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Crossing Borders and Negotiating Boundaries: The Seventeenth-century European Missions and Persecution*

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Abstract

On their journeys through the Dutch Republic and the German territories, seventeenth-century Quaker missionaries came into contact with a wide variety of religiously inspired groups and individuals. This article considers some problems of conventional historiographical approaches to the new religious diversity in early modern Europe. Persecution was an especially important issue for travelling ministers. Despite their own experience, some religious radicals strongly objected to the Quaker view on persecution, so that, among others, 'sufferings' became a controversial subject. This article argues that controversy was part of a transnational process of mapping out the new, radical spectrum in which many religious radicals were actively involved. Dynamics within this spectrum can also be argued to have contributed to a new culture of religious debate. Two examples of contemporary response to Quaker 'sufferings' are presented and discussed with this wider perspective in mind.

Keywords

sufferings, religious reform, missionaries, polemic, Dutch Republic, Germany, Antoinette Bourignon, Mennonites

Introduction

In January 1658, the Flemish Mennonite community in Hamburg in the north of Germany sent a letter to the Mennonite group in the village of Kriegsheim near Worms in the Palatinate.[1] They expressed their concern that 'by the efforts of one of them called Quakers, several sisters and brothers' had 'distanced themselves from the community and the accepted truth'.[2] They reported that during the previous year, they had been twice visited themselves 'by two of the same [the Quakers] and had them in our houses for several weeks and talked a lot...with them, but have not been

able to find out anything from them better than what we knew before'.[3] In March, the Hamburg Mennonites sent another letter, this time addressed to the English Quakers,[4] in which they confirmed their acceptance of many Quaker principles,[5] emphasising that these were not new to them but had been 'revealed...by the spirit of God a long time ago'.[6]

One of the letter writers was Barend Roelofs (c. 1600–1665), who had served as a highly esteemed Minister for a number of years. Despite the reservations he expressed in both letters, Roelofs himself converted in 1659, together with several other Hamburg Mennonites. Unlike the Mennonites, Quakers were not tolerated by the Lutheran authorities in Hamburg, and Roelofs emigrated to the Netherlands with his family and joined a Meeting there that same year.[7] He and his sons Cornelis, Pieter and Jan later became prominent members of the Dutch Quaker community.[8] How had these events, which obviously had dramatic consequences for the parties concerned, come about?

THE EUROPEAN MISSIONARY JOURNEYS AND PERSECUTION

Soon after the 'First Publishers of the Truth' had made their way south, some of them had ventured further afield and crossed the Channel to travel in the Dutch Republic, the German lands, France and as far as the Mediterranean.[9] The first missionary to arrive on the continent, according to George Fox' *Journal*, had been Jane Wilkinson in 1654.[10] Among the missionaries referred to in the letter to Kriegsheim were William Wilson (d. 1682) and Reginald Holme (d. 1692), who had come to Hamburg in 1657. William Ames (d. 1662) had visited the city in 1658 and travelled south along the Rhine in the same year. It was Ames who had succeeded in convincing some of the Kriegsheim Mennonites.[11] John Hall (1637–1719), too, had arrived in Hamburg in 1658.[12]

The early Quaker missionary journeys have been described as 'one of the most dramatic outbreaks of missionary enthusiasm in the history of the Christian Church'.[13] Quakers were much talked about on the continent during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in the German language, their name became synonymous with all sects.[14] But compared to the rapid increase in numbers in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and North America, the progress of Quakerism on the continent was insignificant. As W.C. Braithwaite noted,

> the universal Mission of the early Friends receives its most emphatic illustration from the outlay in service and money which was devoted to the work of carrying the message beyond seas to the American Colonies, to the Protestants of Holland and Germany, to the Roman Catholics, and even to Jews and Mohammedans. The result, except in the case of the American Colonies and Holland, was altogether disproportionate to the effort involved...[15]

In the Dutch Republic, a Yearly Meeting (Amsterdam), several Monthly Meetings (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Harlingen) and a number of local Meetings (e.g. Haarlem, Alkmaar, Leeuwarden, Groningen) successfully operated for many years and several meeting houses were acquired.[16] But even there, Quakerism did not strike firm roots

until the twentieth century, although some of today's continental Meetings have very strong links with the missionary journeys, especially with the second wave, which started after the middle of the eighteenth century.[17] So it is not their missionary success which marks out these journeys. Apart from a few well-known, spectacular cases (Mary Fisher's trip to Constantinople, John Luffe, John Perrot and John Stubbs' journey to Rome and Katherine Evans and Sarah Chevers' visit to Malta), their destinations are not remarkable, either: at the same time, Ministers were travelling as far as the Caribbean Islands, while the majority of European journeys did not go beyond the Netherlands and the German territories.

Rather, I think that it is the timing of these journeys and the early Ministers' high degree of mobility that suggest further investigation. The journeys took place during an age of general crisis. On the continent, the Thirty Years' War and several other military conflicts, epidemics and economic hardship are assumed to have contributed to a climate of heightened religious sensitivity.[18] It has been assumed that in this precarious situation, the established churches were unable to offer sufficient explanation and consolation, and that partly because of this failure, many turned away from them and looked for spiritual nourishment elsewhere.[19] The result was a new and bewildering multitude of separatist groups and individuals. Some of them had only recently emerged, while others—like the Mennonites—had been around since the time of the Reformation. Travelling around Europe, Quaker missionaries came into contact with a great number of these religious radicals.

