Introduction

The early Quaker movement is remarkable for its prolific use of the printing press. Quaker leaders began to publish their ideas in tracts and broadsides in late 1652; by the end of 1656, nearly three hundred titles had been printed, an average of more than one new Quaker book each week. Their zealous use of the press challenges established opinions about the significance of the Quakers, and about the role of print in the English revolution. Quakers in the 1650s are widely seen as a group of religious dissidents who were disillusioned with English political society, and who were historically significant as a thorn in the side of Commonwealth and Protectorate governments rather than for any more positive contribution. This book, based on a systematic and chronological reading of the tracts published between 1652 and 1656, and of the many letters produced by the movement's leaders, argues on the contrary that Quakers were highly engaged with contemporary political and religious affairs, and were committed in very practical ways to the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. Their printed tracts were used very explicitly to involve everyone in this process, urging all people to heed the light of Christ within them, and to uphold the law of God in all aspects of religious and political life. The pamphleteering activities of the early Quaker movement demonstrate that print enabled a form of political participation in the society of the 1650s: through it, Quakers expected to achieve substantial political and religious change.

Histories of the early Quaker movement invariably describe a group of religious radicals, first apparent in the north of England in 1652, which became a national phenomenon over the summer of 1654, when Quaker preachers conducted a campaign across the whole country.[1] The genesis of

[1] The story of the emergence of the Quaker movement has been amply told by William C. Braithwaite, *The beginnings of Quakerism* (London, 1912: 2nd edn, Cambridge, 1955), Braithwaite, *The second period of Quakerism* (London, 1919: 2nd edn, Cambridge, 1961). Two other monographs offer important interpretations: Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in puritan England* (New Haven, 1964), and Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English revolution* (London, 1985).

the Quaker movement consisted in the linking up of puritan sects and Seeker congregations across Yorkshire, Lancashire and Westmorland, through the rousing preaching, initially of the Leicestershire-born lay preacher George Fox, and later of other key preachers like James Nayler, Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, all of whom were experienced lay preachers to gathered churches or Seeker congregations.[2]

The Quakers' religious beliefs were central to the emergence of a movement which was highly participatory, both in the demands it placed on its followers, and in the expectation to change the outside world. Quakers rejected the central predestinarian tenets of Calvinist puritanism: they believed that the light of Christ was present within each individual and that this could lead to salvation and to perfection.[3] This entailed an aggressive proselytising campaign in which Quakers sought to awaken literally every one to Christ's inner light. The individual religious participation of those 'convinced' was also central. Quakers emphasised the guidance of the spirit above the scriptures or other formal doctrinal expressions, and indeed juxtaposed the spirit to all things 'carnal' or outward.[4] This led them to abandon formal structures of religious worship, and to argue against any church which emphasised formal worship and professional ministry, especially one financed through a compulsory tithe system. It also underpinned the Quakers' social egalitarianism. The belief that everyone was spiritually equal fostered the practice of abandoning honorific titles, of using the egalitarian 'thee' rather than the respectful 'you'; and refusing to doff hats or swear oaths which stressed human hierarchies above God. It was also used to justify the fact that women preached and participated fully in religious leadership.[5] Quakers had also been very recent participants within the radical politics of the 1640s: Quaker leaders

[2] The most recent narrative of Fox's early preaching which linked these communities is in H. L. Ingle, *First among friends: George Fox and the creation of Quakerism* (Oxford, 1994). See also William G. Bittle, *James Nayler: the Quaker indicted by Parliament* (York, 1986); and for wider accounts of the early work of Quaker ministers, see the accounts in Norman Penney (ed.), *First Publishers of Truth* (London, 1907). W. C. Braithwaite has shown us that there were links between some of these communities prior to the preaching of Fox: W. C. Braithwaite, 'The Westmorland and Swaledale Seekers in 1651', *JFHS* 5: 1 (1908), 3–10.

