



Among Friends

Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe and Middle East Section

No 155 ■ Autumn 2022

EDITORIAL

SUSTAINABILITY OR REGENERATION?

As I told people about my new job at EMES, at least one Friend said something like “FWCC... isn’t that the Quaker organisation that travels all the time? How will you manage that and your farm?” These casual questions held poignant meaning for me. During the last few years of the pandemic I, like EMES, have had to evaluate the role of work and travel. This has all been part of adjusting my hopes and dreams for the farm and regenerative community project where I live in Italy (see *Among Friends Issue 150*), realising that to sustain our work I must focus significant attention abroad since fewer people have been able to visit us. All this comes at a time when I and EMES, like all of us, are becoming increasingly aware of the impacts of our work and lifestyles on the climate.

A query for me becomes: must I find the means to sustain my way of life, or seek regeneration for the future for my children?

In this issue, you’ll find Arne Springorum’s personal reflections on questions like this with a challenge to each of us to take action. You’ll also see examples of EMES’ collective efforts to consider climate change within the broader context of our work. An obvious but still evolving aspect of this is our new sustainability policy, published in full on page 4. Many Friends have suggested this policy does not go far enough in

changing our work, while all of us are clear that certain points like the aspect of carbon offsetting require significantly more discernment to understand an ethical way forward. Since adopting this policy and based on my own passion for these questions, I am taking on the role in EMES of monitoring our travel-related carbon emissions and have begun facilitating the Global Quaker Sustainability Network in partnership with the FWCC World Office. Since I come from a background in network-related work and consultation, I am excited to see both the work of the Sustainability network and our Peace and Service network consider the interconnection between questions of peace, climate, and meaningful action.



■ Executive Committee meeting at Quinta Ecosophia, Portugal.

In concrete terms, it is clear that Friends are already taking the new travel policy to heart. At our Annual Meeting where we adopted the policy, for example, 60% of the 38 Friends from 15 countries travelled to in-person sessions in Paris by train, while a few months later train travel made up almost 90% of journeys to our Peace and Service Consultation. In this issue you’ll hear from Executive Committee member Annie Janssen as she reflects on her rail journey to Portugal for another EMES meeting. At the same time, part of our commitment to sustainability and accessibility also includes making our meetings and gatherings blended for online participation, the lowest carbon-impact approach. Rather than consider online and in-person experience the same, we can again consider the richness of interconnected yet different experiences. We also heard from over half of the online Annual Meeting participants that they would not have participated at all without an online option. We hope this issue inspires you into new insight and action!

Evan Welkin *Communication and Programme Officer*

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Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

fwccemes.org

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

During September and October, the EMES Executive Committee met at Quinta Ecosophia near Lisbon, the EMES Nominations Committee met in Amsterdam, and the FWCC Central Executive Committee met near Nairobi. Each of these meetings also included hybrid participation, with tracking of travel-related carbon emissions considered in accordance with the new sustainability policy. Read the full text of the policy later in this issue.

INTERNATIONAL GATHERING

Around 60 international members live in Europe and the Middle East – this is around half the international members in the world. EMES holds three online gatherings each year to bring them together in January, July and September. Other isolated Friends and attenders are also invited. If you are an international member and are not on the mailing list for these gatherings please get in touch with michael@fwccemes.org

EMES YOUTHGROUP

The EMES Youthgroup continues to meet monthly alternating between Saturday mornings and midweek evenings. You can read the writeup from our gathering in September online. Young Friends aged 14-18 are all welcome! More information: fwccemes.org/youthgroup



■ EMES Youthgroup in Strasbourg



Church and Peace

CHURCH & PEACE NETWORK

EMES is a founding member of the Church and Peace Network, an ecumenical gathering of peace churches, organisations and individuals offering a Christian perspective on peacebuilding in Europe. At the 2022 Church and Peace International Conference in Croatia this October, Friend

Tony Weekes of South Belfast Meeting was elected to the Board and shared his particular interest in considering the role of “the economics of cruelty” in provoking violence in Europe and around the world. For more on the conference and Church and Peace, visit: bit.ly/3ts5yYi

SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

With partner organisations, the Central European Gathering and British Friends of QCEA, EMES continues to support Quaker work with Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Poland and other countries surrounding Ukraine. Evangelical Friends in Hungary led a relief mission to Ukraine this summer, with plans for another this winter. We are also staying in contact with Friends and seekers in Ukraine and Russia to support them during this difficult time, as well as continuing to consider direct actions within the Peace and Service Network. There is more information on our website: bit.ly/3hFGtXi

