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Freeman's "The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust: a study in Quaker philanthropy and adult education" - Book Review

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Freeman, M., *The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust: a study in Quaker philanthropy and adult education 1904 -1954*, York: Sessions, 2004. pp. xiv + 250, ISBN 1 85072 310 9, Paper, £12.50.

This solid and thorough history of the first fifty years of the Joseph Rowntree Trust is to be commended for its detail but also the way it offers connections for scholars working in other areas.

The history of the Trust is fascinating. Mark Freeman is clearly an authority on the topic and the wider areas of the Trust's work, particularly adult education, and he brings out several themes with great clarity. The family's control of the Trust and the reticence to move outside of the Rowntree circle when appointing Trustees, the way in which the interests of different family members then influenced the patterns of giving, the emphasis on work local to York, and the relatively small amounts the Trust had to give away in those earlier days, are all continuing themes through the first fifty years. The attitude of the Trust to the ever-needy Woodbrooke settlement, and the way in which the settlement repeatedly went in directions different from the preference of JRCT Trustees is also interesting. Ultimately though it is the benign paternalism of the Trustees and their pre-industrial ideal which most informs. It is this paternalism which leads to conditional giving, close control over trusteeship, and an uneasy attitude towards more grass roots reformers such as Trades Unions.

The themes of the book link well with the work of current Birmingham University Quaker Studies postgraduate students working on Quakerism and feminist pacifism (Deborah Cho), Quakers and industrial relations (John Kimberley), Quakerism and imperialistic attitudes in Wales (Gethin Evans), whilst also connecting with the published work of Farah Mendlesohn on Quaker relief in the Spanish Civil War (*Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*, Mellen, 2002). Sheila Spielhofer and Quaker relief in Vienna (*Stemming the Tide*, Sessions, 2001), and Claus Bernet's work on some of the German Quaker Seeborn ancestors of this branch of the Rowntree family and their settlement at Friedenstahl ('Between Quietism and Radical Pietism: the German Quaker settlement, Friedensthal, 1790 - 1814', *Woodbrooke Journal*, Spring 2004).

I found few typographical errors but would have preferred a far more comprehensive cross-referencing system instead of the vague 'later' or 'above'. However, above all, the book can be commended as providing a great insight into the benign paternalism of Edwardian and later Quakerism and of the trajectory of the adult education movements in the first half of the twentieth century.

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