

# WHAT HATH MANCHESTER WROUGHT? CHANGE IN THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, 1895 - 1920

## I

When London Yearly Meeting gathered at Devonshire House 100 years ago to consider, among other things, a recommendation from its Home Mission Committee that an extraordinary Conference be convened in Manchester for the purpose of 'making known our distinguishing views' and broadening contact with the larger community, men's and women's meetings met separately, and men had supervision over all meaningful decisions regarding the life of the Society. The separation was not just physical.<sup>1</sup> As one exasperated female noted in the early 1890s, the Women's Meeting was 'chiefly occupied with reading aloud extracts from the *Book of Discipline*, to fill up the time till men Friends come out; some reform is certainly needed.'<sup>2</sup> This situation, said Mary Jane Godlee (1851-1930), an elder and overseer of Ratcliff & Barking Monthly Meeting, seemed 'very curious, and... rather painful to those... who may have believed in the theory that women Friends have always had an equal place with their brethren in the Church.'<sup>3</sup>

When Yearly Meeting again assembled at Devonshire House in the final months of the Great War, this same Mary Jane Godlee, for a time, sat in the Clerk's chair and presided over 'a reverent and prayerful silence...', which, as one participant told her husband, an imprisoned conscientious objector, gave her a sense of 'sharing in the... deep stand for truth in a way which I have not had a chance to do in public before.'<sup>4</sup>

Mary Jane Godlee's opportunity to act as Clerk of Yearly Meeting had resulted from another startling transformation in the public demeanour of Friends. In 1895 Quakers were as respectable and law-abiding as any body of citizens in the United Kingdom. But, in 1918, when John Henry Barlow of Birmingham (1865-1924), handed over the conduct of Yearly Meeting to M.J. Godlee, he proceeded directly to the Guildhall to demonstrate his solidarity with three Friends on trial for

defying, with the full sanction of Meeting for Sufferings, Government censorship regulations.<sup>5</sup>

The Quakers who met at Devonshire House in 1895 were widely renowned for their selfless devotion to appropriately philanthropic causes as well as justly celebrated for their worldly success. As behooves the wealthy and respectable in capitalist societies, Friends could be counted on to maintain the sort of social conservatism that looked askance at unruly behaviour, even in a good cause. In 1918, however, an official Committee on War and the Social Order recommended and Yearly Meeting endorsed a blueprint for collective Quaker social policy called the "FOUNDATIONS FOR A TRUE SOCIAL ORDER," which would unquestionably have shocked and even outraged what one critical voice at the Manchester Conference derisively called 'the dilettante circles of eminently Quaker society.'<sup>6</sup>

And while the War and Social Order Committee was flying in the face of respectable opinion, others officially representing London Yearly Meeting were openly defying the law of the land. By the time Yearly Meeting convened in May 1918, hundreds of Quaker men and a few Quaker women were in jail cells or detention camps for failing to obey Military Service or Defence of the Realm or other Acts imposed by the wartime Government. Most of those imprisoned were members or supporters of the Friends' Service Committee which had refused any cooperation with authorities implementing military conscription.

Thus, between 1895 and 1918 the British Society of Friends, like Jesus on the mountain (Matt. 17, 1-2), appeared to have been transfigured. To have, indeed, resumed aspects of its original form in the mid-seventeenth century when the comfortable and mighty looked upon the children of the Light as 'something new and terrifying.'<sup>7</sup> How had these drastic changes come about? Were they, by and large, instinctive responses to wartime circumstances, or could they be traced to more deeply rooted attitudes and ideas predating the War and being tested by it? How, in fact, had the early twentieth-century Society of Friends prepared for and responded to its greatest trial since the Restoration, a test by war, which for all its tragic circumstances and consequences, ended as a triumph of Quaker faith.

## II

In late November 1895, Henry Stanley Newman, long-time honorary secretary to the Friends Foreign Mission Association, wrote to Rufus Jones of Philadelphia, editor of the *American Friend*, with his assessment of a recent and momentous event for London Yearly Meeting:

The Manchester Conference will mark an era in the history of our Society in England. We have found for some years past... that our Church was *losing grasp* of the highly educated & intelligent young men and women belonging to our best old Quaker families who were receiving first class curriculum at College & then drifting theologically. If our Society was thus to lose its best, a few years might settle our fate. Every Christian Church *must* face modern criticism & modern scientific thought... This Conference is the effort *for the first time* in our Society to *face* this emergency...<sup>8</sup>

H.S. Newman, born in 1837, was not really part of the wave of the future for British Quakerism (although he was editor of *The Friend* from 1892 to 1912), but this former tent meeting evangelist had a clear sense of what Friends were obliged to relegate to the past. Like many others, Newman saw the Manchester Conference as a vital turning point. Indeed, the Conference quickly took on a life of its own which at times attained semi-mythic proportions. Half a century later one participant still recalled Manchester as the time and place where the question of 'Creed or no Creed... took on for me a deeper aspect' as 'the battle was joined' between the 'black of dogma' and the 'white of science.' Unfortunately for Friends, this observer became so engrossed in the prevailing spirit of modernity that he went over to the Christian Scientists.<sup>9</sup>

But that strayed-away Friend was, no doubt, the exception. Many of the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Renaissance of Quakerism remembered the Manchester Conference as the moment when Friends shook free from the Calvinist doctrines of total depravity, the propitiatory Atonement and Biblical literalism and embraced a liberal theology that could accommodate both "modern" thought and primitive Christianity. Recently, Edward Milligan, in one of the small gems he periodically sculpts for the edification of the historically inclined, pointed out that anyone seeking a sense of the nature and degree of theological change in London Yearly Meeting might begin by comparing the *Christian Discipline...* of 1883 with *Christian Life, Faith and Thought...* published nearly 40 years later.<sup>10</sup>

To be sure, the accent of the *Book of Discipline* had been substantially altered during those years, but that theological metamorphosis was well underway by the time the Manchester Conference gathered. Beginning with the publication of *A Reasonable Faith* in 1884,<sup>11</sup> followed within two years by Edward Worsdell's *Gospel of Divine Help*, the intellectual cutting edge of Quaker religious thought had been moving with increased rapidity from evangelical to liberal, from a faith based on right belief apart from the world to one emphasizing Christian experience as the means of remoulding the world. The Manchester Conference did

not initiate any fundamental changes in the realm of Quaker theology, it confirmed the dominance of modern thought as the wave of the future.

There was a confrontation of sorts at Manchester between the aged patriarch of evangelical Quakerism, Joseph Bevan Braithwaite (1818-1905), and four intellectually prominent, liberally inclined Friends who, if they disagreed on theological details, collectively believed that the key to Quakerism was not the limiting Word of Scripture but the defining Light of Christ. The contest was manifestly uneven, not only because JBB could not be present to read his own paper but also because his adversaries, Thomas Hodgkin, Silvanus Thompson, John William Graham and J. Rendel Harris, seemed so spiritually fresh and intellectually *au courant*. No doubt many young Friends to whom JBB particularly addressed his remarks were alternatively amused and irritated by Braithwaite's admission that the substance of his remarks had been 'written nearly 50 years ago' while he simultaneously counselled them 'to put a check upon many curious but unprofitable enquiries... and be even content to remain ignorant of many things' better left unexamined.<sup>12</sup>

The rhetorical triumph of a New Theology at the Manchester Conference was said to have elicited 'widespread sympathy... especially amongst... younger Friends' who had been made aware 'that they could accept the new conclusions of scientific and historical research, without any loss of faith...'<sup>13</sup> But, in retrospect, the voice most frequently recalled and the name most widely celebrated was that of 27-year old John Wilhelm Rowntree (1868-1905).<sup>14</sup> When Rowntree pleaded that the 'sluggish self-complacency... spiritual pride [and] false respectability' of the contemporary Society of Friends be replaced by a faith 'deeper in its basis, clearer in its vision, [and] broader in its charity' which could speak with a strong, fresh voice to the 'seeming chaos' of the world, his words seemed to touch a deep core of Quaker sensibility and spirituality.<sup>15</sup>

The necessary re-evaluation of John Wilhelm Rowntree, or better the two John Wilhelms—saintly white knight on the verge of discovering what Larry Ingle has called the "Quaker Holy Grail" or very human young dynamo who died before his vision or his mission could be fulfilled—has barely begun.<sup>16</sup> But for our purposes a useful cue may be taken from Roger Wilson's assertion that meaningful and practical response to the Manchester Conference was in large measure due to 'the Christian passion, the intelligent imagination and the... entrepreneurial skill of John Wilhelm Rowntree.'<sup>17</sup>

Before he died in 1905, JWR brought many things to British Quakerism, one of the most important was his friendship with Rufus

