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The Quaker Ethic and the Fixed Price Policy: Max Weber and Beyond

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Some of Max Weber's letters, conversations, and writings during the later years of his life show a deep personal respect for Quakerism. For him, the "Quaker ethic" of "a consciously responsible feeling of love" offered a "genuinely humane interpretation" of both "inner and religious values of marriage" and an "ethical responsibility" between marriage partners. He even seemed to believe that his own marriage shared similar laudatory principles.¹

This personal respect for Quakerism emerged from his comparative historical research, since he did not maintain any active contact with the Quaker community of his day. He attended only one Quaker meeting for worship, and while moved by its silence, he was unmoved—even somewhat bored—by a long "ministry" that one member presented.² Weber undertook research on Quakerism as part of his attempt to understand the role of Puritan sects in the development of early modern capitalism. He recognized that Quakerism, like other Puritan groups, maintained an inner-worldly asceticism, but he may not have understood that its merchandise-pricing policy was unique among the Puritans.³ In contrast to the accepted practice of customers and merchants haggling over prices, Quaker merchants asked of all customers a fixed price for each item and refused to bargain over it. Weber thought that this policy reflected their religious concern for honesty, and therefore he saw it as a practical demonstration of their religiously motivated ethics. In this respect, Weber's sensitivity to Quakerism's religious dimension may have blinded him to some of the socioeconomic and political aspects of its history.

Although Weber recognized that "the religiously determined way of life is profoundly influenced by economic and political factors operating within given geographical, political, social, and national boundaries,"⁴ he nonetheless insisted that theodicies of both suffering and good fortune were more important for the development of religious ethics than was either class interest or social resentment.⁵ Consequently, the fixed price policy exemplified for Weber a general sociological truth: a religious ethic "receives its stamp primarily from religious sources, and first of all, from the content of its annunciation and its promise."⁶ Yet his observation that the nonpredestinarian Quakers upheld an inner-worldly asceticism that "was equivalent in practice" to the inner-worldly asceticism of Calvinistic Puritans obscured the fact that the fixed price policy was an exclusively Quaker innovation.⁷ Weber seems not to have appreciated this uniqueness, nor was he inclined to search for the unique social and historical factors that gave rise to its formulation.

Close examination of the first decade of Quakerism, however, reveals that the Quakers' religious beliefs provide an incomplete explanation for the appearance and development of the fixed price policy, which arose as a reaction against the prevailing business practices of the day and which was but one aspect of the Quakers' response to the Puritans' failure to institute the Levellers' proposed social, political, and economic reforms. Whereas Weber thought that the fixed price policy originated primarily from religious motives, this chapter will consider how it was decisively influenced by socioeconomic and political circumstances. By arguing in this vein, I am giving substance to some of Weber's general comments, about the influence of economics and politics on religious doctrines, that remain unexplored in his discussions of the Protestant ethic in general and the Quakers in particular.

WEBER ON ASCETICISM AND QUAKER BUSINESS ETHICS

Weber noted that the Quakers' inner-worldly ascetic ethos had practical implications for their business procedures. An immediate consequence of their inner-worldly asceticism was their strict adoption of the fixed price policy,⁸ which proved to be a necessary step in the development of business honesty and nonpreferential treatment of buyers, part of what Collins has termed a "methodical, nondualistic economic ethic."⁹ Economic exchanges that were conducted according to these principles were both "a condition as well as a product of a particular stage of capitalist economy known as Early Capitalism [and t]hey are absent where this stage no longer exists."¹⁰

Weber's claim that the fixed price policy was a consequence of the Quakers' inner-worldly ascetic ethos is important, but in this assertion

he does not show adequately how the policy was also a consequence of their critical judgment upon the business community of the day. Weber thought, for example, that Quakerism's "very strong contemplative elements" prevented Quakers from becoming concerned about "mundane interests," including social issues, despite the fact that their religious beliefs "again and again directed them to the course of action" in the world.¹¹ He thought that for Quaker "religious reformers," such as George Fox, "programmes of ethical reform never were at the center of interest. . . . The salvation of the soul and that alone was the centre of their life and work. Their ethical ideals and the practical results of their doctrines were all based on that alone, and were the consequences of purely religious motives."¹² Furthermore, Weber argued, Quaker asceticism involved "methodologies of apathetic ecstasy,"¹³ which in turn fostered "unpolitical or even anti-political principles."¹⁴

