The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society

Volume 55 Number 8

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Annual Membership Subscriptions due 1st Janaury (Personal) £4 (U.K. Institutional) £6 (Overseas Institutions) US $11. Subscriptions should be paid to the Treasurer and Membership Secretary, FHS, 32 Bolehill Road, Bolehill, Wirksworth, Derbyshire, DE4 4GQ. Orders for single issues and back numbers should be sent to FHS c/o The Library, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Volume 55 Number 8 1989 (2)

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Communications should be addressed to the Editor of the *Journal*, c/o The Library, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

GEORGE FOX AS ENTHUSIAST: AN UNPUBLISHED EPISTLE

Early Quakers were enthusiasts, a fact that helps explain their success but demonstrates also why they provoked such vigorous opposition from contemporaries.[1] Being possessed by God – the literal meaning of enthusiasm – likewise got seventeenth-century Friends into difficulties with the authorities. Two of their central teachings, that Christ was present to teach and lead his people and that every person possessed the Inward Teacher, easily shaded over into the view that Christ was within each individual. Hence the Quaker assertion that the divine Christ lived in them seemed an obvious attempt to identify with the messiah, perhaps even to claim divinity. Many people who heard their statements interpreted them precisely in those ways.

The experience of James Nayler was the best known example. As early as 1653, he was asked at Appleby in Westmorland whether Christ was in him, and he asserted that Christ's spiritual body filled all places,[2] not exactly a straight forward denial or an example of letting one's "no" be "no". Nayler's most dramatic demonstration of his views came three years later. Permitting a tiny band of his followers to mimic Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem in their October 1656 parade in Bristol caused him to be charged and tried for blasphemy. His trial and

conviction marked a constitutional milestone in the history of the second Protectorate Parliament.[3] The entire incident profoundly shocked other Quakers and deepened a major difference over the locus of authority among the top leadership of the young movement, a dispute that was never totally healed even after Nayler's brutal punishment, subsequent submission, and early death in the fall of 1660.

George Fox, the Quaker leader who outlived Nayler and won the struggle for control of the movement, confronted similar questions. In 1650, having hardly begun his evangelistic forays, he was jailed in Derby for blasphemy. Among other things the charge resulted from his response to a question as to how he knew Christ abided in him; he enthusiastically responded, 'he has given us his spirit'. His interrogators immediately inferred that he meant he was Christ.[4] On another occasion, when rumours circulated in the vicinity of Gainsborough that he had been calling himself Christ, he denied the charge but subtly confused the issue by labelling his accuser a 'Judas'.[5] A bit later, he straight out informed an inn keeper that he was 'the son of God';[6] he answered a question about whether he was the 'son of God' affirmatively at Carlisle in 1653[7] and he made the same comment in a letter to Oliver Cromwell, head of the English government in 1654.[8] It is significant that Thomas Ellwood, the editor of the first edition of Fox's *Journal* in 1694, omitted any reference to these explicit statements, probably because by that time he wanted to make his subject appear as respectable as possible.

His most candid exploration of the implications of his belief of God-possession appears in an heretofore unpublished 1653 epistle in the Swarthmore Manuscripts (II, 55). It is printed in full below. Designed for 'Margaret Fell and every other friend who is raised to discerning',[9] it represents his most explicit statement of the assumptions underlying his enthusiastic views and his belief that he was the son of God. There is no way to know how extensively it was circulated or why it was never published. Its theological presuppositions are based on a selected reading of the Bible and are hardly orthodox and seem close to the 'Familists' or 'Family of Love', the heretics respectable people of the seventeenth century loved to hate.[10] Hence it is likely that early Friends regarded Fox's epistle as simply too inflammatory ever to see the light of day, and after the Nayler incident he himself would have had little interest in reminding outsiders just how widespread his disgraced co-worker's views were within the movement.

The document is typical of Fox's writing style, reading much like a rough draft, with incomplete and run-on sentences that occasionally

belie efforts at understanding. Still its repetitive and almost biblical cadence builds to a logical climax that grows naturally out of its presuppositions – one may not agree with the premises but, once accepted, it is diffcult to deny the conclusions. The epistle is not in his handwriting; it is a text of a text, perhaps of a text: it is simply impossible to know how far it is removed from the original. Based on editor Norman Penney's assignment of a document in a similar hand (Swarthmore Mss. II, 2), it was copied by Thomas Aldam of Warmsworth, one of Fox's earliest converts.[11] On the reverse side is written, 'A testimony gff: 1653'.

Another copy, slightly different but a bit improved as far as punctuation and grammar are concerned, exists in the probable handwriting of William Caton, Margaret Fell's young secretary and also an early convert. It appears in the Caton Mss. (II, 48–49), like the Swarthmore Manuscripts housed in the Library of the Society of Friends, London; fortunately both have been microfilmed. For purposes of comparison, I have meshed the two, using the Swarthmore Mss. as the standard and retaining its capitalization and punctuation. Words and letters within square brackets [---] appear in the Caton Mss. but not in the Swarthmore copy, while those in angle brackets <---> are not in the Caton Mss.

Accordeing to the spirit I am the sonne of God[12] and accordeing to the flesh I am the seed of Abraham, [and David] which seed is Christ,[13] which seed is but one in all his saints, and the promise is to the seed, which seed is not many but one, which seed is Christ and Christ in ye. The mistery which hath beene hid from ages, but now is made manifest, which seed though there be ten thousand, <yett> are all one,[14] which seed bruises the serpents head;[15] & the serpent speakes in all in the first nature[16] & [the serpent] is <the> head; [where the head of the serpent is bruised with the head of the woman] <upon the seed if the serpent is cursed with the seed of the Woman> the seed of the woman is head & speakes,[17] & male & female come to the beginning, & Christ is all & in all, & the promise of god here is fullfilled; Accordeing to the spirit I am the sonne of god before Abraham was, befor Jerusalem was, the same which doth descend, the same doth ascend & all the promises of god are yea come[d] out of time from god, into time to that which is captivated in the earth in time, & to it the seed which is Christ, they are all yea & a man fetcheth up out of him, where there is noe time; [&] all that can perceive [it let him]. [All that can perceive] this <ye> are happy &

<blest> [blessed] who have eares to heare,[18] blessed are <the> [your] eares, who have eyes to see blessed are your eyes,[19] & blessed is he that receives the truth, in the love of god & walks in it[t] <upp> to god; The blessing is upon Abraham & his seed, [in] blessing I will bless thee & [in] Multiplyeing I will multiply thy seed,[20] & blessed is he that blesseth thee & cursed is he that curseth thee, To the <seed> [head] all Nations shall bow where it is carryed up[p] into power, & it will not bow to the devill, if he would give it all the glory of the world, but tramples upon all, & worshipps noe god but the living god, though there be many gods in the world, Every for me & Nation hath a god, but it will worshipp none of these godds, but tramples upon them all Every carnall heart who loves the wages of unrightheousnesse who hath a god as Balaam had, but was slaine with the seed, [& to] the seed of god where it is raised upp by the same spirit that raised up[p] Jesus Christ who are brought from the dead, raigne over all the world, & comprehend[s] all the world have the same minde that was in Christ Jesus,[21] the same spirit that raised <Christ Jesus> [Jesus Christ] & he that hath not is none of his, but he that hath <comprehends> [apprehends] all Nations, languages, kinreds & tongues, and all Babilons wayes, & all the Mistery of Iniquity, & the master of harlotts, & all manner of coloures which <no> [the] beast hath, this seed where it is redeemed, it comes out of kinreds & they be all one if ten thousand, out of all Nations [all Languages & Countreyes & to it apprehends all Nations all Languages & Countreyes] God is pure who hath spoken it[t], & as many as received the word, I say unto ye: yee are gods, as it is written in your law,[22] & the scriptures cannot be broken, & he that denyes the word of God breakes [the] scripture[s], [And] Now waite all to have these thinges fullfilled in ye, if it be never so little a measure waite in it[t], that ye may grow <upp> to a perfect man in Christ Jesus,[23] there is a feedeing upon the milke of the word,[24] before ye come to the word.

[George Fox]

<Lett a copy of this be sent to Margt ffell
& every other freinds that are raised to a discerneing>

H: Larry Ingle

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] One learned critic even penned a book whose very title underscored this opposition. See Thomas Comber, *Christianity No Enthusiasm: or, The Several Kinds of Inspirations and Revelations pretended to by the Quakers, Tried and found Destructive to the Holy Scripture and true Religion.* London, T.D., 1678.

[2] The most accessible source for this examination is Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts, eds., *Early Quaker Writings, 1650–1700.* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI., 1973, 260–62.