Jones. The one really innovative religious idea to emerge from early twentieth-century Quakerism was not touched upon at Manchester but imported from America and planted in British soil by Rufus Jones. Well before he met John Wilhelm in 1897, Jones had developed a theory which connected the ideas of George Fox and other early Friends to a brand of Christian mysticism carried to England from the continent at various stages of the Reformation. Jones' research led him to conclude that Quakerism was not a radical spin-off from Puritan Calvinism but rather a thoroughgoing rejection of it, a life-enhancing spiritual religion fully compatible with the most challenging discoveries of modern thought.<sup>18</sup>

British Friends of a liberal persuasion enthusiastically embraced Jones' notion of Quakerism as a mystical faith, buttressed by traditions of Quaker life and worship and directly influenced by "leadings" of the Light. For them, Jones' mystical Inward Light theology was a sort of *deus ex machina*, permitting both the severance of ties with the harsher aspects of evangelical theology and the pursuit of spiritual answers entirely within the intellectually respectable context of modern, optimistic liberal thought. Placing human progress in the vanguard with a mystical faith in Christ, liberals in the era of the Quaker Renaissance seemed to have an unbeatable combination – a way open not simply for the survival of the Society of Friends but for its expanding influence as a vital religious community.<sup>19</sup>

John Wilhelm Rowntree and Rufus Jones became the titular leaders of Reformed Quakerism. And, to quote Maurice Creasey:

Out of that partnership... was to come a modern interpretation of the very meaning and universality of spirit of the Quaker Faith as one of the dynamic forms of mystical religion, the religion of life...<sup>20</sup>

Their collaboration also helped to spark a revitalization of interest in Quaker history which generated, among other things, the Friends Historical Society, the publication of Norman Penney's edition of *The First Publishers of the Truth* and, ultimately, the Rowntree Quaker History Series.<sup>21</sup>

Another of John Wilhelm Rowntree's contributions to the renewal of British Quakerism was in his collaboration with George Cadbury (1839-1922) in constructing the physical and spiritual base for Woodbrooke, an institution which would provide a vital intellectual and spiritual centre for Quakerism before, during and after the ordeal of the Great War. The earliest germination of Woodbrooke was in George Cadbury's complaint at the Manchester Conference about "the dead

formality” of so many Friends’ meetings. Their Religious Society would never again flourish, Cadbury asserted, until its members ‘realized the importance of earnest, life-giving, educated Gospel ministry.’<sup>22</sup> Eighteen months later John Wilhelm initiated the process which, through a fortuitous combination of Rowntree imagination and Cadbury generosity, would eventually lead to the launching of Quaker Summer Schools in 1897 and to the establishment of Woodbrooke six years later.<sup>23</sup>

The Manchester Conference did, then, directly or indirectly, advance or initiate theological and institutional developments which proved of enormous significance in transforming British Quakerism. But other vitally important questions were either ineffectively addressed at Manchester or simply ignored. Among these were the role of women, Quaker social policy and the peace testimony.

Nearly a third of the speakers at Manchester were women, unusual for the time perhaps, although fully in keeping with the tradition of a strong Quaker female ministry. But while Friends took pride in having had, unlike most Churches, the benefit of knowing ‘the work of God’s spirit when he speaks to the women,’ not a single *Minute* approved at Manchester mentioned the status of females. But when, in the midst of one intense discussion, the indomitable Ellen Robinson (1840-1912) called upon the Clerk to ‘kindly silence the men a little bit’ so that the meeting might receive more light and less heat, Friends were put on notice of a question with which they would be forced to grapple during the impending century.<sup>24</sup>

Such grappling as occurred in the next two decades produced no startling alterations. In 1898 women were, two centuries after George Fox’s death, finally admitted to Meeting for Sufferings. When the separate Women’s Yearly Meeting was abolished ten years later, Mary Jane Godlee was appointed second assistant Clerk of the united Yearly Meeting. These were, to be sure, modest advances, but given the growing general recognition of the need for an expanded social and political role for women, it is somewhat surprising that Friends, as a Society, were so silent on the question of women’s place or even women’s rights. When in 1910 a group of women Friends appealed to Meeting for Sufferings for the opportunity ‘to express their united sympathy with the cause of women’s suffrage,’ it was decided that the time was not yet ripe for such a dialogue.<sup>25</sup>

Two years later a statistical study revealed that with regard to assigning positions of responsibility and authority, Friends were more a microcosm of the larger society than many found comfortable. For while women constituted a majority in nearly every type of meeting in

Britain and made up two-thirds of attenders at meetings for business, all 17 Quarterly Meeting Clerks as well as 74 out of 80 Monthly Meeting Clerks were men.<sup>26</sup> The 1912 edition of the *Christian Discipline...* did forcefully re-emphasize the principle of spiritual equality in the 'freedom of the Gospel' where there was 'neither Jew nor Greek . . . bond or free . . . male or female,' while concluding, in apparent absence of mind, that 'all are one *man* in Christ Jesus.'<sup>27</sup> That was where matters still stood until the crisis of the Great War provided females not only increased opportunities for service but unprecedented occasions to lead, or sometimes to drag, their Religious Society in new, previously uncharted directions.

Another vexatious brush with the future at the Manchester Conference concerned Social Questions. Considerable time was given over to this topic, but the resulting discussion was largely confined to pious personal summaries of philanthropic deeds illustrating how Friends with a few spare hours or pounds could make meaningful contact with the working classes.<sup>28</sup> There were also uncomfortable moments which threw glaring light not only on the tepid quality of Quaker ideas about social reform but also on the nature of Quaker attitudes toward the equality of believers, at least in the sight of man. During one discussion, Kenerie Ward, a barely literate farm labourer, related how, after years of vainly seeking for spiritual comfort, the silence of a Friends' meeting had become 'the starting point in my life.' But lest Friends wax prideful at the winning of this humble soul, Ward struck a discordant note in describing how after 'I went to that meeting for five months... only one man... ever spoke to me.' Even years later, Ward said, some of the meeting's elders had still not recognized his presence. 'All these things keep people away from *your* Church,' Ward needlessly concluded.<sup>29</sup> This awkward moment underlined, as one female speaker noted, also the feeling of at least some working class people that while their worship might 'be good enough for the Lord,' it might not be 'good enough for Friends.'<sup>30</sup>

It was painful enough for the Society to be reminded of its propensity for embracing philanthropy while shunning its intended recipients. But when 25-year old Samuel Hobson (1870-1940) made a pitch for wholesale Quaker conversion to socialism, the comfortable bourgeois world of Victorian Friends seemed to be spinning out of control. Hobson, a Fabian Socialist and former secretary to Keir Hardie, asserted that by making 'some great corporate pronouncement... for social progress,' the Conference could provide the socialist movement with the 'religious enthusiasm' which might ensure its ultimate triumph would be peaceful.<sup>31</sup>

Hobson's dramatic appeal elicited no overwhelming response. But if the Manchester Conference could not get beyond traditional philanthropy and *noblesse oblige*, a small group of young Friends soon took up the cause Sam Hobson had heralded. In April 1898 the Socialist Quaker Society (SQS) was formed by seven young Friends who believed that the Universal Brotherhood implied by the Inner Light could not 'be realized under the present competitive system. . . .'<sup>32</sup>

Few of their fellow Quakers were impressed. When the newly formed SQS asked the Premises Committee at Devonshire House for use of a meeting room, they were unceremoniously turned down.<sup>33</sup> Although the keepers of Friendly space eventually relented and Socialist Quaker gatherings became a fixture at early twentieth-century Yearly Meetings, socialism made few inroads among Friends and SQS membership remained static at a few dozen through most of the pre-war period.<sup>34</sup>

One possible reason for the SQS's floundering was the emergence of the Friends' Social Union, an officially-sanctioned vehicle for the socially committed. Organized in 1903 by a group of weighty and respectable Quakers led by Seebohm Rowntree, the FSU was the first corporate body of Quakers to undertake a systematic and "scientific" approach to social concerns.<sup>35</sup> The Union diligently sought to 'evoke the spirit of Justice and of Social Service, and to apply our Religious Faith consistently to our Social and Civic Life...' But while FSU *Minutes* and published materials reveal an abundance of unwavering moral earnestness, it produced a paucity of meaningful social consequences.<sup>36</sup> The Union's *Minute Book* was full of references to the work to be undertaken and the means for developing it, but these are concurrent with complaints from bemused Friends about the 'indefinite nature' of FSU proposals, about a sense of inadequacy for remedying known evils or even about being 'unable to discover anything that needs to be remedied.'<sup>37</sup>

The Friends' Social Union wafted through the pre-war decade, active and earnest, full of respectably fashionable ideas about ways and means for putting Quakerism to the forefront of the campaign for social justice and moral rejuvenation, but, finally, unable to fix a unique role for their Religious Society. In the meantime, the Socialist Quaker Society had by 1912 managed to attract some attention and double in its membership (to around 120) by publishing an "Open Letter" to Friends on the futility of working within the capitalist structure to remedy the social ills caused by that rapacious system.<sup>38</sup> More significant was the launching of the SQS's own journal, *THE PLOUGHSHARE*, edited by William Loftus Hare (1868-1943), a convinced Friend and zealous advocate for

socialism. The fact that SQS survived at all was a tribute to the band of true believers who, with Hare, continued to see socialist principles as the political and economic counterpart to Quaker religious beliefs. One such enthusiast, after attending an inconclusive Friends Social Union Conference in the spring of 1914, noted: 'I have come away... with a strengthened sense of the need for the Socialist Quaker Society... May the SQS be ready... to present our message when the Society of Friends is ready to hear it.'<sup>39</sup> Within a few months, the Great War would begin to provide Quaker socialists with circumstances which seemed to make their message both relevant and timely.

