'A Suffering People': English Quakers and Their Neighbours c.1650-c.1700

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'A SUFFERING PEOPLE': ENGLISH QUAKERS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS *c.*1650–*c.*1700*

Suffering was an integral part of early Quaker identity. In the 1650s, the Friends seemed to court violence, by outrageous and provocative behaviour: going naked as a sign, reproving townspeople in the marketplace for their wickedness, and denouncing ministers as hirelings in front of their congregations. Beaten, thrown to the ground, dragged through the mire and run out of town, they would dust themselves off and return to the fray, for this (to them) was a war, the 'Lamb's War',[1] in which Quakers were killed.[2] After the Restoration, following George Fox's 'peace testimony', they largely abandoned the Lamb's War, but they still suffered extensive persecution and punishment for their refusal to pay tithes or swear oaths, and for their insistence on meeting publicly in defiance of the laws. They explained this refusal and this defiance in terms of obedience to the light of Christ within them: they were 'not free' to act otherwise. Meetings ignored orders from the authorities to disperse, because it was 'not time'.[3] Friends refused to enter into bail, to give sureties for good behaviour or to appear in court, because they would not admit to having done anything wrong, nor would they pay court fees when summoned to answer what they regarded as unfounded accusations, or jail fees after what they saw as unmerited imprisonments. Unwilling to resist actively, they submitted meekly to blows

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[1] See Rev. 17:14.

[2] Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1753), i, 289, 304, 540; ii, 96; Craig W. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660–1688* (Philadelphia, 1988), 23 n. 65.

[3] *The Journal of George Fox*, revised edn, ed. John L. Nickalls (London, 1975), 449; Norfolk Record Office, Norwich (hereafter NRO), SF 95, fos. 89, 95.

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and missiles and to being driven through the streets like cattle — and they were not dispirited. As one remarked in 1683, 'professors' (those who merely professed religion, but were 'out from the truth')[4] feared suffering. For those who lived in the truth, suffering was 'easy, sweet and pleasant unto their souls'.[5] As one Norwich Quaker wrote, the presence of the Lord made their troubles light.[6]

Popular hostility towards Quakers has attracted little attention from historians. Studies of crowds and riots in the Restoration period make little mention of violence against Quakers.[7] The most focused discussion has been by Barry Reay, who argued shrewdly that Quakers were feared and hated as 'outsiders' and compared popular attitudes towards Quakers to those of the Clubmen towards the military.[8] But Reay concentrated on the period up to 1660, and his conclusion, that 'popular animosity was a mixture of xenophobia, class hatred, ignorance and a superstition that merged with the world of witchcraft',[9] showed little empathy with the Quakers' enemies. He identified the Quakers as the rich or as 'middlemen and speculators',[10] while depicting them as a threat to the social order.[11] 'Ignorance was nurtured by the propaganda of gentry and ministers'[12] and the unthinking populace was given 'magistrate's licence' to use violence against Quakers.[13] At times Reay accepted that there were genuine religious reasons for disliking Quakers[14] and

[4] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 3 n., 203.

[5] Friends' House Library, London, Great Book of Sufferings (hereafter GBS) 6/2, p. 436.

[6] Friends' House Lib., Original Records of Sufferings (hereafter ORS) 1, no. 113.

[7] Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge, 1987), has only one mention (p. 52) of violence against Quakers (in 1659). Max Beloff, *Public Order and Popular Disturbances, 1660–1714* (Oxford, 1938), does not mention anti-Quaker violence at all.

[8] Barry Reay, 'Popular Hostility towards Quakers in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England', *Social Hist.*, v (1980), 394–6. The argument is repeated, often word for word, in Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London, 1985), ch. 4. Outsiders were prominent among the victims of anti-Quaker violence in York: David A. Scott, 'Politics, Dissent and Quakerism in York, 1640–1700' (Univ. of York D.Phil. thesis, 1990), 29, 33, 76.

[9] Reay, 'Popular Hostility towards Quakers in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England', 407.

[10] *Ibid.*, 401–3.

[11] *Ibid.*, 388–9.

[12] *Ibid.*, 391.

[13] *Ibid.*, 405.

[14] *Ibid.*, 389.

argued that apprentices and the young might see themselves as 'the custodians of social morality',[15] but in general he saw popular violence towards Quakers as manipulated rather than spontaneous, based on 'blind gut-conservatism'[16] rather than deeply held religious or social values. More recent studies have dealt only incidentally with violence against Quakers. Richard L. Greaves, in an article on changing attitudes towards Quakers, devoted just one paragraph to this topic.[17] Adrian Davies emphasized the Quakers' increasing willingness to work within 'the world', rather than remaining aloof, appealing to the secular and ecclesiastical authorities for relief from persecution.[18] He also argued that Quakers became increasingly well integrated into their communities, holding parish offices and interacting socially with their neighbours.[19] This was facilitated by their scaling-down of the Lamb's War and by a growing respect for Quakers' honesty in business dealings; it found expression in officials' reluctance to persecute their Quaker neighbours and willingness to subscribe certificates that they were peaceable.[20] Yet in his concern to show how well integrated Quakers became, Davies underplays the continuing popular hostility towards them. As we shall see, his claim that 'informal actions taken against Friends such as beatings or being held in the stocks disappear from the sufferings books after the 1650s'[21] is not supported by the evidence.

From an early stage Quakers collected, and published, accounts of their sufferings. In 1676 a weekly Meeting for Sufferings was established in London. Its initial task was to collect details of sufferings — not only as they happened but also retrospectively[22] — but it soon became the movement's main executive body, lobbying the king, ministers, MPs, judges,

[15] *Ibid*., 404–5.
[16] *Ibid*., 395.
[17] Richard L. Greaves, 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"? Changing Conceptions of Quakers in Early Modern Britain', *Albion*, xxx (2001), 32. Greaves does not seem to have used the sufferings records in Friends' House Library.
[18] Adrian Davies, *The Quakers in English Society, 1655–1725* (Oxford, 2000), 170, 185–8.
[19] *Ibid*., 200–15.
[20] *Ibid*., 174–7, 187, 202, 208–9.
[21] *Ibid*., 183–4.
[22] Friends' House Lib., Meeting for Sufferings (hereafter MfS) 1, before pagination.

bishops — anyone who might legitimately ease the burdens under which the Quakers laboured. It also dealt with legal and other queries from Friends. Throughout the records of the Meeting for Sufferings runs a sense of injustice: sometimes that the laws had not been fairly applied, sometimes that the laws themselves were unjust. The minutes of this meeting, together with the Great Book of Sufferings and the Original Records of Sufferings, all in Friends' House Library, provide the major part of the evidence for this study.[23] These documents were of course collected for a propagandist purpose. They invariably referred to Quakers (or rather Friends) in the third person, as if in a press release. They depicted Friends as having no option but to act as they did. The light within them, Christ Himself, commanded them to meet at specific times and places, to ignore interruptions and to continue the meeting until the spirit told them that it was time to bring it to an end. By contrast, those who attacked them and disrupted their meetings did so out of choice — and out of the wickedness to which the 'people of the world' were all too inclined.

The moral bias within the reports is obvious, but that does not mean that they were inaccurate. The Meeting for Sufferings insisted that stories should be checked.[24] Underlying the carefully assembled details of sufferings ran the assumption that the sheer weight of evidence was sufficient to convince any impartial person. In fact, sometimes the documents include evidence that runs counter to the impression they were intended to convey. In general they seem factually correct, but cannot be expected to examine objectively the motives of their persecutors. At first, the Quakers portrayed themselves as heroic outsiders, a plucky few fighting the Lamb's War against the world. After 1660, the records of sufferings give a very different picture: that persecution was the work of self-interested priests, officials and informers, and that the Quakers' sufferings distressed their fellow-citizens and neighbours, who did what they could to mitigate them. As we shall see, there is much truth in this picture — but it is not the whole truth. My purpose is to assess, first, the extent of

[23] Besse prints verbatim, or summarizes, many documents from these sources. Although he sometimes omits sordid details or oversimplifies, he rarely falsifies. He is least reliable when identifying the instigators of violence, where he tends to convert suspicion into fact, and in ascribing motives for violence.

[24] MfS 1, before pagination, and pp. 8, 10; MfS 6, p. 83.

(and reasons for) violence against Quakers in the 1650s and, second, the extent to which this popular violence continued after the seeming volte-face of the peace testimony of 1661. In the process I hope to shed light on the wider question of how far bonds of neighbourliness and community were destroyed by the corrosive impact of religious and political discord.

I

THE 1650s

Friends were most often attacked in the 1650s when they attempted to speak in church. Although many waited until after the 'priest' had finished, and although sometimes the people,[25] or the priest,[26] invited Friends to speak, the general reaction was one of hostility from both. Many Quaker interruptions focused on the 'deceit' of the priest: for Fox, the church bell was like a market bell, signalling that the 'priest' was offering his wares for sale.[27] Often Quakers appeared in a white sheet or a halter, both associated with shame punishments, or carrying a candle.[28] It never seems to have occurred to Friends that congregations might find the disruption of their worship offensive, or that they might resent denunciation of their minister as a false teacher, or themselves as living 'in Cain's nature in envy and malice'.[29] Similarly, Quakers invited trouble when denouncing the sins of the people in the street or marketplace. At Market Rasen, a Quaker reproved the people for their swearing and profaneness: he and his wife were beaten and stoned out of the town.[30] Going naked as a sign could provoke similar reactions: Quakers were knocked down in the street in Leeds and Skipton, merely for carrying the clothes of a naked Friend.[31]

[25] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 100–1.
[26] *Ibid.*, 88–9.
[27] *Ibid.*, 100–1, 39.
[28] George Whitehead, *The Christian Progress of that Ancient Servant . . .* (London, 1725), 407–8.
[29] GBS 1, p. 337.
[30] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 347, gives the date as 1658; GBS 1, p. 594, has 1655. For a similar example, see *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 49.
[31] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, ii, 95; GBS 2, Yorkshire, p. 13; GBS 4/2, p. 491.

