Minutes of the Interim Committee Meeting, March 22, 1958, Palo Alto, California


The meeting opened at 9:30 with a period of worship, followed by a "roll call" of Monthly Meetings. Santa Fe and Honolulu Meetings, which were not able to be represented, sent letters, as did Tacoma Preparative Meeting.

1. TREASURER'S REPORT: Robert Simkin reported that the balance on hand is $2,337.76. So far, he has received from Meetings $1,881.50. Meetings were reminded that the suggested manner of payment has been: One half before the end of the calendar year following Yearly Meeting; one half before the first of the next July.

2. FINANCE: The Interim Committee adopted this minute:

   The Interim Committee agrees that it is not yet ready to recommend an increase in the per capita contribution from Monthly Meetings, but refers the matter to the Finance Committee for their study and recommendation. We ask them to look over our needs and expenses, and to bring in a budget at the beginning of Yearly Meeting which will include a contingency fund for concerns that may arise later.

Vern James, chairman of the Finance Committee, speaking of the Meeting House Fund proposed at the last Yearly Meeting, said that since then two points of view have arisen: (a) We should set up a fund with a committee to administer it. (We now have such a committee.) We should build the sum up to $3,000 before lending any of it, and then should lend not more than one half of the funds available.

(b) This is not a function of Yearly Meeting. The committee should exist to aid any Meeting needing funds in raising them.

There was some discussion of the wisdom of appointing three Yearly Meeting representatives to conferences as we have done lately and then budgeting travel expense for one. It was felt that, while we should not appoint if we do not intend to assist, part payment of expense is a good principle.

3. REPRESENTATION AT BAD PYRMONT (Germany): Related to the above was discussion of problems involved in sending our three representatives to the meeting of the Friends World Committee, September 23-29, 1958. This minute was approved:

   Friends approve of appropriating $200 additional, to be taken out of current reserve if, in addition to Clifford Maser who we understand is being sent to Europe by the State Department, our two other representatives can go.
4. INCREASE IN LENGTH OF YEARLY MEETING: Representatives were not agreed on a
need for lengthening the time of Yearly Meeting by an additional day.

Representatives approved the suggestions of the Education Committee, presented
by Gretchen Rudnick, chairman, that the first session of Yearly Meeting be held at
4 o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, August 6 (opening day); and that it be a
meeting of all—adults and children—with worship and singing. They approved also,
suggestions that standing committees, the Ministry & Oversight Committee, and perh-
aps the meeting of Monthly Meeting clerks (so successfully tried last summer) might
meet on Wednesday, August 6, before the first session of Yearly Meeting.

To keep from wasting time in our few days together, representatives had these
suggestions: (1) We should have much more pre-Yearly Meeting activity on the part
of committees (e.g. correspondence). (2) There is a great need for members of the
Interim Committee to go back and make the Yearly Meeting and Interim Committee come
alive for the members of their Monthly Meetings—"words should become persons".
(3) Meetings should emphasize to their members the advisability and wisdom of an
orderly presentation of individual concern through the Monthly Meeting; in order
to give weight to the expression (possibly representing the individual and the
Meeting), and to save valuable time often taken by unreflective speaking. (4) Half-
Yearly and Quarterly Meetings might be able to consider some of the business that
otherwise would need to be cared for by Yearly Meeting. (5) Only in the case of
special concerns should there be reports from the worship-fellowship groups to the
general sessions.

5. DROPPING THE WORDS "PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION": This minute was approved:

We recommend to Yearly Meeting that the name "Pacific Coast Association" be
dropped and that we see to it that those who are not members of Pacific,
Yearly Meeting be always encouraged to meet with us.

Speaking of this, many said that dropping the words should not make non-members
feel unwelcome in our Meetings, but would help to clarify the sense of responsibil-
ity for the business meetings and concerns of Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meeting.

6. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: These Friends were named to the Nominating Committee:
Madeleine Stephenson (Berkeley), Cleo Cox (Phoenix), and Richard Broughton (Vir-
toria, B.C.). Harold Carson (University Meeting) was named as the new chairman.
In addition to Harold Carson, these two Friends continue on the committee until the
spring of 1959: John Dorland (Orange Grove) and Beulah Thornburg (Willamette
Valley).

The nomination of Robert Dann to the Discipline Committee, made by the Nomin-
ating Committee after the 1957 Yearly Meeting to replace Floyd Schmoe who had re-
signed to take the chairmanship of the Peace and Service Committee, was approved
by the Interim Committee.

The resignation of Eleanor Brownell from the Discipline Committee was reported
with regret, along with the wish of the chairman that no replacement be named, since
the committee is large enough as it is.

In a discussion of nominations, the point was made that while on the whole,
Friends receiving Yearly Meeting appointments should be those active in their
Monthly Meetings, we should be careful not to exclude from appointment those with
special gifts and love for Yearly Meeting and its work.