Historians have been faced with the problem of how to cope with the considerable religious diversity of the age. It is well known that despite the competition aspect, a network of contacts between these groups evolved during the course of the later seventeenth century.[20] Hence, one solution to the problem has been to see the groups as branches of the same reform movement, and they have often been summed up under blanket terms like 'Reformers',[21] 'Stepchildren of Christendom'[22] or 'Believers without church'.[23] Scholars have tended to draw attention to the like-mindedness between religious leaders and to point to mutual influences.[24] Another solution has been to highlight the doctrinal differences between the groups and to categorise them as either progressive or backward-looking with the larger historical developments in mind. Thus, A. Fix regards the debates between Quakers and Dutch Collegiants (an offshoot of the Dutch Reformed Church strongly influenced by the Mennonites) as catalytic in the latter's development towards rationalism. He sharply contrasts 'innovative' Collegiants with 'extremely spiritualistic' Quakers: '[they] stood on opposite sides of an ever-widening fissure separating the traditional, providential Christian worldview from the emerging secular and rationalistic worldview of the Enlightenment'.[25]

Both these approaches are problematic. It is extremely difficult to trace the dissemination of the highly volatile ideas among religious reformers, especially because some of these date back to long before the emergence of the new religious spectrum. It is also evident that some of the innovative attitudes so typical of the Enlightenment could develop especially well precisely with the 'extremely spiritualistic' outlook as a background. During the eighteenth century, Quakers advocated the abolition of slavery not so much with Enlightenment values in mind, but because they believed the

Inward Light to be accessible to all people, and that therefore, all people were equal *before God*—a conviction that had always been at the very core of their theology.

I believe that the worldview of early modern religious radicals should not be judged with the success story of secularisation in mind. This article instead focuses on the interaction between them. There was certainly fierce competition, as they all shared more or less the same target group of seeking Christians for recruiting new members—the conversion of the Roelofs family is a case in point.[26] Quakers and others played a considerable part in producing the flood of polemic pamphlets that swept Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[27] Engaging in long-lasting controversies, they contended with each other across geographical borders and in so doing demonstrated the transnational nature of the new phenomenon. However, the relationship between these religious radicals cannot be reduced to competition, and friction should not be dismissed as the result of rivalry: the Hamburg Mennonites hosted Quaker missionaries in their houses for several weeks and 'talked a lot with them'. Unfortunately, like most oral communication, their conversations were not recorded. I will nonetheless try to show how source material related to the missionary journeys opens a window on dynamics within the reform-oriented religious spectrum.

My claim is that they were part of a process of differentiation, in the course of which religious radicals negotiated the boundaries that structured their religious landscape. They all shared one, rather vague aim: universal religious reform that continued where, from their point of view, the Reformation had fallen short. There were different ways of achieving this aim, and many issues could be, and indeed were, discussed controversially. The most obvious ones concerned central doctrinal questions: whether or not Christians should practise baptism and use the sacraments was one such point, which Quakers and Mennonites could not agree on.[28] Another central issue concerned the relationship with the 'world'. Most religious reformers agreed that it was necessary to renounce 'wordliness' in order to reach a new spiritual status, a transition often described as a 'new birth'.[29] But what exactly did this entail? The question was crucial, since it was not possible to physically leave this world,[30] and conscientious action, which was regarded as an outward sign of the rejection of the 'world', often led to conflict with the authorities, so that persecution was inevitable.

Persecution also played an especially prominent part in the missionary business, although it varied in intensity—even within the Dutch Republic, which has traditionally been seen as a safe haven for religious dissenters.[31] Except in the very beginning of missionary activities,[32] no bans were issued against Quakers in the province of Holland, and magistrates often proved unwilling to persecute them when they were reported.[33] In Friesland, by contrast, placards were issued threatening them with imprisonment.[34] In the German territories, the situation was entirely different: according to the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*, each sovereign determined the confessional situation in his territory, and apart from very few places which offered refuge (e.g. Danish ruled Altona near Hamburg and Friedrichstadt in the dutchy of Schleswig), most religious minorities were considered outlaws. Holding public meetings for worship, as well as printing and distributing separatist literature, were illegal.[35] Both missionaries and converts were persecuted by the local authorities in Lutheran

Hamburg.[36] In 1660, the city council issued a mandate banning them. As a precaution, the mandate also prohibited citizens to offer lodgings to Quakers and ordered them to report any Quaker Meetings. As the council had anticipated, Quakers repeatedly returned to Hamburg despite banishment, and were consequently arrested and examined.[37]

As in England, Quakers were anxious to emphasize their peacableness and advocate tolerance, especially from 1660 onwards. When they published the famous *Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God called Quakers* on the accession of Charles II (1660), it was printed in German in the same year[38] and in Dutch without a date, but probably not much later.[39] After banning the Friends from Hamburg, the city council commissioned a pamphlet which appeared in 1661.[40] It claimed that 'defiance, wantonness, insolence and obstinacy are the true reason why they have been brought before the city gates, but have come back in and mocked the authorities [and said] that the spirit had ordered them to stay in this place'.[41] In his answer to this pamphlet,[42] George Fox acknowledged the necessity of authorities that acted justly, but condemned those that made improper use of their power.[43] To the accusation that they were trying to subvert the rulers' authority, he retorted that on the contrary, Quakers were there to help rulers by speaking out against sin and encouraging people to read the Scriptures.[44]

The early Friends developed their own strategies for dealing with persecution even on the continent: when the Second Day Morning Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings were established in the 1670s, they dealt with continental concerns right from the beginning, recording persecution and providing financial and other support.[45] Friends wrote pamphlets publicising instances of persecution and advocating tolerance in the languages of the countries they occurred in.[46] When Joseph Besse's collection of 'sufferings' appeared in 1753, it included many instances of persecution that had occurred in Europe.[47]

Persecution played a central role in the missionary business in another respect: L.M. Wright has pointed out that there was a tendency in early Quakerism 'of acquainting the public first with the sufferings of the group, and secondly with the body of beliefs that made the Friends willing for the sake of conscience to endure religious persecution'.[48] Persecution attracted attention, and although the early Quakers were busy advocates of tolerance, they nonetheless made good use of 'sufferings'[49] for the shaping of their own image as an 'innocent people in scorn called Quakers' and the forming of a distinctive Quaker identity.[50] We should not be surprised to find that persecution featured heavily in discussions between Quakers and other religiously inspired groups and individuals, as Quakers were by no means the only group that had to endure persecution for conscience's sake.