Oddly, the principle which would undergo most drastic alteration and exert most profound influence on early twentieth-century Friends, the peace testimony, received but passing reference at the Manchester Conference.<sup>40</sup> One obvious reason for this neglect was the lack of a crisis to bring peace principles into focus. If the Jameson Raid had taken place in October rather than December of 1895, Friends might have had a great deal more to say about the dangers of militarism and imperialism. Still, this lack of focus may, in fact, have reflected a lack of any consensus as to what Friends' witness for peace would or should entail in the modern world. Certainly, as Hope Hewison has made abundantly clear in *A Hedge of Wild Almonds*, nothing like a consensus emerged when tensions in South Africa erupted into a long, nasty and popular war which provoked embarrassingly public disputes among Friends, leading some to question whether the peace testimony had become 'little more than a pious opinion.'<sup>41</sup> But the conflict in South Africa also forced the sort of pithy reconsideration of peace principles that Friends had avoided for a long time. One result was the appointment of a special Deputation charged to visit every Monthly Meeting in Britain 'with a view to arousing our members to their responsibility... of maintaining our "testimony for peace"...'<sup>42</sup>

In 1904 the Peace Deputation reported back to Yearly Meeting that it had received a 'warm response' noting especially the self-denying and untiring effort of younger Friends' to give practical effect to their peace testimony.<sup>43</sup> In fact, during the decade between the reception of this Report and the outbreak of the Great War, the size and scope of Quaker peace activities did surpass anything previously undertaken. There was much with which to be concerned and Friends responded with a multi-layered peace activism: opposing budgets, aggressive imperialism, the drilling of schoolboys, the National Service League's campaign for compulsory service and even the Australasia laws which introduced the compulsory training of youth in those Islands. On the positive side, Friends promoted peace societies, international peace congresses and

the Norman Angell Movement while Yearly Meeting in 1912 defined the content and meaning of "Our Testimony of Peace" more carefully than Friends had ever done before.<sup>44</sup>

The impetus for this activity came not only from the official Peace Committee of Meeting for Sufferings<sup>45</sup> but also from the Young Friends' Movement which, under the guiding hand of Neave Brayshaw, blossomed under the Edwardian period and would prove an indispensable vehicle for carrying social ardour and religious fervour in the Quaker struggle against the First World War.

In the midst of the glorious summer of 1914, *The Friend* reported on a campaign undertaken by Sussex Friends 'to place before rural people the evils of militarism.' Dozens of meetings had been held for audiences of up to 300 and despite the occasional "rough crowd," as at the Romsey horse-fair, the Quaker peace message had been well-received. Surely, the editor mused,

such sustained and well-organised work will have its effect in the promotion of a peaceable spirit and a right understanding amongst those who have not hitherto considered whether there is not 'a better way.'<sup>46</sup>

That was on 31 July 1914.

### III

And where were you when the war began?

... sitting on a bench looking out over the Irish Sea as my father talked with breaking heart ... about the world would never be the same again... The beauty of the sea, of the long stretching line of the Welsh Coast, seemed to mock at us. To think that the long & patient work for Peace should bring - this!<sup>47</sup>

These are two recollections: a Quaker boy of eight and a middle-aged Friend, each spending the final hours of peace on holiday by the sea and neither grasping what had transpired. 'All is bewildering, confused... and hidden', lamented *The Friend*, 'some ghoulissh terror of darkness or pestilence that wasteth in noonday'.<sup>48</sup> 'Many Friends do not know "where they are",' wrote Ernest Taylor (1869-1955) after his return from Wales. He feared that some Quakers, 'caught by the "urgency" and "righteousness of *this war*"', were becoming "very cold" with regard to peace'. Colder, perhaps, than he imagined. Friends may not have been surprised to learn that two Quaker Tory MPs had abandoned the peace testimony for the national cause, but members of Meeting for Sufferings were probably jolted when Henry Marriage Wallis enjoined

them to assist in recruiting Quaker youth for the crusade to crush the Hun.<sup>49</sup>

And they did join. Eventually nearly 1,000 or one-third of all male Friends of military age served.<sup>50</sup> About the same percentage of all Quakers openly supported the war and an indeterminate number drifted, confused and demoralized. In the spring of 1915, a *Minute* of Pontefract Meeting noted 'the depression... and... perplexity which so many Friends are feeling as to the right attitude to adopt'.<sup>51</sup>

One of those who attempted to speak to the condition of these wavering brethren was Wilfred Littleboy, a Birmingham chartered accountant and leader in the Young Friends Movement. 'No one,' Littleboy said,

can honestly take our stand against all war without being committed to a higher and more exalting service, one leading to love and life and not to hatred and death.<sup>52</sup>

Stirring stuff. But were even Friends prepared to heed such words while the siren song of Rupert Brooke pleaded for "the red/Sweet wine of truth"? Joshua Rowntree, a former MP, also wondered. It is very natural, he noted

that with the seething of the war fever all around some of our young people should long to do something to lessen the misery & prove that they do not shirk enlistment from cowardice.<sup>53</sup>

The Society, officially and otherwise, did attempt to provide active alternatives to young Quakers, the Friends Ambulance Unit and the Friends' War Victims Volunteers being the most prominent.<sup>54</sup> But amidst this wheeling and shuffling, one thing at least becomes clear. Quakers who marched away with the forces thereby lost all influence over the direction their Society would take with regard to the war. By and large, this direction was placed into the hands of young stay-at-homes who resisted the war and conscription.

The first opportunity for anti-war Friends to give corporate witness to their peace testimony was at Yearly Meeting in 1915. From this gathering the two most significant vehicles for organizing wartime resistance emerged. Yearly Meeting approved of the creation of a Committee of 20 young men 'to strengthen the Peace testimony among Friends of military age.' This group, calling itself the Friends Service Committee, held a separate meeting for young men of military age which produced a recommendation, endorsed by Yearly Meeting, that

in the event of conscription no exemption be given to Friends that was not equally applicable to non-Quakers.<sup>55</sup> A second new Committee originated in a recommendation from the Friends Social Union 'urging Friends to consider the relations between War and the prevailing Social Condition.'<sup>56</sup> Yearly Meeting responded by authorizing the appointment of a Committee 'to investigate what connection there is between the war and the social order... and to consult with those Friends who have been led, owing to the war, to... a personal readjustment of their way of life.'<sup>57</sup> The resulting War and the Social Order Committee (WSOC) had 36 original members (including 11 women), half of whom were drawn from the executive Councils of either the Friends Social Union or the SQS. Membership would change and grow, but the WSOC proved to be 'the most lively London Committee' of the wartime period and, for a time, the most radical as well.<sup>58</sup>

The sense of the first wartime Yearly Meeting was clear from the words of its Clerk, John Henry Barlow, that the peace testimony 'springs from the very heart of our faith... [and] must be a reality in our lives...'<sup>59</sup> Such decisiveness seemed to have the desired effect. Ernest Taylor thought 'Y.M. did good' in making Friends 'more contented.' But, he also remained concerned that members were still enlisting and that the peace camp was growing restless. 'One wants so to help in ways that some people call "radical"'.<sup>60</sup>

As the threat of conscription grew during the final months of 1915, the opportunity for radical action was at hand. The Service Committee responded by issuing a manifesto whose tone harkened back to the unbending religious radicalism of the first Quakers:

The stand Friends have always taken against military service has been based on deep conscientious conviction, and not on grounds of expediency... we assume that Friends will stand fast to their belief in... the principles of Jesus Christ... be the consequences what they may.<sup>61</sup>

At the time the FSC was announcing this no compromise course, one of its members, the Yorkshire MP Arnold Rowntree, was consulting with a group of influential Quakers, including William Charles Braithwaite, the official historian of Quakerism, and Richard Cross, the business manager of *The Nation*, on the feasibility of a special "conscience" clause being inserted into any future conscription act.<sup>62</sup> Their responses to this enquiry offer a surprising contrast to the attitudes and ideals expressed by the Service Committee. Braithwaite, for example, envisioned a bill specially designed for Friends, exempting them without individual proof of conscientious objection, and also requiring

that those exempted 'offer some alternative service approved by the authority,' including hospital service with the Royal Army Medical Corps, mine-sweeping or other 'indispensable work' such as munitions manufacturing.<sup>63</sup>

Braithwaite was counselling the sort of arrangement that the Service Committee had specifically rejected because, as he told Arnold Rowntree:

we ought to make it easy for the State to get good equivalent service. Our duty to our country is just as clear a demand on us as our duty to parents or neighbours, and holds us bound by these ties from which we cannot separate ourselves, and which are part of the relations of life which are to be discharged in fear of God.<sup>64</sup>

Richard Cross feared that 'a very large minority of the Society' were ready to abandon the peace testimony altogether, therefore he wished to ensure the unimpeachable righteousness of any position taken by the Society. Quaker objection to military service was, he said, 'a matter of high spiritual conviction,' and Friends 'ought not to dishonour that conviction by joining forces with disloyal cranks, who want to enjoin rights without performing duties.'<sup>65</sup>

The positions taken by Friends like W.C. Braithwaite and Richard Cross illustrate the dilemma of Quakers caught between their historical traditions and their patriotic impulses. These middle-aged Friends were committed to a peace testimony which while it would constrain Quakers from fighting with carnal weapons would also demonstrate that as loyal subjects of King and country, they were prepared to contribute to the commonweal. Leaders of the next generation had concluded that the only legitimate stand for Quakers to take was not just to oppose the war but to attempt to stop it.