For Weber, these "methodologies of apathetic ecstasy" involved "rational" actions, since they were directed to an "absolute value."¹⁵ In the Quakers' case, the absolute value was a "religious call" to live according to the model "of the first generations of Christians,"¹⁶ and to live this way "regardless of possible cost to themselves."¹⁷ One of the rational actions that the first Quakers undertook, according to Weber, was the adoption of the fixed price policy, even though their trades and businesses suffered.¹⁸ Eventually, however, the value-rational policy of the early Quakers—that of "honesty is the best policy"¹⁹—was fortuitous, having the unintended result of bringing them increased business, since potential customers began to "have confidence in the religiously determined righteousness of the pious."²⁰

THE FIXED PRICE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The fixed price policy was indeed the expression of the absolute religious value Weber described. The Quakers' insistence on selling an item at the same price to all customers, regardless of social class, was based on the religious assertion that the seed of God existed in all people, including the nonbelieving.²¹ Moreover, Fox's *Journal* mentions that early Quaker tradespeople experienced initial losses because of their refusal to haggle, and a Quaker letter from 1656 makes the same point.²² Likewise, a 1655 publication by a temporarily lapsed Quaker describes how his business had suffered from his refusal either to haggle with customers or to show them "civil respect" by removing his hat and bowing to them when they entered his shop.²³

This policy, however, was more than the reflection of Quakers' deeply felt religious convictions; it was also a bitter indictment of contemporary merchant practices. A Quaker who engaged in the fixed price policy did so in part as a "judge out of the power of God" against "all the defrau-

ders, cozeners, cheaters, overreachers, liars, and wrong-dealers" in the marketplace.²⁴ The judgmental impact of the protest was made clear in two demands that Fox put forward in a 1658 tract entitled *A Warning to all the Merchants of London*. First, Fox called upon merchants to desist in the "cozening and cheating, and defrauding" practices of price-setting and haggling and replace them with the honest fixed price policy.²⁵ The numerous husbandmen and rural residents who practiced Quakerism would especially benefit from the policy's implementation, since the London merchant "hath a name and a bad report . . . [for] deceiv[ing] the country people that deals with you."²⁶ Second, Fox insisted that "the merchants, great men, and rich men" with their "gold and silver, and gold chains about [their] necks, and their costly attire" relinquish some of their wealth for the "poor blind women and children and cripples crying and making a noise up and down [the] streets."²⁷ In both demands, which were inseparable for Fox, he was indicting the ethics of the business community of his day and voicing his social concern for the poor. For instance, Fox admonished the merchants to "take in the blind and the cripples that cries up and down your streets, and feast them when you make your feasts; for the rich feast the rich, and not the poor that cannot feast them again."²⁸ This hostility against the wealthy on behalf of the poor is even more apparent in other Quaker tracts.²⁹

Contrary to Weber's claim that Fox and similar figures were not "proponents of humanistic projects for social reform or cultural ideals,"³⁰ Fox and his fellow Quakers had a keen eye for social, economic, and even political reform. In addition to Fox's tract that demanded reforms among the merchants, Quakers wrote many other tracts to judges, lawyers, and members of Parliament, calling for reforms in their respective occupations. These tracts, like Fox's to the merchants, typically contained warnings about "pride . . . loftiness . . . wantonness, and haughtiness," vices that Quakers held to be the real causes of social iniquity.³¹ Consequently, their reformist demands, including the fixed price and poor relief, were practical measures aimed at eradicating what Quakers saw as widespread human suffering resulting from pride and greed.

By arguing that the Quakers' formulation and implementation of the fixed price reflected not only their belief in an absolute religious ethic of honesty but also their hope for practical social reforms, I am asserting that two different types of rational activity were associated with the policy. The Quakers' insistence on fixed prices was an example not only of value rational (*wertrational*) activity based upon religious honesty but also of an instrumental rational (*zweckrational*) activity that attempted to prepare people's hearts for specific social and political reforms. Weber himself realized that interactions between these two types of rationalities

took place, even though he failed to see that the business ethos of the early Quakers provided an excellent example of it.³²

Radical Reform During the English Civil War

Quakers' general attacks on particular human vices were the result of bitter lessons they had been taught by political disappointments. After the Puritans gained power at the end of the 1640s, they refused to implement popular radical demands for economic, political, and religious reforms. Though the Quakers' fixed price policy usually was directed toward merchants, Quakers also claimed that the human greed and pride that plagued merchants were the same evils that infected political figures. The demands for personal reform contained in the fixed price policy must be viewed, therefore, in this specific sociopolitical context. Crucial here were the reformist efforts of the radical movement whose participants were known as the Levellers, and the Quakers' demands must be located within the same radical tradition.³³