Quakers often blamed the people's hostility on the 'priest'.[32] Sometimes they were attacked by priests,[33] their wives and children[34] or servants.[35] More often the priest was accused of inciting the people to attack the Quakers. In Westmorland, in 1652, it was said that the priests had told the people that James Nayler was a blasphemer who had denied the divinity of Christ and the Resurrection;[36] and that they had called on the people to 'hale him away', 'put him forth' or 'fight for the Gospels'.[37] At Somersham, Cambridgeshire, the priest told the people to gird on the sword, for the enemy was at hand.[38] Friends who disrupted Baptist or Independent meetings suffered similar treatment.[39] Crowds claimed to have been ordered to attack Friends by magistrates or constables,[40] and responded to such orders with alacrity. At Tarvin, Cheshire, two Quakers, John Milner and Thomas Hill, denounced tithes. Some people called the priest, who struck them with his cane. A great crowd gathered — men, women and children. Thomas Gardner, alehousekeeper, told the Quakers that if they did not leave they would be torn to pieces; and then he pulled out some of Hill's hair. A butcher struck Hill with a great club, while a shoemaker threw lasts at Milner's head, calling them witches and fiends of hell. Some tried to throw Hill and his horse into a pit; others threw large stones. When the stoning ceased, Milner and Hill rode back through the crowd.[41]

[32] The word 'priest' is found in the Book of Common Prayer, the use of which had been forbidden in 1645: the usual contemporary term was 'minister' or 'pastor'. However, since the Quakers consistently used the term 'priest' I have done so too. It was undoubtedly intended as a term of abuse, equating the mainly Presbyterian parish clergy with their Church of England and Catholic predecessors, in that they all claimed the authority to minister from book-learning, rather than from the light within, and all demanded tithes.

[33] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 578, 666, 711; GBS 3/2, pp. 693–4.

[34] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 738; ii, 2.

[35] *Ibid.*, i, 693, 736.

[36] *Ibid.*, ii, 2.

[37] *Ibid.*, i, 153; GBS 2, Yorkshire, p. 12; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 127; GBS 1, p. 170.

[38] GBS 3/2, p. 591.

[39] Whitehead, *Christian Progress of that Ancient Servant*, 53–4; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 694, 710; NRO, SF 95, p. 3.

[40] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 584, 692.

[41] GBS 1, p. 138. For Fox riding back through a crowd, see *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 226–7.

In this case, the priest incited the crowd, but often priests and magistrates were criticized for not rebuking the people — not the same thing.[42] Often the violence seems to have been spontaneous. At Blackburn in 1655, a Friend who spoke in church was dragged out and thrown against a wall. He came back in, complaining to the priest. The priest ignored him, but the 'rude multitude' beat him again, drove him out of the building and attacked another Friend who had said nothing.[43] At Dursley, Gloucestershire, Deborah Hurding tried to exhort the people, but they cried out 'kill her!' and 'tear her to pieces!' The magistrates put her in prison for her own protection and offered to let her escape; she refused.[44] When Fox was attacked in Carlisle cathedral by magistrates' wives, a crowd of 'rude people' came in with sticks and staves, crying 'down with these roundheaded rogues'; he had to be protected by soldiers from the garrison.[45] Often Quakers were attacked for speaking in church, with no mention of incitement by the priest or anyone else.[46] At Thorne, Yorkshire, the constable allowed Thomas Aldham to speak in church, but the 'ruder sort' punched and kicked him, and threw him out. He suffered similar treatment elsewhere.[47]

One reason for the violence against Quakers who spoke in church was that, while offensive, it was not necessarily illegal. An Act from (embarrassingly) Mary Tudor's reign imposed penalties for interrupting the service (which is why Friends often waited until the priest had finished before speaking). After 1650 there was no law requiring attendance at church or forbidding meetings outside the church. The 1650 Blasphemy Act was used against Nayler, but few others. Quakers fell foul of ordinances against travelling or working on the Sabbath: for them, Sunday was just a day like any other.[48] They were also prosecuted, or moved on, under the vagrancy laws, although on

[42] GBS 1, p. 407; GBS 3/2, p. 591; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 192–3, 564.
[43] GBS 1, pp. 555–6.
[44] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 209.
[45] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 158; see also *ibid*., 42.
[46] See, for example, *ibid.*, 44–5; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 55–6, 668, 710–11; ii, 95; GBS 1, pp. 407, 540. For a case where a priest protected a Quaker against the people, see Brian Hawkins, *Taming the Phoenix: Cirencester and the Quakers, 1642–1686* (York, 1998), 85.
[47] GBS 2, Yorkshire, pp. 11–12; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 95.
[48] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 116, 193; GBS 1, pp. 146, 483.

one occasion a magistrate decided that Fox, who slept rough and wore old leather breeches, was 'not a vagrant by his linen'.[49] But even if it was hard to prove that Friends had broken the law, people still carried them before the magistrates and set them in the stocks.[50] Violent though their conduct might be, the people in the crowds clearly felt their action was legitimate. Some will have been involved in law enforcement, as constables or as members of the watch. Others would have been influenced by sermons by their ministers, denouncing the Quakers as heretics and blasphemers.[51] In general, they would have felt that their actions were as legitimate as attacks on bawdy houses by London apprentices.[52] Magistrates treated Quakers (especially women) as 'loose, idle and disorderly', sending them to the house of correction or parading them through the streets wearing a scold's bridle.[53] After the Restoration Quakers were sometimes put in the 'cage' and exposed to the derision of the people.[54]

Interrupting church services, berating passers-by and refusing to respect the Sabbath set Quakers at odds with their neighbours, both ungodly and godly. Although Fox and his colleagues sometimes found the people 'loving' or 'moderate',[55] they were predominantly hostile and he often needed the protection of the civil or military authorities.[56] Popular hostility becomes even more apparent when we consider Quaker meetings. These might seem less provocative than confrontations in church or marketplace, but they encountered more extensive violence. Meeting houses were attacked; windows were smashed; stones, mud, water and sewage were thrown. Quakers passing to or from meetings met with similar treatment. At Mitcham, Surrey, people came from adjacent parishes to attack the Friends: they

[49] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 83, 92.

[50] *Ibid.*, 44–5; GBS 1, p. 407; GBS 3/2, p. 765.

[51] Quaker records, understandably, rarely refer to such sermons, but see Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, ii, 2. See also Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present*, no. 59 (May 1973), 67–9.

[52] See K. J. Lindley, 'Riot Prevention and Control in Early Stuart London', *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.*, 5th ser., xxxiii (1983), 110; Tim Harris, 'The Bawdy-House Riots of 1668', *Hist. Jl*, xxix (1986).

[53] GBS 1, pp. 81, 128.

[54] GBS 2, Norfolk, p. 15; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 238–9.

[55] For example *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 74.

[56] *Ibid.*, 44–5, 49, 149, 158, 226–7, 254–5.

tore their coats and cloaks, beat them, flung them in ditches, covered them with dirt, threw wildfire and rotten eggs at them, made 'rough music' with drums and kettles, drove them along with staves, drenched them with muddy water and stoned them a great way along the road.[57] Students at the two universities were especially hostile. At Cambridge in 1658 they bombarded Friends with dirt and stones, tore their clothes and spat in their faces. They fired bullets through the windows and ran through the meeting like 'wild horses', hallooing, stamping and trying to drown out the speakers, pulling off the women's headcloths and daubing their faces with excrement.[58] Their brethren of Oxford broke the meeting-house door, windows and part of the porch, pulled Friends' hair, rode on their backs like horses, and threw gunpowder and squibs. Having called for beer, tobacco and wenches, they threw beer at the Quakers when they would not drink, sang bawdy songs, smoked, scoffed and swore.[59]

Oxbridge students might reasonably be seen as untypical of the population at large, but similar behaviour can be found in London, Manchester and Hereford, as well as in villages like Martock, Somerset and Brighthelmstone, Sussex.[60] At Lewes the 'rude rabble', including some Independents, came with swords, guns and pikes, threw dirt, broke windows, and threw squibs and gunpowder.[61] At Bristol in 1654 a crowd of 'hundreds' attacked a meeting. Next day, three rioters were arrested, but were rescued by a crowd estimated at 1,500.[62] At Sherborne in 1657, as Friends left the meeting, 'rude people' daubed them with all the filth they could find in the streets. They threw 'great stones', knocking many to the ground, 'many hundreds encompassing them about'. Friends took refuge in an inn, which the rude people surrounded until four in the morning. Others lay in wait at the bridges for most of the night, in case they tried to make a break for it.[63] At times Friends were attacked before they even had a chance to meet. When two

[57] *Ibid.*, 352–3; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 589; GBS 2, Surrey, p. 4. For other examples, see Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 710, 765.
[58] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 86–7.
[59] *Ibid.*, 564–6.
[60] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 276, 307–8; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 254–5, 578, 710.
[61] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 710.
[62] *Ibid.*, 39–40.
[63] GBS 1, p. 359.

