

University of Kent

WOMEN ANTI-SLAVERY CAMPAIGNERS IN BRITAIN, 1787-1868

Clare Midgley

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD, August 1989



DX89605

F 135251

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Christine Bolt for her dedicated supervision of this thesis. Many thanks also to Meg Arnot, Kelly Boyd and Nick Midgley for very thorough proof-reading; to Moira Ferguson, Joan Grant, Clare Taylor, Susan Thorne and Alex Tyrrell for valuable comments and references; to friends at the Institute of Historical Research, London Feminist History Group and London History Workshop for their support; and to Henk van Kerkwijk for sharing a printer. I am also grateful to the staff of all the libraries whose collections I used during my research, especially the helpful librarians and archivists at the British Library, Friends' House Library in London, Rhodes House Library in Oxford, John Rylands University Library in Manchester and Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.

## Abstract

This thesis deals with a subject which has received very little previous attention from historians: the involvement of women in the anti-slavery movement in Britain from the 1780's to the 1860's. It aims both to enrich our understanding of women's lives at this period and to provide new insights into the popular extra-parliamentary campaign against slavery.

Research for the present study has focused on those women who were involved in anti-slavery organisations. The bulk of evidence presented thus concerns the middle-class women who were subscribers to national societies or members of ladies' anti-slavery associations. Limited information uncovered about upper-class, working-class and black women's involvement in anti-slavery is, however, also presented.

Working within a broadly chronological framework, the contributions of women to the successive stages of the anti-slavery movement are delineated. It becomes evident that women, while denied formal power in the movement through their almost total exclusion from national committees and conferences, nevertheless exercised considerable autonomy and initiative. Ladies' anti-slavery associations, both auxiliary and independent, developed distinctive approaches to campaigning, and took national and well as local initiatives. Their contributions expanded the base of public support for anti-slavery to the female half of the population.

Most women campaigners described their anti-slavery motivations and justified their public actions against slavery within an evangelical framework, stressing issues of morality and religion. Even when petitioning, women denied that they wished to challenge the ideology of a "separate spheres" which proscribed their involvement in parliamentary politics.

A minority of radical Quaker and Unitarian women campaigners did, however, become supporters of women's rights from the late 1830's onwards, influenced both by their own experiences in the anti-slavery movement and by their close contacts with American abolitionist-feminists.

### Note on References and Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

BPL Anti-Slavery Collection, Boston Public Library,  
Boston, Mass.

RHL Anti-Slavery Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

U.P. University Press

The publications of local anti-slavery societies are referred to in the footnotes in the form in which they appear on the title page of the original (though very long titles are abbreviated). However, in the BIBLIOGRAPHY at the end of this thesis the publications are grouped together under the name of the society. Thus a footnote reference to: The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton, appears in the BIBLIOGRAPHY as: Female Society for Clifton, Second Report.

## CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
NOTE ON REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I. Women Against the Slave Trade, 1787-1823	11
CHAPTER II. Women and the Campaign for the Abolition of British Colonial Slavery, 1823-1833. Part 1: Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations	77
CHAPTER III. Women and the Campaign for the Abolition of British Colonial Slavery, 1823-1833. Part 2: Policies and Politics.	142
CHAPTER 1V. Abolition in Transition: the Apprenticeship System and "Universal Abolition", 1834-1839	199
CHAPTER V. British Women in the Transatlantic Anti-Slavery Movement, 1840-1860	262
CHAPTER VI. Women and the Final Stages of the Popular Anti-Slavery Campaign, 1861-1868.	331
CONCLUSION	390
APPENDIXES	399
I. Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations	
II. Selected Women Anti-Slavery Activists	
III. Female Petitions to Parliament for the Abolition of Slavery, 1830-33	
IV. Female Petitions to Parliament for the Abolition of the Apprenticeship System in the West Indies, 1838	
V. Illustrations (figs. 1, 2, 3, 4)	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	425

## INTRODUCTION

Women's contributions to the British anti-slavery movement have received little attention from historians, despite the survival of much relevant source material.<sup>1</sup> This thesis, based on a full study of these primary sources, examines the extent of female involvement in the various stages of the campaign against slavery, looks at the type of women who became activists, and delineates what contributions they made. It also discusses women's specific role in the anti-slavery movement, exploring the effect of female activism on women's position in British society, particularly in terms of politics, public life and the development of feminism.

My intention is not simply to incorporate women into pre-existing accounts of the anti-slavery movement or of women's lives. Rather, I have tried to suggest how a focus on female activism exposes the need to modify these accounts, and to some extent reformulate the conceptual frameworks on which they are based. This attempt is inspired by a desire to realise the radical potential of women's history, through what Joan Scott has described as "the writing of narratives that focus on women's experience and analyse the ways in which politics construct gender and

---

<sup>1</sup>While piecemeal information on women's activities in contained in a number of historical studies, the only account to focus specifically on the women campaigners is a pioneering recent article by Louis and Rosamund Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness': Women in the British Anti-Slavery Movement, 1820-1860", Jane Rendall, ed., Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 82-111.

gender constructs politics".<sup>2</sup>

In the following brief and necessarily selective survey of important works of anti-slavery history, I suggest how the construction of these histories has excluded women, and point to the resultant problems in their analyses. I go on to outline recent work in women's history. This has provided valuable conceptual approaches to the study of women while not directly dealing with their involvement in anti-slavery. Finally, I define the scope of my present study and outline the arrangement of this thesis.

The earliest anti-slavery histories were in the form of accounts written either by abolitionists themselves or by their relatives. The best known of these were written by the male leadership or based on their papers. These occasionally acknowledge the personal influence of female relatives, pay tribute to the contribution of one or two individual women, or mention a particularly striking action by women. However, they give the impression of female contributions being both rare and secondary to those of men.<sup>3</sup> The sense of a female anti-slavery tradition which I

---

<sup>2</sup>Joan Wallach Scott, "Survey Article: Women in History. II. The Modern Period", Past and Present, no. 101 (Nov 1983), pp. 141-157, quote from p. 156. The term "gender" is used here, as in the present thesis, to refer to socially constructed differences between masculine and feminine identities and roles, as distinct from biologically determined sex (see also p. 9 below).

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Clarkson, The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1808); Robert I. and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, (London: John Murray, 1838); Life of William Allen, with Selections from his Correspondence, 3 vols. (London: Charles Gilpin, 1846); Charles Buxton, ed., Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Baronet, with Selections from his Correspondence, (London: John Murray, 1848); Viscountess Knutsford, Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay, (London: Edward Arnold, 1900); Henry Richard, Memoirs of Joseph Sturge, (London: Partridge, 1864).

have detected in the writings of women abolitionists is almost entirely absent from these male accounts.<sup>4</sup>

Early twentieth century historians of the movement also marginalized women. They drew on men's memoirs and also on the records of the exclusively male spheres of Parliament and anti-slavery national committees. This was partly because such documentation was the most accessible, partly the result of their "Whig" view of history as an account of progress through Parliamentary politics under the leadership of a benevolent and humanitarian male elite.<sup>5</sup>

A major onslaught on this historiographical tradition was made by the West Indian Marxist historian Eric Williams. Williams argued that it was primarily economic change rather than humanitarian endeavour which brought about the downfall of the slave trade and slavery. He linked the development of the British anti-slavery movement with the rise of a middle class dependent on industrial rather than mercantile capital.<sup>6</sup> Discussion of his thesis has continued to the present, and while the economic statistics on which his argument is based have been challenged, the problem of defining the precise nature of the link between the rise of industrial capitalism and the

---

<sup>4</sup>An exception is an account specifically addressed to a woman: Sir George Stephen, Anti-Slavery Recollections: in a Series of Letters, Addressed to Mrs Beecher Stowe, (London: Thomas Hatchard, 1854). This nevertheless singles out individual women rather than stressing female organisation.

<sup>5</sup>Frank J. Klingberg, The Antislavery Movement in England: A Study in English Humanitarianism, (New Haven: Yale Historical Publications, 1926); Reginald Coupland, Wilberforce: A Narrative, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923); Reginald Coupland, The British Anti-Slavery Movement, new edition, (London: Frank Cass, 1964).

<sup>6</sup>Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

launching of the anti-slavery campaign continues to preoccupy scholars.<sup>7</sup>

In an important contribution to this debate, David Brion Davis has suggested that middle class opposition to slavery was based on its incompatibility with the liberal ideology associated with industrial capitalism. Davis, making use of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, has described the dominance of a middle-class ideology which was based on representing the relationship between capitalist employer and waged labourer as "free", and positing this "free" labour as the antithesis of slave labour.<sup>8</sup> Davis' analysis is, I believe, of great value, but it is limited by his failure to take into account that middle-class ideology concerned gender as well as class relations.

Studies have also been made of the relationship between anti-slavery and religion, examining the denominational support for anti-slavery and the campaigners

---

<sup>7</sup>For a summary of the historiography up to 1976 see Roger Anstey, "The Historical Debate on the Abolition of the British Slave Trade", in Roger Anstey and P.E.H. Hair, Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition, (Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Occasional Series, Vol. 2, 1976), chap. xviii. For recent debate see Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987).

<sup>8</sup>David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823, (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1975). For a restatement of his position in response to criticism by Thomas Haskell and others see David Brion Davis, "Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony," American Historical Review, Vol. XCII, no. 4 (Oct 1987), pp. 797-812. For a valuable guide to recent theoretical work on ideology see Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology - Marxism Without Guarantees," Marx: A Hundred Years On, ed. Betty Matthews, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), pp. 57-85.

expressions of religious motivation.<sup>9</sup> Little work has been done, however, on <sup>the</sup> specific significance of religious motivation to women campaigners or on the link between women's roles in particular sects such as Quakerism and their anti-slavery involvement.

Scholars have also studied the anti-slavery movement as a nation-wide popular campaign involving the mobilization of both middle- and working-class "public opinion" in the provinces to put pressure on Parliament.<sup>10</sup> This shift away from the study of the all-male national leadership has provided an opening for including women, and some information on women's activities has been incorporated. Men's activities have continued to be taken

---

<sup>9</sup>Roger Anstey, "Religion and British Slave Emancipation", in David Eltis and James Walvin, eds., The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), chap. 3; Seymour Drescher, "Two Variants of Anti-Slavery: Religious Organisation and Social Mobilization in Britain and France, 1780-1870", in Christine Bolt and Seymour Drescher, eds., Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform, (Folkestone: Wm. Dawson, 1980), chap. 2; C. Duncan Rice, "The Missionary Context of the British Anti-Slavery Movement", in Walvin, ed., Slavery and British Society, (London: Macmillan, 1982), chap. 6; Douglas Charles Stange, British Unitarians Against American Slavery, 1833-65, (Cransbury: Associated University Presses, 1984).

<sup>10</sup>James Walvin, "The Impact of Slavery on British Radical Politics: 1787-1838", in Vera Rubin and A. Tuden, eds., Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies, Annals of the New York Academy of Science, Vol. CCXCII (1977), pp. 343-355; James Walvin, "The Propaganda of Anti-Slavery", in Walvin, ed., Slavery and British Society, chap. ii; and Seymour Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986). For two differing assessments of working-class attitudes to abolition see Patricia Hollis, "Anti-Slavery and British Working-Class Radicalism in the Years of Reform", in Bolt and Drescher, eds., Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform, (Folkestone: Wm. Dawson, 1980), chap. xiv, and Betty Fladeland, "'Our Cause being One and the Same': Abolitionists and Chartism" in Walvin, ed., Slavery and British Society, chap. iii.

as the norm, however, and thus the devaluation of female contributions has persisted.

Recent work has also explored the contribution of slaves themselves to their emancipation, and investigated the interaction of events in Britain and the Caribbean in forwarding emancipation.<sup>11</sup> However, black women's participation in slave resistance and white women's reactions to colonial events remain under-studied.<sup>12</sup>

In the field of women's history, studies of the lives of white middle-class women in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have illuminated the impact of the dominant middle-class ideology of "separate spheres" in defining women's place as being in the private, domestic sphere, and excluding them from the "male" world of public life and politics.<sup>13</sup> This ideology was linked with the

---

<sup>11</sup>Michael Craton, Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies, (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1982); Mary Turner, Slaves and Missionaries: the Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). James Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom, 1776-1838, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986) and Seymour Drescher, Capitalism and Anti-Slavery consider the impact of black resistance in Britain and the Caribbean on the British anti-slavery movement.

<sup>12</sup>For a list of studies of women's resistance to slavery in the British West Indies see chap. ii, section 6 of this thesis. Standard works on the history of black people in Britain contain only scattered mentions of women: James Walvin, Black and White: The Negro and English Society, 1555-1945, (London: Allen Lane, 1973); F.O. Shyllon, Black People in Britain, 1555-1833, (Oxford U.P. for Institute of Race Relations, 1977); F. O. Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain, (London: Oxford U.P., 1974); Peter Fryer, Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain, (London: Pluto, 1984).

<sup>13</sup>For valuable anthropological approaches to the public/private dichotomy see Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, Woman, Culture and Society, ((Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1974); Shirley Ardener, ed., Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps, (London: Croom Helm, 1981). For a survey of historical work on "separate spheres" ideology in nineteenth century America see Janet Sharistanian, ed., Gender, Ideology, and Action: Historical Perspectives on

evangelical revival, which assigned women an important though subordinate role as guardians of religion and morality in the home, able to advise men immersed in the potentially corrupting public world of politics and business.<sup>14</sup> Historians have explored both the restrictions which this ideology imposed on women, and the scope it afforded for female philanthropy. Research into female voluntary associations has revealed how middle-class women organised to practice their "private" values and domestic and duties in the wider world.<sup>15</sup> Debate on the place of British women's anti-slavery organisations in this process has, however, been lacking.

Historians have also discussed the way in which some middle-class women went beyond negotiating the boundaries of their "sphere" to challenging "the ideology of domesticity" in the developing women's rights movement. In the United States, close links between anti-slavery and the development of feminism have been exposed.<sup>16</sup> In Britain

---

Women's Public Lives, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 67, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986).

<sup>14</sup>Catherine Hall, "The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology", in Sandra Burman, ed., Fit Work for Women, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), chap. i.

<sup>15</sup>For the United States see: Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: Women's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835, (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1979); Mary P. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks: A Case Study of Female Moral Reform in Antebellum America", Feminist Studies, no. 5 (Spring 1979), pp. 66-85. For Britain see: Anne Summers, "A Home from Home - Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century", in Burman, ed., Fit Work for Women, chap. ii; Frank K. Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy, 1780-1830", International Review of Social History, Vol. XIX (1974), pp. 426-445; Frank K. Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

<sup>16</sup>American studies stressing the importance of abolition to the development of feminism include Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle, (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1959) and Blanche Glassman Hersch, The Slavery of Sex:

scholars have suggested that a similar link existed, while acknowledging that its extent and precise nature have yet to be clarified.<sup>17</sup> Still less work has been done on the relationship of women to other aspects of politics.<sup>18</sup>

In this thesis I attempt to fill some of these absences in the historical record and to contribute to some of these debates. In so doing I have made use of recent developments in feminist history towards a history of "gender", most importantly Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's major study of the creation of a "gendered" middle class in England between 1780 and 1850. Their work has demonstrated the importance of investigating manliness as well as femininity, of exploring the contradictions within middle-class ideology as well as its unyielding prescriptive force.<sup>19</sup> My own study, while centering on women, makes comparisons with men in order to illuminate gender roles in

---

Feminist-Abolitionists in America, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

<sup>17</sup>Ray Strachey, The Cause. A Short History of the Women's Movement in Britain, reprint of original 1928 edition (London: Virago, 1979), pp. 41-43; Olive Banks, Faces of Feminism, (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), p. 23; Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985) pp. 245-8.

<sup>18</sup>Pioneering studies are: Dorothy Thompson, "Women and Nineteenth-Century Radical Politics: A Lost Dimension", in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., The Rights and Wrongs of Women, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), chap. iii; Malcolm I. Thomis and Jennifer Grimmett, Women in Protest 1800-1850 (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Barbara Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, (London: Virago, 1983); Rendall, ed., Equal or Different.

<sup>19</sup>Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850, (London: Hutchinson, 1987). See also Catherine Hall, "Private Persons Versus Public Someones: Class, Gender and Politics in England, 1780-1850", in Carolyn Steedman et al., eds., Language, Gender and Childhood, History Workshop Series, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 10-33.

the anti-slavery movement, and it also explores the gendered nature of anti-slavery ideology.

Recent feminist writings have also emphasised the importance of seeing women not as a homogeneous group, but in the complexity of their divisions, particularly on class and racial lines.<sup>20</sup> In this thesis I have attempted to address issues of race and class both through an analysis of the ideas, organisations and activities of white middle class women campaigners and through comparison where possible with the approaches of black women and white working class women opposed to slavery.

However this study perforce concentrates on the white middle class women who formed the bulk of female activists in the formally organised anti-slavery movement. Their activities are the best documented and the most accessible to the researcher. In contrast, those of black and working-class white women are less readily detected, and though some evidence has been uncovered and is presented here, a fuller picture could only be constructed through painstaking research at a local level on sources outside the archives of anti-slavery material and the society publications on which this thesis mainly relies.

Geographically, my study covers England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, because all these areas were involved in putting pressure on the British government for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, and all were

---

<sup>20</sup>For black feminist critiques of white feminists in Britain glossing over such divisions see Hazel Carby, "White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood", in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, ed., The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain, (London: Hutchinson, 1982), chap. vi; Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism", Feminist Review, no. 17 (Autumn 1984), pp. 3-19.

involved in giving support to the abolition movement in the United States from the 1840's to 1860's. There is very little on Wales, because there is little evidence for organised anti-slavery activity there. I have, however, made little attempt to delineate national or regional variations, and have concentrated instead on providing an overview of the widespread participation by women in the successive anti-slavery campaigns of 1780-1870.

The thesis is arranged in chronological chapters, which are divided into largely thematic sections. Chapter I looks at the origins of the anti-slavery movement, at the campaign of 1787-1807 against the British slave trade, and at activities in the 1807-1823 period. Chapters II and III examine the campaign for the abolition of British colonial slavery, which culminated in the passage of the Emancipation Act in 1833. Chapter IV covers the transitional period of 1834-39, looking at reaction to the "apprenticeship" system of tied labour introduced by the Act, and at developing campaigns for "universal abolition". Chapter V concentrates on the transatlantic anti-slavery movement and links with American abolition, from the World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 to the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861. Chapter VI deals with aspects of the movement in the 1860's, and includes an examination of the freedmen's aid movement, the demise of the popular campaign after 1868, and the entry of women activists into feminist organisations. In conclusion, I summarize the main findings of my research, and suggest the significance of the study to both anti-slavery and women's history.

## CHAPTER I

### WOMEN AGAINST THE SLAVE TRADE, 1787-1823

Histories of the early stages of the anti-slavery movement in Britain have included little on women's contributions. James Walvin has suggested that women were not only excluded from the national leadership but also hardly involved in the popular extra-Parliamentary campaign until the 1820's.<sup>1</sup> E.M. Hunt has, however, drawn attention to women's involvement in the Manchester abolition society, and Seymour Drescher, in his recent reassessment of the popular campaign, has provided a number of valuable references to women's activities on the basis of extensive new research into primary sources.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, no overall analysis of the specifics of women's contribution to abolition has been attempted.

Historians of women have also provided little analysis of their contribution to the abolition movement. Frank Prochaska includes abolition in his study of the growth of middle-class women's philanthropic activities from the 1790's onwards, but does not explore the campaign's specific characteristics.<sup>3</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine

---

<sup>1</sup>Walvin, "The Impact of Slavery", p. 351; Walvin, "The Propaganda of Anti-Slavery", p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>E.M. Hunt, "The Anti-Slave Trade Agitation in Manchester", Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, Vol. LXXIX (1977), pp. 46-72, see p. 51; Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, pp. 78-79, 85 and notes on pp. 215-6, 221.

<sup>3</sup>Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy"; Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy.

Hall's study of the English middle-class women and men from the 1780's also has little on anti-slavery.<sup>4</sup>

In this Chapter I attempt to fill this gap in the historiography. I begin (Section 1) by examining the origins of anti-slavery campaigning by women in Britain, focussing first on black women's resistance to their chattel status, and then on white Quaker women's early opposition to slavery. The following four Sections cover the campaign for the abolition of the British slave trade. In Sections 2 to 5 I look at the most intensive period of that campaign, between 1783 and 1792, covering issues of organisation and support (Section 2), public and political dimensions (Section 3), imaginative literature as anti-slavery propaganda (Section 4) and abstention from slave-grown sugar (Section 5). In Section 6 I examine the period of less intensive public campaigning, between 1793 and the passage of the Abolition Act in 1807. Finally, Section 7 deals with the evidence for anti-slavery activity in the period between the passage of the Abolition Act and the beginning in 1823 of the campaign for the emancipation of slaves in the British colonies. In conclusion, I make a brief assessment of the significance of women's abolitionist activities in the four decades between 1783 and 1823.

### 1. Origins of Anti-Slavery

---

<sup>4</sup>They assert that "Anti-slavery was recognized almost from the beginning as a peculiarly feminine concern" but provide evidence dating back only to the emancipation campaign of 1823-33 (see Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, pp. 433-4).

Women's contribution to the intellectual origins of anti-slavery, in particular their relationship to eighteenth century Enlightenment thought, is an area requiring further research but one which is beyond the scope of this thesis.<sup>5</sup> This Section instead focuses on women in the two groups which first became active against slavery: Quakers and black people.

The black contribution to the origins of anti-slavery in Britain has only recently been acknowledged in anti-slavery historiography, having previously been examined in the separate field of black history.<sup>6</sup> In both sets of historiography attention has focussed on black men, partly because evidence from baptismal records and elsewhere suggests that they considerably outnumbered black women.<sup>7</sup> Painstaking research is needed into primary sources before a full reconstruction of black women's lives in Britain can be attempted. Here it is possible only to collect together scattered published evidence which indicates that black women were involved in early resistance to slavery in Britain.

Black people were brought to Britain by slave traders, plantation owners and West Indian officials from the sixteenth century onwards, and by the eighteenth century

---

<sup>5</sup>The major study of this subject, which concentrates almost exclusively on the views of leading male intellectuals, is David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1966).

<sup>6</sup>For recent attempts to integrate black actions into British anti-slavery history see Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, chap. II; Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom; Douglas Lorimer, "Black Slaves and English Liberty: A Re-Examination of Racial Slavery in England", Immigrants and Minorities, Vol. III, no. 2 (July 1984), pp. 121-150.

<sup>7</sup>See Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom, pp. 47, 53.

had become fashionable as unwaged household servants among the aristocracy, by whom they were viewed as decorative status symbols. Some of these slaves were girls and young women, valued for their skills as domestic servants. In 1761 the Daily Ledger carried an advertisement for "a healthy Negro Girl aged about fifteen years; speaks English, works at her needle, washes well, does household work, and has had the smallpox", and in 1769 the Public Advertiser contained a similar advertisement for a girl aged eleven.<sup>8</sup> Black people were frequently advertised for sale in British newspapers, and the latest advertisement for a black slave to appear in a London newspaper was for a "little negro girl".<sup>9</sup>

There is evidence that black women and girls ran away from their masters and mistresses, forming part of a tide of self-emancipation which Peter Fryer and others have credited with effectively ending slavery in England by the 1790's.<sup>10</sup> This process can be traced in the advertisements for runaways which appeared in British newspapers. An early example, from the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), offered a guinea reward for the return of "a Negro Maid, aged about 16 years, much pitted with the Small Pox, speaks English

---

<sup>8</sup>Daily Ledger, 31 Dec 1761, as quoted in James Walvin, The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England, 1555-1860, (London: Orbach and Chambers, 1971), p. 80; Public Advertiser, 28 Nov 1769, quoted in F.O. Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain, (London: Oxford U.P., 1974) p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Gazetteer, 15 June 1772, quoted in Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, p. 196 n. 61. Drescher identifies the last public sale of a slave in England as taking place in Liverpool in 1782.

<sup>10</sup>Peter Fryer, Staying Power. The History of Black People in Britain, (London: Pluto Press, 1984), especially p. 203; Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, chap. II. In Scotland slavery had been made illegal by the judgment in the Knight v. Weddeburn case in 1778.

well, having a piece of her left Ear bit off by a Dog; She hath on a strip'd Stuff waistcoat and Petticoat."<sup>11</sup> Even young girls ran away, as evidenced by the case in 1760 of a "negro" girl who had "eloped from her mistress on account of ill usage".<sup>12</sup>

Another circumstance which led women to flee from their owners was the threat of forced deportation to the West Indies. Though a judgment by Lord Mansfield in 1772 made this illegal, there were instances of such deportations until at least 1792. Thus while Quakers in Bristol in 1772 were successful in obtaining a warrant to keep a girl runaway, in 1790 the town's public crier offered a guinea to anyone who hunted down a black girl who had run away because she did not want to be sent back to the West Indies. When found she was forced on board ship.<sup>13</sup>

Other runaways were more fortunate, finding refuge in the sizeable black communities which had grown up in the

---

<sup>11</sup>Unidentified newspaper, quoted in John Ashton, Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne. Taken from Original Sources, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1882), p. 81.

<sup>12</sup>Lloyds Evening Post, 3-5 Nov 1769, quoted in Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, p. 188, n. 24. Lorimer (Lorimer, "Black Slaves and English Liberty" p. 139) suggests that black men, had more job opportunities than black women, and thus faced fewer obstacles in attempting to gain freedom. Clear evidence for this is lacking, however.

<sup>13</sup>Horace Walpole's Correspondence, Vol. I, p. 350; letter from Hannah More to Horace Walpole, Cowslip Green, July 1790, quoted in William Roberts (ed.), Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, (London: R. B. Seeley, 1834), Vol. II, p. 235. Shyllon gives information on two other deportation cases in Bristol, both involving women, one in 1667, the other in 1792 (Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain, pp. 11, 170).

slave trading ports of London, Bristol and Liverpool.<sup>14</sup> These communities were composed not only of sailors and other free blacks but also of runaways and what the London magistrate Sir John Fielding described in 1768 as "a great number of black Men and Women who have made themselves so troublesome and dangerous to the Families who brought them over as to get themselves discharged".<sup>15</sup> This last group, alleged Fielding, "enter into Societies and make it their Business to corrupt and dissatisfy the Mind of every fresh black Servant that comes to England: first, by getting them christened or married, which they inform them makes them free", and which led them to demand wages for their services.<sup>16</sup> There is some evidence to back Fielding's claims of black organisation. A newspaper reported that after Lord Mansfield's judgment of 1772 two hundred "Blacks with their ladies" gathered at a public house in Westminster to celebrate. There is also evidence of black people meeting to discuss the 1787 scheme to resettle the London black poor in Sierra Leone. There were around forty black women among over four hundred people who were eventually transported to the African colony.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Estimates of the black population of England in the late 18th century vary, but it was probably approaching 20,000. (See Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom, p. 47).

<sup>15</sup>Sir John Fielding, Extracts from Such of the Penal Laws, as Particularly Relate to the Peace and Good Order of This Metropolis, (New Edition; London: H. Woodfall and W. Straham, 1768), p. 144. [emphasis in quote mine]

<sup>16</sup>Fielding, p. 144. While the Yorke-Talbot court ruling of 1729 had declared that baptism did not make slaves free the belief that it did was widespread among black people (see F.O. Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain, (London: Oxford U.P., 1974), p. 26).

<sup>17</sup>Stephen J. Braidwood, "Initiatives and Organisation of the Black Poor 1786-1787", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. III, no. 3, (Dec 1982), pp. 211-227.

Among the transportees were also some seventy white women, most of them the wives of black men. Given that London parish registers suggest that only about a fifth of blacks in London at this period were women such intermarriage is not surprising.<sup>18</sup> Black abolitionist Olaudah Equiano, who played a leading role in negotiations on the Sierra Leone scheme, himself married a white woman, Susan Cullen of Ely in Cambridge, in 1792.<sup>19</sup> An early abolitionist poem, The Dying Negro (1773), was based on a report in a London newspaper of a black runaway man who had got christened in order to marry a white servant woman, but had been seized and taken aboard a slave trading vessel in the Thames.<sup>20</sup> Intermarriage provoked expressions of horror at black men's sexuality and at "miscegenation" among the West India interest in Britain. Edward Long, for example, stated that "the lower class of women in England, are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention".<sup>21</sup>

Working-class men and women on occasion gave help to runaway slaves. In 1760 a black girl runaway was brought to church in Westminster by two housekeepers to be

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>For Equiano's role in the Sierra Leone scheme see Fryer, pp. 105-6. Equiano's abolitionist autobiography, The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African, numbered thirty-four women among its four hundred and one subscribers, including the well-known authors Hannah More and Joanna Baillie, literary hostess Mrs Montague, abolition supporters Lady Middleton and her friend Mrs Bouverie, and two duchesses.

<sup>20</sup>[Thomas Day and John Bicknell], The Dying Negro, a Poetical Epistle, (London: Flexney, 1773).

<sup>21</sup>A Planter [Edward Long], Candid Reflections Upon the Negro Cause (1772), p. 48-49, as quoted in Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain, p. 151. (who gives other examples of hostility to intermarriage on pp. 162-3).

baptised.<sup>22</sup> There are indications that this was not an isolated instance: Fielding commented in 1768 that black runaways got "the Mob on their side", and a notice in the Daily Advertiser in 1772 warned people against harbouring a "black woman belonging to Mrs Grant".<sup>23</sup> There are also a few instances of black men joining working-class radical organisations in the 1790's. Organisations like the London Corresponding Society to which Olaudah Equiano belonged were, however, male dominated, and no cases of black women's involvement have yet been found.

It was the position of black men and women in Britain which prompted the first action by a middle-class white man against slavery. During the 1760's and 1770's Granville Sharp (1735-1813) attempted to establish through a series of court cases that slavery was illegal in Britain, and to use Habeas Corpus to secure the freedom of individual slaves.<sup>24</sup> One of his successful cases involved a woman, Mary Hylas, who had married a free black man but after several years had been kidnapped by her owners and transported to slavery in the West Indies.<sup>25</sup>

Sharp, though himself an Anglican, had close links with Quaker opponents of slavery. British and American

---

<sup>22</sup>Report in Lloyds Evening Post, 3-5 November 1760, p. 433, as quoted in Drescher, Capitalism and Anti-Slavery, p. 188, n. 24.

<sup>23</sup>Fielding, p. 144; Daily Advertiser, 4-9 Sept 1772.

<sup>24</sup>For a detailed account of the court cases, especially the famous Somerset case of 1772, see Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain.

<sup>25</sup>Information in Fryer, p. 118-9; Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain, pp. 40-42. Sharp knew of several other black women who had been taken from their husbands and sold to the West Indies (see Lorimer, "Black Slaves and English Liberty", p. 132).

Quakers' considerable economic involvement in the slave trade and slavery was already being questioned by some members of the Society of Friends in the early eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Their opposition to slavery was linked to their belief that every individual could inwardly experience God directly. It was a belief which when applied to women or to black people implied that neither were naturally inferior. In addition, by denying the Calvinist doctrine of original sin, Friends freed women from responsibility for the sins of Eve and blacks for the sins of Cain.<sup>27</sup> While positive evidence is lacking, it seems plausible that the similar basis of Quaker beliefs in racial and sexual equality would have inclined Quaker women to an empathy and identification with black people which went beyond the humanitarian concern of their menfolk.

The Society of Friends was also unusual in having no formal ministry, and in permitting anyone, male or female, to become a lay minister, provided they were convinced they had a calling from God.<sup>28</sup> Leading abolitionist Thomas Clarkson later singled out transatlantic visits by Quaker ministers as being of vital importance in spreading knowledge of, and opposition to, slavery among British

---

<sup>26</sup>See A.T. Gary, "The Political and Economic Relations of English and American Quakers (1750-1885)", DPhil thesis, Oxford, 1935.

<sup>27</sup>For Quaker views of black equality before God see J. William Frost, ed., The Quaker Origins of Antislavery (Norwood, Pa: Norwood, 1980), p. 2. Frost, however, does not discuss the parallels with their views on female equality.

<sup>28</sup>See Thomas Clarkson, A Portraiture of Quakerism, 3 Vols., (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), Vol. III, chap. XVIII.

Quakers.<sup>29</sup> It is known that these ministers included a number of influential women: Rebecca Jones of Philadelphia and Catherine Payton of Dudley in Worcestershire and Mary Peisley of Ballymore in County Kildare.<sup>30</sup> Peisley and Payton travelled thousands of miles together through the northern and southern states of America between 1753 and 1756 and in their memoirs both expressed their disapproval of American Quakers who bought and kept slaves. Peisley considered the activity to be irreconcilable "with the golden rule of doing unto all men as we would they should do unto us", and Phillips expressed her pleasure that there was a growing move among Quakers to free their slaves.<sup>31</sup> Philadelphia minister Rebecca Jones (1739-1817), who first came to England in 1756 with Peyton and Piesley, travelled extensively as a minister in Britain and Ireland between 1784 and 1788 and took a great interest in the beginnings of the organised anti-slavery campaign at that period,

---

<sup>29</sup>Thomas Clarkson, The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1808), p. 129-30.

<sup>30</sup>Catherine Payton (1727-94) entered the ministry in 1748 and made preaching tours of Britain, Holland and America. In 1772 she married William Phillips, who worked in the Cornish copper-mining industry. She also wrote a tract on Quaker missionary work in Africa and the West Indies in 1792. (Memoirs of the Life of Catherine Phillips: to Which Are Added Some of Her Epistles, (London: James Phillips, 1797)). Mary Peisley (1717-1757) entered the ministry around 1744. She married Samuel Neale in 1757 but died two days later. (Some Account of the Life and Religious Exercises of Mary Neale, Formerly Mary Peisley. Principally Compiled from Her Own Writings, ((Dublin: John Gough, 1795))).

<sup>31</sup>Memoirs of the Life of Catherine Phillips, p. 68; Some Account of the Life and Religious Exercises of Mary Neale, p. 92.

advising the Quaker leadership on the wording of their abolition petitions.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the high value placed on their views and advice, women occupied a subordinate place in the hierarchy of Quaker organisation in Britain. They were organised into a separate network of women's meetings which was subordinate to the men's meetings. The Women's Yearly Meeting in London, established in 1759, was a powerless and informal body. Even after 1784, when it was empowered to correspond with and advise local women's meetings, it lacked the power to set rules of conduct for the Society. Thus while exchanging letters with the Yearly Meeting of Women Friends in Philadelphia on the progress of the anti-slavery cause between 1777 and 1797, it could not as a body take an official position on slavery.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, the Yearly Meeting in London, at which decisions were taken by men only, had the power to effectively ban involvement by British Quakers in the slave trade in 1761 by making involvement a matter for "discipline".<sup>34</sup>

## 2. The Popular Campaign Against the Slave Trade, 1783-1792:

<sup>32</sup>William J. Allinson, compiler, Memorials of Rebecca Jones, (2nd ed., Philadelphia: Longstreit, 1849), especially pp. 144-5.

<sup>33</sup>Letters no. 28 and 38, Women's Yearly Meeting (London), "Epistles Sent and Received 1768-1778", MSS in Friends House Library, London.

<sup>34</sup>See Alan M. Rees, "English Friends and the Abolition of the Slave Trade", The Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Vol. XLIV, no. 2 (Autumn 1955), pp. 74-87; J. William Frost, "The Origins of the Quaker Crusade Against Slavery: A Review of Recent Literature", Quaker History, Vol. LXVII, no. 1 (Spring 1978), pp. 42-58; Judith Jennings, "The American Revolution and the Testimony of British Quakers Against the Slave Trade", Ibid., Vol. LXX, no. 1 (Spring 1986), pp 99-103. None of these accounts deal with women's contribution.

### Organisation and support

The organised national anti-slavery campaign launched in Britain in the 1780's aimed to abolish the slave trade rather than slavery itself.<sup>35</sup> The trade was at its peak at this period and was on an enormous scale: between 1751 and 1807 over 1,600,000 Africans were forcibly transported across the Atlantic by British slave traders.<sup>36</sup>

The leadership of the campaign against the slave trade was exclusively male. This applied to the Quaker abolition committees formed in 1783, to the committee of the non-sectarian Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade [henceforth, the Abolition Society] formed in 1787, and to the Parliamentary support for the campaign. In addition, the minutes and reports of the committees make no specific mention of women's participation.<sup>37</sup>

Despite their exclusion from decision-making bodies, women nevertheless contributed to the abolition campaign in a number of ways, and in this Section I will look at their relationship to the male leadership and to formal anti-slavery organisations, at both national and local levels.

---

<sup>35</sup>The reasons for this choice are discussed in David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, chap. ix, and Roger Anstey, The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition (London: Macmillan, 1975), chap. xi.

<sup>36</sup>Philip Curtin, The African Slave Trade: A Census (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), Table 38.

<sup>37</sup>The following records were checked: MSS Minute Book of the Meeting for Sufferings committee on the Slave Trade, 1783-92, Friends House Library, London; MSS Minutes of the Informal Slave Trade Committee, "Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade: Illustrations", Vol II [new numbering], p. 9, Friends House; Fair Minute Books of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1787-1819, 3 Vols., British Museum Add. MSS. 21254-6.

As historians have acknowledged, women of high social status and personal contacts with the powerful exerted "behind-the-scenes" influence on male politicians in favour of abolition. The home of Lady Middleton at Teston in Kent acted as a centre for Evangelical supporters of abolition.<sup>38</sup> Her close friend Hannah More wrote a series of letters describing the launching of the Parliamentary campaign at Teston, describing how she and Lady Middleton initiated discussions of the slave trade at dinner parties attended by leading politicians, and how the women canvassed members of Parliament by letter and personal contact.<sup>39</sup> Lady Middleton herself, whose husband was a member of Parliament, exerted an early influence on William Wilberforce to promote the abolition cause in Parliament.<sup>40</sup>

Family friend Ignatius C. Latrobe claimed on this basis "that the abolition of the slave trade was ... the

---

<sup>38</sup>Lady Margaret Middleton (d. 1792) was the daughter of barrister James Gambier and wife of Capt. Charles Middleton (1726-1813), created Lord Barham and First Lord of the Admiralty.

<sup>39</sup>William Roberts (ed.), Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs Hannah More, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1834), especially pp. 71, 152; letter from Hannah More to Lady Middleton, Cowslip Green, 10 Sept [1788], quoted in Lady Georgina Chatterton (ed.), Memorials, Personal and Historical, of Admiral Lord Gambier, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861), p. 173. Hannah More (1745-1833) was daughter of the master of a charity school, and she and her sisters ran a successful girls' school in Bristol. She moved to London in 1774 and became a member of the "bluestocking" fashionable literary circle around Elizabeth Montague. From 1787, however, she came under the influence of leading Evangelicals and began to write the serious works of moral reform for which she is famous. (see M.G. Jones, Hannah More, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1952)).

<sup>40</sup>Robert I. and Samuel W. Wilberforce (eds.), The Life of William Wilberforce, (5 Vols., London: Murray, 1838), Vol I, p. 142-6. See also discussion of Lady Middleton's influence in John Pollock, Wilberforce, (Tring: Lion, 1978), p. 53.

work of a woman, even Lady Middleton", but this is clearly a gross exaggeration of the power of feminine influence.<sup>41</sup> While Evangelicals stressed the importance of women's role as guardians of religion and morality, a comparison of the anti-slavery efforts of Hannah More and William Wilberforce, both members of the Evangelical "Clapham Sect", suggests the ways in which feminine influence was in practice limited rather than enhanced by women's lack of formal political power.<sup>42</sup> Both individuals could use social contacts to exert political influence, but Wilberforce was also, as a member of parliament, in the position to lead the parliamentary campaign against the trade.

The contrast between male members of the Clapham Sect and their wives and daughters is even more striking. In the historical record the women are shadowy private figures hidden behind the public men.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that female domestic support was essential to the public work of the men, and that women, through marriage, entertaining and friendships, played an essential

---

<sup>41</sup>Latrobe, a Moravian missionary, made the remark in a letter to his daughter on 5 Dec 1815, quoted in Wilberforce and Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, Vol. I, p. 146.

<sup>42</sup>For Evangelical ideology concerning women see Hall, "The Early Formation".

<sup>43</sup>Reginald Coupland remarks in his biography of Wilberforce that his wife "would seem to have attained the Periclean standard of womanly virtue", being neither dominating nor a political hostess but rather fostering a family life of peace and unity which was taken for granted by her family. (Reginald Coupland, Wilberforce. AS Narrative, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), p. 258.

part in cementing the close Evangelical social and family network.<sup>44</sup>

Some Evangelical women also gave financial support to abolition. The names of both Lady Middleton and Lydia Babington, wife of Evangelical M.P. for Leicester, Thomas Babington, are among the list of subscribers to the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1788.<sup>45</sup>

Female financial support for abolition has been ignored by historians of anti-slavery. In fact, it was quite substantial. The subscription list included the names of a total of two hundred and six women, comprising around 10% of total subscribers, and donating £363.3s.6d of the society's total income of £2760.2s.7d in 1787-8.<sup>46</sup>

The proportion of female subscribers was typical of philanthropic societies of the 1790-1810 period.<sup>47</sup> The predominance of male subscribers to the Abolition Society, as in these other groups, may be related both to the exclusion of women from decision-making committees and to women's lack of control of money. It is likely that many

---

<sup>44</sup>Ernest Marshall Howse, Saints in Politics: the "Clapham Sect" and the Growth of Freedom, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953). Rev. James Ramsay's daughters acted as secretaries for his abolition work (see letter from Ramsay to Thomas Clarkson, Teston, 6 Sept 1788 in "Clarksons Abolition of the Slave Trade: Illustrations", Vol. III (new numbering), p. 156).

<sup>45</sup>List of the Society, Instituted in 1787, for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, (London, 1788).

<sup>46</sup>List of the Society. This is the only surviving list of the Society. The proportion of female subscribers is a minimum estimate: the donations from eleven groups of General Baptists and from some eighty anonymous individuals doubtless conceal further female contributions.

<sup>47</sup>See Frank Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), Appendix I.

male subscriptions were made as "heads of household", representing their wives and children as well as themselves.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless there is evidence that some married women did subscribe to the Abolition Society in their own right. In fact, most female subscribers were married: only forty-four were definitely single.<sup>49</sup> Thus Frank Prochaska's observation that single women contributed more generously to philanthropy than married women does not seem applicable to the Abolition Society.<sup>50</sup> Another interesting characteristic of the female subscribers is that only about a quarter appear to have been related to male subscribers, suggesting that women frequently made the decision to support abolition independently of their male relatives.<sup>51</sup>

Identification of individual women from the subscription list is difficult. Where it is possible, however, it indicated that female subscribers came from similar backgrounds to the men. There is evidence for Quaker, Unitarian and Evangelical Anglican support.<sup>52</sup> The

---

<sup>48</sup>For women's lack of independent identity and property rights after marriage see Ray Strachey, The Cause, (reprint of 1st edition of 1928, London: Virago, 1978), p. 14-17.

<sup>49</sup>Though it should be borne in mind that many older single women adopted the courtesy title of Mrs (see Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy", p. 433).

<sup>50</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup>A woman with the same surname and town of residence as a male subscriber is taken to be related to the man.