[3] The most recent study of Nayler is William G. Bittle, *James Nayler, 1618–1660: The Quaker Indicted by Parliament.* William Sessions, York, 1986, which is strongest on the parliamentary manoeuvering. See also the insightful study of Emilia Fogelklou Norlind, *James Nayler: The Rebel Saint, 1618–1660.* Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1931.

[4] *Journal of George Fox,* ed. Thomas Ellwood. London; no publ. 1694, 31–32 (hereinafter cited as *Journal*). I have transposed the object in the sentence to its modern place. Fox made a similar statement in 1660 in responding to charges that brought him to Lancaster prison. *Journal of George Fox,* ed. Norman Penney, Octagon Books, New York; 1973, I, 381 (hereinafter cited as Penney *Journal).*

[5] *Journal,* 67.

[6] *Short Journal and Itinerary Journals of George Fox,* ed. Norman Penney. Cambridge, 1925, 17.

[7] *Ibid.,* 33.

[8] See Penney *Journal,* I, 161–2 and 425–6.

[9] I have modernized spelling and punctuation here. The fact that the essay's circulation was limited to those who had been 'raised to discerning' suggests, however unintentionally, a two tier level among early Friends; presumably those not considered acute enough to appreciate Fox's words were unable to discern the higher truths to which the master had already arrived and now revealed to a select group.

[10] On the Family of Love, see Felicity Heal, 'The Family of Love and the Diocese of Ely', *Studies in Church History,* 9 (1972), 213–22, Jean D. Moss, 'The Family of Love and English Critics', *Sixteenth Century Journal,* 6 (1975), 35–52, and Alastair Hamilton, *The Family of Love.* James Clarke & Co., Cambridge: 1981, esp. 112–41. The fact that Fox's theology shared this tenet with the Familists should not be taken to mean that he owed his thought to this group or drew direct inspiration from them, for as Hamilton shows it is almost impossible to tie the Family of Love directly to any English group in the seventeenth century.

[11] See the note in Penney, *Journal,* I, 425.

[12] See John 1:12. Quaker embarrassment with the epistle was also revealed by the first line given it by the anonymous seventeenth-century complier of the 'Annual Catalogue of George Fox's Papers'. Rather than reading 'I am the son of God', the complier gives two alternative readings: 'I am chosen' – and, more significant still, for this wording completely undercuts the force, power, and meaning of the epistle – 'Christ is.' See *Annual Catalogue of George Fox's Papers,* ed. Henry J. Cadbury, Friends Book Store, Philadelphia, 1939, 42 (item 19,67A). The location of the epistle is incorrectly given as Swarthmore Mss, II, 56.

[13] Reference to Galatians 3:16 and Hebrews 2:16.

[14] An interesting, if implicit, solution to the problem of authority, it suggests that unity can be found even if there be 10,000 individuals.
[15] Reference to Genesis 3:15.
[16] Not an explicit reference to Ephesians 2:1–3 but likely related, particularly as it makes clear that Fox shared the common Christian belief that human beings in their natural state 'walked according to the course of this world' and were gripped by evil.
[17] See Revelation 12.
[18] Reference to Matthew 11:15.
[19] Reference to Matthew 13:16.
[20] See Genesis 17.
[21] Reference to Philippians 2:5.
[22] Psalm 82:6.
[23] Reference to Colossians 1:28.
[24] Reference to I Peter 2:2.

The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society

Volume 55

1983–89

FRIENDS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD, LONDON,NW1 2BJ

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ERRATA

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Page 9, line 1. *For* Bishops *read* Bishop's
Page 29, line 29. *Insert after* question, asked
Page 31, line 16. *Insert after* well, as
Vol. 55 nos. 3 & 4 Contents. *For* Bibliography *read* Biography
Page 86, line 5 from bottom. *Delete* a
Page 146, line 13. *For* Friend's *read* Friends
Page 158, line 3 from bottom. *Delete* and ; penultimate line *delete* apostrophe *after* Friends
Page 171, line 1. *For* 1650 *read* 1656
Page 178, line 25. *For* stresed *read* stressed
Page 223, line 2. *For* Dehli *read* Delhi
Page 223, line 5 from bottom. *For* sympthetic *read* sympathetic
Page 225, line 15. *For* sterotypes *read* stereotypes
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Page 229, line 1. *For* "defuse" *read* "diffuse"
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Page 236, line 5. *For* emergences *read* emergencies
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Page 243, line 8 from bottom. *Delete* semi-colon *after* machine
Page 244, line 8. *For* postion *read* position
Page 246, line 7. *For* Brights *read* Bright's
Page 247, bottom line. *For* foresake *read* forsake
Page 248, line 18. *For* adultion *read* adulation
Page 258, line 1. *For* of *read* or

SOME NOTES ON GEORGE FOX AND ISLAM*

* Research for this paper was partly supported by a grant from the Humanities Department at Florida Institute of Technology

A few years after George Fox had launched the Quaker movement, some of his followers travelled to Ottoman Turkey and to Palestine in order to spread his message among the Muslims. The year 1657 saw George Robinson in Jerusalem, Gaza and Ramleh; a year later, Mary Fisher arrived in Constantinople and addressed Sultan Mohammed IV with words that won her respect but not converts. None of the missionaries succeeded in proselytizing the Muslims, but their concern about the spiritual welfare of Christendom's most feared enemies, at a time when the Ottoman empire was aggressively threatening Europe, reflects on the breadth of their religious sensibility.[1]

Such breadth was inspired by George Fox himself who praised in his journal the effort in 1657 'over seas to Jerusalem'[2]. Indeed, such was his enthusiasm for preaching to the Muslims that he acquired a copy of the Koran and studied it carefully. The version which he turned to, as his quotations from it reveal, was Alexander Ross's translation of 1649, and Fox so mastered it that he was able to use it with ease and accuracy.[3] Unlike many of his contemporaries, Fox realized that no debate with the Muslims would be fruitful if it was based solely on Christian premises. It was not only important that he know his Bible well, but know and understand the text of his opponents.

The first address by Fox to Muslims came indirectly in 1673, in *An Epistle to all Professors in New-England, Germany and other Parts of the called Christian World. Also to the Jews and Turks throughout the World.* The treatise has nothing particular about Islam, but it is significant that Fox viewed the Muslims as part of his inter-religious audience. Indeed, for him to encompass the Turks among his hopeful congregation reveals an important departure from Restoration Church perspective: few if any contemporary writers thought of the Muslims as potential converts; even Cambridge Platonist and Latitudinarian theologians like Henry More and Isaac Barrow, along with Quaker writer Robert Barclay, declaimed against Islam and Muslims.[4] While the Jews were of the tree that was to be grafted to the Christian body,[5] the Muslims were

threatening Europe and were seen as infidels deprived of God's mercy.

Fox's opportunity to write directly to the Muslims came in 1680. In that year (and as early as 1678), some English men and women were taken captive in Algiers. A statement presented to Parliament described the plight of those captives, particularly the physical and sexual abuse to which they were being subjected:

> [the English captives are] shut up in noisome places, commonly adding some hundreds of blows on their bare feet, forcing out the very Blood, and sometimes on the Back, sometimes on the Belly, and sometimes on them all... But above all, is their [Turkish] frequent forcing of Men and Boys by their execrable Sodomy, also their inhumane abuses and force to the Bodies of Women and girls, frequently attempting Sodomy on them also.[6]

Fox was appalled at such treatment especially that some of the captives were Quakers. Indeed, in the annual Meetings for Sufferings in England, reports had been presented from 1679 on about the plight of the captives both in Algiers and Morocco. Descriptions of torture, terror and sometimes death were repeatedly given.[7] Deeply concerned, Fox decided to appeal to the Muslim monarch, and on 'the 16 of the fifth month, 1680', he prepared a tract *To the Great Turk and the King at Argiers* [sic.]. In it, Fox adopted an unusual criticism of the King: instead of simply decrying the savagery and brutality of the infidels, and showing how superior Christian values were, Fox tried to demonstrate that the King's ruthlessness fell below the moral laws of the Koran. Fox wanted to show the king that while he, the Christian, recognized the moral guidelines of the Koran, the king who was a "Mahometan" did not. Repeatedly, Fox affirmed to the king that sexual violence was against 'the law of the great god, and your own Alcoran'.[8]