Quaker preachers came to Haverhill in 1656, a crowd besieged the house where they were staying, cursing and throwing stones till midnight. Next morning they returned, broke into the house, beat and kicked the men, stoning them along the street, beyond the town's end.[64]

These assaults — and there were many more — suggest that Friends were widely hated and feared; as we have seen, some saw them as witches.[65] The sheer *range* of modes of disruption is striking. The throwing of dirt and dung and the rubbing of faces with excrement, defiling the victims, mimicked the treatment of unpopular felons in the pillory or the stocks. The hallooing and 'rough music' echoed the popular, unofficial shame punishments of skimmington and charivari.[66] Throwing water at Quakers, or throwing them into water, could be seen as cleansing the community of pollution.[67] Many punishments emphasized inversion, in retaliation against the Quakers' inversion of the natural order, denying the authority of priest and magistrate (a double inversion in the case of Quaker women).[68] Often meetings were attacked by people coming out of church.[69] Crowds showed a strong sense of legitimation: if Quaker meetings were not illegal, people clearly felt that they ought to be. Sometimes, after the meeting was broken up, Quakers were carried to the magistrate,[70] whereupon crowds put them in the stocks. Attacks on the Quakers clearly reflected very widespread resentment of their behaviour — by no means confined to clergymen and magistrates. They involved self-help in the absence of effective laws and in defiance of the sympathy towards Friends sometimes shown by the military and civil authorities. Occasionally ordinary people expressed compassion for the suffering of Friends. In 1656 'foreigners and civil people' reproved those who assaulted a London meeting house

[64] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 661.

[65] *Ibid.*, 689; GBS 1, p. 138; Reay, 'Popular Hostility towards Quakers in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England', 398–9.

[66] See Martin Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, no. 105 (Nov. 1984).

[67] See Davis, 'Rites of Violence', 57–60.

[68] The comments of Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 302–3, are interesting in this context.

[69] *Ibid.*, 710, 736, 765; GBS 2, Salop, p. 1; GBS 3/2, p. 765.

[70] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 44–5, 307–8; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 765.

and besmeared those who worshipped there; they were attacked for their pains. Neighbours sometimes protected Friends against assault.[71] But such cases are not numerous. The overwhelming impression from the 1650s is that the Quakers were deeply unpopular.

II

THE ZENITH OF POPULAR ANTI-QUAKERISM 1659–1660

The fall of Richard Cromwell and the resumption of military rule added to their unpopularity. The army, conscious of its political weakness, mobilized religious radicals, admitting Quakers to the militia, to the voluntary regiments raised against Sir George Booth's rising, and possibly to the army; there was much talk of a Quaker rising.[72] Some Quakers published pamphlets (which they later tried to forget) accusing the army's opponents of wishing to restore the monarchy. In February 1660 the return of the MPs 'secluded' in 1648 reversed Pride's Purge and restored the Long Parliament. Before dissolving in March, the Commons remodelled the militia, replacing the Baptists and Quakers with Presbyterians and even Royalists. In many counties, volunteer troops of cavalry were formed to guard against the perceived threat from the New Model and its civilian allies, especially the Quakers.[73] The army's officer corps was gradually purged by Monk, and it became demoralized and marginalized, but militia officers and the general population viewed the Quakers with a mixture of fear and loathing. As the king's return became possible, then inevitable, Quakers were exposed to ferocious popular revenge.

Violence against individuals became more extreme. In May 1659 Elizabeth Brown of Brentford spoke to a priest in the street. She and another woman were attacked by a crowd, both men and women, beaten, punched and driven out of town. Elizabeth was described as being left almost dead.[74] Daniel

[71] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 276; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 689; GBS 1, p. 153.
[72] Reay, *Quakers and the English Revolution*, 41–2, 83–4, 87–91.
[73] John Miller, *After the Civil Wars: English Politics and Government in the Reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000), 169.
[74] ORS 3, no. 296.

Baker suffered grievously for proclaiming the light in Shrewsbury in 1660. In January he was in danger of his life after being pelted with stones, dirt and snowballs. In March, encouraged by a Presbyterian magistrate and rude soldiers, a large crowd pulled him off his horse and beat him. In October, lame in his leg, he went through the streets on horseback. The rude people threw brickbats, stones and 'many filthy things'.[75] Friends did not need to offer any provocation. A tailor's wife in London went to market to buy meat. A butcher's wife cried, 'Here is a Quaker'. The woman took refuge in a Quaker's house, but a great many butchers and other rude people dragged her out, beat her and tore many of her clothes. She was rescued by a constable.[76]

Meetings fared worse. In June 1659, at Liskeard, rude people threw stones and excrement and beat Friends with staves and fists. Hunting cries, a horn and five or six great hounds drowned out the speaker. The Quakers were tumbled down the stairs, into the street, while the priest watched from his window. The crowd pulled out the Quakers' hair and tore their clothes, until at last the priest said, 'Take them away'.[77] At Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, many rude people banged on the meeting-house walls and threw in water. When Friends appealed to Sir Thomas Hewett, JP, saying that they had freedom to meet, he responded that it was up to those who had given them freedom to do them right. Rude people continued to roll Quakers in the mire, daubing their faces, filling their hats with dirt and clapping them on their heads. Tiles, boards, windows and walls of the meeting house were broken. When it was so badly damaged that Friends were forced to come out, they were beaten and had their clothes torn, and were pursued with stones and dirt for two miles.[78]

After the army put down Booth's rising, the people became even ruder. At Newark, a crowd lined both sides of the road and the Quakers ran a gauntlet of sticks and stones. Horses'

[75] GBS 2, Salop, p. 6.

[76] GBS 2, London, p. 9. For a similar instance, in January 1661, of Friends having difficulty buying food, see *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 397. For another reference to 'rude' butchers, see *ibid.*, 178.

[77] GBS 1, p. 154; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 115–16.

[78] GBS 1, pp. 481–2; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 241.

saddles, bridles and girths were cut.[79] From March 1660, 'soldiers' (militia or volunteer cavalry) broke up meetings with swords and clubs, and crowds marched in quasi-military order, as if acting by authority. At Glastonbury, where Friends provocatively met at the market cross, a priest came with a crowd of 'drunken fellows', marching 'to beat of drum'.[80] The first of a series of attacks on the Cambridge meeting, by students and a 'rude multitude', took place on 8 April. The scholars dispersed at the command of the proctor, but soon reappeared, throwing in great stones, pulling Friends' hair and dragging them through the gutter. In May several hundred assembled each Sunday, ignoring the orders of aldermen and JPs to disperse. They used heavy hammers to break the doors and locks, pulled down the stairs and broke most of the glass.[81] Meanwhile at Harwich a great crowd threatened to pull down the meeting house; some cried, 'The king is now coming who will hang or banish you all'.[82] In Devon Friends passed through the graveyard at Clyst Hiden on their way from the Talaton meeting. They found a great crowd of young men, who threw cattle dung and pulled some over as they tried to cross a stile. The youths followed, throwing stones and dirt, thrusting dung into their faces and beating them with sticks and fists.[83] At Burton in Bishopsdale, Yorkshire, a constable came with many rude people, armed with swords and staves, calling on the meeting to disperse. Some cried, 'beat them out of town'. Two were put in the stocks, others were driven to the riverside and horses' bridles were cut.[84] In December 1659 the mayor of Norwich had asked Friends not to meet as the people were so rude. Friends replied that 'we could not but meet to worship God as our manner was' and although some rude people appeared, there was no disorder. But on 2 June 1660 a large crowd attacked the meeting house, saying now the king had come in they would all be hanged. Friends were beaten, punched and daubed with dirt; the crowd pulled their hair and spat in their

[79] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 358; GBS 2, p. 197; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 552–3.
[80] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 12, 167, 585–6.
[81] GBS 1, pp. 106–7, 134.
[82] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 194–5.
[83] GBS 1, pp. 345–6.
[84] GBS 2, Yorkshire, p. 17. See also *ibid.*, Somerset, p. 8.

faces.[85] As one Friend noted, under Oliver they had suffered cruel mockings, buffetings and stonings, and had been reviled by their nearest and dearest; but when the king returned the rude multitude expressed the hope that they would be 'cut off from the face of the earth'.[86]

By the end of June 1660 the worst of the popular violence (as distinct from that of the 'soldiers') was over,[87] except in Cambridge. On 21 July 'a tumult of scholars, lewd women, townsmen and boys' beat Quakers and threw dirt, making a hideous noise with shouting, drumming and gunpowder. When this failed to halt the meeting, they broke down the walls with 'bolt-hammers and other engines'. When the Quakers produced Charles II's Declaration of Breda, the crowd called them rebels. Having battered down the rest of the walls, the crowd hunted them through the streets and attacked an alderman's house where a Quaker lodged.[88]

This popular, and disorderly, persecution was a product of the tensions, animosities and near-vacuum of authority in 1659–60. For the Quakers, it was the work of a minority of 'rude' people. Although Friends had no time for worldly courtesies, they used the language of 'politeness' to describe their fellow-citizens: on one side 'civil' (or 'sober' or 'moderate'), on the other 'rude' (or 'drunken'). 'Rude' was defined in terms of behaviour towards Friends: it was not a description of social status, although in conjunction with words like 'rabble' or 'multitude' it suggested the lower orders. (On the other hand the Quakers repeatedly blamed figures of high status — magistrates and priests — for encouraging or condoning violence against them.) Fox described anti-Quaker crowds in London in 1656 as made up of 'rude priests, watermen, and lackeys and rude

[85] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 359–60; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 488–9; Arthur J. Eddington, *The First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich* (Friends' Hist. Soc., London, 1932), 29–30. Eddington included many extracts, often very substantial, from documents.