With the passage of the Military Services Acts in 1916, Friends had to decide which of these interpretations to embrace. In an extraordinary "Adjourned Yearly Meeting" in late January 1916, the decision was for a policy of resistance to conscription and non-cooperation with the war effort. Thus, Friends officially put themselves in a position *vis-à-vis* the State not unlike that of their ancestors during the Restoration when the Quaker and Conventicle Acts threatened the free exercise of their faith.

There was still another dimension to the Quaker struggle against the war. Socialist Friends insisted that any Quaker scheme for re-ordering British society that might be devised by the War and Social Order Committee should incorporate a plan for the overthrow of the

competitive capitalist system which, as they believed, was the handmaiden of all wars and strife.

From February 1916 Quaker socialists trumpeted their adversarial relationship with the capitalist State in an enlarged and expanded version of *THE PLOUGHSHARE*.<sup>66</sup> The first issue of the new series, published immediately after the passage of conscription, announced that Friends, indeed all humanity, faced 'the Real Armageddon... not a war *between* the Kingdoms of the earth but *against* them all':

We believe that the greatest of all issues – the Armageddon issues – are becoming clearer than they have been for many a long day, and they who perceive them will infallibly fight on the right side in all the lesser wars here below.<sup>67</sup>

It remained to be seen if such a vision could somehow be transmitted to the entire Society of Friends.

Thus, two radical agendas took shape among anti-war Friends: the Service Committee's refusal to compromise its peace principles by co-operation with the State, and the Socialist Quaker Society's declaration of the need to overthrow that State and replace it with a Christian socialist regime preparing the way for the Kingdom of God on earth. A third formula might be added to this mix. During the final two years of the war, the radical thrust of Quaker pacifism and Quaker socialism was to a considerable extent directed by female Friends. Some of these women came to associate the origins and prolongation of the war with the same principles of force and domination which had kept their sex in a state of perpetual subjection for so long. For them, feminism and pacifism, and often socialism as well, became inseparable weapons in the struggle for human emancipation.<sup>68</sup>

As the contest against the authorities heated up, the no-compromise faction of the FSC had reason to be confident of the support of younger Quakers. In December 1915, a Service Committee poll of over a thousand male Friends revealed that about 85 per cent supported the FSC's pledge 'to refuse to enlist, to make munitions, or to do work entailing the military oath.'<sup>69</sup> Such a result clearly marked the flowering of the shoots planted during the pre-war Young Friends Movement. This blooming had been carefully nurtured by Neave Brayshaw, whose importance has, as it seems to me, been consistently underrated. Many simply did not take Neave seriously, perhaps because of his propensity to burst into tears at emotional moments which earned him the nickname "Puddles."<sup>70</sup> While organizing the "tramps" and other social activities of pre-war Young Friends, Brayshaw never neglected the 'deep spiritual basis for all our work.' At the Swanwick Conference of

1911, the high water mark for pre-war Young Friends, Brayshaw set the tone for reminding his audience that the peace testimony was 'a necessary outcome of our root belief... the... one organic, vital principle which permeates the whole...' Mere passive resistance, he noted, would not suffice, for the Quaker witness must be vital, 'not simply against the act of war but against the spirit that makes war possible.'<sup>71</sup> During the war years many of those present would act out the spirit Brayshaw was attempting to convey:

May... we go away from this place strong for the work that lies before us... and together build the Holy City... the way of perfect peace is also the holy war... the highest happiness is not known apart from fellowship in the sufferings of Christ.

And he concluded, evoking Albrecht Dürer's plea for Erasmus to lead the struggle against

the unjust tyranny of earthly power, the power of darkness... [and] in the face of all the sore need of the world, in this day of the battle of God... it may be for some of you, to gain the martyr's crown!<sup>72</sup>

Once the war began, Brayshaw consistently pursued the theme that the war and conscription were exactly that trial of faith for which Quakerism had been preserved and that those unequal to the task of resistance had no warrant to call themselves true Friends. The sole justification for the survival of Quakerism as a separate body, he noted, was

doing work... not being done elsewhere... We Friends are something more than a social or semi-religious club... We exist not for ourselves but to make our contribution to the world in bearing witness to our belief..<sup>73</sup>

In the end, however, the stance taken by Neave Brayshaw and the radical war resisters of the Service Committee was not the one to which most young male Friends adhered. When the Government actually made good on its threats to punish those who refused to serve, more and more Quakers, like the general CO population, opted for some form of alternative service. The way of these so-called "alternativists" was made smoother through the work of Quaker MPs like T.E. Harvey and Arnold Rowntree who took pains to ensure that the alternative service offered to alternativist COs did not involve even indirect connection with the armed forces. Still, this apparent working at cross purposes

caused some friction and hard feelings between the no-compromise camp and those who willing to accept alternatives.<sup>74</sup>

Some of the most vehement defenders of the absolutist stand were the women who were beginning to play an expanded role in the deepening and apparently all-consuming crisis facing Friends. A short time after the appointment of the Young Men's Service Committee a separate Women's Service Committee was also created, largely as an afterthought.<sup>75</sup> When young males began to be arrested and imprisoned as conscientious objectors and the ranks of the FSC thinned, Esther Bright Clothier (1873-1935), a granddaughter of John Bright, wrote to the Chairman of the men's committee expressing extreme displeasure at the fact that despite the expanding crisis, the women's committee had been given little to do,:

I think in Friends' things we ought not to exclude either sex... After all, the work the Friends Service Com[mitt]ee is doing is the great work of Friends at present and women have to share in the blessing that comes in such work - I am sick of being told Conscription is a man's question - it isn't - and I know you and probably all the Service Com[mitt]ee would agree.<sup>76</sup>

Within a month of this challenge, the Service Committee had ceased to be gender exclusive, and just in time. As more and more male Friends were consigned to prison or detention camps, Quaker women took an increasingly large and ultimately indispensable role in keeping their Society in the forefront of the struggle against conscription and the war.<sup>77</sup>

The presence of women on the Service Committee did not alter the hardline to which it adhered. On the contrary, the women seemed to sharpen the Committee's resolve to maintain its position against the Government, against the pliancy of compromising Friends and even against the political stance taken by secular CO allies as represented by the largely socialist and partly Quaker No-Conscription Fellowship. When the NCF determined to make the issue of occasional mistreatment and consistent hardship of prisoners for conscience a part of their struggle against the Government, the Service Committee not only rejected any connection with attempts to mitigate the conditions for imprisoned or interned COs but also convinced Meeting for Sufferings to support its position.<sup>78</sup>

Late in 1916, as older and influential Friends were attempting to strike some bargain with the Government that would bring about the release of imprisoned Quakers and prevent further detention of others,<sup>79</sup> Edith Wilson, an Assistant Clerk of Yearly Meeting since 1915,

addressed the question of Quakers and alternative service in an article for *THE PLOUGHSHARE*.<sup>80</sup> Although it was, Wilson said, quite natural for older male Friends to try to work out some means by which younger members could avoid both the spiritual inconsistency of military service and the physical unpleasantness of prison, it was not acceptable. Once individuals determined to place their religious convictions before the commands of a State engaged, as they believed, in an evil enterprise, such individuals, Wilson said, were no longer at liberty to compromise with that State and thereby, at least implicitly, to condone its evil actions. By arranging schemes for special treatment, older Friends were, Wilson believed, tempting the conscientious objector to bargain with a thing he regards as essentially evil,' and, in effect, to become a defector from the battle against militarism.