WEEKLY UKRAINE WORSHIP

EMES holds a weekly 30 minute meeting for worship to pray for peace in Ukraine every Tuesday at 14.30 Central European Time. Please join us if you can: bit.ly/3hGf3QP

GLOBAL QUAKER SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

Evan Welkin will facilitate the Global Quaker Sustainability Network, a quarterly gathering of Quaker organisation representatives and individuals considering sustainability and climate action, as part of a yearlong secondment opportunity through the FWCC World Office. Building on an initiative of the World Office, the network role will also support EMES' deepening commitment to climate justice and sustainability in our Section and beyond.



PEACE & SERVICE NETWORK

We extend our thanks to Lee Taylor for her service as the Peace and Service Consultation Co-Clerk, and welcome Paul Holdsworth who joins Sue Glover Frykman and Evan Welkin on the new Peace and Service Network Coordinating Group. The Peace and Service network connects Quakers from, or working in, Europe and the Middle East on peace and/or service issues. Please contact evan@fwccemes.org for more information and read more about our recent gathering on page 4.

Kate McNally



PEACE & SERVICE CONSULTATION

The 2022 EMES Quaker Peace and Service Consultation (PSC) was held as a hybrid event from 7-9 October: in-person at Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont, Germany, and online on Zoom, under the theme 'What in the world are we doing?' 'Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God' (Micah, 6.8).

In addition to an annual PSC, EMES began hosting monthly online peace and service network sessions in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the EMES Executive Committee set up a Working Group consisting of two members from the Executive, the EMES staff and PSC Co-clerks to review the annual and monthly gatherings with a view to including the peace and service activities in the Section in the EMES Work Plan (which is adopted by the EMES Annual Meeting) in order to fully incorporate the EMES vision of building "a thriving, vibrant, inclusive, all-age, spiritual community of Friends in Europe and the Middle East, woven together in transformative faith and love, working and connecting with others, listening to the Spirit, actively living out our Quaker testimonies of truth and integrity, equality and community, simplicity, peace, and care for the earth and the environment".

Following a survey of the current members of the EMES peace and service network and the discernment process of the



■ Jeff Beatty presents QVA with a creative visual aid *Kate McNally*

Working Group and the Executive Committee, the following changes were agreed on at this year's PSC that will help to make the EMES Peace and Service Network more inclusive and comprehensible to its members and part of the EMES Work Plan.

EMES will continue to support peace and service work in the Section in two ways: a) through monthly online gatherings of the Peace and Service Network (held on the second Thursday of each month) and b) an annual weekend face-to-face/hybrid/online that will now be called the Annual EMES Peace and Service Network Gathering. The overall purpose of these activities is to provide spaces where individuals interested in peace and service and the various Quaker peace and service organisations, committees and groups in the Section can share details of their work, learn from and support each other, form partnerships and collaborations.

In the past, co-clerks have been appointed by what has up to now been called the annual PSC. To better reflect the addition of the monthly online meetings and the integration of the peace and service activities into the EMES Workplan, a small Peace and Service Coordinating Group has been formed to guide and oversee the work. For the coming year this Coordinating Group consists of Evan Welkin (the EMES staff person responsible for peace and service activities), Sue Glover Frykman (the co-clerk with one more year to serve) and Paul Holdsworth (from the EMES Executive Committee). The minutes of this year's PSC can be found on the [EMES website](#).

The Peace and Service Coordinating Group



■ Natasha at PSN *Kate McNally*

FAITH & SERVICE

A Conversation between Kate McNally and Oliver Robertson,
excerpted from the Peace & Service Network.

Oliver: Where do you think that the call to service comes from?

Kate: For me it starts in Quaker worship. That's where I wrap myself in the love of God and then I need to bring that love back to the world, to bring God back to the broken world.

Oliver: I think of service as divine grace manifested in the world, and that the strongest signal of faithful lives comes from what we do rather than what we say. Actions are very often more powerful, more persuasive, than words.

Kate: I agree. I think that when we feel a call to ministry it's important to know ourselves deeply and to accept that God loves us just as we are, with all of our imperfections. We are all imperfect but we are perfectly suited to the work we are called to do. We each bring different skills and different gifts. Our ministry needs all of that. For example, in anti-racism work, the ability and willingness to be impolite and confrontational is sometimes needed to call out micro (or macro) aggressions.