[86] NRO, SF 95, pp. 4–5.

[87] But see GBS 1, p. 23, which refers to the disruption of a meeting at Steventon, Bucks., in October 1660.

[88] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 87–8. In the Declaration of Breda, Charles II promised that nobody should be harassed for 'differences of opinion in matter of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom': *The Stuart Constitution, 1603–1688: Documents and Commentary*, ed. and intro. J. P. Kenyon (Cambridge, 1966), 358. The crowds would have argued that the Quakers' behaviour did disturb the peace.

professors'.[89] 'Rudeness' was also often linked with youth — boys, youths, young men (and university students). In the Norwich riot two ringleaders were identified as an apprentice and a servant in a brewhouse.[90] There were occasional references to rude (or lewd) women; in Norwich 'rude girls' reviled Friends, scoffed at the inner light and threw stones.[91] In one unusual case, a young male Quaker was tied up and his naked buttocks were caned by 'lewd and immodest maidens'.[92] But while there are references to those in authority trying to restrain the crowds, notably at Cambridge, there is little suggestion (in contrast to the period after 1660) of widespread sympathy for the Quakers.[93] Their aggressive, disrespectful attitude towards authority and their neighbours had left them exposed and vulnerable, following the collapse of army rule and the return of the monarchy. Such changed circumstances forced their leaders to rethink their position.

III

AFTER THE RESTORATION: CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

I have suggested that one reason for popular violence against Quakers in the 1650s had been the lack of legal remedies against them. One device used later — tendering the oath of allegiance, designed to identify Catholics — was inappropriate at a time when the monarchy had been abolished, because it included a statement of loyalty to the king. Soon new measures gravely worsened the legal position of Quakers and other nonconformists. The Act of Uniformity, 1662, revived the legal requirement that all should attend their parish church each Sunday on pain of a fine. In 1662 an Act laid down punishments for Quakers and others who refused oaths, and for Quaker meetings of five persons or more (over and above the immediate family).[94] The first Conventicle Act (1664) applied to all nonconformist meetings of five or more and imposed heavy

[89] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 276.
[90] Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 30.
[91] *Ibid.*, 190.
[92] GBS 2, Sussex, p. 8. Besse's account of this incident (*Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 711) is unsurprisingly brief.
[93] For one example of the sympathy of 'sober people', see GBS 1, p. 482.
[94] *Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (London, 1810–28), v, 350–1.

fines for attending meetings, with seven years' transportation for a third offence.[95] The severity of the fines proved counter-productive. Magistrates were reluctant to prosecute and juries loath to convict, not least because those convicted could become dependent on poor relief. The Act was temporary, expiring in March 1669. A year later, the Commons passed a new Conventicle Act. It was permanent and addressed the weaknesses of the previous Act. It imposed much smaller, but more realistic, fines on 'hearers', but heavy fines on those on whom nonconformist worship depended: preachers and those who allowed their houses to be used for meetings. It countered the Quaker tactic of challenging indictments on technical grounds by stating that all clauses in it 'shall be construed most largely . . . for the suppressing of conventicles and for the justification and encouragement of all persons to be employed in the prosecution thereof'. Two other additions were also designed to facilitate prosecution. First, informers who brought successful prosecutions were to receive one-third of the fines paid by the nonconformists. Second, the 1664 Act had laid down a fine of £5 for constables who failed to do their duty. The 1670 Act prescribed in addition that magistrates who failed to act were to be fined £100, of which half was to go to the informer.[96]

Andrew Marvell famously described this last Act as 'the quintessence of arbitrary malice'.[97] The provisions about informers and the fining of negligent magistrates were to have serious repercussions for all nonconformists. It was one thing to pass a law and quite another to enforce it: most of the awesome battery of laws against Catholics went unenforced most of the time.[98] Most parish officials and JPs had shown little eagerness to prosecute under the 1662 and 1664 Acts. The 1670 Act gave informers a vested interest in prosecution and the power to threaten and coerce reluctant constables and

[95] *Ibid.*, 516–20.

[96] *Ibid.*, 648–51 (quotation from p. 650). See also Anthony Fletcher, 'The Enforcement of the Conventicle Act, 1664–79', in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Studies in Church Hist., xxi, Oxford, 1984), 236–7.

[97] *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, 3rd edn, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1971), ii, 314.

[98] John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660–1688* (Cambridge, 1973), ch. 3.

magistrates.[99] Persecution could now be driven by very small numbers of informers, officials and priests, against the wishes of most of the magistracy and the community at large. At times informers were accused of giving orders to their superiors.[100] Informers were mostly deeply unpopular and often morally odious,[101] but they had the law on their side and the English were a law-abiding people. If the Quakers were harassed by their neighbours in the 1650s in the absence of law, in the 1680s they were harassed by those with a vested interest in persecution, whose legal authority made it difficult for the Quakers' neighbours to help them.

Although Quakers were now far more vulnerable in the face of the law, in some ways they did little to help themselves. They insisted on meeting publicly, at times announced in advance. Their refusals to promise not to meet, or to give security for good behaviour, bewildered and frustrated magistrates who wanted to help them.[102] But they did help themselves in three significant ways. The first was to set out to convince the government and their fellow-citizens that they were 'peaceable'. Fox and some others had denounced violence in the 1650s and renounced conspiracy against the government in 1660.[103] They had believed in the 1650s that they were doing God's work in seeking to transform the world. The return of the monarchy forced a painful reappraisal. A mixture of disappointed providentialism and pragmatic realism drove Fox to the conclusion that the Lamb's War was no longer the way forward. As the king seemed less hostile than the Quakers' many enemies, Fox became increasingly inclined to try to persuade the new regime to leave Friends alone. Even before the small Fifth Monarchist rising in London in January 1661, led by Thomas Venner, Fox

[99] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* (hereafter *CSPD*), *1670*, 353; *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson, 1673–4* . . ., ed. W. D. Christie, 2 vols. (Camden Soc., new ser., viii–ix [London], 1874), i, 33; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 70; MfS 3, pp. 228, 247; MfS 4, p. 271(*bis*); MfS 5, pp. 251, 254, 320.

[100] *More Sad and Lamentable News from Bristol* . . . (London, 1682), 4; NRO, SF 95, fo. 86.

[101] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 563; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 79–80; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 75, 205–6; GBS 6/2, p. 397; *CSPD, 1670*, 369–70, 376, *CSPD, Jan.–June 1683*, 75.

[102] See, for example, *CSPD, 1663–4*, 431; *CSPD, 1682*, 228; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 84, 195–6.

[103] Greaves, 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"?', 33.

was moving towards a renunciation of violence and confrontation.[104] Immediately after Venner's rising, Fox issued his Peace Testimony, which stressed that Quakers would never take up 'carnal' weapons against the state or anyone else — their 'weapons' were exclusively spiritual.[105] Quakers claimed that the Conventicle Acts (which defined conventicles as seditious meetings on pretence of religion) did not apply to them. There was no pretence; they met publicly, with open doors, to worship God, with no thought of plotting sedition, so there was no need for informers to investigate their meetings.[106] Initially, many of their fellow-English were unconvinced.[107] Discoveries of the extent and sophistication of Quaker organization added to their suspicions.[108] In the 1670s there were claims that Quakers resorted to violence and openly challenged the Established Church.[109] In the early 1680s some magistrates still regarded them as disaffected — because they would not conform to the Church.[110] However, some observers regarded them as less dangerous than other Dissenters, even in the early 1660s.[111] The king issued repeated orders to release from jail those Quakers who were not dangerous.[112] By the early 1680s it was remarked that people regarded the Quakers, even if they would not swear, as less of a threat to the state than Presbyterians or Baptists, who would. At Middlesex sessions they were told that although they

[104] H. Larry Ingle, *First among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (New York, 1994), 190–3.

[105] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 394–404.

[106] *Ibid.*, 558, 563–4. See also *CSPD, 1664–5*, 20; *CSPD, 1670*, 222; MfS 5, p. 128; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 66–8, 204.

[107] Durham University Library, Mickleton Spearman MS 31, fo. 77, Cosin Letter Book 1B, no. 134; *CSPD, 1660–1*, 462; Historical Manuscripts Commission (hereafter HMC), *le Fleming* (London, 1890), 30.

[108] *CSPD, 1660–1*, 481; *CSPD, 1670*, 361, 542–3. A few Quakers were involved in the 1663 Northern rising: see Greaves, 'Seditious Sectaries or "Sober and Useful Inhabitants"?', 34.

[109] *CSPD, 1670*, 256, 314, 599; *CSPD, 1678*, 442; Longleat, Warminster, Coventry MS 7, fos. 82–3. For the Quakers' version of the events described in *CSPD, 1670*, 314, see Whitehead, *Christian Progress of that Ancient Servant*, 330–1, 617; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 410, 412, 415.

[110] HMC, *le Fleming*, 184; HMC, *Kenyon* (London, 1894), 172.

