

Quaker Action



Upholding traditions of resistance

Highlights from our past and present in working
for a more just, peaceful future.

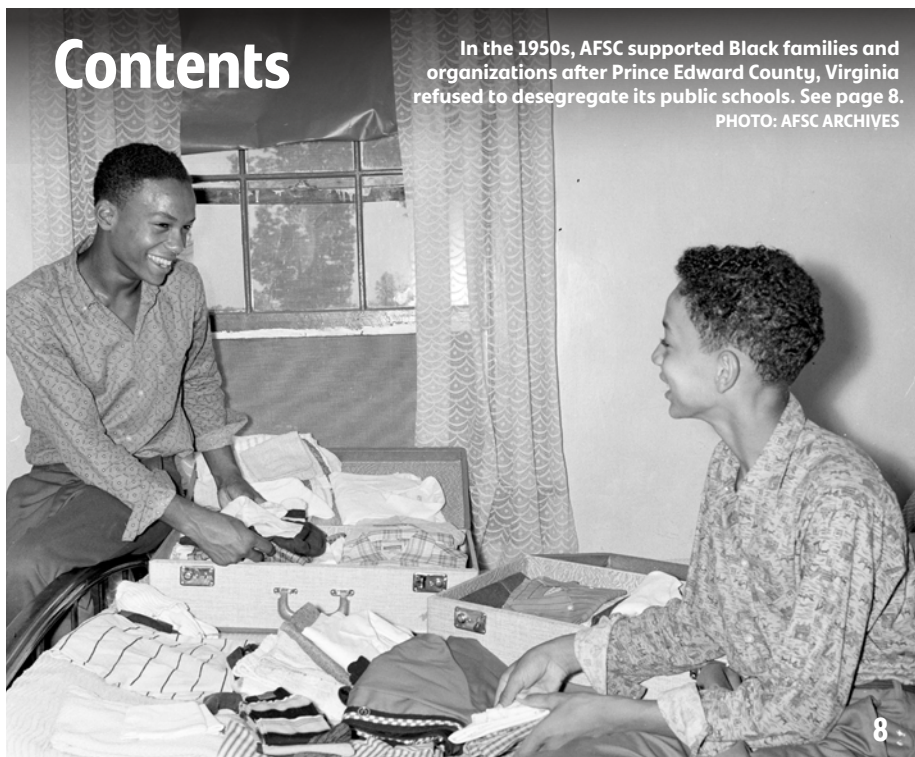


**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

Fall 2021 Volume 102 Number 2

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In the 1950s, AFSC supported Black families and organizations after Prince Edward County, Virginia refused to desegregate its public schools. See page 8.
PHOTO: AFSC ARCHIVES



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Quaker Action

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Service Committee

Who we are

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light within each person, we nurture the seeds of change and the respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions.

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Cover photo

In Chicago, young people call on the city to divest from policing and invest in mental health services.

Photo: Sarah-Ji/@loveandstrugglephotos



Letter from our general secretary



Photo: Carl Roose

Welcome to the redesigned Quaker Action magazine. I hope you enjoy it!

If you interact with AFSC online, you may have noticed new fonts, colors, and styles. We've also made a few changes to our logo. These changes are part of our larger effort to make our worldwide work more accessible and recognizable—while carrying forward the same values and commitment of those who came before. To learn more about these changes, visit afsc.org/update.

This issue features updates on AFSC's recent successes as well as highlights from our past. It's moving to see how different AFSC generations have boldly risen in historic moments, transforming our society for the better.

Today, we face big challenges, including racism, inequity, shrinking civic freedoms, and climate change. But we also have opportunities and reasons for hope. This issue offers a few examples of how we make a difference by activating communities, research, connections, and advocacy. Thank you for making our successes possible!

Please let me know what you think about this issue and our work together by emailing me at quakeraction@afsc.org.

In peace,



Joyce Ajlouny
General secretary

Your monthly gift powers peacebuilding!