[3] For studies which place Quakers within the context of puritanism, see Geoffrey Nuttall, *The holy spirit in puritan faith and experience* (Oxford, 1946); Nuttall, *Studies in Christian enthusiasm* (Wallingford, Penn., 1948); Hugh Barbour, *Quakers in puritan England*; Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*, pp. 1–26; R. W. Acheson, *Radical puritans in England 1550–1660* (London, 1990).

[4] Maurice Creasey, '"Inward" and "outward": a study in early Quaker language', *JFHS* supplement 30 (1962).

[5] Christopher Hill, *The world turned upside down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1987); Barry Reay, 'Quakerism and society' in J. F. McGregor and B. Reay (eds.), *Radical religion in the English revolution* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 141–64; Kenneth Carroll, 'Quaker attitudes towards signs and wonders', *JFHS* 54: 2 (1977), 70–84; Carroll, 'Sackcloth and ashes, and other signs and wonders', *JFHS* 53: 4 (1975), 314–25. For attitudes to sexual equality in the early Quaker movement, see Keith Thomas, 'Women and the civil war

were drawn from the army and the Levellers.[6] More broadly, membership was drawn from the middling, mainly rural sections of society, excluding the very poor and the very rich: 'most belonged to the relatively comfortable middle section of the community and were slightly wealthier than the population at large'.[7]

Historians are loath to attribute too much significance to the proliferation of radical religious sects of the 1650s, arguing that their importance has been exaggerated. Nevertheless, Quakers are still considered important to the history of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Numerically they certainly appear more significant than other religious groupings. At the Restoration, Quakers comprised nearly 1 per cent of the entire population, while in their stronghold of Westmorland, 3.3 per cent of the population were Quakers.[8] John Morrill, in an article which warned against being 'dazzled by the emergence of the radical sects', conceded that the Quakers probably changed the numerical significance of the sectaries' challenge to puritanism.[9]

The significance of the Quakers to the history of the 1650s is largely negative. In *The world turned upside down*, Christopher Hill described the Quakers as political radicals drawing on long-standing traditions of social protest and anticlericalism. Their appearance was, for Hill, a consequence of the failed revolution of 1647 to 1649: the emergence of the Quakers, he argued, 'witnessed *both* to the defeat of the political Levellers *and* to the continued existence of radical ideas'.[10] Hill's argument was shaped in part by the research of Alan Cole, whose work was seminal in countering the largely

sects', *Past and Present* 13 (1958), 42–62, Phyllis Mack, *Visionary women: ecstatic prophecy in seventeenth-century England* (Berkeley, 1992), Patricia Crawford, *Women and religion in England 1500–1720* (London, 1993); Christine Trevett, *Women and Quakerism in the seventeenth century* (York, 1991).

[6] M. E. Hirst, *The Quakers in peace and war* (London, 1923) was the first to identify the links between Quakers, the army and the navy. Her work has been consolidated by Alan Cole, 'The Quakers and politics, 1652–1660', unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1955; and by Barry Reay, 'Early Quaker activity and reactions to it, 1652–1664', unpublished D Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1979.

[7] Reay, *Quakers and the English revolution*, p. 21. See also Ernest E. Taylor, 'The first Publishers of Truth: a study', *JFHS* 19 (1922), 66–81; Alan Cole, 'The social origins of the early Friends', *JFHS* 48 (1957), 99–118; Barry Reay, 'The social origins of early Quakerism', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11: 1 (Summer 1980), 55–72; Richard Vann, *The social development of English Quakerism, 1655–1755* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Vann, 'Quakerism and the social structure in the interregnum', *Past and Present* 43 (1969), 71–91.

[8] Reay, *Quakers and the English revolution*, p. 29. In comparison, it has been estimated that the entire Baptist population comprised no more than one quarter of a percentage of the national population. Cited in Ronald Hutton, *The British republic, 1649–1660* (London, 1990), pp. 30–31.

[9] John Morrill, 'The church in England 1642–9', in John Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642–1649* (London, 1982), p. 90, n. 4.

