstructured online discussion list has been active at various times during the year.

Fourteen people from different part of Finland gathered in Muhos, central Finland, in early autumn. We collectively explored the nature of eldership as Friends understand the term, and what it might mean in our meeting. Some of us were appointed elders for the gathering, and we plan to appoint elders for special meetings in future. Some of us sense that this discussion about eldership has contributed to a greater sense of individual responsibility for our meeting. We welcomed the EMES secretary Marisa Johnson, who shared her own insights re eldering, and on the discernment required for making decisions about membership. Marisa also guided us in a threshing session on the sensitive topic of what we will do with the property we own in Helsinki. This time in Muhos was a very precious time for many reasons, and a separate

epistle was written from the meeting. We were pleased to share our experience with Markku Hirn from Sweden YM.

Through 2010 we received other visitors from USA, UK and Sweden. We travelled too: One of us is enrolled in Equipping for Ministry studies at Woodbrooke; one of us has spent time in Melbourne, Australia; one of us could participate in Britain YM, two in the Middle Europe Gathering, two of us participated in different activities at Svartbäcken; and on another occasion four of us travelled together to visit Stockholm Meeting.

This year we are happy to have found a home for our valuable collection of Quaker books at the Settlementtyhdistys library, where a qualified librarian takes care of them all and they are accessible to the public including all Friends.

Anne Herbert, Representative

France Yearly Meeting

Paris Monthly Meeting has acquired new energy with new attenders. As they are young, the average age has changed. Some people have left us too, for a variety of reasons.

Our Sunday Meetings sometimes attract 15 people, which is pretty lively for us. The poet Jean-François Cocteau published his new book of poetry, *Emois*, and Freddy Mulongo published his book about RDC in Congo, *Les dix questions*.

The Quaker worship group in Strasbourg/Kehl has grown since last summer. New families with small children come regularly, which is a joy and a challenge at the same time. Since the beginning of the year we now meet twice a month and often have a theme in order to be fed spiritually.

Other groups continue as usual. George Elias, an old and faithful member of France Yearly Meeting, from Congénies, passed away in April, and his ashes were scattered in the Quaker graveyard. On April 6th, Eric Sonié, from Languedoc, was active in the Occitan festival « Total Festum », and Deborah Williams, from New Zealand, who was Friend in Residence at Congénies at the time, gave a talk about the fate of natives in New Zealand.

In mid June, the CQI had the visit of German Young Friends who came for a vigil at Eurosatory, outside the gates. Marisa also kindly visited us at this time.

This was also the time when a silent vigil and fast was held at Congénies against nuclear armament.

July was also the time of our Yearly Meeting in Strasbourg. We felt that we had reached a crossroads after most of the renovation of La Maison Quaker in Congénies had been completed. We had to reflect on how to grow and how to connect the three associations.

August saw us joining in a fast on August 6th and 9th via the association « Armes nucléaires, stop », of which we are a member, at the peace wall near the Eiffel Tower. It also saw the wedding of Tony Marsh, Secretary of Paris Monthly Meeting, to Maria Estrella, from the Philippines. This was a very congenial and cheerful celebration.

October saw a « retreat » at Congénies together with the teaching of dances by Peggy O'Neil on the theme the feminine divine, which we enjoyed very much. In December, we were happy to see Chuck Fager come back to us at the CQI in Paris to give us recent news about the struggle to abolish torture in the United States. There is still a lot to do, of course.

On December 31st Jeanne-Henriette Louis ended her term as clerk of France Yearly Meeting. Kate de la Mare is the assistant clerk. We do not know who will be clerk in 2011.

The international group that is preparing the Penn celebrations in Saumur (France) on May 20-21 is both active and enthusiastic.

Mike Zipser, Representative

Georgia Worship Group

The year 2010 was a rather hard year for many people in many countries. Different nations faced floods, earthquakes, forest fires, starvation etc. Many of these difficulties are consequences of global climate change. Summer was extremely warm in Georgia this year and it was even worse in the neighbouring country of Russia. It is time for people around the world to think hard about what each of us can do to prevent the global climate change.

This year 5 Georgian Friends participated in the Russian speaking version of the internet on-line Quaker project. It was not difficult to take part in a Russian speaking project since some Friends in Georgia do speak Russian. This project gave a possibility to learn more about Quaker history, traditions and customs

and to share experiences, meet new Friends “on-line” and renew contacts with “old” ones. It was a very good and helpful project, which we hope will continue in many languages.” Georgian Friends' representatives attended the EMES Meeting for Learning in Sweden and the online facilitators' project. Important knowledge and skills were acquired in both contexts.

There are still thousands of IDP's from Abkhazia and South Osetia and FHG continued relief projects for them. We express our gratitude to Friends for their help in the funding of that work.

We were visited by a Friend from Cambridge, who gave a very informative and interesting lecture (talk) about Quaker history, peace, climate change etc. His visit was very productive and helped us to continue to develop friendly links between Georgian and Cambridge Friends. In May-June we were visited by 2 Friends from New York - Greta Mickey and Shirley Way - who have implemented several AVP trainings: for IDP's living in shelters, association of young IDP's, orphans, Georgian Friends and a training to train trainers. With the help of an experienced Georgian AVP trainer, Maia Gonjiashvili, they have restarted the AVP work in Georgia that stopped at the beginning of the 21st century. Several young people and one Georgian Friend became AVP facilitators and continue to work in that capacity.

We hope that many Friends from different countries will visit us in 2011. We are always happy to see Friends from any country of the world coming to Tbilisi, Georgia. We express profound gratitude to the Radley Trust for the help and support given to Georgian Friends Worship Group. We also express gratitude to Friends worldwide for their prayers and support.