By so stating Fox was breaking new ground in Christian-Muslim dialogue by positioning himself in the Muslim camp. He did not controvert with the king the legitimacy of the Koran, nor did he ascribe the violence of the captors to the degeneracy of their religion – attitudes which contemporary Christian writers upheld. Indeed, in the 'Needful Caveat' to the translation Fox was using, Alexander Ross had attacked the teaching of the Koran as 'A gallimaufry of errors' and 'Mis-shapen issue of Mahomet's brain'.[9] Differently, Fox approached the Koran as the Muslims themselves viewed it – a message that finalized the prophetic sequence from Adam through Moses to Jesus and "Mahomet". He treated it without vituperation, and although he did not accept its

revelation, he presented it on a par with the laws of Moses, Jesus and "the great God":

> Mahomet saith, chap. 3. pag. 34 That Jesus said, *Who shall sustain the Law of God in my absence? and the Apostles answered him, We will sustain the Law of God in thy absence, &c.* And therefore why do not you believe in the Law of God, according to Jesus and the Prophets; for Jesus Apostles declared against such men as burned in their Lusts... and therefore you Turks that do such things, are Judged by the great God, and all his Holy Prophets, and Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, to Act contrary to Gods pure, just, holy, righteous Law, and they are Witnesses against you, as is also your own Alcoran.[10]

Having established his position towards the Muslim revelation, and with Ross's translation at his fingertips, Fox turned to the 'Chapter of Hegir' and the account of Lot which treated of sodomy and its dire wages:

> Now *Mahomet* saith in your *Alcoran,* chap. 15[11] pag. 161. *When the Messengers of the great Eternal God were sent to destroy the Infidels of Sodom, which came to Lot's House, to see the Messengers: And Lot said unto them, I beseech you, defile not your selves with my Guests: Fear God, and dishonour not your selves, and how, that Lot said, behold my two Daughters, take them, and the inhabitants said, we do not hinder thee to lodg thy Guests: and how that the Inhabitants remained confounded in their Drunkenness, and that God overthrew the City, and turned it upside down, and caused it to Rain with Stones and Fire which utterly destroyed it, who were so impious...* Now how can you look up to the great God of Truth, and in your owned *Alcoran* and Scriptures concerning *Lot,* and suffer such impious abominable Actions, to be committed at Argier?

Fox copied nearly verbatim from Ross's translation, and continued in this method of quoting and commenting on the verse till the end of the treatise. He was nearly always accurate in his chapter and page references, and the few mistakes that occur are a result of printing carelessness. He knew Ross's Koran thoroughly and was comfortable in ranging through the interwoven and uncouthly translated text to find the appropriate references. He quoted verses from the intial long suras, as well as from the final short ones, and he integrated them into his discussion side by side with Biblical statements. Sometimes in his Koranic citations, Fox merged sentences, added by his own words or reorganized the syntax, but his purpose remained the same: to show the king of Algiers that he had broken away from the teachings of his own religion. The Koran, Fox asserted, did not condone such violence and the Turk thus stood condemned not from a Christian perspective, but from God's Koranic revelation:

> And Mahomet saith, *that God guideth not the Wicked*, chap 19. page 115. And again, he saith, *Alms is appointed for the Poor* for *them that recommend themselves to God, to redeem Slaves, and such as are in Debt*, in the same chap. p. 11. I say then, according to your own Alcoran, God hath not been your Guide to be so wicked.[12]

For Fox, the brutality of the captors was not a result of a false religion but of their disobedience to a religion that forbade inhumanity and unnatural violence. Fox drew a line between theology and believers, between Islam and Muslims: while he castigated the latter, he did not seize on the former. Indeed, he was fair enough to praise the Muslims when praise was their due: the Turks, he wrote, were more tolerant of Christians and of Jews than many European kingdoms, including England: 'Where do you read,' he addressed his countrymen in 1677, 'that ever the Turks forced any Christians to observe any of their Holy-Dayes, Fasts or Feasts?'.[13] Fox shamed the Muslim captors for their treatment of the prisoners but praised Islamic tolerance. He did not ascribe the captors' failures to their theology, for he knew that there was a similar gap between Christian ideals and human practices. He reminded the Algiers captives in a letter on 10 April 1683 that in the Christian monarchy of England, the Anglican establishment persecuted the Quakers, and told them that they enjoyed a freedom to worship among the Muslims which the Friends in England did not:

> I think you have more liberty to meet there than we have here; for they keep us out of our meetings, and cast us into prison, and spoil our goods. And therefore prize your liberty in your meetings, and do not abuse it.[14]

Other Quakers also made similar observations at the Meeting for Sufferings.[15] At such a juncture, Fox may have felt that it was better to be a Quaker among the Muslims than among Anglicans.

The next occasion in which Fox addressed Muslims occurred in a treatise written in 1683. As a result of the fall of Sultan Muhammad in 1687, Fox published the year after *An Answer to the Speech or Declaration of the Great Turk, Sultan Mahomet. Which He sent to Leopold Emperor of Germany. And is a Defence of the true Christian Religion against the said Turks Antichristian Speech. And A Testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ.* In this treatise, Fox eagerly engaged in theological discussion, for he wanted to refute the claim that Christians believed in a "Crucified God".[16] Nevertheless, he did not alter his approach to his opponent and as in the earlier treatise, tried to shame the Sultan by showing him how he had failed in his obedience to the Koran.

So according to your own Alcoran, you Turks, and all others that are Persecutors, who disobey the Law of Jesus, he will be a Witness against you in the day of Judgment; yea, I say against you Turks, and all other Persecutors upon the Earth.[17]

In this treatise, Fox advanced an evangelical strain by trying to preach the cause of Christ. And perceptively he realized that he could do so from within the Koranic context: he knew that the Koran not only held Jesus in high esteem, but viewed him as the prophet of the last judgement. As a result, Fox repeatedly quoted the above verse 'that Jesus will be a Witness in the day of Judgement against them that obey not his Law': he calculated that his best way to introduce Christ to the Muslims was not through the Bible, but from the Koran:

> And *Mahomet* in his *Alcoran* confesses, *That* Jesus Christ *was not begotten by the will of Man, who was conceived of Mary, and that she should conceive, and bring forth without the touching of Man.*[18]

Fox proved his view of Christ to the Muslims from the words of their own revelation. Missionary activity did not need to exclude the theological belief of the addressees.

Fox's approach to mission was not based on undercutting the other's frame of religious reference but on recognizing that reference and using it for the Christian purpose. Indeed, in his evangelism to the Jews, the native Americans and the Muslims, Fox urged respect for the culture of the other community. Particularly in the case of the Muslims, Fox realized how importantly such respect extended to the Arabic language – the language of the Koran. In the above letter of 10 April 1683, he urged the captive "Friends" to learn 'the Turks, and Moores' language, that they might be the more enabled to direct them to the grace and spirit of God in them'.[19] Indeed, as early as 1660, Fox had included Arabic among the languages to support his thesis on the dual and plural pronouns: that Arabic was the language of the Muslim enemies had not prevented him from studying it.[20] For him, evangelical activity involved the education of the missionary too.

George Fox exhibited charity to the Muslims and respect to the Koran. Although these attitudes were motivated by an evangelical drive, they stemmed from a sensibility in Fox which recognized the moral content of the others' religion and culture. Fox rejected vituperation and vitriolic superiority: in seeking to convert, he preferred to demonstrate the efficacy of Christianity not by denying Muslims their religious belief, but by showing how Christians, specifically Quakers, expressed in their lives the noble teachings of their faith. Fox tried not to

denounce but to shame the Muslims towards Christianity: thus, to the treatise addressed to the King of Algiers and the Sultan of the Turks, he appended a description by a fellow Quaker telling how the latter had nobly treated some Muslims after capturing them at sea.[21] For Fox, the cause of Christianity among the Muslims was best served by the Quaker model of charity and by well-prepared theological dialogue.

N.I. Matar

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers* (New York, 1844), vol. I, 219–222; William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism.* Cambridge, University Press, 1961, 2nd ed. 418–427.

[2] *The Journal of George Fox,* ed. Norman Penney, Cambridge, University Press, 1911, vol. II. 338.

[3] *The Alcoran of Mahomet. Translated out of Arabique into French; by the Sieur Du Ryer, Lord of Malesair, and Resident for the King of France, at Alexandria. And newly Englished, for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities,* 1649.

[4] See Henry Moore's attack in *An Exploration of the Grand Mystery of Godliness in The Theological Works of the Most Pious and Learned Henry More,* 1708, chs. VIII–X; and Isaac Barrow's sermon in *The Theological Works of Isaac Barrow* (Oxford, 1830), vol. V, 24 ff. Although Barclay quoted from the Muslim philosopher Ibn Tufayl, *Truth Triumphant* (1692), 362, he attacked Muhammad as a religious persecutor, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (New York, 1827), 506.