[111] *CSPD, 1660–1*, 466, 471, 473; Bodleian Library, Oxford, Clarendon MS 77, fo. 236. Bodleian Lib., Clarendon MS 75, fo. 191, and British Library (hereafter BL), Egerton MS 2537, fos. 331, 335, mention the other major denominations but not Quakers.

[112] *CSPD, 1660–1*, 587; *CSPD, 1661–2*, 466; *CSPD, 1663–4*, 10; *CSPD, 1664–5*, 218; *CSPD, 1671–2*, 489–90; *CSPD, 1672*, 214–15.

had not sworn allegiance, they had practised it.[113] The change in the attitude of the 'establishment' towards Friends owed much to systematic lobbying and use of the press to convince people that they were neither heretics nor dangerous. This process was not without its setbacks, as sometimes Friends' insistence on using 'thee' and 'thou' and keeping their hats on infuriated those whom they were trying to persuade.[114] It also did not help that many Quakers voted for Whig candidates in the parliamentary elections of 1679 and 1681,[115] although the Quaker leadership had urged Friends not to become embroiled in party politics.[116] But in the long run the Quakers' patient efforts to repackage themselves succeeded, to the extent that, although they were excluded from the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, they were included in the Toleration Act of 1689.[117]

A second way in which Quakers helped their cause was by dissociating themselves from other Dissenters.[118] Although the derogatory term 'professors' might apply to those who conformed

[113] MfS 3, p. 82. See also *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 463. But there were reports in 1676 and 1680 that the judges were severe against Quakers: University of Texas at Austin, Humanities Research Centre, Pforzheimer MS 103e, vol. ix, Edward Coleman to Sir Richard Bulstrode, 14 July 1676; ORS 4, no. 463.

[114] HMC, *5th Report* (London, 1876), 151; MfS 1, p. 174. The king was basically well intentioned towards Quakers, but found some aspects of their behaviour hard to understand: see Whitehead, *Christian Progress of that Ancient Servant*, 533–5.

[115] GBS 3/1, pp. 504–5; GBS 4/1, p. 244; ORS 1, no. 111; *An Account of the Late Hardships and Violence Inflicted upon Certain Persons Called Quakers for their Peaceable Religious Meetings in the City and County of Gloucester* (London, 1682), 5–6; MfS 2, p. 158; *The Distressed Case of the People Called Quakers in the City of Bristol* . . . (London, 1682), 6–7; *A Farther Account from Several Letters of the Continuation of the Cruel Persecution of the People Called Quakers in Bristol* . . . (London, 1682), 2; Richard Davies, *An Account of the Convincement, Exercises, Services, and Travels* . . ., 3rd edn (London, 1771), 184–5. Friends had no qualms about seeking the support of Whig MPs: GBS 4/1, p. 245; ORS 1, no. 111; MfS 2, p. 101. See also Richard L. Greaves, 'Shattered Expectations? George Fox, the Quakers and the Restoration State, 1660–85', *Albion*, xxiv (1992), 245.

[116] Nicholas Morgan, *Lancashire Quakers and the Establishment, 1660–1730* (Halifax, 1993), 50–1.

[117] National Archives, London, Public Record Office, SP 104/177, fo. 16; Catherine L. Leachman, 'From an "Unruly Sect" to a Society of "Strict Unity": The Development of Quakerism in England, *c.*1650–89' (Univ. of London Ph.D. thesis, 1997), *passim*.

[118] There are few references in Quaker records to the sufferings of other denominations (for exceptions, see *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 426–7; MfS 3, p. 339). There is no reference, for example, to the vigorous persecution of Presbyterians and Independents in Bristol in 1674–5.

to the Church, Friends used it mainly to refer to Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists.[119] Friends remarked repeatedly that, in times of persecution, they continued to meet while the 'professors' did not.[120] Others, including Presbyterians, confirmed this,[121] and Friends' dogged insistence on meeting publicly at set times contrasted with other Dissenters, who varied the times of their meetings and kept their meeting places secret.[122] As in the 1650s, Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists expressed deep hostility towards Quakers. In the brief period of open competition between denominations, under the Declaration of Indulgence of 1672, Presbyterians and other Dissenters disrupted Quaker meetings.[123] Ralph Josselin complained in 1661 of the spread of 'Quakers' and profaneness. In 1663 the old Baptist Vavasour Powell saw Christianity as being dashed on two rocks, the world and (worse) the Quakers.[124] Richard Baxter regarded Quakers as among the 'proper fanatics', along with Ranters, Seekers and infidels, guided by 'rebellion within' rather than by the Bible.[125] However, Baxter acknowledged that in the 1660s the Quakers' stubbornness took much of the pressure off other Dissenters and won them many adherents and much sympathy. He complained in 1671 that people had far more charity for Quakers, even though they would not own the essentials of Christianity, than for a 'pious conformable minister' like himself.[126] By the 1680s the Quakers'

[119] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 53.

[120] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 566–7; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 53; *CSPD, 1670*, 321; *CSPD, 1680–1*, 626; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 80–1; *More Sad and Lamentable News from Bristol*, 2.

[121] *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616–1683*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (Oxford, 1976), 504; *Reliquiae Baxterianae . . .*, ed. Matthew Sylvester (London, 1696), bk 1, pt 2, p. 437; *CSPD, 1670*, 321; *CSPD, 1680–1*, 626.

[122] Bodleian Lib., Carte MS 222, fo. 322; *CSPD, July–Sept. 1683*, 60 (a secret meeting house for four hundred people at Bridgewater).

[123] Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 54, 77–9; *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1667–1686*, ed. Russell Mortimer (Bristol Record Soc., xxvi, [Bristol], 1971), 63, 74, 76.

[124] *Diary of Ralph Josselin*, ed. Macfarlane, 481; Davies, *Account of the Convincement*, 81.

[125] *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. Sylvester, bk 1, pt 2, p. 387; *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, ed. N. H. Keeble and Geoffrey F. Nuttall, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1991), ii, 92–3. See also *The Ellis Correspondence . . .*, ed. [G. J. W. Agar-Ellis] Lord Dover, 2 vols. (London, 1829), i, 252.

[126] *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. Sylvester, bk 1, pt 2, pp. 436–7; *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, ed. Keeble and Nuttall, ii, 117.

projection of themselves as the most harmless of Dissenters was becoming accepted in governing circles. Bishop Lamplugh of Exeter did Friends numerous small kindnesses.[127] In Norfolk in 1682 Tory JPs signed certificates that Quakers posed no threat to the state, but prosecuted other Dissenters.[128] The second earl of Yarmouth, one of the county's leading Tories, wrote on behalf of imprisoned Friends, spoke to the deputy recorder of Norwich on their behalf and advised them to state their case to the judges when they came to the city. His kindness perhaps explains an informer's comment that the earl was a dirty fellow who deserved to be kicked.[129] Meanwhile Sir George Jeffreys secured the release of Friends from Horsham jail,[130] and Friends came to see him as among the most sympathetic of judges. In March 1684, in a two-hour charge to the grand jury at Launceston assizes, after a quick swipe at those who refused oaths, Jeffreys concentrated his venom on Dissenters and (especially) occasional conformists, arguing that until these were brought into full conformity, the government would never be secure.[131] It was noted that Jeffreys's patron, the duke of York, was also friendly towards Quakers, which added to the Presbyterians' animus against them. In 1685 the Quakers categorically dissociated themselves from Monmouth's rebellion, and in the following twelve months proceedings against them were gradually ended.[132]

The third way in which Quakers helped themselves was by integrating themselves into their communities,[133] as far as their singular beliefs and behaviour would allow. The first step was to

[127] R. Hawkins, *A Brief Narrative of the Life and Death of that Antient Servant of the Lord and his People, Gilbert Latey . . .* (London, 1707), 106–10. For other 'friendly' bishops, see MfS 2, pp. 80, 90, 139; Davies, *Account of the Convincement*, 172–81.

[128] ORS 4, no. 485 (five of those signing the certificate had signed the 1680 loyal address from Norfolk and three were to sign that of 1682: Raynham Hall, Norfolk, 'First Viscount Townshend, Misc. Corr. 1650s–87', address of 1680; BL, Add. MS 36988, fo. 180); ORS 4, no. 488; MfS 2, p. 94. I am grateful to the Marquess Townshend for permission to consult the manuscripts at Raynham.

[129] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 508; MfS 3, pp. 14, 87, 145; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 218–19.

[130] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 724; MfS 2, pp. 98, 105.

[131] ORS 3, no. 370; ORS 4, no. 398. For similar comments on occasional conformity, see Bodleian Lib., Tanner MS 36, fo. 196; *CSPD, July–Sept. 1683*, 362–3.

[132] ORS 4, no. 398; MfS 4, pp. 84, 87, 90, 92–3, 110–12, 155; Dr Williams' Library, London, Morrice MS P, p. 471. For some who were associated with the rebellion, see Greaves, 'Shattered Expectations?', 256–7.