[10] Christopher Hill, *The world turned upside down*, p. 240; Hill, *The experience of defeat* (Harmondsworth, 1985).

denominational view that early Quakers were pacifist and aloof from political life, and who established the Quakers' political links with the New Model Army, Levellers and governments of the 1650s.[11] Yet Cole refused to allow the Quakers' much significance as active political participants in the early 1650s. Cole argued that the spiritualism of the early Quakers precluded them from any positive political action. The Quakers, he argued, were disillusioned by the political and religious reforms of the Commonwealth which betrayed the principles on which the civil wars had been fought. As a result, Quakers increasingly distanced themselves from 'carnal' governments which compromised religious conviction, and emphasised instead adherence to religious ideals and practice determined by the light of Christ within each individual. The form of political activity in which Quakers participated, Cole argued, was their prophetic mission to judge and witness against the political and religious corruption around them, denouncing clergy, magistrates, landowners and Cromwell himself. The Quakers' refusal to compromise with their former comrades excluded them from the political mainstream: they were politically significant to the 1650s as a marginal group of committed but unrealistic radicals, witnesses rather than actors, and sufferers rather than agents.[12]

Barry Reay's later study of the Quakers and the English revolution consolidated Cole's argument that the Quakers played little active part in the history of the 1650s.[13] Reay pointed out the strong denominational influence in Quaker history, which, by emphasising the longevity of the movement, and the long-term success of figures like George Fox, has obscured the movement's origins, and removed it from the immediate political context of the Interregnum. Reay's work sought to reintegrate the Quakers into the history of the 1650s, arguing that the early Quaker movement was an important means of understanding the social and political context of the English revolution. In a self-conscious attempt to eschew the weight of retrospective Quaker records, Barry Reay based much of his research on non-Quaker records: court records of Quaker prosecutions, government papers and anti-Quaker pamphlets, and in consequence discovered very widespread hostility to the Quakers. The nature of Reay's research therefore led him to consider the Quakers as troublemaking outsiders, and his thesis, that hostility to the Quakers was significant to the collapse of the republic in 1659–60, has contributed to the notion that Quakers had little that was positive to contribute to the history of the 1650s; and that they were significant

[11] Cole, 'Quakers and politics', esp. pp. 1–36. See also Cole, 'The Quakers and the English revolution', *Past and Present* 10 (1956), 39–54.
[12] Cole, 'Quakers and politics', pp. 22–36; 37–77.
[13] Barry Reay, 'Early Quaker activity'; Reay, *The Quakers and the English revolution*.

primarily for the conservative reactions they provoked at all levels of society.[14]

Within the context of the 1650s the Quakers are thus seen as the radical remnant of a failed revolution, having lost faith in the republican regimes, and, driven by a rather inward mysticism, with little positive to offer in the way of political solutions. This view has been assimilated into broader accounts of the 1650s. John Morrill wrote that all the religious sects were politically anarchistic; none 'had ambitions to set up particular constitutional forms'; and their criticism of the regimes was half-hearted: they were 'under no illusion that a Stuart Restoration would be much worse for them'.[15] Derek Hirst reiterated Barry Reay's argument that fear of the Quakers was their most important feature. In an article arguing that 'too much has been made of the sects' by historians, he went on to emphasise that it was the Quaker threat to ministers and magistrates which, 'though familiar, is too little heeded'.[16]

In the past fifteen years, there has been a sustained assault on the significance of radicalism in the 1640s and 1650s, as part of the broader revision of the English civil war and revolution.[17] It is no longer possible, as did both Alan Cole and Barry Reay, to describe the Quakers as a popular radical movement (although Barry Reay also showed that the Quakers provoked enormous popular hostility).[18] More recent work on popular culture has suggested that truly 'popular' religion centred on traditional religious worship; that Anglican ceremony remained central to the religious inclinations of most people; and that it was successfully maintained throughout the 1650s. Research for this and earlier periods has increasingly focused on how 'ordinary' people experienced their religion in the aftermath of the reformation, rather than on unusual and rather esoteric religious separatists, who have enjoyed disproportionate attention.[19]

[14] Barry Reay, 'Popular hostility towards Quakers in mid-seventeenth-century England', *Social History* 5: 3 (1980), 387–407; Reay, 'The Quakers, 1659, and the restoration of the monarchy', *History* 63 (1978), 193–213; Reay, 'Quakerism and society', pp. 21, 164.