[5] For the appeal to Jews, See Isabel Ross, *Margaret Fell* London, 1949, 89 ff. Fox also published numerous tracts addressed to the Jews.

[6] Anonymous, *The Case of many Hundreds of Poor English Captives, in Algier* (1680), 1.

[7] Kenneth Carroll, 'Quaker Slaves in Algiers, 1679–1688', *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society,* LIV (1982), 301–302. See also his 'Quaker Captives in Morocco, 1685–1701', in *JFHS,* LV (1983), 67–79.

[8] George Fox, *To the Great Turk* (1680), 3.

[9] *The Alcoran of Mahomet,* A2v ff. See also Ross's *Pansebeia* (1653), 120 ff.

[10] Fox, *To the Great Turk,* 10; for Moses, 2.

[11] *Ibid.,* 3–4. The reference should be to chapter 9.

[12] *Ibid.,* 6.

[13] George Fox, *The Hypocrites Fast and Feast not God's Holyday. Hat–Honour to Men Man's Institution, not God's.* (1677), 10.

[14] *A Collection of Many Select and Christian Epistles, Letters and Testimonies* in *Works* (Philadelphia, 1831), vol. VIII, 236.

[15] See the references to Moses Finch and Ephraim Gilbert in Carroll, 'Quaker Slaves', *JFHS* LIV, 307.

[16] *An Answer to the Speech or Declaration of the Great Turk, Sultan Mahomet* (1688), 5.

[17] *Ibid.,* 6.

[18] *Ibid.,* 9.

[19] *Ibid.,* 237.

[20] George Fox, *A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors to Learn Plural and Singular* (1660), 77 ff.

[21] See 'Postscript. Of George Pattisons taking the Turks about the 8 Month 1663', 15–20.

QUAKERS, BRISSOT AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ABOLITIONISTS

Jacques-Pierre Brissot (1754–1793), the revolutionary journalist and political activist, is perhaps best known for his efforts to abolish the slave trade and slavery in France. Scholarship devoted to the abolitionist movement in general and to the *Société des Amis des Noirs,* the Quakers, and Brissot in particular has been admirably extensive, but it has not as yet turned to a definitive assessment of Brissot's written contributions to the movement as one of the founding members of the *Société,* which, when founded in Paris on 19 February 1788, needed a skilled publicist to contend with entrenched opposition to their cause.[1] The present inquiry will be concerned with bringing more clearly and particularly to light the activities and convictions by which Brissot's role may be understood and fairly judged. It will focus on how his journalistic writings and his pamphlets offer ideological arguments for abolition and an inclusive humanitarian vision. It will also examine, among the experiences which influenced his ideas and led to his commitment to the cause, his inspirational contacts with the Society of Friends in England.

Brissot was born in Chartres, the son of a *maître-hôtelier.* His mother was a devout Catholic who raised Brissot's older brother to enter the priesthood. Brissot himself was a voracious reader. His early years and intellectual development were greatly influenced by his study of Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire. By the age of twenty, in the first stages of his career as a writer, he left Chartres for Paris. His all-encompassing hatred for the repressive hierarchical system in which he lived had by this time begun to develop. He longed to break away from the restrictions which his petit-bourgeois, orthodox background sought to impose on him.

Under the spiritual guidance of Rousseau's *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard,* he went through a religious crisis, ending in an irrevocable break with the Church and with his family. Among his early works, written in 1777, perhaps as an attempt to justify this break, are two polemical attacks on Catholicism as the embodiment of the repressive abuses of the established system.[2] His rejection of a divinely established

social and political hierarchy and of the Christian view of human nature laid the groundwork for his development as humanitarian and social reformer.

The development of his thought in this humanitarian direction was distinctly marked by his reading of Rousseau and of other *philosophes* as well. He found arguments against slavery in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* and *De l'esprit des lois* and in the *Encyclopédie* article 'Esclavage'.[3] In a number of his pamphlets on abolition, Brissot refers specifically to the work of the abbé Raynal.[4] The idealism of the *philosophes'* literary legacy was very much a part of his intellectual development as he passed from thought to writing and then to action as founder of *les Amis des Noirs* and as editor of *Le Patriote françois*. The outbreak of the Revolution more than a decade after his earliest writings gave him both the political opportunity and the journalistic freedom to translate his ideology into aggressive activity as he lobbied for an egalitarian society.

In 1778 he secured a position on *Le Courrier de l'Europe* and moved to Boulogne-sur-mer where he remained for more than a year. His first trip to London was in late 1779. The knowledge he had gained of the reform movement in England through his work on *Le Courrier* and the contacts he made in London on this and subsequent trips sparked his interest in the question of penal reform. Brissot's work in this area consisted of a series of examinations of the *Ordonnance criminelle* of 1670.[5] As either author or editor of a number of works, he set down his proposals for a much-needed criminal code reform.[6] Included in these works are several open attacks on the despotic nature of the legal system. It was his conviction that society is to blame for most crimes and criminal behaviour. Improved education, social reform and a belief in man's ability to better himself are important points in Brissot's proposals in this area. Here, as in his earlier attacks on the Church, he was rejecting a hierarchical system based on a narrow view of privilege and salvation. His intellectual development during the dozen or so years preceding the Revolution prepared him to embrace the kind of unrestricted humanitarian causes which quite naturally included Black emancipation. Brissot's position grew out of his own intellectual history – his personal identification with the oppressed, his hatred of the ruling classes and of the Church and his firm belief in the possibility of meliorative change.

Brissot's passage into the more active phase of his work toward abolition can be traced to his fascination with the Society of Friends. He returned to London for a lengthy stay in 1782 in order to set up his *Licée [sic] de Londres*, a correspondence, journal and organization which were

to keep men of letters informed of important political, social and literary events taking place in England. Although this project ended in dismal failure, Brissot made a number of important contacts, among them the Quaker, Robert Pigott, who was to become a close friend. As will be shown, Brissot's writings during the middle of the decade reflect his growing interest in the Society of Friends and their concerns.[7]

Brissot made another brief visit to England in 1787 when he was threatened by a *lettre de cachet* for his pamphlets on bankruptcy.[8] It was at this phase in his career that he began his active work against the slave trade. His arrival in England at this time coincided with important abolitionist events in the English Quaker community. Brissot, having already made contacts in that community and possessing an active interest in the humanitarian issue of emancipation, was ready to join the struggle.

Historically, English Quakers had expressed their official disapproval of the slave trade in 1727 and by 1761 they had excluded from their society all persons having anything to do with it. The judicial decision of Lord Mansfield, stating that a slave became free once in England, supported the Quaker initiative. In 1783, Quakers formed an association whose express purpose was the relief and liberation of the slaves in the West Indies and the discouragement of the African coast slave trade. As a result of the work of the Friends, Dr. Pinkard, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge proposed *an liceat invitos in servitatem dare* as the subject for the Latin essay prize of 1785. Thomas Clarkson was the winner. He published his prize essay in English the following year, 'Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species'. Along with Wilberforce and Granville Sharp as president, he formed a committee in 1787 to suppress the slave trade.[9]

During his brief stay in London in 1787, Brissot resumed contact with several of those campaigning against the slave trade whom he had met in 1783–1784. He had been corresponding with James Phillips, a book seller and a Quaker, even before arriving in England and had sent him a copy of his collaborative work with Etienne Clavière, *De la France et des Etats-Unis.*[10] Phillips had published Thomas Clarkson's prize essay in 1786. He was among those on the first list of members of the committee formed in 1787 for the suppression of the slave trade, presided over by Granville Sharp. Brissot was invited to join the group which held its meetings in Phillips' home.

Brissot was eager to join in the work of the London Committee. He returned to France determined to draw his colleagues into the effort. His first plan was to transmit information through the translation of

books and pamphlets. His enthusiastic commitment to Black emancipation was an integral part of his idealization of America as haven for the oppressed and refuge from despotism, and, of course, many Quakers had already emigrated to the New World to escape religious persecution.