THE MENNONITE MARTYR TRADITION

The letter from the Hamburg Mennonites listed some common principles that Quakers and Mennonites shared, like their sober life styles, the demand for active charity[51] and the testimony of integrity.[52] The writers regretted that some of these were not always duly observed among their co-religionists, but strongly urged the

Kriegsheim Mennonites not to convert to Quakerism because of this. They referred to the distraint of goods and even loss of lives that their Anabaptist ancestors had suffered for their faith:

> Should one therefore leave one's community (of which many have witnessed to the truth with their goods and their blood), and join a people or person of whom one can't be sure he was sent and whose faith has not reached the highest test of blood...?[53]

After Roelofs' conversion, the Flemish Mennonites were left without a Minister, so they elected a successor to replace him. This was Gerrit Roosen (1612–1711),[54] who immediately published a pamphlet in which he criticised the Quakers, repeatedly mentioning statements made by Ames during his visit in Hamburg.[55] Interestingly, Roosen used an expression almost identical with the one quoted from Roelofs' letter: 'Whether they [the Quakers] will stand such test as Menno's followers...and risk their life, their goods and their blood, and that with a cheerful mind, we will leave to God and time'.[56]

It is not a coincidence that the reference to the ancestors' risking their possessions and their lives appears in both texts. It epitomises the long martyr tradition that the various Mennonite factions[57] cultivated and that made it possible for them to construct what B.S. Gregory has called a 'pedigree' of martyrs.[58] They looked back to the thousands of Anabaptist martyrs killed at around the time of the Reformation, many of whom were mentioned in Thieleman Jansz van Braght's famous book of martyrs, the *Martyr's Mirror.* The second Dutch edition of this monumental collection, which was illustrated with elaborate engravings, had appeared in 1685[59]—almost 70 years before Besse's Quaker collection was published.

The times of bloody persecution were past for seventeenth-century Mennonites—at least in the Netherlands and the North German territories.[60] In most places, like in Hamburg, they were tolerated—often because, unlike Quakers, they were willing to act in political conformity and to pay a special fine, the so-called *Schutzgeld* or *Schirmgeld.* Coming to an agreement with the 'world' in this way was acceptable to them, an attitude which has been labelled 'conforming non-conformity'.[61] But as the letter and pamphlet show, the remembrance of their suffering ancestors was still very much alive.

QUAKER 'SUFFERINGS'

James Parnell became the first Quaker martyr, and in the year Roosen wrote his pamphlet, the 'Boston Martyrs' William Robinson, Marmaduke Stephenson and Mary Dyer were hanged.[62] Just like the Mennonite 'test of goods and blood', the Quaker way of responding to suffering, in line with the larger Christian martyr tradition, has been interpreted as a contest between the persecutor and his victims, in which the latter can claim a symbolic victory through 'bold speaking' and demonstrating his or her spiritual invulnerability in the face of physical force.[63] But unlike the Mennonites, the Friends were unwilling to compromise, so they had to face continuing repression. The establishment of Meeting for Sufferings, the 'sufferings' literature and intense lobbying on behalf of the persecuted all show that there was a

very clear agenda of dealing with this problem practically.[64] This agenda also had theological implications, which are reflected in the exchange between Quakers and other religious radicals.

One Friend, Stephen Crisp (1628–1692), wrote about the ancient martyrs: 'Even if they're dead, they live in their witnesses, which speak to us that still live, so that we are encouraged to walk in their footsteps'.[65] Crisp was perhaps the most articulate among the early missionaries. He travelled extensively in Germany and the Netherlands and married a Dutch Quaker convert, Geertruyd Niessen Dirricks (d. 1687). Among Crisp's papers, the 'Colchester Collection', there is a handwritten note endorsed 'of what is lately happened among the minists', which he apparently made as a basis for one or several of his pamphlets. The first two instances on this list refer to the paying of fines by Mennonite communities to avoid persecution.[66] Crisp wrote a large number of tracts while he was travelling on the continent, many of which mentioned Quaker 'sufferings'.[67]

Similar to the Mennonite test of 'goods and blood', Quaker 'sufferings' were construed positively. Most obviously, Quakers looked to the suffering Christ, especially in the metaphor of the Cross. Through their suffering, the unjustly persecuted could feel especially near to Him, so that 'sufferings' were a sign of God's love, rather than punishment. Penn's *No Cross, no Crown* (1682) appeared in Dutch in two separate editions in 1677 and 1687. In the missionary context, the readiness to 'bear the Cross' was a requirement which had to be fulfilled by converts. Hence, Crisp complained about some indecisive sympathisers in Friesland: 'But oh! the Cross, the offence of the cross they could not bear with...'[68] There were other ways of interpreting suffering positively. Repression could be regarded as a divine means for the bettering of souls and encouragement of the true faith. In his *Tender Visitation in the Love of God unto those People called Fr.[ench] Protestants*, which Crisp addressed to the Huguenot refugees who had left France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and which was published in English and French simultaneously, he wrote:

> It's the work and business of a true Christian Soul to be bettered by every condition, and most of all by Sufferings, which are permitted of God for the slaying and crucifying all that in his people that is contrary unto him, that they may be as Gold purified in the Furnace of Tribulation.[69]