[133] See Davies, *Quakers in English Society*, 200–14.

scale down the Lamb's War. (Some had never been involved in the first place or had abandoned the Lamb's War before 1660.)[134] Quakers still sometimes spoke in church, or went naked, but much less often than in the past.[135] Their restraint was intended to reassure the authorities that they were harmless, but it also reduced friction with the neighbours. On Easter Day 1661 John Rowett was hauled out of the church at Stoke Climsland, Cornwall, and beaten for interrupting the priest, the people 'asking whether he had no other time to come but when people were going to receive the communion'.[136] Quakers soon began to avoid giving offence and stressed neighbourliness. In 1664 Fox told a magistrate that those who met at Swarthmoor were 'his neighbours and a peaceable people'. George Bishop told the mayor of Bristol, 'We are of the city and in the city, inhabitants thereof and interwoven are we therein'.[137] During vigorous persecution in the city in 1663–4, eminent citizens visited Friends in prison 'as brothers-in-law, uncles and partners in merchandising'. They were said to be shocked that respectable people were being sent to jail and even to Bridewell.[138] In 1683 Tobias Hardmeat of St Ives, Huntingdonshire, asked to be tried by 'twelve of my honest countrymen, such as have known me and my dealings amongst them and my life and conversation'.[139] Fox claimed that the Quakers' honesty in business won them the respect of their neighbours, while others were impressed by their 'exemplary lives'.[140] Although Quakers in some respects remained 'different',[141] they mingled with non-Quakers at funerals,[142] and some took on parish offices, provided they did

[134] Scott, 'Politics, Dissent and Quakerism in York', 9–10, 14, 46–7, 78–9.

[135] *CSPD, 1660–1*, 472; *CSPD, 1682*, 564; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 53; GBS 3/2, pp. 559–60, 983; GBS 6/2, pp. 610–11; Bodleian Lib., Tanner MS 37, fo. 119; MfS 5, pp. 335, 355; Leachman, 'From an "Unruly Sect" to a Society of "Strict Unity"', 246–59.

[136] GBS 3/1, p. 236.

[137] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 456; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 46.

[138] *A Relation of the Inhumane and Barbarous Sufferings of the People Called Quakers in the City of Bristoll* . . . ([London?], 1665), 33, 47, 51–2, 86–102; GBS 1, p. 84.

[139] ORS 2, no. 207.

[140] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 169–70; *CSPD, 1660–1*, 466.

[141] Davies, *Quakers in English Society*, ch. 3.

[142] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 123; GBS 6/1, pp. 146, 209–10; MfS 5, p. 162; MfS 8, p. 222. However, on one occasion a non-Quaker's family objected violently to his being buried in a Quaker burial ground: MfS 5, p. 115.

not have to swear an oath.[143] Quakers acted as executors for, or witnessed the wills of, non-Quakers, and vice versa.[144] David Scott has argued that the interdependence within towns discouraged aggression and made Quakers inclined to blend in.[145] (This same interdependence made magistrates reluctant to persecute their fellow-citizens.)[146] York's small Quaker community was concerned to maintain a good reputation 'amongst all sober people of other persuasions'.[147] There is ample evidence of neighbours paying fines, bail or sureties, rescuing Friends from informers or supervising their property when goods were being distrained.[148] Sometimes Quakers' fines were paid by people they did not know.[149] Neighbours bought distrained goods: some Friends reimbursed them, others said that they could not do so, but told them they might sell the goods. Where neighbours owed Friends money, they used it to pay fines or fees.[150] Elsewhere non-Quaker relatives bought distrained goods and returned them.[151] Between 1678 and 1686 many Quakers obtained certificates from their neighbours, parish officers, magistrates and clergy that they posed no threat to the government.[152] At Welshpool Richard Davies lived on good terms with the priest; when he was troubled by an informer, the townsmen ostracized the man, who came to beg Davies's pardon.[153] Faced

[143] MfS 6, pp. 58, 128; Hawkins, *Taming the Phoenix*, 216–18; Bill Stevenson, 'The Social Integration of Post-Restoration Dissenters', in Margaret Spufford (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520–1725* (Cambridge, 1995), 369–72; Morgan, *Lancashire Quakers and the Establishment*, 37–42.

[144] Stevenson, 'Social Integration of Post-Restoration Dissenters', 381–3.

[145] Scott, 'Politics, Dissent and Quakerism in York', 12–17, 48.

[146] *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. Sylvester, pt 3, p. 172; Bodleian Lib., Carte MS 70, fo. 447; *CSPD, 1666–7*, 12; *CSPD, 1667–8*, 97; *CSPD, 1675–6*, 1; *CSPD, 1680–1*, 696; Perry Gauci, *Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth, 1660–1722* (Oxford, 1996), 73–4, 103–4, 123, 135–8.

[147] Scott, 'Politics, Dissent and Quakerism in York', 85. For the extent of their integration into a wider godly community, see *ibid.*, 85–103, 117–20.

[148] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 45, 132; *CSPD, 1670*, 243; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 193, 197–8; ORS 4, no. 403; GBS 3/1, pp. 406, 458; GBS 3/2, pp. 683–4; GBS 4/2, pp. 427, 434, 438–40; GBS 6/1, pp. 228, 282, 298; GBS 6/2, p. 445. See also Horle, *Quakers and the English Legal System*, 270–3 and *passim*.

[149] GBS 5/2, pp. 363, 376.

[150] ORS 2, no. 221.

[151] GBS 3/1, p. 423.

[152] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 548–50; GBS 3/2, pp. 794–7; GBS 4/2, p. 441; ORS 4, no. 461; MfS 2, pp. 84–5; *CSPD, 1680–1*, 555.

[153] Davies, *Account of the Convincement*, 111, 141–6.

with persecution, Quakers were no longer as isolated as they had been in the 1650s.

IV

PERSECUTION AND THE PEOPLE

The chronology of persecution of Quakers tends to follow a pattern: a burst of harassment (and plunder) in 1661, after Venner's rising;[154] a flurry of persecution in 1664–5, following the first Conventicle Act; and a more severe persecution in 1670–1, particularly in London, after the second Conventicle Act. More persecution followed the cancelling of the Indulgence, in 1673, and the withdrawal of licences, in 1675. But the most sustained and brutal persecution began in 1681–2 and continued until 1685–6.[155] Few places suffered systematic persecution throughout these years and there were isolated (but occasionally severe) outbreaks at other times. Some were provoked by a particular event, such as the opening of a new meeting house in Norwich.[156] In Cumberland the vast majority of prosecutions were for non-payment of tithe and covered the periods from 1660 to 1664 and from 1674 to 1688. In Durham and Northumberland, Bristol and London the great majority of prosecutions were for meetings. They were spread fairly evenly over time in Durham and Northumberland, but in Bristol they were concentrated in 1661, 1664 and 1682, and in London in 1661–2, 1664 (above all), 1670 and 1683–5. There were few prosecutions for tithe refusal in Durham, Northumberland and London — and none in Bristol.[157]

The chronology of persecution of Quakers was not the same as that for other Dissenters. JPs in Norfolk in 1682 persecuted Presbyterians and Independents, but not Quakers: the same

[154] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 394–7; Whitehead, *Christian Progress of that Ancient Servant*, 241–2; *The Diurnal of Thomas Rugg, 1659–1661*, ed. William L. Sachse (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., xci, London, 1961), 142.

[155] For the period from 1664 to 1679, see Fletcher, 'Enforcement of the Conventicle Act', 237–46.

[156] Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 110–12; Hobson, *Memoirs of the Life and Convincement of Benjamin Bangs*, 31–3.

[157] Horle, *Quakers and the English Legal System*, 281–4.

was true of Bristol in 1674–5 and York in 1681–5.[158] The general pattern that emerges is of reluctance to convict Quakers, from judges and juries in the 1660s[159] to entire communities in the 1680s. Magistrates were 'moderate',[160] parish officers took an age to execute warrants and neighbours refused to co-operate with those who came to disrupt meetings.[161] When Quakers were shut out of London meeting houses, watchmen and constables did them numerous small kindnesses, especially in the bitter winter of 1683–4. They allowed them forms to sit on, sometimes allowed them into the meeting house and removed a disruptive woman, 'seeing our disliking of her'.[162] Hearing that informers were coming, they advised Friends to disperse.[163] Soldiers who were sent to drive them out were persuaded to drive away the rude people instead.[164] In 1671 Secretary Williamson claimed that no one pitied the Quakers, so long as they were not beaten.[165] But their bloody-minded stubbornness and capacity for suffering won sympathy and admiration. Friends ignored orders to go before a magistrate if the officers could produce no warrant, so were placed in carts and carried hither and thither.[166] Theophila Townshend of Cirencester told a constable that she would not leave the meeting unless he beat her, because she was not free to go.[167] Small wonder that those in authority were at their wits' end over how to deal with Friends. They might find their defiance of authority maddening,[168] but

[158] For Bristol, see *CSPD, 1672–3*, 332–3; *CSPD, 1675–6*, 9–10; *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 1673–5*, 326; *A Sober Answer to an Address of the Grand Jurors (as Said) of the City of Bristol: The Grand Sessions of the Peace Offered also to Consideration* ([London?], 1675). (A manuscript copy of the address can be found in Bristol Central Library, MS B7949, no. 146: no printed copy appears to survive.) For York, see Scott, 'Politics, Dissent and Quakerism in York', 103, 194–202.

[159] *CSPD, 1663–4*, 457, 523; *CSPD, 1664–5*, 20; *CSPD, 1665–6*, 15.

[160] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 668, 691; GBS 6/1, pp. 117–18, 219–20; GBS 6/2, p. 602; ORS 1, no. 102; ORS 2, no. 240; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, ii, 81. Some JPs were not at home when informers came or 'not willing to be spoken with': ORS 2, no. 146.

[161] GBS 6/1, pp. 17–18, 52, 63; GBS 6/2, p. 423; ORS 2, no. 231; ORS 4, no. 403; MfS 2, p. 228; Hawkins, *Taming the Phoenix*, 209.