Georgian Friends Worship Group

German Yearly Meeting

Our regional meetings, interest groups and our Yearly Meeting Working Committee (*Meeting for Sufferings*) have concerned themselves with such themes as:

- ◆ The Kairos Palestine Document,
- ◆ Celebrating the Quaker Way,
- ◆ The 350 year celebration and our current peace testimony,
- ◆ An adult pilgrimage to Quaker meetings and historical sites in

England,

- ◆ New discoveries about the Universe (at the Border Meeting)
- ◆ Gandhi and the Quakers (at an open Family Gathering),
- ◆ A Handbook for helping to integrate all generations (Children, Young Friends, and Adults) into the spiritual life of the Yearly Meeting,
- ◆ A proprietary book adding to our “Quaker Faith & Practice”,
- ◆ “Quaker responses to Global Change (as a recurrent theme)
- ◆ and changes in our Yearly meeting (including our financial situation),

Our Yearly Meeting at our „Quäkerhaus“ in Bad Pyrmont was attended by 189 Friends, 47 of which were children, and Young Friends, 14 were representatives and guests from other FWCC recognised meetings.

The main theme of the 80th Annual German Yearly Meeting in October was “Global Change: Perception, Connection, Our Testimony”.

The author of the Annual Richard Cary Lecture was Heidi Blocher (New England YM), and was entitled „Seek first the kingdom of God ... and all these things will be given unto you“ (Matthew 6, verse 33). Heidi explained her thoughts on each of the words, based on her biblical and spiritual journey:

First seek,
 Wait silently,
 In the silence there is also space to hear a scream for help,
 This silent space is also a treasure trove,
 Faith, that Gods realm is already of this world,

As well as various discussion groups, we also used the method of a „World Café“ to think about how our world will look in 2025. In particular, which of our 2010 deeds as Quakers will we be particularly thanked for by the people living in 2025.

To help the learning process of all involved, we have supported three of our Young Friends travelling as co-representatives of GYM to other Yearly Meetings.

Several members of the YM have travelled under concern to places of great injustice and armed conflict and were held in the light during their travels.

Christopher Hatton and Björn Rohde-Liebenau

Hungary, Budapest Worship Group

There seems to be new energy in the community and a growing need for more Meetings as well as the use of our native Hungarian. Regular events include the Border Meeting with Austrian and Slovak Friends in the winter. This time, on 18-19 December 2010, it was held in Vienna. The theme for worship sharing was Memory and Oblivion. Cathy Butler and Jalka shared with the gathering some of what they had learned about the Quaker business method at the EMES Meeting for Learning held in Sweden in June 2010. We also enjoyed Meeting for Worship with a growing number of Serbian Friends and Friends in Novi Sad in October. The next regular joint gathering is due in early April.

Our CEG (Central European Gathering) was held on the Balaton, in Révfülöp, Hungary, on 21-24 May 2010. The theme was Interfaith and we were recharged and uplifted by Brian Phillips' talks. Brian is hoping to come to Budapest again to talk to us about the Peace Testimony on 29 June 2011. We can use the beautiful new premises of József Farkas' Reformed Church congregation at 9 Gyulai Pál utca - and free too! This is going to be a major public outreach event, mainly for English – speaking university students in Budapest.

The Czech group has agreed to organise the 2011 CEG gathering in the small town of Litomyšl in Eastern Bohemia from 2-5 June 2011. Bradius, Arne, Zoltán and a Friend from Austria will be serving as a committee to work with funding issues regarding our gatherings. The task would be to seek external funding for our gathering on a long-term basis.

Re. the Gipsy project in Sajókaza, we exchange invitations and answer private needs (collect money for anti-cancer medication) as best we can, from a considerable physical distance. Zsuzsa has also been called to answer a need which was publicised by the Reform Church to help refugees with their Hungarian. She has befriended some Russian-speaking refugees from the Caucasus. For the first time in our 17-year-old history, we held an Advent-Christmas celebration on 12 December with visitors, enquirers and refugees attending. One of us, Éva Katona, was invited by Neile Euranis' Area Meeting to attend their residential retreat free of charge.

In addition to our regular attenders, Cosima de Nicholas Kamata from France, Cathy Butler from the UK and Major Thomas from Iowa, the year saw an almost continuous stream of visitors including James Bromley from Blackheath Meeting, London, Paul Ong from Warwick Meeting, Dee Edelman from Salem Friends Meeting in Winston Salem, NC USA, Terry Hobday and Pierrette from our twin group in Wem, John Shinebourne and his wife from North London, Ann Pellegrino from Lafayette, Indiana Quaker Meeting, Justin Wright + friend from Philadelphia YM. With serendipity we managed to direct Clare B Dimyon to our Novi Sad gathering, our visitors Helen Clay and her husband and new enquirer Viktor Szépe to our Advent/Christmas celebration. Further visitors included Sophie and Brayton Gray from Congenies, Mike and Marian Liebmann from Bristol. An expatriate couple, Anna Juhász and her husband have just found us and we are expecting new visitors (Mike Zipser from Strasbourg-Kehl – Earlham College and David Minifie from Christchurch Meeting, New Zealand, to worship with us at a New Year gathering on 2 January 2011.

Zsuzsa was present at the first Quaker wedding in the Region (Jana Marejkova and Vojta in Pilzen). Tony Frei and Zsuzsa regularly exchange greetings and news. Berne Weiss will be our representative at the Annual Meeting/Joint Gathering in 2011. Zsuzsa Eastland also feels led to attend this EMES-EMEYF event with a view to taking part in the World Conference in Kenya in 2012.

Zsuzsa Eastland, Clerk

Ireland Yearly Meeting

Ireland Yearly Meeting met in Friends School Lisburn from 8-11 April 2010 on the theme 'Living Our Vision'. The public lecture entitled 'Living the Vision – Building Peace – a personal Journey' was given by Anne Bennett who has spent time in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and Friends House, London where she worked for QPS. This year we had a number of Irish Friends returning to be with us. Jonathan Morton works for OMS (One Mission Society) covering Central America and Eastern Europe and was involved in Haiti Earthquake relief. Paul and Becca Mohally live and work in Nicaragua and among other things support community economic development and fair trade initiatives. It was a great joy to hear these young Friends speak about the important outreach they are able to do and we are glad that IQFA continues to support these and other projects, most with Quaker connections.