It is a tragedy of advancing years that wealth, and honours, and position, and comfort, gain such a hold upon us that it becomes well-nigh impossible to believe that young men are willing to sacrifice all these things, and life itself, in the pure joy of a quest for truth.<sup>81</sup>

With the absolutist faction of the Service Committee, Edith Wilson asserted that any attempt by Quakers to gain exemption or concessions from the Government was

an acknowledgement that the laws of God are not really applicable in the Kingdoms of this world, and therefore it is no use trying to make them universal... it [is]... an unconscious yielding to the temptation to use a religious conviction as a plea for a political concession rather than as an inspiration to service and to sacrifice.<sup>82</sup>

What Edith Wilson and other leaders of the absolutist camp were saying, if they were saying anything, that it was the war itself rather than any single act or group of acts arising from the war that the peace testimony was about; the question, they said, was not: 'Do Friends refrain from fighting with carnal weapons, but, were Friends trying by every possible means to stop the war?' Most other Christian COs, including the numerically larger Plymouth Brethren and Christadelphians, refused service because, as they saw it, the conflict in Europe was not their war. Quaker absolutists, on the other hand, would not perform even alternative service because the war emphatically was their war -the one their Society had been preparing to resist for two and a half centuries and the one from which it would emerge as a prophet society for transforming the world into the Kingdom of Christ.

One of the absolutists who articulated this view was Wilfred Littleboy, the Birmingham accountant who spent over two years in His Majesty's prisons. Writing to FSC secretary Edith Ellis (1878-1963) who would later be imprisoned herself, Littleboy noted that conscription was

absolutely wrapped up with the whole war question. We cannot conceive England or any other country continuing as a war state without some form of Conscription, and therefore... calling attention to the evils thereof is really a sort of addendum to the whole question.<sup>83</sup>

Only 145 young Quakers, or about five percentage of those of military age, joined with Littleboy in sustaining the "absolutist" position. But Meeting for Sufferings adopted and Yearly Meeting affirmed this stance as the official position of the Society. Thus, by establishing a radical new version of the peace testimony, a tiny body of absolutist conscientious objectors was able to set a new standard for Quaker war resistance. In so doing, they permanently transformed the way in which their Religious Society faced the secular world which they were engaging in a way their ancestors had never done. This was not because the crisis of war and conscription allowed Friends to reach a real consensus, but because a minority alliance of young pacifists and middle-aged zealots grasped the moment to lead their Society, kicking and screaming as may be, to support, as official policy, a new and radical interpretation of their historic, but previously somewhat amorphous, peace testimony.

The same process was, in fact, taking place with regard to Quaker social policies. As the crisis of Quaker resistance to the commands of the State broadened and deepened so did the response of the War and Social Order Committee. In its earliest manifestations the WSOC seemed to be firmly in the grasp of its liberal, FSU element. After the passage of conscription, however, the change in the Committee's demeanour may be illustrated by the public utterances of its Chairman, Jonathan Edward Hodgkin, consulting engineer, businessman and scion of an old and weighty Quaker family.<sup>84</sup>

Early in 1916, J.E. Hodgkin set out his own version of the Committee's objective for readers of *THE PLOUGHSHARE*:

We feel that... the present social system has as its outcome a state of international... warfare. It is to a new way of Life that men are looking, if we can embody in practical life an example of the testimony we hold, not only *against* all war, but for a new World Order, we shall surely have made an effective contribution to our day and generation.<sup>85</sup>

Speaking for the SQS, *THE PLOUGHSHARE*, maintained that because the capitalist warrior State was, by its very nature, 'antagonistic to the efforts of those seeking to establish the Kingdom of God,' winning such, the legacy of which Hodgkin spoke, would require front-line fighters to come to 'grips with present-day evils.' Men and women willing 'to suffer in an unpopular cause' and taking as their inspiration 'those early Quakers who did and dared everything for the right to express the truth which was working through them...' The days of the Apostles and the primitive Quakers are with us once again,' one Friend noted, and, for socialist Quakers at least, the model for their deportment was not George Fox but Gerard Winstanley who, 'whilst voicing the religious views of Friends, had a practical expression... far beyond anything of which... our forefathers dreamed.'<sup>86</sup>

In such an atmosphere the WSOC in 1916 presented its first report, entitled "Whence Come Wars?," to the most momentous Yearly Meeting since the days of the early Quaker martyrs. On behalf of the Committee, J.E. Hodgkin asked:

Is the Society... content to remain a highly respected body of spiritual epicures, or is it realising, as in the stirring days of its early history, that it has a message for the world which must be given, cost what it may?<sup>87</sup>

Yearly Meeting provided no definitive answers to Hodgkin's question. "Whence Come Wars?" was received with thanks and discussed at length but only as 'the first stage.' Still, as the historian of wartime Quakerism noted, some of those in attendance were 'unsettled, shaken... [that] one of Yearly Meeting's own committee's was asking whether this comfortably middle-class Society... was either relevant or useful.'

For its part, *THE PLOUGHSHARE* was pleased that the Committee had 'directed attention to the theoretical and historical efforts of a more or less revolutionary kind in the realm of industry and the social order,' but warned that: 'The Banks, the Tribunals, the Press, the Army and the Churches are all against us, and the people are still unawake to the truth that we wish to tell them.'<sup>88</sup> Some socialist Quakers indeed seemed to view their Society's confrontation with the Government as the long-awaited revival of the struggle between the forces of darkness and Children of the Light. For these Friends, a distinct, but discernible minority, the eschatological implications of this vision were reflected in the perception of one Friend who saw Yearly Meeting in 1916 as 'actually engaged in the age-long battle with "forces that control and govern this dark world - the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in heavenly warfare."' <sup>89</sup>

Too much, perhaps, should not be made of this, but during the period in 1916 and 1917 when Quaker socialist influence in the WSOC 'was at its height, members of the SQS tended to look upon conscription not just as an attack on freedom of conscience but as an attempt to forge the final link in the chain with which capitalism had bound the working classes and would enshroud all others as well. Therefore, they perceived of themselves, as 'conscientious objectors to our whole social system, and our whole life . . . must be that of Christian revolutionaries.'<sup>90</sup>

Thus while the movement to radical or revolutionary solutions was a distinctly minority crusade, it also reflected, among Quakers of military age, the swiftness of pre-war liberalism's fall from grace as the means for creating the Kingdom of God on Earth. But if liberalism was found wanting, the goal of perfecting human society through a reasonable and relevant faith remained unchanged. Redrawing the ideological boundary so as to exclude private ownership for profit (self-help had already been eliminated by the New Liberalism), socialist members of the War and the Social Order Committee viewed all props of the old order as irredeemably compromised. The capitalistic Warfare State had, with the support of most Churches and other social institutions, appropriated for itself the accoutrements of traditional morality and proceeded to make a mockery of it.

The high water mark of radical socialist influence in the WSOC was during the spring and summer of 1917 at a time when some members of the Friends Social Union were expressing grave fears that the entire Committee was becoming 'a mere annexe of the Quaker Socialist Society [*sic*]'.<sup>91</sup> Meeting in June 1916 amidst the still inspiring afterglow of the first Russian Revolution and the formation of British Workers and Soldiers Councils at a Leeds Conference, the Committee heard Alfred Barratt Brown (1887-1947), an SQS member who had already been imprisoned as a CO, proclaim that 'Nothing short of Revolution, in the best sense of the word, would bring the better day for which we long.'<sup>92</sup> When the Committee met at Letchworth in September to hear Labour M.P. W.C. Anderson reflect upon the growth of "revolutionary feeling" in Britain and throughout the world, the WSOC responded with a *Minute* calling upon Friends 'to do their utmost to promote...the transfer of "capital" from private to public control.'<sup>93</sup>

Ultimately, the zealous would-be revolutionaries of the Socialist Quaker Society and the War and Social Order Committee failed to realize their vision of converting Friends into a truly radical spiritual cum political body fulfilling the social mission left undone by early Friends. The reasons for this failure are not difficult to discern. The

moment that Quaker Socialists were locked away in jail or Home Office Camps, their mission began to fail because as prisoners they were being denied the only means at hand for establishing the Kingdom of God in a physical as well as a spiritual sense. In their prison cells they could, like their absolutist brethren, suffer in obedience to the Light that led them and thus be spiritually redeemed, but they could not preach the Word of economic and social salvation to the storming crowd in the streets. When a mere 30 of 82 members of the War and the Social Order Committee met at Manchester early in 1918 to hear and discuss a paper on 'Quakerism and Capitalism' by SQS member J. Walton Newbold (1888-1943), many of the missing members were socialist conscientious objectors in custody. One result of these circumstances was that the rump of the Committee did not set a Quaker agenda for the sort of non-violent social revolution that Barry Brown had predicted; rather, it began the process fitting the idea to the reality and, thus, of pulling the WSOC and the Society it represented away from the abyss of social upheaval. In the circumstances, the failure of the SQS's vision became abundantly clear. Of course, that failure was not complete. Politically, the Society of Friends moved from the solid centre of the pre-war Liberal Party to a cautionary position on the edges of the Labour Camp. Socially, it completed the movement from philanthropic good works to serious consideration of the roots of social and economic injustice in British society. The War and Social Order Committee not only survived but remained both active and controversial, establishing and expanding Quakerism's new found involvement in social service as opposed to philanthropic causes.