<sup>52</sup>The following Quaker women can be identified: Sarah Dillwyn of Walthamstow (1751-1815) had come to England around 1774 with her husband William, who became a member of both Quaker and non-sectarian abolition committees and wrote an influential pamphlet against the slave trade; Hannah Gurney of Norwich was married to wealthy abolitionist and leading Quaker minister John Joseph Gurney; Catherine Fox of Falmouth (1751-1829) was an elder

standard annual subscription rate of one to five guineas suggests that subscribers were well-off middle-class men and women. While E. M. Hunt has found evidence of artisan involvement in local abolition committees in the north-east of England, the subscription rate was too high for large-scale working-class support.<sup>53</sup> In addition, few aristocrats subscribed, unwilling perhaps to support a society dominated by nonconformists, or inhibited by family involvements in the West Indies.<sup>54</sup>

Patterns of subscription in specific towns suggest that local abolition societies, which like the national society had exclusively male committees, differed widely in the extent to which they sought female support. The number of female subscribers varied from none at Leicester (where there were thirty-six male subscribers) to sixty-eight in

---

in the Society of Friends and the wife of George Croke Fox, a Falmouth merchant who toured Cornwall in 1788 to stimulate abolition petitions; Susanna Boone of Birmingham (1731-89) was a Quaker minister who was married to ironmonger George Boone (1730-85); Mary Arthington and Catherine Elam (1755-1831), both of Leeds; Ann Hirst of Farfield near Sheffield; Mrs Joseph Atkinson of Manchester; and Mary Hanbury of Stoke Newington. [Identification of Quaker women throughout this thesis is based on the multi-volume typescript "Dictionary of Quaker Biography" in Friends House Library, London]. Evangelical women are mentioned above, Unitarians in the discussion of Manchester which follows.

<sup>53</sup>E. M. Hunt, "The North of England Agitation for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1780-1800", MA dissertation, University of Manchester, 1959, chap. iv.

<sup>54</sup>Aristocratic women subscribers were Lady Hatton of Lanstanton and Dowager Countess Stanhope. For the rarity of titled subscribers and patrons of nonconformist philanthropic societies see Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy", p. 433. Lady Scarsdale, who aided leading abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, explained that she had decided that religious duties outweighed the risk of offending friends and relatives with West India interests. (see Clarkson, The History of the Rise, pp. 222, 235).

Manchester, where women made up nearly a quarter of the total of three hundred and two subscribers.<sup>55</sup>

Women's subscriptions in Manchester have been remarked upon by Hunt, but he has not attempted to explain their large number. In the following account, I will suggest an explanation based on women's relationship to those features of the Manchester Society singled out by Hunt and Seymour Drescher as distinguishing it from other local groups: namely, the prominence of Unitarians, radicals, and merchants on its committee.<sup>56</sup>

To begin with denominational factors. Many of the wives and daughters of the Unitarians who dominated the Manchester abolition committee subscribed to the society.<sup>57</sup> It may be suggested that Unitarian women, raised in a denomination which stressed freedom of thought, independence, individual autonomy, and the religious importance of ethical conduct by the individual, were encouraged, and felt motivated, to subscribe to the

---

<sup>55</sup>Other figures are 2 women among 100 subscribers at Birmingham, 12 among 264 at Sheffield, 9 among 73 in Bristol, 8 among 60 in Exeter, 3 among 53 in Leeds, 1 among 44 in Rotherham, and 9 among 63 in York (see List of the Society). Separate lists located for Nottingham show 16 women among 185 subscribers, and for Edinburgh 6 among 67 (see Nottingham Journal, 1 Mar 1788; Two of the Petitions from Scotland, Which Were Presented at the Last Parliament, Praying the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, (Edinburgh: Printed by order of the Society Established at Edinburgh, for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, 1790), p.12).

<sup>56</sup>E.M. Hunt, "The Anti-Slave Trade Agitation in Manchester", Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, no. 79 (1977), pp. 46-72; Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, pp. 67-73.

<sup>57</sup>The Bayleys. Rigbys, Grimshaws, Hardmans and Mathers were all members of the influential Unitarian congregation of Cross Street Chapel (see Sir Thomas Barker, Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel, (London, 1884). Thomas Cooper was also a nominal Unitarian, though the Walkers were Anglicans and the Atkinsons were Quakers.

Manchester society in their own right rather than letting their husbands or fathers act as their representatives.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, since Quakerism also gave women a considerable measure of equality, denominational factors seem insufficient in themselves to explain the greater female support at Manchester in comparison to towns with Quaker dominated abolition committees.

Another possible factor was the political radicalism of the Manchester committee, which was chaired by Thomas Walker, the president of the Manchester Constitutional Society, and had as secretary another leading member of the Consitutional Society, Samuel Jackson. These activists brought a radical approach to their anti-slavery work, and the Manchester abolition society led the transformation of abolition into a popular campaign mobilizing public opinion to put pressure on Parliament.<sup>59</sup> However, this did not necessitate the inclusion of women, given that radicalism at this period was male dominated.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup>For support of female education and women's rights by Unitarians see Raymond V. Holt, The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England, (2nd ed., London: Lindsey Press, 1952), pp. 147-155. For Unitarian stress on the autonomous individual and on independence see John Seed, "Gentlemen Dissenters: the Social and Political Meanings of Rational Dissent in the 1770's and 1780's", Historical Journal, Vol. XXVIII, no. 2 (1985), pp. 299-325, especially pp. 316-318.

<sup>59</sup>For the radicalism of the Manchester abolition committee see Hunt, Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, no. 79 (1977), pp. 46-72. For the political radicalism of Unitarians at this period see John Seed, "The Role of Unitarianism in the Formation of Liberal Culture, 1775-1851: A Social History", PhD thesis, University of Hull, 1981, chap. 2; for a study of radicalism in 1790's Manchester see James Walvin, "English Democratic Societies and Popular Radicalism, 1791-1800", PhD thesis, York University, 1969, pp. 605-702.

<sup>60</sup>See Edward Royle and James Walvin, English Radicals and Reformers, 1760-1848, (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), pp. 185-188 for a discussion of women and radicalism.

Socio-economic factors thus also need to be considered. Hunt's research into support for abolition in northern English towns suggests that other abolition committees tended to be dominated by clergymen and professionals rather than the merchants who dominated the Manchester committee and whose wives and daughters featured among the subscribers.<sup>61</sup> An examination of the nature of abolitionist appeals to women in Manchester suggests that certain characteristics of this elite's lifestyle and ideology encouraged them to seek female support for abolition.

Manchester abolitionists decided to publicly appeal for female aid as soon as they launched their public campaign. A long letter from "C" printed in the Manchester Mercury of 6th November 1787 is apparently the earliest instance of an appeal to British women to aid the abolition cause. Written at a time when radicals were increasingly using the press as stimulant for and vehicle of public opinion, its appearance is significant in itself in suggesting a recognition of women as a constituent of "public opinion".<sup>62</sup> A second public appeal to women was

---

<sup>61</sup>Mrs William Rigby, Mrs Grimshaw (nee Mary Holt) and Mrs Samuel Hardman (nee Urith Lowe), were merchants' wives; Mrs Walker's and Mrs Mather's husbands were cotton merchants; Mrs Aktinson was the wife of a hat manufacturer; and Mrs Cooper (d.1800) was married to a lawyer and natural philosopher.

<sup>62</sup>For the press and public opinion see J.A.W. Gunn, Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's U.P., 1983), chap. iii.

made in May 1792 in the context of a renewed appeal by radical abolitionists to public opinion.<sup>63</sup>

The writer of the 1787 appeal "publicly requested" the ladies of Manchester to take up a "publick Opportunity" for charitable work by adding their names to a published subscription list to help cover the cost of petitioning "for some Parliamentary interference in favour of the oppressed Africans".<sup>64</sup> Women's financial support was thus being sought for an activity, petitioning, from which they themselves were excluded.<sup>65</sup> Female charity was to aid male politics.

The Manchester petition, however, based its demands for action on the offensiveness of the slave traffic to humanity, justice, and national honour rather than on policy considerations.<sup>66</sup> This was to be the general ideological approach of abolitionists, and it was one which gave scope for female involvement:

If any public Interference will at any TIME become the Fair Sex; if Their Names are ever to be mentioned with Honour beyond the Boundaries of their Family, and the Circle of their Connections, it can only be, when a public Opportunity is given for the Exertion of those Qualities which are peculiarly expected in, and particularly possessed by that most amiable Part of the Creation - the

---

<sup>63</sup>Manchester Herald, 19 May 1792, in an article entitled "Slave Trade" by "B. C.". The Manchester Herald was set up March 1792 as a mouthpiece for Manchester radicals.

<sup>64</sup>Manchester Mercury, 6 Nov 1787.

<sup>65</sup>The 10,639 signatories to Manchester's abolition petition of December 1787 were all adult males (for the exclusion of women from petitioning in 1787-8 see Section 3 of this Chapter).

<sup>66</sup>See Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, p. 73.

Qualities of Humanity, Benevolence, and  
Compassion.<sup>67</sup>

Those moral qualities on which abolitionist commitment was based were thus seen as being especially "feminine" in nature.

The writer of the appeal went on to delineate the sufferings of the female slave and the violation of family life under slavery. Such aspects of slavery particularly shocked abolitionists, and were seen as necessitating and justifying female action against male brutality:

If it be just and right; if it be what Nature requires, and what Mankind expects, that Women should sympathize with Women; that if the Brutality of the Male should at any Time reverse in his Practice the Obligation of his Species, a Female may meet, from the Pity of her own Sex, that assistance which the Inhumanity of the other may deny.<sup>68</sup>

Women who were privileged themselves owed this to other less fortunate women:

Which of them, whom the kindness of Providence has blessed with even moderate Affluence, with the Attention of a Husband, and with the Smiles of a Family, can justify to her own Feelings, and her own Sense of the Duty she is under, the Omission of joining in support.

Abolition had the potential to

Relieve the Miseries of more Females, and Miseries more Extent, than any other charitable Institution which the Exertions of Benevolence have yet brought forward.

Female suffering under slavery was blamed not only on slave

---

<sup>67</sup>Manchester Mercury, 6 Nov 1787.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid. For the possibility that Manchester abolitionists, living in "a town of the uprooted", should be particularly concerned about loss of kin, home and community see Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, p. 72-3.

holders but also on "the Supineness and Indifference of Englishmen in this Country". In Manchester in particular:

If the Young Men, if the Husbands of Manchester are so much involved in the Cares of the World, in the Bustle of Trade, that the still small voice of pity cannot be listened to, it is the Duty, and I trust it will be the earnest Inclination of the Fair Sex, in this town at least, to remind them, that some Attention is due to the Humanity of our Commerce as well as to the Gains of it.

These statements are at first sight surprising in view of the evidence for the familial nature of support for abolition in Manchester. They can be explained as a tactic for enlisting female support through evoking a role for them as guardians of morality and ameliorators of the suffering caused by the uncaring pursuit of profit. A process may be discerned whereby the commercial elite of Manchester, able to use their wealth to accord their wives and daughters the status of leisured ladies, then encouraged them to devote themselves to charitable works, and idealised them as untainted by the corrupting influence of the market-place. As the wording of a special prologue to the tragedy of Oroonoko, spoken at the Manchester Theatre on November 28th 1787 put it:

Our better Hopes within this Circle Rest:  
Here Pity lives in ev'ry gentle Breast.  
Folly may scoff, or Avarice may hate,  
Since Beauty comes the Negroe's Advocate.  
Let others boast in Fashion's Pride to glow,  
To lure the Lover, or attract the Beau;  
You check Oppression's Lash, protect the Slave,  
And, First to charm, are still the First to save.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup>Manchester Mercury, 4 Dec, 1787.

It may be concluded that an environment conducive to female involvement in abolition in Manchester was created by the dominance of the committee by radical Unitarian merchants whose ideology in relation to abolition and gender provided scope for female participation in abolition.

The possible part played by women's own initiatives also needs to be considered. The organisation of a separate "lady's subscription" in Manchester, while possibly simply a male tactic for encouraging female support, could have been initiated by women themselves, and it seems likely that women would at least have privately canvassed their female acquaintances for support.<sup>70</sup> Positive evidence is, however, lacking.

What is clear is that women did give valuable financial support to the Manchester abolition society. This was publicly praised and described as representing "perhaps the most auspicious Occurrence in this Business, and certainly the most flattering to its Promoters here".<sup>71</sup> The praise was merited, given that women provided almost a quarter of the society's income in 1787-8, contributing to its ability to initiate the extra-Parliamentary campaign against the slave trade.

For women themselves, their inclusion as subscribers was important both to their recognition by others, and to their perception of themselves, as members of the "public" whose voluntary activities could advance a philanthropic cause. On the other hand, their exclusion from the

---

<sup>70</sup>For the "Lady's Subscription" see letter to Manchester Mercury, 11 Dec 1787.

<sup>71</sup>Letter published in Manchester Mercury, 11 Dec 1787.

committee and from signing the massive abolition petitions organised in the town marked their political marginalization and subordinate status in the movement.

### 3. The Popular Campaign: Lectures, Petitions and Pamphlets

This political marginalization is confirmed when the overall level of female contributions to petitioning, public speaking, and pamphleteering is examined.

In the first place, petitioning was an almost exclusively male activity. Of the many thousands of petitions against the slave trade which were presented to Parliament there is evidence that women signed only a handful. In 1788, as Seymour Drescher has pointed out, "even the most widely-signed petitions were confined to adult males" and "there was not even public speculation that women should sign petitions".<sup>72</sup> In 1792, however, a few petitions from town "inhabitants" were signed by women. At Belford in Northumberland it was reported of the abolition petition that: "Some of the 433 [signers] are Ladies, who were anxiously desirous to shew their abhorrence of this abominable trade".<sup>73</sup> There was also talk of the possibility of sending a separate female petition to Parliament. A suggestion for such a petition was contained in the Derby Mercury of 16th February 1792, and repeated in the York Courant of February 21st 1792 which stated:

It has been said that a Petition from the Ladies to Parliament, for an Abolition of the Slave-Trade, would have a good effect. The idea is certainly a proper one - for, as Female Misery is included in the wretched Allotment of the Africans, an Appeal

---

<sup>72</sup>Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, pp. 78, 85.

<sup>73</sup>Newcastle Courant, 3 Mar 1792.

in their Behalf from the same Sex must carry great Weight with it.

This suggestion was never put into practice, however, and other evidence confirms that it was not usual for women to sign abolition petitions in 1792. In a Northamptonshire parish, for example, women were grouped with paupers and illiterate labourers as those who were not permitted to sign.<sup>74</sup> During his anti-slavery tour of Scotland on behalf of the Abolition Society the Quaker William Dickson remarked with concern that in Dundee "by a mistaken zeal some boys and 3 women have been allowed to sign" a popular petition which had attracted two thousand signatures. His local contact had asserted that "there is scarce any preventing boys or at least improper people from signing."<sup>75</sup> This suggests that while a few women may have signed petitions, this was not considered desirable by the leadership of the Abolition Society. The Methodist minister, radical and abolitionist Samuel Bradburn also acknowledged that women could not sign petitions, though he personally disagreed with this policy.<sup>76</sup>

Women also rarely spoke out in public against the slave trade. In his extensive survey of newspaper reports of anti-slavery activity, Seymour Drescher has identified only two instances of women giving public lectures against the slave trade, both in London in 1788. The first was a

---

<sup>74</sup>Northampton Mercury, 24 and 30 March 1792.

<sup>75</sup>William Dickson, Diary of Visit to Scotland on Behalf of the London Abolition Committee, entry for Dundee, 25 Feb 1792. Temp. MSS. 10/4, Friends House Library, London.

<sup>76</sup>Samuel Bradburn, An Address to the People Called Methodists; Concerning the Evil of Encouraging the Slave Trade, (Manchester: T. Harper, 1792), p. 13. Samuel Bradburn (1751-1816) joined the Manchester abolition committee in 1792.

speech in favour of abolition at a weekly debate at the School of Eloquence in Panton Street, Haymarket. The admission fee was only 6d, and Donna Andrew's research suggests that such commercial debating societies attracted audiences of mixed sex and class.<sup>77</sup> Her speech was well received and "The Question was carried against the Slave Trade."<sup>78</sup> On the second occasion a "Lady of distinguished ability" opened a ladies only disussion at La Belle Assemblée, Rice's Rooms in Brewer Street, Golden Square, which was one of six or seven such women's debating societies in London at this period.<sup>79</sup> The 2s 6d admission charge suggests it was for a slightly better off audience than the School of Eloquence, and the debate was on whether ladies whose husbands were peers or members of parliament should try to influence them to support abolition.<sup>80</sup>

Such debating societies were an important public forum for debate on slavery by both men and women.<sup>81</sup> The two public addresses by women, while exceptional, are important as among the earliest examples of public speaking by women in Britain outside the context of religion. They occurred over thirty years before what the historian Jane Rendall has labelled the "unprecedented public lecturing" by

---

<sup>77</sup>Donna Andrew, "Women and Debating Societies in late Eighteenth Century London", seminar paper given at the Institute of Historical Research, London, 19 May 1989. Andrew contrasts these commercial debating clubs, frequently attended by some five hundred men and women, and discussing issues of love, marriage and women's roles as well as politics and morals, with the small private male radical clubs which met in London public houses at this period.

<sup>78</sup>Morning Herald, 27 Feb 1788.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Morning Chronicle, 7 April 1788.

<sup>81</sup>See p. 45 below for a debate at Coachmaker's Hall.

Owenite socialist women in the 1820's and 1830's.<sup>82</sup> Significantly, a conservative attack on debating clubs written in 1810 commented that discussions on the slave trade were "one of the earliest tricks to attract females to their indecent discussions".<sup>83</sup> Such evidence suggests that abolition had unusual power in impelling women to take public action.

Women also rarely wrote anti-slavery pamphlets and tracts, in contrast to the hundreds of published sermons and tracts by men. Some well-known female radical dissenters did, however, make statements of opposition to slavery and the slave trade in wider ranging political tracts and books.

The most notorious radical woman of the 1790's, Mary Wollstonecraft, included Thomas Cowper's abolitionist poem "On Slavery" and a quote from Anna Laetitia Barbauld on the sufferings of slave women in her 1789 educational anthology The Female Reader.<sup>84</sup> She also included an anti-slavery

<sup>82</sup>Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), p. 224.

<sup>83</sup>A Warning to the Frequenters of Debating Clubs, Being a Short History of the Rise and Progress of Those Clubs, (London, 1810), p. 3, cited in Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, chap. iv, n. 44.

<sup>84</sup>Mr Cresswick [Mary Wollstonecraft], The Female Reader, (London: J. Johnson, 1789), pp. 171, 321. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was the daughter of Edward John Wollstonecraft, an unsuccessful English farmer, and his wife Elizabeth Dickson of Ballyshannon in Ireland. She worked as a lady's companion and a governess then settled in London where she began to work as a writer. She became a member of the radical dissenting circle around Dr Price at Newington Green and travelled to Paris in 1792 to witness the French Revolution at first hand. There she met Gilbert Imlay, by whom she had an illegitimate child. She married leading radical William Godwin in 1797 but soon after died in childbirth. (Claire Tomalin, The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974)).

message in A Vindication of the Rights of Men, written in 1790 as a reply to Edmund Burke's conservative Reflections on the Revolution in France. In her book, published before Thomas Paines' more famous work, Wollstonecraft expounded the doctrine of natural rights, to which the institution of slavery was posed as a complete antithesis. Slave traffic, she asserted, "outrages every suggestion of reason and religion" and is a "stigma on our nature". The security of property should no longer be the highest principle of society. Rather, all men should be "allowed to enjoy their birthright - liberty." She asked: "is it not consonant with justice, with the common principles of humanity, not to mention Christianity, to abolish this abominable traffic."<sup>85</sup>

Wollstonecraft's friend Helen Maria Williams, another leading radical, included a long digressory passage in support of abolition in her Letters on the French Revolution.<sup>86</sup> In this she praised Mirabeau for proposing to the National Assembly that they abolish the slave trade. She hoped, however, that England would not wait for France to take a lead, for:

I trust an English House of Commons will never persist in thinking, that what is morally wrong, can ever be politically right; that the virtue and

---

<sup>85</sup>Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke: Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France (2nd ed., London: J. Johnson, 1790), pp. 24, 128, 129-30.

<sup>86</sup>Helen Maria Williams (1762?-1827), daughter of an army officer, began her career as an author of imaginative and polemical works in 1782, becoming a member of Elizabeth Montagu's literary circle. She soon joined the radical circle around Price, Priestley and Godwin and between 1790 and 1793 she made frequent visits to France, setting up a salon in Paris which was frequented by Girondins. In 1794 she moved to Switzerland to live with her married lover, John Hurtford Stone.

the prosperity of a people are things at variance with each other; and that a country which abounds with so many sources of wealth, cannot afford to close one polluted channel, which is stained with the blood of our fellow-creatures.<sup>87</sup>

Williams' view of anti-slavery as an attempt to moralize both commerce and politics resembled the appeal to women in Manchester to get involved in the abolition campaign.

Exhibiting the optimism in human progress felt by British radicals at the beginning of the French Revolution, Williams expressed her belief that "this system of inhumanity" would soon be abolished:

Europe seems hastening towards a period too enlightened for the perpetuation of such monstrous abuses. The mists of ignorance and error are falling away, and the benign beams of philosophy are spreading their lustre over the nations.<sup>88</sup>

A similarly optimistic note was sounded by Unitarian radical Anna Laetitia Barbauld in An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts (1790), an argument for full religious freedom for dissenters.<sup>89</sup> With the triumph of freedom in France she

---

<sup>87</sup>Helen Maria Williams, Letters on the French Revolution, Written in France, in the Summer of 1790, to a Friend in England: Containing Various Notices Relative to That Interesting Event, and Memoirs of Mons. and Madame Du F--, (1st American ed., Boston: J. Belknap and A. Young, 1791), p. 33.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825), daughter of Unitarian educationalist the Rev. John Aikin, married a Unitarian minister and helped him run a boys' school until forced to separate from him due to his insanity. She wrote several very popular children's books as critical editions of eighteenth century authors as well as works of religious and political controversy. She had contacts with the "Bluestockings" and leading Romantic writers like Scott and Wordsworth and radical dissenters including Priestley. (Anna Letitia Le Breton, Memoir of Mrs Barbauld, Including Letters and Notices of her Family and Friends, (London: Bell, 1874)).

felt that liberty now "even extends a smile of hope and promise to the poor African, the victim of hard, impenetrable avarice."<sup>90</sup>

Such expressions of opposition to slavery as an integral element of support for the "rights of man" were on similar lines to the writings of male supporters of the French Revolution. Mary Wollstonecraft, however, extended the boundaries of this debate by making use of the rhetoric of the abolition movement in her analysis of the oppression of British women. In A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792) she described women as "the most oppressed half of the species", few of whom had ever "emancipated themselves from the galling yoke of sovereign man". She asserted that:

Liberty is the mother of Virtue, and if women be, by their very constitution, slaves, and not allowed to breathe the sharp invigorating air of freedom, they must ever languish like exotics.<sup>91</sup>

This analysis of the nature of women's oppression affected Wollstonecraft's views on how women should exert a good influence on society as a whole. She argued that women should develop a rational humanity founded on knowledge, rather than be "slaves" to their senses.<sup>92</sup> She considered the currently fashionable feminine sensibility to be unstable and unreliable because it was based on emotion rather than reason.<sup>93</sup> In the absence of

---

<sup>90</sup>A Dissenter [Anna Laetitia Barbauld], An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, (2nd ed., London: J. Johnson, 1790), p. 33.

<sup>91</sup>Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Women, pp. 35, 37.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 192

understanding, female influence was harmful rather than beneficial to society:

When I call women slaves, I mean in a political and civil sense; for, indirectly, they obtain too much power, and are debased by their exertions to obtain illicit sway.<sup>94</sup>

Wollstonecraft was not the first British woman to make analogies between the position of women and that of slaves.<sup>95</sup> But in her Vindication, written at the height of the popular abolition campaign, the analogy was transformed from a personal complaint into a public call for action to bring about change. If women were to help slaves, Wollstonecraft implied, they must first be freed themselves.

#### 4. The Popular Campaign: Imaginative Literature as Propaganda

Though women abolitionists rarely wrote tracts or pamphlets they nevertheless made an important contribution to anti-slavery propaganda through the medium of imaginative literature. A survey of Peter Hogg's bibliography of anti-slavery literature makes this clear: the absence of pamphlets by women contrasts with the female authorship of around 25% of the listed British and Irish anti-slavery poems and tales.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>95</sup>For early eighteenth century examples see Katherine M. Rogers, Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England, (Brighton: Harvester, 1982). For a discussion of the significance of early use of the analogy see Moira Ferguson, ed., First Feminists, (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1985), p. xii.

<sup>96</sup>This percentage estimate is based on the list of imaginative literature in Peter C. Hogg, The African Slave Trade and Its Suppression: a Classified and Annotated Bibliography, (London: Frank Cass, 1793), taking into

A number of detailed studies of imaginative literature about Africans and slavery have been made by literary historians.<sup>97</sup> Studies of racial ideology have provided the basis for setting imaginative literature in the context of other writings about Africans.<sup>98</sup> In addition, the specific importance of the works as abolitionist propoganda, stressed by Thomas Clarkson in his early history of the campaign, has been confirmed in studies by Roger Anstey and David Brion Davis.<sup>99</sup> These studies, however, even when they discuss works by women, do not try to define the specifics of women's contribution, and it is on this that

---

account only those works for which the sex of the writer is known.

<sup>97</sup>Eva B. Dykes, The Negro in English Romantic Thought, or a Study in Sympathy for the Oppressed, (Washington: Associated Publishers, 1942) makes no attempt to distinguish anti-slavery works from works about blacks which lack an abolitionist perspective. Wylie Sypher, Guinea's Captive Kings: British Anti-Slavery Literature in the Eighteenth Century, (reprint of original 1942 ed., New York: Octagon, 1969) has a clearer focus. Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism, (New York: Columbia U.P., 1928) covers works about native Americans and South Sea Islanders as well as Africans. Victor Casco Dinani Mtubani, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in English Poetry to 1833", PhD thesis, Univeristy of Exeter, 1980 is a useful examination of the poetry as both literature and propaganda.

<sup>98</sup>Philip D. Curtin, The Image of Africa. British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850, (London: Macmillan, 1965), chap. ii, and Anthony J. Barker, The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1550-1807, (London: Frank Cass, 1978), chap. ii. Both show that the "noble savage" was a literary convention drawn from European thought without concern for the empirical evidence about Africa which was widely available by the late eighteenth century.

<sup>99</sup>Clarkson, The History of the Rise, chap. iii stresses the important contribution of William Cowper's poetry to the abolition campaign. Anstey, The Atlantic Slave Trade, chap. vi, examines anti-slavery values in literature; Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution includes a lengthy analysis of Cowper's poem "Charity" as "a paradigm of early British antislavery thought" (pp. 368-73).

this section focusses.<sup>100</sup> Rather than attempting to analyse specific works in detail, I will investigate the ways in which women used imaginative literature as a medium for abolitionist propaganda, and suggest why they chose this medium.

The heyday of imaginative literature about slavery was in the 1787-92 period, at the height of the popular campaign against the slave trade, and it can be interpreted as part of the appeal made to public opinion at this time.<sup>101</sup> Poems about slavery were circulated by abolition societies and were widely published in the newspapers which reported abolitionist campaigns, as well as in literary, denominational and women's periodicals.<sup>102</sup>

Women saw imaginative literature as a particularly good way of appealing to a wide public. Lady Harriet Hesketh suggested to her cousin Cowper that he write some songs on the slave trade "as the surest way of reaching the public ear".<sup>103</sup> Hannah More wrote to Lady Middleton suggesting that they persuade the manager of the Drury Lane

---

<sup>100</sup>Dykes has a section on "some women abolitionists" (The Negro in English Romantic Thought, chap. vi) but does not specify why she separates out women's writing in this way.

<sup>101</sup>See Mtubani, "Slavery and the Slave Trade", pp. 344,345.

<sup>102</sup>the leading Evangelical poet William Cowper (1731-1800) had his poem The Negro's Complaint included in a 1788 publication of the Edinburgh Abolition Society, and his Pity for Poor Africans was reprinted and widely disseminated by the Abolition Society in London. William Roscoe (1753-1831), a leading Liverpool abolitionist, donated the profits of his poem The Wrongs of Africa (1787) to the Abolition Society. For abolition poems in women's magazines see poems by Gratia Williams in New Lady's Magazine, Vol. II (Sept 1787), p. 473 and Vol. III (May 1788), pp. 267-8, and verse by men in the Lady's Magazine, Vols. XXI (1790) and XXIII (1792).

<sup>103</sup>Lady Harriet Hesketh (1753-1807) was daughter of Ashley Cowper, clerk of Parliaments, and wife of Thomas Hesketh, baronet, of Rufford, Lancs.

Theatre, with whom More had close contacts, to put on Oroonoko as a way of reaching three thousand people a night with an anti-slavery message.<sup>104</sup> More herself wrote Slavery: A Poem in 1788 explicitly as propaganda to aid Wilberforce at his opening of the parliamentary campaign against the slave trade.<sup>105</sup> She commented to her sister: "I grieve that I did not set about it sooner; as it must now be done in such a hurry .... but good or bad, if it does not come out at the particular moment when the discussion comes on in Parliament, it will not be worth a straw."<sup>106</sup>

Other women, amateur and professional writers, Evangelicals and dissenters, conservatives and radicals, mainly middle-but also upper-and working-class, joined More in calling on Britain to take action against the slave trade. A poem "On the Slave Trade by a Young Lady at School", printed in the Manchester Mercury, pointed out the duty of British Christians to help their brethren, the Negro slaves, and to "rescue Afric' from oppression's laws."<sup>107</sup> A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade (1788) by Ann Yearsley, a working-class Bristol woman, pleaded with the leading inhabitants of the city to end its

---

<sup>104</sup>Letter from Hannah More to Lady Middleton, Cowslip Green, 10 Sept [1788?], Chatterton, Memorials, p. 169. Possibly as the result of More's suggestion, the play was performed at Drury Lane in 1789 (review of the play in the Times, 2 Nov 2, 1789).

<sup>105</sup>Hannah More, Slavery, a Poem, (London: T. Cadell, 1788). The poem was reprinted under the title "The Slave Trade: A Poem" in The Works of Hannah More, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1801).

<sup>106</sup>Roberts (ed.), Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 97.

<sup>107</sup>Manchester Mercury, 4 March 1788.

heavy involvement in the slave trade.<sup>108</sup> Irish Quaker teacher Mary Leadbeater's poem The Negro. Addressed to Edmund Burke (1789) appealed to the conservative politician as "freedom's firm friend" to make slavery illegal.<sup>109</sup> Radical writer Helen Maria William's Poem on the Bill Lately Passed for Regulating the Slave Trade (1788) praised the Act but urged the government to go further to give full freedom.<sup>110</sup> Unitarian radical educationalist Anna Laetitia Barbauld's Epistle to William Wilberforce Esq. (1788) praised Wilberforce's efforts but attacked the nation as a whole for failing to abolish the trade.<sup>111</sup> Irish Quaker Mary Birkett's Poem on the African Slave Trade. Addressed to Her Own Sex (1792) appealed specifically to women to join in the abolition campaign.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup>Ann Yearsley, A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade. Humbly Inscribed to the Right Honorable and Right Reverend Frederick, Earl of Bristol, Bishop of Derby, etc, etc. (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, [1788]). Ann Yearsley (1752-1806), known as the "milkwoman of Bristol", was a working class woman whose poetic talent was discovered by Hannah More. She gained the patronage of literary hostess Mrs Montague and enjoyed a few years of great popularity, writing in a style designed to appeal to the middle and upper classes. More's patronising attitudes towards her, however, led to public arguments over the control of the income from her writing.

<sup>109</sup>Mary Leadbeater, Poems, (Dublin: Martin Keene, 1808), p. 88. Leadbeater (1758-1826) of Ballymore, County Kildare also wrote a series of moral tales for Irish peasants, comparable to Hannah More's Cheap Repository Tracts. She and her father corresponded with Burke. Around 1826 she became involved in the slave emancipation campaign.

<sup>110</sup>Helen Maria Williams, A Poem on the Bill Lately Passed for Regulating the Slave Trade, (London: T. Cadell, 1788), p. 23.

<sup>111</sup>Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade, (London: J. Johnson, 1791).

<sup>112</sup>Mary Birkett, A Poem on the African Slave Trade. Addressed to Her Own Sex, (Dublin: J. Jones, 1792).

Other literary works by women were less obviously campaigning in intent but also stressed the sufferings of black people under slavery and contrasted this with a romantic and idealised view of the life of the "noble savage" in an African Eden. A typical example in this genre is Eliza Knipe's narrative poem Atombaka and Omaza: An African Story (1787), the tale of a young African warrior chief and his lover, their bravery in battle, capture by the enemy and sale to slavetraders. On board ship, rather than face a life enslaved, they throw themselves, "clasp'd in a fond embrace", into the sea and drown.<sup>113</sup>

While such tales of romantic love were potentially important in combating pro-slavery stereotypes of black men and women's animal sexuality and licentiousness, the effectiveness of such tales as anti-slavery propaganda depended on the context in which they were written.<sup>114</sup> The earliest work of this kind, Aphra Behn's novel Oroonoko, was written in 1688 and, while justly described as the first anti-slavery work in Britain, its evocation of sympathy for the sufferings of black slaves had no discernible political impact.<sup>115</sup> In contrast, similar works produced from the 1770's onwards were stimulated by the growing anti-slavery campaign and in turn fostered

---

<sup>113</sup>Eliza Knipe, Six Narrative Poems, (London: printed for the author, 1787), pp. 51-60.

<sup>114</sup>For the role of the tales in combating such stereotypes see Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, pp. 468-470.

<sup>115</sup>Aphra Behn, Oroonoko: or the Royal Slave; a True History, (London: Canning, 1688). Aphra Behn (1640-89), possibly the first professional woman writer in England, was a Tory in politics who wrote plays, poetry and prose during the Restoration period.

anti-slavery sentiment. Oroonoko itself, which had been transformed into dramatic form by Thomas Southerne in 1696 and had become an extremely popular play during the 18th century, was recognised as valuable propaganda by abolitionists in the 1780's, and was performed in Manchester and London with the addition of anti-slavery prologues.<sup>116</sup>

There are no obvious differences between abolitionist verse and tales written by men and those by women, and indeed both men like Cowper and women like Behn and More were involved in creating the conventions of the genre. Nevertheless it is clear that certain characteristics of the medium of imaginative literature encouraged women to select it rather than the tract as a vehicle for anti-slavery propaganda.

Most importantly, women felt comfortable with the genre. Women had a literary tradition stretching back to Aphra Behn, but lacked a comparable tradition of writing political pamphlets. Imaginative writing by women was encouraged from the mid-eighteenth century by the simultaneous growth of a literary cult of romantic sentimentalism and of a middle class evangelical ideology stressing women's role as the heart of the family. In view of the evidence for the cult of the "man of feeling" at this period, it is perhaps an over-simplification to suggest, as Katherine Rogers does, that the moral ideal in such literature was one considered "feminine".<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup>Manchester Mercury, 4 Dec 1789; Times, 2 Nov 1789.

<sup>117</sup>Katherine M. Rogers, Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England, (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), chap. iv (quote from p. 120).

Nevertheless, it is clear that women like Hannah More played an important part in linking evangelical ideas about feminine sensitivity to the literary cult of sentimentalism.<sup>118</sup> More's poem Slavery (1788), which includes the lines

From head to hearts lies Nature's plain appeal,  
Though few can reason, all mankind can feel.<sup>119</sup>

was praised in the Monthly Review in these terms: "The chief excellence of this poem consists in its pathetic appeal to our feelings, in behalf of our sable fellow-creatures."<sup>120</sup>

Imaginative literature was seen as an appropriate way of appealing to feminine sensitivity in both a private domestic and a public social setting. The Abolition Society had Cowper's poem Pity the Poor Africans reprinted on fine quality paper and distributed in thousands with the superscription, "A Subject for Conversation at the Tea-Table", suggesting its suitability for discussion among women in the home. The dramatic version of Oroonoko was performed in Manchester in 1787 with an anti-slavery prologue was specifically addressed at women.<sup>121</sup>

The few specific poetic appeals to women to support abolition stressed feminine sensitivity and influence. In An Appeal to England, on Behalf of the Abused Africans

<sup>118</sup>For More's views of feminine sensitivity see Hannah More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, With a View to the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune, Vols. VII and VIII of The Works of Hannah More. This work is discussed in Section 6 below.

<sup>119</sup>Hannah More, Slavery: a Poem, (London: T. Cadell, 1788), verse 13, lines 3, 4 (p. 11).

<sup>120</sup>Monthly Review, Vol. LXXVIII (1788), p. 246.

<sup>121</sup>Manchester Mercury, 4 Dec 1787.

(1789) the Irish Quaker Thomas Wilkinson successively addressed himself to clergy, colleges, "free and favour'd Britons", "House august", "Senators" and king, and then appealed to the tenderness of women:

Ye British Dames! whose tender bosoms know  
 To melt with pity o'er the couch of woe:  
 How must your hearts commiserate his woes,  
 Whose lot nor home, nor couch, nor country knows!  
 These sacred rights he never must regain,  
 Oh plead for such! - you seldom plead in vain.<sup>122</sup>

Similarly Irish Catholic abolitionist James Field Stanfield's poem The Guinea Voyage (1789) called on women in these terms:

A nation's councils oft your pow'r obey;  
 The wars of nations own your sov'reign sway  
 .....  
 When beauty lifts her eye in Mis'ry's cause,  
 Compassion wakes, and follows with applause.<sup>123</sup>

The anonymous The Negro Mother's Petition to the Ladies' of Bristol, a campaign poster in the form of a poem, was produced by Edward Protheroe, who stood as parliamentary candidate for Bristol on an anti-slave trade platform in 1788. It was in the form of an appeal from a black woman to the women of Bristol, imploring them to "tink on" suffering slaves, to tell their husbands, fathers and brothers about their plight, and to urge them to vote for

---

<sup>122</sup>Thomas Wilkinson, An Appeal to England, in Behalf of the Abused Africans. A Poem, (Dublin: sold by R. Jackson & W. Sleaton, 1792), verse 35 (p. 20). Wilkinson was a friend of Thomas Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

<sup>123</sup>James Field Stanfield, The Guinea Voyage. A Poem in Three Books, (London: James Phillips, 1789), Book 3, verse 15 (p. 33). James Field Stanfield (d. 1824) an actor and author, was converted to abolition through his experience of working on a slaving ship. He became a friend of leading abolitionist Thomas Clarkson.

"massa PRODEROE", the abolitionist candidate, in the election to "de house call Parliament".<sup>124</sup>

Only one poem has been identified which was written by a woman and directed specifically at her own sex. Irish Quaker Mary Birkett's Poem on the African Slave Trade appealed to "Hibernian fair, who own compassions sway" to join in the abolition campaign:

For Mercy's softest beams to you belong;  
To you the sympathetic is known,  
And Charity's sweet lustre - all your own;  
To you gall'd Mis'ry seldom pleads in vain,  
Oh, let us rise and burst the Negro's chain!<sup>125</sup>

The poem continued with a call for women to exert their influence:

Say not - no power of your's so far extends,  
These are your brothers, husbands, sons, or friends,  
. . . . .  
Will these reject your small, your just request,  
When urg'd with meekness - yet with warmth exprest?<sup>126</sup>

Katherine Rogers has written that in the late eighteenth century women writers were expected to write in a "feminine" way, demonstrating delicacy of feeling, dealing with emotional distress rather than political problems, and abstaining from radical social criticism and political discussion.<sup>127</sup> My brief survey of abolitionist verse and tales, however, has demonstrated that women of varying political and religious convictions found a way to voice social and political criticism through the acceptably

---

<sup>124</sup>Protheroe poster, p. 179, MS Letterpress Book, I, Fuller Papers, Duke University Library, as quoted in Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, chap. 9.

<sup>125</sup>Birkett, Poem on the African Slave Trade, Part I, verse 26, lines 4 - 8 (p. 13).

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., Part II, verse 20, lines 15-16, 21-22 (pp. 21-22).

<sup>127</sup>Rogers, Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England, p. 170.

"feminine" means of poetic sentiment and appeals to the emotions. By themselves, such sentimental appeals could lead to a selfish obsession with the reader's sensibility rather than action to relieve black suffering.<sup>128</sup> As a complement to men's tracts and pamphlets, however, they could, as D. B. Davis has pointed out, give "a directness and emotional intensity to rational arguments that had long been ignored."<sup>129</sup>

##### 5. The Popular Campaign: Abstention

Mary Birkett's poem not only appealed to women to exert their influence on men: it also urged them to take action themselves by joining in the boycott of slave-grown sugar. Seymour Drescher and Kenneth Corfield have rightly drawn attention to the importance of abstention in bringing women into the abolition campaign, and in this Section I will examine women's involvement in the campaign in some detail.<sup>130</sup> I will put forward evidence that the issue was from the first seen as one of particular concern to women, and suggest the reasons why this was the case. I will then look at the level of female involvement in abstention, and its significance both in terms of the campaign's effectiveness and in terms of women's own social position.

The high-point of the abstention campaign was in late 1791 and early 1792, when Birkett wrote her poetic appeal,

---

<sup>128</sup>See Mtubani, "Slavery and the Slave Trade", pp. 118-120.

<sup>129</sup>Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, p. 481.

<sup>130</sup>Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, pp. 78-79; Kenneth Allan Corfield, "English Abolitionists and the Refusal of Slave-Grown Goods, 1780-1860", MA dissertation, University of London, 1983, p. iv.

but there is earlier evidence of interest in the question. These early references suggest that from the first the campaign was seen as an issue of relevance to women, and that it was in practice one in which women participated. Abstention originated with a few American Quakers, and Kenneth Corfield has drawn attention to the support which John Woolman gained during his 1772 visit to England from Sarah Rathbone, daughter of Quaker merchant William Rathbone of Liverpool.<sup>131</sup> The obituary of Quaker anti-slavery campaigner Rachel Lloyd stated that her joining the sugar boycott at around the age of fifteen - i.e. in about 1783 - marked her entry into anti-slavery campaigning.<sup>132</sup> In Manchester, the 1787 public appeal to women to support abolition included an attack on Englishmen who made abolition "the Sport of the Tea-table, partly furnished at the expense of Transactions like these."<sup>133</sup> On May 21st 1788 the anti-abolitionist Liverpool General Advertiser printed an article in the form of a letter purporting to be from the daughter of one of the members of the radical Manchester Committee, complaining that her father would not allow her to use any West Indian commodities. In addition,

---

<sup>131</sup>Kenneth Allan Corfield, "English Abolitionists and the Refusal of Slave-Grown Goods 1780-1860", MA dissertation, University of London, 1983, p. 3 (based on information in Henry J. Cadbury, John Woolman in England, 1772, (Friends' Historical Society, London, 1971), p. 132).

<sup>132</sup>See her obituary in The Twenty-Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, and Their Respective Neighbourhoods, Established 1825, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1854), p. 19. Rachel Lloyd (1768-1854) was the daughter of George and Deborah Braithwaite of Kendal in Cumberland. She married around 1792 to Samuel Lloyd Senior of Farm near Birmingham, a member of the Quaker banking family. She was an activist in the women's anti-slavery society at Birmingham from 1825 until her death.