We were glad to welcome Friends from other Yearly Meetings, FWCC, Quaker House, Brussels and visitors from Irish churches.

During the year we appointed a youth co-ordinator for the Yearly Meeting, Carolyn McMullan who is developing and supporting activities with young Friends and meetings around the country and the teenage programme at Yearly Meeting. Irish Young Friends attended Yorkshire Holiday School, FWCC Quaker Pilgrimage and hosted the European Young Friends Spring Gathering at the Moyallon Centre. We are grateful for the many Friends who help to organise and lead these various events which bring Young Friends together and help them to work out their witness in the world.

The reconciliation work of Quaker House Belfast, jointly run with Britain Yearly meeting for over 30 years, was laid down in May 2010 and its work recorded in the book 'Coming from the Silence' along with other work undertaken in Ulster.

Friends continue to take part in a number of inter-church and inter-faith fora and were represented at events to commemorate the Irish Famine, Holocaust Memorial Day and the visit of church leaders from the Middle East. In October Grange Meeting in County Tyrone celebrated 350 years of Friends in that area. ECO Quakers Ireland organised a seminar on ethical investment and banking for the wider community, all the more important in the present economic climate.

Elizabeth Duke, a New Zealand Friend studying diversity among Friends travelled around Ireland Yearly Meeting in October and found a range of views that surprised her. We remember in gratitude: 'In Christ there is no black or white, in him no bond of free. Yet justly may we take delight in our diversity'
A W Braithwaite

It has been a full and enriching year for Friends in Ireland and we look forward to maintaining contact with EMES and the wider Quaker family in 2011.

Felicity McCartney, Clerk

Italy: Bologna Worship Group

The Bologna Worship Group is the only one that has been in existence for the past 20 years. It began in fact in May 1991, and, since then, we have been meeting fortnightly for our silent worship (see Societa' degli Amici on Facebook). In Italy there are developments in Milan led by Maurizio Benazzi.

We have no news of a permanent group in Rome.

Some of us witness in local jails, with a group of students called "Una Via" (see also Facebook), with special care for detainees from North-Africa (Maghreb). Recently, the group has grown, but we are always fewer than ten people. We often have visitors, Friends from other countries.

Pier Cesare Bori

Latvia Recognised Worship Group

2010 was a very quiet year for Latvia Recognised meeting. A year ago in Liepaja we started to seek new ways to provide our spiritual needs. In November 2009 we met some people with similar needs and founded a meeting for insights. We come together once a month for more than 3 hours, with a different theme each time. About 5-6 people with different backgrounds come regularly – psychologists, Buddhists and others. As Quaker universalists we are interested in the many different types of spiritual understanding and are open to others. In this group we have shared our thoughts about different religious streams, e.g. Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Kabala and others. Some of our friends often attend different events and then give us new ideas and impulses.

Our meeting place is open and we have some new attenders. For a small town like Liepaja any spiritual seeker is welcome. We have also visited our friends in Vilnius – the Lithuanian Subud group – who were seekers in the Quaker way from our first Baltic Gathering in Jurmala in 2005. It was very nice to meet with them and we hope to do it again and discuss universalism and TangoZen.

Inese Ansule, Clerk

Lithuania

Our group is an initial attempt to establish a permanent quaker and quaker-interested group in Vilnius, Lithuania. We gather every/every second week in private spaces. We meet for half an hour silent prayer and sharing of our everyday or general life concerns. We plan to put a website about our group this year [right now there is only a FB group in Lithuanian].

Algis Davidavičius

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Brummana Monthly Meeting

Our meeting dates back to the 1870s and has seen many ups and downs due to political strife in the area. Our Quaker School, Brummana High School (www.bhs.edu.lb) was established then and is still attracting students and future peace makers who believe in our values and Peace Testimony. We are often enriched with the presence of travelling Friends in the area. We welcome visitors and Friends from all over the world. We pray that the new year will bring Peace to this area so that we can have a Yearly Meeting or a World Gathering long overdue. Hold you in the Light.

Tony Manasseh, Clerk

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Ramallah Monthly Meeting

Ramallah Monthly Meeting celebrated the centenary of the dedication of its Meeting House. The celebrations included cultural events to help the visitors learn more about the history and heritage of local Quakers. A guided walk around the rapidly developing city identified sites of architectural significance, some of which have been restored to preserve the historical character of Ramallah, which is in danger of disappearing through the pressures of development. Students at the Friends Boys' School performed a wonderfully energetic Debke, local dance, to the great enjoyment of an appreciative audience. Singer Sana Moussa and some of her Nawa Athar Group gave a wonderful concert of traditional music in the Meeting House, which has excellent acoustics and lends itself very well for this type of use.

The Meeting for Worship on Sunday 7th March was attended by well over 100 people, many of them locals, and some Internationals working in NGOs in Israel and in the Occupied Territories. It was a very moving Meeting, with many messages of greeting, including from the Mayor of the Ramallah Municipality, and messages of solidarity, thankfulness and hope. The most touching bit of ministry was a little play performed by the young people of the Meeting, which portrayed John Woolman visiting a slave-owning family of Friends, and refusing to take any food or drink that had been made by slaves, and choosing to sleep with the slaves in their quarters rather than in the comfortable bed offered to him: a poignant message from people being oppressively restricted in their freedom of movement and denied basic civil rights.

Jean Zaru writes: “Our ministry through FICR will continue. I have been very involved locally, internationally and ecumenically to continue working for peace and justice and the integrity of creation.

We are still on the map despite our small numbers and sometimes at Meeting for worship we have persons from many nationalities and backgrounds. Do hold us in the Light.”

Jean Zaru, Clerk

Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Nothing special happened within Netherlands YM in 2010. The spiritual highlight was again yearly meeting itself. This year we considered the question of how we as small group can influence great world issues. We saw a lovely play ‘On human folly’ by two British ‘Plain Quakers’ about how John Woolman dealt with this question. And David Atwood of QUNO Genève showed us how personal concerns can develop into issues taken on by eventually the UN, like child soldiers.