Prior to the appearance of the Quakers, the Levellers waged a fervent campaign for wide-ranging economic, political, and religious reforms. The campaign included demands for the abolition of government-sponsored monopolies, of mandatory tithe payments, and of oath-taking on religious, political, and legal issues. Likewise, they called for an extension of the franchise and a significant increase in the government's relief activities for the poor.³⁴ Although Weber was somewhat familiar with many of the Levellers' social, political, and economic demands, he made only passing reference to them in the Protestant ethic essays, and they played no part in his basic argument.³⁵ In the "Protestant Sects" essay, he correctly described Levellers and Quakers as opposing tithes and a state-supported ministry, but he failed to connect the groups chronologically with regard to their reformist concerns about tithes and other issues.³⁶

In its day, the Leveller movement in London was capable of inspiring thousands of people to participate in emotion-filled demonstrations.³⁷ Nonetheless, the movement failed to persuade either the Long Parliament or the Rump to institute any of its reformist demands, nor was it able to win support from the army officers (the "Grandeess") who reshaped the government in 1648. The Grandeess' refusal to accept the reformist doctrines embittered the Levellers; they felt betrayed by the very commanders under whom they had risked their lives fighting to rid the country of political and religious "oppression."

In the famous Putney debates of late October 1647, for example, in which Grandeess and Levellers wrestled with the question of extending the franchise, the Leveller Edward Sexby complained to Cromwell that

"[a]ll here, both great and small, do think that we fought for something. I confess, many of us fought for those ends which, since we saw, were not those which caused us to go through difficulties and straits [and] to venture all in the ship with you. It had been good in you to have advertised us of it, and I believe you would [have] had fewer under your command to have commanded."³⁸ Sexby made these comments on 29 October. The day before, the radical preacher John Saltmarsh made a similar point in a letter he wanted read at the debate: "[Y]e have not discharged yourselves to the people in such things as they justly expected from ye, and for which ye had the spirit of righteousness first put upon ye by an Almighty Power, and which carried you upon a conquering wing. The wisdom of the flesh hath deceived and enticed, and that glorious principle of Christian liberty which we advanced in at first (I speak as to Christians) hath been managed too much in the flesh."³⁹ Fourteen months later, when the Levellers were under the impression that the Grandees had agreed to utilize a radical document, [*A Second*] *Agreement of the People*, as the model for a new government, they were shocked to hear the officers retreat from this position in a series of debates held at Whitehall.⁴⁰ The Levellers and other radicals were appalled, for example, that the Grandees would desire to give civil magistrates "compulsive and restrictive powers in matters of religion." As far as the important Leveller spokesperson John Lilburne was concerned, the court system in 1648 was as tyrannical as the courts had been under Charles I—nothing had substantially changed.⁴¹

The feelings expressed by the Levellers and their supporters—of frustration at the turn of events by those who expected more—commonly occur after wars; the underprivileged among the ranks of victorious soldiers remain unsatisfied. After Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell suppressed the Leveller-inspired army mutinies in May 1649, the movement never recovered. The reasons why the movement failed have been debated by historians;⁴² yet from the perspective of many Levellers, the reason for its failure was simply the basic spiritual depravity of those in authority. Reflecting on the "betrayal" by the army officers a few months earlier, three prominent Leveller leaders wrote in March 1649 that the Grandees had succumbed to their own "Delusions and perfidious Stratagems . . . to betray and enslave [the Commonwealth], to their own Pride, Ambition, Lusts, Covetousnesse, and Domination."⁴³ The common people had fought to cast off an oppressor but now found themselves oppressed by the very men whom they had supported. It was an interpretive theme that made sense out of a confusing and disappointing time, and it would recur often in the radical literature (Quaker and otherwise) of the next decade.

Quakerism and the Radical Tradition

If pride and similar vices were the cause of the authorities' opposition to reforms, then the real enemy was not so much an outward, political opponent as an inner, spiritual one. The true adversary, human pride, lay within, and it was against this vice that the Quakers launched their inward "spiritual war" during the very years that the Leveller movement was dying. Fox, for example, wrote that in 1647, "I went back into Nottinghamshire and there the Lord shewed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without were within, in the hearts and minds of wicked men. . . . The natures of these things I saw within, though people had been looking without."⁴⁴ Like the Levellers, Quakers believed that the Puritan authorities had succumbed to spiritual vices, and in the Quakers' eyes, this fact explained why the Puritans refused to implement the reforms the Levellers demanded.⁴⁵ Thus, when Quakers put forth reformist demands, they were almost identical to those of the Levellers: abolition of tithes and oaths, granting of religious toleration (for Protestants), election of annual parliaments by an extended franchise vote, abolition of monopolies, and extension of poor relief.⁴⁶ In fact, the most prominent Leveller of the 1640s, John Lilburne, converted to Quakerism, as Weber realized.⁴⁷ With at least one doctrine, however, Quakerism went beyond the Levellers' reformist demands, and this was the fixed price.