[15] John Morrill, *The nature of the English revolution* (London, 1993), pp. 26–27.

[16] Derek Hirst, 'The failure of godly rule in the English republic', *Past and Present* 132 (1991), 33, 36.

[17] J. C. Davis, 'Radicalism in a traditional society: the evaluation of radical thought in the English Commonwealth, 1649–60', *History of Political Thought* 3: 2 (1982), 193–213; a useful account of the impact of revisionism is the editors' introduction in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in early Stuart England* (London, 1989), pp. 1–46.

[18] Cole, 'The Quakers and the English revolution', 39–40; Reay, *Quakers and the English revolution*, p. 1; Reay, 'Popular hostility towards Quakers', 387–407.

[19] John Morrill, 'The church in England, 1642–49', pp. 89–114; John Spurr, *The restoration Church of England, 1646–1689* (London and New Haven, 1991), pp. 1–20; Eamon Duffy, 'The Godly and the multitude in Stuart England', *Seventeenth Century Journal* 1: 1 (1986), 31–55; Patrick Collinson, *The religion of protestants: the church in English society,*

Criticism of historians' overemphasis on radical religion reached its apotheosis in the work of Colin Davis, who in 1986 published a short monograph arguing that the most flamboyant of the radical sects of the 1650s, the Ranters, did not exist 'either as a small group of like-minded individuals, as a sect, or as a large-scale, middle-scale or small movement'.[20] Davis's argument was raised in criticism at the over-reliance by historians on a handful of printed tracts, some of which were by 'Ranter' authors, and others were lewd gutter-press denunciations of the Ranters, presenting them as the worst sign yet of divine wrath. The Ranter tracts themselves, Davis maintained, held little common 'doctrine' and there was scant evidence that the authors even knew each other; the hostile gutter-press attacks on the Ranters were more revealing about contemporary fears than about the nature of radical religion in the Commonwealth. 'There was no Ranter movement, no Ranter sect, no Ranter theology.'[21]

Davis's work gained notoriety for its attack on Christopher Hill and the Communist Party Group historians, whom he accused of exploiting the seventeenth-century Ranter 'myth' to further their own interpretation of the English revolution.[22] Beyond the vituperative exchanges, though, Davis did highlight methodological problems which remain unanswered either by him or his critics. In the final round of the debate, the question revolved around whether the Ranters constituted 'a number of groups, some loosely linked, with related and alarming ideas on the nature of God and on sin'; or whether we should talk of a Ranter 'milieu', or 'moment'.[23] For Davis, the key issue is to identify a socially cohesive group of people with a 'shared ideology reflected behaviourally' of practical antinomianism.[24] The role of print in all this remains unexplored but is implicitly central. Davis implied, though he has not pursued the argument, that a coherent religious movement (or at least one which may be traced by historians) is constituted by the relationship between authors of tracts, the tracts themselves, and responses of their audiences.

1559–1625 (Oxford, 1982); Tessa Watt, *Cheap print and popular piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 1991); Margaret Spufford, 'The importance of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in Margaret Spufford (ed.), *The world of rural dissenters, 1520–1725* (Cambridge, 1995); Anthony Fletcher, 'The godly divided: the end of religious unity in protestant England', *Seventeenth Century* 5: 2 (1990), 185–94.