Oliver: One of the gifts that we can bring is support and accompaniment. There is a Quaker tradition of one person's tested concern being held by the wider group, who support the individual to follow their leading.

Kate: When we lived in Quaker House Brussels, we lived in a small intentional community. Over time, we felt a collective call to work with migrants and refugees. Doing this work together meant that we could count on the talents of all of us and do things that no one of us could have done alone. I think that a lot of Quaker work is done under a concern held by a group. I believe that we serve better supported by a loving community.

Oliver: I had one experience, when I worked a decade ago for QUNO in Geneva, when we were getting minutes and messages from Friends every few months, saying we must do something on climate change internationally. It was very unusual because we were being asked to take forward other people's concern, and QUNO was the only Quaker body that could do it due to our position and access to the United Nations. It felt like having responsibility for something that was very precious to others. Holding their leadings.

Kate: Is this the same thing that happens in a meeting for clearness, where we uphold someone and support their concern? And accompanying elders do this as well I believe.

Oliver: I think so. The other example is Quaker clerks in Meetings for Business, where your role is to listen for the words and the words behind the words, so you are less able to enter fully into the stillness, because you need to be constantly listening.

Kate: Can I add a word here for self care? When we uphold others it can deplete our energy. When we work with traumatised people each one leaves a small shard of grief in our hearts. It's important that we learn how to shed that. The next ones need us whole.

Oliver: Absolutely, and there are different forms of service. I remember a case where a Quaker (and others) were in court for nonviolent direct action, which was their ministry. Then you had Friends around them who were attending court, or writing to their MP, or giving the defendants a bed for the night, or making soup for everyone at the end of the day, and that was all different kinds of service too.



TRAVELLING AMONG FRIENDS B

The EMES Sustainability Policy is a beautiful wish list – a series of statements about how we want to act to mitigate climate change, even if we often have difficulty putting it into practice. For me, the travel section is relatively unproblematic, in that I always prefer train travel to air travel.

But this past summer I was faced with a big challenge in implementing our Sustainability Policy, when I set myself the task of travelling entirely by train to the EMES Executive Committee Meeting in Sintra, outside Lisbon. The planning was an immense undertaking, further complicated by the fact that I was to attend a family wedding in Norway on the weekend prior to the meeting.

It turned out to be even more complex than I had imagined.

One big difficulty is the lack of a coordinated rail system in Europe. You have to thoroughly research all the options of the various rail lines, choose the most convenient but still affordable connections – remembering to factor in the cost of any overnight stops you need to make along the way – and then hope that as you book them, one by one, some of the later legs of your journey will not have sold out or become too expensive in the meantime.

Another hindrance is the current lack of overnight train options. Many night trains were discontinued during the height of the pandemic, and have sadly

not been reactivated. I was only able to incorporate one into my journey, plus an overnight coach trip (not nearly as comfortable!).

Luckily for me, I was helped in my planning by Friends as well as a very special friend. Quakers in Sweden, France and Spain very kindly offered to host me as I made my way to Lisbon and back. And the special friend was the Man in Seat 61, without whose excellent website my journey planning would have been a genuine nightmare instead of just an intensely nail-biting exercise.

After departing Hamar on the morning of Monday, September 19th, I arrived in Sintra on Friday afternoon, September 23rd, where I met other members of the Executive Committee. We were greeted by our wonderful host Denise Luxton, and escorted to her home and the beautiful setting of our meeting, Quinta Ecosophia.

One aspect of this trip was the joy that we members of the EMES Executive experienced in being together in work and in worship in such lovely and peaceful surroundings, rather than our more common experience of seeing each other on a screen. I have no doubt that it led to greater productivity and effectiveness throughout the weekend. How to square that with the need to minimise travel is an ongoing discussion point that all of us face everyday. The need to connect and the enrichment that personal connection brings vs the



BY TRAIN

by Annie Janssen

need to drastically reduce our carbon footprint – can we find a sustainable balance?