Each day, we are working toward the world we want to see: welcoming people seeking refuge, protecting the dignity of all people, and making sure all our neighbors have what they need to thrive.

When you give monthly, you become an AFSC Partner for Peace. Partners for Peace invest in the long term work needed to build lasting peace while helping AFSC meet pressing needs around the world.

Visit afsc.org/QAmonthly or call our Donor Services Team at 888-588-2372 to start your gift today.



Photo: Dagfoto.co

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and join our Facebook group!

afsc.org/alumni



Tonya Histan

Alumni director

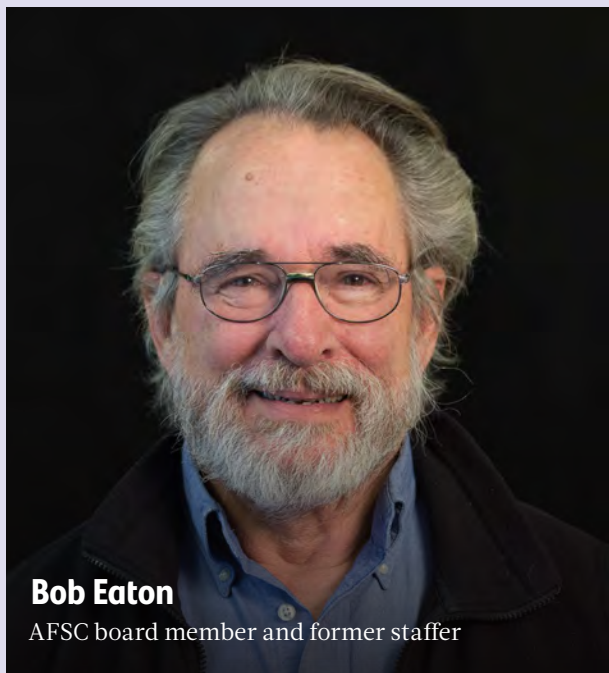
Philadelphia-area students in grades four through six wrote and illustrated a new children's book about AFSC alum **Hettie Simmons Love**. Hettie grew up in the Jim Crow South and became the first Black person to attend the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. She was also one of only two women in the program at the time. After graduation, Hettie worked in the finance department of AFSC in Philadelphia.

Bob Goodman worked with AFSC as our information technology director for many years, introducing the Help Desk and Star Café intranet, among many other innovations. He passed away peacefully in his home on April 25, just eight days shy of his 78th birthday.



As director of AFSC's National Criminal Justice Program, **Linda Thurston** worked with advocates and formerly incarcerated people to develop curriculum and organize events and workshops promoting the rights of people in prison and alternatives to incarceration. She died on May 23.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Bob Eaton

AFSC board member and former staffer

This year marks 50 years since Daniel Ellsberg released the Pentagon Papers to help end the Vietnam War. He has recounted how he was moved to do so after meeting conscientious objectors, including Randy Kehler and then-AFSC staffer **Bob Eaton** (pictured).

Tahija Vikalo is the new executive director for Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, a national nonprofit whose mission is to build trust, respect, and relationships between Muslim and Jewish women and teenage girls. Tahija worked for AFSC for over a decade, focusing mainly on Middle East programs and emergency assistance.



Photo: Hilal Vandenberg

In the 1950s, **Bob Moses** was introduced to AFSC when he met with Bayard Rustin to learn more about conscientious objection. He participated in workcamps with AFSC in Europe and Japan before moving to Mississippi to organize and register thousands of voters. After a lifetime of advocating for civil rights and education, Bob died on July 25 at the age of 86.