The economic innovation of the fixed price must be understood in light of the Quakers' inward war and the Levellers' outward, but unsuccessful, struggle. The policy was part of Quakerism's battle against greed and dishonesty, and it did not depend upon a government for enforcement or success as had the Levellers' proposals. The innovative policy had, as Weber recognized, religious ideas at its base, but it also had been preceded by a history of unfulfilled social demands. The Levellers' demands had been directed to the Parliament of the nation; the Quakers' fixed price policy was directed to the merchants of the nation, although the principle of honesty that lay behind it was to be adopted by all people, regardless of their occupations. The fixed price policy was a personalized attempt to institute economic change in a manner different from the failed political attempts of the preceding years. Since Quakers felt that the Puritan revolution had failed because of the authorities' capitulation to pride and vice, the Quakers' new attempt at reforms depended for its success largely on the elimination of pride and covetousness.

By placing its reformist doctrines, including the fixed price policy, within the social context of the era, we can see that Quakerism was in large measure a reactive movement.⁴⁸ Many of its members shared the

reformist expectations of the Levellers, especially those regarding the abolition of tithes, and had felt frustrated at the movement's political and economic failure. The Quakers responded to the Levellers' failure by spiritualizing, hence modifying, their predecessor's reformist demands, making them part of the inevitable millenarian social order that would emerge with Christ at its head. Quakers stressed the necessity of righteous activity by "saints" who were to conduct their lives in a manner that signified their awareness of Christ's imminent return. "For the mighty day of the Lord is coming," Fox warned the London merchants, "wherein every one of you must give account of his deeds done in the body, and every man's work must be tried by fire."⁴⁹

Millenarianism was, of course, widespread in mid-seventeenth-century England, with the Civil War victory symbolizing Christ's establishment of the country as the New Jerusalem, to which he soon would return and lead the saints in the final battle against the "Romish antichrist."⁵⁰ By legitimizing their conduct through saintly and divine claims, the Quakers gave new life to many of the radical hopes of the period, especially with regard to the abolition of the state-supported church system.⁵¹ In an age when the Quakers expected Christ to return at any moment, they used New Testament passages (about the apostles preaching freely and living off the voluntary contributions of those who accepted the message) as scriptural justification for their antitithe campaign.⁵² In a similar vein, the Quakers' belief in the imminent return of Christ, who would strike down the lofty and proud as he rewarded the saints, provided them with an impetus to develop a merchandizing policy that was scrupulously honest even by Puritan standards.⁵³ They did not relinquish the radicals' desire for reform, and on some issues (such as tithe abolition), they persistently pressed public figures for their implementation. Embittered by recent historical experience, however, they held out little hope of achieving their goals until either the officials themselves underwent a spiritual regeneration within their own hearts or Christ himself returned to rule the earth. Weber did not specify the "psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political" distress out of which the "charismatic revolution" of Quakerism appeared,⁵⁴ but we can identify it as the widespread indignation caused by Puritan failure to institute the political, economic, and religious reforms that had been the objects of struggle and hope for so many people.

EDUARD BERNSTEIN ON QUAKER FRUSTRATION—AN ARGUMENT IGNORED

Weber himself was aware of an interpretation of Quakerism that, on the one hand, revealed the bitter frustration that Quakers felt over recent political events and, on the other hand, identified this frustration as the

source of the group's personalistic demands for reform. This interpretation had been written by Eduard Bernstein nearly a decade before publication of the Protestant ethic essays, and it included a discussion of the social conditions that gave rise to the earliest formulations of Quaker doctrine.⁵⁵ The rebellion against Charles I, Bernstein realized, "had claimed untold sacrifices, without any satisfactory result; political struggles had succeeded each other without bringing a solution of social difficulties any nearer; men who had been hailed as deliverers, when once raised to power, assumed the mien of oppressors, and thus the conclusion seemed inescapable that the chief evil lay in *man* himself, in the *weakness* of human nature, which the existing Churches had proven powerless to overcome."⁵⁶ From the vantage point of the 1650s, "[n]o reliance could . . . be placed on men, nor could any hope be set upon an alteration in the government, but improvement could only follow the cultivation of the right *spirit*. This attitude of mind may be observed after all great political reactions."⁵⁷ George Fox, Bernstein thought, aptly represented this personalistic response to recent social and political disappointments.⁵⁸