<sup>133</sup>Manchester Mercury, 6 Nov 1792.

early discussion of abstention among Evangelical Anglican women is suggested by a letter to Hannah More in February of 1788 from the Bishop of Norwich, Dr G. Horne, who said he was afraid to acquaint his wife with More's poem Slavery since it might "be the occasion of withdrawing one lump and diminishing the other."<sup>134</sup>

Why then was abstention seen as a particularly female concern? In the first place, it is clear from pamphlets such as the Baptist William Fox's An Address to the People of Great Britain, which launched the public abstention campaign in 1791, that the public campaign to encourage abstention got underway in response to frustration at the failure of petitioning by men to persuade Parliament to put a stop to the slave trade. If the government would not take action, Fox argued, then people must bring about the end of the slave trade themselves through putting economic pressure on planters and slave-traders to change over to a system of free labour and trade in free-grown produce.<sup>133</sup>

The disillusionment with petitioning, a campaign method from which women were largely excluded, led to an increasing focus on abstention, a campaign in which women could participate. Methodist Samuel Bradburn's Address to the People Called Methodists explicitly included the female half of the denomination in his appeal for a boycott of

---

<sup>134</sup>Letter from George Horne to Hannah More, Magdalen College, 13 Feb 1788, quoted in Roberts (ed.), Memoirs, p. 105. George Horne (1730-1792) was married in about 1769 to the daughter of Philip Burton of Eltham.

<sup>133</sup>William Fox, An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Abstaining from West Indian Sugar and Rum, (25th ed., London: M. Gurney, n.d.). William Fox (1736-1826) of Clapton near London was the founder of the Sunday School Society, a treasurer from 1797 of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, and a friend of both Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce.

sugar and rum as one element of a popular campaign against the slave trade.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, an advertisement for a meeting in Coachmaker's Hall in London on 12th January 1792, acknowledged that abstention was a campaigning tactic which "had been resolved upon by women as well as men". The speaker William Allen, a Quaker member of the Abolition Committee, couched his appeal "to the justice and humanity of both sexes", emphasising that all could participate in the boycott and concluding by making an especial appeal to women.<sup>135</sup>

The inclusion of women in appeals by Quakers like Allen was related to Quaker emphasis on the individual guilt of supporting slavery through consumption of slave grown goods, and individual responsibility to abstain was tied to their belief in the importance of following the dictates of one's conscience.<sup>136</sup> It clearly placed an equal responsibility on women and men. In Sheffield, where Quakers led the abstention campaign, a public appeal to women to replace West Indian produce by "food unstain'd with unoffending blood" appeared in the Sheffield Register in 1791.<sup>137</sup> The anonymous male author's "Lines, Humbly Addressed to the Fair Sex", were printed above a letter

---

<sup>134</sup>Samuel Bradburn, An Address to the People Called Methodists; Concerning the Evil of Encouraging the Slave Trade, (Manchester: T. Harper), pp. 12-18.

<sup>135</sup>Woodfall's Diary, 5 Jan 1792.

<sup>136</sup>For Quakers and abstention see Ruth Ketring Nuernberger, The Free Produce Movement. A Quaker Protest Against Slavery, (Durham: Duke U.P., 1942), which focusses on the American movement.

<sup>137</sup>Sheffield Register, 16 Dec 1791. For the Quaker campaign see Sheffield Register, 11 Nov 1791; Sheffield Advertiser, 27 Jan 1792.

defending the sugar and rum boycott. Slaves could be restored to liberty, the writer argued:

If you, ye Fair (who long, too long, have been  
With us, sad partners, in the sinful act,  
And caus'd the tyrants to prolong the scene)  
Will join to end the tragic, mournful fact.<sup>138</sup>

Similarly, Quaker Mary Birkett's 1792 poetic appeal to Irish women urged them to follow the example of their English sisters in abstaining from slave produce, both as a way of freeing them from guilt and as a way of advancing abolition:

Yes, sisters, to us the task belongs,  
'Tis we increase or mitigate their wrongs.  
If we the produce of their toils refuse,  
If we no more the blood-stain'd lux'ry choose;  
.....  
And in our brethrens sufferings hold no share,  
In no small part their long-borne pangs will cease,  
And we to souls unborn may whisper peace.<sup>139</sup>

Women's actions, Birkett claimed, could and did have some effect:

Say not that small's the sphere in which we move,  
And our attempts would vain and fruitless prove;  
Not so - we hold a most important share,  
In all the evils - all the wrongs they bear;  
And tho' their woes entire we can't remove,  
We may th' increasing mis'ries which they prove,  
Push far the plant for which they die,<sup>140</sup>

To these general assertions of women's similar responsibilities to men and their ability to participate in the boycott was added the recognition that women held the responsibility for household purchases and made the decisions about family consumption. They were thus in the position to actually take the lead in the abstention

<sup>138</sup>Verse 7 of "Lines, Humbly Addressed to the Fair Sex", Sheffield Register, 16 Dec 1791.

<sup>139</sup>Birkett, A Poem on the African Slave Trade, Part I, verse 26, lines 9-13, 18-20 (pp. 13-14).

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., Part I, vese 31, lines 1-7, (p. 15) (emphasis in original).

campaign. In a letter which appeared in the Newcastle Courant in 1792 its writer, "Humanus", described women as making decisions on household consumption:

Happening lately to be sometime from home, the females in my family had in my absence perused a pamphlet, entitled "An Address to the People of Great Britain on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum". On my return, I was surprised to find that they had entirely left off the use of Sugar, and banished it from the tea table.<sup>141</sup>

This decision-making role was also acknowledged in An Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York (1792), which urged the duchess to proscribe sugar from her own household.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, in Gillray's cartoon "ANTI-SACCHARITES,-or- JOHN BULL and his Family leaving off the use of SUGAR" (1792) Queen Charlotte is shown as the instigator of abstention from sugar in the royal family, for reasons both of economy and to save "the poor Blackeemoors" from work.<sup>143</sup>

It was recognised not simply that women were able to take the lead in the abstention campaign, but also that their participation was essential to its success. A

---

<sup>141</sup>Newcastle Courant, 7 Jan 1792.

<sup>142</sup>An Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York, Against the Use of Sugar (n.p., 1792). Princess Frederica Charlotte Ulrica Catherina, Duchess of York (1767-1820) was the daughter of William II of Prussia. Her marriage to the Duke of York in 1791 was greeted with public enthusiasm, but the couple soon separated.

<sup>143</sup>The cartoon, the original of which is in the British Museum, is listed as no. 8074 in Mary Dorothy George, Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Vol. VI (London, British Museum Publications, 1978). Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz married George III (1738-1820) in 1761, the year after he ascended the throne. The couple had nine sons and six daughters.

newspaper report of sugar abstention in Biggleswade and Lincoln concluded:

City meetings might make resolutions upon resolutions in such a business to little purpose indeed, unless we first gain over our wives and daughters.<sup>144</sup>

This report included the information that in Lincoln "a party of oeconomical and public-spirited ladies" had undertaken to forward a house to house canvass to gain signatures to an agreement not to use sugar. While this was on account of its high price rather than for humanitarian reasons the report is of interest in indicating that women sometimes organised abstention from sugar on a community as well as an individual household basis.

Aristocratic women were appealed to not only as individual consumers but also appealed to as the leaders of fashions in consumer items.<sup>145</sup> The writer of An Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York (1792) requested the duchess to place herself at the head of the body of people who had stopped using sugar. The writer hoped that the king and queen would follow suit, and that the scheme would spread though the nobility and gentry to the middling orders and then through Europe, fired by her example.

The role of women as leaders of fashion was also exploited by Josiah Wedgwood, manufacturer of the famous jasper cameo depicting a black slave with the motto "Am I

---

<sup>144</sup>Chester Chronicle, 2 Dec 1791.

<sup>145</sup>For aristocratic women's role as leaders of fashion in the context of the "consumer revolution" of the period see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England, (London: Europa, 1982), especially pp. 119, 142.

not a man and a brother?" Wedgwood produced these cameos from 1787 onwards and they became widely adopted for decorating men's snuff boxes and ladies' bracelets and hairpins.<sup>146</sup> In his diary of his 1792 tour of Scotland on behalf of the Abolition Society William Dickson noted that he presented the gentlemen with whom he stayed with abolition pamphlets, their wives and daughters with cameos.<sup>147</sup> The abolitionist Thomas Clarkson later recalled: "At length the taste for wearing them became general; and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity, and freedom."<sup>148</sup> Clarkson's point about the harnessing of consumerism to political ends could equally be applied to the abstention movement.

Campaigners for abstention also appealed to women's supposed sensitivity and their influence over men. William Allen, in his 1792 speech to a public debating society in London, addressed women thus:

In THEM 'tis graceful to DISSOLVE AT WOE,  
And from the SMALLEST VIOLENCE to shrink!

They are universally considered as the MODELS of every just and virtuous sentiment - and we naturally look up to them as PATERNS [sic] in all the softer virtues. Their EXAMPLE, therefore, in ABSTAINING FROM THE USE OF WEST INDIA PRODUCE--- must silence every murmur ---- must refute every

---

<sup>146</sup>For Wedgwood's exploitation of public events for commercial ends and his explicit targeting of fashionable women as clients see Ibid., chap. iii.

<sup>147</sup>William Dickson, "Diary of a visit to Scotland".

<sup>148</sup>Clarkson, The History of the Rise, Vol. II, p. 192.

objection --- and render the performance of the  
Duty as UNIVERSAL as their INFLUENCE!<sup>149</sup>

The writer who appealed to the Duchess of York to use her influence stated:

I cannot suppose there exists a female, possessing a heart of sensibility, who can consider at length the detail of the facts which I have now hinted at, without many a deep sigh, without many an earnest wish, that the world may be fairly rid of a traffic which involves in it such such [sic] complicated villany.<sup>150</sup>

Similarly, Mary Birkett praised English women abstainers:

And you, ye daughters of the sister isles!  
Who blest in charity's benignant smiles,  
Who cheer th' afflicted - wipe the tearful eye,  
And bid the heart of sorrow cease to sigh;  
With hearts unknowing - innocent and gay,  
You took the plant for which we dearly pay;  
But when you knew the price - you push'd it way  
[away].<sup>151</sup>

Women's concern for the suffering of other women was also evoked. Andrew Burn, in his Second Address to the People of Great Britain described how mothers with infants were forced to toil and subjected to whippings, stating "Think on this, Mothers who use sugar!"<sup>152</sup> Cruikshank's cartoon of the Royal family entitled "The Gradual Abolition of the Slave Trade. Or leaving of Sugar by Degrees" has the Queen, who is trying to persuade her household to cut down on sugar consumption, saying in an imitation of black

<sup>149</sup>[William Allen], The Duty of Abstaining from the Use of West India Produce, A Speech, Delivered at Coach-Maker's-Hall, Jan. 12, 1792, (London: T. W. Hawkins, [1792]), pp. 22-23.

<sup>150</sup>An Address to Her Highness the Dutchess of York, p. 10.

<sup>151</sup>Birkett, A Poem on the African Slave Trade, Part II, verse 18, lines 23-24 (p. 19).

<sup>152</sup>Andrew Burn, Second Address to the People of Great Britain: Containing a New, and Most Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West Indian Sugar (London: M. Gurney, 1792), p. 4.

dialect: "Now my Dear's only an ickle Bit, do but tink on de Negro girl dat Captain Kimber treated so Cruelly". This referred to the case just described by Wilberforce to Parliament of a girl whipped to death on a slave ship for refusing to dance on deck.<sup>153</sup>

The extent of female support for the abstention campaign is difficult to gauge. The most reliable contemporary estimate of total abstainers, made by Thomas Clarkson on the basis of his extensive anti-slavery tour of England and Wales in late 1791 and early 1792, is not broken down on sex lines. Clarkson estimated that 300,000 "persons" of "all ranks and parties. Rich and poor, Churchmen and dissenters" had abandoned the use of slave-produced sugar.<sup>154</sup>

Newspaper reports of abstainers in particular towns, however, generally gave numbers of abstaining families rather than individuals, suggestive of the domestic basis of the campaign and, by implication, the involvement of women.<sup>155</sup> The fact that some grocers began to stock East India in preference to West India sugar suggests that women, who were responsible for household purchases, put consumer pressure on retailers. Further evidence for female involvement is provided by Mary Birkett's praise of

---

<sup>153</sup>George, Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires, Vol. VI, no. 8081.

<sup>154</sup>"Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade: Illustrations", Vol. 3 (new numbering), p. 53.

<sup>155</sup>York Courant, 20 Dec 1791; Leeds Intelligencer, 8 Nov 8 and 13 Dec 1791; Gloucester Journal, 6 Feb 1792; Northampton Mercury, 7 Jan 1792; Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, 30 Mar 1792; Norfolk Chronicle, 5 Nov 1791; Sheffield Advertiser, 2 Dec 1791.

English women's support for abstention, and James Mullala's praise of Irish women's participation in the campaign.<sup>156</sup>

There is evidence that some of the women who participated in the abstention campaign were working-class. Clarkson stated that some domestic servants had voluntarily followed their master's example and left off the use of slave-grown sugar.<sup>157</sup> This is interesting information in view of the important role of domestic servants, the majority of whom were women, in transmitting middle and upper class fashions to the rest of society.<sup>158</sup>

An indication that there was also support for abstention among women from artisan households is contained in the letter Lydia Hardy wrote in 1792 to her husband Thomas, a shoemaker and the leader of the radical London Corresponding Society (L.C.S). In the letter, written from her home village of Chesham in Buckinghamshire, where her father worked as a carpenter and builder, she stated:

Pray let me no how you go on in your society and likewise we ...[illegible word] as been donn in the parlement house concurring the slave trade for the people here are as much against it as enny ware and there is more people I think hear that drinks tea without sugar than there is drinks with ....<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup>James Mullala, A Compilation on the Slave Trade, Respectfully Addressed to the People of Ireland (Dublin, 1792), as cited in Douglass C. Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign Against American Slavery, 1830-1860", PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975, chap. i.

<sup>157</sup>Clarkson, History of the Rise, Vol. II, p. 349.

<sup>158</sup>See for example Neil McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution", in Neil McKendrick, ed., Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J. H. Plumb, (London: Europa, 1974), p. 189.

<sup>159</sup>Letter from Lydia Hardy to Thomas Hardy, Chesham, 2 Apr 1792, Public Record Office, Chancery Lane (ref: TS 24/12/1). Lydia Hardy (nee Priest) (d. 1794) had married

The letter also mentions the Hardy's close friend Olaudah Equiano's anti-slavery autobiography, which he had revised while staying in their home.<sup>160</sup> Artisan women's support of abstention was the product of radical enthusiasm for abolition rather than the aping of middle- or upper-class fashion. However, Lydia Hardy's lack of status in the radical movement compared to her husband, and her letter, with its complaints of debt and ill-health, are suggestive of the obstacles impeding all working women from participation in abolitionist activities.

The support which the abstention campaign attracted among women provoked considerable concern among the West India interest in Britain. An article in the Gentleman's Magazine of December 1791, by an advocate of reform rather than abolition, urged that women were taking action in vain.<sup>161</sup> The February 1792 issue of the Magazine contained an attack on the Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York alongside a "Vindication" of the use of West Indian sugar.<sup>162</sup> In March 1792 the Times carried a long letter purportedly written by a little boy to a young lady who had persuaded him to give up sugar. The writer suggests that the lady had been gulled by hypocritical men who actually made their fortunes from trading in other slave produce

---

Thomas Hardy in 1781 and had six children.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.; Memoir of Thomas Hardy (London: James Ridgeway, 1832), p. 15.

<sup>134</sup>"Reflections on the Slave-Trade; with Remarks on the Policy of its Abolition. In a Letter to a Clergyman in the County of Suffolk. By G. C. P.", Gentleman's Magazine, Dec 1791, p. 1124. Footnotes to the article refer to Barbauld's Epistle to William Wilberforce and Fox's An Address to the People of Great Britain.

<sup>162</sup>Gentleman's Magazine, Feb 1792, p. 158.

such as cotton. The lady and her mother are also accused of inconsistency for using other slave-grown produce.<sup>163</sup>

While such attacks suggest that the West India interest were nervous at the possible success of the abstention campaign, any adverse effect that declining consumption in Britain might have had on planters and traders was in practice cancelled out by a huge increase in imports of British colonial sugar to continental Europe in the 1790's. In Britain itself the effects of the boycott on consumer demand were obscured by its occurrence at a time of sugar shortage and rising prices.<sup>164</sup> In addition, the potential effectiveness of the abstention campaign was seriously undermined when it ceased to be publicly promoted by the Abolition Society after 1792, though it was kept up by individuals, particularly Quaker men and women, into the 1800's.<sup>165</sup>

The main importance of the campaign to the abolition movement was probably the role it played in creating in large numbers of men and women a sense of individual responsibility for slavery, and a belief in the possibility of achieving its downfall through extra-parliamentary action. For women, the campaign allowed them an active

---

<sup>163</sup>Times, 30 March 1792. The letter also appeared in the European Magazine and London Review, Vol. XXI (March 1792), pp. 185-6.

<sup>164</sup>Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, p. 79.

<sup>165</sup>See Quaker pamphlet by John Horn, Some Considerations on the African Slave Trade, and the Use of West Indian Produce, (London: G. Cooke, 1805), as cited in Neurmberger, The Free Produce Movement, p. 6; Hannah Kilham of Sheffield joined the abstention campaign in 1803, at around the time she joined the Society of Friends. (Sarah Biller, ed., Memoir of the Late Hannah Kilham: Compiled Chiefly from Her Journal, (London: Darton and Harvey, 1837), p. 110).

part in the abolition campaign which they had been denied in the field of petitioning. It also exposed their power as domestic consumers to have an effect on both commerce and politics.

#### 6. Campaigning between 1793 and the Abolition Act of 1807

The termination of the abstention campaign in 1793 was part of a general decline in extra-parliamentary anti-slavery activity at this time as a direct result of the Government clampdown on public meetings and extra-parliamentary campaigning in reaction to the French Revolution and the war with France. The Abolition Society became inactive and the largest local society in Manchester collapsed following disagreements between radicals and Whigs on the committee, and the arrest of the society's leader Thomas Walker on charges of treason.<sup>166</sup>

Reactions to the French Revolution and the effect of war with France meant that there were no public petitioning campaigns for abolition at this period. Instead abolitionists focussed on the parliamentary campaign, and the selection and election of abolitionist candidates. Women, as non-voters excluded from Parliament, were marginal to this process. Nevertheless wealthy ladies did individually play some part in election politics. Reporting on the election in Yorkshire at which Wilberforce was elected the York Herald commented that "The FAIR SEX,

---

<sup>166</sup>Fair Minute Books of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade: entries show that meetings decreased in frequency after August 1793 and none were held between April 1797 and May 1804; Hunt, Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, no. 79, (1977), pp. 46-72.

as the best canvassers, were distinguishable in a high degree."<sup>167</sup> In Sheffield it was reported that:

Lady Johnson of Hackness, near Scarbro', we understand, has not only subscribed 1000 L in support of Mr Wilberforce's election, but has sent a number of Freeholders to York at her own expense ... and a young lady in the neighbourhood of Hull, has greatly distinguished herself by her successful exertion, in obtaining votes for that gentleman.<sup>168</sup>

Such activities, however, marked a continuance of earlier eighteenth century forms of political patronage rather than a development of the popular abolition campaign of 1787-92.

The low political priority accorded to abolition by most women during the period is reflected in the writings both of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, a radical who supported the French Revolution, and of Hannah More, a conservative who opposed it.

In her 1793 pamphlet, Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation, Barbauld attacked the hypocrisy of those who condemned "the principles and practices of neighbouring nations" while condoning the "human sacrifices" involved in the British slave trade, and asked: "Are there not some darker-coloured children of the same family, over whom we assume a hard and unjust control?"<sup>169</sup> Her anti-slavery point, however, is not made for its own sake but rather as a way of attacking supporters of the war with France.

Hannah More's conservative reaction to the French Revolution is reflected in her Cheap Repository Tracts, a

<sup>167</sup>York Herald, 6 June 1807.

<sup>168</sup>Iris, or Sheffield Advertiser, 9 June 1807.

<sup>169</sup>A Volunteer [Anna Laetitia Barbauld], Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation; or, a Discourse for the Fast, Appointed on April 19, 1793, (2nd ed., London: J. Johnson, 1793), pp. 17-20.

series she compiled and edited in 1795. A study of the content of these tracts casts serious doubt on the contention of More's biographer M. G. Jones that More can be credited with keeping anti-slavery sentiment alive through the 1790's.<sup>170</sup> In fact, the tracts include pieces which range from opposition to implicit acceptance of slavery. In The Sorrows of Yamba; or, a Negro Woman's Lament the enslaved woman looks back in sorrow at her idyllic family life in Africa, her capture, the death of her child at sea, and her ill-treatment as a slave, and called on British slave-traders to "Mock your Saviour's name no further,/ Cease your savage lust of gain."<sup>171</sup> This is a poem of standard abolitionist type, and the favourable contrast it makes between "noble savage" and hypocritical Christian slave-trader resembles a poem written by a radical woman at this period, Fanny Holcroft's The Negro (1797), in which a dying slave curses his Christian masters.<sup>172</sup>

Three other tracts selected by More, however, have a more ambivalent message. In Babay. A True Story of a Good Negro Woman the slave is charitable because she is a Christian, and the chief purpose of the story is not anti-slavery but the pointing of a moral to the working class reader: charity is based not on advantages of birth and

---

<sup>170</sup>M. G. Jones, Hannah More, (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1952), p. 91.

<sup>171</sup>Hannah More, "The Sorrows of Yamba; or, a Negro Woman's Lamentation", [Hannah More, ed.], Cheap Repository Tracts, Published During the Year 1795. [London]: J. Marshall, [1797], Vol. I. Quote from verse 15, lines 3,4.

<sup>172</sup>Fanny Holcroft, "The Negro", Monthly Magazine, Vol. IV (Oct 1797), p. 286. Fanny (d. 1844) was an author and the daughter of leading radical Thomas Holcroft.

education but on religious conviction.<sup>173</sup> In the poem The Comforts of Religion the aim of freedom in life is replaced by a vision of slavery and other human sufferings made bearable by a religion which holds out the hope of life after death.<sup>174</sup> Finally, in A True Account of a Pious Negro an English gentleman tells of his encounter with a slave on a North American plantation. He asks the slave whether he would not prefer liberty to slavery and the man replies:

I have wife and children, and my massa takes care of them, and I have no care to produce any thing: I have a good massah who teach me to read; and I read good book, that keep me happy.<sup>175</sup>

One of the messages at the end of the tale is that "religion, and that only will make a man content and comfortable in the lowest situations."<sup>176</sup>

These poems and tales compiled by More need to be interpreted in the context of the purpose of the Cheap Repository Tracts of which they formed a part. These tracts, which reached thousands of readers, fulfilled More's aim of providing "safe" books for use in Sunday Schools to teach the poor to read. They were intended to combat the effect of Paineite pamphlets advocating the "Rights of Man" which were circulating among the working class in the wake of the French Revolution. They stressed morality, loyalty and religion, encouraging people to

---

<sup>173</sup>[More, ed.], Cheap Repository Tracts, Vol. I, pp. 3-5.

<sup>174</sup>[More, ed.], Cheap Repository Tracts, Vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>175</sup>[More, ed.], Cheap Repository Tracts, Vol. I, pp. 7-12, quote from p. 8.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

accommodate themselves to their station in life rather than to try to change the established order.

More's reactions to the French Revolution encompassed not only calls for working-class and black passivity but also a reply to Wollstonecraft's call for liberty and equality for women. Her Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799) stressed differences in male and female natural qualities and social roles, praised the special sensitivity of women, and called for the moral regeneration of society on a Christian basis through the moral influence of women educated not in the art of reasoning but in religion. While accepting that the supposed inferiority of both women and blacks was in part, and possibly wholly, the result of inadequate education rather than innate inability, More argued the goal of equality in this life to be unimportant in the face of the pre-existing equality of all before God:

Christianity had exalted women to true and undisputed dignity; in Christ Jesus, as there is neither "rich nor poor", "bond nor free", so there is neither "male nor female".<sup>177</sup>

Looking at the evidence for women's involvement in abolition in the 1793-1807 period as a whole it can be concluded that, as a consequence of the collapse of the popular abolition campaign and middle-class preoccupation with the state of British society and the threat from France, women made little direct contribution to the passage of the Abolition Act in March 1807. In this, however, they were only in the same position as the

---

<sup>177</sup>Hannah More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, With a View to the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune, Vols. VII and VIII of The Works of Hannah More, (London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1801), p. 33 and quote from p. 34.

majority of men, who were also disenfranchised and excluded from parliamentary politics. However, as Walvin points out, though the Act was the "function overwhelmingly of parliamentary tactics and ploys" it was "the tactics and arguments of popular abolition" which "had served to lodge the issue securely with Parliament itself".<sup>178</sup> As has been shown, women had played an important part in several aspects of this popular campaign.

7. After the Act: the Foreign Slave Trade and Missionaries, 1807-1823

Following the passage of the Abolition Act in 1807 abolitionists were optimistic that the end of the British slave trade would lead to the withering away of slavery in the British West Indies. The African Institution was founded with three main aims: to see that the new laws were properly enforced, to encourage "legitimate" commerce with Africa, and to persuade other countries to follow Britain's example in ending involvement in the slave trade. Only one of the Institution's initial one hundred and thirty subscribers was female. This was probably the result of its failure to specifically appeal for female support, its concentration on gaining the support of the political elite, and its image as a small parliamentary pressure group.<sup>179</sup>

Female support did, however, gradually increase over the years, and by 1823 the sixty female subscribers

---

<sup>178</sup>Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom, p. 121.

<sup>179</sup>Report of the Committee of the African Institution, (London: William Phillips, 1807).

represented around 10% of total subscribers. Some of these women were Evangelicals like Hannah More and others came from wealthy Quaker merchant and banking families who had earlier supported the Abolition Society: the Allens, Barclays and Hanburys, the Rathbones of Liverpool and the Foxes of Falmouth.<sup>180</sup>

Despite this increase in female subscribers women were responsible for only two of nearly eight hundred petitions presented to the Government in 1814 urging it to insert clauses in peace treaties which committed other European nations to end their involvement in the slave trade.<sup>181</sup> The female petitions were from Hawick and Inverkeithing, suggesting that women may have been less rigidly excluded from politics in Scotland than in other parts of Britain.<sup>182</sup>

A number of women who had supported abolition turned to support of missionary work at this period. As early as 1792 Irish abolitionist Mary Birkett had put forward a vision of the colonisation, legitimate commerce and Christianisation of Africa as a positive alternative to the slave trade:

Thy vessels crown'd with olive branches send,  
And make each injure'd African thy friend:  
So tides of wealth by peace and justice got,  
Oh, philanthropic heart! will be thy lot.

---

<sup>180</sup>Fifth (to Seventeenth) Report of the Directors of the African Institution, (London: Ellerton and Henderson, 1808 (to 1823)).

<sup>181</sup>Betty Fladeland, "Abolitionist pressures on the Concert of Europe, 1814-1822", Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXXVIII, (1966), pp. 355-73; Jerome Reich, "The Slave Trade at the Congress of Vienna - a Study in English Public Opinion", Journal of Negro History, Vol. LIII, no. 2 (Apr 1968), pp. 129-43.

<sup>182</sup>Edinburgh Evening Courant, 11 July 1814, 21 July 1814.

Plant there our colonies, and to their soul,  
 Declare the God who form'd this boundless whole:  
 Improve their manners - teach them how to live,  
 To them the useful lore of science give <sup>183</sup>

The African Institution promoted the commercial side of this vision, left the educational aspect to the missionary societies which had been founded by all the main Protestant denominations in Britain between 1792 and 1804. These societies attracted considerable support from women, with 10-15% female subscribers, and developed networks of female auxiliary societies.<sup>184</sup>

Missionary societies' relationship to the anti-slavery movement at this period was ambivalent. In the British West Indies, as Mary Turner has pointed out, missionaries condoned rather than condemned slavery, tried to work in co-operation with planters rather than to enter into political conflict with them and concentrated on the spiritual rather than the material welfare of the slaves. Nevertheless, while stressing the inferiority of "heathen" African culture, they based their work on a belief in black humanity and potential for Christianisation and civilisation which was at odds with planter stereotypes. In addition, missionary work was significant to the development of anti-slavery through giving missionaries a first-hand knowledge of slavery and its damaging effects, through encouraging links between white and black members of growing nonconformist denominations, through fostering British hostility to planters who persecuted missionaries,

---

<sup>183</sup>Birkett, A Poem on the African Slave Trade, Part I, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>184</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 29 and Appendices; Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy", pp. 427-8 and Appendices.

and through the development of black churches which combined African and Christian beliefs and rituals and became a potent source of resistance to slavery.<sup>185</sup>

The link between anti-slavery and missionary work was strongest in the British colony of Sierra Leone in West Africa. After 1807 Evangelical, Methodist, Baptist and Quaker missionaries and educators co-operated in organising schools for a flood of African children rescued from captured slave ships.<sup>186</sup> Among the workers who went out to the colony in the 1820's were two Quaker women, Hannah Kilham and her assistant Ann Thompson of Cooladine in Ireland. For Kilham (1774-1832) the work can be seen as a way of combining her anti-slavery, missionary and charitable commitments: she had earlier supported the campaign against the slave trade, the Bible Society and the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor in her home town of Sheffield, and by 1819 had become interested in the idea of instructing Africans in their own languages.<sup>187</sup> In her proposal to Quakers concerning the scheme she wrote:

The protection of the natives of Africa from the rapacious hands of slave-merchants belongs now to the government; and here, so far as regards the persons of the Africans, the case at present rests; but viewing it in a far higher relation, considering that these are men, who have minds to be instructed, and souls.... have we, the Society of Friends, yet done for them all that is in our

---

<sup>185</sup>Mary Turner, Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), especially chaps. i. iii.

<sup>186</sup>Curtin, The Image of Africa, chap. xi.

<sup>187</sup>Sarah Biller (ed.), Memoir of the Late Hannah Kilham, Chiefly Compiled from Her Journal, (London: Darton and Harvey, 1837); Mora Dickson, The Powerful Bond - Hannah Kilham 1774-1832, (London: Dennis Dobson, 1980).

power to do?<sup>188</sup>

Kilham's representations led to the setting up of the African Instruction Fund Committee (1819-25), an unofficial Quaker group which is significant as the first Quaker committee to have both male and female members.<sup>189</sup>

### Conclusions

Surveying the evidence for women's abolitionist activities in Britain prior to 1823 it is evident that they contributed to the anti-slavery campaign in a number of ways, despite their exclusion from positions of leadership. Black women resisted their slave status from as early as the seventeenth century. Quaker women ministers in the mid-eighteenth century spoke out against slavery. Women of high social status influenced politicians to oppose the slave trade in 1787. Female subscribers to abolition societies helped fund the public anti-slavery campaign. Radical women included statements of opposition to slavery in their tracts. Women of varied political and religious persuasions made a major contribution to anti-slavery verse and tales. Women as the purchasers of household goods played a leading role in the campaign for abstention from slave-grown sugar.

It is noticeable that women's participation in the abolition movement was at its highest level during periods when the main appeals for popular support were made, between 1787 and 1792. It was also greatest in Manchester,

---

<sup>188</sup>"Report of the 'Committee of African Instruction' to the Subscribers: Read at the Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1825", The Yorkshireman, no. 9 (2nd ed.), (15 Dec 1832), p. 162 (emphasis in original).

<sup>189</sup>Ibid.

where the most radical local society was located. Indeed the popular abolition campaign involved radical dissenting women as well as those conservative Evangelical women whom Prochaska describes as dominating female philanthropy from the 1790's onwards.<sup>190</sup>

The issuing of occasional public appeals to women in newspapers, tracts and poems at this period indicates that they were to some extent perceived as part of the "public" whose "opinion" was capable <sup>of</sup> exerting pressure of Parliament from outside. Nevertheless women were excluded from the most political aspects of the campaign: from policy-making committees, and to a large extent from petitioning, public speaking and pamphleteering. Indeed a study of the abolition campaign clarifies the process whereby middle class men were developing a "public sphere" of voluntary activities outside Parliament which largely excluded middle class women.<sup>191</sup>

This exclusion was, however, less complete than in voluntary political, commercial and learned societies. This was partly because abolitionists represented the slave trade as a moral and religious issue rather than a political or economic one. This opened up the possibility for female participation when linked with an evangelical ideology which elevated women's role as guardians of morality or with Quaker and Unitarian beliefs in the

---

<sup>190</sup>Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy", pp. 438-441.

<sup>191</sup>For a discussion of the development of a "public sphere" by men see Geoff Eley, "Re-thinking the Political: Social History and Political Culture in 18th and 19th Century Britain", Archiv Fur Sozialgeschichte, Vol. XXI (1981), pp. 427-457; for gender divisions and the public sphere see Hall, "Private Persons", pp. 10-33.

importance of the individual following the dictates of his or her conscience. In addition, women's role as purchasers of household goods and as leaders of consumer fashion made their participation in the abstention campaign essential to its success.

While abolitionists might not describe their aims and activities as political they were nevertheless designed to influence commercial policy and achieve Parliamentary action through the use of public pressure. Women were for the first time giving substantial support to a movement whose prime aim was to bring about political change. However, given their lack not only of formal power but also of group organisation in the movement at this period, this was within the framework of priorities and approaches determined by the male leadership.

## CHAPTER II

### WOMEN AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ABOLITION OF BRITISH COLONIAL SLAVERY, 1823-1833

#### PART 1: LADIES' ANTI-SLAVERY ASSOCIATIONS

By 1823 it was clear that the abolition of the British slave trade had not led to improvements in the treatment of slaves or to progress towards their emancipation. Abolitionists thus decided to tackle the issue of slavery directly. A Parliamentary campaign was launched, backed by a popular movement led by a new national society, the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions (henceforth, "the Anti-Slavery Society"). Campaigning initially for the amelioration and eventual abolition of slavery, later for immediate and entire emancipation, the Society's aims were partially achieved with the passage of the Emancipation Act in 1833.<sup>1</sup>

Several recent studies have stressed the vital importance of widespread popular support to the strength and success of the anti-slavery campaign.<sup>2</sup> However, though the organisation of ladies' anti-slavery associations was one of the major innovations in anti-slavery organisation at this period, these new groups have received only limited attention from historians. Alex Tyrell has stressed their

---

<sup>1</sup>For general accounts of the Parliamentary campaign and actions of the male leadership see Coupland, The British Anti-Slavery Movement; Klingberg, The Anti-Slavery Movement in England.

<sup>2</sup>For useful surveys of recent approaches see Bolt and Drescher, eds., Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform, and Walvin, ed., Slavery and British Society.

role in exerting pressure from without.<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Corfield has examined women's organisation of the boycott of slave-grown sugar and support of immediate emancipation.<sup>4</sup> James Walvin has outlined their contributions to the popular anti-slavery campaign, concluding that they operated as "adjuncts of men", exerting influence in the local community and doing much of the "tedious, unrewarding but necessary tasks".<sup>5</sup> Louis and Rosamund Billington, on the basis of a fuller study of the associations, have reached more positive conclusions, stressing that "women's antislavery societies were not simply passive auxiliaries."<sup>6</sup>

Walvin and the Billingtons are, however, in agreement in representing the associations as both an extension of female evangelical philanthropy and a new entry of women into politics. Walvin has described them as providing women with "their first organized and coherent political role in modern British society", though this was "strictly within the limits determined by their male

---

<sup>3</sup>Alex Tyrrell, "Women's Mission and Pressure Group Politics in Britain", Bulletin of the John Ryland University Library of Manchester, no. 63 (1980), pp. 194-230.

<sup>4</sup>Corfield, "English Abolitionists and the Refusal", chap. ii; Kenneth Corfield, "Elizabeth Heyrick: Radical Quaker," Gail Malmgreen, ed., Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930, (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 41-67.

<sup>5</sup>Edward Royle and James Walvin, English Radicals and Reformers 1760-1848, (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p. 186; Walvin, "The Propaganda of Anti-Slavery"; Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom, pp. 157-159.

<sup>6</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness'", p. 90.

contemporaries".<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the Billingtons have argued that women's activities "fitted neatly into conventional notions of 'women's sphere'" while at the same time constituting political action.<sup>8</sup> Both analyses, I believe, underplay the barriers to female philanthropy developing into political activity by women in a society where the ideology of "separate spheres" led to tolerance of the former but prohibition of the latter.

In this chapter and the next I attempt to reassess the role of ladies' associations and their members in the anti-slavery movement through a thorough examination of primary sources and through comparison with men's societies and male activists. I also try to clarify the nature of the relationship between philanthropy and politics in women's anti-slavery work.

This chapter begins with a study of the origins, development and form of ladies' anti-slavery associations (section 1). I then look at women's activities in these associations: fund-raising and allocation (section 2), the diffusion of information (section 3), and the sugar boycott (section 4). In section 5 the type of women - predominantly middle-class - who were active in the associations is examined and the relationship of other women - black and white, working- and upper-class - to the movement is explored. This leads on to a discussion in section 6 of the way in which women articulated and

---

<sup>7</sup>Walvin, "The Impact of Slavery", p. 351; Walvin, "The Propaganda of Anti-Slavery", p. 63.

<sup>8</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness", p. 82, p. 87.

justified their anti-slavery concerns within the ideological framework of the period.

In Chapter III I examine the contribution of women to major changes in national anti-slavery policy and tactics. The two chapters overlap chronologically since Chapter II, though concentrating on the 1825-29 period, includes some later material, while Chapter III, which focusses on changes which occurred nationally in 1830-33, traces their origins back to initiatives taken by women as early as 1824. General conclusions about women's contributions to the campaign against British colonial slavery are drawn together at the end of Chapter III.

### 1. Origins and Forms

In 1825, two years after the foundation of the Anti-Slavery Society and of the earliest local men's societies, the first ladies' anti-slavery associations were formed in England. This Section investigates the origins and nature of these Associations, assessing the relative importance of female initiative and male direction in determining their form and function.

The network of local societies connected with the Anti-Slavery Society expanded rapidly. The Society's records show the receipt of money from four ladies' associations and thirty-four men's auxiliaries in 1826, increasing to a peak of thirty-nine ladies' associations and seventy-eight auxiliaries in 1831.<sup>9</sup> Altogether, from

---

<sup>9</sup>Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826; 1827 and 1828; 1829 and 1830; 1831: with a list of Subscribers, (London: Bagster and Thoms, [n.d.]). These numbers represent only the more active groups. The first report of the Anti-Slavery Society stated that there were

these lists and from other sources, I have been able to identify a total of seventy-three ladies' associations active at some time between 1825 and 1833 (see list (1) in Appendix I).

While men's anti-slavery groups were always more numerous than women's the gap narrowed from a ratio of eight to one in 1826 to two to one in 1831. Men's auxiliaries and ladies' associations had a similar geographical spread, covering most English counties, and with a few groups in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. They were located in a wide variety of communities: county and market towns in rural areas, large urban industrial centres and ports. At a local level, however, men's and women's societies were not always in the same towns. Of the seventy-three ladies' associations forty-two were in towns with active men's groups, the remaining thirty-one in towns with no identified men's auxiliary. Thus the existence of ladies' associations considerably increased the number of towns involved in anti-slavery activism.

The earliest women's anti-slavery society in Britain was the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves (henceforth, "the Female Society for Birmingham"). It was formed on 8th April 1825 at a meeting at the house of Lucy Townsend, wife of the vicar of West Bromwich near

---

two hundred and twenty auxiliaries in existence whereas the receipts of the Society show list only thirty-one such groups. (Report of the Committee of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, (London: printed by Richard Taylor, 1824)).

Birmingham.<sup>10</sup> It was to become the largest, most influential and longest lasting of such groups.<sup>11</sup>

At the time when the Society was founded the national committee of the Anti-Slavery Society had not discussed the possibility of women's groups, though they had been promoting the formation of men's auxiliaries since their foundation in 1823.<sup>12</sup> There was also no precedent for such groups in the British anti-slavery movement, and no directive from the male leadership concerning their formation.

The initiative for the new group came from Lucy Townsend, who, with her friend Mary Lloyd, became its co-secretary. Townsend, an Evangelical Anglican, and Mary Lloyd, a Quaker, had met through their involvement in the local ladies' branch association of the interdenominational

---

<sup>10</sup>Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Founding Meeting Held at West Bromwich, 8th April 1825. [n.p., n.d.]. Between 1826 and 1831 the Society had adopted the title of the Female Society, for Birmingham, West-Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, and their Respective Neighbourhoods, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves.

<sup>11</sup>The Society was active until 1919. Many of its printed reports, together with manuscript minutes and other material, are located in the Archives Dept. of Birmingham Central Library, and have also been published as Records Relating to the Birmingham Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, 1825-1919, 2 reels of microfilm, (East Ardsley: Microform Academic Publishers, n.d.).

<sup>12</sup>Accounts for 1823 and 1825 list the printing of 1000 and 1500 copies of a sheet entitled "Resolutions recommended to Auxiliary Associations" (see Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1823 ..., pp. 3,6. In 1823 and 1824 the veteran abolitionist Thomas Clarkson toured England and Wales promoting men's auxiliaries (see "Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 9th June, December 1823, MSS Brit. Emp. S.20 E 2/1, RHL).

evangelical British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>13</sup> This association provided the two women with a possible model for organising a women's anti-slavery society. The Bible Society had between 1812 and 1821 developed a network of three hundred and fifty women's branches and its leader, Charles Dudley, had published detailed discussions of women's work and practical blueprints for the setting up and running of women's groups.<sup>14</sup>

Another source of information was presumably Mary Lloyd's husband Samuel, who was involved in the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society which was active by 1824.<sup>15</sup> No mention of the men's society is made in the founding records of the women's group, however, suggesting that it was not formally involved in setting up the women's group. Information in letters from Thomas Clarkson to Lucy Townsend backs this conclusion, indicating that the idea for the society came from her, and that Clarkson then suggested she enlist Mr Lloyd's support. Townsend had written for advice to Clarkson, a member of the committee of the Anti-Slavery Society and the leading promoter of local men's auxiliaries, and he responded with suggestions

---

<sup>13</sup>See Sara W. Sturge, Memoir of Mary Lloyd of Wednesbury, 1795-1865, (printed for private circulation, 1921), p. 30. For further information of Mary Lloyd, Lucy Townsend and other individual activists mentioned in sections 1 to 4 see section 5 of this chapter.

<sup>14</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, pp. 24-27; Charles S. Dudley, An Analysis of the System of the Bible Society, (London: R. Watts, 1821) pp. 375-6, 397-8.

<sup>15</sup>Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1823 ..., p. 14. The men's society apparently became inactive for it had to be refounded in 1826 (see Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, entry for 6 Dec 1826, Archives Dept, Birmingham Central Library).

about the title of the group and obtained pamphlets for the women from the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>16</sup>

Clarkson did not try to impose a specific form on the group, however, and neither the auxiliaries of the Anti-Slavery Society nor the ladies' branches of the Bible Society provided a model for a group on quite the lines of the Birmingham society. For the Birmingham society was set up as an independent society rather than a local auxiliary.<sup>17</sup> This independent status made it more comparable to the small number of early nineteenth century charitable societies managed by women.<sup>18</sup>

Another unusual feature of the Female Society for Birmingham was that it did not label itself a local group. Indeed, as Louis and Rosamund Billington have pointed out, it acted more like a national society, actively promoting the foundation of local women's societies throughout England, and in Wales and Ireland, and supplying them with information and advice.<sup>19</sup>

Lucy Townsend was involved in founding a Ladies'

---

<sup>16</sup>Extracts of letters from Thomas Clarkson, dated 30 March 1825, 30 May 1825, in Lucy Townsend, "Scrap Book on Negro Slaves", pp. 115-118, MSS Brit. Emp. S.4., RHL.