The failure of this brief revolutionary thrust from within the Society of Friends may be usefully compared to the results achieved by spiritually radical members of the Friends Service Committee. When the Quaker absolutists were jailed for refusing to fight or even to accept some readily available alternative to fighting, their punishment at the hands of the authorities, however personally trying, represented a triumph for the ideals that they upheld. Because they would not violate their consciences by acquiescing in the commands of the State, they chose to suffer silently in imitation of early Quaker martyrs. As Wilfred Littleboy saw it, by putting themselves in God's hands they linked themselves to 'the dreamers of the dream who assure the future.'<sup>94</sup> In the end, absolutists like Littleboy did not dare to hope that by suffering they might aid somehow in a human resolution of the conflict that would inevitably produce a better world; rather, they accepted the daunting prospect of a personal Cross 'as all a piece of... growth toward

the establishment of His will on earth.’<sup>95</sup> And although absolutist sacrifices did not end the war or shorten it by one day or save a single human life, the redeeming power of their sacrificial act; in imitation of the Cross of Christ, was, in the great tradition of Quaker witness, a smashing victory over militarism, violence and death. It was not, of course, a universal triumph, any more than Quakerism was a universal faith, but it was the victory, the choice of life over death, that British Friends collectively, whatever their individual degree of war resistance or non-resistance, came to recognize as the most important outcome of the trail of faith imposed by the Great War.

Therefore, it was not surprising that Friends, in choosing the post-war route which the Society would follow, chose Wilfred Littleboy’s way of the Cross rather than J. Walton Newbold’s road to Marxist revolution. Newbold, of course, left Friends when they faltered in the march to socialism and, in 1922, became the first Communist member of Parliament.<sup>96</sup> Twelve years later Wilfred Littleboy was Clerk of Yearly Meeting, a position he retained until 1942 when his message to Friends in the midst of Second World War reflected both the persistence of the pacifist faith he had helped to establish and the roots of its inspiration:

War is evil... military victory will not bring true peace. Cannot our common suffering make us aware of our common brotherhood? Let us turn from the terrible deeds we do to one another... The way of friendship can overcome evil. We see it perfectly in... the Cross... which... showed us the triumphant power of God. For us as children of a common Father it is time to follow his lead.<sup>97</sup>

#### IV

One of the enduring accomplishments of the War and Social Order Committee was its recommendation of and planning for a gathering of Friends from throughout the world ‘for consideration of the nature... of our “Testimony against all War” ‘ and for reflection upon the social and political spheres of future Quaker witness within the world.’<sup>98</sup> The fruit of this effort was the first World Conference of All-Friends. When this meeting gathered in London in August 1920, what might Friends have said had been wrought by the Manchester Conference a quarter of a century earlier? In the light of the momentous events of the period from which British Quakerism had just emerged, the Manchester Conference might have seemed to have been overrated. It had, after all, produced no new theological insights nor innovative social philosophy; it had practically ignored the role of women and even the peace testimony in

the life of the Society. Still, such a judgement would have been premature and short-sighted.

What was truly wrought at Manchester was a new way of seeing many things and a new willingness to act upon things seen. This was the spirit that began the significant transformation of British Quakerism which prepared it for the testing time of the Great War. Indeed, the prevailing spirit of London Yearly Meeting in 1920 must have surprised and even shocked representatives from evangelical Midwestern American Yearly Meetings, who, on returning from England would cast their votes for the Republican presidential candidate, Warren Gamaliel Harding, a paragon of safe respectability if not, as events would show, of virtue. And there's the rub. While American evangelicals had fixed the boundaries of their religious witness with the Richmond Declaration of Faith, with the Manchester Conference London had, for better or for worse, expanded its frontiers, from evangelical to liberal in theology, from respectably philanthropic to socially engaged, from male dominated to female influenced, from theoretically anti-war to radically pacifist. And if a gathering as diverse as the All-Friends Conference proved to be was unlikely to produce any startling innovations, it did effectively endorse the radical pacifist doctrine hammered out in the fiery furnace of the Great War by a small group of Friends inspired by the example of the first generations of Quakerism and by an inspiring vision of a 'prophet Society, a body of moral pioneers, committed to upholding the truth, which though now unpopular, will one day be accepted by men...' <sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the cry of those socialist Friends who had sought to respond to the great modern crisis of industrial society with solutions as radical as those proposed by their spiritual ancestors over two centuries earlier were not entirely lost in the winds. The *Official Report* of the All-Friends Conference managed, however briefly, to incorporate a celebration of the vision that had moved Quaker socialists and the wartime War and Social Order Committee:

The Church is in the world in order to transform it into the Kingdom of God... we are to work as well as to pray for the coming of that Kingdom and the doing of God's will on earth... Surely this is the way to overcome the barriers of race and class and thus to make of all humanity a society of friends.<sup>100</sup>

*Thomas C. Kennedy*  
*Presidential Address*  
*10 June 1995*

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Report of the Proceedings of the Conference... in Manchester..., 1895 (London, 1896), 11. Hereafter *Manchester Conference*.
- <sup>2</sup> Jane E. Newman, "About Monthly Meeting," *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, 25 (1891), 267-70.
- <sup>3</sup> Mary Jane Godlee, "The Women's Yearly Meeting," in *London Yearly Meeting During 250 Years* (London, 1919), 93-4.
- <sup>4</sup> Maude Robinson, 'Lest We Forget : A Memory of the Society of Friends in the War Years, 1914-1918' (London, n.d.), 26 and E[sther] Peet to Hubert Peet, 4 June 1918, Peet Family Papers, seen by permission of Stephen Peet, London.
- <sup>5</sup> The three Quakers, Ellis, Harrison Barrow, and Arthur Watts were all convicted; Barrow and Watts received six-month sentences and Edith Ellis served three months after refusing to pay a fine. For a detailed account of the incident, see the FSC pamphlet, *The Story of an Uncensored Leaflet* (London [1918]) and Leigh Tucker, 'English Friends and Censorship, World World I,' *Quaker History*, 71/2 (Fall, 1982), 114-24.
- <sup>6</sup> See *LYM Proc*, 1918, 78, 80 and *Manchester Conference*, 198; the speaker was Quaker socialist Samuel G. Hobson. The "Foundations" remain as paragraph 540 of the *Christian Faith and Practice* of London Yearly Meeting.
- <sup>7</sup> Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration*, (Oxford, 1985), 9.
- <sup>8</sup> 25 Nov. 1895, Box 1, Rufus M. Jones Papers (RMJP), Haverford College Quaker Collection (HCQC). The *American Friend* published a special edition on the Conference on 29 Nov. 1895.
- <sup>9</sup> Gilbert J. Fowler, "Some Recollections of my old friend J.W.G. & reflection thereon," 15 March, 1944, Box 3, John William Graham Papers (JWGP), John Rylands Library, Manchester University.
- <sup>10</sup> Edward H. Milligan, "How We Got Our Book of Discipline: the Revision of 1921 - From Doctrine to Experience," *The Friends Quarterly*, 25/3 (July, 1988), 110-17. Also see John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey* (London, 1984), 210.
- <sup>11</sup> *A Reasonable Faith* was published anonymously by three Friends, Francis Frith, William Pollard and William E. Turner, who subsequently revealed their authorship to Yearly Meeting in 1885.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 217. J.B. Braithwaite's paper was read for him by his son-in-law, Richard Thomas of Baltimore.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 247 and Richenda C. Scott, "Authority or Experience: John Wilhelm Rowntree and the Dilemma of 19th-Century Quakerism," *JFHS*, 49 (Spring 1960), 86-7.
- <sup>14</sup> *Manchester Conference*, 78.
- <sup>15</sup> *Manchester Conference*, 79, 82.
- <sup>16</sup> See Stephen Allott, *John Wilhelm Rowntree, 1868-1905* (York, 1994). Also see H. Larry Ingle, "On the Folly of Seeking the Quaker Holy Grail," *Quaker Religious Thought*, 25/1, May, 1991, 17-29.
- <sup>17</sup> Roger C. Wilson, ' "We Shall Never Thrive Upon Ignorance" (J.J. Gurney): The Service of John Wilhelm Rowntree 1893-1905,' in *A Quaker Miscellany for Edward H. Milligan*, edited by David Blamires, Jeremy Greenwood and Alex Kerr (Manchester, 1985), 155. Also see Maurice Creasy, *The Next Fifty Years* (London, 1956), 9-55 *passim*.
- <sup>18</sup> Howard Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years* (Philadelphia 1953), vii-ix and Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (London, 1970), 38 briefly discuss the influence of neo-Hegelian thought on leaders of the Quaker Renaissance.