Bernstein had grasped, therefore, the complex interplay between the Quakers' religious views and their political frustrations. He even asserted that "religion, and above all, *this* religion, provided an outlet for the tension caused by the proceedings on the political stage."⁵⁹ Despite the fact that he mistakenly accepted the assertion of a Quaker historian who claimed that Fox practiced an "absolute separation from all the political aims and objects of men of his time,"⁶⁰ Bernstein nonetheless realized the reformist aspirations of many of the early Friends. He observed that "[i]t was not until after the Restoration that Fox's doctrine of abstention from politics was generally adopted by the Quakers. During the Commonwealth this was . . . little the case."⁶¹ Thus, "[o]riginally, in this as in similar movements, the negative side, the *protest*—in this case protest against the establishment of new hierarchies—was uppermost."⁶² Bernstein's basic argument has been confirmed by more recent historians, one of whom shows that Quakerism "was prepared to play a political role in 1659: any reservations were due not to qualms of conscience but suspicions of the integrity of those in power."⁶³

Weber complimented Bernstein on this study by referring to it in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as an "excellent essay."⁶⁴ Furthermore, in both these essays and the accompanying "Protestant Sects" article, Weber printed his thanks to Bernstein for providing him with both Quaker books and salient passages from them.⁶⁵ Indeed, five of Weber's major sources were ones that Bernstein had footnoted in his 1895 work.⁶⁶ In sum, while Weber cited both Bernstein's work, in which the essay on Quakerism appeared, and books on the Quakers possibly borrowed from Bernstein's private collection, he nonetheless did not

report Bernstein's insightful analysis of the social and political forces that generated and propelled the group during the period in which it formulated its fixed price policy.⁶⁷

QUAKERISM, RESENTMENT, AND NIETZSCHE

The interpretation of the motivation behind the Quakers' economic activities that stresses the reactive and protesting qualities of their inner-worldly activities is akin more to Nietzsche's theory of resentment (*resentiment*) than to Weber's theory of a theodicy of suffering.⁶⁸ Although Weber carefully outlined Nietzsche's theory, in the end he rejected Nietzsche's idea that a conscious or unconscious desire for vengeance could "have determined the different forms of ethical 'rationalization' of life conduct."⁶⁹ Rather than viewing a desire for revenge as the motive for ascetic action, Weber claimed that the "theodicy of suffering" of people in "the socially repressed strata or of strata whose status is negatively (or at least not positively) valued" leads to their belief "that a special 'mission' is entrusted to them; their worth is guaranteed or constituted by an *ethical imperative*, or by their own functional *achievement*."⁷⁰

The Calvinistic Puritans, as Weber demonstrated, experienced their theodicy of suffering within the context of psychologically troubling predestinarian beliefs, and uncertainty about their spiritual states drove them to perform ethical acts in the form of business achievements as attempts to receive signs about their eternal conditions.⁷¹ The ethical rationalization of Calvinistic Puritan activity, therefore, conformed to Weber's theoretical discussion concerning the origins of inner-worldly ascetic activity. Moreover, the Calvinistic Puritans' business activities were value-rational in content, since they attempted to respond to questions that were religiously motivated.

The motivations for Quaker activity, however, did not conform to his theoretical discussion about theodicy. Although the Quakers' inner-worldly asceticism "was . . . the equivalent in practice of the Calvinistic doctrine" of predestination,⁷² and its fixed price policy was even stricter than its Puritan "just price" counterpart, the Quakers did not undertake business activities in an attempt to receive signs about their eternal states. Weber himself realized that the Quakers replaced the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination with a salvational certainty in which "relapses, to say nothing of the loss of the state of grace, became practically impossible."⁷³ Since Quakers did not accept predestination, their ethical activities, particularly their business affairs, were not based on a theodicy suffering caused by a constant uncertainty over the fate of their souls. Moreover, the tracts in which George Fox discussed the fixed price demonstrate that the Quakers used it as a means by which to pass judgment on the business community and wealthy merchants of their

day, and these criticisms were part of a wider campaign for social, political, and religious reform. In short, although the fixed price policy did in part reflect the Quakers' religious concern for honesty (and as such was a value-rational activity), it also was used by group members as a means both to launch social criticism and to demand social reforms (and as such was an instrumentally rational activity). To a significant degree, therefore, the Quaker ethic of business honesty was the ethic of a resentful group—or a theodicy of resentment.⁷⁴

As an explanation for the instrumentally rational aspect of the policy, the frustration, disgruntlement, and disappointment of many radicals drove the Quakers to identify spiritual enemies, such as human greed, as the primary hindrance to the implementation of radical demands by Puritans in power. Likewise, the Quakers' belief in the imminence of the millennium served both the instrumental function of compensating for these immediate social and political deprivations and the value-oriented function of stimulating absolute business honesty in preparation for God's eternal judgment.