<sup>17</sup>For information on typical ladies' branch associations see Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, pp. 22-29.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 32 and Appendix IV, which lists both local and national societies; Prochaska, "Women in English Philanthropy", p. 430 lists 17 national ladies' societies founded between 1795 and 1830.

<sup>19</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness'", pp. 85, 87. Hall and Davidoff's assertion that the group was typical of the "local and small-scale level" of women's societies is incorrect (Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p. 437).

Association at Calne in Wiltshire in August 1825.<sup>20</sup> In December of that year the Birmingham society set out encouraging the formation of other groups, amending their founding resolutions to include the following statement: "That it be one of the chief objects of this society to strive to promote the formation of Ladies' Associations ... in every part of His Majesty's Dominions to which their influence may extend".<sup>21</sup> The scheme was co-ordinated by the Society's secretaries, who in 1828 had £20 placed at their disposal "for promoting the formation of Ladies Associations, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, wherever their influence may extend".<sup>22</sup>

Lloyd and Townsend achieved their objectives through the Society's network of district treasurers. This network was expanded from ten women in 1825 to forty-nine by 1830, spread throughout England, with contacts also in Tenby and Monmouth in Wales, in Dublin, and even as far afield as France, the Cape of Good Hope, Sierra Leone and Calcutta.<sup>23</sup> These contacts were possibly established through denominational networks such as Quaker women's meetings, through the Bible Society network, and through information from Thomas Clarkson, who had informed Lucy Townsend in 1825 that "there are many ladies in different parts of the

---

<sup>20</sup>See [Elizabeth Heyrick], Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, (London: Combe, 1826), p. 162; extract of letters of Thomas Clarkson, 3 Aug 1825, Lucy Townsend, "Scrap Book on Negro Slaves", p. 117.

<sup>21</sup>Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, [meeting, Walsall, 8 Dec, 1825: resolutions].

<sup>22</sup>The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1828), pp. 25-26.

<sup>23</sup>The Fifth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1830).

Kingdom who would embark in committees of this sort in London, Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne etc etc".<sup>24</sup>

The district treasurers, aided by advice and a supply of propaganda from Birmingham, were encouraged to found local associations in their towns. This scheme was very successful. The Society's 1828 report expressed pleasure at the formation of ladies' associations around the country, stating that "to some of these societies your Committee has paid much attention, both by correspondence, and by assisting them with donations of small works, and of articles containing Anti-Slavery information".<sup>25</sup> By 1827 ladies' associations had been formed in two towns with district treasurers, in Bristol and in Manchester, where Lucy Townsend's niece Emma was involved.<sup>26</sup> In 1829 letters of resignation were received from district treasurers in Battersea Rise and Islington in the London area, and from Newcastle, Reading and York, "most of them in consequence of Female Antislavery Associations being formed in their respective vicinities."<sup>27</sup> In Dublin the local district treasurer, Mrs Orpen, set up a ladies' society in 1828 "in correspondence with" the Birmingham group.<sup>28</sup> Other towns <sup>h</sup>were the Birmingham society had district treasurers and

---

<sup>24</sup>Lucy Townsend, "Scrap Book on Negro Slaves", p. 115.

<sup>25</sup>Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup>The Second Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, [1827]); Lucy Townsend, "Autographs", p. 318. MSS Brit. Emp. S.5, RHL.

<sup>27</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, 1825-52", entry for 7 April 1829. MSS in Birmingham Central Library.

<sup>28</sup>Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, (Dublin: Napper, 1828), resolution I, [p. 4].

where ladies' associations were founded which were in contact with Birmingham were Southampton, Plymouth, Monmouth in Wales, and Tottenham near London.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to encouraging the formation of these thirteen separate local societies, the Birmingham group also had four auxiliary societies - local ladies' associations which sent their members subscriptions to Birmingham, rather than using the money themselves or sending it to the Anti-Slavery Society in London. The societies at Leicester, Oakham and Deddington and at Moyallan in Ireland were of this type.<sup>30</sup>

A number of other ladies' associations also show evidence of close links with, and influence from, Birmingham. The original title of the Sheffield group, (formed on 12 July 1825 and thus one of the earliest ladies' associations), was the Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, a similar name to the Birmingham group. In addition, a complexly worded founding resolution of the Birmingham society was replicated identically in the founding resolutions of the Sheffield group, of the Colchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association (founded on 1 July 1825) and of the Liverpool Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society (founded on 17 January 1827), suggesting that the

---

<sup>29</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, 1825-52", entries for 29 Jan 1829, 26 Nov 1829; "Ledger belonging to the Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves", MSS in Birmingham Central Library.

<sup>30</sup>First Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1826), pp. 31-32, Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, pp. 19, 21; lists of subscribers at Leicester and Oakham in Fifth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham; "Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for 10 July 1827, 26 Nov 1828.

three later groups copied the Birmingham resolution word for word.<sup>31</sup> There is also evidence that all three groups were supplied with propaganda by Birmingham from the time of their foundation onwards.<sup>32</sup>

Overall, of the seventy-three ladies' associations founded between 1825 and 1833 there is evidence suggesting that as many as twenty were formed under the influence of the Female Society for Birmingham. Some, including those at Calne and Dublin, were independent, some were auxiliaries of the Birmingham society, others, including those at Sheffield and Liverpool, were auxiliary to the national Anti-Slavery Society.

In contrast to the influence of the Birmingham women, only one case of a local men's society setting up a ladies' association has been identified. This was the Rochester and Chatham Anti-Slavery Society, which set up a local women's group in 1826. An attempt in 1825 by the Aberdeen

---

<sup>31</sup>The resolution was that the society should continued its exertions "till the time may come when the lash shall no longer be permitted to fall on the persons of helpless Female Slaves, when our fellow-creatures shall no longer be advertised like beasts for sale, and sold like beasts at a West India slave Market, and when every Negro Mother, living under British Laws, shall press a free-born infant to her bosom". (compare Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Founding Meeting; The First Report of the Ladies Association for Liverpool, (Liverpool: George Smith, 1828); Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves [founding resolutions of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, 12 July 1825]; Rules of the Colchester Ladies Anti-Slavery Association, (Colchester, 1825)).

<sup>32</sup>"Ledger Belonging to the Female Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", pp. 11, 89; accounts at back of "Album", MSS D/CR/12, Cropper family papers, Merseyside Record Office, Liverpool.

Anti-Slavery Society in 1825 to encourage women to form ladies' associations in Scotland was unsuccessful.<sup>33</sup>

It was the initiative of women in Birmingham in setting up the first ladies' anti-slavery society which prompted the Anti-Slavery Society to decide to encourage the formation of ladies' associations. At a national committee meeting on 11 May 1825 a letter from Mary Lloyd's husband Samuel was read giving details of the formation of the Birmingham-centred group. It was immediately resolved that a sub-committee "prepare a plan suitable for the promotion of similar societies".<sup>34</sup>

The decision to encourage the formation of ladies' associations did not take place without opposition from some prominent male abolitionists. The issue divided members of the influential Evangelical Clapham Sect, with William Wilberforce and Thomas Babington opposing Ladies' Associations, while Zachary Macaulay enthusiastically encouraged them. Wilberforce grounded his disapproval on the Bible, writing in January 1826:

I own I cannot relish the plan. All private exertions for such an object become their character, but for ladies to meet, to publish, to go from house to house stirring up petitions - these appear to me proceedings unsuited to the female character as delineated in Scripture. I fear its tendency would be to mix them in all the multiform warfare of political life.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>First Report of the Rochester and Chatham Anti-Slavery Society, (Strood: J. and H. Sweet, 1828); Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. I, no. 3 (31 Aug, 1825), p. 23-4. The first ladies' society to be formed in Scotland was the Edinburgh Female Anti-Slavery Society, formed in 1830.

<sup>34</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 11th May 1825.

<sup>35</sup>Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, 5 Vols., (London: John Murray, 1840), Vol. V, p. 264, quotation from letter dated 31 Jan, 1826.

He continued his campaign against ladies' associations until at least July 1826, criticising Macaulay for publicising their activities in the Anti-Slavery Society's periodical, the Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter.<sup>36</sup> Macaulay, however, ignored his advice. Wilberforce himself was losing influence over the movement at this period, having handed over leadership of the Parliamentary campaign to Buxton. He reluctantly agreed to his wife's name being included as a subscriber to one of the new associations.<sup>37</sup> Hannah More, another leading Evangelical, signalled her approval of such groups by joining the committee of the Female Anti-Slavery Society for Clifton, though she was too old to play an active part in its activities.<sup>38</sup>

By June 1825 a set of sample rules for ladies' associations had been prepared, and it was resolved to print three thousand copies each of rules for gentlemen's societies and rules for ladies' associations.<sup>39</sup> The issuing of rules indicates an attempt to encourage some unity of aims, structure and activities on local groups. The rules were quite basic and flexible, however, being concerned mainly with organisational structure, and including the statement that they "can be altered and modified ... according to circumstances".<sup>40</sup> The

---

<sup>36</sup>R. I. and S. Wilberforce, The Correspondence of William Wilberforce, Vol 2, p. 93, 94.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 493-4.

<sup>38</sup>The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton, Bristol, and its Neighbourhood in Aid of the Cause of Negro Emancipation, (Bristol: T. D. Clark, [1828]), p. 3.

<sup>39</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entries for 8 and 15 1825.

<sup>40</sup>Genius of Universal Emancipation, Vol II, no. 27 (Baltimore, 12 May 1827), p. 213.

recommended organisational structure for women's and men's groups was almost identical, and the "special object" of both was defined as being the collection and diffusion of information, with a secondary function of collecting subscriptions. Recommended campaigning methods differed, however: women were to diffuse information and collect funds through the medium of district collectors, men through the press and public meetings. In addition, men were urged to promote petitions to the legislature whereas the women's rules made no mention of petitioning.<sup>41</sup>

The Anti-Slavery Society's enthusiasm for ladies' associations steadily increased. In 1826 two thousand copies of a circular "Address to the Ladies" were issued.<sup>42</sup> This was probably the tract Negro Slavery. To the Ladies of the United Kingdom, which gave a wider definition of the objectives of ladies' associations than the earlier rules, suggesting that they not only diffuse information and collect subscriptions but also promote petitions to the legislature, encourage the use of "free" grown sugar, redeem female infants from slavery and fund the education of the "rising race of females".<sup>43</sup> By 1828 ladies' associations were being described as important "means of

---

<sup>41</sup>[Anti-Slavery Society], Rules for Anti-Slavery Associations. (Ladies'), (London: Knight and Bagster, [n.d.]); [Anti-Slavery Society], Anti-Slavery Society, [rules for men's societies], (London: Ellerton & Henderson, [n.d.]). The women's rules were reprinted in the Genius of Universal Emancipation, Vol, II, no. 27 (12 May 1827), p. 213.

<sup>42</sup>Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society for the Years 1823 ..., p. 8; "Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 25 Jan 1826.

<sup>43</sup>Negro Slavery. To the Ladies of the United Kingdom, (London: Ellerton & Henderson, [n.d.]).

awakening and extending public interest".<sup>44</sup> Anti-Slavery Society activist Zachary Macaulay wrote to the Liverpool abolitionist James Cropper that ladies' associations "seem to form now one main stay of our hopes, and agreed with him that they "ought to be strenuously pushed in every direction".<sup>45</sup>

When Elizabeth Heyrick wrote her Apology for Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations in 1828 she mentioned such letters as evidence of the value attached by leading male abolitionists to ladies' associations and stated that men were now "in the bitterness of successive disappointment, looking to us for co-operation their final resort".<sup>46</sup> This sense of disappointment is certainly evident in the appeals to women composed by Cropper and Macaulay and issued by the Anti-Slavery Society in 1828. These began by lamenting the lack of progress in Parliament towards the implementation of resolutions passed in 1823 for the amelioration of the condition of the slaves. The main channels now left for activism were, they stated, the diffusion of information in order to arouse public opinion against slavery, and the substitution of free for slave produce. In both areas, much important work could be done by women, especially

---

<sup>44</sup>Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. II, no. 12 (May 1828), p. 213.

<sup>45</sup>Letter from Z. Macaulay to [James Cropper], London, 16th Feb, 1828, MS 10275, Brougham Papers, University College, London.

<sup>46</sup>The full text of this pamphlet was given in the Genius of Universal Emancipation, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 7 (Dec 1831), pp. 110-12; no. 8 (Jan 1832), pp. 133-5; no. 9 (Feb 1832), pp. 149-52.

through the medium of ladies' anti-slavery associations, of which a sample plan was appended.<sup>47</sup>

The lack of progress by male abolitionists in Parliament combined with recognition of female initiatives thus led the Anti-Slavery Society by 1828 to emphasise an extra-Parliamentary campaign in which ladies' associations were seen as having the potential to make contributions equal to, or even greater than, men's auxiliaries.

The appropriate relationship between ladies' associations and men's auxiliaries was never set out by the Anti-Slavery Society. Evidence from local society records, however, suggests that, despite informal family connections, the two types of groups operated largely independently of each other.<sup>48</sup> This contrasts with the situation in other philanthropic societies, in which, as Prochaska has pointed out, "committee-men often grafted female associations on to men's auxiliaries" in order to keep them under their control.<sup>49</sup>

To summarize, ladies' associations tended to be formed as the result of independent female initiatives, both by local women and through the influence of the Female Society

---

<sup>47</sup>[Anti-Slavery Society], Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations, (London: Bagster and Thoms, [1828]); [Anti-Slavery Society], A Picture of Colonial Slavery, in the Year 1828, Addressed Especially to the Ladies of Great Britain, (London: Bagster and Thoms, [1828]). (For evidence of Cropper's authorship of the former see letter from James Cropper to Joseph Sturge, Liverpool, 14 July 1827, quoted in Anne Cropper, Extracts from Letters of the Late James Cropper, (Liverpool, 1850), p. 61; for evidence of Zachary Macaulay's authorship of the latter see "Committee on Slavery Minute Book", 2 Sept 1828).

<sup>48</sup>Note for example the lack of references to each other's activities in the Minute Books of the Birmingham Antislavery Society and the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves.

<sup>49</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 27.

for Birmingham, which acted as a national promoter of female organisations. The groups were increasingly promoted by the male leadership as their great value to the movement came to be recognised.

## 2. Activities: Fund-Raising and Allocation

Both men's auxiliaries and ladies' associations had an organisational core of officers and committee members, supported by a membership ranging from around forty to as many as four or five hundred subscribers.<sup>50</sup> These subscribers provided the societies with their main source of income.

Frank Prochaska has characterised fund-raising as the major contribution made by local women's societies to national philanthropic organisations in the nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Examination of Anti-Slavery Society records confirms the increasing importance of women's contributions to national funds. In 1826 of the £2558 income of the Anti-Slavery Society from donations and subscriptions, £438, or 17 percent, came from men's Auxiliaries, only £104 or 4 percent from Ladies' Associations. By 1829, however, when national income had dropped to £1415, donations from

---

<sup>50</sup>For the range in membership numbers of men's auxiliaries compare The Second Annual Report of the Edinburgh Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate Abolition of Negro Slavery, (Edinburgh: Anderson and Bryce, 1825) which lists 502 subscribers, with First Report of the Suffolk Auxiliary for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery, (Ipswich: King and Garrod, 1825) which lists 38 subscribers. For ladies' associations compare The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham (Birmingham: Hudson, 1828), which lists 396 donors and subscribers, with Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Sheffield: Iris, 1832), which lists 38.

<sup>51</sup>Frank Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, chap. i, especially pp. 23-27.

men's groups had decreased to £195 or 14 percent whereas those from women's societies had increased to £293 or 21 percent. This was because a higher proportion of ladies' associations than men's groups sent donations (as opposed to payments for publications) to London: in 1829 only seventeen of the fifty-eight men's groups compared with nineteen of the thirty-three ladies' associations.<sup>52</sup> This evidence suggests that ladies' associations gave a higher priority to fund-raising for the Anti-Slavery Society than did men's auxiliaries.

Women were also more systematic and innovative fund-raisers than men. The Female Society for Birmingham developed a nationwide network of district treasurers, and more localised networks were formed by the Ladies' Associations at Calne, Manchester and Dublin.<sup>53</sup> In addition, women at Reading and Rotherham organised small anti-slavery bazaars which raised £60 and £124 respectively.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup>All the figures quoted here are derived from the Accounts of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society. Contributions from men's auxiliaries and ladies' associations were not of course the only source of funds for the Anti-Slavery Society: some individuals contributed directly to central funds, the number of men (113-132 annually) and much smaller number of women (only 11 to 27 annually) remaining stable over the period. The largest single source of funds was an annual block donation from the Society of Friends of £500 to £1500, given most but not all years. It is unknown what proportion of this money came from Quaker women.

<sup>53</sup>Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Founding Meeting; The Second Report of the Ladies Association for Calne (Calne: W. Baily, 1827); Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, (Dublin: R. Napper, 1828); Lucy Townsend, "Autographs", p. 318, MSS Brit. Emp. S 5, in RHL.

<sup>54</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 26 Nov, 1829; The Seventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1832), p. 16, 57; advertisement for

On the other hand, neither ladies' associations nor the Anti-Slavery Society defined fund-raising as the women's main function, and women frequently used much of their funds locally rather than donating them to the society in London. The Female Society for Birmingham, one of the largest group donors to Anti-Slavery Society funds, used most of the money it raised to produce its own propaganda. In 1826, its year of peak income, the group raised £908, a staggering amount when compared to the total income of £2933 for the national Anti-Slavery Society for that year, and compared to the £50 to £150 annual turnover of other ladies' associations and men's auxiliaries at this period. Of this total nearly £700 was spent on its own activities, and only £80 sent to the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>55</sup>

An examination of other women's groups shows a spectrum of donation patterns from the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society's donation of no funds whatsoever to London, to the Liverpool Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society's allocation of almost all its income to the national society.<sup>56</sup> Prochaska's characterisation of local ladies'

---

Rotherham Anti-Slavery Bazaar in the Sheffield Iris, 5 Oct 1830. For a discussion of bazaars as a female fund-raising method see Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, chap. ii.

<sup>55</sup>The First Report of the Female Society for Birmingham; Account of Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826.

<sup>56</sup>[Anti-Slavery Society], Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations, p. 7; The First Report of the Ladies' Association for Liverpool; Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Sheffield, 1827), p. 15. For intermediate positions see The Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne ..., (Calne: T. P. Bailey, 1828), [p. 36]; The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton, p. 22.

associations as primarily fund-raisers for their national societies is thus inapplicable to anti-slavery. The proportion of money they donated to London shows a similar variability to that of men's auxiliaries.<sup>57</sup>

Where ladies' associations did differ from men's societies was in their donations to various groups involved in relief and educational work among the black population of the British West Indies. In contrast, men's groups did not normally support such work.

Interest in so-called "negroes' aid" was reflected in the original titles of women's societies at Birmingham and Sheffield: the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves and the Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. The only men's group with a similar title, the Hibernian Negroes' Friend Society, was strongly influenced by the Birmingham women, which it praised for giving priority to "negroes aid" work, in contrast to the disinterest of other societies.<sup>58</sup>

The Birmingham group resolved at its foundation that surplus funds should be given to Christians involved in charitable work among free blacks in the West Indies, and for the formation of schools for black people, slave and free, children and adults. Over the following years it gave donations to a large number of groups: the Society

---

<sup>57</sup>Contrast Report of the Committee of the Manchester Society, for the Furtherance of the Gradual Abolition of Slavery (Manchester: Smith, 1827), account (p. 9) which shows £200 of £438 raised was remitted to London, with The Second Annual Report of the Edinburgh Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate Abolition on Negro Slavery, the statement of accounts in which shows no donation to London from an income of £114.

<sup>58</sup>Charles E. H. Orpen, The Principles, Plans, and Objects, of "The Hibernian Negro's Friend Society", (Dublin, 8 Jan 1831), p. 12.

for the Relief of Distressed and Discarded Negroes in the Island of Antigua; the Female Refuge Society of Antigua; Moravian Sunday Schools in the West Indies; the Benevolent Society for St Kitt's; the Society for the Visitation of the Sick in Barbados; Mission House, Hatton Garden, for the purchase of adult books for plantations where missionaries were not admitted; and the London-based Evangelical Ladies' Society for Promoting the Early Education and Improvement of Children of Negroes, and People of Colour (henceforth, the London Ladies' Negro Education Society).<sup>59</sup>

Similar resolutions concerning allocation of funds, and similar donations, were made by the ladies' societies at Calne, Clifton, Dublin, Liverpool, St Ives and Edinburgh.<sup>60</sup> The Dublin women transmitted their donations through the medium of the Birmingham group, and the evidence already cited for close links between Birmingham and the societies at Calne, Clifton, Liverpool and Dublin suggests that the Birmingham women may have influenced these groups to support "negroes' aid".

---

<sup>59</sup>Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Founding Meeting, resolution 7; The First to Fifth Reports of the Female Society for Birmingham; The Seventh and Eighth Reports of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1832, 1833). For the formation of mission schools in Jamaica from 1822 and their reliance on British charitable support see Turner, Slaves and Missionaries, p. 87.

<sup>60</sup>Eighth founding resolution of the Ladies' Association for Calne, 11 August 1825, quoted in [Heyrick], Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, p. 162; The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton, p. 22; The First and Third Reports of the Ladies' Association for Liverpool, (Liverpool: George Smith, 1828, 1830); The Second Report of the Female Association for St. Ives, (St. Ives: S. Gardner, [1832]), [p. 31]; Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, p. 13; Report of the Hibernian Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, (Dublin: M. Goodwin, 1833), p. 7; Resolutions and Rules of the Edinburgh Female Anti-Slavery Association, (Edinburgh: Ballantyre, 1830), p. 10-11.

Support for black relief education and conversion to Christianity can be seen as an extension of women's support for educational, missionary and charitable societies at this period. Male abolitionists had similar involvements but kept them separate from their anti-slavery work, possibly because they viewed the latter as political rather than philanthropic. Women abolitionists did, however, make some distinction between anti-slavery and philanthropic work. The Female Society for Birmingham in 1827 described helping the poor as charity, a question of mercy, whereas freeing the slave was a question of justice. British women, it considered, were partly responsible for the misery of the slave, but not responsible for the condition of the poor.<sup>61</sup>

This issue of responsibility was also emphasised by Elizabeth Heyrick, who argued in 1824 that slaves would not accept Christian instruction so long as they saw their instructors violating their own lessons by their support for the "sin" of slavery.<sup>62</sup> When the Ladies' Negro Education Society was formed by Evangelical Anglicans in 1825 women abolitionists, while supporting it financially, were at pains to point out that education was not the only aid British ladies could bestow on slaves. A letter to the Christian Observer, probably written by Lucy Townsend, stated that it was the colonial system which caused the

---

<sup>61</sup>The Second Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, pp. 13-16.

<sup>62</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition: or, an Enquiry into the Shortest, Safest and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery, (London: Knight and Bagster, 1824), p. 8. This pamphlet will be discussed in detail in chap. iii, section 1 of this thesis.

debasement of slaves and thus the priority should be to "assist in delivering them from their cruel bondage, which reduces them to the brutish and demoralized state in which we find them". Giving priority to education rather than emancipation "neutralizes the efforts of many otherwise noble-minded advocates ... , and it prevents British Ladies joining hand in hand to break their bonds".<sup>63</sup>

A few years later A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations, published by the London Female Anti-Slavery Society, stressed the distinction between educational and anti-slavery work. Female associations, it asserted, supported efforts for educating slaves while deprecating exertions which were limited to amelioration, and were intended as a substitute for eventual full emancipation.<sup>64</sup>

Increasing doubts about the value of educating slaves led some women's groups to favour concentrating aid on freed slaves in Africa. The London group considered such aid to freed slaves as "legitimate and desirable as a collateral one" to anti-slavery, which could be met without weakening support for the primary object of emancipation.<sup>65</sup> In 1831 a total of twenty-eight ladies' anti-slavery

---

<sup>63</sup>The Christian Observer, Vol XXV, no. 11 (Nov 1825), pp. 715-6; no. 12 (Dec 1825), pp. 749-51. Lucy Townsend, "Scrap Book on Negro Slaves", pp. 151-155, MSS Brit. Emp. S 4 in RHL, contains an amended and lengthened version of the letter in Lucy Townsend's hand, suggesting that she may also have been the author of the published version.

<sup>64</sup>A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations, (London: printed for the Female Anti-Slavery Society, [n.d.]), pp. 6-8. An identically worded section is included in The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton, pp. 5-8.

<sup>65</sup>The Fourth Report of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society, (London: S. Bagster Jun., 1832), pp. 9, 14-15. The text of the circular is given in The Seventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, pp. 31-34.



associations sent donations in response to a circular appeal from the London Female Anti-Slavery Society urging them to give financial support to the school founded some ten years before by Hannah Kilham to educate girls rescued from slave ships. The Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Society made clear its African focus in its title, stating that aid to freed blacks rather than relief to slaves accorded better with its political objective of the total abolition of slavery rather than its mitigation.<sup>66</sup>

Women also allocated funds to the cases of individual slaves and free blacks which came to their attention. This included the "ransoming" of individual slaves by purchasing them and then setting them free. The Female Society for Birmingham resolved in November 1826 to appropriate part of its funds to the ransom of infant slaves but had to drop the scheme on being informed that a large-scale ransoming scheme would not be allowed by Government. A fund of £150 accumulated for the purpose was then redirected into a modest plan for the ransom of a male or female slave who would be useful as a teacher of slaves.<sup>67</sup>

The Anti-Slavery Society's secretary, Thomas Pringle, gave personal help to a number of black slaves who had been brought to Britain by their owners. On several occasions he obtained funds from the Female Society for Birmingham, possibly because it was a society for the relief of slaves rather than an exclusively anti-slavery group. The

---

<sup>66</sup>Quote from "the objects and proceedings of Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Association" in the Missionary Register, (London), February 1830, pp. 83-84.

<sup>67</sup>The Second Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, pp. 26-7; "Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 8 April 1830.

Birmingham women passed on information to other women's groups, including those at Salisbury, Manchester, Clifton and Dublin, and these societies often channelled their donations for individual cases through Birmingham. Individual men, women and in some cases whole families were ransomed though the total numbers involved were small and the process often took several years.<sup>68</sup>

Looking at female fund-raising and allocation as a whole, it is clear that ladies' associations were successful fund-raisers but that they did not prioritise this activity. They did not donate all their funds to the national Anti-Slavery Society, but spent some on educational and relief work among black people affected by slavery, some on promoting their own local campaigning.

### 3. Activities: Propaganda

Ladies' associations, in common with men's auxiliaries, saw their primary role as being the diffusion of information in order to arouse public opinion against slavery. Indeed, a large proportion of their funds were allocated for this purpose.

Both groups were involved in the local distribution of the tracts, pamphlets and periodical of the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>69</sup> They occasionally also reprinted tracts or made

---

<sup>68</sup>The Fifth Report of the Female society for Birmingham, "Report of the Female Society for Birmingham ...", The Christian Advocate, no. lxxx (2 May 1831), no. lxxii (16 May 1831); The Seventh and Eighth Reports of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for 12 April 1831, 3 April 1832; Report of the Hibernian Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup>See Accounts of Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society for payments for publications purchased by local anti-slavery societies.

compilations of extracts for local distribution.<sup>70</sup> Both groups also produced their own propaganda material. These included printed annual reports which gave information on developments in the West Indies, on progress in the anti-slavery cause, and on their own anti-slavery perspective and activities, including accounts and lists of officers and subscribers.

Many of the founding resolutions and reports of local Ladies' Associations were sent to the Female Society for Birmingham, which played a unique role among local anti-slavery societies, male or female, acting as the hub of a network of contacts between local ladies' associations.<sup>71</sup> The group supplied its own propaganda to other ladies associations on a national basis, acting as an alternative source of supply to the Anti-Slavery Society. Of the £908 it raised in 1826 it spent £498 on the production of workbags containing sets of anti-slavery documents, and £195 on printing, in contrast to only £10 remitted to the

---

<sup>70</sup>Examples produced by Ladies' Associations are: A Concise View of Colonial Slavery, (Newcastle: Hodgson, for the Newcastle Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, 1830); and An Address to the Public, (5th ed, London: printed for the Female Anti-Slavery Society by Bagton and Thoms, 1828). Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society printed five hundred copies of a Parliamentary speech by Brougham (see The Fifth Annual Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, (Sheffield: J. Blackwell at the Iris Office, 1830), [p. 3]).

<sup>71</sup>See "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves" for information on the Female Society for Birmingham's receipt of printed founding resolutions and/or reports from the Ladies' Association for Calne, the Female Society for Clifton, Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Association, Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and London Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society; The First Report of the Ladies' Association for Liverpool included an extract from the report of the Female Society for Clifton, and the album in the Society's possession ("Album" among Cropper Family Papers, Merseyside Record Office, Liverpool) contained the First Report of the Birmingham society.

Anti-Slavery Society in payment for its papers and documents. The group's total expenditure on publications amounted to almost half the amount spent by the national Anti-Slavery Society itself on publications in 1826 (£703 as compared to £1485).<sup>72</sup>

The Birmingham women produced propaganda which made use of middle-class women's accomplishments and was designed to appeal particularly to women. Their workbags containing tracts were sewn from East India cotton, silk or satin.<sup>73</sup> This use of an acceptable feminine activity for a practical and philanthropic end is a minor but suggestive example of the way in which women linked the "private" sphere of domestic work with the "public" sphere of campaigning.

The workbags were aimed at "the affluent and influential classes of the community" and were presented to the King, to Princess Victoria, to aristocrats, to the wives of prominent male abolitionists such as Mrs Clarkson and Mrs Wilberforce, to the author Maria Edgeworth and to the prison reformer Elizabeth Fry. Workbags were also supplied to the Ladies' Associations with whom the Birmingham group was in contact at Calne, Colchester, Sheffield, Bristol and Clifton, Manchester and Peckham. In

---

<sup>72</sup>Compare Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, pp. 8-9, with The First Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 23.

<sup>73</sup>The workbags are described in Sturge, Memoir of Mary Lloyd of Wednesbury, p. 30, and in The Genius of Universal Emancipation, New Series, Vol. I, no. 16 (Baltimore, 20 Oct 1827), p 126.

1826 alone the Birmingham group distributed two thousand of the workbags through England, Wales and Ireland.<sup>74</sup>

The Birmingham group was aided in its efforts by the Liverpool Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, which seems to have been responsible for the transmission of its workbags and pamphlets not only throughout Lancashire but also to Moyallen, Clonmell and Dublin in Ireland and as far afield as Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York in the United States. Those supplied included Benjamin Lundy, editor of the abolitionist magazine the Genius of Universal Emancipation, who devoted a large amount of space to publicising the efforts of British women and urging American women to follow their example. Lundy had no equivalent contacts with local men's auxiliaries, though he did receive some of the publications of the national Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>75</sup>

Much of the propaganda produced by ladies' associations was aimed specifically at women and was intended to arouse female public opinion. This was true not only of their reports but also of other pamphlets. The Female Society for Birmingham published "What Does Your Sugar Cost?" to promote female support of the slave-grown sugar boycott; the London Female Anti-Slavery Society

---

<sup>74</sup>"Cash Book, Belonging to the Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves for Birmingham", Birmingham Central Library; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for 30 Oct 1827, 8 April 1828, 12 April 1831; "Ledger Belonging to the Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves for Birmingham"; The First Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 6.

<sup>75</sup>See handwritten lists and accounts at back of "Album" among Cropper Family Papers; The Genius of Universal Emancipation, various entries between Vol II, no. 27 (Baltimore, May 1827) and 4th Series, Vol. I, no. 12 (Philadelphia, Dec 1836).

published A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations. The Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 published its founder George Thompson's Address to the Ladies of Glasgow.<sup>76</sup>

In towns where there was no active men's group ladies' associations also on occasion produced tracts aimed at men and well as women. Examples are Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society's A Word for the Slave, and their Appeal of the Friends of the Negro to the British People, fifteen hundred copies of which were produced in an attempt to enlist the support of working-class men.<sup>77</sup>

Ladies' associations also diffused the works of individual women writers, many of whom were themselves members of local anti-slavery societies. A compilation of anti-slavery propaganda distributed in album form by the Female Society for Birmingham included poems "On the Flogging of Women" by Charlotte Elizabeth Phelan, a district treasurer for Birmingham, and on "British Slavery" by Hannah More, and the pamphlet Scripture Evidence of the Sinfulness and Injustice of Oppression by the Quaker

---

<sup>76</sup>"What Does Your Sugar Cost?" A Cottage Conversation on the Subject of British Negro Slavery, (Birmingham: Richard Peart, 1828); A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations, (London: printed for the Female Anti-Slavery Society, [n.d.]); George Thompson, Substance of an Address to the Ladies of Glasgow and its Vicinity Upon the Present Aspect of the Great Question of Negro Emancipation, (Glasgow: David Robertson, 1833).

<sup>77</sup>The Ladies of the Sheffield Anti-Slavery Association, A Word for the Slave, (Sheffield: J. Blackwell, 1830); Appeal of the Friends of the Negro to the British People; on Behalf of the Slaves in Their colonies, (Sheffield: J. Blackwell, 1830); The Fifth Annual Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.

abolitionist Mary Dudley.<sup>78</sup> A similar Album in the possession of the women's society at Liverpool included Verses on Slavery by a working class woman called Jane Yeoman, Leicester activist Elizabeth Heyrick's No British Slavery and Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women.<sup>79</sup> The Liverpool group also circulated Mary Dudley's pamphlet and Inquiries Relating to Negro Emancipation, by an unidentified female author.<sup>80</sup> Clifton and Bristol Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association included in its anti-slavery library Mary Dudley's pamphlet, Charlotte Elizabeth Phelan's narrative poem "The System", local abolitionist Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck's Is the System of Slavery Sanctioned, and British Slavery Described, a pamphlet by Miss [probably Sarah] Wedgwood published by the North Staffordshire Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>81</sup> The Dublin

---

<sup>78</sup>"Female Society for Birmingham etc, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves. Album" in Birmingham Central Library, Archives Dept.; [Mary Dudley], Scripture Evidence of the Sinfulness of Injustice and Oppression, (London: Harvey & Darton, 1828).

<sup>79</sup>Jane Yeoman, Verses on Slavery, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1826); [Elizabeth Heyrick], No British Slavery; or, an Invitation to the People to Put a Speedy End to It, (London: sold by Hatchard & Son, 1824); [Elizabeth Heyrick], Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women, (Leicester: A. Cockshaw, 1828).

<sup>80</sup>Dudley, Scripture Evidence; Inquiries Relating to Negro Emancipation, (London: J. Hatchard & Son, 1829); "Album", Cropper Family Papers (note the handwritten list of pamphlets distributed by the Liverpool society at the back of the album).

<sup>81</sup>The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton, pp. 16-17; [Dudley], Scripture Evidence; Charlotte Elizabeth [Phelan], The System; a Tale of the West Indies, (London: Frederick Westley & A.H. Davis, 1827); [Wedgwood, Miss ?Sarah], British Slavery Described (Newcastle: sold for the Benefit of the North Staffs Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, 1828) (for its attribution to Miss Wedgwood of Camp Hill see letter from Elizabeth Heyrick to Ann Knight, Leicester, 25 Aug 1828, Knight Family Papers, Temp. MSS 725, D.10, Friends' House Library, London). No copy of Schimmelpenninck's pamphlet could be traced.

Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society circulated poems by Charlotte Elizabeth and Hannah More.<sup>82</sup> A poem by Leicester activist Susanna Watts entitled "The Slave's Address to British Ladies" was printed at the head of the 1828 reports of the Birmingham and Calne societies.<sup>83</sup> Watts was also the editor of The Humming Bird, a periodical which interspersed anti-slavery items with miscellaneous articles and included an "Address to the Ladies of Great-Britain, in Behalf of the Negro-Slaves".<sup>84</sup> Her co-worker Elizabeth Heyrick sent copies of this periodical to Anne Knight of the Chelmsford Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, with whom she also exchanged other tracts.<sup>85</sup> Lucy Townsend of Birmingham wrote a tract entitled "To the Law, and to the Testimony" which was supplied at cost price to anti-slavery associations.<sup>86</sup>

Ladies' anti-slavery associations thus both stimulated the production of pamphlets by women and provided a source of distribution for them. The value of such tracts written by women for a female audience was recognised by the Anti-

---

<sup>82</sup>Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, p. 16.

<sup>83</sup>The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham; The Third Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne.

<sup>84</sup>The Humming Bird, Vol. 1, no 1 (Dec 1824) to Vol. I, no. 12 (Nov 1825). The "Address to the Ladies" is in Vol. I, no. 7 (June 1825), pp. 195-203. For letters to Susanna Watts concerning contributions to the Humming Bird see p. 261 of Susanna Watts Scrapbook, Leicester Public Library.

<sup>85</sup>Letters from Elizabeth Heyrick to Anne Knight, Leicester, 25 Aug 1828, 5 Apr 1830, Knight Family Papers, D.10, Friends House Library, London.

<sup>86</sup>Lucy Townsend, "To the Law, and to the Testimony", or Questions on Slavery Answered by the Scriptures, and Presumed to be Worthy of Particular Consideration on the National Fast Day, (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1832).

Slavery Society. A pamphlet written by a woman to encourage other women to join ladies' associations was republished by the Society in cheaper form in 1828, and a total of one thousand five hundred copies of Elizabeth Heyrick's Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women were purchased by the Anti-Slavery Society in 1828 and 1829 for distribution.<sup>87</sup>

Ladies' anti-slavery associations and men's auxiliaries diffused their propaganda and aroused public opinion in rather different ways. There is evidence that both set up libraries for the loan of tracts and pamphlets.<sup>88</sup> The main method of tract distribution used by women, however, was house to house canvassing, when publications were sold to the better-off or lent to the poor. This laborious but effective method of distribution was not used by men's auxiliaries and was probably inspired by the system of female district visitors to the poor used by the evangelical philanthropic societies of the period.<sup>89</sup>

Ladies' associations also made some use of the press

---

<sup>87</sup>Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1827 and 1828, p. 5; Account ..., for the Years 1829 and 1830, p. 3; A Lady, A Dialogue Between a Well-Wisher and a Friend to the Slaves in the British Colonies, (London: S. Bagster, Jun., [n.d.]).

<sup>88</sup>The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton; The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham; Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield ...[Minute Book], entries for 10 April 1831, 18 Jan 1833, MSS in John Rylands University Library, Manchester; Report of the Hibernian Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society. Some men's societies also organised libraries - see "Birmingham Antislavery Society Minute Book", MSS in Birmingham Central Library.

<sup>89</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, pp. 105-8; Ford K. Brown, "Fathers of the Victorians", reprint from Virginia Quarterly Review, July 1936, pp. 424-428.

as a means of diffusing information and gaining support.<sup>90</sup> The Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society occasionally made public appeals for financial support and sent reports of its activities to local newspapers, as did the Chelmsford Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>91</sup> The Dublin-based Hibernian Ladies' Negro's Friend Society paid for the insertion in the Dublin Evening Post in 1833 of a speech by Thomas Fowell Buxton and an address from the Anti-Slavery Society in London.<sup>92</sup> When the minutes of the Female Society for Birmingham are compared with those of the local men's auxiliary, however, men's regular and consistent use of the press contrasts with its sporadic use by women. Possibly the press was felt to be too political a medium: women's groups seem to have preferred to use religious periodicals such as the Missionary Register and the Christian Advocate to publicise their work. This gave them a higher public profile at a national level but a lower one at a local level.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup>For an example of the systematic use of the press by a men's society see "Birmingham Antislavery Society Minute Book".

<sup>91</sup>"Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield ..." [Minute Book], entry for 1 Oct 1831; Sheffield Iris, 24 Oct 1826 (report of annual meeting), 5 Oct 1830 (advertisement for anti-slavery bazaar); The Essex Standard, and Colchester and County Advertiser, 21 Apr, 1832.

<sup>92</sup>Report of the Hibernian Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, [p. 7].

<sup>93</sup>The Missionary Register, linked to the (Evangelical Anglican) Church Missionary Society, received the reports of ladies' anti-slavery associations at Birmingham, Calne, Clifton, Liverpool, North Staffordshire, Leicester, Manchester, Reading and Peckham and printed extracts from many of them between 1826 and 1830; the Christian Advocate printed the full text of the Sixth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham (no. LXX (2 May 1831), No. LXXII (16 May 1831)).

Locally, men's auxiliaries dominated the more public anti-slavery activities. Ladies' associations generally left the organisation of public meetings to men's auxiliaries. While women were encouraged to attend public meetings, and did so in large numbers, they never chaired or spoke at such meetings themselves.<sup>94</sup> In Birmingham the Female Society asked the men to arrange public lectures, and were hampered by not always receiving their co-operation.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, women did occasionally organise public meetings at which men were invited to speak. In 1830, in the absence of an active men's society to conduct the event, the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society arranged for a vicar to give a public lecture on slavery, though only after obtaining "the approbation of many gentlemen of influence".<sup>96</sup> Prominent male abolitionists also gave lectures at the annual meetings of ladies' associations.<sup>97</sup>

Women's failure to speak at public meetings did not mean that female anti-slavery debate was confined to the domestic sphere, however. While the Female Society for Birmingham held its committee meetings in members' homes,

---

<sup>94</sup>For encouragement of women to attend public meetings see advertisement in Sheffield Iris, 17 Jan 1826. The Yorkshire Gazette of 23 Oct 1830 reported that ladies outnumbered gentlemen by some six or seven to one at a public meeting on anti-slavery in York.

<sup>95</sup>"Birmingham Antislavery Society Minute Book", entry for 3 May 1831. These minutes show the frequent organisation of public meetings by a men's society.

<sup>96</sup>"Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield ..." [Minute Book] entry for 24 July 1830.

<sup>97</sup>Joseph Ivimey, The Utter Extinction of Slavery an Object of Scripture Prophecy, (London: Messeder, 1832), title page.

other societies made use of public meeting halls. Liverpool women held their committee meetings in the Bible Depository, women at Chelmsford and St. Ives (Hunts) held their annual general meetings in the local Friends' Meeting House, and women in Sheffield held committee meetings in the Fire Office.<sup>98</sup>

In addition, the significance of groups of women debating political issues within the home should not be underestimated. It involved a breakdown of the division between male and female roles within the family, a division symbolised by the physical segregation of the "public" areas of the middle-class home into the parlour where women took tea and discussed domestic issues and the smoking room <sup>h</sup> where men discussed politics.  
^

#### 4. Activities: Abstention

One important aspect of anti-slavery work which involved this merging of the domestic and the political was the campaign for abstention from slave-grown sugar. Women now not only participated in this campaign on an individual basis as in the 1790's, but also promoted it in their local communities through ladies' associations.

The national campaign was two-pronged: individual abstention, and pressure on Parliament to equalize the duties on East and West India sugar, thus removing the artificial price advantage enjoyed by sugar from the slave

---

<sup>98</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves"; [Anti-Slavery Society], Ladies Anti-Slavery Associations, p. 6; Ivimey, The Utter Extinction of Slavery, title page; The Second Report of the Female Association, for St. Ives, [p.5]; "Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield ..." [Minute Book].

plantations. At a local level activities were broadly divided on sex lines, with men's auxiliaries concentrating on petitioning Parliament on the sugar duties, and ladies' associations focussing on the abstention issue. In other words, women concentrated on the more domestic, consumer-based aspect of the campaign, centering on issues of individual responsibility and morality, men on the question of economic policy.<sup>99</sup>

The ladies' society at Sheffield, where there had been strong Quaker support for the boycott in the 1790's, resolved at its foundation in July 1825 to promote the slave-sugar boycott, and women's societies at Calne and Birmingham soon followed suit.<sup>100</sup> Other ladies' associations which promoted abstention included those at Liverpool, Peckham, Clifton, Worcester, Leicester, St Ives (Hunts), Dublin and Edinburgh.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup>For pamphlets on the sugar issue produced by the Anti-Slavery Society see lists of publications in Accounts of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society. For activities of men's Auxiliaries on sugar duties see for example Address of the Bath Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society (Bath: Wood and Cunningham, 1825), pp. 3, 13; report of anti-slavery public meeting in Birmingham Chronicle, 10 Nov 1825; On the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, Addressed to the Inhabitants of Ashborne and its Neighbourhood (Ashborne: E. Parkes, [n.d.]).