- <sup>19</sup> This discussion owes much to John Punshon's ideas as set out in his *Portrait in Grey*, 226-29 and in private conversation. Also see Daniel E. Bassuk, "Rufus M. Jones and Mysticism," *Quaker Religious Thought*, 17/4 (Summer, 1978), 1-26. Bassuk believed that Jones made his reinterpretation of Quakerism intellectually respectable by attempting to graft it onto the Greek metaphysical tradition of mysticism and by injecting into it affirmations of positive thinking and of the social gospel, thus bringing it into line with late nineteenth century religious liberalism. (23) Christopher J. Holdworth's splendidly incisive essay on "Mystics and Heretics in the Middle Ages: Rufus Jones considered," *JFHS*, 53/1 (1972), 9-30 is more sympathetic towards Jones but also rejects the idea that mysticism significantly influenced seventeenth-century Friends.
- <sup>20</sup> Sir George Newman on Rufus Jones' seventieth birthday, quoted by Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones* (New York, 1958), 237-38.
- <sup>21</sup> See Thomas C. Kennedy, "History and the Quaker Renaissance: the Vision of John Wilhelm Rowntree," *JFHS* 55/1-2 (1985-86), 35-56.
- <sup>22</sup> *Manchester Conference*, 51-2. For George Cadbury see A.G. Gardiner, *The Life of George Cadbury* (London, n.d.).
- <sup>23</sup> Correspondence and other materials concerning the planning for and early history of Woodbrooke may be found in the George Cadbury Papers deposited in the Woodbrooke Library.
- <sup>24</sup> *Manchester Conference*, 94.
- <sup>25</sup> "Appeal From Women Friends for Consideration of Women's Suffrage at Y.M., 1910," Box 2/16, LSF. This appeal was signed by Anna M. Priestman as Clerk and 75 other women.
- <sup>26</sup> Harold Marsh, "Women in the Church," *The Friend*, 22 March 1912, 179-81.
- <sup>27</sup> *British Friend*, June 1911, 161 and *Christian Practice*, Part II of *Christian Discipline of the Society of Friends* (London, 1912), 33-4, emphasis added.
- <sup>28</sup> See Chapter VIII below.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-9, emphasis added.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 125. The speaker, Harriet Green, was repeating the words of a working-class member in her meeting.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-99. Also see Hobson's autobiography, *Pilgrim to the Left: Memoirs of a Modern Revolutionist* (London 1938) and Peter d'Alroy Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1914: Religion, Class and Social Conscience in Late Victorian England* (Princeton, 1968), 385-87.
- <sup>32</sup> Socialist Quaker Society, *Minutes*, 2 April 1898, microfilm copy; originals in LSF. Four women and three men were original SQS members. The only history of the SQS is T. Adams, "The Socialist Quaker Society, 1898-1924," M.A. Thesis, Leicester University, 1985 which is supplemented by his pamphlet *A Far-Seeing Vision: The Socialist Quaker Society (1898-1924)*. Peter d'A Jones's brief discussion of the organization in *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1944* (Princeton, 1968), 367-89 is less partisan and in many ways more useful.
- <sup>33</sup> *SQS Minutes*, 28 March and 27 April 1899.
- <sup>34</sup> The *SQS Minute Book*, II, 22 Feb. 1910 listed only 52 members. Both the *British Friend* and the *Friends Quarterly Examiner* did publish explicitly socialist articles by SQS members. See *British Friend*, August 1903, 244 and Mary O'Brien Harris, "The Socialist Alternative to Poverty," *FQE*, 42 (1908), 408-27.
- <sup>35</sup> See *Minutes and Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1910* (London, 1910), 155-56 and "The Friends' Social Union," 4, printed flyer in LSF. Also see Marwick, "Quaker Social Thought," *passim*. The FSU did not officially represent London Yearly Meeting until 1910 when it was made responsible to that body.

- <sup>36</sup> "The Friends' Social Union," *Annual Report*, 1905, LSF. The LSF contains the FSU's *Minutes*, 1904-1915, 1916-17, *Annual Reports*, and other *Reports and Pamphlets*, 1904-1915.
- <sup>37</sup> FSU, *Annual Reports*, 1904-1913, *passim*. and *Minutes*, 1908, 1910-12, FSU/3, LSF.
- <sup>38</sup> See Adams, *Far-Seeing Vision*, 11-12.
- <sup>39</sup> SQS *Minutes*, 26 June 1899 and 22 Feb. 1910; J[oseph] T. H[arris], "FSU Conference," *THE PLOUGHSHARE*, (PS) 1/7, May 1914, 85-6.
- <sup>40</sup> Only Priscilla Hannah Peckover (1833-1931), founder and President of the Women's Local Peace Associations, and Samuel J. Capper (1840-1904), one of the most active late nineteenth-century Quaker peace workers, referred to the peace testimony. See *Manchester Conference*, 49-50, 64.
- <sup>41</sup> John Stephenson Rowntree, "Memorandum on the Peace Committee, LYM 1902", 12pp. BOX H1/12, LSF. For divisions among Friends over the South African War, see Hewison, *Crown of Wild Almonds*, 127-224 *passim*.
- <sup>42</sup> This resolution was brought by Bristol and Somerset Quarterly Meeting. See *BF*, June 1902, 154.
- <sup>43</sup> *LYM Proc.*, 1904, 33-5.
- <sup>44</sup> Quaker peace activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are summarized in Thomas C. Kennedy, "Opposition to Compulsory Military Service in Britain Before the Great War," *Peace and Change*, 8/4 (Fall, 1982), 7-18 and "The Quaker Renaissance," *passim*. See *BF*, May, 1912, 134 for commentary on "Our Testimony for Peace," and William Oats, For a different view, see Brian David Phillips's Cambridge doctoral thesis "Friendly Patriotism: British Quakerism and the Imperial Nation, 1890-1910" (1989) which is extremely critical of both the motives and the efficacy of most Quaker peace activists during this period.
- <sup>45</sup> *Minutes of the Peace Committee*, 1888-1912 are contained in four *Minute Books* deposited in the LSF.
- <sup>46</sup> *TF*, 31 July 1914, 563.
- <sup>47</sup> Roger C. Wilson, "The Best Things in Ye Worst Time" in *Quakerism: A Way of Life*, edited by Hans Eirik Aarek (Norwegian Quaker Press, 1982), 9 [?] and Ernest E. Taylor, 'Diary, 1914-', Temp. MSS., Box 23/3, LSF. Mary Millior Braithwaite, aged ten in 1914, also recalls her family being on the Welsh Coast when the war began; her father was John Henry Barlow, wartime Clerk of London Yearly Meeting. Tape recorded interview with M.M. Braithwaite, 13 Aug. 1986, London.
- <sup>48</sup> *TF*, 7 Aug. 1914, 575-6.
- <sup>49</sup> Taylor, 'Diary, 1914-', 27 Aug., 4 and 25 Sept. 1914 and Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford 1970), 201-2. Frank L. Harris and Alfred Bigland were Conservative members of Parliament; Henry Marriage Wallis was the zealous "war Friend."
- <sup>50</sup> *LYM Proc.*, 1915, 30; *TF*, 23 May 1915, 408-9; and *LYM Proc.*, 1923, 232. Also see Maude Robinson, "Lest We Forget" (London, n.d.), 3. Over a 100 Quakers died in service during the war.
- <sup>51</sup> *Minute 2*, 28 April 1915, *Minutes of the Meeting of Elders*, Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, Brotherton Library (Bro. Lib.), University of Leeds.
- <sup>52</sup> "Our Peace Testimony and Some of Its Implications," *TF*, 2 Oct. 1914, 722-24.
- <sup>53</sup> Joshua Rowntree to Henry J. Mennell, 17 Nov. 1914, MS Box 5.114, LSF.