Do you have news or stories to share? Email us at alumni@afsc.org



AFSC supported emergency aid efforts in Indonesian communities devastated by the cyclone. Here partners provide psychosocial support to children in Amanuban Village, Kota Kupang. Photo: Augusto Bunga

INDONESIA

Delivering humanitarian aid after a deadly cyclone

In April, more than 184 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced when Tropical Cyclone Seroja hit East Nusa Tenggara, the southernmost province in Indonesia. Farms, fields, and cattle were destroyed—further devastating communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to supporters like you, AFSC and longtime partner KOMPAK were able to deliver food, personal protective equipment, and other necessities to hundreds of people in Kupang City and several villages. We also distributed weaving materials, vegetable seeds, and other items to help families rebuild livelihoods.

Sanci Nitti, a weaver in Tunbaun Village, told us, “We are happy because we received weaving equipment, textile dyes and [now] have capital for our business ... to support our family’s finances.”

AFSC and KOMPAK trained emergency response teams, which included young people of diverse faiths. Youth cleaned wells contaminated with mud during the cyclone, helping to restore access to safe drinking water in two villages. They also assisted our efforts to provide psychosocial support to children.

Thank you for helping us make a difference for communities in Indonesia. You are ensuring more people can stay safe and healthy while facing tremendous difficulties!



Jiway Tung

Indonesia country representative



Bay Area community members call on public officials to prioritize human needs over incarceration.

GAZA

Standing with Palestinians in Gaza

In May, Israeli airstrikes on Gaza killed at least 260 Palestinians and displaced tens of thousands more. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, AFSC was able to provide humanitarian aid to 150 elderly Palestinians and their families. Seniors received hygiene kits and kitchen supplies so they could make meals despite the destruction of their homes.

There is much more work to do, both in humanitarian assistance and in advocating for policies that support a just and lasting peace. We are grateful for the support of caring people like you as we undertake that effort.

For more on how you can stand up for Palestinian rights, visit afsc.org/standwithgaza •

CALIFORNIA

Putting care first, jails last

In Alameda County, California, 40% of people who are in jail have a mental illness. Nearly half of that group is Black. In May, the county took an important step to stop jailing people with mental illnesses—and instead provide them with the care they need.

On the anniversary of the police murder of George Floyd, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed the “Care First, Jail Last” resolution, which was co-authored by AFSC as part of the Decarcerate Alameda County Coalition.

The resolution prioritizes care and services for people with mental health and substance use needs who are at risk of incarceration. It calls for investments to address the lack of community-based

mental health services. It also promotes coordination among agencies charged with implementing changes.

It’s a crucial step in divesting from jails and policing—and moving public dollars toward treatment and support that people with mental illnesses desperately need.



John Lindsay-Poland

Co-director, California Healing Justice Program



Mike Merryman-Lotze

U.S. Middle East program director

Unifying Palestinian youth across divides

An interview with Ali,
AFSC's Gaza program coordinator.

Q: How did you start working with AFSC?

A: In 2013, AFSC launched Palestinian Youth Together for Change (PYTC) to challenge the fragmentation of Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Israel divides Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel. We cannot see each other. But we as Palestinians believe we can have liberation if we can face our struggle together.

I joined PYTC when I was 26. It allowed me to communicate with Palestinian activists from the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel using social media. We organized events and campaigns in our communities even though we were not able to see each other in person.

“Over the past 10 years, social media has become one of our most important tools for communicating to the rest of the world. We don’t need to wait for the press.”

In 2015, I began working with AFSC as a program coordinator and continue this work to bring together Palestinian youth across divides.

Q: How has social media helped young activists organize?

A: Over the past 10 years, social media has become one of our most important tools for communicating to the rest of the world. We don’t need to wait for the press. We can report on human rights violations and also show how we are recovering, how we support each other.



Ali

Program coordinator, Gaza

Photo: AFSC/Gaza

A lot of youth share tools for people in other places to show solidarity. We have seen freedom defenders from all over the world join Palestinian campaigns against home demolitions and other human rights violations.

Q: Why is it important for AFSC to support Palestinian youth in nonviolent resistance?

A: Most organizations that support youth civic engagement in Palestine don’t want us to address the political and social situation. When youth participate with AFSC, they feel connected to their community, that they can do something, that the future could be better.