Quaker virtue and simplicity and the American way of life were praised by Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur in *Les Lettres d'un fermier américain,* published in France in 1784. Brissot read Crèvecoeur's work with appreciation and was incensed when the marquis de Chastellux published his own account of America, criticizing Crèvecoeur and ridiculing the Quakers.[11] In response, in 1786, Brissot wrote his *Examen critique des voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale de M. le marquis de Chatellux[sic], ou Lettre à M. le marquis de Chatellux dans laquelle on réfute principalement ses opinions sur les Quakers, sur les Negres, sur le Peuple et sur l'Homme.*[12] In defending those he names in his title, Brissot is also attacking the established system. The details of his arguments in support of the Quakers provide a key to his abolitionist thinking both before and during the Revolution. He stresses the purity of the new society which the Quakers and Blacks exemplify, and Quaker egalitarian beliefs. Both of these factors are fundamental to what would become his revolutionary vision for France and for humanity as a whole.[13]

In the *Examen critique,* Brissot presents Chastellux as the embodiment of old-world corruption and prejudice. The marquis, a member of the aristocracy, unable to comprehend the purity of values held by the Society of Friends, had criticized Quaker pacifism. Brissot, who at this point in his life shares this pacifist ideology, explains that war is simply a manifestation of the rivalries of the corrupt members of society. Quakers are capable of curing this aged pestilence; they will cleanse the system of despotism, ambition, and luxury.[14]

He writes at great length in defence of Quaker meditation, 'illumination' and 'enthusiasm', evidently identifying himself as one who is 'illuminated' and claiming Rousseau as the model 'enthusiast'. It is through the efforts of those who are pure and thus capable of receiving such inspiration that despotism and tyranny will crumble. The accomplishments of the United States are attributable to this force which the marquis has also ridiculed.

> If ridicule had stopped George Fox or Penn, what misfortune for humanity! Slaughter of the Savages in America would have continued, the Negroes would not have been freed so soon; the principles of equality and therefore of democracy would not have been communicated, would not have accelerated the revolution in America. That is what we owe to the spirit of illumination and enthusiasm.[15]

A belief in equality, the absence of hierarchical differentiation, is an aspect of Quaker doctrine to which Brissot gives great importance. He defends the Quaker use of 'tu' (thou) because it is used for all without distinction of rank or privilege.[16] They have neither priests, nor bishops nor ministers, because they see no mention of any ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Scriptures. This point is essential for Brissot who also emphasized it in his work on the early Church.[17] 'Every Quaker is a Minister, as soon as he feels inspired'.[18] Equality is an integral part of their religion and it includes sexual as well as racial equality, which was supported by their resolution of 1727.[19] Quaker humanitarianism is central to his defense of the sect.[20]

Brissot's support of the Society of Friends was encouraged by his friend Pierre Charles Blot who throughout Brissot's career shared his belief in the importance of humanitarian efforts. On one occasion Blot writes from his home in Lyon, following the publication of the *Examen critique*. He tells Brissot of a letter written in defense of Chastellux, and published in *Le Journal de Paris.*

> *It is a real Diatribe against this respectable Society, in which the writer goes as far as to tarnish the memory of Penn... in truth it appears that the author is angry that there are still some Good People... if you take pen in hand Once More to support such a worthy cause, my friend, paint for us virtue, Good morals... teach us that, whatever anyone might say, without virtue, there can be no Happiness in this Life... Good People, virtuous men may always be persecuted. Indeed!... without persecution, virtue perhaps might make less progress... How sick at heart M. de Crev[ecoeur]... must be to see in us so much perversity... Europeans are really gangrenous... and Writers... ah, they are the most vile and the most corrupt...*[21]

Indeed, Brissot does continue to defend the Quakers and what this sect appears to exemplify for him. How do the fundamental arguments outlined above – the purity of the New World society, the egalitarian model, and the revolutionary vision – play a role in the articulation of Brissot's abolitionist literature?

The ideological content of Brissot's anti-slavery pamphlets must be considered in the context of certain important facts and events of his day. The *Société des Amis des Noirs* was formed at the request of the London Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, itself formed in 1787 as has been mentioned. The work of the French group was besieged from its inception by a number of very real obstacles. It was working in an intellectual environment in which racial tolerance was basically unknown. Although France benefited from the wealth of her colonial possessions, and above all from Saint-Domingue, (the present-day Haiti, granted to France by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1695),

there was general apathy concerning problems so far removed and unrelated to immediate issues of Europe. Specific groups resisting any humanitarian reform in the colonies were plantation owners, merchants living in French port cities engaged in trade with the colonial possessions, and shippers, all of whom felt economically threatened by the idea of possible emancipation. The status of mulattoes became a pressing issue as well, although Brissot saw this question as simply another aspect of his general humanitarian crusade.[22] Furthermore, he and others associated with the *Société* were accused of forming a conspiracy with England, the object of which was to undermine France by abolishing the slave trade and destroying her colonial power.

Despite such a range of opposing forces, Brissot was convinced that his was a fight based on purity and righteousness. After travelling to the United States in 1788, in part to observe at first hand the efforts of abolitionist groups in the New World, Brissot reports to the *Société*, assuring them that although there were difficulties presented by the southern states, the end to the slave trade in America is imminent. His reasoning: the New World, by its very nature, is antithetical to slavery.[23] His image of Blacks forms an integral part of the moral purity he projects onto the New World. He views them with fondness because they have been oppressed. Once given freedom and treated with justice, they will respond virtuously because they are not tainted by European corruption.[24]

In Brissot's *Lettre à Barnave,* a deputy of the National Assembly, there is an interesting application of this obsession with old-world corruption. In March 1790 the Colonial Committee, through Antoine-Pierre Barnave, submitted a report to the Assembly stating among other things that the Assembly should decree no laws on the status of persons in the colonies, except upon the precise and formal demand of the colonial assemblies. This decree, hidden in a preamble to a law, virtually deprived the mulattoes of any chance for citizen status. The Assembly passed the law, never allowing any members of *les Amis des Noirs* to speak. Five days later Brissot wrote to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre of his resulting depression. 'I am good for nothing, my respectable recluse, not even for these unfortunate Blacks who, in spite of all my efforts, have been so cruelly abandoned to their executioners.'[25]

Until this point, Brissot had thought of Barnave as an ally of the revolutionary cause. Wounded by what appeared to him to be a sell-out to the plantation owners, he accuses Barnave of having deceived the National Assembly with his youthful, ingenuous appearance and his reputation as a patriot and democrat. Brissot's construct is, once again,

old-world corrupt values threatening the fresh innocence of the revolutionary effort; Barnave has corrupted the purity of the National Assembly. Infected by a tradition of despotism, it is to a despotic system that Barnave strives to return, bringing all of France with him.[26]

For Brissot the mulattoes are a living example of the white aristocrat's infection of 'natural man' – they are a physical result of the white man's corruption of the Black. They, like the Black, are victims of oppression and persecution. Therefore their rights must be defended.[27] Time and again, Brissot states bluntly that Black, white, mulatto – all are equal by nature.[28] Again, it should be remembered that he was dealing with a public generally convinced that such was not at all the case, that the Black was inferior to the white, less sensitive, and specifically created to serve as beast of burden. Brissot attacks the marquis de Chastellux for his writings on Black inferiority and racial inequality.[29] He denies categorically that Blacks should be treated as property.[30] It is circumstance, the way individuals are treated by society, that shapes them as human beings. 'It is slavery itself which turns men into brutes.'[31]

As a true disciple of Rousseau, Brissot takes great pains to explain that it is not nature that is to blame for the behaviour of slaves; it is slavery itself as a social institution which is at the root of the problem. Therefore, as he has written in his study of criminal code reform, (and here he is no longer following Rousseau's teachings), it is natural for the enslaved to rebel against tyranny. Such rebellion is not criminal because slavery is in itself a crime against nature.[32] His discussion of the effects of tyranny is not limited to Blacks; it is a commentary on the state and the rights of all those oppressed by despotism.[33]

If the effects of oppression are so disastrous, then all men, including Blacks and mulattoes must be educated to be free.[34] Brissot acknowledges that this conviction arises from lessons he has learned reading Locke, Rousseau, Helvétius and Raynal. Like these mentors, he believes that contemporary man can be as good as or, in fact, better than his ancestors, when allowed to develop in a favourable environment.[35]

> The Negroes will never be our friends, or men, as long as they are not like us in all ways, as long as they do not enjoy all our rights. Political liberty is the dividing line between good and evil, order and disorder, happiness and misery, ignorance and enlightenment. Do you wish to make the Negro worthy of you? then raise him to your level by giving him this liberty.[36]

Because in Brissot's view, the revolutionary vision applies to all of humanity, his humanitarian efforts are an integral part of his efforts to

realize the revolutionary dream.[37] The rights of man must be guaranteed to all equally before any other steps can be taken to establish a new society.[38]

In his attempts to deliver his message to colleagues and the public, Brissot faced a barrage of economic arguments which were among the most heated objections to the abolitionist cause. In his pamphlets he argues constantly against these objections. At all times, the essential point for him is the humanitarian issue. A society cannot be built on tyranny.