The missionaries declared their project immune to the threat of persecution, saying that attempts at hindering their work and punishing Quaker converts were doomed to fail and would only cause them to re-enforce their efforts. Occasioned by persecution in the town of Groningen in Friesland, Crisp wrote: 'The more you cause this people to suffer, the more shall we be drawn in the Love and Power of God, to visit them and your City for their sakes'. As in England, the Quakers warned persecutors that they would come to a bad end. Crisp threatened the Groningen magistrates: 'Now your Day of Trial is come, and I cannot but in love warn you not to run this course of Persecution, for if you do, you will bring Vexation upon your selves inwardly and outwardly, and the Judgments of God upon you and your city...'[70]

Roelofs and Roosen had reminded their Mennonite readers of their ancestors' risking 'their goods and their blood' as an important part of their *raison d'être*. A few

years later, Quaker missionary William Caton (1636–1665) engaged in correspondence with a Mennonite minister called Mees Jansz from Saardam in the Dutch Provinces,[71] who had come to Hamburg in 1660 and together with Roosen preached sermons critical of Quakers. In this context, he wrote a letter to all continental Anabaptists, which was printed in Dutch in 1665,[72] and in which he cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Mennonites' claim to their ancestors' suffering. He reproached them for adhering to the faith only outwardly, pointing out that the early Anabaptists had not eschewed the consequences of their non-conformity.[73] Caton also criticised the Mennonites as harbouring a fear of persecution. He claimed that the quiet life that they enjoyed had made them inert, so that they had become self-righteous, vain, quarrelsome and pleasure-seeking.[74] The remembrance of past suffering, in Caton's view, should guide present action and the right faith had continually to be proven and coupled with a virtuous life style.[75]

ANTOINETTE BOURIGNON'S RESPONSE TO THE QUAKER CULTURE OF 'SUFFERINGS'

In 1669, Crisp contacted the Belgian mystic visionary Antoinette Bourignon (1616–1680),[76] who had attacked Quakers in a printed letter, when one of her adherents had sympathised with them and she herself had been called a Quaker.[77] Several of Bourignon's adherents later on became Quakers. The most prominent of these was Reynier Jansz, who worked as a printer for her, but then emigrated to Pennsylvania and used his skills in one of the first Quaker printing presses there.[78]

Bourignon herself suffered persecution nearly all her life.[79] She, too, was later to spend some time near Hamburg, but when she received Crisp's letter, she was staying in Amsterdam. Unlike the Mennonites, she was never offered the option of paying a fine to avoid it. She had her own positive interpretation of suffering, recommending the 'doctrine of the Cross' and demanding that believers 'suffer in Imitation of' Christ.[80] Nevertheless, she tried to escape persecution and consequently travelled through the Dutch Republic and Northern Germany restlessly for many years.

In his letter, Crisp acknowledged that Bourignon, too, had been inspired to turn away from the 'world'. But he also accused her of turning her 'sword against the Ignorant people of god called quakers' and putting 'a weapen into the hands of their enemys'. Bourignon deigned not to answer this letter until about two years later, when Crisp and the Rotterdam linen merchant Benjamin Furly (1636–1714), himself an important agent in the continental missions, published a tract critical of her, in which they included the letter.[81] Bourignon immediately wrote a voluminous reply to this in which, among other things, she attacked the Quaker concept of 'sufferings'.[82] Her criticism was based on the denial of the divine guidance that the Quakers claimed for themselves. She compared their insisting on patient endurance to a mental disorder: ''Tis truly lamentable to see these People suffer so much for meer Fancies, bred in the Heads of craz'd melancholy Men, who communicate this Disease to one another, by so many goodly Discourses of Divine Things'.[83] By patiently enduring persecution, she wrote scornfully, they created for themselves two hells: one in this world, and one in the next.[84] Because they were to be regarded as insane, 'they

should not be punished by the Magistrate, but rather be left to their Fancies, as we do by Idiots'.[85] Their willingness to suffer for their non-conformity she ridiculed especially in one passage where she described a Quaker burial in polemical terms:

> It is the Custom with these Quakers, to carry their Dead to the Grave in a bare Coffin, and the Bearers run like a Dog that has got away with a Bone, which is followed by the other Dogs that are in the Streets who run after him that has the Bone...and the other Quakers follow the Corps, some with their Cloaks, others without them, each of them cloathed as when they are at work...and a great Number of Boys follow them, crying and mocking and sometimes throwing Dirt, which the Quakers suffer patiently, thinking they merit by it.[86]

Clearly, Bourignon refused to accept that Quakers were the victims of persecution. Instead, she accused them of provoking the attackers to commit sins and causing suffering intentionally. Rather than the Inward Light, she claimed, it was wilfulness that guided their unconventional behaviour. In the same pamphlet, she also accused Quakers of disobedience towards the authorities. Christ she saw not as a model of the patient sufferer, but as a model of obedience, accepting the Cross without resistance, even though He had to die alongside criminals.

> For he knew better than these Quakers, that Honour and Obedience is due to God only. But he knew also that Magistracy is ordain'd of God, and that we ought to obey it; and tho' a Man were no Malefactor, yet he may sit down on a Bench where Criminals use to sit... Where is their Meekness? Where is their Submission and Humility? There is nothing like it to be seen in any of their Actions, but a great deal of Pride and high Esteem of themselves...[87]

Bourignon combined her attack on the Quaker interpretation of suffering with her criticism of their defying conventions. To her, non-conformist though she was, refusing 'hat honour', 'bold speaking' and other practises that challenged the authorities were not acceptable. Of course, there was rhetorical strategy behind this. Bourignon was surely defending herself against Crisp's accusation of having put 'a weapen into the hands of their enemys'. She also came remarkably close to the position of the pamphlet issued by the Hamburg council in 1661. One might argue that she took the side of the persecutors and denounced the Quakers' non-conformity in an attempt to demonstrate her own willingness to co-operate.