Real business issues tend to be rather avoided than tackled during YM. One example was the Kairos letter received from the Palestinian Christians. Some Friends seem to consider YM as being incapable of dealing with conflicting matters, on the basis of bad experiences in the (distant) past. Preference is given to discussions at MM-level, with the disadvantage that decision building tends to be rather complicated and diffuse.

Friends reacted with interest to the impetus about ‘eldership’ from EMES. There is no such function among Dutch Quakers and the subject can be controversial considering the experiences with elders that many Friends encountered in their former churches. The dealing with this theme has not been decided on, but in the meantime all four MM’s are either planning to talk about it or have done so.

There is some concern about the fact that the running costs within YM are not covered by the regular contributions of Friends. Contributions vary a lot and one third of the now 94 Friends don’t contribute at all. On the other hand, Netherlands YM is rather rich and has difficulties to convert the considerable reserves from legacies into (own) activities. There has been a meeting of all treasurers (MM’s function de facto financially independently) and the financial

commission. A letter has been sent to all Friends giving an overview of the total financial situation, including an indication of the contributions needed.

Martin Touwen, Representative

Norway Yearly Meeting

There are now 131 members of The Religious Society of Friends living in Norway. Not all of these are taking active part in the Society, but then there are quite a few attenders that join us at a regular basis, taking part in activities and our spiritual life.

Between 50 and 60 Friends met in the countryside of beautiful Telemark for the Annual Meeting in July. The theme of the Meeting was the Quaker Process, the way we as Quakers deal with and make decisions. This of course is a topic that needs to be focused on from time to time since we often tend to lose track of our well founded tradition in this field that also new Friends are eager to learn. Follow up seminars are being held in the local Meetings.

The Quaker premises in Oslo are suitable for a variety of activities and are also being rented out to other organisations that Quakers sympathize with or have a connection with. This keeps costs down and are very much welcomed as a means to reach out and to keep in touch with other groups. The Quaker Centre Committee has outreach as one of its main concerns. Another is to initiate activities that can enrich spiritual life and engagement among Friends.

In Stavanger there have been Meetings for Worship most Sundays throughout the year. The Stavanger group also takes responsibility for an old meeting house that no longer is in regular use. It is situated in a beautiful rural landscape. A workshop for maintenance of the house is held once a year, often combined with a cultural event. This year Hans Eirik Aarek gave a speech about Quaker History through the last 150 years.

In Kristiansand the Meetings for Worship are held every other Sunday in a very nice and old hospital church. The group has been allowed to use this church for free for an undefined period of time. Local Friends are very grateful for this, and the fact that the church is kept open every day is very practical. There has been a stable study group in Kristiansand for many years now. They meet every fortnight and read a variety of religious literature.

The Bergen group meets once a month, and so does the group in Mandal, the southernmost town in Norway. Meetings for Worship are also being held on an island on the North West coast. In Telemark there are now Meetings for Worship in an old stone church on a regular basis. An annual gathering for all ages is being held in the autumn, where nature, spiritual awareness and social life are in focus. More than 50 persons were gathered this year, half of them children and youth.

Quaker Service Norway continues the long term work in The Middle East and in Africa. The focus is on development, peace and human rights. Rather large amounts of money have been granted from both the Department for Foreign Affairs and from NORAD, the Norwegian governmental organisation for developing in foreign countries. Quaker Service hosted an International Conference in Oslo in February titled: From Peace Projects to Peace Politics.

If you want to read more about Norway Yearly Meeting you can visit www.kveker.org. You will find extracts in English on most pages.

Marit Zeiffert

Russia, Moscow Monthly Meeting

Our monthly meeting is a small one, but is the only existing one in Russia and the former Soviet Union. On Sundays we have a silent worship in the centre of Moscow. The information about that is available on the Russian Quaker website www.quakers.ru. Recently, Moscow Monthly Meeting started its own page in Life Journal: <http://moscow-quaker.livejournal.com/>.

Three years ago a member of our meeting, Galina Orlova, started a worship sharing and discussion group. These sessions are usually held twice a month on Saturdays.

On June, 6 2010, Moscow Monthly Meeting adopted a special minute concerning the incident connected with the Fleet of Freedom which was attacked on May 31, 2010 by Israeli forces.

For the last three years Judy and Johan Maurers, Friends from Oregon, USA, have been living in the Moscow area. The presence of a young British Friend, Jenny Haward, is also appreciated. In the second half of October we welcomed Marisa Johnson and shared our reflections, concerns and thoughts with her. We

are looking forward to taking part in the organization of a Russian-speaking Friends gathering (Friends from different countries of the former Soviet Union).

Mikhail Roshchin, Clerk

Russia, Friends House Moscow (Dom Druzei)

Those readers requiring a fuller picture of the work of Friends House Moscow are invited to look at our website: www.friendshousemoscow.org

Outreach and social project work in co-operation with Russian NGOs continue to be the two main threads to our activity. We provided financial support to 14 projects in 2010.

Outreach

The ten-week on-line EMES/Woodbrooke Quaker study course in Russian is up and running. Our religious website forum at www.quakers.ru and Live Journal community continue to work well and with good participation.

The translation of Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting is very close to completion. Permission to translate eight more Quaker books has been given and four of them are under way. Quaker books and materials are sent regularly to new seekers in Russia and former countries of the USSR.

This year's highlight - Richard Kilbey's pictures, painted during the 1921 famine when he was a member of the Quaker team in Buzuluk, were exhibited for three months in Samara's Eparchial Museum of Church History. The Russian edition of "Constructive Spirit – Quakers in Revolutionary Russia" was launched at this event.