[162] GBS 5/2, pp. 349, 369, 377, 464; ORS 6, nos. 703, 706.

[163] GBS 5/2, p. 386.

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 353; ORS 6, no. 703. A constable did the same in 1686: ORS 6, no. 748.

[165] *CSPD, 1671–2*, 28.

[166] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 448–9; *CSPD, 1671*, 419.

[167] ORS 5, no. 604.

[168] GBS 1, p. 83.

they eventually became weary of trying to force them into compliance.[169]

It would seem, then, that after the Restoration the persecution of Quakers was carried on by a small minority of bigoted magistrates and greedy informers, while the neighbours mitigated the impact of persecution as far as they could. However, the Quakers' own records show that this was not always the case. Violence against Friends continued, often small-scale, sometimes not.[170] We need now to consider two factors: first, those ways in which Quakers were still not fully integrated into their communities; and, second, the 'rude people'.

The most common way in which Quakers showed themselves out of step with their neighbours was in relation to fasts and feasts. In the 1650s this had centred on their refusal to treat Sunday as different from any other day, but now it was extended to a range of other days, including 30 January (anniversary of Charles I's execution) and Whitsuntide.[171] Often they were punished by magistrates, but sometimes they found themselves the objects of popular fury, especially for opening their shops on Christmas Day. They did so because, as one said, 'I have found more peace in so doing',[172] but it was seen as a serious breach of neighbourliness. In the 1660s in a number of towns the military or civil authorities ordered Quakers to shut their shops on Christmas Day; when they refused, rude people threw stones and dirt and spoiled their goods.[173] In London and Westminster the crowds were larger and the destruction greater, with missiles being thrown for three or four hours.[174] In Norwich Quakers who opened their shops on Christmas Day in 1676 and 1680 faced a hail of stones, ice and snowballs for much of the day. Some were injured, others were

[169] *CSPD, 1671–2*, 40; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 200; Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 207; NRO, SF 96, fo. 66; John Whiting, *Persecution Exposed: In Some Memoirs Relating to the Sufferings* . . . (London, 1715), 114.

[170] See examples from 1664 (Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 596–7; GBS 2, Norfolk, p. 15), and from 1668 (Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 335; GBS 3/2, p. 713).

[171] *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Nickalls, 669; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 262, 512; GBS 4/2, p. 448.

[172] GBS 4/2, p. 347.

[173] GBS 1, pp. 350, 441, 512, 541.

[174] GBS 2, London, p. 109; GBS 4/1, p. 17.

pulled out of their shops and beaten and their goods were spoiled.[175] In one case, most of the ringleaders in the attack came from the victim's home parish.[176] From 1677 the Meeting for Sufferings repeatedly appealed to the Lord Mayor and aldermen to protect the shops of London Friends.[177]

The 'rude boys' or 'rude people' offer a more difficult problem. In many accounts of the disturbance of meetings, they accompanied the relevant officers: but who were they? The records of Bristol Friends suggest that, from the 1670s to the 1690s, these were boys who 'played' around the meeting-house door but also came in and sat or 'played' in the gallery.[178] At times they disrupted proceedings, by rushing down from the gallery before the meeting was over; 'the smaller and disorderly sort' spat on the heads of Friends below.[179] Men Friends were deputed to stand near the doors or to sit in the gallery, hoping to dissuade them from mischief. They were also to speak to the boys' masters or parents.[180] In 1696 they were reduced to seeking assistance from the constables.[181] Although the records occasionally refer to 'boys and rude people',[182] the frequent references to 'boys' and to 'play' suggest that the culprits were mostly quite young. In Broughton Astley, Leicestershire, there were four 'rude boys', aged between fourteen and about eighteen, who revelled in the authority, allegedly vested in them by the constable and the parson, to maltreat a small group of Quakers, most of them women. They pelted them with missiles, beat them, dragged them through the mire and forced dirt into their mouths. One old woman nearly died.[183] These youths showed a taste for sadistic violence, and the constable's 'authorization' gave them

[175] Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 94, 170–2.
[176] *Ibid.*, 171.
[177] MfS 1, p. 43; MfS 2, p. 172; MfS 3, pp. 84, 313.
[178] *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting . . . 1667–1686*, ed. Mortimer, 63, 74, 123, 125, 160–2; *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1686–1704*, ed. Russell Mortimer (Bristol Record Soc., xxx, [Bristol], 1977), 2, 51, 102.
[179] *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting . . . 1686–1704*, ed. Mortimer, 2, 3, 51.
[180] *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting . . . 1667–1686*, ed. Mortimer, 63, 74.
[181] *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting . . . 1686–1704*, ed. Mortimer, 102.
[182] *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting . . . 1667–1686*, ed. Mortimer, 76.
[183] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 340–1; GBS 3/2, pp. 924–5, 928; *The Late Barbarous and Inhumane Cruelties Inflicted upon Certain Persons Called Quakers . . .* (London, 1682); R. H. Evans, 'The Quakers of Leicestershire, 1660–1714', *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeol. Soc.*, xxviii (1952), 51.

a power which normally boys of their age would not have possessed. In towns the numbers of the 'rude boys' were swollen by 'prentices and great lads'[184] looking for excitement. They were a recognizable group: at Hull in 1661–2 the governor ordered that some Quakers who had been arrested should be handed over to the 'rude boys', 'and they, having such encouragement, grievously abused them, and especially the women, by flinging mire and dirt upon them'.[185] In Truro in 1670 a constable 'set on the rude boys' to pelt an old woman with stones and dirt.[186] Apprentices played a conspicuous part in London riots against brothels — quasi-legitimate attacks on illegal targets. The fact that they were now 'helping' parish and civic officers to enforce the laws against Quakers served to confer a spurious legitimacy on their violence.[187] In Bristol the informers, led by John Hellier, referred to the 'rude boys' as 'their assistance'. In March 1682 Hellier delivered a Quaker to the boys, to carry him to Bridewell: they abused him and threw him down in the dirt several times.[188] It was also alleged that Hellier encouraged the boys to break the meeting-house windows, drive the Quakers up and down and attack them, especially the women, calling them whores, tearing their scarves and pelting them with dirt.[189] But on one occasion, the boys failed to respond to Hellier's call to thrust themselves against the women, tear their scarves and throw dirt.[190] Meanwhile the corporation, with the exception of Sheriff John Knight, viewed Hellier's conduct with a distaste that was shared by their fellow-citizens.[191]

[184] ORS 4, no. 434.

[185] GBS 3/2, p. 928; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, ii, 107.

[186] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 120.

[187] For a claim that London apprentices believed that they had a legitimate role as moral guardians, see Steven R. Smith, 'The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents', *Past and Present*, no. 61 (Nov. 1973), 160–1. See also Davis, 'Rites of Violence', 66, 87–8.

[188] *Distressed Case of the People Called Quakers*, 4; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 57; *The Sad and Lamentable Cry of Oppression and Cruelty in the City of Bristol . . .* (London, 1682), 1.

[189] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 54, 57; GBS 3/1, p. 25; *Distressed Case of the People Called Quakers*, 6, 9, 10; *Sad and Lamentable Cry of Oppression and Cruelty*, 3.

[190] GBS 3/1, pp. 32–3; *Distressed Case of the People Called Quakers*, 21. In 1668 boys in Monmouth had refused to take shoes from a shop which had opened on Christmas Day: GBS 4/2, p. 347.

[191] *Distressed Case of the People Called Quakers*, 15; GBS 3/1, p. 51; MfS 2, p. 122; *CSPD, 1682*, 228, 238–9; *Sad and Lamentable Cry of Oppression and Cruelty*, 4; *More Sad and Lamentable News from Bristol*, 3.

Bristol was far from unique: there are similar accounts of rude boys from Glastonbury, Chichester and Bridport, all in 1683.[192] Before considering the wider populace, let us consider the assault on the Quaker meeting at Hereford in 1676 — not, generally, a year of persecution. In August the mayor and assembly ordered the Quakers to cease meeting. When they ignored the order, they were attacked by boys with staves, who threw stones and dirt, knocked off Friends' hats and stuck burrs in their hair; once they tried to bring a pig into the meeting. Later the mob threw squibs, broke the remaining windows and part of the walls, sounded horns, poured urine on Friends' heads and filled their hats with excrement. Although many were described as boys, these included pupils from the free school and choristers from the cathedral. It was alleged that the latter had been set on by the 'college priests', but the schoolmaster apologized to Friends for his pupils' behaviour; it was alleged that when he reprimanded them they threw him over a bench and called him names. It would seem that many of those involved at Hereford were more akin socially to Oxbridge students than to the rude boys of Bristol; one was the son of the mayor-elect. The Quakers recorded that those taking part also included young men and old, as well as girls.[193]

The sustained and seemingly spontaneous assault on the Hereford meeting suggests that it was widely unpopular, and resembles those of the 1650s rather than the 1680s; there is no mention of informers, and the magistrates, constables and schoolmaster seem to have done what they could to restrain the rioters.[194] In the 1680s the pattern was different. Between 1682 and 1686 Quakers were kept out of most London meeting houses for most of the time. Parish officers often treated them kindly, but they had to contend with informers and stones, dirt and turnip-tops thrown by 'brutes',[195] and even became a tourist attraction.[196] The neighbours' reaction was mixed. When the

[192] GBS 6/1, pp. 60, 78, 89–90; MfS 3, pp. 14, 17; Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 725–6.