These interpretations resemble, in their broadest outlines, Nietzsche's theory of resentment to the extent that they postulate elements of social hostility within the religious doctrines of a politically disprivileged group. Although, with regard to Quakerism, this interpretation is a significant departure from Weber's widely accepted Protestant ethic argument, it is nonetheless within the bounds of his own thoughts. Weber's 1913 statement on the relationship between resentment and inner-worldly asceticism allows for the possibility that under particular but unspecified circumstances asceticism could emerge from resentment: "All that can be said is that resentment *could* be, and often and everywhere has been, significant as one factor, among others, in influencing the religiously determined rationalism of socially disadvantaged strata. . . . In any case it would be quite wrong to attempt to deduce 'asceticism' in general from these sources."⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

Once the political and social context of the fixed price policy is considered, then Weber's claim that the Quakers' economic activities stemmed from "purely religious motives" must be modified. As a millenarian protest group whose followers were deeply disappointed with the course of recent political events, Quakerism transformed its members' resentful frustration into internalized efforts at reform that its practitioners still hoped would lead to fundamental political and social changes. The fixed price policy emerged as one example of its members' internalized and personalistic efforts in what they considered the final days before Christ's physical return to rule as judge and king. Seen in

its historical setting, the policy not only reflected Quakerism's religious concern for honesty, which Weber identified, but also revealed the movement's concern for the poor and concomitant hostility toward the life style of the wealthy, which Weber neglected. His neglect of these mundane aspects of Quakerism is apparent in his portrayal of the group as mystically contemplative, unpolitical or apolitical, with no central concern for ethical or social reforms that were independent of purely religious endeavors.⁷⁶

If we view Quakerism against the backdrop of the English Civil War, its personalized attempt at economic reform becomes analogous to the responses of other groups that appear after a time of great conflict and high expectations.⁷⁷ For example, the early Quaker emphasis on the need for personal spiritual reform as the first and necessary step for social reform resembles the personalistic orientation of many North American groups that prospered in the late 1970s after the fragmentation of the social movements of the 1960s.⁷⁸ Perhaps additional parallels can be drawn in the area of economic innovation between Quakerism and other sectarian groups,⁷⁹ especially since the protest element within the fixed price policy now has been established. In any comparison of this kind, however, close attention must be paid to the structural conditions that generate social disappointment, as well as to the way in which social frustration generates a protest response in the form of sectarian religion. Comparative studies that take these factors into account will bring us closer to determining the specific circumstances in which social resentment and feelings of political deprivation take the guise of inner-worldly asceticism, as they did during the tumultuous times of mid-seventeenth-century England.

CHAPTER 9

1. Weber, 1946: 350; Kent, 1983: 311–12; *see* Mitzman, 1970: 219, 221. Weber based his interpretation of the Quaker ideals of marriage on a 1682 letter written by William Penn to his wife entitled “My Dear Wife and Children,” which Weber probably read in Evans and Evans, 1841: 166–69; *see* Kent, 1985: 315–20; Weber, 1930: 266 n. 35.

2. Weber, 1946: 317–18.

3. *See* Weber, 1946: 312; 1978a: 1118.

4. Weber, 1946: 268.

5. Weber, 1946: 271.

6. Weber, 1946: 270.

7. Weber, 1930: 148.

8. Since Weber suggested that Baptists also claimed to have originated the fixed price policy (1946: 312), he may not have realized that the Quakers actually were the ones to have done so. He did not document his assertion about the Baptists, and I have been unable to determine what his source might have been. He realized, however, that in the eighteenth century the Methodists adopted the fixed price policy (1946: 313). On the discussion of both the fixed price policy and the related just (or fair) price policy by other Puritan groups, *see* Bailyn, 1955: 20–21; Bebb, 1935: 102–12; Robertson, 1933: 17–18; Tawney, 1926: 160–61. On the Methodists and the fixed price policy, *see* Wesley, 1961: 416. A fixed price on a given item did not vary according to customers, whereas a just price could be slightly higher for wealthy customers than for poor ones.

9. Weber, 1978b: 638; *see* Collins, 1986a: 89.

10. Weber, 1978b: 638. Nonetheless, it remains true that the fixed price policy has become an accepted procedure in contemporary business exchanges, at least on the level of most consumer purchases.

11. Weber, 1946: 291–92.

12. Weber, 1930: 89–90.

13. Weber, 1958b: 163.

14. Weber, 1930: 150; *see* Weber, 1946: 337.

15. Weber, 1978b: 25 (my translation).

16. Weber, 1930: 146.

17. Weber, 1978b: 25.

18. Weber, 1946: 312–13; *see* Weber, 1930: 69. For a 1669 example of Presbyterians’ taking an oath not to buy or sell with the Quakers, *see* Cadbury, 1948: 10. One should not assume, however, that the reason for the Presbyterian boycott was only because of the Quakers’ fixed price policy, since considerable theological enmity existed between the two groups. Another example of someone’s boycotting a Quaker businessperson (in this case, a Quaker shoemaker in 1652) appears in Nuttall (1954: 13–14), although reasons for the spurning other than the fixed price policy were given in the original account.