> If I am the friend of the Blacks, I do not cherish any less all the French; I do not desire any less the prosperity of our maritime cities and that of our colonies. But I want to build that prosperity on foundations more solid than that of injustice and despotism; but I wish to affirm our prosperity on the great principles of liberty and justice.[39]

Again and again he returns to underscore the terrible irony that a people fighting to overthrow despotism and tyranny are themselves despotic and tyrannical.[40] As his efforts met with increasingly strong opposition in the National Assembly and he was confronted with the resistance and personal attack of specific individuals, his approach to this contradiction – the injustice of those fighting for justice – took on a more extreme hue. He saw in the anti-abolition forces an undermining of the Revolution as a whole. This is a logical conclusion for one who considered humanitarianism and the causes of the Revolution to be one and the same. He attacks Barnave for his inconsistent behaviour: Barnave has declared Saint-Domingue to be part of the French Empire, yet he does not agree that this island should be governed by the French constitution. Barnave agrees that all men are entitled to equal rights, yet he does not acknowledge that these rights should be the same everywhere.[41] Brissot accuses Barnave of invoking 'the spirit of old-world despotism'. The Committee on Colonies, with Barnave as its spokesman, had branded as treasonous any attempt to incite uprisings against the colonists or their property. This measure clearly had been aimed at *les Amis des Noirs*. Brissot writes, 'Was this not... to bring back those obscure laws concerning *lèse-majesté*, laws with which a Tiberius would get rid of individuals who defended liberty...?'[42] There can be no exceptions to justice, to the precepts of humanity, liberty and equality.

> They are blind! they do not see the fatal consequences of these exceptions! They do not see that they are cutting their own throats, that they are destroying their

constitution and placing themselves in irons once again! They do not see, for example, that all these classifications of active citizens who are eligible at ten pounds or at a marc, merely change the form of aristocracy. They modify it for a short time to make it more novel, and to make it weigh more cruelly than old-style despotism...[43]

Brissot would have no part of the argument that the islands present specific and unique problems which demand specific solutions. If the whites and Blacks of the islands are created in the same way that Europeans are, then they must be given the same rights.[44] Once the declaration of the rights of man has been affirmed, the Assembly no longer has the power to distinguish among various species of men.[45]

Brissot states that those who are oppressed have a right, in fact, a duty, to rise up in revolt against their oppressors. Any action attempting to suppress a revolt in the name of human rights must automatically be considered seditious.[46] Although it is evident that such statements evolved logically from Brissot's basic premises, they unfortunately made him an easy target for accusations of treason and blame for the eventual disintegration of France as a colonial power. But Brissot saw himself as part of a new and growing humanitarian vanguard, preparing to carry the revolutionary message to all of humanity.

Having gained considerable political influence not only as editor of *Le Patriote françois*, but also as deputy to the Legislative Assembly and the Convention, the forces opposing him began to gather strength. His colonial policy as well as his endorsement of military action against Austria and an unpopular decentralized governmental model were important factors in bringing about his political downfall. He was guillotined in 1793.

The efforts of *les Amis des Noirs*, Brissot's work with the Society of Friends, his pamphlets and articles in *Le Patriote françois*, offered concrete means by which he could transform humanitarian ideology into true revolutionary action. The abolitionist battle was finally won, if only temporarily, after Brissot's execution. But his work had prepared the way and clarified the questions, bringing about a new awareness with respect to prejudice and inequality, issues with which we are battling still today.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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William Neville and Douglas Shepard of the State University College at Fredonia for their valuable suggestions. Any errors are the responsibility of the author.

[2] *Lettres philosophiques sur saint Paul, sur sa doctrine politique, morale & religieuse & sur plusieurs points de la religion chrétienne considérés politiquement* (Hambourg, 1784; Neuchâtel, 1783); *L'Autorité législative de Rome anéantie* N.p., 1784; 1785). Both works were written in 1777. See this author's 'The Roots of Brissot's Ideology', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 13, 2 (1989) [in press].

[3] *Lettres persanes,* ed. Paul Vernière (Paris, 1960), 89–91, 123–4, 158–60, 242–3, 249–50, 254–8; *De l'esprit des lois,* ed. Gonzague Truc, 2 vol. (Paris, 1961), I, 254–73; *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers,* par une société de gens de lettres, 35 vols. (Paris, Neuchâtel, 1751–1780), V, 936–7: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Ces mots *esclavage,* et, *droit* sont contradictoires,' livre I, chapitre iv, *Du contrat social,* in *Oeuvres complètes,* ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond, 4 vol. (Paris, 1961–1964), III, 358; *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes,* III, 111–194; *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* partie iv, lettre 3, II, 412–14. See also Jean-François, marquis de Saint-Lambart, *Les Saisons* (Paris, 1769). Voltaire is a more difficult issue. He discusses Spanish abuses in *Candide, Alzire, Essai sur les moeurs* and *Dictionnaire philosophique,* but his position is questionable from the point of view of general racial prejudice. See Mercier, *L'Afrique noire,* 105–8.

[4] Abbé Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes,* 10 vols. (Neuchâtel, Genève, 1783–1784). See Brissot, *Examen critique des voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale, de M. le marquis de Chatellux[sic], ou Lettre à M. le marquis de Chatellux, dans laquelle on réfute principalement ses opinions sur les Quakers, sur les Negres, sur le Peuple, & sur l'Homme* (Londres, 1786), 98; *Lettre de J.P. Brissot à M. Barnave, sur ses rapports concernant les colonies, leurs conséquences fatales, sur sa conduite dans le cours de la Révolution; sur le caractère des vrais démocrates; sur les bases de la constitution, les obstacles qui s'opposent à son achèvement, la nécessité de la terminer promptement, etc* (Paris, 1970). 48–9. Strict abolitionists, however, including Brissot, did not find the *philosophes'* arguments sufficiently strong. See Brissot, *Mémoires,* 2 vol. Mémoires et documents relatifs aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, ed. Claude Perroud (Paris, 1911), II, 84–6.

[5] A body of laws which defined crimes and punishments from 1670 to the Revolution. There was some attempt at modification during the years just prior to the Revolution. See Louis Masson, *La Révolution pénale en 1791 et ses précurseurs* (Nancy, 1899); Edmond Seligman, *La Justice en France pendant le Révolution (1789–1792),* 2 vol. (Paris, 1901–1913).

[6] *Les Moyens d'adoucir la rigueur des loix pénales en France, sans nuire à la sûreté publique* (Châlons-sur-Marne, 1781); *Le Sang innocent vengé, ou discours sur les réparations dues aux accusés innocens* (Berlin, Paris, 1781); *La Théorie des loix criminelles,* 2 vol. (Berlin, Neuchâtel, 1781); *Bibliothèque philosophique du législateur, du politique, du jurisconsulte,* 10 vol. (Berlin, Paris, 1782–1785). See this author's '*La Théorie des loix criminelles:* Brissot and Legal Reform', *Australian Journal of French Studies* 2 (1989) [in press].

[7] Brissot, 'Des quakers', and review of *Letters from an American Farmer, Journal du Licée[sic] de Londres, ou Tableau de l'état présent des sciences et des arts en Angleterre,* 2 vol. in 1 (Paris, 1784), II, 195–205, 286–288; also *Examen critique des voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale, de M. le marquis de Chatellux[sic]; Réponse à une critique des lettres d'un cultivateur américain, des Quakers, etc., faite par l'auteur anonyme des Recherches sur les Etats-Unis* (N.p., 1788), in which Brissot attacks Philippe Mazzei, an Italian who had recently visited the United States and who had criticized Crèvecoeur. Brissot here

defends Crèvecoeur, and in particular his attitudes toward the Blacks and the Quakers.

[8] Brissot, *Point de banqueroute, ou lettre à un créancier de l'état, sur l'impossibilité de la banqueroute nationale, et sur les moyens de ramener le crédit et la paix* (London, 1787); *Point de banqueroute, ou lettres à un créancier de l'état, sur l'impossibilité de la banqueroute nationale, et sur les moyens de ramener le crédit et la paix,* nouvelle édition, augmentée de trois autres lettres sur la dette nationale (London, 1787).

[9] Clarkson, *History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade,* 2 vol. (London, 1808), I, 257. See Ellery, *Brissot de Warville,* 183.