[20] J. C. Davis, *Fear, myth and history: the Ranters and the historians* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 75.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[22] For the responses and subsequent debate, see G. E. Aylmer, 'Did the Ranters exist?', *Past and Present* 117 (1987), 208–19; Christopher Hill, 'The lost Ranters? A critique of J. C. Davis', *History Workshop Journal* 24 (1987), 134–40; E. P. Thompson, 'On the Rant', in G. Eley and W. Hunt (eds.), *Reviving the English revolution* (London, 1988); J. C. Davis, 'Fear, myth and furore: reappraising the "Ranters"', *Past and Present* 129 (1990), 79–103; Bernard Capp, 'Fear, myth and furore: reappraising the Ranters. Comment 2', *Past and Present* 140 (August 1993), 164–271.

[23] Capp, 'Fear, myth and furore', 171. [24] *Ibid.*, 207.

The misuse of, and over-reliance upon, printed sources is a theme common to much of the recent revisionism of the English civil war.[25] The collapse of censorship in 1641 unleashed a flood of pamphleteering, as a result of which domestic news and a wide spectrum of political and religious ideas were published on an unprecedented scale. Much of this material was systematically collected by a London stationer, George Thomason, resulting in his own financial ruin, but rendering much of the pamphlet literature accessible to subsequent historians.[26]

Christopher Hill argued that the sudden expansion in publishing had a revolutionary impact. Previously suppressed ideas were expressed; styles of writing changed; authors became journalistic and wrote with a purpose, developing methods which aimed to persuade wider audiences.[27] The assumptions behind Hill's arguments are familiar to literary scholars, and particularly new historicists, who are keen to locate literary texts within a social or political context, and thus to make explicit links between language and action and to explore 'the kinds of public intervention that speech and writing can make'.[28] They are more inclined to argue, without the reserve of political historians towards the period, that 1640–1660 was a time of literary and linguistic innovation. Nigel Smith has shown how the political upheavals at the centre of society were reflected in a crisis over the meanings of words and the significance of literary styles and genres.[29] Sharon Achinstein has argued that the diversity of opinions published were symptomatic of the wider conflict in the public sphere. The debates over language itself, and over the possibility of a universal language, were highly significant: 'because public expression was becoming the means by which political and social differences were made known'.[30] In an article published in 1996, David Zaret argued that the emergence of printed petitions in the 1640s transformed petitioning from an essentially secret, deferential and apolitical means of addressing Parliament into a dialogic and highly public form of political lobbying. The

[25] Editors' introduction in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (eds.), *Culture and politics in early Stuart England* (London, 1994), pp. 1–20, esp. p. 2.
[26] Lois Spencer, 'The professional and literary connexions of George Thomason', *The Library* (5th ser.) 13 (1958), 102–18; Spencer, 'The politics of George Thomason', *The Library* (5th ser.) 14 (1959), 11–27.
[27] Christopher Hill, 'Radical prose in seventeenth-century England: from Marprelate to the Levellers', *Essays in Criticism* 32: 2 (April 1982), 95–118; cf. Hill, 'Censorship and English literature', in *The collected essays of Christopher Hill* (3 vols., Brighton, 1985–86), vol. 1, *Writing and revolution in seventeenth-century England* (Brighton, 1985), pp. 32–62.
[28] David Norbrook, *Writing the English republic: poetry, rhetoric and politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 10.
[29] Nigel Smith, *Literature and revolution in England, 1640–1660* (London and New Haven, 1994); Smith, *Perfection proclaimed: language and literature in English radical religion, 1640–1660* (Oxford, 1989).
[30] Sharon Achinstein, 'The politics of Babel in the English revolution' in James Holstun (ed.), *Pamphlet wars: prose in the English revolution* (London, 1992), p. 17.

circulation of printed petitions, Zaret argued, led in very practical ways to the invention of public opinion: petitions invoked the authority of the public opinion they represented, and petitioners began publicly to demand action from Parliament, including constitutional reform, based on their petitions.[31]