I felt truly privileged to be able to connect with Friends not just in Portugal, where we were able to meet up with members of the Lisbon meeting, but also along my journey. There were common threads in my late night and early morning discussions with my Quaker hosts – how to forge connections between EMES and our Local and/or Yearly Meetings, how to harness the enthusiasm of those who have come to us online during the pandemic but who have no experience of Quaker practices, Quaker offices and traditional Quaker worship, and how to foster Quaker values and testimonies within groups that may exist almost entirely in a virtual space. It seemed to me that many of us were struggling with the same sorts of challenges in far-flung corners of the Section.

The train travel itself was almost always a joy, though I admit that after two weeks of travel, I was definitely happy to be sleeping in my own bed once again. One thing that puzzled me was the presence of screens in some trains, showing subtitled films. Why would anyone want to watch a movie, I thought, when the moving picture outside the train window is always so much better? I look forward to planning my rail travel for the next in-person EMES Executive Committee meeting, wherever it may be – perhaps in your part of the Section...?



All photos: Annie Janssen

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

“Our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of our planet Earth. We see that our misuse of the Earth’s resources creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We are all responsible for stewardship of our natural world.”

(Part of minute IRM 16-19, FWCC World Plenary Meeting, Pisac, Peru 2016)

EMES’ main objective is: the advancement of religion for the public benefit by means of fostering the principles and practice of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) through consultation and cooperation.

In carrying out the work of EMES, choices are constantly being made that have an impact on our environment. This policy has been developed in order to guide these choices towards a sustainable future. The aim is to encourage Friends to change their behaviour, but not to judge or blame.

It will be important to assess the impact of the policy on the section, as well as to gather individual Friends’ experiences of implementing it, in order to adjust it as necessary, for example by gradually setting more ambitious targets. The policy is a work in progress and we will review it every three years, as our understanding of our effect on the planet changes.

TRAVEL

We hope to change the mindset of Friends when they book travel and encourage everyone to consider all options when planning their journeys. Travel by train or boat can be a positive experience for our own wellbeing as well as that of the planet.

We also need to acknowledge the balance between the need to be present at a meeting or gathering and the fact that some Friends have less time for travel. We do not want to exclude Friends from serving EMES because of other commitments such as work or family and also do not wish to exclude Friends with disabilities, or other health issues, for whom use of public transport may not be a feasible option.

Bearing all of this in mind, EMES commits to the following:

- **Travelling** by land and sea, using public transport, as our **default for travel by EMES staff and role holders**. Travelling by air only when it is essential.
- **Asking everyone travelling to an EMES event to commit to following this policy** when booking their travel insofar as possible.
- Where EMES pays for travel costs, **paying** any extra costs associated with land and sea-based travel, such as additional subsistence on longer journeys, overnight stays in hotels, etc.
- **Collecting** carbon footprint data concerning all EMES travel and **offsetting** the carbon dioxide produced.
- **Publishing** data concerning EMES’ carbon footprint and offsetting measures.

EVENTS

We believe that bringing people together to meet in-person is a vital part of EMES’ work. At the same time we acknowledge the carbon emissions this produces and the problems that these emissions are causing to our planet. EMES recognises that there are real advantages and also disadvantages to holding our meetings online. While many elements of an in-person meeting can be replicated at an online event, there is also a price to be paid in the area of spirituality, both individually and for our whole community.

EMES will consider holding events online where possible, including EMES Executive Committee meetings and EMES Annual Meetings. When planning an event, EMES will consider whether it could be organised as a hybrid event, an in-person meeting or as an entirely online event. EMES plans to hold at least one in three of its Annual Meetings online.

We believe that all in-person events for which EMES is responsible should be run in ways that cause as little damage to our planet as possible, and we therefore commit EMES to the following actions:

- **Making sustainability the main criteria** when choosing a venue.
- **Booking only venues that can provide full vegetarian and vegan catering** (preferably locally sourced) for our residential events.
- **Encouraging all attendees**, both while travelling and while staying at the venue, to be mindful of making sustainable choices.
- **Providing a list** of resources to support Friends in making sustainable choices.
- Seeking ways of **monitoring energy consumption of in-person elements** of EMES gatherings as a tool for lowering energy consumption wherever possible, and publishing the relevant data.