[10] Brissot and Clavière, *De la France et des Etats-Unis, ou de l'importance de la révolution de l'Amérique pour le bonheur de la France, des rapports de ce royaume et des Etats-Unis, des avantages réciproqes qu'ils peuvent retirer de leurs liaisons de commerce, et enfin la situation actuelle des Etats-Unis* (London, 1787); Brissot, *Correspondance et papiers,* in Mémoires et documents relatifs aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, ed. Cl. Perroud, 4 vol. (Paris, 1912), IV, 142, letter 60 to David Williams, 20 mai 1787.

[11] *Voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale,* 2 vol. (Paris, 1786).

[12] See Nicole Aronson, 'Chastellux et Brissot: deux images de l'Amérique au dix-huitième siècle', *French Review* 49, 6 (1976), 960–71.

[13] *Discours sur la nécessité d'établir à Paris une société pour concourir, avec celle de Londres, à l'abolition de la traite et de l'esclavage des nègres;* prononcé le 19 février 1788, dans une société de quelques amis rassemblés à Paris, à la prière du comité de Londres, 3. Although Brissot did not sign this tract, he is most probably the author.

[14] Brissot, *Examen critique,* 77. Later in his career as a revolutionary politician, Brissot supported the 1792 war against Austria. Although he believed that the war was necessary in order to protect the gains and progress of the Revolution, the policy proved ruinous for both France and Brissot.

[15] Brissot, *Examen critique,* 60. All quotations will retain the original punctuation. Translations are by the author of the present paper who takes full responsibility for them.

[16] Brissot, *Examen critique,* 22. Here the influence of Voltaire is evident. See 'Lettres sur les anglais', no. 1–4, in *Oeuvres complètes,* 13 vol. (Paris, 1876), V, 2–8. Pierre Brodin, 'Les Quakers américains et la France au dix-huitième siècle, *French Review* 49, 6 (1976), 899–908. Voltaire brought the Quakers to the attention of the French reading public. However, Brissot is careful not to refer to Voltaire in his humanitarian writings. He probably felt that Voltaire's position in this area would not help his efforts.

[17] Brissot, *Autorité législative,* 14–15, 38, 39, 44. See also *Patriote françois,* 8 vol. (Paris, 28 juillet 1789–2 juin 1793), no. 543 du mercredi 2 février 1791.

[18] Brissot, *Examen critique,* 41.

[19] Brissot, *Examen critique,* 79.

[20] Brissot, *Examen critique,* 66–7.

[21] Unpublished letter 21 novembre 1786, Archives Nationales 446 AP 1. Philippe Mazzei had written the letter to the *Journal,* using the name Ferri. See note 7.

[22] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave,* 4.

[23] Brissot, *Mémoire sur les Noirs de l'Amérique Septentrionale, lu à l'Assemblée de la Société des Amis des Noirs, le 9 février 1789* (Paris, 20 décembre 1789), 10–12. See also *Patriote françois,* no. 747 du vendredi 26 août 1791, 240, where he quotes from the second volume of his *Nouveau voyage dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, fait en 1788,* 3 vol.; no 780 du jeudi 29 septembre 1791, 383–4; *Réplique de J. P. Brissot à la première et dernière lettre*

de Louis-Marthe Gouy, défenseur de la Traite des Noirs et de l'Esclavage (Paris, 10 février 1791), 43–4.

[24] See Brissot, *Réplique à la première et dernière lettre*, 10, 34 and *Examen critique*, 107 where he defends his belief in the Black's moral purity in contrast with the corruption of European aristocracy.

[25] Brissot, *Correspondance et papiers*, lettre CXIV du 13 mars 1790, 249.

[26] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 3, 10, 12, 17, 20, 70–1, 74, 76, 80–1.

[27] Living proof of the aristocrat's corruption was the plantation owners' and colonists' desire to separate from the *métropole*. Brissot felt sure that the mulatto would remain loyal to the Revolution. Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 55–6, 62–3.

[28] Brissot, *Addresse pour l'abolition de la traite*, 6–7; *Mémoire sur les Noirs*, 95; *Lettre à Barnave*, 61.

[29] Brissot, *Examen critique*, 85–6, 95–6, 108–110.

[30] Brissot, *Mémoire sur les Noirs*, 20–1.

[31] Brissot, *Examen critique*, 86. See also, *Mémoire sur les Noirs*, 28–9, 31–2.

[32] Brissot, *Examen critique*, 90–1. See also, *Théorie des loix criminelles*, I, 276–7, 282–3, 291–2.

[33] Brissot, *Examen critique*, 93–4.

[34] Brissot, *Discours sur la nécessité*, 7–8, 'The proposal to spread [enlightenment] while holding men in irons is to wish to enlighten human beings by depriving them of their eyes; it is to wish to procreate by abortion.'

[35] Brissot, *Examen critique*, 104-6.

[36] Brissot, *Examen critique*, 99

[37] Brissot, *Adresse pour l'abolition*, 19.

[38] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 80.

[39] Brissot, *Réplique à la première et dernière lettre*, 36. When first presenting his ideas for *la Société* in *Discours sur la nécessité*, he did include the interests of planters and their property as part of the society's responsibility, 26. See also *Adresse pour l'abolition de la traite*, 20–22.

[40] Brissot, *Discours sur la nécessité*, 4. He attempts to project an image of the United States in keeping with what he wants to see happen in France. See Brissot, *Mémoire sur les Noirs*, 5–6. See also *De la France et des États-Unis*, 324, where his projection of the American situation moves into the realm of wish-fulfilment.

[41] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 22–3.

[42] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 28, 29. See also *Réplique à la première et dernière lettre*, 15–6.

[43] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 42. See also *Adresse pour L'abolition de la traite*, 2.

[44] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 60.

[45] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 15.

[46] Brissot, *Lettre à Barnave*, 6; *Rélique à la première et dernière lettre*, 32.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Quakerism in Lincolnshire. By Susan Davies. Yard Publishing Services, Lincoln, 1989. Pp. xiv + 129.

In this slim and readable volume Susan Davies has covered the history of Friends in Lincolnshire from the first journeys of Richard Farnworth in 1652 and 1653 to the restoration of meeting houses between 1987 and 1989. It is a nicely balanced study which deals not only with personalities and buildings but also with the religious and spritual life of the Society and its testimonies over nearly 350 years. The author has undertaken much archival research and the book demonstrates also her wide reading in and around the subject. In this way it admirably links the history of Quakerism with the history of the county.

The first half of the book, chapters one to seven, are devoted to the establishment of Quakerism in Lincolnshire and the suffering Friends underwent before the Toleration Act of 1689. It is understandable that this period should receive very full attention as the history is written to commemorate the tercentenary of the building of the first meeting house in Lincoln and the greater toleration in religious worship that arose after 1690. Interestingly we note that persecution of a sort in the form of prosecution for the non-payment of tithes continued into the 1840s, if not later.

The rise of Quakerism occurred at a time of general upheavals in the state which were reflected in Lincolnshire. That some members of the Wray family of Glentworth and Ashby were pro-Quaker is not surprising if one reads about them in *Tudor Lincolnshire* and *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (*History of Lincolnshire,* volumes VI and VII). By the end of the sixteenth century many people had under puritan influence begun to adapt a radical attitude and a ready acceptance of nonconformity.

Throughout the centuries the county has provided several well-known Quaker families (we avoid the word "weighty" nowadays – perhaps even in commas) but it is a comment on family, social and denominational history that 'only members of the Burtt family now remain who are descended from the Lincolnshire farming Friends of the seventeenth century' (p.115).

The book has excellent plans of the distribution of Quaker communities and of the particular and monthly meetings throughout the period. With the exception of the photographed documents, some of which are too small to read without a magnifying glass, the illustrations are very good. And the photograph of Sophia Thompson on her tricycle on p. 105 is superb.

It would have been informative to have had more on the rise of Methodism in the county where it took so firm a hold and some investigation as to whether it contributed to the decline in Quaker numbers. Apart from slight inaccuracies in the description of different tithes, Susan Davies's work is historically sound. This book is essential reading for Friends and for all those interested in the history of nonconformity in Lincolnshire.

Gerald A.J. Hodgett

Friends to China: The Davidson Brothers and the Friends Mission to China 1886–1939. By Charles Tyzack. William Sessions Ltd, York, 1988. £10.75 post paid.

This is a fascinating book. In it Charles Tyzack gives an account of the Davidson family's involvement in the Friends Mission to China between 1886 and 1939. He points out that it is not a definitive history of the Friends Mission because it concentrates on work where the Davidson family members were involved rather than attempting to give an overall picture. But by following the fortunes of four brothers, we become involved in their characters and their adventures; and the story grips us in a way that a more balanced account would find it hard to do.