CONCLUSIONS

Although it was by no means the only subject of debate between religious reformers in seventeenth-century Europe, suffering was a highly topical issue at a time when religious non-conformity regularly led to persecution. In the debates between Quakers and other religious radicals they encountered on their missionary journeys, it featured prominently and its theological implications were discussed controversially.

The examples I have presented illustrate how varied and complex views on persecution were. Quaker missionaries like Crisp communicated strategies for dealing with ongoing persecution and stressed the positive potential of suffering as encouraging the true faith. The Mennonites, too, acknowledged the important role suffering

played in their culture of non-conformity. By looking back to the persecution suffered at the time of the Reformation, they preserved it as part of their heritage. It remained central to their collective identity even when they lived in relative security, and they held the lack of such a tradition against the newly arrived Quaker message. Bourignon, on the other hand, came close to those advocating the persecution of non-conformists. She did not actively seek suffering, like some Quakers and the Mennonites' Anabaptist ancestors, but consistently tried to avoid it and criticised others for what she regarded as openly provocative behaviour.

Clearly, controversy between these groups was more than simply an expression of their 'competition for souls' (C. Kooi), and their relationship was deeply ambivalent. Their interaction was as much about marking out common ground and spelling out the differences among themselves, as defining their relationship with the 'world'. They were engaged in the process of mapping out the radical religious spectrum, and suffering was one of the issues that served to define the boundaries.

It is interesting that a lot of debating took place in print. This of course opens up some interesting issues. Many pamphlets were translated into other languages. They were accessible to an international reading audience not necessarily versed in Latin, the *lingua franca* of learned theology, and thus facilitated broad participation in theological discussion, access to which had traditionally been restricted to a very small, priviledged minority. 'Quakeriana' and 'Anti-Quakeriana', as J. Smith called them,[88] were widely distributed and circulated. Despite their ephemeral nature, copies of Quaker and anti-Quaker tracts can still be found in considerable numbers in continental libraries[89]—even in Germany, where at the time, their distribution was illegal. Religious radicals like the Quakers can be said to have contributed towards the emergence of an arena in which a critical discourse on religion could be developed across language barriers and independently of the formal rules of academic disputation.

NOTES

★ I would like to thank Marian Grothey and Dr Frauke Reitemeier for their helpful comments on this paper. Except where otherwise indicated, I have translated all quotations; the original text can be found in the references.

1. 'Mennonite' here refers to the followers of that particular Anabaptist strand originally led by the sixteenth-century Dutch Minister Menno Simons, who spread widely in the German territories. Of all the groups that missionaries contacted in Europe, they were clearly most attracted to the Mennonites. The latest comprehensive study of Dutch Anabaptism is Zijlstra, S., *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden: geschiedenis van de dopersen in de Nederlanden 1537–1675*, Hilversum: Uijtgeverij Verloren, 2000. For the Mennonites in Hamburg, see the work of Goertz, H.-J., and Driedger, M.D., *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

2. 'daß durch einen die man quackers nennet einige schwestern und brider von der gemeÿne und die angenommene warheidt seindt abgewandert'. A copy of the letter is preserved in the 'Thesaurus Hottingerianus' in the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich: MS F79, p. 542r-v. It was first mentioned by Benrath, G.A., 'Die konfessionellen Unionsbestrebungen des Kurfürsten Karl Ludwig von der Pfalz', *Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Oberrheins* 116 (1968), pp. 188-252.

3. 'auch zweÿ mahl derselben zweÿ zu gleich etlichen wochen in unsere haußen gehabt und viel...mit ihnen gehandelt, aber haben von ihnen nichts beßers als wir gehabt können er kündigen...', ZB Zürich: MS F79, p. 542r. The letter mentions that interpreters were employed.

4. ZB Zürich: F79, pp. 543r-546v. The letter begins on p. 546r.

5. 'So nehmen wir ewer sachen etliche die mit dem geschrieben Evangelio uber einkommen vor gutt an'. ZB Zürich: F79, p. 546r.

6. 'ist vns auch nit news was ihr schrifftmäßig vorbringet sondern ist vns schon lang durch den Geist Gottes kundt gemacht...' ZB Zürich: F79, p. 546r.

7. See Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, p. 62, and Kannegieter, J.Z., *Geschiedenis van de vroegere Quakergemeenschap te Amsterdam, 1656 tot begin negentiende eeuw*, Publikaties van de Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst van Amsterdam, 9, Amsterdam: Holkema & Scheltema, 1971, p. 25. According to Driedger, this community lost 36 Members between 1655 and 1692. More than a third of these turned to Quakerism. See *Obedient Heretics*, pp. 27, 192-93.

8. Kannegieter devotes a whole chapter to Jan (who later adopted the name of van der Werff) and his offspring: see *Quakergemeenschap*, pp. 265-81.

9. The best account of the missionary endeavours, though incomplete, can be found in W.I. Hull's series of Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History. For Germany, see also Hubben, W., *Die Quäker in der deutschen Vergangenheit*, Leipzig: Quäker-Verlag, 1929.

10. See Hull, W.I., *The Rise of Quakerism in Amsterdam, 1655–1665*, Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, 4, Swarthmore: Swarthmore College, 1938, pp. 200-201. This may well have been the same person that P. Mack identified as coming from Yorkshire; see *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, p. 417.

11. See Hubben, *Quäker*, p. 64.

12. See Hubben, *Quäker*, p. 90.

13. Watts, M., *The Dissenters*. Vol. 1. *From the Reformation to the French Revolution*, repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985 [1978], p. 198.

14. See, for instance, the entry in J.H. Zedler's encyclopaedia: 'Es ist also der Quackerismus ein rechter Inbegriff und Zusammenschluß aller Ketzereyen'. *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste, Welche bishero durch menschlichen Verstand und Witz erfunden und verbessert worden...*, 64 vols., Halle 1732–54, XXX, col. 10. According to one scholar, this was the case in most European languages: see Greenwood, O., *Vines on the Mountains*, Quaker Encounters, 2, York: Sessions, 1977, p. 4.