[193] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 259–60; GBS 1, pp. 497–9.

[194] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 259. For similar events in Plymouth, Andover and Lewes, see *ibid.*, 161, 238–9, 718–19.

[195] GBS 5/2, pp. 323, 342, 346, 348; ORS 4, no. 472; ORS 7, nos. 768, 783.

[196] GBS 5/2, p. 376. When Peter the Great visited London in 1698, he was taken to a Quaker meeting: Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1857), iv, 339.

Ratcliffe meeting was broken up in 1670, some of the crowd 'came in love to see if they could be any way serviceable to the sufferers and others were more evilly inclined, to take what they could from them' — including their hats.[197] In Norwich 'the rabble' sometimes behaved 'very rudely', but the presence of crowds also helped protect Friends against the worst excesses of informers and rude people — and sometimes enabled them to escape.[198]

V

THE END OF PERSECUTION?

Persecution for meeting came to an end in 1686 and the Quakers were granted freedom of worship by the Toleration Act of 1689. This followed a sustained attempt by leading Friends, early in 1689, to show that their views on such matters as the inner light and the authority of Scripture were not as heterodox as their enemies alleged. Under the Act, in order to be allowed to open meeting houses they had to make an affirmation (rather than take an oath) of allegiance, declare their belief in the Trinity (in which the Holy Spirit was 'co-equal with the Father and the Son') and acknowledge that the Bible was 'given by divine inspiration'.[199] Their meetings were now undisturbed, but there were still occasional outbursts of violence against them. Much the most spectacular occurred in Sunderland on 20 December 1688. That evening a small group broke the locks, entered the meeting house and went away. About one in the morning they returned with a 'rabble of boys and dissolute men of the baser sort' and spent the rest of the night demolishing the house and its fittings and burning them. At eight o'clock they marched through the town, several hundred strong, breaking the windows and tiles of several Quakers' houses. Subsequently the legal owner of the house brought an action for trespass. Although the damage was independently valued at £50, a jury awarded him £1.[200] This is a mysterious episode. The

[197] Hobson, *Memoirs of the Life and Convincement of Benjamin Bangs*, 13–14.

[198] Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 110–12, 167, 178, 180, 206–7; NRO, SF 96, fos. 72, 75.

[199] Leachman, 'From an "Unruly Sect" to a Society of "Strict Unity"', 33–4, 43–5; William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 2nd edn, revised Henry J. Cadbury (York, 1979), 155–6.

[200] Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings*, i, 189–90; GBS 5/1, pp. 195–6; MfS 7, p. 59.

leaders included men of standing, masters and mariners, and while there was destruction the reports contain no suggestion of looting. The same was generally true of attacks on Catholic chapels and Catholics' homes at the same time, and this perhaps offers an explanation. One report refers to breaking open the locks and windows of the meeting house as if they were Papists.[201] A report of the trespass action is endorsed: 'An account of the demolishing of the Sunderland meeting when the rabble was lately up in destroying of mass houses, they fell upon the Quakers' meeting house and demolished the same'.[202] Alternatively, this may have reflected resentment at the co-operation of some Quakers with James II's regime.

Even if this were merely a case of mistaken identity at a time of anti-popish panic, the fact that it happened — and the subsequent conduct of the jury — suggests that Friends were not fully accepted in their communities. In 1692 John Gurney, a Quaker, applied to be admitted a freeman of Norwich, but refused to take the oath. He was allowed to practise his trade, but denied the other privileges of the freedom.[203] Their reluctance to take on chargeable officers or to contribute to the militia caused some resentment,[204] as did their refusal to observe the fasts and feasts of their neighbours. At Lewes and Woodbridge Quakers who opened their shops on Christmas Day, or officially designated fast or thanksgiving days, had their windows broken and their goods spoiled by a 'rabble'.[205] In 1691 London Quakers had their windows broken and their house-fronts defaced for failing to put up illuminations on either 4 November (William III's birthday) or 5 November. The following year the Meeting for Sufferings appealed successfully to the Lord Mayor and aldermen for protection.[206] In 1696 Bristol Friends drew up a paper, to be presented to the magistrates, 'to show forth our conscientious grounds why we do not observe days'.[207] Friends were still

[201] MfS 6, p. 234 (this gives a slightly different account from that in GBS 5/1, pp. 195–6). At Lewes there was a report that arms had been found in the house of one 'called a Quaker': MfS 6, p. 230.
[202] ORS 3, no. 288.
[203] NRO, Norwich Civic Records, Case 16a/25, fo. 293.
[204] See Eddington, *First Fifty Years of Quakerism in Norwich*, 98; BL, Add. MS 40713, fo. 43.
[205] GBS 6/1, pp. 307–9; MfS 8, p. 18.
[206] MfS 8, pp. 2, 3, 18, 152, 159.
[207] *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting . . . 1686–1704*, ed. Mortimer, 107.

appealing to the London authorities for protection in 1713.[208] In 1715 a Quaker meeting house in Oxford was ransacked and its seats and fittings burned, as part of a Tory assault on the city's Dissenters; it should, however, be added that the great majority of attacks on meeting houses in 1715 were directed against Presbyterians.[209] In 1735 Exeter Friends resolved to move their meeting from 'Holy Thursday' when the bounds of the city's parishes were beaten in procession, 'Friends having been generally abused in coming to meetings that day'.[210] Perhaps most telling of all was the case of Sarah Reynolds of Stourbridge, Worcestershire. She was much abused by 'a wild sort of rabble', who spoiled her goods and tried to break her shop windows for opening on Christmas Day 1691. They put forth a 'proclamation' 'that they would make the people of God called Quakers comply with the people of the world (as they called themselves) in the keeping their shop windows on fast days and holy days shut up'.[211]

Fasts and feasts were not the only source of tension. Friends still occasionally behaved provocatively; Cambridge students still behaved rudely towards Quaker meetings.[212] At Broseley in Shropshire, in 1691, Friends bought a plot of land on which to build a meeting house. The townspeople stole the gate and threatened to pull down in the night whatever Friends built during the day. When a local JP seemed reluctant to give Friends redress, one accused him of refusing to do them justice, for which he was jailed for contempt. The Meeting for Sufferings advised him to apologize. Friends, they said, should seek the goodwill of men in authority before starting to build meeting houses. They should 'labour in wisdom and mildness' to win the magistrates' favour 'so as to moderate the people toward them'.[213] It would be difficult to imagine advice further from the spirit of

[208] MfS 21, p. 70.

[209] William Alexander, *The Life of Thomas Story*, revised John Kendall, 2 vols. (York, 1832), ii, 35–7; *A Full and Impartial Account of the Oxford Riots* (London, 1715), 4–5 and *passim*. For the focus on Presbyterians, see the supplement to *Weekly Journal, with Fresh Advices*, 3 Aug. 1715.

[210] Allan Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650–1875* (Manchester, 1962), 111.

[211] MfS 8, pp. 31, 52. On Christmas Day in 1701, the 'rabble' in Dublin forcibly closed Quakers' shops: *Post Boy*, 6–8 Jan. 1702.

[212] MfS 7, pp. 33, 46–7; MfS 8, p. 140; MfS 9, pp. 239, 269–70.

[213] MfS 7, pp. 260–1, 265. For another case of opposition to a meeting house, from an MP, see *ibid.*, pp. 184–5, 193–4.

the Lamb's War, and indeed some felt that Friends had gone too far in accommodating themselves to the world.[214] In 1695 an Anglican ordinand remarked that the Quakers now wore fine clothes and learned all kinds of 'sempstry' (needlework) and behaviour, no longer quaking or foaming at the mouth, but behaving modestly and devoutly.[215] Sufferings records now consisted of meticulously recorded prosecutions and distraints for tithe, occasional fines for oath or office refusal, or for refusing (on conscientious grounds) to pay militia rates. A few complained of being rated double for the poll tax, as 'preachers'. Sometimes their consciences led to Quakers' being imprisoned, but references to violence or physical maltreatment were now rare.

In the heyday of the Lamb's War in the 1650s, the Quakers had been at war with the rest of society. Their aggressive, confrontational tactics provoked resentment and retaliation. In 1660–1 they reinvented and repackaged themselves in order to ward off the threat of persecution by the state, while at the same time trying to remain true to their principles and their roots. They would probably have lost their original momentum anyway, as most evangelical movements do sooner or later. But in the case of the Quakers the Restoration forced a major rethink. In the 1650s, and especially in 1659, a radical recasting of the social and religious order (starting with an end to tithes and priestly power) had seemed distinctly possible. In 1660 that possibility disappeared for the foreseeable future, and they faced the probability, if not certainty, of persecution. Fox, in whom spiritual intensity coexisted with firm and pragmatic leadership, responded with the peace testimony. Words were matched with deeds, the Lamb's War was scaled down and friction with the neighbours diminished. It never entirely disappeared, but the element of 'difference' between Quakers and their neighbours was reduced to a tolerable level, especially as friction was counterbalanced by sympathy as Friends suffered at the hands of officials and informers. By 1700 Quakers were as fully integrated into their communities as they were ever likely to be.

Queen Mary, University of London *John Miller*

[214] Davies, *Quakers in English Society*, 201, 221.

[215] *The Diary (Ephemeris Vitae) of Abraham De la Pryme, the Yorkshire Antiquary*, ed. Charles Jackson (Surtees Soc., liv, Durham, 1870), 53.