Their adventures make stirring reading. Warburton Davidson is beaten almost to death; Robert's steamboat sinks in a Yangtse gorge; Alfred lies behind armoured plates on board his vessel; Henry hauls down the military flags from the Meeting House and narrowly avoids imprisonment. It was, of course, a very dangerous period for westerners who wanted to go beyond the Treaty Ports and anti-foreign feeling could be very strong.

For me, there were points of contact between my life and the people and places in this book. I spent time in Chungking and Chengtu in my FAU (Friends Ambulance Unit) days, visiting Tungliang, Tungchwan and Suining; I am cousin to the Wighams mentioned; and I suspect I may have been the last member of a foreign football team to score a goal against those agile school boys at Wen Feng T'a, F.L. Yang's school above Chungking. But the reader needs no points of contact to enjoy this book. It is good reading.

Inevitably when thinking about missions, the question emerges about success in bringing Christianity to the Chinese. If the answer is wanted in terms of numbers of converts, it will look disappointing and I doubt if Friends did any better than anyone else. But Friends did something very special – and the Davidson family led the way in doing it. That was creating close relationships with Chinese people and setting up institutions in which their friendship could flourish. The school at Wen Feng T'a was one; the International Friends Institute in Chungking was important as a point of contact for many years; the YMCA at Chengtu was another; but perhaps the most important and long lasting was the contribution to the creation of the West China Union University in Chengtu of which Robert Davidson was the first chairman. It was created in a remarkable atmosphere of ecumenism that preceded the Edinburgh Conference of 1910.

The Davidsons and their colleagues displayed that Quaker genius for bridging their cultural gaps, working with others in a good cause and getting to know their Chinese partners in 'the things that are eternal'. I remember, when visiting Tungliang and Suining in the 1940s, observing how different were the relations with Chinese people compared with other missions we encountered. Our concept of 'that of God in every man' reaches distant corners.

This book is good history in itself. For completeness it is good to learn that Charles Tyzack might go on to write an overall history of the Friends Mission. Perhaps someone should be embarking on the next chapter of Friends in China – to write a proper history of FAU (and FSU) in China; the files and the diaries are around, not to mention living memory!

Chris Barber

Hedge of Wild Almonds: South Africa, the 'Pro-Boers' and the Quaker Conscience. By Hope Hay Hewison, James Currey, London, 1989. Pp. xviii + 389, illus. £25.00, paperback £12.95.

It seems to me that there is a necessarily spiritual dimension about the writing of any history that deserves the name. The discipline itself is that of entering with an increasing depth of understanding into the personalities and processes of the past. Most of us, I suspect, succumb to its enchantment through the emotional response we find ourselves making to the stories and values we grew up with, or else our rebellious rejection of them. Either way, we are on dangerous ground. We do not spring newly made from the head of time, and we have to come to terms with our formative influences. This is why history is a spiritual activity. This is why many shun or fear the humanities. Before people face the past they have to face themselves.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 is a case in point. I grew up knowing that the 'Boer War' came before 'the Last War'. In my imagination it is associated with faded sepia photographs, the lore of scouting and the tune 'Dolly Gray' played on a barrel organ in Great Russell Street every morning as I went to work in Bloomsbury in the late fifties. I have grown up knowing that the standing enclosures at football grounds are often called 'kops', and that pre-1914 houses sometimes bear strange names like 'Vereeniging'. The assumptions of a vanished imperialism are so multifarious and deeply ingrained that it takes time for someone of my generation to work them out.

This graciously written and attractively produced book is of signal assistance in the process of coming to an understanding of the complexities of the imperial heritage in connexion with contemporary South Africa. Mainly focussed on London Yearly Meeting and its attitudes over a period of just 20 years, it in fact provides a concise account of the history of South Africa from the Dutch settlement of 1653 to the creation of the modern state in 1910. The hedge of the title was originally planted by Jan van Riebeek to mark the separation between the territories of the settlers and the native Hottentots. Throughout the book we encounter the short term advantage and long term misery that flows from the greed for land, and the hedges in the mind which South Africa has such difficulty in uprooting.

The main part of the text follows the phases of the war, beginning with British policy towards the Boer republics, the outbreak of the conflict and the early setbacks, the Boer guerrilla campaign after 1900 when Britain thought the war was won, and the consequent moves by Britain against the civilian population, the immediate consequences of the fighting, and finally the movement towards rapprochement and the emergence of the Union of South Africa. The topic necessarily requires a chronological treatment but the author very skilfully weaves a number of themes into it. There is the general history of South Africa, and stories of Friends in that country and this. Particularly important is the attention given to the indigenous peoples, indentured workers and the non-European immigrants most notable of whom was, of course, M.K. Gandhi.

What emerges is a picture of Friends of almost a 100 years ago struggling with the new complexities the twentieth century has attached to old dilemmas. As has been noticed elsewhere in connexion with Australia, the inward looking nature of nineteenth-century British Quakerism made it ill-equipped to deal with the growth of Quaker communities in what were then the colonies. Partly this was the religious heritage, partly the social isolation in which most Friends then lived. Partly it is an

expression of an ambivalence about the growth in a group which nevertheless dreams of changing the world.

The central narrative shows how the war brought many of these social and theological tensions to a head. Early 1900 found Friends divided into a larger, pro-Boer group, and a smaller group broadly sympathetic to Government policy. The former comprised the more progressive Friends associated with the movement set off by the Manchester Conference, the latter, the older, traditionalist leadership of the Society. Attitudes do not seem to have been based on the kind of grasp of the complexities of the situation which we would consider essential today. The author's thesis is that the terms of contemporary debate, and therefore the outlines of the post-war settlement, were determined by the relations of the Boer republics and the Imperial power, and not a political and social settlement of Southern Africa which took real account of the African and non-white immigrant population. The long term significance of this is obvious.

London Yearly Meeting was no more successful in appreciating this than anybody else. Indeed, it seems that its structure and the variety of opinions held within it prevented the kind of response Friends might look for today. The Friends' South Africa War Victims fund was set up in 1899 but was beset with troubles and proved dilatory, and the 1900 Yearly Meeting is remarkable more for the theological wrangle over its statement on the war than what it actually said. On the other hand, away from corporate restraints, individual Friends were active in the South Africa Conciliation Committee and in support of Emily Hobhouse's work in the concentration camps.

We are therefore offered a subtle judgment on the period. The idealism and practicality show up clearly, as we would expect and indeed want to expect. But also we are shown the limitation of the way we choose, as Friends, to do things. Perhaps we are always in transition, and it was the nature of the emergency in 1899 which made Friends more effective in organisations other than their own, bearing in mind the transition in their own ranks. Even today the question of sanctions divides Friends, so perhaps we are not so very different. Every so often, through an aside, the author reveals her family experience in these events. Her book is a work of highly readable scholarship and also a work notable in intention and execution. It is a real history.

John Punshon

NOTES AND QUERIES

GERARD CROESE

Sonia P. Anderson: *An English consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667–1678* (Clarendon Press, 1989), includes a brief note concerning Gerard Croese, naval chaplain in the Dutch service visiting Smyrna and preaching in the consular chapel there in 1675. Croese's 'General history of the Quakers' was the first standard history of Quakerism to appear. It came out before the end of the seventeenth century, and was only superseded to Friends' satisfaction by Willem Sewel's *History* 20 years afterwards.

Russell S. Mortimer

CAMBRIDGESHIRE FRIENDS

The Victoria County History: *Cambridge and the Isle of Ely,* vol. 9 (Oxford University Press, 1989) includes information on Quaker activities in the following villages around Cambridge: Cottenham, Oakington, Rampton, Long Stanton, Over (and John Ainsloe), Swavesey (meeting house of 1714, in Black Horse Lane, rebuilt after the fire in 1719, sold in 1937) and Willingham.

Russell S. Mortimer

QUAKER COLLECTIONS

In an article by Clive D. Field entitled 'Sources for the study of Protestant Nonconformity in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester' in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester,* volume 71, number 2, Summer 1989 pages 117 to 120 are devoted to recording Quaker documents in the Library's possession. The principal collections are the Midgley Reference Library and four smaller groups of printed books. There are two significant archival collections. The first contains over 200 manuscripts of the Quaker scientist John Dalton (1766–1844) and the second, the papers of John William Graham (1859–1932).

G.A.J.H.

Heather Smith, 215 Bramcote Lane, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2QL wishes to contact anyone who has correspondence to or from or who met the late Sir George Newman (1870–1948) to further her research project.

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FMH Friends' meeting house
MM Monthly meeting
QM Quarterly meeting

The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society

Volume 55

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FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD, LONDON,NW1 2BJ

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ISSN No. 0071 9587

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