15. Braithwaite, W.C., *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, York: Sessions, 2nd edn, rev. H.C. Cadbury, 1955 [1912], p. 401.

16. See Cadbury, H.J., 'First Settlement of Meetings in Europe', *JFHS* 44 (1952), pp. 11-12. A Yearly Meeting also existed in Gdańsk, and Monthly Meetings in Friedrichstadt, Hamburg and Krefeld. Except for the Monthly Meeting records for Harlingen and Friedrichstadt (see LSF: Temp MSS 749/1-4 and MS Vols. 122-26), no minutes or registers for any of the continental Meetings have survived.

17. This is the case in the Pyrmont area in Germany, where missionaries like Sarah (Tuke) Grubb (1756–1790) travelled towards the end of the eighteenth century. Although the site of the meeting house, which dates back to 1800, was since the decline of the Meeting during the second half of the nineteenth century used for other purposes, it was restored to its original use with the construction of a new house in 1932.

18. For the crisis theory, see Hobsbawm, E.J., 'The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century', in Ashton, T. (ed.), *Crisis in Europe 1560–1660: Essays from 'Past and Present'*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 6th edn, 1980 [1965], pp. 5-58, and Parker, G., and Smith, L.M. (eds), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1997 [1978].

19. The connection between crisis and religious sensitivity has been made by H. Lehmann especially; see *Das Zeitalter des Absolutismus: Gottesgnadentum und Kriegsnot*, Christentum und Gesellschaft, 9, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980.

20. J. van den Berg speaks of a 'supranational network of intellectual and spiritual connections'; see his 'Frömmigkeitsbestrebungen in den Niederlanden', in Brecht, M. (ed.), *Geschichte des Pietismus*. Vol. 1. *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993, pp. 57-111, here 105.

21. Hylkema, C.B., *Reformateurs: geschiedkundige studien over de godsdienstige bewegingen uit de nadagen onzer Gouden Eeuw*, 2 vols., Haarlem: Willink & Zoon, 1900–1902, repr. 1978, and Jones, R.M., *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, London: Macmillan & Co., 1914.

22. Lindeboom, J., *Stiefkinderen van het Christendom*, repr., 's Gravenhage, Nijhoff, 1973 [1929].

23. Kołakowski, L., *Chrétiens sans église: la conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVIIe siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, 2nd edn, 1987 [1969, Polish original 1965].

24. For a recent example, see Deppermann, A., *Johann Jakob Schütz und die Anfänge des Pietismus*; Beiträge zur historischen Forschung, 119, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002. Deppermann considers how Quaker ideas were received in radical pietist circles in Frankfurt a. M. He comes to the conclusion that although he never became a Quaker, Schütz found 'much to be admired' with regard to the Friends' willingness to suffer for their faith (see p. 325).

25. See *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1991, p. 211.

26. C. Kooi has pointed out that in the Dutch Republic, freedom of conscience and the fact that the official Dutch Reformed Church only enjoyed limited privileges resulted in a 'free market of religious choices', where 'confessional fault lines were...fluid' and 'fierce interconfessional competition' raged. See 'Converts and Apostates: The Competition for Souls in Early Modern Holland', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 92 (2001), pp. 195-214.

27. Of all German language tracts printed in the Dutch Republic in the 1670s, almost one third were written by Quakers. See Bruckner, J., *Bibliographical Catalogue of Seventeenth-century German Books Published in Holland*, Anglica Germanica. British Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, 13, Den Haag: Mouton, 1971, pp. xix and xii.

28. See the second letter from Hamburg, a large portion of which is devoted to this question, ZB Zürich: F79, pp. 543r-546v.

29. See Nuttall, G.F., 'Overcoming the World: The Early Quaker Programme', in Baker, D. (ed.), *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World*, Studies in Church History, 10, Oxford: Blackwell, 1973, pp. 145-64.

30. Dutch Mennonites and Quakers have used exactly the same phrase to describe this dilemma: 'in the world, but not of it'. See Kuipers, W.H., 'In de wereld, maar niet van de wereld. De wisselwerking tussen de doopsgezinden en de hen omringende wereld', in Groenveld, S., Jacobszoon, J.P. and Verheus, S.L. (eds), *Wederdopers, menisten, doopsgezinden in Nederland 1530–1980*, 2nd edn, Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1981 [1980], pp. 21-239.

31. H.A.E. van Gelder explores the relationship of church and state and the conditions under which dissenters lived in *Getemperde Vrijheid: een verhandeling over de verhouding van Kerk en Staat in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden en de vrijheid van meningsuiting in zake godsdienst, drukpers en onderwijs, gedurende de 17e eeuw*, Historische Studies uitgegeven vanwege het Instituut voor Geschiedenis der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht, 26, Groningen: Wolters & Noordhoff, 1972.

32. For these early instances, see Kannegieter, *Quakergemeenschap*, pp. 13, 15-16.

33. See Kannegieter, *Quakergemeenschap*, p. 17.

34. See placard issued in 1662 and partly printed in Riewald, J.G., *Reynier Jansen of Philadelphia, Early American Printer: A Chapter in Seventeenth-Century Nonconformity*, Groningen Studies in English, 11, Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1970, p. 33.

35. See Schrader, H.-J., *Literaturproduktion und Büchermarkt des radikalen Pietismus: Johann Heinrich Reitz' 'Historie der Wiedergebohrnen' und ihr geschichtlicher Kontext*; Palaestra Untersuchungen aus der deutschen, englischen und skandinavischen Philologie, 283, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989.