I still work with activists I met through PYTC. After the Israeli airstrikes on Gaza in May, we helped organize a general strike across Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel. We were protesting not just against the attacks, but also against home demolitions in Jerusalem, land confiscation in the West Bank, discrimination policies in Israel. We were able to do that because AFSC brought us together in 2013. •

Upholding traditions of resistance

Throughout our history, AFSC has worked to build peace and challenge injustice. Our work is rooted in and guided by those who are most harmed by the conditions we seek to change. Our approaches vary based on the circumstances.

Over the decades—and continuing today—we have created innovative ways to address problems facing our society. For more than a century, AFSC has built a large toolbox of methods in working for social change. It includes community organizing, building bridges, advocacy, and research and analysis.

Here are some examples of those tools in action. Each pairs a story from our history with our current work for a more just, peaceful future.



(LEFT) Students in Prince Edward County, Virginia.
Photo: AFSC Archives

(RIGHT) Young leaders with AFSC's YUIR program speak out at a press conference this year.
Photo: Adrian Mack

Community organizing

Even amid the most daunting circumstances, change is possible when people come together to overcome violence and oppression.

Since our founding, AFSC has supported grassroots community organizing in the U.S. and around the world to resist injustice.



THEN

Ending school segregation in Virginia

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered an end to school segregation. Refusing to comply, Prince Edward County in Virginia shut down its public school system in 1959. White students got vouchers to attend a private, all-white academy. Some Black families sent their children to live with relatives in other counties or states to get an education. But hundreds more were left with no options for school.

AFSC supported Black families and a coalition of organizations working to reopen the schools. We opened an office in Farmville, Virginia, launching an emergency program that placed dozens of Black students with host families in other states to attend school.

The Farmville office also served as a hub for networking and community organizing. With support from AFSC, Black families and community groups organized training schools and recreational activities for students and created reading rooms in churches. Over the next five years, AFSC supported community members to pressure county, state, and federal government officials to get the schools reopened. That finally happened in 1964—a decade after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.



NOW

Calling for racial justice in Minnesota

Young people have always been at the forefront of movements for social change. But far too often, they're left out of decision making on issues affecting their everyday lives.

In the Twin Cities, Minnesota, AFSC works with Black and Brown youth through our Youth Undoing Institutional Racism (YUIR) program. YUIR participants share their experiences with racism and analyze systems that perpetuate it. They learn how to organize, building campaigns to create the change they want to see.

"Youth have experienced unprecedented trauma with COVID as well as increased racial, mental, and physical violence," says Shanene Herbert, Healing Justice Program director. "As staff, we are intentional about providing space for youth to just 'be' and adapting to their needs."

After the police murder of George Floyd, YUIR provided a safe space for young people to discuss their experiences amid protests, militarized forces, and media crews in their communities. Earlier this year, YUIR members held a press conference to respond to the city's plans to address a rise in gun violence. Youth spoke out against proposed increases to police funding—and instead called for investments in schools, restorative justice programs, and other initiatives to promote healing over punishment.

"As the youth who are being most directly impacted by violence in our communities, we need to be at every decision-making table," YUIR members proclaimed.



THEN

Connecting people and movements to end apartheid

For much of the 20th century, South Africa's system of apartheid upheld white minority rule through racial segregation and violent oppression. AFSC played a key role in the decades-long struggle to end it.

Early on, we helped build bridges between the Pan-African movements and Black Americans struggling for civil rights and equality. Africa activist Bill Sutherland, who served as AFSC's South African representative, was instrumental in bringing the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Ghana upon its independence. Bill also encouraged organizations in the African liberation movement to support the March on Washington.

In the 1980s—as South African activists captured the world's attention with strikes, marches, and acts of civil disobedience—AFSC was a leading voice in the U.S. calling for divestment and sanctions. We focused on the U.S. South, where other anti-apartheid groups were less represented. There, the cause resonated with Civil Rights activists who saw connections with the struggle to end Jim Crow. Our 1981 Africa Peace Tour visited cities including Birmingham, Alabama and Atlanta, Georgia. In 1985, AFSC hosted a U.S. speaking tour with South Africa activist Leah Tutu.