19. Weber, 1930: 282 n. 112; 1946: 313.

20. Weber, 1946: 312.

21. Fox, 1656: 101; 1661: 3.

22. Fox, 1675: 138–39; letter from William Edmonson to Margaret Fell, 27 June 1656 (in Braithwaite, 1961: 211).

23. Toldervy, 1656a: 19. The Quakers' fixed price policy may not have stimulated widespread public discussion. For example, Toldervy's reference to the fixed price policy in his anti-Quaker tract is the only indication that I can find in the polemical material that might indicate a discussion of the policy was going on in the public sphere. The Quakers who attempted to refute Toldervy's book, however, did not even address the charge that the fixed price policy and related Quaker doctrines had damaged his business (Fox, 1659: 85-87; Nayler, 1656) nor did Toldervy reiterate or clarify this charge in his subsequent efforts to defend his argument (1656c, 1656b). Toldervy also did not say what his business was. Other Quaker doctrines simply were more contentious than the fixed price policy, and therefore they attracted the most attention, especially among Puritan ministers who led the public debate against the Quakers.
24. Fox, 1658: 1; *see* Fox, 1657: 3-4.
25. Fox, 1658: 1. Not all Quakers followed Fox's admonition about honesty in business practices. As Reay (1980: 402-3) indicates, court records and statements from the 1650s show that at least five Quakers were accused of dishonest, illegal, or unsavory business practices. These accusations involved selling underweight bread, inaccurately measuring grain, engrossing corn, regrating butter, and selling corn outside the local community during a time of shortage.
26. Fox, 1658: 3.
27. Fox, 1658: 2.
28. Fox, 1658: 4; *see* Luke 14:12-14.
29. Maclear, 1950: 243-45, 254; Nuttall, 1973: 149; Petegorsky, 1940: 235-38.
30. Weber, 1930: 89.
31. Fox, 1658: 6; *see* Nuttall, 1973: 151-54; O'Malley, 1979: 174-75; Schenk, 1948: 114-31.
32. On the debate over the instrumentally rational (*zweckrational*) aspects of value-rational Calvinistic Puritan behavior, *see* Cohen, Hazelrigg, and Pope, 1975a: 233-35; 1975b: 671; Parsons, 1975: 667. Since the early Quakers felt certain about their salvation, however, their inner-worldly asceticism cannot be interpreted as "self-interested," as perhaps could the asceticism of the predestinarian Puritans.
33. *See* Cole, 1956; C. Hill, 1972: 193; D. Martin, 1966: 62-68; J. Martin, 1965: 86-122; Nuttall, 1973: 154-62; Reay, 1980: 106.
34. *See* Haller and Davies, 1944.
35. Weber, 1930: 282 n. 110, 216 n. 29.
36. Weber, 1946: 318, 459 nn. 27, 30. To correct one of the "facts" that Weber cited, I point out that John Goodwin did not debate in the Long Parliament with William Prynne over the issue of tithe support for ministers. Their debate was in printed form, since Goodwin was never a member of Parliament (*see* Haller, 1955: 249-53).
37. Brailsford, 1961: 360, 602.
38. In Woodhouse, 1938: 74.
39. In Woodhouse, 1938: 438, *see* 81.
40. Woodhouse, 1938: 125-78.
41. *See* Lilburne's comments in Woodhouse, 1938: 349-50.
42. *See* Aylmer, 1975: 45-55; Frank, 1955: 187-221.
43. Lilburne, Overton, and Prince in Haller and Davies, 1944: 187.