There is a wide gap between the attitude of essentially literary scholars, and that of historians, to the proliferation of print in the 1640s and 1650s. Historians more concerned with the political significance of the decades are very wary of print as an accurate historical source. The fact that print is assumed to be propagandistic is taken as proof that it is a poor reflection either of what happened, or of how people experienced events. John Morrill queried Hill's heavy reliance on printed material: 'unless one has dirtied one's hands with the grime of the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers, and unless one has ploughed through a cross-section of the surviving Assize Files and county committee papers, the nature of the revolutionary experience will remain elusive'.[32] William Lamont has argued that the sheer quantity and literary range of material in the Thomason collection effectively prevents any accurate assessment of its content; and maintained that the only way to judge it is in the context of extraneous manuscript material.[33] Printed sources are often assumed to be misleading. Morrill and Walter argued that perceptions of disorder in the English revolution were inflated by printed reports of riot: the 'reality', they claimed, was far more peaceable.[34] Beyond the reliability of the content, there are also serious, and important, reservations about the accessibility of printed tracts. Although expanding, literacy levels were low; and although print was easier to read than handwriting, most people could not read. The abundance of printed information does not automatically equate with a universally or uniformly informed populace.[35] This, indeed, is a point insufficiently addressed by some literary

[31] David Zaret, 'Petitions and the "invention" of public opinion in the English revolution', *American Journal of Sociology* 101: 6 (May 1996), 1497–1555, esp. 1499. I am grateful to Ann Hughes for drawing my attention to this article. See also the work of Dagmar Freist, *Governed by opinion: politics, religion and the dynamics of communication in Stuart London, 1637–1645* (London, 1997).

[32] John Morrill, 'Review article: Christopher Hill's revolution', *History* 27: 241 (1989), 249.

[33] William Lamont, 'Pamphleteering, the Protestant consensus and the English revolution', in R. C. Richardson and G. M. Ridden (eds.), *Freedom and the English revolution: essays in history and literature* (Manchester, 1986), pp. 72–89, esp. p. 73. He draws his argument from Conrad Russell, 'Losers', *London Review of Books* 6: 18 (1984), 20–22.

[34] John Morrill and John Walter, 'Order and disorder in the English revolution', reprinted in J. S. Morrill, *The nature of the English revolution*, pp. 359–61, 373.

[35] David Cressy, *Literacy and the social order: reading and writing in Tudor England* (Cambridge, 1980); Margaret Spufford, 'First steps in literacy: the reading and writing experiences of the humblest seventeenth-century autobiographers', *Social History* 4: 3 (1979), 407–35; Keith Thomas, 'The meaning of literacy in early modern England' in G. Bauman (ed.), *The written word: literacy in transition* (Oxford, 1986); Adam Fox, 'Ballads, libels and popular ridicule in Jacobean England', *Past and Present* 145 (1994), 47–83.

scholars, whose work often focuses on the cultural experiences of a literary minority.[36]

The work of Davis in particular, and the hesitancy of other historians in general, calls for a sustained and detailed study of how contemporaries made use of print. The Quakers lend themselves to such an investigation. Not only did they produce, and preserve, a significant number of tracts; they also wrote and preserved thousands of letters in the course of their extensive campaigning, which describe their pamphleteering activities. Furthermore, we can be sure from a number of other sources that the Quakers 'existed': they were not a figment of their own or others' propaganda. A primary concern of this book is to show how and why Quakers published tracts as part of their successful missionary campaign; to examine how a group of people in the mid-seventeenth century were able to make use of print to spread their ideas; and to identify the impact of print on the growth of a successful, national movement.

A second concern is to argue that if we examine pamphleteering as an activity in its own right, it becomes necessary to reassess the early Quaker movement and the nature of its political participation. Recent non-denominational historiography has presented the early Quakers in a negative light, as eccentric troublemakers who merely hastened the popular, conservative reaction which brought down the republic. While this is true in some respects, the Quakers' own zealous and sustained use of the press describes a very purposeful and organised movement which requires explanation.