Our organizing efforts amplified calls for the U.S. government and corporations to stop financially supporting South Africa's apartheid state. We also provided tools for college students, people of faith, and others to pressure their institutions to divest. The movement ultimately proved successful. South Africa announced an end to apartheid in 1994.

Building bridges

Dialogue is a critical first step to resolve conflict. Through peaceful communication, we can see openings for solutions that respect the needs and rights of all.

AFSC promotes dialogue by bringing together people who would not normally meet, including government officials, civil society groups, and community and movement leaders.

We bridge efforts among diverse groups, sometimes reaching across deep divides, to find common ground.



Protesters in Chicago, Illinois demonstrate against apartheid, July 1 1980.

Photo: AFSC Archives



NOW

Working to prevent election violence

Election-related violence is an ongoing threat to democracy around the world. In countries where AFSC works—including Kenya, Burundi, and Zimbabwe—we have seen how election violence has claimed numerous lives, displaced communities, and intensified existing conflicts.

Over the past decade, AFSC has worked closely with partners to prevent election violence. In 2018, we published a report on its causes and best practices for prevention. And we brought together dozens of members of civil society, government officials, and others from 38 countries who work to ensure peaceful elections.

The gathering was a rare opportunity for this global group of practitioners to share knowledge and learn from each other. They found commonality in their experiences, whether coming from Sri Lanka, Tunisia, or Guatemala. They also distilled principles to prevent election violence—including ongoing investment in peacebuilding efforts (not just in the lead-up to elections) and engaging a broad coalition that includes a range of political parties.

As a result of the gathering, participants established a first-of-its-kind Global Network on Preventing Election Violence to share resources to promote free and peaceful elections worldwide.

At a 2018 gathering, Africa Regional Director Kennedy Akolo introduces AFSC's report on preventing election violence.

Photo: Carl Roose/AFSC

Advocacy

AFSC brings our experience working with communities worldwide to policymakers, ensuring they hear the voices of those impacted by their decisions.

Throughout our history, we have spoken out on controversial issues when other organizations wouldn't. We have taken bold positions knowing it may take years to transform public opinion, reaching across deep divides, to find common ground.



(LEFT) Photocopy of the AFSC publication released in 1924 to oppose rising xenophobia.

Photo: AFSC archives

(BELOW) President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the 1965 Immigration Act as others look on at Liberty Island, NYC.

Photo: Yoichi Okamoto



THEN

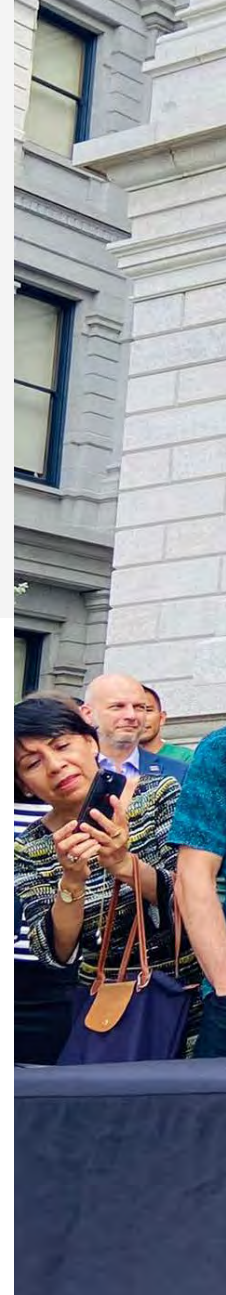
Standing with refugees

Amid rising xenophobia, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Immigration Act of 1924, slashing immigration to the U.S. The law made permanent strict quotas on immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe and barred immigrants from Japan.