<sup>100</sup>Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, [Founding Resolutions]; Calne resolution quoted in [Elizabeth Heyrick], Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, p. 162; Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, [resolutions, 8 Dec, 1825].

<sup>101</sup>The First and Third Reports of the Ladies' Association for Liverpool; Reasons for Using East India Sugar, (London: printed for the Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Association, by Howlett and Brimmer, 1828); The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton; The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 21; A Brief Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Heyrick, (Leicester: Crossley and Clarke, 1862), pp. 17-18; The Second Report of the Female Association, for St. Ives; Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society; Report of the

The interest in abstention taken by ladies associations was fostered by the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>102</sup> The Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, commenting in 1826 on the multiplying of ladies' associations, described one of their main objects as being to encourage the use of free rather than slave sugar.<sup>103</sup>

Elizabeth Heyrick, the foremost female pamphleteer of the period, had argued in 1824 that, in the absence of any progress towards emancipation by Parliament, destroying the market for the products of slave labour was the safest and speediest way of forcing planters to change from slave to free labour. Following Quaker tradition, she also regarded abstention as a matter of conscience and morality. Slavery was "a question in which we are all implicated" through the purchase of slave produce. Abstention would free people from participation in a sin which exposed the British nation to the threat of Divine retribution.<sup>104</sup>

In An Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women, published in 1828 and widely distributed by the Anti-Slavery Society, Heyrick addressed herself specifically to women. She urged her sex to take a lead in the anti-slavery campaign by implementing "a general system of decisive practical discouragement." Women were appealed to because "in the domestic department they are the chief

---

Hibernian Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society; Resolutions and Rules of the Edinburgh Female Anti-Slavery Association.

<sup>102</sup>Negro Slavery. To the Ladies of the United Kingdom, p. 3; [Anti-Slavery Society], Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations, pp. 1, 5, 6.

<sup>103</sup>Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. I, no. 14 (July 1826), p. 212.

<sup>104</sup>[Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition (quote from p. 4).

controllers; they, for the most part, provide the articles of family consumption".<sup>105</sup> In her Apology for Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations, published the same year, she urged Ladies' Associations to concentrate their efforts on promoting the West Indian sugar boycott.<sup>106</sup>

Ladies' anti-slavery associations had already set about promoting abstention in a systematic way. A high priority was given to the campaign and comprehensive house to house canvasses were carried out in Sheffield and Birmingham.<sup>107</sup> During these canvasses pamphlets obtained from the Anti-Slavery Society and propaganda produced by the Associations themselves were distributed. The Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society handed out cards bearing the information that "by six families using East India sugar one slave less is required".<sup>108</sup> The Birmingham society in 1828 issued five thousand copies of "a little directory for the use of those ladies who visit the poor to recommend the consumption of the produce of Free Labour", entitled "What Does Your Sugar Cost?" A Cottage conversation on the Subject of British Negro Slavery. A circular was sent to district treasurers suggesting that

<sup>105</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women, (Leicester: A. Cockshaw, 1828), quotes from pp. 4, 6.

<sup>106</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], "Apology for Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations", pamphlet reprinted in full in The Genius of Universal Emancipation, see especially 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 7 (Dec 1831), p. 111; no. 9 (Feb 1832), pp. 150-151.

<sup>107</sup>Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, (1827), p. 3; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", various entries, 1827-1829; Second and Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham. See also The Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, pp. 7, 20.

<sup>108</sup>East India Sugar, (Sheffield: J. Blackwell) [card].

such small tracts aimed at children and the poor should be lent from door to door, while a different pamphlet entitled Reasons for Substituting East India Sugar for West, four thousand copies of which were printed, should be spread among the "higher classes".<sup>109</sup> Lucy Townsend's daughter Charlotte produced a little booklet on abstention aimed at children and their mothers, Pity the Negro; or an Address to Children on the Subject of Slavery, of which at least seven editions of two thousand copies each were published.<sup>110</sup>

Another tactic, used by the Worcester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, was to put pressure on local shopkeepers by withdrawing custom from grocers who sold, and confectioners who used, West India sugar.<sup>111</sup> In Dublin lists of importers and retailers of "free-grown" East India sugar were published.<sup>112</sup> There was also talk of setting up of local depositories for the sale of East India sugar at cost price.<sup>113</sup>

Attempts were also made by women to compile systematic registers of abstainers. The Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery

---

<sup>109</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 16th November 1826. The pamphlet was also circulated by the female societies at Sheffield and Dublin.

<sup>110</sup>[Charlotte Townsend], Pity the Negro; or An Address to Children on the Subject of Slavery, (7th Ed., London: Westley and Davis, 1829).

<sup>111</sup>The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 21.

<sup>112</sup>Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, p. 17.

<sup>113</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 26 Nov 1829. Unfortunately it is not known whether such depositories were ever opened.

Society decided in 1828 to keep a central register of all families who gave up using slave-grown sugar, collated from monthly lists produced by district treasurers.<sup>114</sup> In 1829 the Birmingham society instituted a similar scheme, and also contributed to setting up a national registry of abstainers. The aims were to show that numbers of abstainers were large and growing, to encourage competition between Ladies' Associations in recruiting new abstainers, and to draw public attention to the campaign by the regular publication of numbers of abstainers in newspapers. The scheme was taken up by the Anti-Slavery Society, and a National Registry was opened at No 10 Gracechurch Street, London on 20 December 1829.<sup>115</sup>

Unfortunately no lists of numbers of abstainers published by the Registry have been located, and it is thus difficult to estimate the extent of support for abstention. Elizabeth Heyrick claimed in 1826 that nine out of ten families visited agreed to abstain, amounting to two thousand families in one large manufacturing town.<sup>116</sup> In Sheffield, where organisations of radical artisans supported the anti-slavery cause, the rich were urged to follow the example of the local poor, the majority of whom had promptly agreed to abstain.<sup>117</sup> In Wiltshire, however,

---

<sup>114</sup>Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, p. 10.

<sup>115</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for 26th Nov. 1829; "Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entries for 6th and 20th Oct. 1829; The Genius of Universal Emancipation, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 5 (Sept 1831), pp. 73-4.

<sup>116</sup>[Heyrick], Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, Letter V.

<sup>117</sup>Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, p. 3.

most support was given by the more wealthy and influential members of the community and great difficulty was met in exciting the interest of the rural poor.<sup>118</sup> Despite women's persistent efforts, however, there is, as Corfield has pointed out, no evidence that the abstention campaign had any noticeable affect on the import of slave grown sugar.<sup>119</sup> As earlier, its main importance was in informing a wide range of people about British involvement in slavery and in enlisting them in some form of practical action which kept this involvement on their minds.

#### 5. The Female Activist

A few members of the new ladies' associations had gained their first experience of anti-slavery work through joining in the sugar boycott of the 1780's and 1790's. This applied both to Lucy Townsend (d. 1845), founder of the Birmingham society, and to Rachel Lloyd (1768-1854), who became one of the first district treasurers of the Female Society for Birmingham.<sup>120</sup> Other women whose activism spanned both periods of campaigning were Hannah Kilham (1774-1832), Hannah More (1745-1833) and Irish abolitionist poet Mary Leadbeater (née Shackleton) (1758-1826), who organised anti-slavery activities in her village

---

<sup>118</sup>The Third Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, p.7; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 26 Nov 1829.

<sup>119</sup>Corfield, MA dissertation, p. 33.

<sup>120</sup>"Memorial of Lucy Townsend" in The Twenty-Second Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, p. 13; list of officers in Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Founding Meeting.

of Ballitore in the 1820's.<sup>121</sup> In addition, Elizabeth Heyrick's (1769-1831) opposition to slavery dated back to at least 1796.<sup>122</sup>

The majority of women who made up the officers and committee members of ladies' anti-slavery associations were, however, from a new generation of activists, many born during the years of the campaign against the slave trade.

Some of the new activists were the daughters or wives of wealthy industrialists, manufacturers, merchants and bankers. Mary Lloyd (1795-1865) was married to Rebecca Lloyd's son Samuel, the head of a firm owning a foundry and colliery. Mary Roberts (1798-1882), secretary of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, was the daughter of Samuel Roberts of Park Grange, a manufacturer of silver and plated goods. Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck (b. 1778), a committee member of the Female Society for Clifton and an anti-slavery pamphleteer, was from the gun manufacturing and banking Galton family of Birmingham. Sarah Wedgwood (1776-1856), a leading financial supporter of anti-slavery, was daughter of the famous Staffordshire pottery manufacturer Josiah Wedgwood. Elizabeth Heyrick was the

---

<sup>121</sup>Isabel Grubb, "An Anti-Slavery Enthusiast, 1826", Journal of the Friends Historical Society, Vol. XXXI (1934), pp. 21-26 quoted extracts of letters on the anti-slavery campaign from Joshua Beale to Mary Leadbeater, the originals of which are in Friends' Library, Dublin.

<sup>122</sup>Letter from J. Coltman Jr. to Elizabeth Heyrick, 1796 in Coltman MSS 15, D57, 34. Leicester Museum Archives Dept.

daughter of John Coltman, a prominent Leicester hosiery manufacturer.<sup>123</sup>

Other women were from the families of prosperous tradesmen. Anne Knight (1786-1862), active in Chelmsford Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, was daughter of William Knight, a prosperous wholesale grocer. Hannah Messer (1787-1845), co-treasurer of London Female Anti-Slavery Society, was daughter of Joseph Messer, a druggist. Mrs Ulph, treasurer of the Female Association for St Ives (Huntingdon) was wife of J. B. Ulph who ran a large ironmongery business.<sup>124</sup>

Others were related to clergymen or schoolmasters. Mrs Margaret Crouch, secretary of the St Ives Female Association, was a schoolmaster's wife. Ann Gilbert (1782-1866), prominent in the Nottingham Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, was married to Independent minister the Rev. Joseph Gilbert. Maria Marsh, treasurer of Colchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, was wife of the Evangelical Church of England clergyman the Rev. William Marsh. Lucy Townsend of Birmingham and Calne was married to Evangelical Anglican vicar Samuel Townsend.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup>Sturge, Memoir of Mary Lloyd of Wednesbury; Samuel Roberts, Some Memorials of the Family of Roberts, (3rd ed., Sheffield: Northend, 1924); Christina C. Hankin (ed.), Life of Mary Ann Schimmelpenninck, (2 vols., London: Longman, Brown et al, 1858); Josiah Wedgwood, A History of the Wedgwood Family, (London: St. Catherine, 1908); A Brief Sketch of the Life and Labours of Mrs Elizabeth Heyrick. Most of the women discussed in this section are listed in Appendix II of this thesis.

<sup>124</sup>Gail Malmgreen, "Anne Knight and the Radical Sub-Culture", Quaker History, Vol. LXXI (Fall 1982), pp. 100-113; typescript Dictionary of Quaker Biography; information from curator of Norris Museum, Huntingdon.

<sup>125</sup>Information from curator of Norris Museum; Ann Taylor Gilbert, Autobiography and other Memorials of Mrs Gilbert, (2 vols, 1874); L.E. O'Rourke, ed., The Life and

Some women were themselves writers or teachers. Both Susanna Watts (d. 1842) and Elizabeth Heyrick worked as teachers and writers. Mrs Phelan, district treasurer at Sandhurst for the Female Society for Birmingham, was a popular author under the pen-name Charlotte Elizabeth. Ann Gilbert composed popular hymns for Sunday Schools.<sup>126</sup>

Such activists ranged in age from their twenties to their forties. Married and single women were involved in roughly equal numbers, and for most anti-slavery work had to be fitted in with a host of other duties for which middle-class women had particular responsibility: involvement in family businesses, housekeeping and the control of servants, the rearing of large families, and care for the sick and elderly. Mary Lloyd, for example, fitted in her duties as secretary for the most active women's group at Birmingham whilst rearing ten children and housekeeping on a fluctuating budget.<sup>127</sup>

Mary Lloyd and other activists were also involved in a range of philanthropic and charitable work in addition to anti-slavery, though in the 1825-33 period many gave priority to their anti-slavery work. Before her marriage and move to Birmingham in 1823 Mary Lloyd had taken an interest in the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society and in Elizabeth Fry's prison visiting work. On moving to Birmingham she became involved in the Bible

---

Friendships of Catherine Marsh, (1917); "Memorial of Lucy Townsend", The Twenty-Second Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society for Birmingham, (Birmingham: Hudson, 1847).

<sup>126</sup>Hymns and Poems of the Late Mrs Susanna Watts, (Leicester, 1842); Gilbert, Autobiography; Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, especially pp. 147, 158, 335, 343, 405, 452-3.

<sup>127</sup>Sturge, Memoir of Mary Lloyd.

Society and local Provident and Benevolent Societies. In 1834 she and Lucy Townsend formed a Juvenile Society for the Deaf and Dumb. Lucy Townsend herself, in addition to her philanthropic duties as a vicar's wife, was involved in the Bible Society, Dorcas meetings, and, with her husband, in campaigns for the suppression of vice and the abolition of bull-baiting and other cruel sports. Sarah Wedgwood gave most of her considerable fortune to charities including temperance, missionary, Irish and Female Protection societies as well as anti-slavery. Mary Dudley (1782-1847), sister of Bible Society secretary Charles Dudley, was herself involved in the education of the poor. Anna Gurney promoted safety measures for fishermen and sailors in her neighbourhood of Norwich. Elizabeth Heyrick campaigned against cruelty to animals and visited prisons. Her friend Susanna Watts in 1828 founded a Society for the Relief of Indigent Old Age in Leicester. Maria Marsh performed charitable duties as a vicar's wife and, like her husband, supported missionary work.<sup>128</sup> Women anti-slavery activists thus tended to be involved in a wide variety of societies designed for the education and relief of the poor, the promotion of missionary work, and the relief of the suffering of animals.

Overall, women came from similar backgrounds as male activists, and abolition was frequently a family concern. Examples of families in which both male and female members were involved in anti-slavery were the Coltmans of

---

<sup>128</sup>For Mary Dudley see Annual Monitor, 1849, p. 39; for Anna Gurney see Patricia M. Pugh, Calendar of the Papers of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, 1786-1845, List and Index Society Special Series, Vol. 13 (1980), introduction. For the other women see references in notes 117 to 121 above.

Leicester (Elizabeth Heyrick's relatives), the Lloyds and Sturges of Birmingham, the Marshes of Colchester and Birmingham, the Knights of Chelmsford, the Robertses and Reids of Sheffield, the Wedgwoods of Staffordshire, the Gurneys of Norwich, the Buxtons of Northrepps Hall, the Staceys of Tottenham near London, and the Croppers of Liverpool.

Within the family, however, the differing opportunities open to its male and female members affected the nature of their contribution to the cause. Samuel Gurney, George Stacey, James Cropper and Thomas Fowell Buxton were all on the national committee of the Anti-Slavery Society whereas their wives and daughters were involved in local ladies' associations and in providing "behind-the-scenes" support to their male relatives. Priscilla Buxton, daughter of Parliamentary anti-slavery leader Thomas Fowell Buxton, was co-secretary of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society and also her father's main adviser and confidante.<sup>129</sup>

In denominational terms anti-slavery drew support from a wide range of religious groups, and this is reflected in the presence of Quakers, Evangelical Anglicans, Baptists, Independents and Unitarians among the officers and committee members of ladies' associations. The Gilberts of Nottingham were Independents, Mrs Ulph of St Ives a Congregationalist; the Wedgwoods were Unitarians; Susanna Watts of Leicester was Baptist; Hannah More of

---

<sup>129</sup>The abolitionist George Stephen later described her as Buxton's "guardian angel", who acted as "his secretary, his librarian, his comforter, and often as his adviser and guide" (see Sir George Stephen, Anti-slavery Recollections, (London: Thomas Hatchard, 1854), p. 197). See also Pugh, introduction.

Bristol, the Townsends of Birmingham and the Marshes of Colchester were Evangelical Anglicans. Most of the remaining activists who have been identified were Quakers, and some held influential positions in the Society of Friends. Elizabeth Dudley (1799-1849), Mary Dudley's sister and co-secretary of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society, travelled extensively as a recorded minister and served as clerk to the Women's Yearly Meeting in London.<sup>130</sup> Mary Foster (1801?-1871), treasurer of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society, was an elder in Stoke Newington Meeting.<sup>131</sup> Mrs Sarah Gundry (1775-1860), treasurer of Calne Ladies Association, was also an elder in the Society of Friends.<sup>132</sup> Mrs Elizabeth Robson (1771-1843), a Liverpool Quaker minister, paid an extended religious visit to the United States in the 1820's during which she obtained an audience with President John Quincy Adams and exhorted him to use his power on behalf of the oppressed slaves.<sup>133</sup>

Ladies' anti-slavery associations, like the organised anti-slavery movement as a whole, thus drew their membership from philanthropically inclined middle-class nonconformists and Evangelical Anglicans. The total membership of the associations probably never exceeded ten

---

<sup>130</sup>Typescript Dictionary of Quaker Biography.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Obituary in Annual Monitor, 1861, p. 39.

<sup>133</sup>Letter J. Robson to J. S. Robson, 30 Oct 1826, MSS Portfolio 38.65, Friends' House Library, London; typescript Dictionary of Quaker Biography.

thousand.<sup>134</sup> This number did not represent the limits of support for anti-slavery, however. For outside the associations were other women who supported anti-slavery in various ways.

One such outsider was Fanny Wright (1795-1852) who, although from a Scottish middle class background, became an outcast from respectable society because of her public promotion of Owenite socialist and feminist ideals. Despite her political radicalism, Wright was a supporter of gradual rather than immediate emancipation. She was not involved in the British anti-slavery movement but in 1826 set up a short-lived racially mixed community at Nashoba in Tennessee with the plan that slaves, having earned their purchase price, would be set free and settled in some suitable country.<sup>135</sup>

In Britain itself the limited membership of ladies' associations was related to their failure to recruit working-class support. Although middle class women activists carried out door to door canvasses on the lines of missionary and Bible societies, they made no attempt to follow these groups in collecting weekly penny

---

<sup>134</sup>This is a very rough estimate based on the existence of a minimum of seventy-three groups with an average membership of perhaps one hundred women. There were twice as many men's societies and thus possibly twice as many male subscribers.

<sup>135</sup>For Wright's view on slavery, which she considered should be ameliorated and gradually abolished, see: An Englishwoman {Frances Wright}, Views of Society and Manners in America, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1821). pp. 62-77, 422-7, 515-23. A detailed consideration of Wright's work is beyond the scope of this thesis, since it forms part of the history of anti-slavery in America rather than Britain. (see Olive Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1985), pp. 228-230 for a short outline of her life and a list of biographies).

subscriptions from the poor. Instead, like men's auxiliaries, they set subscription rates at five to twelve shillings a year, a large amount for a working-class woman to contribute as a lump sum. Scattered references in subscription lists to donations from "a poor woman", "spontaneous offering from a servant", suggest the exceptional nature of such contributions, as well as being anonymous donations rather than membership subscriptions.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, as has been shown, their members did attempt to get support from working-class women for the sugar boycott since this depended on mass participation for its success.<sup>137</sup>

The exclusivity of ladies' associations suggests that they in part functioned as social clubs, a means of consolidating status as members of the philanthropic middle class. Like philanthropic groups, they offered women an opening for useful work combined with the opportunity of developing contacts and friendships outside the family circle in a "respectable" women-only milieu.

There is no evidence that ladies' associations had any black members. The free black community in early nineteenth century Britain was less sizeable than in the late eighteenth century, and there were few slaves, though there were a small number right up to the enforcement of the Emancipation Act in 1834. Some of them were women, and some of them ran away from their owners. Several were helped by working- and middle-class white women, and

---

<sup>136</sup>See for example The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 22.

<sup>137</sup>Working women's signing of anti-slavery petitions to Parliament will be discussed in chap. iii, section 3 of this thesis.

several exchanged their slave status for positions as servants in abolitionist families.

The black woman on which most information is available is Mary Prince, who not only resisted her own enslavement but also campaigned against slavery on behalf of other black people. This she did through writing her autobiography which was intended to "let English people know the truth" about slavery "that they may break our chains, and set us free".<sup>138</sup> A slave in the British West Indies, she was brought to London around 1828 by her owners and took the decision to leave them rather than be taken back to slavery in the West Indies. The secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, Thomas Pringle, unsuccessfully negotiated with her owners to manumit her, and she herself petitioned Parliament for her freedom. Unable to return home, she was employed as a servant by the Pringles.<sup>139</sup>

Information in Prince's autobiography and evidence presented at the court case for libel mounted by her owner Mr Wood against Thomas Pringle reveals that Mary Prince received help from white and black women, middle- and working-class. She was aided by her owner's English washerwoman Emma Hill and "mulatto" cook, a blacksmith's wife, her sister-in-law Susan Brown, Mrs Pringle, Susanna Strickland, the author and family friend of the Pringles

---

<sup>138</sup>Mary Prince, The History of Mary Prince, ed. Moira Ferguson, (reprint of original edition of 1831 with a new introduction) (London: Pandora, 1987) (quotes from pp. 64, 84). For a review article on this edition see Joan Grant, "Call Loud", Trouble and Strife, no. 14 (Autumn 1988), pp. 9-12. Prince's representation of the life of slave women is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>139</sup>Prince, The History of Mary Prince; The Case of Wood v. Pringle, [n.p., n.d], (an appeal for funds); Times, March 1st 1833, pp. 6-7. For Mary's Prince's petition to Parliament see chap. iii, section 3 of this thesis.

who wrote down her autobiography, and members of the Female Society for Birmingham who gave financial assistance.<sup>140</sup>

In his introduction to Prince's History Pringle mentioned that many similar cases had come to the attention of the Anti-Slavery Society. One of these concerned Nancy Morgan. A slave from Saint Vincent who had been brought to England by her owners, she applied to Thomas Pringle, imploring him to procure her freedom. This time Pringle was successful, negotiating a price of £60 with her master for her and her son, £20 of which came from the Female Society for Birmingham.<sup>141</sup>

Quaker women aided other black women. One, known only as Polly, had been brought to England from Trinidad by her owner. In 1827 she applied to a Methodist minister in Ramsgate for baptism. He informed a Quaker relation of his, Mrs Mary Capper of Clapton near London, of the case and she obtained an interview with Polly. Polly told the English woman that "she knew she was thought free in England, but she thought she was more a slave than in the West Indies, as she had none of her acquaintance to speak to." She said she would like to live in an English family, and Mrs Capper decided to engage her as a servant, this being the most effective way of procuring her freedom. She worked for Mrs Capper for eighteenth months but became dejected at her isolation from other black people. Hannah

---

<sup>140</sup>Prince, The History, p. 77; Times, 1 Mar 1833, p. 6-7; The Seventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, Appendix no. 4, pp. 38-9; the Eighth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, Account; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 12 Apr 1831.

<sup>141</sup>For information on her case see The Seventh Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, pp. 38-9.

Kilham discovered that she had originally come from Sierra Leone and it was decided to send her back there to work as a servant for Kilham's friend Maria MacFoy.<sup>142</sup>

A second case was taken up by Quaker abolitionist Elizabeth Dudley. It was that of a young black woman from Buenos Aires who had been brought to Britain by her cruel mistress, an Admiral's wife. She had heard from sailors that she would be free on reaching England. Her situation became known to some Quakers in Southwark, who procured her freedom and obtained a place for her at the Borough Road school of the British and Foreign School Society, in the hope that she could become a teacher to her fellow Africans. Elizabeth Dudley applied for money from the Society of Friends anti-slavery fund for her clothing and board.<sup>143</sup>

It was middle-class white women like Elizabeth Dudley who ran ladies' anti-slavery associations, black women like the one she aided who were the focus of their philanthropic concern.

## 6. Ideology

The middle-class women who were members of ladies' anti-slavery associations felt the need to justify the existence of their organisations in the face of opposition

---

<sup>142</sup>"Anti-Slavery Correspondence, 1821-32", statement signed by Mary (John) Capper, Clapton, 9 Apr 1830, Temp. MSS 101/3, Friends' House Library, London; "Minutes of a Standing Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings Appointed to Aid in Promoting the Total Abolition of the Slave Trade", Minute Book no. 2, entry for 11 May 1830, Friends' House Library, London. Mary Capper's husband John was a member of the Quaker anti-slavery committee.

<sup>143</sup>"Anti-Slavery Correspondence, 1821-32", letter from Elizabeth Dudley to Peter Bedford et al., Devonshire House, [n.d.], Temp. MSS 101/3, Friends' House Library.

from some male activists and doubts among women themselves about the propriety of anti-slavery activism. This self-justification had the positive result of leading women to clarify the specific role they could play in the movement, and to stress aspects of slavery which were of particular concern to them as women.

Two aspects of anti-slavery ideology will be examined in relation to women in this section: the representation of anti-slavery as a religious and moral campaign rather than a political one, and concern for the disruption of family life under slavery. These will be related to women's representation of their anti-slavery activities as compatible with middle-class "separate spheres" ideology through stressing women's role as guardians of morality, women's special sensitivity and influence, and their concern for family life and female suffering.

Male activists' representation of slavery as a religious and moral, rather than a political, issue made it possible for women to assert that anti-slavery activism lay within their appropriate sphere.<sup>144</sup> An early appeal to women in the Humming Bird presented anti-slavery as a religious activity which was simply an extension of women's work in the Bible Society and Missionary and Sunday School movements.<sup>145</sup> Similarly the female author of The Negro Slave called on women:

Let not then the circle of your charities  
be too circumscribed, nor your zeal too much  
confined within the limits of home duties, for

---

<sup>144</sup>For male activists' view see Walvin, "The Propaganda of Anti-Slavery", pp. 63-67.

<sup>145</sup>"Address to the Ladies of Great-Britain ...", The Humming Bird, Vol. I, no. 7, (June 1825), pp. 195-6.

there is this blessed quality in Christian benevolence, that it is not weakened by extension, nor exhausted by constant overflow.<sup>146</sup>

The female author of Dialogue portrayed involvement in anti-slavery by women as necessary because men had "not adequately performed their duty".<sup>147</sup> Women's political exclusion was compared to that of working-class men and seen as fostering uncompromising adherence to anti-slavery principle. Sheffield women represented slavery as an issue "on which the humble-minded reader of the Bible, which enriches his cottage shelf, is immeasurably a better politician than the statesman versed in the intrigues of Cabinets". Elizabeth Heyrick, in a pamphlet critical of the male leadership of the campaign, stated: "The cause of emancipation has been pleaded in the Senate by the wise, the eloquent, the noble. Now, it is pleaded in the Workshop and the cottage, by women and children". Lack of political power was thus represented by women activists as an advantage rather than an impediment, and women drew moral strength from Biblical teachings about God aiding the weak and the meek.<sup>148</sup>

"Feminine" characteristics were also portrayed as positive encouragements to anti-slavery activism. The Vindication argued that the activities of Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations were an expression of "pity for

---

<sup>146</sup>The Negro Slave. A Tale. Addressed to the Women of Great Britain, p. 70.

<sup>147</sup>A Lady, A Dialogue Between a Well-Wisher and a Friend to the Slaves in the British Colonies, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], "Apology of Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations", The Genius of Universal Emancipation, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 7 (Dec, 1831), p. 110; The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, pp. 26, 27; A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations, p. 3.

suffering, and a desire to relieve misery" which "are the natural and allowed feelings of women".<sup>149</sup> Similarly Elizabeth Heyrick, in her Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women, published in 1828, stated of woman: "the peculiar texture of her mind, her strong feelings and quick sensibilities, especially qualify her, not only to sympathize with suffering, but also to plead for the oppressed."<sup>150</sup> Sir James Mackintosh, in a speech at the annual meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1831, praised women's anti-slavery zeal in these terms:

In proportion as they possessed the retiring virtues of delicacy and modesty, those chief ornaments of women, in that proportion had they come forward to defend the still higher objects of humanity and justice.<sup>151</sup>

These qualities, he asserted, "flow from the same source, and flow towards the same object", which was "to humanize the world, to soften the hearts of men".<sup>152</sup>

Ideas about women's social role and feminine character were closely related to the particular concern which women activists showed for the sufferings of women and disruption of family life under slavery. Expressions of this concern recur again and again in anti-slavery pamphlets, reports, appeals and poems written by women and/or addressed to them.

---

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., p.3.

<sup>150</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women, (Leicester: Cockshaw, 1828), [p. 3].

<sup>151</sup>Speech quoted in Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. IV, no. 8 (May 1831), p. 257, and also in The Seventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, p. 26.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

Concern for women and the family under slavery was a feature of male anti-slavery ideology.<sup>153</sup> What women did was make it the main focus of their concern. This was encouraged by a belief that women had a natural empathy with their own sex. Lord Brougham, leader of the anti-slavery campaign in the House of Lords, wrote to Zachary Macaulay suggesting that a public appeal to Lady Jersey, calling on her to reflect on the degraded condition of female slaves, would be a good way to arouse influential women to support the cause.<sup>154</sup> The Anti-Slavery Society's Picture of Colonial Slavery (1828) described anti-slavery as "particularly worthy of the attention of the female sex" because "the cruelly degrading and demoralizing effects of slavery on the female character are so strongly marked".<sup>155</sup> Similarly, an appeal to women in 1825 suggested that the cause of the slave should lay particular claim to women's sympathies since "it unites the claim of strangers with the claim of brethren and the claim of a fellow-sex".<sup>156</sup>

Such beliefs were strengthened by the fact that middle-class women showed the greatest willingness to

---

<sup>153</sup>The resolutions for the amelioration of slavery passed by Parliament in 1823 included clauses opposing the flogging of women and the separation of families and the Anti-Slavery Society's 1825 "Plan for the Emancipation of the Slaves" began with a statement of opposition to field work by women on the ground that it interfered with their domestic duties (see Second Report of the Committee of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions (London: Ellerton and Henderson, 1825), Appendix K, p. 168).

<sup>154</sup>Knutsford, The Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay, p. 433.

<sup>155</sup>[Anti-Slavery Society], A Picture of Colonial Slavery, pp. 5-6.

<sup>156</sup>"Address to the Ladies of Great-Britain", The Humming Bird, Vol. I, no. 7 (June 1825), pp. 195-203.

support philanthropic groups which were concerned with the relief <sup>of</sup> their own sex and with domestic issues. As Prochaska has concluded: "women preferred to contribute to those charities which dealt with pregnancies, children, servants, and the problems of aging and distressed females".<sup>157</sup>

Activism on behalf of other women was seen as consistent with women's role in society and her character. In the Dialogue one woman persuades another that action on behalf of female slaves is simply an extension of her domestic duties, since it is slavery which prevents women taking proper care of their children, and slaveholders who mistreat pregnant women and force the sick and infirm to work.<sup>158</sup> The Ladies' Association for Calne, stressing that the women had made "such exertions as a proper attention to our domestic duties would allow us to make" for the relief especially of their own sex, continued:

We would also record our conviction, that they who are the most desirous of preserving the delicacy of the female character will ever feel the most anxious for the deliverance of the weakest and most succourless of the human race, (the female colonial slaves,) from that revolting system of degradation and debasement ....<sup>159</sup>

Similar points were made by the author of A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations. Tackling the question of whether it was unbecoming for women to join anti-slavery associations, the writer stated that it was not "unbecoming" or "unfeminine" to feel particularly acutely

---

<sup>157</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 30.

<sup>158</sup>A Lady, A Dialogue, p. 3.

<sup>159</sup>The Second Report of the Ladies' Association for Calne, p. 3-4.

The deep degradation of our own sex under this dreadful system, for the exposure of their persons to the lacerating whip, and the exposure of their untaught minds to the most awful licentiousness in its most debasing form, which even leads its captives to glory in their shame. Surely these things must stir up our spirits within us, when we behold so large a number of our own sex helpless victims alternately of cruelty and lust ....<sup>160</sup>

Articulation of concern for female slaves gave ladies' anti-slavery associations a *raison d'etre* and a distinctive focus for their work. Women's societies at Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield and Colchester expressed in their founding resolutions their determination to continue campaigning until enslaved women were no longer flogged and their children were born free.<sup>161</sup> The founders of the Birmingham society stated that they were motivated by the determination:

To awaken (at least in the bosom of English women) a deep and lasting compassion, not only for the bodily sufferings of Female Slaves, but for their moral degradation ....<sup>162</sup>

Pamphlets written to encourage women to join ladies' associations also focussed on female suffering.<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>160</sup>A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations, p. 3-4.

<sup>161</sup>See text of founding resolution of these societies given in footnote 30 of this chapter. For resolutions of similar content but different wording see Calne founding resolutions, quoted in [Elizabeth Heyrick], Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, p. 162; Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, [founding resolutions]; Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.

<sup>162</sup>The First Report of the Female Society, for Birmingham, p. 3.

<sup>163</sup>See for example: A Lady, A Dialogue; A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations; [Heyrick], Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women; [Heyrick], "Apology for Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations", in The Genius of Universal Emancipation, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 7, p. 110.

Women focussed on three main aspects of female suffering: flogging, "moral degradation" and separation of mothers from children. Imaginative combinations of verse and engravings were used to give a vivid picture of the suffering of women under slavery. The Female Society for Birmingham's albums, which were distributed throughout the country, contained a series of specially commissioned engravings of the sufferings of slave women, accompanied by lines of verse (for an example of these illustrations see Appendix V, fig. 1).<sup>164</sup> One of the pictures, depicting a woman with her sick child, was also imprinted on the society's workbags.<sup>165</sup>

Women abolitionists also adopted a modified version of the image on the Wedgwood cameo of 1787, and by 1828 were producing seals showing a kneeling female rather than a male slave and bearing the legend "Am I not a Woman and a Sister" as an alternative to "Am I not a Man and a Brother".<sup>166</sup> This assertion of sisterhood conveyed women's identification with the sufferings of their own sex, and, with its family and religious connotations, acknowledged

---

<sup>164</sup>The engravings were by a local artist, Mr S. Lines.

<sup>165</sup>Genius of Universal Emancipation, n.s., vol. I, no. 16 (Oct 1827), p. 126.

<sup>166</sup>These seals, listed in the Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, (Dublin: printed for the Society, 1828), p. 16, were supplied by the Female Society for Birmingham (see account for supply of seals etc. to Dublin The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p. 54). The motto "Am I not a Woman and a Sister" was later adopted by American women abolitionists, first appearing at the head of the "Ladies Department" in the Liberator (Vol. II, no. 2 (Jan 1832), p. 6). Walvin incorrectly describes the image and motto as an American innovation of 1838 (J.R.W. [James Walvin], "A Woman and a Sister", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 4, no. 1 (May 1983), pp. 1-2).

black women's humanity and their spiritual, if not cultural, equality.

Women campaigners suggested that the degradation of women under slavery was worse than that of women in heathen societies because it was carried out by supposedly civilised Christians. It thus conflicted with missionary beliefs that Christianity had "civilized" men's attitudes to women. Mary Dudley's pamphlet opposing slavery on Scriptural grounds included an engraving of a kneeling woman slave, her chains broken, praying that her master would read the Bible and learn not to be cruel (see Appendix V, fig. 2).<sup>167</sup> Birmingham women in 1825 appealed directly to planters as professed Christians, stating:

It has wounded us to read of woman's suffering and woman's humiliation in Countries which acknowledge British Laws, which are governed, not by some half-wild, benighted native Race, but by those who are connected with us by the closest ties."<sup>168</sup>

Charlotte Elizabeth Phelan made a similar appeal in her verses "On the Flogging of Women":

Bear'st thou a man's, a Christian's name?  
If not for pity, yet for shame,  
Oh fling the scourge wide;  
The tender form may writhe and bleed,  
But deeper cuts thy barbarous deed  
The female's modest pride.<sup>169</sup>

In stressing the suffering of female slaves women compared their lot not with that of free women in Africa but rather with that of women in Britain. Susanna Watts'

---

<sup>167</sup>[Dudley], Scriptural Evidence, engraving facing title page.

<sup>168</sup>"An Appeal from British Ladies to the West India Planters", handwritten draft in Lucy Townsend, "Scrap Book on Negro Slaves", pp. 127-34.

<sup>169</sup>Poem included in "Female Society for Birmingham, etc., for the Relief of British Negro Slaves. Album."

"The Slave's Address to British Ladies" contrasted the lot of mothers:

Think, how naught but death can sever  
Your lov'd children from your hold;  
Still alive - but lost forever -  
Ours are parted, bought and sold!<sup>170</sup>

Similarly, "The Negro Mother's Appeal", included in the Anti-Slavery Scrap Book, addressed the "white lady, happy, proud, and free" and urged her:

Dispel the Negro Mother's fears -  
By thy pure, maternal joy,  
Bid him spare my helpless boy.<sup>171</sup>

This poem was illustrated by an engraving contrasting the lot of free white and enslaved black mothers (see Appendix V, fig. 3).

Slave women were represented verbally and visually as the ultimate passive victims. They were described as "the weakest and most succourless of the human race", as "helpless victims".<sup>172</sup> White middle-class British women felt it was their duty to speak on behalf of these black women because as slaves they lacked the ability to speak for themselves and were deprived of male protection. Their assertions of sisterhood were thus in part "paternalistic" offers of help by the benevolent to the powerless. The Birmingham group's "Appeal from British Ladies to the West India Planters" began:

---

<sup>170</sup>Printed at head of The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham.

<sup>171</sup>Anti-Slavery Scrap Book (London: Harvey and Darton, 1829). The book was probably produced by the Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Society.

<sup>172</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 8 April 1828; The Second Report of the Lsdies' Association for Calne, p. 4.

This Appeal utters a cry from the hearts of British women, to plead for those of their own sex, who have less power to plead than ourselves, who cannot speak their Misery and their shame ... who have none with the authority and rights of husbands to protect them from insult.<sup>173</sup>

Information on the sufferings of women under slavery was drawn directly from accounts of slave punishments in the Jamaica Gazette and missionary accounts as well as publications of the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>174</sup> The views of slave women themselves are absent from these sources and only recently has research documented the lives of slave women in the British West Indies. This has confirmed the special sufferings of women under slavery described by the women abolitionists. However, the research has also undermined the white stereotype of black women's passivity by exposing the multiplicity of ways in which women resisted and survived slavery. It has also revealed the important economic and cultural roles of women in the black community under slavery, as cultivators of small provision grounds, as marketers, and as preservers of African cultural traditions. It has also been suggested that black women may have viewed Western society and Christian marriage as a threat to their independence and cultural traditions rather than the ideal alternative to slavery envisaged by white women abolitionists.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup>Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. [Founding Resolutions], resolution 10.

<sup>174</sup>See for example the sheet giving "Explanation on the contents of the Society's Album" in "Female Society for Birmingham, Album".

<sup>175</sup>Lucille Mathurin, The Rebel Woman in the British West Indies During Slavery, (Institute of Jamaica, 1975); Rhoda E. Reddock, "Women and Slavery in the Caribbean: A Feminist Perspective", Latin American Perspectives, issue 44, Vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter 1985), pp. 63-80; Barbara Bush, "White 'Ladies', Coloured 'Favourites', and Black

The only surviving autobiography of a British West Indian slave woman is The History of Mary Prince. Distributed by the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society and recommended by the Female Society for Birmingham, the History must have acted as some corrective to the image of the passive female victim purveyed by such groups.<sup>176</sup> It is a moving story of the sufferings and resistance of one woman slave, conveying a strong sense of Mary Prince's personality despite editing by a middle-class white woman, Susanna Strickland. The History is also revealing for its silences: the editing out by Strickland of Prince's seven year extra-marital relationship with a white captain, and her violent attack on a woman whom she found in bed with her lover. These were not the acts of a "respectable" woman, and were presumably excluded so as not to undermine the impact of other passages of the text in which Prince describes her resistance to the white owner's sexual advances, her modesty, her marriage, and her conversion to

---

'Wenches'; Some Considerations on Sex, Race and Class Factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in the British Caribbean", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 2, no. 3 (Dec 1981), pp. 245-62; Barbara Bush, "Defiance or Submission? The Role of Slave Women in Slave Resistance in the British Caribbean", Immigrants and Minorities, Vol. 1, no. 1 (1982). pp. 16-38; Barbara Bush, "Towards Emancipation: Slave Women and Resistance to Coercive Labour Regimes in the British West Indian Colonies, 1790-1838", Slavery and Abolition, Vol, 5, no. 3 (Dec 1984), pp. 222-243; Barbara Bush, "'The Family Tree Is Not Cut': Women and Cultural Resistance in Slave Family Life in the British Caribbean", G. Okihiro, ed., In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean and Afro-American History, (Massachusetts U.P., 1986), pp. 117-132.

<sup>176</sup>"Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield" [Minute Book], entry for 14 Feb 1832; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 12 Apr 1831.

Christianity.<sup>177</sup> The vulnerability of black women to allegations of sexual promiscuity is indicated by the attempt to discredit Mary Prince's History through insinuating an illicit love-affair between her and Thomas Pringle.<sup>178</sup>

Such allegations were founded in planter stereotypes of the black woman as a licentious, lustful trouble-maker. White women abolitionists tried to combat this image by counterposing the image of the innocent victim of male lust, an image which drew on stereotypes of feminine weakness current in British society.

This examination of the way in which women articulated their anti-slavery concerns and justified their activism has drawn attention to the fact that middle-class anti-slavery ideology pivoted not only on the contrast between slave and "free" labour which David Brion Davis has highlighted, but also on the contrast between a "degraded" society lacking proper respect for women and a Christian society which elevated family life and women's domestic duties.

---

<sup>177</sup>The discrepancies between Prince's life and her autobiography were highlighted in the court case which her owner brought against Mr Pringle for libel. Under questioning Mary Prince stated that she had told Miss Strickland about both the love affair and the attack but that Miss Strickland had not included them in the written account (see The Times, 1 Mar 1833, pp. 6-7).

<sup>178</sup>James McQueen, "The Colonial Empire of Great Britain", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Vol. XXX (Nov 1831), pp. 744-764.

## CHAPTER III

### WOMEN AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ABOLITION OF BRITISH COLONIAL SLAVERY, 1823-1833

#### PART 2: POLICIES AND POLITICS

The three years leading up to the passing of the Emancipation Act in August 1833 were marked by a new intensity in anti-slavery agitation. This was characterised by three inter-related developments: the change in the policy of the Anti-Slavery Society from campaigning for the mitigation and gradual abolition of slavery to pressing for immediate emancipation (section 1 of this chapter); the formation of the Agency Committee, which gave new impetus to the campaign in the provinces (section 2); and the inundation of Parliament with petitions calling for it to take direct action to bring about the end of slavery (section 3). In this chapter I examine the important part which women played in all three developments, and the implications of this both for their role in the anti-slavery movement and their social and political position. Finally, I draw together the main conclusions reached in this chapter and chapter II concerning women's participation in the campaign against British colonial slavery.