Social Projects that we supported in 2010 included the following:

- the distribution of *Alternativeshchik*, a conscientious objector (CO) newspaper. We are in close contact with most CO activists in Russia
- *the School Reconciliation Service* – whose programme is gradually extending to schools and social centres in other cities
- *Big Change* – which offers additional educational opportunities, community support and life skills to former and current residents of orphanages. We support the Resource Centre that spreads the methodology and is building a network across Russia

- *Mental Health Services* – a first workshop on cognitive behavioural therapy, introducing an alternative treatment to conventional medical interventions for psychotic patients
- *My New Family, Dzhherzinsk* – a new concept of foster parent training. The first parents and children in care groups have taken part in trainings and seminars
- *Help for Children with Cancer* – diagnostic and treatment support
- *Refugee School* – assisting both adults and children
- *Krug* – providing the rehabilitation and social integration of special needs children through the therapeutic use of theatre and art

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

The core project – working in Moscow, Lipetsk, Dzerzhinsk, Dagestan, Southern Russia and South Ossetia, and also in the Ukraine in Odessa, Lvov, Kharkov and the Crimea. The collaboration between AVP teams is high, although AVP work in South Ossetia is not easy.

There is much more to say than there is space for here. We have given only a tiny flavour of the amazing work going on amongst these hard pressed Russian non-governmental organisations.

Unfortunately the Molly Brown Trust Fund for work with children is unable to provide further resources and projects that were supported by the Trust now have to find alternative sources. Can anyone help?

FHM Staff

Spain, Barcelona Monthly Meeting

Again, this has been a relatively quiet year for Barcelona MM, which, although very small at present, has decided to still meet twice a month. This year we missed the participation of the students who had been with us the previous year in Barcelona although we did receive some visitors. We also lost two very regular attenders to Gainsborough, US. In June our clerk attended a Meeting for Learning at Svartbäcken in Sweden, which was very much enjoyed and appreciated. Rosa Serra, whose book was published last year on Quaker help in Spain during and after the Spanish civil war was asked to give a public lecture on Margaret Fell. Our group was blessed with the birth of a little girl, Veronika Rose, in the summer and we were very happy to receive her into the Meeting at the house of Nancy and Gerry Negelspach, two of the longest-standing members and sustainers of Barcelona Meeting who are no longer physically

able to travel to Barcelona. At the beginning of the year we received several inquiries from people wishing to attend. We send many best wishes for 2011 to all Quaker communities, everywhere!

Caroline Wilson

Sweden Yearly Meeting

Sweden Yearly Meeting was held at the Quaker Retreat Centre at Svartbäcken in May 2010 and was attended by some 40 Friends and friends of Friends. We were also joined by visitors from Britain YM, German YM, Denmark YM and Norway YM. The theme of the yearly meeting was Peace – which included a celebration of the anniversary of the Peace Declaration of 1660 and a more personal study of violence in everyday life.

A key aspect of the yearly meeting was discussions in groups and in plenary about how to deal with the question of members helping the more vulnerable in our society. Which options are open to us – for the yearly meeting and for individual Quakers? The discussions resulted in the decision to formulate Advices and Queries as guidance. Work on this is now in progress. The raising of the issue is linked to the fact that our yearly meeting is small and has limited resources. At the same time we want to contribute to making the world more tolerable for our fellow beings. Frustration and failings are not uncommon in this work – hence the need for Advices and Queries on the subject.

The number of members has remained more or less constant for decades now. Some members have died and as many new people have been accepted into membership. This natural flow gives a vitality and pulse to the life of the yearly meeting. While people's pathways to the yearly meeting are different, we have found that regular meetings for worship, with fixed times and places, in combination with an informative Internet website, are important.

We have also experienced that enquirers and attenders have met Quakers during visits to other countries and resolved to learn more about us on their return home. This makes our website all the more important.

In a variety of different contexts, members of Sweden Yearly Meeting have realised that our most important task is to sustain and support regular meetings for worship. It is possible to take part in Quaker meetings in a number of places in Sweden; some less regularly than others. Some places (e.g. Stockholm) offer meetings for worship a couple of times a week, while in

others Friends gather once a month, or when a group of people write to each other or telephone to say that they would like to host a meeting.

During the year the yearly meeting has organised meetings for learning, study groups on Quaker matters, retreats, Experiment with Light meetings and has even been involved in organising of a Quaker wedding. A group of Swedish Friends were also invited to attend the ceremony at which our Friend Jean Zaru received the Anna Lindh Prize for Peace, in memory of the Swedish Foreign Minister who was assassinated in 2003.

Quaker Service Sweden continues to actively support projects in Bangladesh and Burundi with support from Swedish Government funds for overseas work. It has also continued, e.g. to support Friends' work in Gaza, Georgia and Ramallah. The yearly meeting's quarterly journal, *Kväkartidskrift*, is also regarded as an important outreach tool.

Sue Glover Frykman and Lars Longueville, Representatives

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

Switzerland Yearly Meeting held a **retreat** from January 15th – 17th, 2010 at **Montmirail** on the theme « The Gathered Meeting ». It offered the opportunity to reflect upon the subtle differences between Meditation, Meeting and Gathered Meeting.

A delegation from SYM participated in the **Border Meeting** at Lindenberg from March 19th-21st on the theme “Peace on Earth – what is it and how can I get there?”

SYM held its **annual gathering** as usual over the Whitsun weekend, from 21st – 24th May 2010 but at a new location, the Centre Réformé in the village of Charmey, with 63 participants, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. This theme, “The Quaker Peace Testimony Today”, was explored in several ways. Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary of the European and Middle East Section (EMES) of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), spoke to us movingly about Quaker presence and witness in Israel and the West Bank where she has worked with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme of the World Council of Churches.

Further themes were the presentation on Pierre Ceresole, founder of the International Civil Service and a Swiss Friend (1879 – 1945), two workshops

on Non-violent communication. Jalka, Clerk of the German Meeting, advocated a positive, pro-active attitude to peace and described the many projects for peace that she has initiated through her non-profit organisation “Konfliktkultur”.

From June 14th – 18th, a delegation from SYM went to testify for peace at the entrance of the international arms trade fair **Eurosatory** in Paris.