7. REPORTS BY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES FOR SALT LAKE CITY & WHITTIER AREA MEETINGS:
Madge Seaver, chairman of the Yearly Meeting Ministry & Oversight Committee: "Year-
ly Meeting may be satisfied with its decision to give Monthly Meeting status to
Salt Lake City Meeting." Robert Simkin of Los Angeles Meeting: "The report
The Interim Committee approved the recommendation of the Ministry & Oversight Committee that members of that committee should be instructed to make a visit to all Meetings during the year following the Yearly Meeting at which Monthly Meeting status is granted them.

8. PREPARATIVE MEETINGS DESIRING MONTHLY MEETING STATUS: MULTNOMAH & TACOMA MEETINGS: Clara Shaw gave the report of the Oversight Committee of Northwest Half-Yearly Meeting. The committee recommended that both Meetings become Monthly Meetings, with the further recommendation that they be considered so, as of June 1, 1958, to coincide with the Yearly Meeting year. The minute of the Interim Committee reads:

We accept the recommendation of Northwest Half-Yearly Meeting Oversight Committee that Multnomah and Tacoma Preparative Meetings be recognized as Monthly Meetings and so recommend to Yearly Meeting.

Discussion brought out two reasons why the second part of the Oversight Committee's recommendation could not be accepted: (1) Until the Yearly Meeting itself changes our present procedure, the Interim Committee does not have the final power to recognize a new Monthly Meeting as such, prior to Yearly Meeting; (2) Since there appear to be differences among Half-Yearly and Quarterly Meeting bodies which make it not feasible for them all to assume the whole responsibility of recognizing new Monthly Meetings, we cannot yet begin to hand this duty over to them.

Esther Richards spoke of the change of name from Multnomah County Preparative Meeting to Multnomah Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, a change in which, Beulah Thorkurn said, Willamette Valley Monthly Meeting is happy to concur.

9. REPORT ON THE FRIENDS DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, March 13-18, 1958, at Germantown, Ohio: Benjamin Seaver reported that the Disarmament Conference, sponsored by the Friends Coordinating Committee for Peace, had been an even greater success than one had dared hope. Instead of 100 Friends, 145 had come, and 21 Yearly Meetings had been represented; some of the sessions had been profoundly moving; and unanimity on the Message of the Conference had not been difficult to achieve. Copies of the Message are available for all who want them. The conference talks are on tapes which may be borrowed from the Five Years Meeting office, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, Indiana. Ben Seaver told the Interim Committee that Friends should be expressing themselves on two matters right now: (1) Senator Humphrey's Subcommittee on Disarmament which, instead of being threatened with termination, should be made a permanent committee for the duration of the emergency; and (2) support of Representative Chet Holifield's resolution which is an attempt to prevent the United States from placing nuclear weapons in other countries.

10. SHANGHAI MEETING AND FRIENDS IN CHINA: The Interim Committee listened to and approved the letter which the Clerk had written in December on behalf of Pacific Yearly Meeting to be taken to Shanghai Meeting by the kindness of A. L. Wirin, attorney for John and Sylvia Powell. The Clerk read a letter, just received from Edwin Sanders, saying that the American Friends Service Committee is planning to send Robert and Etta Vogel to Japan and India this coming summer, and there is hope that it may become possible for them to visit Friends in China also. He asked not only for a travel minute for Robert and Etta Vogel from Yearly Meeting, but also for a minute authorizing the Clerk to act in any way that seems appropriate to further the carrying out of the concern to visit in China. The Interim Committee authorized a travel minute on behalf of Pacific Yearly Meeting for the Vogels and adopted the following minute:

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(on Whittier Area Meeting) is in every respect favorable."

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We long for the time when friendly relations and communication are re-established with Friends in mainland China, and particularly with those of our member Meeting in Shanghai. We unite with the concern of Robert and Etta Vogel to pay a pastoral visit to Friends in Shanghai, and ask our Clerk to act for us at the proper time and in the best way to implement this concern.

11. YOUNG FRIENDS: (1) Connie Berry of Santa Monica Meeting presented the plan of the Young Friends Committee of North America to sponsor a visit of four Russian young people to the United States this coming summer. Pacific and California Yearly Meeting Young Friends would like to have these young people visit not only in the East but on the West Coast, which can be done if Young Friends are able to raise the additional sum of $600. The plan of visitation has been approved by the State Department and there are Russian young people able and eager to come. This plan was presented to Interim Committee for the information of Meetings and individuals who might like to contribute toward the needed $600.

The comment was made that this may be an opportunity to enter objection to the irrational State Department prohibition of Russian travel in certain spots in the United States.

(2) Susan Freedman, chairman of the Pacific Young Friends, presented the Young Friends plan for their meetings at Yearly Meeting. This includes three lectures on these topics: a) The basic religions of the world, with each one's similarity to the Friends; b) The theory, history and effectiveness of non-violent action; c) How can Young Friends meet civil responsibilities outside of Meeting? For instance, to what extent should one speak up when such things as capital punishment or H-bomb testing or military lectures are being discussed in high school? These lectures are to be followed by discussion groups for which nine adult leaders will be needed. The Young Friends will welcome suggestions from the Meetings as to leaders. In addition, the boys would like a session on the draft; and the Young Friends would like to meet with the adults in one Yearly Meeting session: "on some concern, that would interest the high school Friends" and that would "come up early in the session so the high school Friends don't fade away." Susan Freedman's address is 37 Valleycito Lane, Orinda, California.