- <sup>54</sup> The official history of the Friends Ambulance Unit is Meaburn Tatham and James E. Miles, *The Friends' Ambulance Unit, 1914-1919* (London, [1919]). For a fascinating non-Quaker view of the Unit, see *Talking across the World: the Love Letters of Olaf Stapleton and Agnes Miller*, edited by Robert Crossley (Hanover, Conn. 1987). For "War Vics," see A. Ruth Fry, "Friends Relief Work Since 1914", n.d., Temp. MSS 481, LSF.
- <sup>55</sup> See *LYM Proc., 1915*, 193-4. For the FSC manifesto and list of original members, see *FSC Minutes, Records of Work and Documents Issued*, 3 vols. June 1915-May 1920, LSF. Also see the recollections of Horace Alexander, a founding member, in *Quaker History* 70 (Spring, 1981), 48.
- <sup>56</sup> FSU, *Minutes*, 11 Feb. 1915, FSU/3, LSF.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 June 1915, quoting from Minute 65 of L.Y.M., FSU/3, LSF.
- <sup>58</sup> *LYM Proc., 1915*, 274-75. The Committee was reappointed every year. The quotation is from a letter of Roger C. Wilson (1906-1992), Clerk of London Yearly Meeting in the mid-1970s, to the author, 6 August 1985.
- <sup>59</sup> Quoted in Mabel Cash Barlow's unpublished memoir of her husband in the J.H. Barlow Papers in possession of the Barlow family.
- <sup>60</sup> Taylor, "Diary", 14 July 1915, Temp. MSS., Box 23/3, LSF.
- <sup>61</sup> *To Our Fellow Members of Military Age of the Society of Friends*, FSC, printed documents, Temp. MSS., Box 31, LSF.
- <sup>62</sup> W.C. Braithwaite (1862-1922) had practiced law in London before accepting a partnership in Gillett's Bank in Banbury in 1896. He completed *The Beginnings of Quakerism* the first of his two volumes on early Quaker history in 1912. Cross (1864-1916) was closely connected with the Rowntree family and worked for their chocolate firm; he was also Secretary to the so-called Bryce Group. See Henry R. Winkler, *The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain, 1914-1918* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1952), 16.
- <sup>63</sup> W.C. Braithwaite to A.S. Rowntree, 19 Nov. 1915, Arnold S. Rowntree Papers (ASRP), Temp. MSS., 558, SR 310/5/2, and Memo. Re. "Conscience Clause", 18 Nov. 1915, *FSC Minutes*, Vol. 1, 22, LSF.
- <sup>64</sup> WCB to ASR, 19 Nov. 1915, ASRP, Temp. MSS., 558, SR 310/5/2.
- <sup>65</sup> Richard Cross to ASR, 21 Nov. 1915, *ibid.* Rowntree also consulted with Edward Grubb (1854-1939), prominent Quaker journalist, teacher and theologian. Grubb's response, while more moderate than the FSC's hard line, reflected not only his long-standing commitment to pacifism but also the fact that he had recently become the Honorary Treasurer of the No-Conscription Fellowship.
- <sup>66</sup> Floyd Dell, editor of the *Masses* (New York), called *THE PLOUGHSHARE* "a beautifully printed, admirably written, very impressive paper." quoted in *PS*, I/6, July 1916, 196; Dell had urged the poet Witter Bynner to send his anti-war poems to *THE PLOUGHSHARE*. Monetary support for the new venture was provided by wealthy anti-war Friends.
- <sup>67</sup> "Commentary: The Seven Wars," *PS*, I/1, Feb. 1916, 3.
- <sup>68</sup> For an illuminating discussion of the growth of the view that the historical relationship between militarism and misogyny made pacifism a necessary aspect of the feminist struggle, see Jo Vellacott's "Introduction" to *Militarism versus Feminism: Writings on Women and War*, edited by Vellacott and Margaret Kamester (London, 1987), 1-34. Also see H.M. Swanwick, "The World After the War . . . Franchise Reform," *The Ploughshare*, I/9 n.s., Oct. 1916, 278: the war had revealed to many anti-suffragists that their potential philosophy was precisely the doctrine which . . . all . . . execrate as Prussianism.

- <sup>69</sup> Robert O. Mennell and Hubert W. Peet reporting the results of the FSC's poll of some 900 male Friends to *TF*, 17 Dec., 1915, 945 and E. Taylor, "Diary," 20 Dec. 1915, Temp. MSS., Box 23/3, LSF.
- <sup>70</sup> In his *Personal History* (London, 1983), 49-51, A.J.P. Taylor had kind things to say about Brayshaw but he obviously did not take him seriously either.
- <sup>71</sup> "Introductory Address," *Swanwick, 1911*, 26-31.
- <sup>72</sup> *Swanwick, 1911*, 37-8. Dürer had been the favourite subject of John Wilhelm Rowntree's lectures on religious art.
- <sup>73</sup> ANB, "Friends and the Inner Light", (London, [1915]), 70-2. For Brayshaw's letters to Young Friends, see MS. Box T 1/3, and his personal correspondence with Philip Radley, MS. Vols. 243-47 and Temp. MSS., 299, LSF. Also see ANB to *TF*, 9 April 1915, 78, 81.
- <sup>74</sup> See Thomas C. Kennedy, "Fighting About Peace: the No-Conscription Fellowship and the British Friends' Service Committee, 1915-1919," *Quaker History*, 69/1 (Spring 1980), 3-22 and "The Quaker Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern British Peace Movement, 1895-1920," *Albion*, 16/3 (Fall, 1984), 264-70.
- <sup>75</sup> *LYM, 1916*, 36 and John W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience* (London, 1922), 161n.
- <sup>76</sup> Esther Bright Clothier to Robert O. Mennell, 11 and 20 June 1916, FSC Files, LSF. Also see Kennedy, "Quaker Renaissance," 261-62.
- <sup>77</sup> *LYM, 1917*, 170, lists only 13 female members, including Esther Bright Clothier, on the Service Committee out of a total of 36, but by early 1917 most of the Committee's male members were in prison or some other type of detention.
- <sup>78</sup> Kennedy, "Quaker Renaissance," 267-69.
- <sup>79</sup> See John W. Graham to Richard Graham, 14 and 15 March, 1916, John W. Graham Papers, John Rylands Library, Manchester in which the elder Graham discusses various efforts to attain specific relief for Quaker COs.
- <sup>80</sup> "Alternative Service": Friends and a Perplexing Problem,' *The Ploughshare* I/7 n.s. (Aug. 1916), 203-04. Edith Wilson also wrote "The Absolutists' Case Against Conscription," a shortened version of which was the basis for the "Challenge to Militarism" pamphlet for which Edith Ellis and two male Friends were tried at the Guildhall in 1918 (see above). See entry for Edith Jane Wilson, "Dictionary of Quaker Biography," LSF.
- <sup>81</sup> Wilson, "Alternative Service," 204-05.
- <sup>82</sup> Edith J. Wilson, "Law-Abiding Citizens," *The Ploughshare*, II/2 n.s. (March 1917), 62-63.
- <sup>83</sup> W.E. Littleboy to Edith Ellis, 27 Sept. 1917, FSC Correspondence, 1915-1919, LSF.
- <sup>84</sup> J.E. Hodgkin (1875-1953), whose brother Henry T. was founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, was both a town councillor in Darlington and a magistrate on the Durham County Bench. See *DQB*, LSF. Also see *Minutes, WSOC*, 3 Feb. 1916 which, as written by Hodgkin, stressed the need 'to look at the whole question of our social relationship in light of our testimony against *all* war.'
- <sup>85</sup> J.E. Hodgkin, "War and Social Order Committee, *PS*, I/1, Feb. 1916, 33-4.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, I/2, March 1916, 40-2, 52-4, I/3, April, 1916, 99: I/4, May 1916, 105; and I/8, Sept. 1916, 237.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, I/4, May 1916, 106, 128 and I/9, Oct. 1916, 290-1.
- <sup>88</sup> "War and the Social Order": A Study of the Committee's Report,' *PS*, I/5, June, 1916, 146-48.

- <sup>89</sup> ' "War and the Social Order": A Study of the Committee's Report,' *PS*, I/5, June, 1916, 146-48, and M[orland], "Impressions of Yearly Meeting", *ibid.*, 169-70. Also see "The Adjourned Yearly Meeting: A Churchman's Impressions" *ibid.* I/2 March, 1916, 41 for another observer's feeling that some Quakers were looking upon the State as a representative of the powers of evil 'antagonistic to . . . those seeking to establish the Kingdom of God.'
- <sup>90</sup> "Christian Revolutionaries," *ibid.*, I/7, Aug. 1916, 227.
- <sup>91</sup> *Minutes, WSOC*, 2-5 Feb. and 8-9 June, 1917; [A.H. Bayes], Act. Sec. FSU, to W.H. Sturge, n.d. [May-June, 1917]; and W.H. Sturge to FSU Council, 9 June 1917, FSU 3/4, LSF. At the time of this correspondence, the FSU was being absorbed into the WSOC.
- <sup>92</sup> *Minutes, WSOC*, 8-9 June, 1917.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-10 Sept., 1917.
- <sup>94</sup> W.E. Littleboy to his parents, 18 & 20 Jan., 1917.
- <sup>95</sup> Wilfred E. Littleboy, "Guardroom notes," 25 April, 1918.
- <sup>96</sup> See A.J.P. Taylor, *A Personal History* (New York, 1983), 37 for some commentary, *à la* Taylor, on Newbold's brief celebrity as "the English Lenin."
- <sup>97</sup> Reprinted in *Christian Faith and Practice* (London, 1916), para. 612.
- <sup>98</sup> *LYM Proc.*, 1916, 103-4. Also see *Minutes, WSOC*, 2-5 Feb. and 4-5 May, 1917.
- <sup>99</sup> *The Peace Testimony of the Society of Friends* (London, [1920]), 21-2.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7 and *All-Friends Conference, Official Report* (London, [1920]), 201.