The **annual gathering of the German-Speaking Swiss Friends** took place on November 14th 2011 in Zurich, and made an attempt to reply to one of the six Queries on Global Change. Considering the huge scope each of these queries, they concentrated on the 5th query: “How can we bear witness to the abundance God offers us and testify to the world about ways in which justice, compassion, and peace may address significant disruption, stress, and tension?”, specifically approaching it from the point of view of “abundance”.

In a country like Switzerland, there is a definite advantage in holding gatherings not exclusively, but also on a linguistic basis, where attending Friends can speak their mother tongue, be it German, French or English, and express their thoughts more clearly and precisely. Although in SYM, many Friends and attendants can speak more than one language, communication is often hampered when one has to express oneself in a language other than one’s mother tongue.

Frank van Pernis, Representative

Europe and Middle East Young Friends

Every year we consider existential questions. What is the meaning of life? How should I best approach the divine? Where do I fit into it all? Indeed, EMEYF’s *raison d’etre* is to provide a spiritual community to isolated Young Friends so that they have the opportunity to explore such questions with their Quaker peers.

This year however, EMEYF had to consider an existential question of a different kind: the financial viability of its own existence. With EMES unable to continue its core support and the JRCT grant coming to an end, it was a nail biting 12 months. In the end, the hard work of our treasurer and clerk paid off, and the JRCT approved our grant application in late November, thereby safeguarding our existence for the next three years. Although the question of our finances was an ever present concern, it did not keep us from our core

activities. We held our Spring Gathering and our Annual Meeting and both proved to be very successful.

Spring gathering was held at the Moyallon Centre in Ireland and its theme centred on conflict: *'How we experience conflict - Opportunities and challenges of internal and external conflict in our lives.'* Through visits and speakers, Young Friends explored the history of the troubles, the role of Friends in facilitating a solution and conflict resolution in general. The gathering was an enormous success, bringing familiar and new faces together in typical Quaker fashion. The gathering epistle should not be missed – a song on conflict resolution to the tune of “Lord of the Dance”! The lyrics and a recording in MP3 format can be found on our website (<http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org/documents/spring-gathering-2010-epistle>). Play it to your meeting!

Annual Meeting took place in the beautiful surroundings of Bad Pyrmont, Germany. We were warmly welcomed by Leonie (as always!) and successfully completed two days of tricky business. Despite the grim financial reality hanging over the gathering, Friends were in optimistic mood, helped by the presence of a new generation of Young Friends from the Netherlands and Germany.

Through these gatherings and various online resources, EMEYF continued to provide community to Young Friends spread out across the Section. For those who take on responsibilities, it continues to provide the opportunity to learn about ‘Quaker roles’ in a safe environment. As we realise the responsibilities we have, we learn, we mature and we enter into the wider Quaker Community with valuable experience under our belts. We have Young Friends serving with EMES, QCEA, the FWCC Young Adult Friends Committee and on several gathering planning committees. On a more personal note, this has been my last year as EMEYF clerk. I am enormously grateful to EMEYF for what have been two rich and full years. I hand over to the excellent Paul Sladen, who will take the community forward in 2011.

All in all, EMEYF looks back on 2010 with a sense of relief and gratitude. It looks forward, once more, with a sense of hope and excitement. The adventure will continue!

Events:

EMEYF / EMES 2011 Joint Gathering: 21-24 April, Herzberg, Aarau, Switzerland.

EMEYF 2011 Annual Meeting: 18-20 November, Brussels, Belgium.

For information and contact details visit our website:
<http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org/index.html>

Calum Shaw, Clerk

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) – Overcoming Obstacles

2010 saw the European Union implement its new governing Treaty – the Lisbon Treaty – in December 2009; after a number of years during which this change had experienced a bit of stop-start-stop-start life, the final ratification happened very suddenly and the implementation and appointment of some key people was then done in what seemed like undue haste.

The major change for our work was the appointment of Catherine Ashton to the post of High Representative for Foreign Affairs/Vice President of the European Commission and the development towards the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Advocacy for inclusion of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and human rights in the EEAS was a central concern for QCEA along with two of the NGO networks we are active in (the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office and the Human Rights and Democracy Network).

At the end of the year, the service is still only in embryonic form, the Member States and the European Parliament have failed to agree a budget for 2011, which certainly sets back the establishment of the full EEAS, and the evidence for inclusion of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and human rights is still very thin. We will have to monitor the situation closely over the coming months.

At the Council of Europe, and after the euphoria of the success of the women in prison report in April 2009, we began the process of trying to get political support for our recommendations on Alternatives to Imprisonment. In many ways, this should not be such a big problem at a time when most countries need to cut public budgets and prisons are overcrowded, but it has proved difficult to find a sponsor for this. In part, this is related to the election calendars in member states of the Council of Europe. Just at the end of 2010 we have now identified an MP from Latvia who will hopefully take this on.

A major part of the work this year has been the developing programme of work on Palestine/Israel and we laboured on a number of briefing papers on subjects such as security research; the arms trade between EU Member States and Israel; the ongoing restrictions for Palestinians and internationals in the West Bank; the economic role of the EU in the region; and the EU civilian crisis management missions in Rafah and the West Bank.

Our biennial conference this year was on the theme of: *Working for peace in the Middle East: what can Quakers do?* Some 100 Friends heard two inspiring keynote speakers (Jean Zaru, Clerk of Ramallah Monthly Meeting; and Christian Berger, EU Representative to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and UNRWA), participated in workshops, and heard David Ferrard's songs for peace and justice.

Jean's call to us 'not to be pro-Palestinian, not to be pro-Israeli, but to be pro-justice' was heard very clearly. This has given us a group of supporters who we can now call upon to take action on specific issues. We did so for the first time in November and we were very heartened by the response.

Finally... last year we reported on the ongoing work in Quaker House, Brussels with hopes that this might be finished by the end of 2010. Well, we are getting there. Not quite finished but the improvements are very tangible and we can see the end of this process. We encourage you to come and visit; we are back in business as far as letting meeting rooms is concerned, so there is no reason for you not to arrange things in Brussels. The improvements are definitely worth experiencing.

Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch

Quaker United Nations Office and Committee (Geneva)

The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) Geneva is the organisation working on behalf of Friends worldwide at the UN and other international institutions in Geneva. Across our three programmes, our eight staff work to further issues of concern to Friends through 'quiet diplomacy'.

2010 was another busy year for our *Human Rights and Refugees* programme. December brought the adoption of new UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders, known as the

‘Bangkok Rules’. QUNO has been raising the particular needs of women prisoners since 2004 and the new rules, which Rachel Brett was involved in developing and drafting, mark the culmination of this work.

Our work on children of prisoners has grown over the course of the year. We welcomed Oliver Robertson, a former PA, back to QUNO in the role of Programme Officer to lead our contribution to the EU-funded COPING project on the mental health of children of prisoners. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also agreed to select ‘children of incarcerated parents’ as the theme for their 2011 Day of General Discussion. QUNO is heavily involved in preparations for the day, with Oliver convening the NGO working group on the issue.

The *Global Economic Issues* programme continued to develop under Caroline Dommen, who commissioned a study on the role of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) in intellectual property and seeds. The study, to be published in February 2011, has already raised awareness about UPOV among delegates in Geneva, which contributed to the landmark decision in October to admit not-for-profit NGOs as UPOV observers for the first time.

QUNO has also been developing its work on the human impacts of climate change, looking particularly at the effects of a changing environment on migration and how all those involved – migrants, receiving communities and those left behind in the communities of origin will manage. QUNO is exploring gaps in the international protection regime for vulnerable migrants and refugees, and working with faith communities on how they can respond to climate change and migration.

Work on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development continues as a major strand of our *Disarmament and Peace* programme under David Atwood. QUNO coordinates civil society engagement in the Declaration process, which in 2010 included participation at the World Urban Forum in Brazil in March and the organisation and coordination of regional workshops in Latin America and Eastern Africa for civil society organisations actively engaged in armed violence reduction programmes.

QUNO also continued to drive progress on disarmament machinery, the arms trade and biological weapons through our Geneva Forum partnership. QUNO was heavily involved in small arms processes, working with governments and

others to ensure an effective 4th Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons. The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, of which QUNO is a founder member, undertook a broad range of initiatives in 2010 aimed at the strengthening of UN peacebuilding machinery.

As ever, our annual summer school brought a large group of joyful, interested and engaged young people to QUNO to spend a fortnight studying the UN and other international agencies in Geneva. Shortly afterwards, our Programme Assistants Holly Mason-White and Tom Richardson moved on, replaced by Carolan Goggin and Aoife Reaper-Reynolds in September.

2011 will be a year of change for QUNO, as our Director, David Atwood, will retire in June. We will be sad to see David leave, and are glad to have found an excellent replacement in Jonathan Woolley, who will be moving to Geneva from Mexico.

Carolan Goggin, Programme Assistant

Quaker United Nations Office in New York

The Quaker United Nations Office in New York is currently staffed by Andrew Tomlinson (Director), Sarah Clarke (Representative) and Camilla Campisi (Representative). Camilla joined the office after the resignation of Francisca Riddy-O'Dowd, whose husband died suddenly last year. Her contribution to QUNO during her period of service was greatly appreciated.

In addition, the Office has a part time administrator, Cathy Thomas, and two programme assistants (internships), Miranda Hurst (UK) and Nadira Khudayberdieva (Uzbekistan).

The QUNO NY Mission statement is profound. It states that QUNO NY will “have finished its work when the UN fully carries out its responsibility to build peace and to prevent violent conflict.” In the last two years, QUNO NY has developed, along with AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) and QUNC (Quaker United Nations Committee), a strategic plan which focuses on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, Quaker Liaison and Outreach work.

The United Nations tends to approach conflict prevention and (post-conflict) peacebuilding as two separate issues. Conflict prevention for the UN often materialises as ‘crisis chasing’, while peacebuilding too often relies on peacekeeping forces. QUNO NY works with UN, UN Mission and fellow

NGO (non-governmental organisation) staff to recognise the links between prevention, peace-making and peace-building, particularly in relation to the role of civil society in all three situations.

QUNO's work is flexible with the regions in which it focuses. At present, Sarah Clarke has been focusing on challenges in Asia, particularly in Myanmar and China. Camilla Campisi is involved in supporting efforts of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, as well as concentrating on regional peacebuilding efforts in Burundi (alongside Burundi Quakers), and in Somalia and Zimbabwe.

The Quaker United Nations Committee continues to meet twice a year in New York with QUNO and several AFSC staff members. The Committee seasons, discerns and chooses program priorities for QUNO NY.

The last few years have been extremely challenging for AFSC finances. The AFSC budget was severely reduced in 2009 and, as of September 2010, AFSC's finances appear to have stabilized. QUNO is currently operating on an 'austerity budget' basis, and anticipate that this will continue for the next year or two.

Lindsey Fielder Cook, FWCC EMES Representative for QUNC NY

Quaker Voluntary Action

FACING UP TO PRESENT REALITIES: OUR WORK IN 2010

'I left intending to find a temple built of time within my usual busy lifestyle in which to recapture something of the experience of being on retreat. It's a struggle but I shall keep trying' (Working Retreat Participant 2010).

2010 was a year when present realities – within and without – came to the fore and moved us.

Within our spiritual lives, many Friends have been provoked by the TV series in the UK: 'The Big Silence.' This showed that the daily reality for many people is an 'overbusyness' in living that excludes periods of silence. People find it so difficult to reach quiet stillness and so lives are impoverished. Our Working Retreats, in modest measure, give opportunity for people to find stillness and we have found that this is much appreciated. In 2010 six Working Retreats were held, spread over three countries and we are moved to continue with this work with a programme of eight retreats in 2011. We would like to see more Friends from beyond the UK involved.