#### 1. Immediatism

The part played by women in bringing about the change to an immediatist policy by the Anti-Slavery Society has been discussed by several historians. David Brion Davis has described Quaker abolitionist Elizabeth Heyrick's

1824 pamphlet, Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, as "the most eloquent early plea for immediate emancipation". However, he sees it was an isolated call ahead of its time which had little influence in bringing about a change in national policy in 1830-31.<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Corfield, however, has recently pointed out that Immediate, not Gradual Abolition was only one of three pamphlets that Heyrick wrote between 1824 and 1826 advocating immediatism, and has provided evidence that her views gained early backing from a number of ladies' anti-slavery associations. Nevertheless he concludes that "overall evidence suggests that female abolitionists had little influence in persuading men to shift their ground and press for immediate emancipation".<sup>2</sup>

In this section I will first summarize the evidence that women were ahead of men in calling for immediate emancipation, drawing on some additional sources to those used by Corfield. I will then, through an examination of the nature of female statements in favour of immediatism, suggest why there was a gender difference on this issue - a question not directly addressed by either Davis or Corfield. Finally, I will reassess the influence which women's stand had on the movement as a whole and on their own social position.

Elizabeth Heyrick was not the only British abolitionist to call for immediate emancipation in the early 1820's. At least one other provincial abolitionist,

---

<sup>1</sup>David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Anti-Slavery Thought", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 49, (1962-3), pp. 209-30.

<sup>2</sup>Corfield, "Elizabeth Heyrick", pp. 41-67.

Samuel Roberts of Sheffield, expressed support for immediatism as early as 1823.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Heyrick's Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, running into three editions in 1824, was the most clearly argued and widely distributed pamphlet calling for immediatism prior to the publication in 1830 of an immediatist speech by the Rev. Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Heyrick backed up her arguments in two other pamphlets published in 1824 and 1826.<sup>5</sup>

Heyrick, through her position as leader of the Leicester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and district treasurer of the Female Society for Birmingham, was integrated into the network of ladies' associations of which Birmingham was the hub. She got early support from one of the founders of the Ladies' Association for Calne who, in a letter of 1825, quoted approvingly in Heyrick's Letters, stated her personal abhorrence of gradual abolition

<sup>3</sup>See quote from "A Letter to John Bull. With a Sketch of a Plan for the Safe, Speedy and Effectual Abolition of Slavery" in Autobiography and Select Remains of the Late Samuel Roberts, (London: Longman, Brown etc, 1849), p. 102.

<sup>4</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition; or, an Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest, and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West-Indian Slavery, (London, 1824). This, like Heyrick's other pamphlets, was published anonymously and was mistaken by some as the work of a male author on account of its "vigorous style" (see A Brief Sketch of the Life and Labours of Mrs Elizabeth Heyrick, p. 19). For Thomson's speech see Andrew Thomson, Substance of the Speech Delivered at the Meeting of the Edinburgh Society for the Abolition of Slavery, on October 19, 1830, (Edinburgh: Whyte, 1830).

<sup>5</sup>[Elizabeth Heyrick], An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties in Best Entitled to Freedom? The Slave or the Slave-Holder? From an Impartial Examination of the Conduct of Each Party, at the Bar of Public Justice, (London: 1824); [Elizabeth Heyrick], Letters On the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery; Chiefly Addressed to the More Influential Classes. To Which are Added, Thoughts on Compensation, (London, 1826).

and expressed the hope that "no Ladies' Association will ever be found with such words attached to it."<sup>6</sup> Her wish was fulfilled: no ladies' association appeared with the words "gradual abolition" in its title, though many, including societies at Calne and Birmingham, did initially campaign for amelioration.

The first anti-slavery society in Britain to call publicly for immediate emancipation was the Sheffield Female Society in 1827. It was clearly influenced by Heyrick, distributing copies of her pamphlet Immediate, not Gradual Emancipation. Unlike her, however, it was willing to entertain the possibility of a "temporary feudal" system as a transitional stage between slave and waged labour.<sup>7</sup> In its 1829 report the Society quoted from a pamphlet by a woman, Inquiries Relating to Negro Emancipation, which argued for the immediate end of slavery but the necessity of a transitional stage.<sup>8</sup>

While there is no direct evidence that other ladies' associations came out in favour of immediatism as early as the Sheffield society, by 1828 a stereotype of ladies' associations as pro-immediatist existed. In consequence, the Female Society for Clifton and the London Female Anti-

---

<sup>6</sup>[Heyrick], Letters, p. 164 (emphasis in original). Corfield, "Elizabeth Heyrick", p. 45) attributes the letter to the Quaker secretary of the Calne society, but it might alternatively have been written by co-secretary and co-founder Lucy Townsend.

<sup>7</sup>Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, (1827), especially pp. 4, 10.

<sup>8</sup>Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society for 1829, included in "Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves" [Minute book], entry for annual meeting, 10 10 Nov 1829; Inquiries Relating to Negro Emancipation (attributed to a "female pen" in a review in The Genius of Universal Emancipation, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 7 (Oct 1830), p. 105).

Slavery Society felt it necessary to publish a Vindication of Ladies Anti-Slavery Associations to correct the "misrepresentation" that they were "adverse to all plans for meliorating the condition" of slaves. The women acknowledged the complexity of undoing the wrong of slavery and stated: "we would not, therefore, be urgent for immediate emancipation". Nevertheless they deprecated "those exertions which are LIMITED to amelioration merely" and urged that "amelioration and emancipation are points far distant, which must not be confounded with each other".<sup>9</sup> Thus, while denying they were immediatist, these two groups questioned the causal link between amelioration and emancipation on which gradualist policy was based.

In contrast, local men's societies in the 1820's were at pains to point out that they positively opposed immediate emancipation, and, unlike women's groups, many included the words "mitigation and gradual abolition" in their titles.<sup>10</sup> As late as 1828 the Rochester and Chatham

---

<sup>9</sup>A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations, pp. 5-6, 8. An identical text, in slightly different order, comprises pp. 5-14 of The Second Report of the Female Society for Clifton.

<sup>10</sup>Declaration of the Objects of the Liverpool Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, (Liverpool: Smith, [1823]); Speeches Delivered in the Town-Hall of Beverley, at a Public Meeting, Convened by the Mayor, for the Purpose of Petitioning Parliament to Abolish Slavery in the West Indies, (Beverley: M. Turner, [1824], p. 11); An Address on the State of Slavery in the West India Islands, From the Committee of the Leicester Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society, (Leicester: T. Combe, 1824), pp. 4, 20-21; The First Annual Report of the Edinburgh Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate Abolition of Negro Slavery, (Edinburgh: Abernethy and Walker, 1824), pp. 5, 7-8; First Report of the Committee of the Newcastle upon Tyne Society for Promoting the Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, (Newcastle: Mitchell, 1825), pp. 4-5; Address of the Bath Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society to the Inhabitants of Bath and its Vicinity, (Bath: Wood and Cunningham, 1825), pp. [3], 14; First Report of the Suffolk Auxiliary Society for the Mitigation and Gradual

Anti-Slavery Society stressed that "the abolitionists have not the remotest idea of an immediate liberation".<sup>11</sup>

Male abolitionists' change to support for immediatism began in the provinces, with the foundation in September 1829 of Yorkshire Protestant Dissenters Association for Abolition as an immediatist group.<sup>12</sup> In the change to an immediatist policy by local societies in 1829-30 men's auxiliaries followed rather than preceded ladies' associations. In Sheffield, where the Female Society had become the first group to adopt immediatism in 1827, the immediatist treasurer of the local men's auxiliary, Samuel Roberts, failed to convert his society to immediatism and it had become inactive by 1830.<sup>13</sup> In Wiltshire the Ladies' Association for Salisbury and Calne became immediatist by 1829 whereas the local men's society did not petition Parliament for immediate abolition until September 1830.<sup>14</sup>

---

Abolition of Slavery, (Ipswich: King and Garrod), 1825), p. 7; The First Annual Report of the Aberdeen Anti-Slavery Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate Abolition of Negro Slavery, (Aberdeen: D. Chalmers, 1826), p. 4; Report of the Committee of the Manchester Society, for the Furtherance of the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, and the Amelioration of the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies, (Manchester: Henry Smith, 1827).

<sup>11</sup>First Report of the Rochester and Chatham Anti-Slavery Society, (Strood: Sweet, 1828), p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>"Associations for the Abolition of Slavery", Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. III, no. 10 (Mar 1830).

<sup>13</sup>For Roberts' isolation on the immediatist issue see report of his speech at an anti-slavery meeting in the Sheffield Iris, 24 Jan 1826. His society petitioned Parliament for the amelioration of slavery between 1825 and 1828 (see N.B. Lewis, "The Abolitionist Movement in Sheffield, 1823-1833", offprint of Bulletin of the John Ryland Library, Vol. 18, no. 2 (July 1934), pp. 5-6).

<sup>14</sup>The Fourth Annual Report, of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne (Calne: T.P. Baily, 1829), pp. 6-7; "Devizes Anti-Slavery Meeting", Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. III, no. 20 (Oct 1830), p. 414. While Corfield ("Elizabeth Heyrick", p. 45) argues that the

In Birmingham the Female Society decided in the spring of 1829 to fund a travelling lecturer who spoke out to other women's groups about his opposition to amelioration, and in April 1830 stipulated that their agents should speak out against amelioration and promote the "utter extirpation" of colonial slavery.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, the Birmingham men's society only became immediatist in August 1830.<sup>16</sup>

These groups were followed later in 1830 by men's societies at Edinburgh and Dublin. Acknowledging that women's groups had taken the lead in this change of policy, the leader of the Dublin Negro's Friend Society stated: "the usual policy, we think, of the Gentlemen's Anti-Slavery Societies had been at least until lately, gradual, limited and temporising".<sup>17</sup>

The national Anti-Slavery Society itself followed rather than led the provinces in this change of policy. It decided to drop the words "mitigation and gradual abolition" from its title in May 1830, but initially promoted petitions to Parliament calling for the freeing of new born children of slaves rather than immediate and total

---

Ladies' Association for Salisbury was the first women's society to become immediatist this is not borne out by the society's reports (see The Second Report of the Ladies' Association for Calne; The Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne).

<sup>15</sup>Townsend, "Autographs", pp. 317-18 - letters from John Philip to Lucy Townsend, London, 26 Apr 1829, and from Emma to Charlotte Townsend, [Manchester], 11 June 1829; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 8 April 1830.

<sup>16</sup>"At a General Meeting of the Members of the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society", [printed sheet, 1830].

<sup>17</sup>Thomson, Substance of the Speech; Charles Orpen, The Principles, Plans, and Objects of the "Hibernian Negro's Friend Society", (Dublin, 8 Jan 1831), p. 6.

emancipation.<sup>18</sup> The Sheffield Female Society publicly expressed pleasure that more and more congregations, societies and individuals were independently choosing to support immediate emancipation of the "living victims of oppression" immediatism rather than this intermediate infant freeing scheme.<sup>19</sup> The Anti-Slavery Society did not change to an immediatist policy until April 1831, however.

The pattern which emerges is of a strong call for immediate abolition made by a woman gaining backing from some ladies' associations, followed by increasing support for immediatism among provincial men's societies, and finally a change in national policy.

Explanations for the earlier support for immediatism among women are suggested by the terms in which male gradualist arguments and female immediatist arguments were couched. Male and female abolitionists were agreed that slavery was an evil and a sin, an affront to religion and morality. For men and women this had different implications in terms of policy, however. Men supported gradualism on the basis of their political experience, women supported immediatism as a matter of moral principle. Thus the Leicester Auxillary Anti-Slavery Society, which numbered Heyrick's brother John Coltman among its committee members, argued against immediatism on the grounds that "universal experience shews, that in the body politic, no less than in the natural, inveterate diseases admit only a

---

<sup>18</sup>Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 27 May 1830; "Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society", Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. III, no. 13 (June 1830).

<sup>19</sup>The Ladies of the Sheffield Anti-Slavery Association, A Word for the Slave, pp. 9-10.

slow and gradual cure".<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Elizabeth Heyrick argued that if slavery was a sin then it should be immediately abolished. It was inconsistent to denounce slavery as the root of all evil and then campaign only for mitigation and gradual abolition.

This difference in outlook was recognised by women, who attacked the anti-slavery leadership for placing political expediency before religious principle. Heyrick criticised the "worldly politicians" who "have converted the great business of emancipation into the object under political calculation" arguing that they had "withdrawn it from divine, and placed it under human patronage".<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the Ladies' Association for Calne argued in 1829 that those who "plead eloquently for a slow and gradual relinquishment of sin" were pleading for "continued rebellion against God, and continued wrong to man!".<sup>22</sup> The following year the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society criticised members of Parliament who proposed anything short of immediate emancipation for their "vain attempts to make humanity and interest meet".<sup>23</sup>

Women linked attacks on the gradualist leadership with the assertion of women's moral superiority and greater sensitivity. The founder of the Calne society, expressing

---

<sup>20</sup>The Committee of the Leicester Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society, An Address on the State of Slavery in the West India Islands, (Leicester: T. Combe, 1824), pp. 20-21.

<sup>21</sup>[Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup>The Fourth Annual Report, of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, pp. 6-7 (emphasis in original).

<sup>23</sup>[Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society], Appeal of the Friends of the Negro to the British People, (Sheffield: J. Blackwell, Iris Office, 1830), p. 7.

her hope that ladies' associations would never advocate gradual abolition, stated in 1825:

men may propose only gradually to abolish the worst of crimes, and only to mitigate the most cruel bondage, but why should we countenance such enormities by speaking them in such acquiescing, unscriptural, heartless terms?<sup>24</sup>

The Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, arguing in 1827 for immediate emancipation, stated:

We ought to obey God rather than man. Confidence here is not at variance with humility. On principles like these, the simple need not fear to confront the sage; nor a female society to take their stand against the united wisdom of this world.<sup>25</sup>

On matters of principle women thus felt justified in challenging male authority. As Elizabeth Heyrick stated: "truth and justice are stubborn and inflexible; they yield neither to numbers nor authority".<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless for some of her supporters lack of political experience did lead to a wavering of commitment. Between their outspoken immediatist statements of 1827 and 1830 members of the Sheffield Female Society had in 1829 expressed the fear that they were "incompetent to judge" the danger of immediate emancipation because of their limited knowledge of "the political relations in which the question is grounded".<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>[Heyrick], Letters, Letter IV, p. 164 (emphasis in original).

<sup>25</sup>Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society, (1827), p. 10 (emphasis in original).

<sup>26</sup>[Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup>Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society for 1829 in [Sheffield] Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, Minutes, entry for 10 Nov 1829.

Women also attempted to goad men into action by accusing them of failing to apply their manly strength of character in the political arena. Elizabeth Heyrick accused leading abolitionists of using arguments which were "puerile cant", and of exhibiting timidity.<sup>28</sup> The Sheffield Female Society described gradualist measures proposed in Parliament as characterized by a "timorous and vacillating spirit".<sup>29</sup>

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that women's support for immediatism was always simply the product of strength of religious conviction. For Heyrick, religious conviction was intertwined with a very radical political outlook. While the Leicester Auxiliary Society's statement of opposition to gradualism was based both on political experience and fear of sudden change, Heyrick attacked gradualism both on religious grounds and with arguments about natural rights. The slave, she argued, "has a right to his liberty, a right which it is a crime to withhold".<sup>30</sup> Gradualism was "a manifest dereliction of the fundamental principle on which emancipation is grounded, a tacit denial of that unqualified right of the slave to freedom".<sup>31</sup> The planter's claim to the slave was ill-founded because it was opposed not only to religion but also to "nature" and "reason". It was also illegal, "as far as legality has any

---

<sup>28</sup>[Heyrick], An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties, pp. 18, 5.

<sup>29</sup>The Ladies of the Sheffield Anti-Slavery Association, A Word for the Slave, pp. 9-10.

<sup>30</sup>[Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup>[Heyrick], Letters, p. 16.

foundation of justice, divine or human, to rest upon".<sup>32</sup>

These arguments were in tune with Heyrick's overall radical political views. In the series of tracts she wrote between 1817 and 1828 she tackled a series of "sins" which she felt should be immediately set right. She was equally concerned to advocate the rights of slave and poor labourer, blaming the sufferings of both on the "lust for wealth" among slave-holder and British employer alike. She argued that charitable relief was inadequate and that justice demanded the immediate setting of adequate wages for labourers and the right of workers to strike.<sup>33</sup>

Heyrick's radicalism might seem at odds with her economic and social position as the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer. A closer look at her life, however, suggests that it was fostered by a conflict between her own character and the limitations imposed on her activities by her womanhood. The picture which emerges from reminiscences of friends and relatives is of a passionate, romantic, talented and somewhat rebellious young woman.

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>33</sup>See the following pamphlets, all written by Elizabeth Heyrick, and all published anonymously: Cursory Remarks on the Evil Tendency of Unrestrained Cruelty; Particularly on that Practiced in Smithfield Market, (London: Harvey and Darton, 1823); Enquiry into the Consequences of the Present Depreciated Value of Human Labour, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1819); Exposition of One Principal Cause of the National Distress, Particularly in Manufacturing Districts; with Some Suggestions for its Removal (London: Darton, Harvey and Darton, 1817); A Letter of Remonstrance from an Impartial Public, to the Hosiers of Leicester, (Leicester: A. Cockshaw, 1825); On the Advantages of a High Renumerating Price for Labour, (Leicester: A. Cockshaw, 1825); Protest Against the Spirit and Practice of Modern Legislation, as Exhibited in the New Vagrant Act, (London: Harvey and Darton, 1824).

She was denied the opportunity to develop her talents as a painter, and as a woman did not have the opportunity to enter the family business open to her brothers. Encouraged to become an industrious and orderly wife, she married for love at eighteen and had a stormy relationship with her jealous and unstable husband. After she was left a widow she devoted herself to philanthropic work and gave most of the sizeable allowance she received from her father to charity. She also converted to Quakerism and became obsessed with her sinfulness and need for self-denial.<sup>34</sup>

Heyrick's religious conviction and political radicalism did not mean that she was an idealist unconcerned with the practicality of her policies. She opposed gradualism not only for reasons of principle but also because she felt it was a bad tactic which had inevitably resulted in "disappointment and defeat".<sup>35</sup> A policy of immediate emancipation, she considered, was not only "more wise and rational" and "more just and humane" but also "more politic and safe".<sup>36</sup>

A comparison of gradualist statements by men's anti-slavery societies with Heyrick's statements of support for immediatism makes clear these tactical differences. Whereas gradualists argued that immediate emancipation would have evil consequences both to the welfare of blacks and the safety of planters, Heyrick considered that it was the safest way to bring about a peaceful transition from slave

---

<sup>34</sup>See Catherine Hutton, "Hasty Sketch of the Coltman Family" (1802); Samuel Coltman, "Memoirs of Letters of the Coltman Family", Vols II and III, Coltman MSS 15D57, items 387 and 449-450, Leicester Museum, Archives Dept.

<sup>35</sup>[Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

to free society in the West Indies. It was delaying abolition which was likely to result in bloody insurrection. To gradualist arguments that the call for immediate abolition was impolitic because it would alienate the planters, Heyrick replied that the planters had been too debased by the slave system to even listen to appeals for amelioration or gradual emancipation.<sup>37</sup> Gradualists argued that slaves had been degraded by slavery and needed to be made "fit for the enjoyment of liberty" by Christian education, whereas Heyrick argued that such education was only possible after freedom: emancipation was "the only foundation on which the reformation of the slave, and the still more needful reformation of his usurping master, can be built".<sup>38</sup>

Heyrick also believed that gradualism was a bad policy because it undermined support for anti-slavery in Britain. Not only had it failed to lead to improvements in the West Indies, but it had also led the British public to become apathetic to the cause in the absence of a straightforward demand to support. Even the anti-slavery leadership was in danger of accomodating itself to the status quo.

Similar policy arguments were made by immediatist supporter Sarah Wedgwood in 1830. Stating her opposition to the infant freeing plan adopted by the Anti-Slavery Society, she wrote to Anne Knight of Chelmsford Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society that she considered the plan "more

---

<sup>37</sup>Compare [Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, Enquiry and [Heyrick] Letters with statements in reports of men's auxiliary societies listed in footnote 10 of this Chapter.

<sup>38</sup>Speeches Delivered in the Town-Hall of Beverley, p. 11; [Heyrick], Letters, p. 24.

fatal" than amelioration because "it will satisfy more people than the other would. She explained:

If the battle might be between emancipation and slavery only there would be some hope; but this 3rd thing that looks like emancipation and is not, is I fear beguiling so many that it will very much weaken the true cause.<sup>39</sup>

The problem for women was that their exclusion from politics meant that they lacked the formal power to change the gradualist policy of the Anti-Slavery Society. They were excluded from its committee and, unlike delegates from local men's auxiliaries, they could not speak or vote at the Society's annual meetings. Despite this, however, several channels of influence were open to them.

Firstly, women could attempt to by-pass Parliament altogether and bring about abolition through methods in which they could play a leading role. Heyrick argued that through abstention from slave grown sugar "We, the people, the common people of England, - we ourselves will emancipate him".<sup>40</sup> Both Heyrick herself and the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society attempted to implement this scheme.

Secondly, women could attempt to influence national policy through arousing public opinion, exerting influence

---

<sup>39</sup>Letter [incomplete] from Sarah Wedgwood, Camp Hill, 19 Sept 1830, Anne Knight Correspondence, Friends' House Library, London. There are indications that Sarah Wedgwood, in co-operation with Anne Knight, published a pamphlet entitled A Remonstrance on the infant freeing issue (see "A Remonstrance, S. Wedgwood" in list of anti-slavery pamphlets circulated by the Liverpool Ladies' Association 1830, Album among Cropper Family Papers; reference to "your remonstrance" against the infant freeing scheme following mention of Sarah Wedgwood in letter from George Stephen to Anne Knight, 8 Oct 1830, Anne Knight Correspondence).

<sup>40</sup>[Heyrick], An Enquiry, p. 22.

on individual members of national and local committees, and putting financial pressure on the Anti-Slavery Society.

A noteworthy aspect of the immediatist campaign by women was that it was conducted largely through public rather than private pressure. It is striking that the first anti-slavery pamphlet by a British woman was Heyrick's highly controversial Immediate, not Gradual Abolition. Heyrick's first pamphlet went into three editions in Britain in 1824. Her biographer stated that it "was read by thousands both in England and America and ... was a means of converting some who had great influence in high places, to the truth and justice of her views".<sup>41</sup>

Immediate, not Gradual Emancipation certainly had a considerable impact on the American anti-slavery movement. It was republished there several times and was serialised in the leading abolitionist periodical, The Genius of Universal Emancipation, the editor of which praised its "nervous language and strong reasoning", contrasting it to "the milk-and-water style" of some American writers.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup>A Brief Sketch of the Life and Labours of Mrs Elizabeth Heyrick, p. 19.

<sup>42</sup>The American editions were as follows: Philadelphia: Rakestraw, 1824; New York: Seamon, 1825; Philadelphia: Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, 1836; Philadelphia: Anti-Slavery Society, 1837; Boston: Knapp, 1838. It was reviewed in The Genius of Universal Emancipation, Vol. IV, no. 3 (Dec 1824), p. 34 and serialized in the magazine in 1825-6 (which also serialized Heyrick's Letters in 1829-30). Betty Fladeland has examined the impact of the pamphlet in America, concluding that it "did much to crystallize determination that uncompromising forceful action against a spreading slaveocracy was imperative". She also notes that Heyrick herself may have been influenced by an American immediatist pamphlet, the Rev. George Bourne's The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable, (Philadelphia: Sanderson, 1816). (Betty Fladeland, Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Co-operation, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 183-4).

In Britain it was favourably reviewed in two major religious periodicals. The Baptist Magazine described it as "a well-written, argumentative, cheap pamphlet. It deserves to be generally read". The reviewer himself had read it to his congregation, and reported that "the good effect it produced was very general". The magazine also printed a letter to the editor recommending the pamphlet. Both items, however, concentrated on Heyrick's recommendation of abstention from slave-grown sugar rather than on the policy of immediate abolition which this boycott was intended to promote.<sup>43</sup> The Evangelical Christian Observer did, however, discuss immediatism in its review, including a long quote about the meaning of the phrase "immediate emancipation". It was described as "a pamphlet of extraordinary vigour" which "cannot fail to produce considerable effect", though reservations were expressed about "the intemperance of some expressions" and "the perfect accuracy of others".<sup>44</sup> These two reviews would have helped bring the pamphlet to the attention of the middle-class nonconformist and Evangelical Anglican community who formed the backbone of organised anti-slavery support, and who would have been sympathetic to its view of slavery as a religious question.

In contrast, the Anti-Slavery Reporter made no mention of the pamphlet, presumably because the views it expressed were contrary to current Society policy. Despite this, the pamphlet excited the interest of provincial

---

<sup>43</sup>The Baptist Magazine, Vol. XVII (1825), pp. 29, 154-7.

<sup>44</sup>The Christian Observer, Vol. XXIV, no. IX, (Sept 1824), pp. 569-70.

abolitionists and the Society's national committee decided to procure a dozen copies for distribution to "any member who may apply for them".<sup>45</sup> A Cambridge abolitionist asked for the Committee's advice on dispensing the pamphlet and a Mr Mathews of Histon in Cambridgeshire wrote a pamphlet entitled The Rights of Man. (Not Paines,) but the Rights of Man, in the West Indies, which praised Heyrick's "eloquent and powerfully written pamphlet" and reiterated many of its arguments.<sup>46</sup> In March 1825 Zachary Macaulay, secretary of the Society, reported that "there has been much discussion and much correspondence among Anti-Slavery folks in London and in various parts of the country" on the immediatism issue.<sup>47</sup>

Interest in Heyrick's ideas was also shown by men in Scotland. The Edinburgh and Aberdeen Anti-Slavery Societies included the pamphlet on their lists of works available for loan to members in 1825 and 1826 respectively.<sup>48</sup> It thus seems probable that it influenced the Rev. Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society, who made use of similar arguments in his October 1830 speech which was instrumental

---

<sup>45</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entries for 8 June, 8 Dec 1824.

<sup>46</sup>Anthropos [Mr Mathews of Histon, Cambs.], The Rights of Man. (Not Paines,) but the Rights of Man, in the West Indies (London: Knight and Lacy, 1824), especially p. 34.

<sup>47</sup>Letter from Zachary Macaulay to Henry Brougham, 25 March 1825. Macaulay Family Papers, Henry Huntington Library, as quoted in Edith Hurwitz, Politics and the Public Conscience, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), p. 32.

<sup>48</sup>The Second Annual Report of the Edinburgh Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate Abolition of Negro Slavery, (Edinburgh: Anderson and Bryce, 1825), catalogue of books belonging to the society; The First Annual Report of the Aberdeen Anti-Slavery Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate Abolition of Negro Slavery, (Aberdeen: D. Chalmers and Co., 1826), p. 22.

in converting the society to immediatism. Slavery, Thomson argued in words echoing Heyrick's of 1824, was "unlawful, iniquitous, and unchristian", a sin which could not be mitigated but must be immediately abolished.<sup>49</sup> There is also evidence that Thomson corresponded on the immediatism issue with Lucy Townsend, secretary of the Female Society for Birmingham. She sent him her society's resolutions of April 1830 concerning putting pressure on the Anti-Slavery Society to adopt immediatism (see p. 161 below), and encouraged him to disseminate his immediatist views in pamphlet form.<sup>50</sup>

Heyrick's later pamphlet, Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery, the first section of which was addressed specifically to the anti-slavery leadership, received considerably more attention from the committee of the Anti-Slavery Society than her earlier pamphlet. Heyrick wrote to the Society in September 1825 enclosing a prospectus for her projected new pamphlet, and this was considered by the committee, and a response written by the society's secretary, Zachary Macaulay, who made suggestions on its contents. He reported that she had agreed to his suggestions, and in December she forwarded the completed manuscript to him.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup>Thomson, Substance of the Speech, pp. 3-4.

<sup>50</sup>Letter from Andrew Thomson to Lucy Townsend, Edinburgh, 18 Nov 1830. Lucy Townsend, "Autographs", p. 326. This letter was printed along with extracts of Thomson's speech as Appendix no. 1 of the "Report of the Female Society for Birmingham" in Christian Advocate, no. LXXX (May 16, 1831). Thomson's pamphlet was distributed by the Ladies' Association for Liverpool (see hand-written list at back of Album among Cropper Family Papers).

<sup>51</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entries for 7 Sept, 19 Oct, 2 Nov, 23 Dec 1825.

Heyrick acknowledged Macaulay's help at the beginning of the tract, stating: "Since the prospectus of the following work was issued, its title and contents have undergone considerable alteration, consequent upon the change produced in some of the writer's views of the subject, by a correspondence with one of the most able and devoted leaders of the Anti-Slavery Society."<sup>52</sup> The changes seem to have been minor, however: certainly there was no weakening of her immediatist position or of her criticisms of the anti-slavery leadership.

Heyrick's immediatist pamphlets, while officially ignored by the leadership of the Anti-Slavery Society, were thus privately given serious attention. Publicly discounted at the time, they were later recognised as a landmark in the change in anti-slavery policy. Joseph Sturge, who had been involved in the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society in the 1820's, wrote in 1842 that Heyrick's pamphlet "produced little immediate effect but to cause its writer to be regarded as an amiable eccentric".<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, in an 1846 "Retrospect of the Anti-Slavery Cause" in the Anti-Slavery Reporter she was one of three women singled out as honoured campaigners.<sup>54</sup>

Women also put financial pressure on the Anti-Slavery Society for a change to an immediatist policy. The Female Society for Birmingham passed the following resolution at their annual meeting in April 1830:

---

<sup>52</sup>[Heyrick], Letters, "Advertisement".

<sup>53</sup>Joseph Sturge, A Visit to the United States in 1841, (London, 1842, p. 56, as quoted in Corfield, "English Abolitionists and the Refusal", p. 29.

<sup>54</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. I, no. 1 (Jan 1846), p. 3.

This Society being anxious not to compromise their own principles, nor to give a sanction to anything which falls short of the standard of Right, will appropriate £50 to the London Gentleman's Anti-Slavery Society when they are willing to give up the word gradual in their title, and not to recur in any terms of approbation to the Resolutions of the Commons House of Parliament in 1823 - which if passed into law would only serve to legalize iniquity.<sup>55</sup>

Some seven weeks after receiving the Birmingham women's resolution the committee of the Anti-Slavery Society resolved that the terms "mitigation and gradual abolition" should be dropped from the Society's title, and that their aim should now be the "entire abolition" of slavery.<sup>56</sup> Though pressure from male provincial delegates at the Society's annual meeting on 15 May was clearly a major force behind this change of policy, the women's financial pressure may also have played a part. The Female Society for Birmingham was one of the largest local society donors to central funds, and also had great influence over the network of ladies' associations which together had supplied over a fifth of the society's total income from donations and subscriptions in 1829.<sup>57</sup>

It may be concluded that women used all means open to them to pressurise the national leadership to change to support of immediate emancipation. They initiated a swing in anti-slavery opinion in favour of immediatism which spread upwards through the decision-making hierarchy from

---

<sup>55</sup>Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, entry for 8 Apr 1830 (p. 100).

<sup>56</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 27 May 1830.

<sup>57</sup>Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1829 and 1830; with a List of Subscribers.

ladies' associations through men's auxiliaries to the national committee, and inwards from the provinces to London. The extent to which this was the result of women's influence and the extent to which it was an independent response to the lack of progress towards amelioration and gradual emancipation is difficult to assess. Certainly women, lacking voting rights and representation on the national committee, were not in a position to force immediatism on the movement. Nevertheless Corfield's conclusion that they had "little influence" seems over-cautious. It does not explain the concern Heyrick's pamphlets aroused among the anti-slavery leadership, nor the vehement rebuttals of immediatism which men's auxiliaries felt impelled to publish. Nor does it accord with overall evidence (presented in chapter II of this thesis) for the full integration of ladies' associations into the anti-slavery network, and the increasing reliance placed on their activities by the anti-slavery leadership. The pressure women exerted for a policy change was from within rather than external, the expression of the views of valued activists, not outsiders. If their support were to be retained, their views could not simply be disregarded.

Corfield also considers that women's radical and independent stance on immediatism "implied no similarly radical attitude to the social and political position of their own sex".<sup>58</sup> This is certainly true in the sense that women who supported immediatism did not also claim equal rights in the anti-slavery movement or in the society as a whole. Nevertheless, women's outspoken criticisms of the

---

<sup>58</sup>Corfield, "Elizabeth Heyrick", p. 51.

male leadership of the campaign involved a questioning of male authority and a recognition that their views were not adequately represented by men. Such an outlook might be described as "proto-feminist" in the sense that it was a necessary precursor to any formulation of demands for women's independent legal and democratic rights.

## 2. The Agency System

The change to an immediatist policy by the Anti-Slavery Society in April 1831 marked a general revitalisation of the movement throughout the country. This was led by the Agency Sub-Committee of the national committee, formed on 1 June 1831. Its purpose was to co-ordinate the activities of paid travelling lecturers whose tasks were to arouse new public enthusiasm for the cause through disseminating information and reviving and forming local societies, and to stimulate petitions to Parliament for immediate abolition.<sup>59</sup>

Differing accounts of the origins of the Agency Sub-Committee have been put forward. Agency member George Stephen described it as the result of a schism within the national committee between Parliamentarians and "young England abolitionists".<sup>60</sup> Studies of national committee records, however, suggest that this dissension did not arise until later and that the Agency system grew out of a sub-committee of correspondence set up on 27 May 1830 to

---

<sup>59</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 1 June 1831; George Stephen, Antislavery Recollections, (London: Thomas Hatchard, 1854), Letter IX; Report of the Agency Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society, (London: S. Bagster, Jun., 1832), pp. 1-8.

<sup>60</sup>Stephen, Antislavery Recollections, p. 127.

co-ordinate the activities of voluntary agents.<sup>61</sup> More recently, a study by Anthony Barker of anti-slavery agent Charles Stuart has established the importance of external as well as internal pressure in forming the Agency Sub-Committee. This pressure came from provincial activists, including women.<sup>62</sup>

In this Section I will examine the leading role played by ladies' associations in exerting this external pressure. I will then look at women's relationship to the new Committee: the vital financial support which women gave to it, and the interest which agents took in encouraging women's anti-slavery work.

Externally, the Agency system originated in a paid agency scheme initiated by the Female Society for Birmingham two years before the Agency Sub-Committee was formed. The Birmingham women hoped both to revive flagging female enthusiasm for the anti-slavery cause nationwide and to propagate immediatism. They may well have taken the idea of paid travelling agents from the example of Bible and missionary societies: the Birmingham society's founders were both involved in the Bible Society and the first agent they appointed, the Rev. Dr John Philip (1775-1851), was a leading Congregational missionary.<sup>63</sup> Philip, who

---

<sup>61</sup>The fullest account of the activities of the committee, which stresses its internal origins, is Ruth Moshingley, "The role of the Agency Committee in the Anti-Slavery Campaign, 1831-1833", unpublished BPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1973, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup>Anthony J. Barker, Captain Charles Stuart, Anglo-American Abolitionist, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. P., 1986), pp. 45-63.

<sup>63</sup>For the importance of travelling agents to early 19th century philanthropic societies including the Bible Society see Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 25.

superintended the work of the London Missionary Society in the Cape of Good Hope, was in England on an extended visit to promote African welfare, and had been travelling around the country diffusing information on the anti-slavery cause and promoting the formation of ladies' associations since the summer of 1828. In April 1829 the Female Society for Birmingham offered him £50 to cover his travel expenses.<sup>64</sup> He was clearly grateful for the offer, writing that he "had long been of the opinion" that the national Society should have travelling agents and "would have been happy to have spent a year or two doing this had he been asked".<sup>65</sup> Sponsored by the women, he continued his agency, and is known to have lectured in June 1829 to the Manchester Female Anti-Slavery Society on his opposition to the policy of amelioration and on his work on behalf of black people in South Africa.<sup>66</sup>

Having successfully sponsored a single agent, the Female Society for Birmingham's next step was to put such support on a regular basis in order to combat a decline in

---

<sup>64</sup>Letter from John Philip to Lucy Townsend, London, 29 Apr, 1829. Lucy Townsend's "Autographs", p. 317.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.; "Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 2 Sept 1828.

<sup>66</sup>Letter from Emma to her cousin Charlotte Townsend, 11 June 1829, Lucy Townsend's "Autographs", p. 318; Philip returned to Cape in 1830, where his wife (d. 1847) acted as local correspondent and district treasurer for the Female Society for Birmingham. (For information on Philip see John Harris, A Century of Emancipation, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1933), p. 39).

public interest in the cause.<sup>67</sup> In its report for 1829-30 the Society lamented that, despite earlier resolutions:

We have not to this day promoted as we might have done, the employment of a regular agency, for assisting in the formation of extended Associations in every accessible part of her Majesty's dominions, in order that the appalling wickedness of the colonial system might become known (if possible) to all men.<sup>68</sup>

To remedy this they resolved at their annual meeting on 8 April 1830 that: "a certain portion of the funds of this Society be in future appropriated towards the employing of travelling Agents." They defined the functions of these agents as being to speak out against amelioration and in favour of total abolition, to "testify to the iniquity" of purchasing slave grown produce, and to aid in organising female anti-slavery associations.<sup>69</sup>

The women immediately set about putting their scheme into operation. They allocated a sum of £50 for agency work, equal to the sum they donated that year to the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>70</sup> They wrote to veteran anti-slavery

---

<sup>67</sup>For the problems ladies' associations were experiencing at this time see The Fifth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham; The Fourth Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, Melksham, Devizes, etc in Aid of the Cause of Negro Emancipation, (Calne: T. P. Baily, 1829), p. 3; "Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield" [Minute Book], minutes of annual meeting, 10 Nov 1829. That similar problems were being faced by local men's societies is evident from comments on their inertia and inefficiency in the Report of the Agency Committee, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 8 Apr 1830.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Compare the allocation of a total of £100 to the Anti-Slavery Society and for agency in "list of payments", The Fifth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham with the listing of a £50 donation from the Birmingham women in the Accounts of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society for 1829, 1830, p. 11.

agent Thomas Clarkson asking him to recommend an agent. They informed other women abolitionists about the scheme, and received a request from a Welsh woman for an agent to be sent.<sup>71</sup>

The Female Society for Birmingham decided to use the fund to promote the anti-slavery campaign in Ireland by paying the travel expenses of Anglo-American abolitionist Captain Charles Stuart on his tour of the country on behalf of the Hibernian Negro's Friend Society, a group with which they had very close links. The Irish men kept the women in Birmingham informed of his progress, which led to a flood of petitions to Parliament.<sup>72</sup> The Ladies' Association for Salisbury and Calne also helped fund Stuart's tour with a £5 donation, and the Clifton and Bristol Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association probably gave aid too: its report, stating that Stuart had "proved himself an able, indefatigable, and uncompromising agent" was quoted by the Birmingham women.<sup>73</sup>

The Female Society for Birmingham received a further request for pecuniary aid from the Irish society, and resolved at their annual meeting on 12 April 1831 to grant them a sum of £100, half for use in Ireland, half to be appropriated to the disbursement of the expenses of Edward

---

<sup>71</sup>Letter from Thomas Clarkson to Lucy Townsend, 2 Oct 1830, and letter from Emma Allen to Lucy Townsend, Lussilly, near Pembroke, 8 Oct [1830], both in Lucy Townsend's "Autographs", p. 116, p. 203.

<sup>72</sup>Charles Orpen, The Principles, Plans, and Objects of the "Hibernian Negro's Friend Society", p. 10; "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 23 Dec 1830.

<sup>73</sup>The Fifth Annual Report of the Ladies' Association, For Salisbury, p. 16; "Report of the Birmingham, West Bromwich, etc, Female Anti-Slavery Society", Christian Advocate, no. LXII (May 16, 1831).

Baldwin, Assistant Secretary of the Irish Society, who had come to England for a lecture tour. This was with the proviso that "he will, as far as is consistent with his object of procuring funds, render his proceedings available to the general views of the Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves".<sup>74</sup> This tactful phrase indicated that the women were not content to simply act as fund-raisers for the men: they wanted to make sure that the agents they funded acted in accordance with their own outlook and policies.

The Female Society for Birmingham also funded a female agent in Ireland. The society's 1832 report itemised the payment of £11.4.6 to a woman by the name of Catherine Croker, who was "engaged in travelling to make known the inconsistency of slavery with Christianity".<sup>75</sup> This was presumably the Miss Croker of New Street, Killarney, who was one of the new district treasurers appointed by the Birmingham society in April 1831, and who was supplied with small works about slavery for school children.<sup>76</sup> She was the first female anti-slavery agent, though female agents had already been used by philanthropic societies such as the Bible Society.<sup>77</sup>

There is evidence that the initiative taken by the Female Society for Birmingham influenced the setting up of a paid agency scheme by the Anti-Slavery Society itself.

---

<sup>74</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 12 Apr 1831.

<sup>75</sup>The Seventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1832), p. 61.

<sup>76</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 12 Apr 1831.

<sup>77</sup>See Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 25.

Firstly, the formation of the Agency Sub-Committee was proposed by George Stephen, an activist with close links with local ladies' associations.<sup>78</sup> Secondly, Stephen was backed by male delegates from Bristol, Dublin and Birmingham, towns where local societies had supported the paid agents' scheme.<sup>79</sup> Thirdly, the newly formed Agency Sub-Committee appointed Charles Stuart and Edward Baldwin, who had been funded by the Female Society for Birmingham, as two of their first lecturers. Birmingham women implied that Stuart and Baldwin's lectures were partly responsible for the formation of the Sub-Committee in these terms: "After their various lectures were delivered in this neighbourhood, we rejoice to state that a Committee was formed in London for propagating Christian Principles, on the subject of British Slavery".<sup>80</sup>

Finally, the instructions which the Agency Sub-Committee gave to its agents echoed those issued earlier by the Female Society for Birmingham: the stress on reviving public interest in the cause, in presenting slavery as a religious and moral issue rather than a question of party politics, and the commitment to campaigning for immediate emancipation.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup>For the circular Stephen issued in 1830 to Ladies' Associations see "Committee on Slavery Minute Book, 1829-1832", entry for 23 1830; letter from George Stephen to Anne Knight, 8 Oct 1830, Anne Knight Correspondence, Friends' House Library, London.

<sup>79</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 25 May 1831.

<sup>80</sup>The Seventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, p. 24.

<sup>81</sup>Compare "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for 8 April 1830, with Report of the Agency Committee, p. 3.

When the Agency Sub-Committee of the national society was set up in June 1831 it gained immediate support from women. The Female Society for Birmingham women dropped their independent funding of agents and instead sent a donation of £80 to the new group.<sup>82</sup> Sarah Wedgwood, a wealthy supporter of anti-slavery who was a district treasurer for the Birmingham society and a firm supporter of immediatism, offered a donation of £100 to "carry the plan into operation". This members of the Agency Sub-Committee credited with giving "encouragement to its projectors to proceed".<sup>83</sup>

The Agency Committee's subscription list shows a total of £1182 received in its first year from eighteen men and seven women, a far higher proportion of women than the average of around ten to one in Anti-Slavery Society subscription lists. It also reveals the important part played by ladies' anti-slavery associations in financing the scheme. The committee was given a total of £320 by thirteen ladies' associations, including £100 each from London and Birmingham, and smaller sums from Beverley, Chelmsford, Manchester, Durham, Peckham, Woodbridge, Plymouth and Stonehouse, Plaistow, Clifton and Bristol, Nottingham and Alton. This support contrasts sharply with total of only £9 received from four men's auxiliaries. In addition, the total donation from women's groups was roughly equal to their total donation to the funds of the Anti-Slavery Society itself in that year, whereas the men's

---

<sup>82</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 3 Apr 1832.