COMMUNICATION

EMES is aware that online communication within the section, as well as the production and use of our electronic devices, come at a cost to the environment. This is an area that is perhaps less well understood so far, and harder to measure. Nonetheless, we believe that there are some practices and guidelines which can begin to make a difference. We therefore commit EMES to the following:

- When buying computer hardware and other electronics for EMES work, **choosing all devices according to sustainability criteria** and environmental impact.
- Printing documents on recycled paper and **only when it is absolutely essential**.
- **Providing documents via links** rather than as attachments, in order to save the associated energy costs.
- Seeking ways of **monitoring energy consumption of online elements** of EMES gatherings as a tool for lowering energy consumption wherever possible, and publishing the relevant data.

Useful links and other information can be found on this page of the EMES website: fwccemes.org/emes/sustainability

Approved by EMES Annual Meeting 2022. Review due: Annual Meeting 2025.



WOODBROOKE UPDATE

Woodbrooke continues to adapt to the changing world around us. There are also changes within the Woodbrooke team, being joined by our interim co-CEO Martin Ford, two team members moving on to other exciting opportunities and recruiting for additional roles to support the development of our Learning & Research work. We have also been embedding a new booking and database system that will help us improve our processes.

We are working on our next programme of courses which will be bookable soon. Over 2023 we will have more of a focus on supporting Quaker communities, particularly with roles – we're excited to have offered Being a Quaker Clerk: a course for Friends from around the world this month which we've worked closely with EMES on.

We will be continuing our important work on the climate crisis, Quaker history, spiritual nurture and putting our faith into action – refreshing and renewing those programmes.

An important piece of work for us has been around racial justice. *Helen Minnis' Swarthmore lecture* Perceiving the temperature of the water injected energy into the on going conversations about racism and reparations. Her book reflecting on the lecture and the months after it will be available to order soon from the *Quaker Centre Bookshop*. We ran a series of sessions with Pendle Hill Quaker Centre in the USA on these issues and have a course coming up in January 2023 on exploring reparative justice.

In response to the War in Ukraine we have offered a range of courses which includes:

20 October – 13 December 2022

Quaker Peace Testimony in a Time of War – what can we do?

4 November – 12 December 2022

Truth, Misinformation and War

13 December 2022 (20:00-22:00 CET)

Supporting Human Rights and Peace in Russia

EXPLORING A QUAKER COMMITMENT TO REPARATIVE JUSTICE

Starting Monday 23 January 2023

Reparative justice is an essential part of living out Quaker faith. This workshop with Pendle Hill and Woodbrooke explores the spiritual imperative and deep need for Quakers to commit to repairing harms done by Quakers and others through their involvement in slavery and its afterlives.

Book online at:

woodbrooke.org.uk/ExploringReparativeJustice

We continue to cherish our links with EMES. We welcomed EMES staff, as usual, to inform our course programme for 2023 and are committed to continuing our partnership on providing weekly online worship. As well as our course programme we can also offer workshops for Quaker communities throughout the section through Woodbrooke Where You Are. These are tailored to your Quaker community, to find out more about that see the *website*.

We wish you all the best for the end of 2022 and a good start to 2023.

Besides racial justice, war and climate crisis have been top of the agenda across Europe and the Middle East. Our climate crisis project continues. If you haven't downloaded a copy of our free study pack **Responding to Ecological Crisis – Quaker Spiritual Insights** you're welcome to do on the [climate crisis section of our website](#).

Responding to Ecological Crisis

QUAKER SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS

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IS THE EU FUNDING CORRUPT ARMS DEALERS?

November 8 saw the relaunch of a public data platform named **Open Security Data Europe**. This platform is unique and could turn into a very useful tool for the peace movement, especially as the EU began in 2017 to subsidise weapons research with a 'modest' budget of €500 million to a Defence Fund worth €8 billion for the period 2021-2027.



Security spending is significant, yet knowing who benefits from these projects and how much money they receive is a challenge. Although publicly available, the information is spread across different places using different platforms, some of which are particularly complex to access. Other data has to be requested directly from national entities. This is why a group of independent journalists created in 2021 'opensecuritydata.eu', which provides one place where citizens, journalists and researchers can find out which companies, public agencies and research institutions receive European funding for civil security. In 2022 the European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAAT), to which QCEA is a member organisation, provided the expertise and financial support to include detailed data on companies and other entities benefitting from the European Defence Fund (EDF) precursor programmes in 2017-2020.

Such a tool is very valuable for civil society to play its role in monitoring European security and defence policies, both at national and European level. Regarding EU funding for military research and development, the database reveals that the top 15 recipients (out of 427) are major arms companies and research centres that account for 52% of the budget allocated in 2017-2020. And the four major European military powers, France, Italy, Spain and Germany, get back almost two-thirds of the budget.