It is in this context that the denominational tradition of Quaker historiography needs to be discussed. The history of the early Quaker movement is dominated by its denominational tradition: indeed, its unassailability as a movement of importance in the 1650s owes a great deal to the fact that Quakers survived into the Restoration and beyond, and that Quaker leaders were very meticulous in the preservation and cataloguing of their records. During the decades following the Restoration, the Quaker movement consolidated into a formally organised church. Part of this involved the establishment of particular, monthly and quarterly meetings in each county, and of a series of central, London-based meetings: the Yearly meeting, the Morning meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings. The local meetings kept regular records of membership, as well as of births, marriages and deaths, and these form a crucial aspect of subsequent estimates of the size and make-up of the early Quaker movement. The central meetings played an important role in

[36] See Thomas Corns's stimulating account of the prose styles of Lilburne and Milton: Thomas N. Corns, 'The freedom of reader-response: Milton's *Of Reformation* and Lilburne's *The Christian Mans Triall*' in R. C. Richardson and G. M. Riddens (eds.), *Freedom and the English revolution*, 93–110.

shaping the collections of Quaker records: the Second Day Morning Meeting regulated all Quaker publications from 1673 onwards, monitoring the content of new books, and ensuring that copies of each one were retained. The Second Day Morning Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings also initiated the collection and cataloguing of all Quaker books 'From the Beginning or First Appearance of the said People', which originated the Friends' reference library which is still extant today.[37] The Second Day Morning Meeting instigated too the posthumous publication of Fox's papers and his *Journal* after his death in 1691; its first Recording Clerk, Ellis Hookes, was responsible in the 1670s for publishing the edited works of some of the most prolific authors of the 1650s: James Parnell, Edward Burrough, Francis Howgill and William Smith, all of whom were dead.[38] In the 1660s, Ellis Hookes also compiled two substantial manuscript volumes of Sufferings; and as part of this catalogued some of the vast collections of letters at Swarthmoor Hall which dated from the 1650s.[39]

Much of our knowledge of Quakers in the 1650s is thus directly attributable to the efforts of a later generation of Quakers, intent on preserving the memory of early Quaker ministers who had died prematurely, and also on preventing the publication of enthusiastic or politically dangerous works which would have compromised the Quaker movement of the Restoration period. The implications of the Quakers' self-censorship have long been known: the omission of references in his published *Journal* to Fox's frequent meetings with Cromwell and the projection of the 1661 Peace Testimony back into the 1650s are two notorious instances in which the political origins of the Quakers were to some extent obscured by subsequent denominational writing.[40]

A rather less sinister implication of such a strong denominational tradition has been the obfuscation of the actual origins of the Quaker movement. As Christopher Hill wrote of reading Fox's *Journal*: 'one at once becomes aware of a gap between the events described and the apparent reasons for

[37] Thomas O'Malley, '"Defying the powers and tempering the spirit": a review of Quaker control over their publications 1672–1689', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33: 1 (1982), 72–88; Anna Littleboy, 'Devonshire House Reference Library, with notes on early printers and printing in the Society of Friends', *JFHS* 18: 1 (1921), 1–16; John Whiting, *A catalogue of Friends Books* (London, 1708), cited in Anna Littleboy, 'Devonshire House Reference Library' *JFHS* 18: 3 (1921), 66–69.

[38] T. Edmund Harvey, 'Introduction' in George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. Norman Penney (2 vols., Cambridge, 1911), vol. I, pp. ix–xxviii; Norman Penney, 'Our recording clerks: Ellis Hookes', *JFHS* 1: 1 (1903), 18.

[39] Norman Penney, 'Ellis Hookes', 15.

[40] T. Edmund Harvey, 'Introduction' in *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. Penney, vol. I, pp. ix–xxviii; Alan Cole, 'The Quakers and politics', pp. 16–36; Christopher Hill, *The world turned upside down*, pp. 241–48.