<sup>83</sup>Report of the Agency Committee, p. 2.

donation was only a minute proportion of their contribution.<sup>84</sup>

This donation pattern suggests a higher level of enthusiasm for the agency scheme among female activists than male. The situation at St Ives in Huntingdonshire illustrates this. There the Female Association praised the work of the new Agency Committee, pledged itself to raise funds for it, and expressed enthusiasm at the prospect of a visit from an agent to speak at a public meeting.<sup>85</sup> Its secretary, however, complained to London that "it seems difficult to interest any gentleman sufficiently to induce him to come forward, so as to form a committee to meet your agent". The men at St Ives had expressed the view that it was unnecessary to take any action at present since when the Reform Bill passed the abolition of slavery was sure to follow.<sup>86</sup> In contrast the women, not involved in the campaign for male political rights, continued to concentrate on extra-parliamentary anti-slavery campaigning.

Women's support for the Agency Committee was reciprocated by the interest which agents took in promoting ladies' associations. The voluntary agents of the Anti-Slavery Society's sub-committee of correspondence had already encouraged women's work, and there had been an increase of over £100 in donations from women's groups to

---

<sup>84</sup>Compare list of subscribers in the Report of the Agency Committee with Accounts of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society for the Year 1831.

<sup>85</sup>Second Report of the Female Association for St Ives, (St Ives: S. Hardner, 1833), p. 10.

<sup>86</sup>Letter from Margaret Crouch to John Crisp, St Ives, 18 Aug 1831, MSS Brit Emp S 18 C 156/148A, 149 in RHL.

the Anti-Slavery Society between 1830 and 1831. The number of ladies' associations contributing increased by eleven, and included new groups at Alton(Hants.), Dorking(Surrey), Kingsbridge (Devon), Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nottingham, Spalding (Lincs.), St. Ives (Hunts.), Staines (Middlesex) and Taunton (Somerset).<sup>87</sup>

The Agency Committee's paid agents were even more successful in forming new local societies. According to George Stephen, agents increased the number of societies affiliated to London from two hundred to nearly one thousand three hundred within the space of a single year.<sup>88</sup> How accurate this figure is, and how many of the groups were ladies' associations, is unfortunately unknown. There are only snippets of information on the formation of ladies' associations at St Albans (following a lecture by Edward Baldwin to over three hundred people at the Baptist Meeting House); at Stafford (together with a men's auxiliary); and at Hythe (by George Thompson, with a men's auxiliary). The Durham and the Stonehouse and Plymouth Ladies' Associations were also set up at about this time.<sup>89</sup> In addition, there is evidence of interest in the cause among working-class women: a lecture in the school room at Folkingham near Sleaford in Lincolnshire, described as a very poor place of only eight hundred inhabitants, was made

---

<sup>87</sup>Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1829, 1830.

<sup>88</sup>Stephen, Antislavery Recollections, Letter X.

<sup>89</sup>George Stephen, Anti-Slavery Recollections, Letter IX; Report of the Agency Committee, p. 19; George Thompson's letters to his wife, describing his tour for the Agency Committee in Sept-Nov 1831, transcribed in "Amelia Chesson's Notebooks", Thompson Papers, Raymond English Deposit, John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

"to one of the most attentive and deeply affected audiences I have ever seen - There were about 150 present, chiefly females". After the lecture subscriptions were obtained and offers of help were made.<sup>90</sup>

The Agency Sub-Committee hoped eventually to cover all of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland by lecture tours, and following a successful appeal for funds it continued its work right up to the passage of the Abolition Act in 1833. On 4 July 1832 it split with the Anti-Slavery Society due to organisational and ideological conflict, forming the independent Agency Anti-Slavery Society with its own periodical, The Tourist. This organisation continued, however, to work in very close co-operation with the Anti-Slavery Society. New ladies' anti-slavery associations in Bradford, Grantham and Charlbury<sup>were formed</sup>.<sup>91</sup> Agents were also active in Scotland and on 6 March 1833 George Thompson founded the Glasgow Ladies' Association for Promoting the Objects of the London Agency Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>92</sup>

It may be concluded that women independently initiated a paid agency scheme, that they influenced the setting up of a more extensive scheme by the Anti-Slavery Society, and that they then gave vital financial support to this scheme. In so doing they helped promote aspects of anti-slavery work which they considered to be of prime importance: the policy of immediate abolition, the presentation of anti-

---

<sup>90</sup>Report of the Agency Committee, p. 19.

<sup>91</sup>The Anti-Slavery Record, Vol. I, nos. 1-14 (May 1832-Apr 1833).

<sup>92</sup>George Thompson, Substance of an Address to the Ladies of Glasgow, (Glasgow: Robertson, 1833).

slavery as a religious rather than a political question, the arousal of public opinion against slavery, and the formation of new ladies' anti-slavery associations.

### 3. Petitions

A major task of the agents appointed by the Agency Committee was to promote the mass petitioning of Parliament for the speedy and utter abolition of slavery. This petitioning was the third key element of the intensification of the anti-slavery campaign during the 1830-33 period.

Women's participation in anti-slavery petitioning has received little attention from historians. In this Section I will examine the development of female petitioning and suggest some explanations for its emergence. I will then assess its considerable significance as a contribution to the anti-slavery campaign, and as a development in women's role in the anti-slavery movement and in their relationship to parliamentary politics.

The petitioning of Parliament was a feature of the campaign against slavery from its beginning in 1823, and on 5 July 1825 a petition was presented to the House of Commons signed by two thousand women from the Birmingham area and organised by a few members of the Female Society for Birmingham independently of that Society. This petition revived the proposal which Buxton had made unsuccessfully in 1823 for Parliament to set a day after which all children born of slaves should be free. It also expressed willingness to raise money to defray any expenses incurred

by this action.<sup>93</sup> This petition was an isolated case, however, and its organisation independently of the Birmingham society suggests that there may have been disagreements among society members about its propriety.

Women did not otherwise participate in the petitioning campaigns of 1823-29 for the amelioration and gradual abolition of slavery. The only other female anti-slavery petition presented during this period before 1830 was the private petition for freedom presented to the House of Commons on 24 June 1829 by the slave Mary Prince.<sup>94</sup>

Rather than petitioning themselves, women initially become involved in promoting petitions from men. While the Anti-Slavery Society's 1825 rules for ladies' associations differed from the men's rules in their failure to mention petitions, in 1826 the Society's address to women urged ladies' associations to promote petitions to the legislature. This step was strongly opposed by Wilberforce, who centered his objections to women's anti-slavery activism on their becoming involved in political controversy through "stirring up petitions".<sup>95</sup> There is in fact little evidence that women did stir up petitions in

---

<sup>93</sup>The First Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, p 11; Lucy Townsend's "Scrapbook on Negro Slaves", p 14. Journal of the House of Commons, session 1825-1826, Vol LXXX, p 629; Appendix to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons, Session 1825, p. 777.

<sup>94</sup>Journal of the House of Commons, session 1829, Vol. LXXXVIV, p. 404. The petition is reproduced as Appendix I in Prince, The History of Mary Prince, ed. Moira Ferguson, p. 116.

<sup>95</sup>Letter from William Wilberforce to Thomas Babington, Jan 1826, quoted in R. I. and S. Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, (London: John Murray, 1838), Vol. V, p. 264; Letter from William Wilberforce to Zachary Macaulay, Feb. 1826, quoted in R. I. and S. Wilberforce, eds., The Correspondence of William Wilberforce, (London: John Murray, 1840), Vol. II, pp. 493-4.

the 1820's, suggesting that they may themselves have felt uneasy about such political activity. Exceptions were, however, made when there was no active men's society to take on the task. Thus the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, agreed at its foundation in 1828 that one of its functions should be to stir up petitions to Parliament from all over Ireland, and the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1830 publicly appealed for men to petition Parliament.<sup>96</sup>

Male opposition, and female reluctance, to women petitioning Parliament had several sources: an ideology which defined women's place as being in the private rather than the political sphere; the associated lack of a female tradition of petitioning; segregation of anti-slavery work on sex lines; and the belief among some women that petitioning had no hope of achieving success, and that emancipation was more likely to be achieved through a boycott of slave-grown sugar initiated by women.<sup>97</sup>

In view of the factors inhibiting female petitioning their mass entry into petitioning in 1830 is surprising. Between November 1830 and May 1831 female anti-slavery petitions were presented from the inhabitants of twenty-one English, four Scottish and one Welsh town, from the committee of Exeter Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, and from female members of six Baptist, one Independent and three Methodist congregations.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup>Rules and Resolutions of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, [p. 3]; [Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society], Appeal of the Friends of the Negro, pp. 6-8.

<sup>97</sup>[Heyrick], Immediate, not Gradual Abolition, pp. 11-12.

<sup>98</sup>See Appendix III of this thesis.

This development was encouraged by several factors. First, the sense of urgency generated by the rising tempo of anti-slavery agitation, and the process of change to the immediatist policy which many women favoured. Second, the precedent set in February to June 1829 and again in March 1830 by small groups of petitions from the female inhabitants of towns and members of congregations—Unitarian, Baptist, Calvinistic Baptist and Independent—urging Parliament to abolish the suttee, the Indian Hindu custom of burning widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands.<sup>99</sup> Third, 1830 saw the beginning of mass anti-slavery petitioning by Nonconformist denominations in response to the increasing persecution of missionaries and slave converts in the West Indies. This entry into politics was thus justified in religious terms, which may have encouraged female participation as an extension of their support for missions.<sup>100</sup>

In addition, while neither the Anti-Slavery Society nor denominational bodies came out openly in favour of petitioning by women in 1830, there are suggestions of a change in attitude from an assumption that women would not petition to an acceptance that they might. The issue was not discussed formally at meetings of the committee of the Anti-Slavery Society but private discussion and disagreements are evident from a letter which Lord Henry

---

<sup>99</sup>Journals of the House of Commons, session 1829, Vol. LXXXIV, pp. 28, 192, 370, 406; session 1830, Vol. LXXXV, pp. 148, 184, 235.

<sup>100</sup>A valuable account of Baptist involvement is K. R. M. Short, "A Study in Political Nonconformity: The Baptists 1827-1845; with Particular Reference to Slavery", unpublished D. Phil, Oxford University, 1972.

Brougham, leader of the anti-slavery campaign in the House of Lords, wrote to Zachary Macaulay:

I have letters saying that a Female Petition is disapproved of by the Society. I differ toto coelo, but as it requires cautious handling I shall myself undertake it, and preach from this very fruitful text.<sup>101</sup>

A change of official policy in favour of female petitions is suggested by the October 1830 issue of the Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter. Here an address by Edmund Clarke was published calling for petitions for immediate emancipation and suggesting "a separate petition, either to Her Majesty, or to the legislature from British females of every town, village and congregation".<sup>102</sup> The address also appeared in the Baptist Magazine, and was doubtless influential given that Clarke was President of the South Devon and Cornwall Baptist Association, the group which initiated Baptist anti-slavery petitioning.<sup>103</sup>

Wesleyan Methodists began to discuss the possibility of female petitioning at about the same time. At meetings held in local chapels in Yorkshire in October 1830 ministers stated that "the custom of the country" did not allow women to sign petitions, but expressed regret that this was the case, since "they are admirably qualified to do it by enlightened understanding and affectionate feeling." Women's own grief that they were not allowed to sign petitions was also noted.<sup>104</sup> The 1 November issue of

---

<sup>101</sup>Knutsford, Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay, p. 433.

<sup>102</sup>Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter, Vol. III, no. 69, (Oct 20, 1830), p. 452.

<sup>103</sup>Baptist Magazine, Vol. XXII (1830), pp. 482-4.

<sup>104</sup>Sheffield Iris, 12 Oct 1830; Christian Advocate, no. 42 (18 Oct 1830); No. 43 (25 Oct 1830).

the Methodist magazine the Christian Advocate included a letter from a Methodist reporting on an anti-slavery petition to Parliament from the females of a Baptist congregation in London and expressing his wish that Methodist and other chapels would follow suit.<sup>105</sup>

Methodists, however, initially favoured women petitioning the Queen rather than Parliament. Both Methodists and Baptists suggested such addresses and the Christian Advocate failed to mention female petitions to Parliament, including two to the House of Lords from Methodist congregations, while reporting on the female anti-slavery addresses presented to Adelaide on her accession as Queen Consort. Such calls by women for a woman to exert her feminine influence may have been considered less political than petitions to Parliament and thus more appropriate for women.<sup>106</sup>

The final concerted petitioning campaign following election of the first Reformed Parliament in December 1832 was marked by an increase in the number of female petitions, probably stimulated by the travelling lecturers employed by the Agency Committee.<sup>107</sup> Increasing acceptance of female petitioning by male activists is suggested by the applause which greeted a call for female petitions made by leading Irish abolitionist Daniel O'Connell at the annual

---

<sup>105</sup>Christian Advocate, No. 44 (1 Nov 1830).

<sup>106</sup>Christian Advocate, no. 44 (6 Dec 1830); no. 80 (2 May, 1831); Court Journal, no. 83 (27 Nov 1830); To Her Majesty Queen Adelaide. The Humble and Dutiful Address of the Undersigned Female Inhabitants of the City of Bristol and its Vicinity, (Bristol: Wright and Bagnall, [1830]). The petition from Bristol was signed by six thousand women, headed by veteran abolitionist Hannah More.

<sup>107</sup>For list of petitions see Appendix III of this thesis.

meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1832. The following year O'Connell defended women's right to petition during an anti-slavery debate in the House of Commons.<sup>108</sup>

A second important development in 1833 was the advent of mixed petitions, signed by both the male and female inhabitants of a town or members of a congregation. While only two petitions are recorded explicitly as signed by both men and women, indirect evidence that mixed petitions became common is contained in a circular issued by the organisers of the national female petition of 1833 which recorded that in some places "both sexes have signed mutual petitions."<sup>109</sup>

There is also evidence that the majority of Wesleyan Methodist petitions were signed by both sexes. Seymour Drescher has estimated that 95.2 percent of Wesleyan Methodists - 229,426 individuals out of a denominational membership of around 241,000 - signed anti-slavery petitions in 1833.<sup>110</sup> This indicates, as Louis and

---

<sup>108</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. V, no. 5 (May 1832), p. 166; T.C. Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, Vol. XVIII (London: Hansard, 1833), column 309.

<sup>109</sup>"Female Petition for the Abolition of Negro Slavery", [printed circular appeal].

<sup>110</sup>Seymour Drescher, "Two Variables of Anti-Slavery: Religious Organisation and Social Mobilization in Britain and France, 1780-1870", Bolt and Drescher, eds., Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform, chap. ii, Table 2. Roger Anstey ("Parliamentary Reform, Methodism and Anti-Slavery Politics, 1829-1833", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. ii, no. 3 (Dec 1981), pp. 209-226) quotes Alan Gilbert's figure of Wesleyan Methodist membership of 232,883 in 1831 and Drescher also bases his calculation on this figure (see Alan D. Gilbert, Religion and Society in Industrial England, (Longman: London, 1976), Table 2.2, p. 31). In contrast David Hempton, Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850 (London: Hutchinson, 1984), pp. 208-210, gives an official membership figure of 260,491 in 1833. Even if Hempton's higher figure is taken, however, it remains true that the vast majority of Methodists signed the petitions.

Rosamund Billington were the first to point out, that Methodist petitions were signed by both sexes, and that the vast majority of female Wesleyan Methodists signed anti-slavery petitions.<sup>111</sup>

Methodist women were not always allowed to sign petitions, however. Indeed, indecision and confusion among Wesleyan Methodists on the eligibility of female signatures is evident from reports in their periodical, the Christian Advocate. This reported that at Whitby several congregational petitions from Wesleyan Methodists were prepared in April 1833, in response to a circular issued by the Missionary Committee in London, but: "Owing to a trifling mistake, the ladies were led to suppose that their names might also be added to these petitions; and ... when they were informed that such a plan was not usual, and could not be allowed, great was the disappointment expressed by many of them."<sup>112</sup> They decided to send a petition to the Queen instead. Reporting on this, the editors of the Christian Advocate urged women to follow their example "as the privilege of petitioning Parliament in withheld from the gentler sex".<sup>113</sup> Only three weeks later, however, in response to a number of letters they had received "inquiring the course which should be followed" respecting the national female petition to Parliament, they printed the full text of the petition and stated: "we earnestly entreat every female throughout the kingdom to

---

<sup>111</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness'", p. 91. Neither Drescher, Anstey or Hempton draw attention to female signatories.

<sup>112</sup>Christian Advocate, Vol. IV, no. 172 (Apr 15, 1833), p. 118.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

subscribe it, even though, as a member of a congregation, or a resident in a parish, she may have signed petitions in these characters."<sup>114</sup>

This national female petition is an impressive example of a national anti-slavery initiative by women. The petition was instigated and organised by women, and was never formally discussed at Anti-Slavery Society committee meetings or mentioned in the Anti-Slavery Reporter. According to Agency Committee activist George Stephen the petition was organised by two Quaker women: Anne Knight of the Chelmsford Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and Marie Tothill of Staines.<sup>115</sup> In fact, while the idea for the petition may have been suggested by these two individuals, the collection of signatures was organised by the London Female Anti-Slavery Society. This Society rivalled the Female Society for Birmingham in size and influence, having established by 1829 a network of ten district committees in the London area and enrolled a total of four hundred and fifteen subscribers.<sup>116</sup>

The group felt that at this crucial stage in the campaign women's "efforts would have more weight if they were collected and concentrated into one vast and universal expression of feeling from all the females of the United Kingdom".<sup>117</sup> Signatures were collected in only ten days,

---

<sup>114</sup>Christian Advocate, Vol. IV, no. 175 (6 May 1833), p. 140.

<sup>115</sup>George Stephen, Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 196-7.

<sup>116</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 26 Nov 1829.

<sup>117</sup>London Female Anti-Slavery Society, "Female Petition for the Abolition of Slavery", 29 April 1833 [printed circular appeal]. See also "The Ladies of the

with the dispatch of circular appeals and sample petitions to contacts throughout the country.<sup>118</sup>

This national petition was the only female petition to gain a place in anti-slavery historiography. It could hardly be ignored, its 187,157 signatures making it the largest single anti-slavery petition ever to be presented to Parliament. In his memoirs George Stephen described it as "this huge featherbed of a petition, hauled into the House by four members amidst shouts of applause and laughter".<sup>119</sup> It was presented in the Commons by Thomas Fowell Buxton, whose daughter Priscilla was co-secretary of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society. The petition was important both because of its massive size and because it was well timed, being presented on the fourteenth of May, the day when the Government introduced their Emancipation Bill.

It was the large number of signatories which each female petition attracted, rather than the number of petitions themselves, which made female petitioning a major contribution to the anti-slavery campaign. Female petitions constituted under one percent of a total of 5484 anti-slavery petitions presented to the House of Commons in 1830-31 and only around two percent of the 5020 petitions presented in 1833. However, if total numbers of signatories are looked at - figures available only for 1833 - women's contribution assumes far greater importance. Out

---

London Female Anti-Slavery Society ..."(London, May 1833)[printed circular thanking those who helped with the petition].

<sup>118</sup>The Record, 16 May 1833; "Female Petition for the Abolition of Negro Slavery".

<sup>119</sup>Stephen, Anti-Slavery Recollections, pp. 196-7.

of a total of 1,309,913 signatories to anti-slavery petitions a total of 298,785, or nearly a quarter, were women's signatures to female petitions, this total including the 187,157 signatories to the national women's petition. When female signatories to mixed petitions are taken into account - a minimum of around a hundred thousand if only Methodist women's signatures are counted - the total of female signatories reaches over four hundred thousand. This represents nearly a third of all the signatories to anti-slavery petitions in 1833.

This enormous female contribution to anti-slavery petitioning, concealed because of the small number of female petitions, was never acknowledged by the Anti-Slavery Society and has never been recognised by historians.

Women's petitions, though relatively small in number, were also significant because they did not simply add to the total mass of calls for the abolition of slavery. Many were distinguished by their articulation of concern for the suffering of slave women which, as has been pointed out in Chapter II, both inspired and justified female anti-slavery effort. In 1830 three identically worded petitions presented from women in the neighbouring towns of Christchurch, Poole and Southampton urged "that all Female slaves may be immediately emancipated as the first step towards the entire abolition of Human Bondage".<sup>120</sup> Other petitions presented between 1830 and 1833, including the national female petition, expressed horror at the degradation and suffering of women under slavery and urged

---

<sup>120</sup>Journal of the House of Lords, session 1830-31, Vol. LXIII, pp. 152, 456, 491; The Record, Nov. 1, 1830.

Parliament to bring a stop to it by abolishing the system and thus allowing the black woman "to occupy her proper Station as a Daughter, a Wife and a Mother".<sup>121</sup> Such petitions, some of which were ordered to be printed by Parliament because of their distinctive wording, encouraged parliamentary debate to focus on the particular sufferings of women under slavery.

How important was female petitioning in bringing about the passage of the Emancipation Act in August 1833? Izhak Gross, in his study of abolition and parliamentary politics in 1832-3, places less stress on petitioning than on the anti-slavery pledges which constituents - by which he presumably means male voters - extracted from local parliamentary candidates.<sup>122</sup> Taking a wider and longer-term view of the campaign, however, it can be seen that petitioning by women contributed to creating a "climate of public opinion" in favour of emancipation which enabled constituents to represent their anti-slavery demands as

---

<sup>121</sup>This quote is from a petition of the females of Spilsby, Lincolnshire, to the House of Lords, dated 28 March 1833 (Journal of the House of Lords, session 1833 Vol. LXV, p. 121). For other petitions making similar points see Journal of the House of Lords, session 1832, Vol. LXIII, p. 420; session 1833, Vol. LXV, p. 183, 208, 314, 325, 349; Appendix of the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons, Session 1830-1, p. 78, p. 216; Nineteenth Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, (London: House of Commons, 1832), Appendixes 673, 675; report of Reading female petition in Berkshire Chronicle, Dec 25, 1830; report of Bolton women's petition in Bolton Chronicle, Dec 25, 1830.

<sup>122</sup>Izhak Gross, "The Abolition of Negro Slavery and British Parliamentary Politics 1832-3", Historical Journal, 23, 1 (1980), pp. 63-85.

indisputable and which encouraged candidates to stress their anti-slavery credentials in soliciting support.<sup>123</sup>

As well as constituting a significant contribution to the anti-slavery campaign, petitioning by women involved their taking on a new role in the anti-slavery movement which was both more public and more political. This to some extent broke down the division of anti-slavery work on sex lines, especially with the advent of mixed petitions in 1833.

This new public presence of women is attested by the large numbers of women who were also attending public meetings called to petition Parliament. In 1830, for example, at a meeting in the Guildhall at York in 1830 called to approve an anti-slavery petition to Parliament "the great majority of the meeting - probably six or seven to one, or even a larger proportion, were ladies".<sup>124</sup> Occasionally public meetings were called by women themselves. In Doncaster (Yorks.) meetings of ladies were held on 24 and 30 April 1833 in the Mansion House. The meetings were advertised in the local newspaper, which reported on the "very respectable and numerous" attendance.<sup>125</sup> In Chatham (Kent) a meeting of ladies was held in the Sun Tavern in April 1833 "for the purpose of

---

<sup>123</sup>For the argument that "frequently renewed petitions" created a "climate of opinion" against slavery see Drescher, Capitalism and Antislavery, p. 94.

<sup>124</sup>Yorkshire Gazette, 23 Oct 1830. The attendance of large numbers of women were also reported in Edinburgh, Nottingham and Exeter. (The Christian Advocate, no. 43 (25 Oct 1830); The Record, 25 Oct, 1830); Nottingham Review, 7 Dec 1832); Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 6 Apr 1833)).

<sup>125</sup>Doncaster, Nottingham, and Lincoln Gazette, 26 April, 3 May 1833.

agreeing to a petition". The petition, proposed and seconded by men, "was unanimously agreed to, and immediately signed by several of the ladies present".<sup>126</sup> These examples of women holding public meetings in town halls and public houses show them entering public spaces normally controlled by men, though they continued to leave the public speaking to men.

Such public activities also resulted in a wider reporting of women's anti-slavery activities in the press. Several of these reports praised the women's efforts in organising petitions and urged others to follow suit.<sup>127</sup> Some reports were also given in denominational periodicals, though publicity within anti-slavery circles was limited by failure of the Anti-Slavery Society's Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter and the Agency Committee's Tourist to make any mention of the women's efforts.<sup>128</sup> The national female petition in particular represented for British women an impressive and dramatic public finale to their years of behind-the-scenes anti-slavery activity. It was held up to women anti-slavery campaigners in America as an example of female achievement, and would be recalled proudly by

---

<sup>126</sup>Rochester Gazette, 30 Apr 1833.

<sup>127</sup>Bolton Chronicle 4 May 1833; Doncaster, Nottingham, and Lincoln Gazette, 10 May 1833; Nottingham Review, 10 May 10 1833. For other newspaper reports of female petitions see: Berkshire Chronicle, 25 Dec 1830; Birmingham Journal, 11 May 1833; Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 16 May 1833; Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 25 April and 9 May 1833; Doncaster, Nottingham, and Lincoln Gazette, 26 Apr, 3 and 17 May 1833; Edinburgh Evening Courant, 16 May 1833; Newcastle Chronicle, 18 May 1833; Nottingham Review 7 Dec 1832, 3 May 1833; Rochester Gazette 30 Apr 1833; Sussex Advertiser 13 May 1833.

<sup>128</sup>See the Wesleyan Methodist Christian Advocate for 1830-33; the evangelical nonconformist Patriot, 11 May 1833; the Evangelical Church of England Record for 1 Nov 1830, 19 Apr 1833, 16 May 1833.

British women involved in later stages of the anti-slavery struggle.<sup>129</sup>

The largest number of signatures tended to be collected in towns with established ladies' anti-slavery associations: Southampton, Exeter, West Bromwich, Bradford (Yorks), Devizes, Nottingham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Edinburgh and Dublin. However, most towns with established ladies anti-slavery societies did not organise female anti-slavery petitions, possibly because the Anti-Slavery Society did not encourage them to do so. Only thirteen of the 148 non-denominational female petitions came from towns with known female societies. A number of others may, however, have been organised by women's groups in their general area. Thus the committee of the Exeter Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, which itself petitioned Parliament in 1831, may also have been responsible for organising the group of twenty-three identically worded petitions from the female inhabitants of Devon towns and villages clustered around Exeter which were presented to the House of Lords in April and May 1833. Similarly, identically worded petitions from Southampton and Christchurch in Hampshire and Poole in Devon may have been organised by Southampton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Nevertheless, the majority of petitions seem to have been organised independently of ladies' anti-slavery associations.

This is indicative of another important aspect of female petitioning: it brought far larger numbers of women into the anti-slavery campaign than ever before. The total of over four hundred thousand individual female signatories

---

<sup>129</sup>The Liberator, Vol. III, no. 28 (July 13, 1833), p. 111.

to petitions in 1833 compares with an estimated total of less than ten thousand members of ladies' anti-slavery Associations. This represented large scale participation in anti-slavery by working-class women. The estimated one hundred thousand women who signed the Wesleyan Methodist anti-slavery petitions belonged to a denomination of which it has been calculated that around 62.7 percent of members came from artisan families.<sup>130</sup> Female support for non-denominational petitions was also extensive. In the manufacturing town of Derby, for example, the local newspaper reported that nearly every adult female in the town signed the petition in 1833.<sup>131</sup>

In some towns more women than men signed anti-slavery petitions. At Edinburgh an October 1830 petition for immediate emancipation was signed by around twenty-two thousand men, the May 1833 petition by 162,000 women, or around a quarter of the adult female population of the town.<sup>132</sup> In 1833 at Doncaster over twice as many women (3810) as men (1627) signed petitions, and at Nottingham there were nearly three times as many female (15,001)

---

<sup>130</sup>Gilbert, Religion and Society, Table 3.1 (p. 83). (By "artisan" Gilbert means skilled workers employed in factories and domestic industry).

<sup>131</sup>This does not seem a great exaggeration when there were 5136 female signatures out of a population of some 24,000 men, women and children (Eric J. Evans, The Forging of the Modern State, (London: Longman, 1983), Appendix Eiii (p. 408)).

<sup>132</sup>The Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. IV, no. 2 (Jan 5, 1831), p.32; Twentieth Report from the Select Committee on Public Petitions (London: House of Commons, May 23, 1833), petition number 7719. The total population of Edinburgh at this time was around 162,000 (see Eric J. Evans, The forging of the Modern State, Appendix Eiii (p. 408)).

signatories as male (5310).<sup>133</sup> Ann Gilbert of Nottingham Female Anti-Slavery Society wrote proudly to fellow activist Mary Ann Rawson of Sheffield:

On very short notice we had petitions for signing in all the Chapels last Sabbath day, and by a vigorous canvass of only 18 hours ... we succeeded in obtaining fifteen thousand signatures - The Gentlemen, who had been doing something of the same kind, as they fancied, for the last week or two, have, in consequence put on double spurs, but at present they are ten thousand in the rear of their truly better halves.<sup>134</sup>

This level of success, as this quote suggests, was the product both of female enthusiasm and well-organised canvassing. While men tended to organise petitions by calling a public meeting and leaving the petition for signature in the town hall, women solicited individual signatures more actively. In Whitby, for example, a report on the collection of signatures for a female petition to the Queen stated: "the town is divided into nine districts, and two or more ladies are appointed to each district."<sup>135</sup>

As well as marking an expansion in the form and scale of women's involvement in the anti-slavery movement, female petitioning represented the first large-scale intervention by women in parliamentary politics. Public petitioning had great importance in the political system of the period. Both Peter Fraser and Colin Leys have stressed the vital

---

<sup>133</sup>Doncaster, Nottingham, and Lincoln Gazette, 17 May 1833; Nottingham Review, 3 and 10 May 1833. In Birmingham, in contrast, the proportions were reversed, with 11,000 male signatories to around 7000 female (Birmingham Journal, 11 May 1833).

<sup>134</sup>Letter from Ann Gilbert to Mary Ann Rawson, Nottingham, 10 May 1833, "Autographs - The Bow in the Cloud", p. 151, Rawson Papers, Raymond English Deposit, John Rylands University Library.

<sup>135</sup>Christian Advocate, Vol. IV, no. 172 (15 Apr 1833), p. 118.

role played by petitioning from the late eighteenth century through the 1830's in bringing the pressure of public opinion to bear on Parliament. A large proportion of parliamentary time was taken up by Members of Parliament who used the presentation of petitions as an opportunity to initiate debate on issues such as slavery. These debates in turn influenced the public through their widespread reporting in the press.<sup>136</sup> When female anti-slavery campaigners began "stirring up" and signing petitions they were thus encroaching on the male terrain of parliamentary politics, implying that women were among the public whose views should be represented in national decision-making.

Presenting the Devizes women's anti-slavery petition to the House of Commons in 1833, Mr Locke argued that in petitioning women "did not go out of their proper sphere in advocating the cause of humanity and morality".<sup>137</sup> In other cases, however, women themselves acknowledged that they had been impelled to step out of their usual sphere. They justified this as representing it as an exceptional response to exceptional circumstances, thus implicitly denying that it would serve as a precedent to further public and political activity by women.

The exceptional circumstance which was advanced to justify female petitioning was the same one which had earlier been used to explain and justify the formation of ladies' anti-slavery associations: the sufferings of women

---

<sup>136</sup>Peter Fraser, "Public Petitioning and Parliament Before 1832", History, Vol. XLVI (1961), pp. 195-211; Colin Leys, "Petitioning in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", Political Studies, Vol. III, no. 1 (Feb 1955), pp. 45-64.

<sup>137</sup>Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 9 May 1833.

under slavery (see section 6 of chapter II). The national female petition stated that: "a painful and indignant sense of the injuries offered to their own sex, has peculiarly impelled them thus to step out of their usual sphere."<sup>138</sup> Similarly, the Reading women petitioners of 1830 stated they:

Hoped that considering the injurious influence of slavery on the female character, they should not be regarded as exercising an unbecoming interference in a political question, or departing from the propriety of their sex.<sup>139</sup>

The fullest expression of this line of reasoning is to be found in the petition of the female members of the congregation of Carr's Lane Chapel in Birmingham. The petitioners stated that:

They can no longer forbear to address your honourable House in a cause which so deeply involves the honour and the comfort of so many of their own sex; and if in this act it should be thought that the zeal of your Petitioners has led them to overstep the line within which female influence is usually confined and unobtrusively employed, they hope it will not be attributed to any deficient sense of what is due either to themselves or to your Honourable House, but to that still deeper sense of what is due to so large a portion of their fellow-subjects.<sup>140</sup>

The minister of Carr's Lane Chapel was the Rev. John Angell James, the author of a number of influential works which stressed that women's philanthropic activities must be compatible with domestic duties, and attacked women who went out canvassing and collecting from door-to-door.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup>Twentieth Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, Appendix no. 701.

<sup>139</sup>Berkshire Chronicle, 25 Dec 1830.

<sup>140</sup>Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Public Petitions, Appendix no. 673.

<sup>141</sup>See Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p. 430.

The fact that he did not prevent the women of his congregation from petitioning is indicative of the widespread acceptance of such action in evangelical circles.

Women's petitions, like their anti-slavery pamphlets, frequently contrasted the "hapless and forlorn" condition of slave women with their own "high privileges as British females", and represented their social position as an ideal which should be extended to other women.<sup>142</sup> As with their petitions against suttee, women petitioned not on their own behalf but on behalf of women whose lives were remote from their's.

Women's petitions associated their own privileges with an "enlightened" imperialism which could spread the benefits of Christianity and of British social conventions and government to the colonies. The female members of New Road chapel in Oxford stated that they:

felt truly grateful for the just and honourable level in society which they maintain, and for the distinguished privileges which in the several characters of daughter, wife, mother, Christian, they enjoy under the benign influence of the principles of Christianity, and by the administration of the enlightened and paternal Government of this happy land.<sup>143</sup>

The language of female petitions thus reinforced evangelical ideology concerning gender relations and religious mission, and opposition to female anti-slavery

---

<sup>142</sup>See text of the Birmingham women's 1830 Address to the Queen in "Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 23 Dec 1830; text of 1833 petition from the ladies of Market Lavington to the House of Commons in Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Public Petitions, Appendix no. 675.

<sup>143</sup>Appendix to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons, Session 1830-1, p. 78. For similar points in a petition from the women of Bolton see Bolton Chronicle, 4 May 4 1833.

petitioning came not from evangelicals but from those suspicious of nonconformist religious enthusiasm. High Church Tory alarm at female petitioning as a threat to the social order was expressed in an article by an anonymous "Englishwoman" which appeared first in the London newspaper John Bull, and was then published as a pamphlet entitled An Address to the Females of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Their Petitioning Parliament for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. The author stated that for women to "outstep propriety" by petitioning Parliament was an "interference" which was "a vote of censure upon those whom we are bound to acknowledge as our superiors - our fathers, our husbands, our brothers; for if they perform their part, our assistance cannot possibly be requisite".<sup>144</sup> The home was women's "only province" and women had been honoured in the past because "they knew their rank in society to be a subordinate one, and they dignified it by the fulfillment of its obligations".<sup>145</sup> The only precedent for political action by women was in that "most calamitous period" when "the females of a revolutionary and fanatical age" forgot their proper position.<sup>146</sup>

In fact, women anti-slavery activists were far from being "revolutionaries and fanatics". The favourable contrast they made between their own social position and that of women slaves involved denying their own subordinate position, in sharp contrast to those Owenite Socialists who

---

<sup>144</sup>An Englishwoman, An Address to the Females of Great Britain, on the Propriety of their Petitioning Parliament for the Abolition of Negro Slavery, (London: J. G. and F., Rivington, 1833), pp. 5-6.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

were at this period making analogies between the position of British wives and that of West Indian slaves.<sup>147</sup> At a men's reception to celebrate the emancipation of slavery held after anti-slavery activist Priscilla Buxton's wedding on Emancipation Day (1 August 1834), Priscilla was toasted with the wish "that she might long rejoice in the fetters put on that day as well as over those which she had assisted to break".<sup>148</sup>

### Conclusion

It has become clear from the evidence presented in this Chapter and Chapter II that women made important contributions to the campaign against British colonial slavery. They were not adjuncts of men and their work was not characteristically on a small and localised scale, as Walvin has claimed. Rather, there is plenty of evidence to back the Billingtons' view that they were not simply passive auxiliaries.

At a local level men's and women's societies had a similar status, operating largely independently of each other and pursuing similar objectives in complementary ways. Ladies' associations depended largely on female initiative at both national and local levels rather than male direction, and the Female Society for Birmingham successfully promoted new groups nationwide. Concentrating on arousing the "public opinion" of the female half of the

---

<sup>147</sup>For a discussion of the Owenite debate on sex slavery see Barbara Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, (London: Virago, 1983), pp. 32-48.

<sup>148</sup>Extract from Anna Gurney and Sarah Buxton's Journal, Buxton Papers, Vol. XII, pp. 111-113, MSS Brit. Emp. S 444, RHL.

population against slavery, the groups widened the popular basis of anti-slavery support and their activities were increasingly recognised by the male leadership as essential elements of the campaign. The middle-class women who dominated ladies' associations articulated anti-slavery ideology in a distinctive way, stressing the disruption of family life and female suffering under slavery. Women also initiated the change from a gradualist to an immediatist policy within the movement. Finally, their national female petition of 1833 was the largest single petition to Parliament calling for immediate emancipation.

The prime aim of ladies' associations was the political one of achieving the abolition of slavery by Parliament through "pressure from without", and by 1830 this included petitioning. The associations were the first <sup>a</sup>organisations of middle-class women for political purposes. Women, however, did not claim a right to engage in political activity. Rather, ladies' anti-slavery associations denied that their objectives or activities were political. They "feminized" anti-slavery through describing it as an aspect of women's religious duties, through blending anti-slavery and philanth<sup>r</sup>ropy, through basing their approach on accepted social roles and feminine characteristics, and through highlighting the suffering of women and disruption of family life under slavery.

A clarification of Louis and Rosamund Billington's description of anti-slavery as both a political activity and as compatible with separate spheres can now be attempted. In petitioning, women were not simply extending their domestic sphere to its public limits in a way common to other female philanthropic organisations. Instead, they

acknowledged that they were stepping outside their usual sphere, but successfully justified this as a mission to extend the benefits of a social system based on the ideology of "separate spheres" to British subjects living under the unchristian system of slavery. Their "exceptional" political action reinforced the ideological framework which customarily excluded them from politics.

## CHAPTER IV

### ABOLITION IN TRANSITION: THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM AND "UNIVERSAL ABOLITION", 1833-1839

The years following the passage of the Emancipation Act were a transitional period for the British abolition movement. There was continuing concern for developments in the West Indies, initially taking the form of abolitionist support for the education of freed slaves (described in section 1 of this chapter), and then a growing campaign against the transitional apprenticeship system which the Emancipation Act had imposed (sections 2 and 3). At the same time, abolitionists were developing new areas of interest, based on an ideal of "universal abolition", focusing mainly on slavery in the United States, and leading to the beginnings of a transatlantic debate on "women's rights" among anti-slavery activists (section 4). Following the end of apprenticeship in 1838 three new national societies were formed to promote world-wide emancipation: the British India Society, the Africa Civilisation Society and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (section 5).

Coverage of women abolitionists' activities at this period has been uneven. Howard Temperley's standard work on the post-1833 period of British anti-slavery does not include a great deal on women's activities in the 1833-39 period.<sup>1</sup> Some useful information on the growth in anti-slavery activism among women in Scotland and Ireland has,

---

<sup>1</sup>Howard Temperley, British Antislavery, 1833-1870, (London: Longman, 1972), chaps. ii to vi.

however, been given by Robert Bingham, C. Duncan Rice and Douglas Riach, and Betty Fladeland has included women in her study of developing links between English and American abolitionists.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Louis and Rosamund Billington have provided a useful but very brief survey of women's contributions to the various aspects of the movement at this period.<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter I make a fuller survey of women's activities in order to assess the overall significance of their contributions to the various campaigns of the period, and to establish to what extent these contributions marked a continuity with the past, and to what extent they were new developments.

### 1. Apprenticeship and Education

The Emancipation Act which came into force on 1st August 1834 did not grant the immediate and entire freedom to the slaves in the British colonies which abolitionists had campaigned for. Instead, it imposed a transitional "apprenticeship" system under which former slaves over six years of age were required to continue working unpaid for their former owners. The apprenticeships were to last until 1st August 1840 for "predials" (agricultural workers) and to 1st August 1838 for "non-predials". The scheme was

---

<sup>2</sup>Robert LeBaron Bingham, "The Glasgow Emancipation Society, 1833-76", unpublished MLitt dissertation, University of Glasgow, 1973, pp. 99, 116-7; C. Duncan Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1981), chap. iii; Douglas Cameron Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign Against American Slavery, 1830-1860", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1976, p. 60; Fladeland, Men and Brothers, chaps. ix, x.

<sup>3</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness'", pp. 92-95.

put into operation in the Cape Colony, in Mauritius and throughout the British West Indies with the exception of Antigua and Bermuda, where the colonial legislatures decided to grant immediate full freedom to the slaves. In a further concession to the West India lobby, planters were granted a total of £20 million compensation.<sup>4</sup>

Despite dissatisfaction with the terms of the Act, abolitionists celebrated it as a victory, the best transition to freedom that they were able to obtain. Some felt that their responsibility to the West Indian slaves had now been discharged, but many now turned their attention to the education and Christian instruction of former slaves. They felt that it was their duty to "elevate" those debased by slavery, by helping fund missionaries, sending out Bibles and school materials, and giving grants for establishing schools and places of worship.

While both male and female abolitionists supported black education, they did so in different ways. Women tended to transform their local anti-slavery societies, which had already supported "negroes' aid" work, into societies for black education. In contrast, men, with no tradition of supporting black education through their anti-slavery societies, more frequently disbanded their societies and supported education through other channels. Birmingham provides a clear illustration of these different approaches. There the men's anti-slavery society was disbanded in January 1834 and on its reformation in July

---

<sup>4</sup>For the major terms of the Act see W. L. Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies, (London, 1937), pp. 118-119.

1835 concentrated on campaigning against apprenticeship.<sup>5</sup> Its leading activists later organised support for black education through a separate group, the Jamaica Education Society, which they set up in 1837 in co-operation with Baptist missionaries.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society at Birmingham had decided in 1833 that when slavery was abolished ladies anti-slavery associations should "merge into Societies for the education of the African race" in both the West Indies and Africa, in order to "undo as much as possible the miserable and demoralizing effects" of slavery.<sup>7</sup> Following the passage of the Emancipation Act, its members stated: "we cannot now deliver the enslaved Negroes in our colonies from their short remaining term of bondage; but we may, with the help of God, assist in training them to the principles and practice of our holy religion."<sup>8</sup> Between 1833 and 1838 the group contributed towards schools in the West Indies, Mauritius and Sierra Leone, both directly and through such groups as the Jamaica Education Society and the London Ladies' Negro Education Society, which continued to be very active after emancipation.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>"Birmingham Antislavery Society Minute Book", entries for January 1834 and June and July 1835.

<sup>6</sup>The Jamaica Education Society, Under the Management of the Baptist Missionaries. Report, (Birmingham: J. W. Stowell, 11 May, 1838).