44. Fox, 1975: 19, *see* 31.
45. *See* Kent, 1989.
46. Burrough, 1657: 6; *see* B[illing], 1659; Brailsford, 1961: 639–40; Schenk, 1948: 114–18.
47. Weber (1978b: 550) portrayed Lilburne as having undergone the transformation of a mystic whose “revolutionary preaching to the world is chiliastically irrational” to a mystic who was “remote from the world.” Although I take exception to Weber’s preconversion portrayal of Lilburne, his postconversion description is partially correct. *See* Gibb, 1947; Gregg, 1961; Nuttall, 1952, 1973.
48. *See* Kent, 1982.
49. Fox, 1658: 6; *see* Rev. 18:11–18. Weber stressed the irrational aspects of millenarianism (1946: 340) and chiasm (1930: 149; 1978b: 550), but apparently he did not realize that millenarianism could stimulate value-rational behavior, even in the economic sphere.
50. Ball, 1975; C. Hill, 1971; *see* Rev. 17:12–20:15.
51. Kent, 1982.
52. Luke 9:3, 10:3–8.
53. *See* Bebb, 1935: 102–12; Underwood, 1970: 95.
54. Weber, 1978b: 1111–12.
55. On Weber and Bernstein, *see* Breuilly, 1987; Mommsen, 1984: 112.
56. Bernstein, 1963: 227–28.
57. Bernstein, 1963: 238.
58. Bernstein, 1963: 228.
59. Bernstein, 1963: 242.
60. Bernstein, 1963: 229 n. 1, quoting Barclay of Reigate; *see* Reay, 1978: 194–95. Between 1652 and 1660, Fox directed at least twelve tracts to parliaments or prominent political figures and at least seven to soldiers, army officers, magistrates, or lawyers.
61. Bernstein, 1963: 229.
62. Bernstein, 1963: 236.
63. Reay, 1978: 196.
64. Weber, 1930: 219 n. 5.
65. Weber, 1930: 256 n. 181, 283; 1946: 312–13.
66. Barclay of Reigate, Barclay of Aberdeen, Thomas Clarkson, J. S. Rowntree, and H. Weingarten. Two of Weber’s references to Quaker material require clarification. First, Weber incorrectly cited (1930: 283 n. 112) J. A. Rowntree as the author of *Quakerism Past and Present*, but the author’s name should be John Stevenson Rowntree. Second, Weber was uncertain about the first year of publication for Thomas Clarkson’s *A Portraiture of the Christian Profession and Practice of the Society of Friends*, thinking it to be from “around 1830.” Actually the book was first published by that title in 1847, but in 1806 Clarkson had published a book entitled *A Portraiture of Quakerism as taken from a view of the Moral Education, Discipline, Peculiar Customs, Religious Principles, Political and Civil Economy and Character, of the Society of Friends*. This early publication served as the basis for the work that Weber used. (I thank Kenneth Ives for pointing out the 1806 publication to me.)
67. Equally unfortunate is the neglect of Bernstein by other important sociologists who have written on topics related to Weber’s “Protestant ethic thesis”—

- e.g., M. Hill, 1973; D. Martin, 1966; Niebuhr, 1929; Parsons, 1937; Samuelsson, 1959; Schluchter, 1981; Troeltsch, 1911; Yinger, 1961.
68. Nietzsche, 1969: 38ff.; see Kaufmann, 1974: 371-78.
 69. Weber, 1946: 270.
 70. Weber, 1946: 276.
 71. Weber, 1930: 115, 121.
 72. Weber, 1930: 148; see Weber, 1978a: 1122-23.
 73. Weber, 1930: 147-48.
 74. In 1913, Weber asserted that ethical prophecies and ethical imperatives did not require or usually involve resentment in order to operate among "socially disadvantaged strata" (1946: 277). I am arguing, however, that the connection between ethics and resentment was crucial for the earliest Quakers, and therefore I take exception to his posthumously published statement that "in Judaism the doctrine of religious resentment has an idiosyncratic quality and plays a unique role not found among the disprivileged classes of any other religion" (1978b: 496).
 75. Weber, 1946: 276.
 76. Kent, 1987a, 1987b, forthcoming.
 77. Thomas, 1963: 10-11; Worsley, 1968: 230.
 78. Kent, 1987c, 1988.
 79. See Tobey, 1976: 28.

CHAPTER 10

1. See Collins, 1986b. Collins may be guilty of overzealousness in minimizing *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and stressing *General Economic History*, but he is correct that the former has been overemphasized in the "received tradition" of standard American sociology.
2. The editors of *General Economic History*, however, themselves report that Weber considered this project to be "an improvisation with a thousand defects"; see the discussion in Kivisto and Swatos, 1988: 24-26.
3. See the schematic diagram in Collins, 1986a: 89.
4. Wallerstein, 1979.
5. Wallerstein, 1980: 67-69.
6. Wallerstein, 1974: 151-52.
7. Collins, 1981.
8. Collins, 1981: 80-104.
9. Since the purpose of this chapter is to make use of Collins's geopolitical principles in developing a theory of ideological change, I will not discuss them at length; see Collins, 1981: 71-106, where his theory and principles are articulated clearly and concisely.
10. Collins, 1981: 101.
11. Collins, 1986a, 1986b. Robert Wuthnow is one contemporary sociologist who has discussed ideological and cultural phenomena within the world-system framework. Initially (e.g., 1980) he treated them as essentially dependent on the economic and geopolitical structures of the world system. More recently (e.g., 1983) he has discussed ideology and culture as dynamic symbol systems with independent effects upon social change processes. However, in doing so, he