Why should that matter for peace movements like QCEA? Because most of these major recipients are exporting military equipment to authoritarian and/or belligerent countries, or to countries in the grip of internal conflicts with a very high risk that these weapons will be used to repress civilians or in conflict zones. In addition, many face serious allegations of corruption, leading in a number of cases to individual sentences or financial compensation.

The militarisation of the EU is not only a problem for reasons of principles and values; it has concrete consequences that impact the rest of the world and marginalise non-violent solutions. Knowing the details of this policy, and who benefits from it, is part of the 'rational' argument that peace movements can use to challenge and demonstrate that it contradicts the EU peace project and citizens' interests.

Laëtitia Sédou

QCEA associate and ENAAAT project officer

QUAKER UNITED NATIONS OFFICE UPDATE

"We should not see peace merely as an absence of war," said Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, the director of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. She continued: "Peace entails enabling people to participate, combatting identity-based and structural injustices towards a more inclusive society."

Nozizwe was speaking at the opening of Geneva Peace Week 2022, an international gathering of people and organisations committed to peace, which QUNO helped to set up. The Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva represents long-term Quaker concerns at the United Nations, including peacebuilding through its Peace & Disarmament programme.

While we do not work alone on these issues, Quakers are a trusted presence at the UN. Although Quakers worked alongside the United Nations even before its formation, 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the official declaration of its non-government organisation status in 1948.

Nozizwe, as part of our work on Human Rights and Refugees, also addressed the 'Expert Mechanism on Law Enforcement and Racism' in early October, part of the UN Human Rights Council. "Eradicating structural racism requires sustained collective effort...we stand with you and others seeking transformation of systemic racism." Those present listened in respectful silence as she drew on her own experience of detention without trial, including a year of solitary confinement.

Meanwhile, our highly effective work on the Human Impacts of Climate Change continued, with the COP27 taking place in Egypt in November 2022. Leading up to the Conference, we carefully used our opportunities for influence to emphasise the need for real transformation of root causes driving climate change. We identify the need for the rapid reduction of the use of fossil fuels and concerns about military carbon footprints and threats created by investment in unproven geoengineering projects.

At the same time, we have also continued to address plastics and other circular economy issues through our Sustainable and Just Economic Systems pilot programme. Most recently, this included a seminar run in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund South Africa. Building on research in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, we explored how plastics waste in local systems can be redesigned to benefit people, nature and the economy.

Jez Smith



LETTER TO FRIENDS FROM BIRMINGHAM PRISON

17 September 2022

Friends, I am here. It's the right place to be in the face of our inability to respond to the climate crisis but it's not right. It is a statement, a radical statement from me to you. I am offering this to you, I am not screaming this at you, although anger is one of my sentiments these months. Here is a fact for all of us: We are not doing enough to stop the suffering that will come as global heating dissolves the matrix of our safety, security and our society. In the future, we will regret not having done more.

Wait, don't feel accused, don't become defensive, just be with this statement. Take it into the silence and discern what this means for you.

Being in HMP Birmingham gives me a voice, despite being isolated, and I am using this voice to speak to you. With 50 other JUST STOP OIL protesters I broke the High Court injunction protecting the Kingsbury Oil Depot against any forms of protest by peacefully sitting in the access road to the depot. Within 24 hours of our arrest by police we were brought before a High Court judge and this is what I said: "Dear fellow human beings in this courtroom. As a Quaker I respect each and everyone of you as we are all children of God. However, I must say that I cannot and will not respect the authority of this court which issued an injunction to protect a system and corporations that are responsible for the suffering and deaths – already now – of millions of people around the world. As a German who knows his country's history I know that laws and orders can be wrong, immoral and must be fought against following the leadings of my heart and conscience. If released, I will therefore break the injunction again and will not voluntarily return to this court."

All 51 of us were remanded in custody until our court hearings next Tuesday through Friday. Sitting in silence with Reverend Tim Hewes, a fellow protester, in our cell this known saying came to my mind and heart. "The world will be destroyed by good people doing nothing." This is us, us Quakers, we are good people, we are mostly busy doing something. Yet we do not face the question: does our doing something amount to making a difference or does it fall into the category of doing nothing, too little, too late? Too small, too indecisive. Too little impact. As my anger and frustrations boil up I am reminded of one of the queries that Lynn Finnegan powerfully presented at the Ireland YM sessions in August this year: How do I welcome my anger, my grief and my joy? If you respond to reading my words with apprehension or upset, I am sorry. I simply do not know how to do this better. But maybe this is what it takes, to

be made uncomfortable, to be confronted with an unpleasant truth, to be confronted with the fact that our actions are a mere lip service to a situation so large and threatening that our natural response is to keep calm and carry on.