36. 'Mandat, daß die Sectarii, vulgo Quäcker, sich von hier fortmachen, niemand derselben hausen, vielmehr sie selbst nebst ihren Zusammenkünften den Herren Praetoribus anzeigen soll', printed in Blanck, J.F. (ed.), *Sammlung der von E. hochedlen Rathe der Stadt Hamburg so wol zur Handhabung der Gesetze und Verfassungen als bey besonderen Eräugnissen...ausgegangenen allgemeinen Mandate...*, Hamburg, [ca. 1768].

37. See J. Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*, 2 vols., London, 1753, II, pp. 448-50.

38. *Erläuterung oder Declaration des wehrlosen und unschuldigen Volks Gottes, Quakers genannt*, Amsterdam, 1660.

39. *Een Verklaringe van het onschadelyke ende onnoosele Volk Gods Quakers genoemt*, s.l., s.a.

40. *Quäcker-Grewel Das ist Abscheuliche / auffrührische / verdamliche Irthumb der Neuen Schwermer / welche genennet werden Quäcker...*, Hamburg, 1661.

41. *Quäcker-Grewel*, 'Vorrede', pp. 12-13: 'Der Trotz / Frevel / Frechheit / Ungehorsam / Widerspenstigkeit / ist die rechte Ursache / in deme sie zum Thore außgeführet worden / doch wiederumb herein kommen und die Obrigkeit verspottet / der Geist habe ihnen befohlen in dieser Stadt zu bleiben'.

42. *Beschirmung der Warheit/ Oder eine Antwort auff ein neidiges und schändliches Buch / genennet der Quaker Grewel...*, Amsterdam, 1679, p. 19.

43. 'Die Obrigkeit nehmen wir an / aber wir wolten nicht haben daß sie ihre Macht mißbrauchen sollten / sondern ein Schrecken mögen seyn denen die Böses thun / und ein Lob der Frommen...' p. 16.

44. *Beschirmung*, p. 19: 'dan wir seyn diejenige / welche die Obrigkeit anmütigen dasselbe zu thun / das rechtfertig und billich ist...und hierin seyn wir der Obrigkeit eine Erleuchterung / auch wollen wir / daß alle Menschen die H. Schrifft mögen lessen / und derselben gläuben...'

45. To take one example, according to figures extracted by the author from the records of the Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker converts in Gdańsk, who suffered harsh persecution, received a total of £565 from London between 1678 and 1707. See LSF: Meeting for Sufferings, vols. 1–18.

46. See, for example, a pamphlet published by Ames, after he and Humble Thatcher had been arrested in Amsterdam: *Een verklaringe van den onrechtvaerdigen handel van de Magistraten van Amsterdam tegens Willem Ames ende Humble Thatcher, voor-ghevallen in den Jahre 1657*, s.l., s.a.

47. See *Collection of Sufferings*, II, chapter 12 ('Europe and Asia').

48. Wright, L.M., *The Literary Life of the Early Friends, 1650–1725*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1932, p. 89.

49. I use 'sufferings' in quotation marks and in the plural where it refers to the specifically Quaker concept with theological and other implications as opposed to the suffering undergone by those subjected to persecution.

50. See Peters, K., *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Peters has shown how the fact that they were 'despised' and 'in scorn called Quakers' was used skilfully in the deliberate appropriation of the group denominator.

51. 'daß der sich ruhmet ein glied am leib Christi zu sein...in allem gehorsam vnd in d[er] liebe wandeln muß v[nd] alle werk d[er] finsterniß abzulegen verpflichtet ist, als geitz Ehebruch gotzendienst...die von Christen nit sollen gethan werden'. ZB Zürich: MS F79, p. 546v.

52. 'dan man muß nit leben mit der Zunge s.[ondern] m[it] d.[er] that und wahrheit'. ZB Zürich: MS F79, p. 546v.

53. 'Solet man darumb ursach nehmen von seiner gemeine (da von viel die wahrheit mit gut und blut bezeuget haben, abgehen und fallen ein volck oder person zu dem man nicht weiß von wehme er gesandt und deßen bekantnüß noch nicht auf die höchste probe biß zum blut komen ist...' ZB Zürich: MS F79, p. 542r.

54. See the older biography by Roosen, B.K., *Gerhard Roosen, weiland Prediger der evangelischen Mennoniten-Gemeinde zu Hamburg und Altona, geboren 1612, gestorben 1711,...*, Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1854, as well as Driedger, M.D., 'Kanonen, Schießpulver und Wehrlosigkeit. Cord, Geeritt and B.C. Roosen in Holstein und Hamburg 1532–1905', *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 52 (1995), pp. 101-21.

55. *Schriftelick Bericht over eenige aenmercklijke puncten der Engelschen Die Quakers genoemt worden. Alles aengaende hare nieuwigheden en eygen verkooren heyligheydt...*, Amsterdam, 1660.

56. *Schriftelick Bericht*, p. 32: 'Of sy oock sulcke proeve sullen uythouden die Mennos navolgers uytgestaen hebben / met lijf / goet ende bloedt daer voor op te setten / ende dat met een vrolijck gemoet; dat willen wy Godt ende den tijdt bevelen'.

57. Zijlstra offers a good overview of these, see *Om de ware gemeente*, especially chapter 12 ('de grote scheuringen').

58. Gregory, B.S., *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 123. For a very lucid overview of the Anabaptist martyr tradition, see Stauffer, E., 'Märtyrertheologie und Täuferbewegung', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 52 (1933), pp. 545-98.

59. *Het Bloedigh Tooneel der Doops-gesinde en Weereloose Christenen...*, Dordrecht, 1685 [1660].

60. There was still some repression in South Germany and Switzerland, which led to the emigration of Mennonites during the eighteenth century, see Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, p. 4.