AFSC denounced the racist act. We published "Exclusion: Its Cause and Cure," outlining the roots of racism as well as the contributions made by Japanese-Americans to the U.S. economy. We also invited Japanese representatives to visit the U.S. to help build understanding between the two countries.

"Anti-Japanese propaganda rests on race prejudice, and on economic conditions which prevailed twenty years ago," the report stated. "The Oriental Exclusion Act, which brings resentment to the boiling point, should be repealed."

AFSC kept up its call to abolish immigration quotas and end the ban on Asian immigrants. After decades of advocacy, Congress passed the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act.



Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signs a bill creating an agricultural workers' bill of rights. Behind him (holding a plant) is Juana Armijo, a Not1More Deportation Table leader who gave moving testimony on the inhumane conditions faced by farmworkers.

Photo: Courtesy of Colorado Senate Democrats

GET INVOLVED

Join our call for citizenship for all immigrants!

Visit afsc.org/citizenshipforall to:
Contact your members of Congress.
Spread the word on social media.
Watch trainings to learn more.



NOW

Transforming Colorado into one of the country's most pro-immigrant states

In 2006, Colorado passed some of the most oppressive anti-immigrant laws in the country—including denying undocumented immigrants some public benefits and requiring local law enforcement to report them to immigration authorities.

Today, Colorado is considered a model for pro-immigrant legislation, thanks to organizing and advocacy by immigrant leaders and allies with the support of AFSC. In 2012, AFSC helped immigrant community members create the Not1More Deportation Table—a group where people facing deportation offer each other

support and work to end unjust immigration policies. AFSC provides members with opportunities to develop their leadership skills, including talking with the media and advocating with legislators.

Ensuring immigrants are at the forefront of advocacy efforts makes it possible to effect meaningful policy change. During Colorado's 2021 legislative session, lawmakers passed a dozen progressive bills to protect and expand the rights of immigrants. AFSC's three top priorities passed: providing funding for universal

legal representation for immigrants, preventing state agencies from sharing information with immigration authorities, and creating an agricultural workers' bill of rights.

"I see the positive impact that telling our stories can have on elected officials," says Not1More member Liceth Bañuelos. "When we share our lived experiences in front of them, some of them change their opinion. They stop seeing us as statistics and start seeing us as active members of our community with needs like theirs."

Research and analysis

Facts, evidence, and analysis are crucial in exposing injustices in our world. But often that information is unavailable, inaccessible, or distorted by those who benefit from hiding the truth.

For decades, AFSC has conducted research and analysis on threats to our rights and civil liberties. These insights are a valuable resource for activists making change around the world.



Protest against General Mills, which manufactures Pillsbury products in an illegal Israeli settlement in occupied Palestinian territory.
PHOTO: EMMA LEIGH SRON

NOW

Helping people align their investments with their values

For two decades starting in 1969, a group of AFSC researchers staffed a program known as NARMIC (National Action/Research on the Military Industrial Complex). They researched military industries and civilian companies complicit in the Vietnam War and in South African apartheid—and created fliers, slide shows, books, and presentations for activist campaigns.

Today AFSC builds on that legacy by conducting and publishing independent research on corporate complicity in state violence and human rights violations. Our research focuses on companies involved in criminal punishment, incarceration, and immigrant detention; Israeli occupation and apartheid; and mass surveillance and border militarization. We also promote economic activism strategies to hold companies accountable and help responsible investors align their investments with their values.