12. SHAPE OF YEARLY MEETING: The Interim Committee is grateful that Eubanks Carsner has been willing to assume the chairmanship of the Arrangements Committee.

Besides the afternoon opening session already spoken of, and the worship-fellowship groups agreed to last summer, the representatives agreed that we would like a session given to the Peace Testimony, around the question, "What can we, as Friends, do about peace?" probably on Thursday evening, August 7; and the session with the Young Friends Saturday evening, August 9, which will be planned by the Education Committee in consultation with Young Friends, possibly on the topic, "Young Friends in the Meetings." (The remark was made that one reason for Quarterly Meetings is to give young people a chance to get together.)

The orientation of new members, which had been mentioned as a need by some, is to be considered a responsibility of the Ministry & Oversight Committee which might conduct a discussion period if there is interest.

We shall want a full report from our delegates to the Friends Disarmament Conference, Gretchen Tuthill will be back from her round-the-world trip, Leslie Spelman would like to report on his visitation in Europe, the Discipline and Indian Affairs Committees have signified that they would like a little time, and time should be assigned to the American Friends Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and the Friends World Committee. The question was asked: Are there things being worked on by the AFSC and the FCNL that are not of interest to Friends generally?
13. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS: The Secretary spoke of the recommendations from the 1955 Yearly Meeting which have been mimeographed and distributed for study by the Meetings. It is hoped that suggestions will be made for improving them so that they can be a real guide to Monthly Meeting secretaries.

14. REPORT OF THE BULLETIN COMMITTEE: Esther Richards, editor of the Friends Bulletin, presented a report without recommendation from the Bulletin Committee in which they offered the idea of not printing the Yearly Meeting minutes in full, in the Bulletin as we have done up to now, but of printing instead a report which would allow for emphasis on the important and interesting, as official minutes do not -- quoting the minutes where necessary, while leaving out the repetitious and routine. Esther Richards said that Pacific is the only Yearly Meeting which prints its minutes in full in its periodical. If this suggestion were taken up, the official minutes would be reproduced in some other way for more limited circulation.

The Interim Committee approved making the experiment of substituting a report for the minutes in the Friends Bulletin on a trial basis for this year.

15. LETTERS TO GOVERNMENTS: The Clerk reported on the response to the letters on nuclear testing authorized at the 1957 Yearly Meeting. Admiral Strauss, answering for President Eisenhower, had sent his form letter; the Prime Minister of Canada had acknowledged receiving the letter; and a few Senators and Representatives in the United States Congress, from the seven states covered by Pacific Yearly Meeting, had answered.

16. OUR AFSC CORPORATION MEMBERS: The Clerk reported on the response from the four regional American Friends Service Committee offices in our area to the letter from Yearly Meeting proposing that our corporation members be received by them as members of the Executive Committee or Board, in the area where they live. Seattle and San Francisco had agreed to the idea; Pasadena had written that one appointee could be received ex officio on the Executive Board; Portland had seen difficulties in the idea, largely because it wanted to do nothing which might further alienate Oregon Yearly Meeting.

To meet these special considerations the Interim Committee suggested that the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee choose our AFSC corporation members from among Friends already on the Executive Committees of the AFSC regional offices.

17. LETTERS: The Clerk reported on letters received from the new Toyama Monthly Meeting in Japan, a communication from German Friends "To all our Friends in America" entitled "The truth about German Rearmament"; a letter "to members of Friends Meetings in America" from North Columbus Friends Meeting in Ohio on the subject of the draft. The Clerk was instructed to write a letter of congratulation to the Toyama Monthly Meeting.

The Clerk read a letter from the staff of the Earlham College annual, Sargasso, proposing that the Yearly Meeting, along with others, should buy advertising space as a means of expressing sponsorship and developing a vital relationship with Earlham.

The Interim Committee felt that there are other ways to make our relationship to Earlham more significant, including inviting Earlham students to visit Yearly Meeting.

18. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE HOME FOR ELDERLY FRIENDS: Marjorie Weber, chairman, reported that since the Yearly Meeting is not in a position, financially or otherwise, to sponsor the building of a retirement home for elderly Friends,
the Committee feels that it has come to the end of its usefulness and recommends that it be discontinued. Its members can continue to keep the material they have gathered in one place as reference material for interested Friends.

The Interim Committee agreed that the time had come to lay down the committee, and to leave it to Quarterly and Half-Yearly Meetings in our various regions to follow this concern further.

19. INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE: Albert Kramer, chairman, presented a report on the Committee's research into the situation of the Klamath Indians and the termination program, which had been undertaken as a result of concern expressed at the 1957 Yearly Meeting. The committee feels that the Yearly Meeting as such can make no contribution in this situation, but must leave it to concerned and informed individuals.

20. THANKS TO PALO ALTO MEETING: The Interim Committee minute its warm thanks to Palo Alto Meeting for the hospitality and thoughtful care of this weekend.

After a short period of worship the Interim Committee adjourned to meet at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 6, 1958, at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California.

Catherine Bruner, Clerk

Mildred M. Burck, Secretary