61. See Goertz, H.-J., 'Nonkonformisten an der Elbe: fromm, reich und ratlos. Vierhundert Jahre Mennoniten in Hamburg und Altona', *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 58 (2001), pp. 164-69, and Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, pp. 4-5, as well as Hamilton, A., Voolstra, S. and Visser, P. (eds), *From Martyr to Muppy (Mennonite Urban Professionals): A Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands—The Mennonites*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994.

62. See Johns, D.L., '"Hanging as a Flag": Mary Dyer and Quaker Hagiography', *Quaker Religious Thought* 30 (2000), p. 7-23.

63. See Knott, J.R., *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 13. Knott here refers to Victor Turner's theory of symbolic action. This theory had not been formulated when Stauffer wrote about the Mennonite 'Märtyrertheologie', but he used very similar expressions.

64. See Moore, R., 'Reactions to Persecution in Primitive Quakerism', *JFHS* 57 (1995), pp. 123-31.

65. 'Voorrede', in *De Oude Waarheyd Ontdekt...*, Amsterdam, 1684: 'Want hoewel zy dood zijn, egter leven zy in hunne getuygenissen, welke tot ons, die in't leven zijn, nog spreken; ten eynde wy aangemoedigt mogten worden, om in hunne voetstappen te wandelen'.

66. Preserved in the Albert Sloman Library (University of Essex, Colchester): 'Crisp Collection of Quaker Letters and Papers', No. 36, p. 46r.

67. See, for instance, his *Ein Wort der Vertröstung/ und ein Geläut der frölichen Botschaft zu denen die da trawren/ in Teutschlandt und den umbliegenden Gräntzen...*, Amsterdam, 1668. Some of these were later translated into English and included in his works, in this case: *A Word of Consolation, and a Sound of Glad Tydings to all the Mourners in Germany*, in *A Memorable Account of the Christian Experiences, Gospel Labours, Travels and Sufferings of the Ancient Servant of Christ, Stephen Crisp*, London, 1692, pp. 209-21. Others were considered for publication by the Morning Meeting, but were 'laid by...after looking into divers of them Relating to Controversies in Holland and persecution where persecution now is not...' See LSF: Morning Meeting minutes, vol. 2, 8 May 1694, p. 35.

68. Crisp, *Memorable Account*, p. 41.

69. The tract is included in *Memorable Account*, pp. 505-20, here 517.

70. Crisp, *To the Magistrates of Groningen*, in *Memorable Account*, p. 322.

71. Caton's letters to Jansz, which carry no date, are preserved in LSF: Temp MSS 749/1, pp. 22-25 and 26-27.

72. *Aen u alle, de welcke Doops-gesinde genaemt zijt; soo in de Geunieerde Provintien, als elders*, included in his *De Oorsaeck van de Pest / En Andere Oordeelen uytgevonden*, Amsterdam, 1665, pp. 15-16 and 19-21.

73. *Aen u alle*, p. 15: 'Gedenckt / gedenckt de goedtheyt ende barmhertigkeydt des Alderhooghsten aen uwe Voor-vaderen / welcke gingen door groote verdruckingen, na dat sy verlicht waren...'

74. *Aen u alle*, p. 15-16: 'Ende derhalven geloove ick / dat haer lijdingen (hoewel de selve groot waren) net soo sware waren tot veele van haer / gelijk als de vreese van lijdingen wel swaer zijn in desen dagh tot veele van u lieden'.

75. I am grateful to Rosemary Moore, who during the discussion of an earlier version of this paper at the 2005 QSRA conference pointed out that later on, Friends themselves would have to face such accusations. And indeed, George Fox himself warned the Friends of this in very similar terms shortly before his death (see Watts, *Dissenters*, p. 262). This illustrates how much the

differences between religious reformers depended on outward circumstances as well as their own priorities, both of which changed with time.

76. A copy of Crisp's letter is preserved in LSF: Port 32.28.

77. *Copie van eenen exellenten brief* (1668), printed in *Het licht schijnende in de duisternissen...*, 4 vols., repr., Amsterdam, 1680–84 [1669–72], IV, pp. 44-55.

78. See Riewald, *Reynier Jansz.*

79. See the latest biography of Bourignon: De Baar, M., *'Ik moet spreken': het spiritueel leiderschap van Antoinette Bourignon (1616–1680)*, Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2004.

80. When a collection of her letters was published in English, it was subtitled 'Upon the Persecutions rais'd against Her, for the Sake of Truth'. See *Collection of Letters, written by Mrs. Antonia Bourignon...*, London, 1708.

81. *Anthoniette Bourignon ontdeckt, ende haeren geest geopenbaert uyt haere vruchten, den geest Godts niet te zijn,...*, Amsterdam, 1671.

82. *Advertissement; van Anthoinette Bourignon,... Tegen de Secte der Quakers...*, Amsterdam, 1672.

83. Quoted from the English translation: *A Warning Against the Quakers wherein the errors of that sect are plainly detected...*, London, 1708, p. 16. The French Original appeared in 1671, and a Dutch translation in 1672.

84. Bourignon, *Warning*, p. 17.

85. Bourignon, *Warning*, p. 31.

86. Bourignon, *Warning*, p. 38.

87. Bourignon, *Warning*, pp. 32-33.

88. See his bibliographies, *A descriptive catalogue of Friends' books, or books written by members of the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, from their first rise to the present time: ...*, 2 vols., repr., London: Smith, 1970 [1867], and *Bibliotheka Anti-Quakeriana: or, a catalogue of books adverse to the Society of Friends, alphabetically arranged; with biographical notices of the authors, etc.*, London: Smith, 1873.

89. To take but one example, the library of the University of Amsterdam possesses a copy of *De Oude Waarheyd*, which comprises 66 pamphlets and epistles in Dutch. It is marked as belonging to the Amsterdam Mennonite Community (shelf mark UBM: O 65-1267).

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