But there are other realities without. One is the affluent European lifestyle, with its excessive consumption, that fails to bring inner wellbeing and yet is so damaging for our world. In this context QVA Trustees decided, with difficulty and reluctance, to turn down a promising project in central Africa in part because the carbon cost of flying volunteers so far was too high. More positively, however, we were moved to take the Working Retreats model into work that particularly promotes and reflects sustainable living and our first pilot project is planned for September 2011.

A further reality is the suffering of people in Palestine – and in Israel and beyond – caught up in Middle East conflict. A Working Retreat was held again in Ramallah in Palestine in the autumn involving help with the olive harvest – but also listening to voices from both Israel and Palestine. Again we have been moved, by need, to extend our work in the area. We plan to hold two retreats in Ramallah in 2011.

There have been other developments. In July we held our first residential programme for autistic adults – designed to develop life and social skills. This was so successful that we will be doing this again in 2011. Also we were able to help the Quaker Congo Partnership in finding a key volunteer for their work.

Thank you all for your support in 2010. However, this needs to continue. We are looking for new Trustees and need more donations as our funds are getting low.

Martin Smith, Clerk

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

2010 has been a year of transition for Woodbrooke with a new Director in November and a number of changes in the educational team at the turn of the year. Due to concerted efforts on income generation and cost control, Woodbrooke has enjoyed a successful year in financial terms despite the recession. One of the particular areas of growth has been the welcome increase in the short course programme take-up.

Julia Ryberg's continued hard work as European Projects Coordinator has seen a steady growth in participation, and there has been a period of consolidation on the initiatives started in previous years. The Quaker in Europe online course is now on a third run of the Czech course, with two ex-participants co-facilitating with Pavel Marusinec who ran the previous ones; the Czech group has been joined by some Polish participants.

The French course is being run for the fourth time, and there is a first run of the German course. The Spanish translations are in and are being formatted so that Julia can create the Spanish course in preparation for it to run in due time. In order to enable all this to happen, the facilitation training is being run for the fifth time.

During 2011, we will be looking in more detail at the lessons learnt from the Quaker in Europe work to help shape our 3-5 year plans for the use of technology to support learning.

Exploratory discussions in 2010 have resulted in plans for a number of activities in 2011, including a series of events with Irish Friends, and a possible event in Germany with Tim Peat Ashworth. Looking further ahead we are in discussion with the British Board of Friend's House Moscow about a potential event in 2012.

In 2010, Friends from Finland and Sweden joined the two-year Equipping for Ministry 'open learning' course along with a dozen or so British Friends. The new course which started in January 2011 includes a Friend from Norway. EFM continues to be a popular way of combining personal spiritual development with learning about Quakers, with the support of a learning community.

Almost 300 people have now signed up for the online version of the Woodbrooke/Quaker Life project, *Becoming Friends*. This is an English language course for English speakers, and is available in book form as well as online. We are pleased that it also appeals to some Friends in other countries and there are several overseas participants including people from Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Ireland as well as Australia and the USA.

The Catchpool Fund continues to help us in support of the European Projects work as well as providing individual bursaries. Woodbrooke stays committed to its aim of meeting the learning needs of Friends in Europe as best it can, through courses and conferences that bring individuals together in the context of knowledge sharing and spiritual growth.

Sandra Berry, Director

Yearly Meetings in 2011

Yearly Meeting	When	Contact
Denmark	26-27 March	post@kvaekerne.dk
Ireland	28 April-1 May	office@quakers-in-ireland.ie
Sweden	2-5 June	kvakargarden@kvakare.se
Switzerland	10-13 June	rorie_nazareth@bluewin.ch
Netherlands	13-15 May	secretariaat@dequakers.nl
Norway	30 Jun-3 Jul	kveker@kveker.org
France	14-18 July	assembleedefrance@gmail.com
Britain	30 July-6 August	Michael Hutchinson, Acting Recording Clerk, Friends House, 173 Euston Road London NW1 2AX
German	13-16 Oct	pyrmont@quaker.org

Other events in 2011

Grenztreffen Switzerland/Germany/France		k.mangels@gmx.de
Commemorating William Penn in Saumur	19-22 May	Ed Dommen edommen1@worldcom.ch
Central European Gathering in Vienna	2-5 June	Pavel Marusinec pavel.marusinec@email.cz
Border Meeting for Friends from Europe	16-18 Sept	Martin Touwen martintouwen@gmail.com
Peace and Service Consultation in Kortenberg, Belgium	11-13 November	emes@fwcc.quaker.org

CONTRIBUTING TO FWCC EMES

The work of FWCC EMES depends on contributions from the Yearly Meetings in the Section and from individual donations. Contributions for the general work can be made using the bank details below.

In Sterling: By international transfer to:

Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HB, UK

IBAN: GB11 CPBK 0800 5150 0732 10

BIC: CPBKGB22

It is also **essential** that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES

Account Number: 20180696

Sort Code: 08-60-01

Holders of UK bank accounts can also send cheques or CAF vouchers in pounds sterling made out to 'FWCC-EMES'.

In Euros: Sozialbank Account

IBAN: DE35 3702 0500 0001 0795 00 in Germany just 1079500)

BIC: BFSWDE33XXX (in Germany just 370 205 00)

Name: Sozialbank

Location: Cologne (Köln), Wörthstr. 15-17, 50668 Köln

In the name of: Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East

CONTRIBUTING TO THE AMARI CAMP PLAY CENTRE, RAMALLAH

There is a separate, FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre account. Contributions for the play centre should be made as follows:

By international transfer to:

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ, UK

IBAN: GB48 MIDL 4005 3072 1385 49

BIC: MIDLGB2141W

It is also **essential** that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre

Account Number: 00091841

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Holders of UK bank accounts can also send cheques or CAF vouchers in pounds sterling for the 'FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre' to the EMES office.

Please note that EMES does not hold accounts for other Quaker work in the Section

Please contact the FWCC EMES Office or the Treasurer, Neithard Petry, for further information or to inform us of bank transfers you are making.