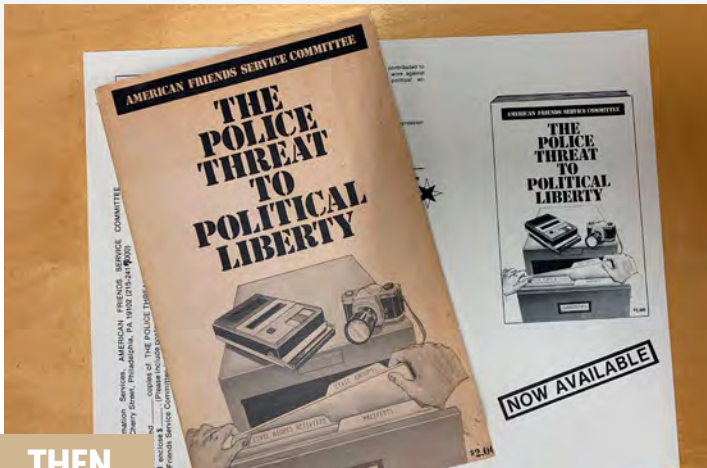
In June, AFSC expanded our own socially responsible investment policy. Our updated policy makes AFSC the first institution with a comprehensive immigrant justice and mass incarceration divestment policy—which goes well beyond private prison companies—and with a commitment to divest from Israeli apartheid.

“We want to invest in companies that, in turn, invest in people’s well-being, our communities’ prosperity, and our planet’s future,” says Dr. Dov Baum, director of AFSC’s Economic Activism Program.

LEARN MORE

Are your investments funding human rights violations?

Visit afsc.org/investigate to screen your investments for companies involved in mass incarceration, immigrant detention and surveillance, military occupation, or the border industry.



THEN

Exposing surveillance abuses by U.S. intelligence agencies

In the early 1970s, the U.S. public got its first look at decades of records of surveillance by local, state, and federal government agencies like the FBI and CIA. In 1979, AFSC published a report further exposing widespread police surveillance for political reasons.

AFSC’s report, “The Police Threat to Political Liberty,” drew from more than 13,000 pages of records. It took many requests and even lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain them. This research detailed an interconnected network of intelligence agencies whose illegal and unconstitutional actions targeted peaceful dissidents, including AFSC.

These documented incidents of illegal surveillance presented “a grave threat to constitutional rights of freedom of expression, due process and privacy,” the report stated. Agencies particularly targeted Black, Latinx, and other people of color, in effect “stifling dissent and thwarting lawful attempts to seek redress of grievances or to effect social change.”

In publishing this information, AFSC garnered media attention, and the research has been used by activists and researchers to this day when analyzing police surveillance and government abuse of power.

Connecting with AFSC



Youth take part in a peacebuilding forum in Kismayo, Somalia.
PHOTO: AFSC SOMALIA

From 2013 to 2020, South Sudan's civil war killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions more.

Last year, AFSC launched a trauma healing program for peacebuilders in South Sudan—helping them address their own trauma as they support other peacebuilders and community members.

With AFSC support, eight local partners have trained 36 peacebuilders on trauma healing. Now participants are training others and have since reached a total of 397 peacebuilders.

“Many of us understand how hard it can be to help others when we’re struggling with pain ourselves. Thanks to supporters like you, AFSC is helping people in South Sudan find healing from trauma, so they can provide support to others and contribute to peace and well-being for all.”

— ZAINA KISONGO
Country representative, Somalia
and South Sudan

Find more events and actions
at afsc.org/getinvolved

WATCH

Join the conversation!

TOWN HALL | Join AFSC staff for live discussions of current events and how you can take action on the issues of the day. Plus, explore videos from past livestreams on our work in communities in the U.S. and around the world. afsc.org/fblive

REGISTER

Community Safety
Beyond Policing

WEBINAR | Across the U.S., communities are organizing to create a future where we rely less on police—and ensure community safety for all. Sign up for our monthly webinars to learn more about the history of policing; its harmful impacts on communities, particularly people of color; and what alternatives could look like. afsc.org/csbg

JOIN

Boycott Pillsbury

CAMPAIGN | Pillsbury, owned by General Mills, is a household name known for its baked goods. But the company manufactures products in an illegal Israeli settlement in the occupied Palestinian territory—violating international law. Join our campaign to boycott Pillsbury products until the company stops manufacturing on stolen land. boycottpillsbury.org



**American
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Quaker action for a just world

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**Quaker
Action**

Fall 2021 Volume 102 Number 2

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