Many Quakers before me chose a path that made others uncomfortable. I have to live with the fact that my actions will make those around me uncomfortable. Lynn Finnegan challenges us to get out of our comfortable armchairs now and not wait any longer. We do not need thousands of Quakers getting arrested (although it would certainly suffice to bring the change we all need and early Quakers did step up to that level of commitment) but we do need Friends to get off the sidelines and get involved. And no, recycling your plastic, growing your own vegetables and not flying any more is not enough. Maybe enough to soothe your conscience but not enough to bring about change in the short time we have left.

At JUST STOP OIL we use a picture which I find helpful: a ball rolling off a hill. As it accelerates we need to leap for it to catch it. Making a step in the direction of the ball is not enough, you cannot half-catch the ball. It's binary: you either catch it or you don't. It is time to trust in our ability to bring about change. We have done it before historically and I am sure we've had the same conversations then as we are having now. Of the 51 of us remanded now, there are four Quakers whom I know of and I am so grateful for that. Yet we are not enough. Please join us, in an arrestee role, in a support role, support us financially in a meaningful way.

Let's accept that leaving business-as-usual behind at this time has the highest chance of preserving our livelihoods and that of our children and those in the global south.

It is time for us Quakers to step up. Find your role but keep in mind that we need to aim for real change, for stopping the ball. I do not have Martin Luther King Jr.'s letter from Birmingham jail available to read here but I do recall that he admonished Americans for being too passive in the fight for civil rights and it seems that this is where I have been led to in writing these lines. I trust, Friends, that you can hear me and that you can see through my struggle and frustration and most importantly that you can respond to this letter how you feel called and challenged.

In love and Friendship,

Kai Arne Springorum

FEEDBACK SURVEY FOR AMONG FRIENDS

In light of EMES' new sustainability policy, we are considering the environmental impact of our activities, including printing and mailing physical copies of our newsletter, Among Friends. Please help us in discerning this decision by completing this quick survey, which you may cut out and send to:

FWCC EMES % Woodbrooke, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6LJ, UK

A digital version is forms.gle/AqJUF25BhHA8abpq5.

Your Name (optional) _____

Please tell us how you receive and read **Among Friends**:

- ☐ In Print ☐ Online via email list
☐ I read it as I come across it (in print or linked online)
☐ via Quake! or other partner communication platforms

If it was not available in your preferred format, would you still read **Among Friends**?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unsure

Do you contribute to **Among Friends**' production and printing costs, and if so, how much?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, amount: _____

Do you believe it is important for EMES to continue to produce print copies of Among Friends?

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Neutral ☐ Unimportant ☐ Very unimportant ☐ Unsure

What kind of articles do you like to read in Among Friends? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Editorial
☐ Articles from partner organisations about their work
☐ Personal reflections and articles by Friends in our Section
☐ News about or from EMES
☐ Calender page

Would you like to see articles in other languages? If so, which one(s)?

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Among Friends is available free of charge at: fwccemes.org

To receive a copy by post please contact us at the EMES office.

There is no set subscription fee for Among Friends. We depend on voluntary subscriptions. Costs of printing and distribution are rising and we hope those who are able to pay will consider an annual donation of around €15 or £13.

If you wish to make a bank transfer, please use the following details.

Euro account

For transfers or standing orders in Euros please use these account details:

Institution name: Wise
Account Name: FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section
IBAN: BE33 9672 0215 6046
SWIFT/BIC: TRWIBEB1XXX

Sterling account

Bank name: CAF Bank
Bank address: 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent. ME19 4JQ UK
Account Name: FWCC EMES
IBAN: GB73CAFB40524000025578
SWIFT/BIC: CAFGBB21XXX
Account Number: 00025578
Sort Code: 40-52-40

For holders of UK bank accounts please send cheques or CAF vouchers in GBP to the EMES office or directly to CAF Bank using the account number and sort code above. Scottish Charity number: SC 036528

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