<sup>7</sup>The Eighth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1833), p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>The Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1834), pp. 12-13.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., accounts on pp. 45-48; Eleventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: Hudson, 1836), pp. 14-20; "Minute Book of the

The change in focus from anti-slavery to black education by women's anti-slavery societies was reflected in their name changes. The Female Society for Birmingham took the lead, changing its name in 1831 to the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society.<sup>10</sup> The Woodbridge Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association became the Woodbridge Ladies Negro Friend and Instruction Society and prioritised support for education to such an extent that in 1837 it had no spare funds to give to the national Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>11</sup> Similarly the Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Association changed its name to the Peckham Ladies' Negroes' Friend and Instruction Society. In Liverpool too the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association became the Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, described by its secretary Ann Cropper as a small association formed to promote the education of negroes in the colonies.<sup>12</sup> The London Female Anti-Slavery Society also changed its name after emancipation, becoming the London Central Negro's Friend Society.<sup>13</sup>

---

Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for annual meetings on 11 Mar 1834, 14 Apr 1835, 8 Mar 1836, 14 Mar 1837, 17 Apr 1838; The Jamaica Education Society ... Report.

<sup>10</sup>"Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 12 Apr 1831.

<sup>11</sup>Letter from Elizabeth Evans to Robert Stokes, Woodbridge, 15 Mar 1837, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 2/73, RHL.

<sup>12</sup>Letter from Anne Cropper to the New England Ladies Anti-Slavery Societies, Liverpool, 4 Apr 1837, quoted in Right and Wrong in Boston. Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. 104. Anne Cropper was the daughter-in-law of leading Liverpool abolitionist James Cropper.

<sup>13</sup>Esther Copley, A History of Slavery, and its Abolition, (2nd ed., London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1839), pp. 575-6.

British women's most distinctive contribution to black education was the support they gave to the education of black girls and women, a preoccupation in tune with the particular concern they had evinced for the suffering of women under slavery. The London Central Negro's Friend Society stated that it wished "to be made instrumental in raising the character of the sable females of our slave colonies by intellectual and moral culture". Aided by the Birmingham women, the group funded the sending of an English woman to conduct a school for the training of school mistresses in Spanish Town, Jamaica.<sup>14</sup> The Peckham Ladies' Negroes' Friend and Instruction Society continued to send regular support to the schools for girls founded by Hannah Kilham in Sierra Leone, successfully soliciting support from Quaker women as far afield at Belfast.<sup>15</sup>

Abolitionists continued to support educational projects after the abolition of apprenticeship on 1st August 1838. The Sheffield Ladies' Association stressed that it was now Britain's responsibility to promote black religious education and welfare. Exhibiting a particular concern for female education, they co-ordinated fund-raising until at least 1845 for George Thompson's School for Negro Girls at Kettering in Jamaica, intended to train

---

<sup>14</sup>Copley, A History of Slavery, pp. 575-6; The Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, p. 13; "Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 11th March 1834. This entry gives the name of the teacher as Lucy Kingdon.

<sup>15</sup>Irish Friend, Vol I, no. 11 (1st Sept 1838), p. 87: letter to the editor on "African Instruction" from M[ary] Dudley, South-Grove, Peckham, 6 Aug 1838. For response from Irish women to the appeal see Irish Friend, Vol II, no 4 (1st April 1839), pp. 26-7: "Schools in Africa. An Address to Children on Behalf of the Sable Children of Africa"; Vol II, no 5 (1 May 1839), p. 37; no 6 (1 Jun 1839), p. 48.

teachers for the West Indies and Africa. Subscriptions were collected from ladies' anti-slavery associations and individuals in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Darlington, Rochdale, Bath, Taunton, Sheffield and Rotherham.<sup>16</sup>

The support which ladies' anti-slavery associations gave to black education was thus a persistent one, dating back to their foundation in the 1820's and continuing into the 1840's. It was, however, subordinate to their anti-slavery work except in the short period between the passage of the Emancipation Act and the beginnings of the popular campaign against apprenticeship.

## 2. The Beginnings of Anti-Apprenticeship Agitation and the Female Address to the Queen

Information from teachers and missionaries in the West Indies led to increasing disquiet among British abolitionists about the abuses of the apprenticeship system.<sup>17</sup> The largest single contribution to the resulting

---

<sup>16</sup>Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery. February 19, 1839, (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1839), [p. 5]; Sheffield Patriot, 19 Feb 1839: notice of annual meeting and bazaar; 5 Mar 1839: poem, "the Ladies Bazaar"; extract of letter from Mary Anne Rawson quoted in The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society. MDCCCXL. [circular appeal]; Mary Anne Rawson, The Thompson Normal School, Jamaica, (Sheffield: Leader, 18 Feb 1845).

<sup>17</sup>For a general account of the missionary-abolitionist alliance in the anti-apprenticeship campaign see Alex Tyrrell, "The 'Moral Radical Party' and the Anglo-Jamaican Campaign for the Abolition of the Negro Apprenticeship System", English Historical Review, No. CCCXCII (July 1984), pp. 481-502. For an example of a woman missionary who wrote to relatives in England between 1834 and 1838 urging them to campaign against apprenticeship see The Youthful Female Missionary: A Memoir of Mary Ann Hutchins, (Second Edition, London: G. Wightman and Hamilton Adams, 1840). Hutchins was the wife of the Rev. John Hutchins, a Baptist missionary in Jamaica.

anti-apprenticeship campaign was made by women. This was the national female Address to the Queen, which has received little attention from historians; it forms the focus of this section.<sup>18</sup>

The popular campaign against apprenticeship was launched in July 1837, when the accession of Queen Victoria and the Parliamentary election campaign presented a double opportunity for public agitation on the issue. The Anti-Slavery Society organised a major public meeting at Exeter Hall on 11th July 1837. The strong desire for decisive action among women at this time is evident from reports that at this meeting "the ladies formed a very considerable portion, if not an actual majority, of the audience". The meeting adopted two major proposals, one involving men exerting pressure on men, the other women petitioning the female monarch. The first was the issuing of an "Address to the Electors of Great Britain" calling on them to elect candidates pledged to oppose apprenticeship at the imminent general election, the second the launching of an Address to the new monarch, Queen Victoria, from the women of Great Britain and Ireland calling for full freedom for the apprentices, and pleading especially on behalf of their own sex.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>Kenneth R. M. Short, "A Study in Political Nonconformity: The Baptists 1827-1845; with Particular Reference to Slavery", unpublished DPhil thesis, Oxford University, 1972, pp. 277-88. My account differs from Short's in both emphasis (he has nothing about women's motivations and understates the role of women in co-ordinating the Address) and coverage (he only discusses the English Address).

<sup>19</sup>See the notices of the meeting in the Christian Advocate, Vol. VIII, no. 394 (July 1837), p. 225, and The Philanthropist, 13 July 1837, p. 3. For the full text of the female address see Christian advocate, Vol. IX, no. 425 (19 Feb 1838), p. 63.

The decision to recommend this Address had been taken at a meeting of the national committee of the Anti-Slavery Society on 3rd July 1837. The Committee then conferred with the Committee of the London Ladies' Central Negro Friend Society.<sup>20</sup> It is, however, slight evidence to suggest that the original idea for the petition may have come, as for the 1833 national petition, from Quaker women rather than the male leadership: according to her biographer, the Darlington abolitionist Elizabeth Pease made the suggestion for an address to the Queen in a letter of June 1837 to Jane Smeal, secretary of the Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society.<sup>21</sup>

As in 1833 a major stimulus to female action was concern for the sufferings of women. Despite the insertion of a clause in the Emancipation Act prohibiting the flogging of women, there was evidence for the continued physical punishment of women. At Birmingham, where the largest number of signatures to the Address were to be collected, the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society began its annual report of March 1836 thus:

THE MISTAKE  
"The Abolition of Colonial  
Slavery has raised nearly  
a Million of our Subjects  
to the Rank of FREEMEN."

THE TRUTH  
"Females of all ages are  
flogged illegally; and in  
almost all cases the  
offenders escape with  
impunity."

Presenting extracts from the reports of stipendiary magistrates appointed to oversee the fair implementation of

---

<sup>20</sup>"Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 3 July 1837.

<sup>21</sup>Anna M. Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, (London: J. M. Dent, 1899), pp. 55-6. I have been unable to locate the original of this letter and thus its precise date remains uncertain.

apprenticeship, and from the letters of their missionary contacts, the Birmingham women asked:

shall Negro women turn their imploring eyes to Britain for protection, and only see her fostering hand extend to befriend, to enrich, and invigorate their oppressors?<sup>22</sup>

The text of the Female Address to the Queen expressed a similar concern, stating that women were "especially shocked by the wrongs and cruelties to which the female apprentices are now exposed". In particular:

Women of every age, and in every condition, are liable, for the most trivial faults, to be committed to houses of correction, from which they are sent on the highways, chained together by the neck with iron collars. They are placed on treadmills of torturing construction, and are subject to the dreadful punishment of flogging with the whip.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, separate Addresses presented to the Queen by the ladies of Manchester and Salford and the ladies of Scotland expressed their sympathy as "mothers and daughters" and "freeborn British females" with the lot of the female apprentices.<sup>24</sup> A Cork woman, Miss Mary B. Tuckey, wrote a poetic anti-apprenticeship Appeal to Irish and British women which began:

We dreamed we saw her fetters breaking,  
We called our Negro sister - FREE!  
But from our pleasant slumber waking,

---

<sup>22</sup>The Eleventh Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham ..., (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1836), pp. 9, 11-12. For the eventual collection of 37,410 female signatures in Birmingham to the national Address see The Philanthropist, Aug 31, 1837, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>See text of Address in Christian Advocate, Vol. IX, no. 425, (Feb 19, 1838), p. 63.

<sup>24</sup>The full text of the Manchester address is given in the Manchester Times, 24 Mar 1838, p. 3. For the Scottish Address see Petition to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, from the Ladies of Glasgow and its Vicinity, Adopted at the Public Meeting Held in the Rev. David King's Chapel, 1st August, 1837.

We find her still in slavery;  
 And prisons, bonds, and scourges still  
 Await her, at her tyrant's will.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, a poem "On slavery" which appeared in the Irish Friend in January 1837 appealed to both the Irish and to Queen Victoria, asking: "And say, shall woman plead with thee in vain / For woman, bowed in slavery's galling chains?"<sup>26</sup>

In England and Wales canvassing for signatures was organised by the London Ladies' Central Negro's Friend Society, the successor of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society which had been responsible for organising the 1833 national female anti-slavery petition.<sup>27</sup> Much of the work was done by its Quaker co-secretaries, Rachel Stacey and Mary Dudley, using similar methods to those they had employed in 1833.<sup>28</sup> The women sent out a circular to local contacts, mainly ministers, urging them to bring the Address to the attention of the ladies of their congregations. They publicised the Address in religious

---

<sup>25</sup>"Appeal to the Ladies of Ireland", The Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 45 (16 Sept 1837), p. 180; "Appeal to the Ladies of Britain" in the British Emancipator No. 1, (27 Dec 1837); "The Irish Woman's Appeal to the Females of Great Britain" in M.B. Tuckey, The Wrongs of Africa: A Tribute to the Anti-Slavery Cause, (Glasgow: George Gallie, 1838), pp. 7-8.

<sup>26</sup>"On Slavery" by "J", Belfast, 11th month, 1837, The Irish Friend, Vol. I, no. 3 (1 Jan 1838), p. 19.

<sup>27</sup>For the organisation of the collection of signatures by the London women see the series of letters MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 2/5-99, C 3/1-77 in RHL; and a letter "on the sufferings of Negro apprentices" by Rev Dr Thomas Price (a London Baptist minister), printed in the Patriot, Vol VI.

<sup>28</sup>For letter addressed to Miss Dudley concerning the petition see MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C3/20 in RHL. The Christian Advocate (Vol. VIII, no. 395 (24 July 1837), p. 237) attributed the preparation of the petition to Miss Stacey but later (Vol. VIII, no 400 (28 Aug 1837), p. 276) corrected this, stating it was not the production of any one individual.

periodicals such as the evangelical nonconformist Patriot and the Wesleyan Methodist Christian Advocate. They also supplied local contacts with tracts and engravings showing the punishment of men and women on the treadmill. In some places, petitions were left to lie in chapels for signature, and there is evidence for the receiving of signatures from many congregations of Baptists and also from Independents. In other places a public meeting was organised by local male or female activists to endorse the Address, and either the local ladies anti-slavery society or a special committee of ladies formed for the purpose organised door-to-door canvassing.<sup>29</sup>

The separate national Addresses organised in Scotland and Ireland were promoted by George Thompson, a former lecturer for the Agency Committee who had close links with female activists in both countries (see Section 4 below). The Scottish Address was launched on August 1st 1837 at public meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow.<sup>30</sup> In Edinburgh the meeting was organised by the Edinburgh Ladies Emancipation Society, and adoption of the Address followed a lecture by George Thompson on the present condition of the apprentices.<sup>31</sup> It gained nation-wide support and by

---

<sup>29</sup>For description of local collection of signatures and numbers of signatories in particular towns see letters among MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C2/5-99, C3/1-77; The Patriot, Vol IV, no 352 (17 Aug 1837), p. 525; no 354 (24 Aug 1837), p. 541; no 357 (4 Sept 1837), p. 564; The Philanthropist, 20 July 1837, pp 1-3; 3 Aug 1837, p. 3; 31 Aug 1837, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup>Petition to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, from the Ladies of Glasgow.

<sup>31</sup>Caledonian Mercury, 31 July 1837, p. 1; letter from James Ogilvy, Edinburgh, 2 Aug, 1837 to the Anti-Slavery Society, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 3/47; Christian Advocate, Vol VIII, no. 399 (21 Aug 1837), p. 269; Vol IX, no. 429 (19 Mar 1838), p. 89; Patriot, Vol VI, no. 367 (9 Oct

November signatures had been collected from sixty-seven Scottish towns.<sup>32</sup> In Ireland the Address was adopted in Dublin following a huge public meeting in a hall "thronged with ladies".<sup>33</sup> The newly formed Dublin Ladies' Association immediately issued an Appeal to its countrywomen urging them to speak out against apprenticeship.<sup>34</sup> Women also collected signatures in Cork, Belfast, Limerick, Wexford, Mountmellich and Moahe, and a separate Address was presented from the ladies of Tralee in County Kerry.<sup>35</sup>

The three national Addresses were signed by an impressive number of women. The Address from the women of England and Wales, which was eventually presented by a deputation from the Anti-Slavery Society to the Queen at her first levee on February 1838, bore a total of 449,540 signatures.<sup>36</sup> In addition separate Addresses - presumably from places where signatures had been collected too late for inclusion in the main Address - were presented from the

---

1837), p. 645 [quoting from the Scottish Pilot].

<sup>32</sup>Anti-Slavery Meeting - Delegation to London. From the Glasgow Argus of 13th November 1837.

<sup>33</sup>Reported in The Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 40 (12 Aug 1837), p. 160; no.42 (26 Aug 1837), p. 166.

<sup>34</sup>An Appeal from the Dublin Ladies' Association, auxiliary to the Hibernian Negro's Friend Society, to their Christian Countrywomen, (Dublin, 21 Aug 1837). The Appeal was also printed in full in the Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 43 (2 Sept 1837), p. 167.

<sup>35</sup>The Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 44, (9 Sept 1837); no. 63, (20 Jan 1838), p. 252; The British Emancipator, no. 3 (17 Jan 1838); no. 41 (16 May 1838).

<sup>36</sup>Christian Advocate, Vol. IX, no. 425 (19 Feb 1838), pp. 56, 63. The ladies' committee was not permitted to present the Address itself (see "Committee on Slavery Minute Book", entry for 28 Sept 1837).

women of Manchester and Salford on March 21st, signed by 29,386 women; from 5634 women of Brighton on 2nd May; and from 2,367 women of Pontefract, and women of Lincoln and and Leicester on May 23rd.<sup>37</sup> The Scottish Female Address, bearing the total of 135,083 signatures, was presented to the Queen at her levee on March 14th 1838.<sup>38</sup> The Irish Address, presented on May 23rd, had a total of 77,000 signatories, including large numbers from Dublin, Cork and Belfast.<sup>39</sup>

In terms of their size alone, Kenneth Short is thus justified in evaluating the Addresses as "one of the great female political efforts of the century".<sup>40</sup> Total signatories to the three national addresses and the various local addresses came to over 700,000, compared to the the total of 1,113,091 signatures to the 4,175 anti-apprenticeship petitions presented to the House of Commons in 1837-8.<sup>41</sup> The 449,540 signatures on the main address alone was correctly described by abolitionists at the time as "an amount of signatures wholly unprecedented ... in the

---

<sup>37</sup>Brighton Herald, 5 May 1838, p. 2; Manchester Times, 24 Mar 1838, p. 3; Christian Advocate, Vol IX, no 430 (26 Mar 1838); no. 439 (28 May, 1838), p. 171; British Emancipator, no. XLI (16 May 1838).

<sup>38</sup>British Emancipator, no. 8, (21 Mar 1838), p. 43; Anti-Slavery Meeting - Delegation to London. From the Glasgow Argus of 13th November 1837. The latter includes a full list of the number of signatures sent from each town.

<sup>39</sup>The Irish Friend, Vol. I, no. 2, (1 Dec 1837), p. 14; The Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 53, (11 Nov 1837), p. 212; The Christian Advocate, Vol. IX, no. 439, (28 May 1838), p. 171. The Irish Address was presented by abolitionists Edward Baldwin, Richard Allen, Arthur West and James Henry Webb.

<sup>40</sup>Short, "A Study in Political Nonconformity", p. 288.

<sup>41</sup>Reports of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions, Session 1837-8, p. 660.

annals of petitioning".<sup>42</sup> It was over twice the number of the signatories to the 1833 national female anti-slavery petition to Parliament. In Scotland and Ireland the increase in signatories in 1838 compared to 1833 was even greater - almost tenfold in Scotland and thirteenfold in Ireland. Thus the Addresses succeeded in arousing more women than ever before to anti-slavery activity, an impressive achievement after several years when little publicity had been given to the issue.

The Addresses involved not only a large number but also a wide variety of women in anti-apprenticeship agitation, from the well-to-do London Quaker women who coordinated the collection of signatures for the English and Welsh petition, to the semi-literate Welsh countrywomen for whose imperfect signatures a canvasser in Ruthin apologised.<sup>43</sup> The London committee stated that they wished to "give all classes of our countrywomen" a chance to sign.<sup>44</sup> In Birmingham, where the largest number of signatures was collected, the public meeting at which the Address to the Queen was launched was attended mostly by the "working classes".<sup>45</sup>

The actual canvass for signatures was in itself of great importance to the anti-apprenticeship campaign because it involved the widespread dissemination of information about the evils of the apprenticeship system.

---

<sup>42</sup>The British Emancipator, no. 7, (14 Mar 1838), p. 36.

<sup>43</sup>Letter from Maria Hope Jones to Miss Dudley, Bryn Hyfryd, 11 Aug 1837, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 3/20 in RHL.

<sup>44</sup>The Patriot, Vol. VI, no. 353, (21 Aug 1837), p. 532.

<sup>45</sup>The Philanthropist, 20 July 1837, p. 3.

This aspect of the Addresses was praised in a letter to the Irish Friend, which stated that "the getting up of them has been one of the most efficient means used for extensively spreading information on the subject".<sup>46</sup>

This information diffusion had added significance in that it took place immediately prior to the formation in November 1837 of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee to co-ordinate an extra-parliamentary campaign for the end of apprenticeship. As Kenneth Short has recognised, women's efforts had thus prepared the ground for the work of that committee.<sup>47</sup> Alex Tyrell's crediting of the new Committee with launching the mass popular anti-apprenticeship campaign needs to be revised to give credit to earlier female initiatives associated with the Addresses.<sup>48</sup> Indeed the female Addresses were held up as an example to men by Central Negro Emancipation Committee agent George Thompson. In a lecture to the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society he contrasted the action of the majority of Irish M.P's who had voted against a motion for the end of apprenticeship with the commendable zeal and industry of Irish women petitioners.<sup>49</sup> At the major anti-apprenticeship meeting in Exeter Hall, London, at the end of March 1838 he successfully proposed that men should

---

<sup>46</sup>Letter to the editor from "A", Dublin, 26 Jan 1838, The Irish Friend, Vol I, no. 5 (1 Mar 1838), p. 38.

<sup>47</sup>Short, "A Study in Political Nonconformity", p. 284.

<sup>48</sup>Tyrell, "The 'Moral Radical Party'", p. 492 misleadingly gives the impression that the Female Address was the outcome of the organisation of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, when in fact it was set in motion four months prior to the formation of that Committee.

<sup>49</sup>The British Emancipator, no. III, (17 Jan 1838).

follow women's example in addressing the Queen, and an Address from the meeting was presented on March 23rd.<sup>50</sup>

Despite their immense number of signatories and the inspiration they gave to the anti-apprenticeship campaign as a whole, the Addresses failed in their immediate aim of persuading the Queen to put pressure on the government to terminate apprenticeship. Nevertheless, they contributed to the pressure on government to include a clause completely prohibiting the physical punishment of women in their Abolition of Slavery Amendment Act of April 1838.<sup>51</sup>

More importantly, it seems probable that the Addresses also influenced the complete abolition of apprenticeship by colonial governments in the five months leading up to 1st August 1838, the date set for the complete freeing of non-agricultural labourers. As historians have pointed out, colonial assemblies were influenced to take this step through fears that massive popular agitation in Britain would both result in unrest among the apprentices and lead to the imposition of abolition by the British Parliament, thus diminishing their local political autonomy.<sup>52</sup> Both the dispatches of the Colonial Secretary and debate in West Indian assemblies in the spring and summer of 1838 stressed "the force of public opinion", the "strongly expressed" wishes of the British public and the "General Agitation" on

---

<sup>50</sup>"Special Report. Great Meeting at Exeter Hall", The British Emancipator, no. IX, (2 Apr 1838), p. 45; The Christian Advocate, Vol IX, no. 430, (26 Mar 1838), p. 97.

<sup>51</sup>See Edith F. Hurwitz, Politics and the Public Conscience, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 76.

<sup>52</sup>Gross, "Parliament and the Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship", pp. 575-6; Tyrell, "The 'Moral Radical Party'", p. 498; Temperley, British Antislavery, p. 40.

the issue in Britain.<sup>53</sup> The women's Addresses represented the largest manifestations of this popular opinion. While their later description as "the final blow to slavery in the West Indies" is somewhat exaggerated, failing to take into account the mass petitioning of Parliament and the abolitionist pressure exerted within Parliament, the Addresses were certainly an important part of that final blow.<sup>54</sup>

### 3. The Central Negro Emancipation Committee: Women and Anti-Slavery Radicalism

The Female Addresses and other aspects of the popular campaign against apprenticeship in 1837-8 took place in the context of a massive growth in political activism by working-class men and women involved in campaigning against the new Poor Law of 1834 and in the Chartist movement.<sup>55</sup>

Birmingham, where the largest number of signatures to the Female Address was collected, was a major centre of organised female Chartist activity by late 1837.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup>Lord Glenelg to Colonial Governors, 2 Apr 1838, London, Public Record Office, CO 318/141, as quoted in M. Craton, J. Walvin and D. Wright, Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire, (London: Longman, 1976), p. 342; MacGregor to Glenelg, 19 Apr 1838, Parliamentary Papers, 1837-1838, Vol. XLVIII, 12, quoted in Gross, "Parliament and the Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship", pp. 575-576; Sir Lionel Smith's speech to the Jamaica legislature, 5 June 1838, PRO, CO 137/231, fos. 229-30, as quoted in Tyrrell, "'The Moral Radical Party'", p. 498.

<sup>54</sup>Description in letter from Thomas Milner Gibson to George Wilson, 29 October 1841 among Wilson Papers, Manchester Public Library, as quoted in Tyrrell, "'Women's Mission'", p. 213.

<sup>55</sup>See Dorothy Thompson, The Chartists, (London: Temple Smith, 1984), including chap. vii on "The Women".

<sup>56</sup>Dorothy Thompson, the Chartists, (London: Temple Smith, 1984), p. 140.

Birmingham women's signatures totalled 37,410 to the 1837 anti-apprenticeship Address, compared with 24,000 to the 1839 Chartist petition to Parliament. While it is not possible to establish how many women signed both petitions, there is evidence to suggest the likelihood of a considerable overlap. In the first place, it is known that the majority of those who attended the public meeting in Birmingham to launch the 1837 Address were from the "working classes".<sup>57</sup> Secondly, Birmingham was one of the places where there was initially considerable co-operation between working-class Chartists and middle class supporters of universal male suffrage.<sup>58</sup> In addition, the leading middle class Chartist sympathiser in Birmingham was the abolitionist Joseph Sturge, whose sister Sophia was secretary of the Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society.<sup>59</sup> However, while such circumstantial evidence suggests that Chartist women probably signed the anti-apprenticeship address, there is no mention of working-class women in the records of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, suggesting that signing marked the limit of their involvement.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup>The Philanthropist, 20 July 1837, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup>Thompson, The Chartists, p. 170.

<sup>59</sup>For a discussion of Sturge's Chartist sympathies see Fladeland, Abolitionists and Working Class Problems, ch. iii. See also "Minute Book of the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entry for 8 Mar 1836, for the resignation of Lucy Townsend as secretary and her replacement by Sophia Sturge (1795-1845). For Sophia's influence on her brother see Henry Richard, Joseph Sturge, (London: Partridge, 1864), p. 335.

<sup>60</sup>See "Minute Book of the Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves", entries for 1834-1839.

The anti-apprenticeship campaign was given a new impetus in November 1837 when Joseph Sturge founded the Central Negro Emancipation Committee at a meeting of hundreds of anti-slavery delegates which he called in London. Its aim was to launch a popular movement demanding complete freedom for the ex-slaves on or before 1st August 1838. The new organisation, as Alex Tyrrell has pointed out, represented a virtual take-over of the movement by radical provincial activists, whose extra-Parliamentary initiatives at a time of popular unrest were viewed with suspicion by the more cautious committee of the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>61</sup>

The new organisation was potentially attractive to women abolitionists. Women had already initiated extra-Parliamentary action through their Addresses to the Queen. They also had a history of taking provincial initiatives and of outspoken support for immediate emancipation. In addition, many women's groups had close links with the male activists who founded the new Committee. Joseph Sturge's sister Sophia as already been mentioned. George Thompson first gained backing for his radical views on apprenticeship from the secretaries of two new women's societies which he had helped to found: Elizabeth Pease of the Darlington Ladies' Society and Jane Smeal of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Glasgow Emancipation Society.

Smeal and Pease, both daughters of leading Quaker abolitionists, were foremost among a new group of women who assumed leadership roles in ladies' anti-slavery

---

<sup>61</sup>Tyrrell, "The 'Moral Radical Party'", pp. 481-502.

associations at this period.<sup>62</sup> Both held radical political views - Pease described herself as an "ultra-radical" who fully supported the aims of Chartism. Both set a minimum subscription rate of 2s 6d rather than the usual 5s to 12s, possibly in a deliberate attempt to attract working class women members.<sup>63</sup> In Glasgow, at least, this was successful, and Smeal reported to Pease in 1836 that "our subscribers and most efficient members are all in the middling and working classes".<sup>64</sup>

According to Elizabeth Pease's biographer, she and Jane Smeal were in part responsible for the formation of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee:

With indignant loyalty, Miss Pease combined with Miss Smeal to support him [i.e. Thompson]. Their initiative roused the other provincial societies ... and public meetings in every centre vindicated him from reproach, while the Exeter Hall gathering [of 14th November 1837, to form the Central Negro Emancipation Committee] sustained his attitude and proclaimed it as the only possible attitude in the circumstances.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup>Elizabeth Pease (1807-97), daughter of British India Society founder Joseph Pease, was a radical who participated in over a dozen different movements between the 1830s and the 1890s. She married Scottish astronomer John Pringle Nichol in 1853. (see Eugene L. Rasor, entry in Joseph O. Baylen and Norbert J. Gossman, eds., Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, 2 Vols., (Brighton: Harvester, 1979); Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol). Jane Smeal was the daughter of William Smeal, secretary of the radical Glasgow Emancipation Society. In 1840 she married John Wigham III, secretary of the Edinburgh Emancipation Society, and herself took over its female branch, continuing to be active through the 1860's.

<sup>63</sup>Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, Three Years' Female Anti-Slavery Effort, in Britain and America, (Glasgow: Aird & Russell, 1837), pp. 65-71; Darlington Ladies Society for the Universal Abolition of Slavery [Rules and Report ca 1837].

<sup>64</sup>Jane Smeal to Elizabeth Pease, Glasgow, 21 Dec 1836, printed as item [31] in Clare Taylor, ed., British and American Abolitionists: an Episode in Transatlantic Understanding, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P.), p. 54.

<sup>65</sup>Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, p. 60.

Another leading supporter of the new Committee, Charles Stuart, also had well-established links with women's groups. He was keen to involve them in anti-apprenticeship agitation, and according to Elizabeth Pease he even tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Darlington society to send a female delegate to the conference in London on 14 November 1837 at which the Central Negro Emancipation Committee was formed.<sup>66</sup> This was the first such move in British anti-slavery circles and one probably influenced by his experiences in the United States in 1834-7, where he witnessed with approval the increasingly public part played by women in the movement.<sup>67</sup>

After the formation of the new committee Stuart joined Sturge, Thompson and John Scoble on tours of England, Scotland and Ireland, addressing meetings and organising auxiliaries, both male and female. Among the new groups formed at this time was the Bath Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association. Its treasurer, Mrs W. T. Blair, and its secretaries the Miss Blairs, were the wife and daughters of leading anti-apprenticeship activist William Blair, a close friend of Charles Stuart's.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Letter from Elizabeth Pease to William Smeal, Darlington, 14 Feb 1841. MS. A.1.2.v.11, p.68 in BPL. Pease was discussing Stuart's inconsistency on the women's rights' issue. The letter was quoted by John A. Collins in a similar context in The Liberator, 21 May 1841, p. 82.

<sup>67</sup>See Anthony Barker, Captain Charles Stuart, p. 129.

<sup>68</sup>Report of the Bath Ladies' Auxiliary British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1838, 1839, and 1840, [n.p, n.d.]. For Blair's involvement in the anti-apprenticeship campaign see Tyrrell, "'The Moral Radical Party'", p. 491.

The women's society at Bath joined those at West Bromwich, Birmingham, Newcastle, Southampton, Woodbridge, Exeter and Darlington in contributing to the funds of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee during its coordination of the anti-apprenticeship campaign. Their contribution was less than men's societies, however, the eight women's groups contributing £197 compared to seventeen men's auxiliaries contributing £331. Men also led women in individual contributions, with one hundred and thirty-eight subscribers identifiable, compared to thirty-two women. Eight large donations from men - mostly Quakers - compared to only two from women - Lucy Darby of the Colebrookdale porcelain manufacturing family and Sarah Wedgwood, who had earlier supported immediate emancipation and the formation of the Agency Committee.<sup>69</sup>

Among the most active of the local societies allied with the Central Negro Emancipation Committee were those at Dublin, Darlington and Sheffield. The Dublin Ladies' Association's "Second Appeal" of October 26th 1837 urged women to take action against apprenticeship.<sup>70</sup> Then in January 12th 1838 the society issued a "Remonstrance with the Christian Church. On Behalf of the Enslaved and Oppressed Negroes", which was published in the British Emancipator. It expressed sorrow at Christian apathy to the plight of slaves, and urged them to remember "them that

---

<sup>69</sup>See "Corrected List of Subscriptions. To the 1st September, 1838" in The British Emancipator, no. XXX (31 Oct 1838), p. 176, and corrections to this list in no. XXI (14 Sept 1838). It should be noted that much of the money raised came from local collections, some among Quakers, and here the proportion of female contributions is unknown.

<sup>70</sup>Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 51 (28 Oct 1837), p. 103-4.

are in bonds".<sup>71</sup> In April 1838 the society circulated a letter to their countrywomen which criticised the majority of Irish M.P.'s for not supporting anti-apprenticeship motions and urged women to unite in obtaining signatures to petitions from all over Ireland to "convince our rulers that both our principles and our wishes have been unblushingly misrepresented".<sup>72</sup>

The Darlington Ladies' Society was also active at a national level. Its secretary, Elizabeth Pease, did an immense amount of behind-the-scenes work promoting the objectives of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee.<sup>73</sup> In March 1838 she drew up the Address to the Women of Great Britain which was issued by the Darlington society.<sup>74</sup> Stressing the suffering of women under apprenticeship, this Address urged them to campaign for the complete annihilation of the system on 1st August. It suggested that women promote this by supporting female anti-slavery associations, setting up new groups, raising funds, circulating tracts and periodicals, influencing friends and stimulating petitions.

In Sheffield the Ladies' Association was revived along with the men's society by George Thompson in October 1837.<sup>75</sup> The women immediately issued an Appeal to the

<sup>71</sup>British Emancipator, no. 4, (31 Jan 1838), p. 1.

<sup>72</sup>"A Letter from the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society to Their Countrywomen", The Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, Vol. II, no. 77 (28 Apr 1838), p. 310.

<sup>73</sup>Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, pp. 55, 60, 61-2, 65; letter from Elizabeth Pease to Thomas Pease, 4 Feb 1838, in Darlington Branch Library (Ref. D/XD/5/263).

<sup>74</sup>Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, p. 64.

<sup>75</sup>Sheffield Independent, 14 Oct 1837; 21 Oct 1837.

Christian Women of Sheffield, which urged them to re-assemble to take action against apprenticeship and, like the Darlington Address, stressed the sufferings of women under the system.<sup>76</sup> Over the following months the Association diffused information on apprenticeship by the circulation of tracts, pamphlets and many thousands of handbills. It re-established an anti-slavery library, and presented papers to Members of Parliament, to the Sheffield Library and to the Mechanics Institute.<sup>77</sup>

This enthusiastic outburst of extra-Parliamentary campaigning by the women's society was led by its secretary, Mary Anne Rawson, who had also been secretary of the society before emancipation. Rawson was clearly in sympathy with the radical wing of the abolitionist movement, obtaining advice from Elizabeth Pease on useful pamphlets and on how to organise canvassing and also a supply of the prints of apprentices being punished on the treadmill, which Rawson then got inserted in local newspapers.<sup>78</sup>

Conflict soon arose both with the men's society and within the women's committee. In the background to this dispute was Rawson's growing resentment at the inactivity of the men's society and their failure to respond to requests from the women to undertake the more public

---

<sup>76</sup>An Appeal to the Christian Women of Sheffield, for the Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery, (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1837), p. 5.

<sup>77</sup>Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery. February 19, 1839, (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1839).

<sup>78</sup>Letter from Mary Anne Rawson to Elizabeth Pease, Attercliffe, 2 Mar 1838, MS A.1.2. v.41, p.28 in BPL.

aspects of anti-slavery work in the town.<sup>79</sup> Arguments surfaced in February 1838 over the issuing of an invitation by the women's committee to R. M. Beverley, a leading activist associated with the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, to give a lecture in Sheffield on the apprenticeship system. In a letter to Elizabeth Pease, Mary Anne Rawson informed her that his coming to Sheffield "excited some opposition among the high church party".<sup>80</sup> The women's committee followed this with a scheme to invite leading radical abolitionists George Thompson and Joseph Sturge to a public breakfast to be held in their honour.<sup>81</sup> The men's committee turned down a request from the women to organise the public event but the women went ahead and issued the invitation. A group of six women, described by Rawson as "our friends connected with the state-church", then resigned from the society on February 27th.<sup>82</sup>

The men's committee's objections were set out in the two resolutions they sent to the ladies committee expressing their angry disapproval of the women's independence of action and their view that the invitations to Sturge and Thompson were "inexpedient" in "existing circumstances" and likely to lead to "unfortunate

---

<sup>79</sup>These criticisms are contained in a rough draft of a letter included between items 63 and 64 of "Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers", Eng. MSS 742, Rawson Papers.

<sup>80</sup>Letter from Mary Anne Rawson to Elizabeth Pease, Attercliffe, 2 Mar 1838, MS A.1.2. v. 41, p. 28 in BPL.

<sup>81</sup>See item 58, "Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers", Eng. MSS 742, Rawson Papers.

<sup>82</sup>Notice signed by Mrs J. Staniforth, Miss Harrison, Sarah Smith, Mary Hall, Hannah Spurr and Mary Sutton, Sheffield, 27 Feb 1838, p. 61 of "Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers", Eng. MSS 742, Rawson Papers; letter from Mary Anne Rawson to Miss Harrison, Attercliffe [n. d.], p. 90 among "Anti-Slavery Letters", Eng. MSS 741, Rawson Papers.

consequences".<sup>83</sup> This suggests that the men both resented women's autonomy and were hostile to the radical abolitionists of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee. This hostility was probably compounded by their nervousness at the growth of Chartism in the town, a movement which was supported by middle class anti-slavery radicals like Joseph Sturge and Elizabeth Pease with whom Mary Rawson was in contact.<sup>84</sup>

The Sheffield women responded to the men's criticisms with a forthright declaration that they represented "an entirely independent Society" which had never been auxiliary or subordinate to the men's society though it had tried to co-operate with it. They felt that the "present interference" by the men was "uncalled for", and found the men's arguments about the undesirability of the breakfast "perfectly unintelligible".<sup>85</sup>

With the support of a few individual members of the men's society, the women's committee then organised a petition from the male inhabitants of Sheffield for immediate, unconditional and complete freedom, on the lines recommended by Beverley in his Sheffield lecture. This was intended as an improvement on the earlier petition organised by the men's society, which the women considered

---

<sup>83</sup>The contents of the men's resolutions of censure can be reconstructed from the references to them in the resolutions passed by the women's committee on 13 March 1838 in response to them - see item 63, "Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers", Eng. MSS 742, Rawson Papers.

<sup>84</sup>See Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield, (Liverpool U.P., 1959), pp. 39-49.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

too compromising in its demands.<sup>86</sup> Because the new petition was not supported by the men's committee no public meeting was organised to sanction it and as a result some people refused to sign.<sup>87</sup> Undeterred, the women, feeling that they had "the mass of popular ...[support?] on the side of immediate emancipation", enlisted the co-operation of working class men in collecting signatures.<sup>88</sup> They succeeded in collecting 17,476 of the total of 18,820 signatures (the remainder were presumably collected by male supporters).<sup>89</sup> Their next action was to organise a female petition on similar lines, which gained a similar number of signatories - around 19,000 - and was the second largest female petition to Parliament in this period.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup>R. M. Beverley, A Speech on the Negro Apprenticeship, Delivered in the Cutlers Hall, Sheffield, on Monday Evening, February 12, 1838, (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co, 1838); letter from Mary Anne Rawson to Elizabeth Pease, Attercliffe, 2 Mar 1838, MS A.1.2. v. 41, p. 28 in BPL.

<sup>87</sup>Letter from Elen Deakin to M. A. Rawson, Shirland Cottage, [n. d], item 23 in "Anti-Slavery Letters", Eng. MSS 741, Rawson Papers.

<sup>88</sup>Letter L. Palmer to M. A. Rawson, Sheffield, item 82 of "Anti-Slavery Letters", Eng. MSS 741, Rawson Papers; draft of note from M. A. Rawson to the committee of the ladies society, item 51, "Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers", Eng. MSS 742, Rawson Papers.

<sup>89</sup>[M. A. Rawson] to William Fairbank and Rev. J. A. Miller, Sheffield, 26 Mar 1838, item 64, "Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers", Eng. MSS 742, Rawson Papers; entry for 28 Mar 1838 in The Local Register, and Chronological Account of Occurrences and Facts Connected with the Town and Neighbourhood of Sheffield, (Sheffield: Robert Leader).

<sup>90</sup>Ladies' Petition for the Abolition of Slavery, (Sheffield: Leader, 6 Apr 1838); petition from the female inhabitants of Sheffield listed in Reports of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions. Session 1837-8, as no. 6944, p. 452. The largest female petition was from Glasgow and had 33,000 signatures (Ibid., number 5594, p. 383).

The roots of the dispute among abolitionists in Sheffield can be summarized thus. On the one hand there was a rather inactive and conservative men's society, with strong links to the Established Church - both its secretaries were Church of England vicars. This society was uneasy both at the radical nature of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, and at the independent stance of the local women's society. On the other had there was an active female society, its committee dominated by Nonconformists and led by an uncompromising individual, which had close links with the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, was impatient with the inaction and conservatism of the men's committee, and tried to push Sheffield into more radical action. The division was not quite as clearcut as this, with Anglican members of the women's society resigning in protest at its stance, and some members of the men's group showing sympathy for a more radical stance. Nevertheless, conservatives were in

Emancipation Committee, and at the independent stance of the local women's society. On the other had there was an active female society, its committee dominated by Nonconformists and led by an uncompromising individual, which had close links with the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, was impatient with the inaction and conservatism of the men's committee, and tried to push Sheffield into more radical action. The division was not quite as clearcut as this, with Anglican members of the women's society resigning in protest at its stance, and some members of the men's group showing sympathy for a more radical stance. Nevertheless, conservatives were in

control of the men's committee, radicals of the women's. It is the women who seem more in accord with the population of the town of Sheffield as a whole, predominantly Nonconformist, many of them radical artisans. Certainly they obtained widespread popular support among both men and women for their petitions for full and immediate emancipation.

The petitions got up by women in Sheffield were among the largest of those which were presented during the final push for the abolition of apprenticeship which was coordinated by the Central Negro Emancipation Committee. Many petitions appear to have been signed by both men and women: of the large group of petitions presented to the House of Commons between 21st and 25th May it was recorded that "many of these Petitions were signed promiscuously by Males and Females".<sup>91</sup> In addition, ninety-three of the 4,175 petitions presented to the Commons at the height of the agitation between November 1837 and August 1838 came from groups of women, making up a total of 123,222 signatories (see list in Appendix IV of this thesis, which also lists female petitions to the House of Lords).

Petitioning for immediate abolition was a repeat of the tactic employed by radical abolitionists in 1830-33. One female supporter of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, however, made a novel suggestion for a more dramatic form of protest. The British Emancipator of May

---

<sup>91</sup>Reports of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions. Session 1837-8. (Total numbers of petitions and signatories are given on p. 660; the comment on signature by males and females is on p. 477). For a similar set of seventy-nine female petitions presented over this period to the House of Lords see Journals of the House of Lords, Vol. LXX, 1837-8. Both sets of petitions are listed in Appendix IV of this thesis.

1838 printed a letter from the "secretary of a ladies' anti-slavery association in the north" to one of the male anti-slavery delegates assembled in London in March 1838 to put pressure on Parliament on the apprenticeship issue. This expressed women's disappointment at the failure of the anti-apprenticeship Address to gain a positive response from the Queen. The writer then suggested that women hold a demonstration in London on coronation day. Should government measures fall short of full emancipation, she proposed:

That in sympathy with our afflicted brethren, the blacks in the West Indies, whose miseries we cannot alleviate, we should assume mourning garb, and that on the 28th of June, the day of our Queen's coronation, as many thousands of us as can meet in London, should assemble there, with black people from every quarter; that on that day we should appear as representatives of our sable friends, in mournful procession, with black flags and emblems of their depressed condition ....<sup>92</sup>

In making this suggestion the writer may have been inspired by the example of working-class women who were now joining Chartist demonstrations in large numbers.<sup>93</sup> Certainly such a public demonstration was far outside the sphere of activities considered appropriate for middle-class women, or even men of their class, at the period.

While this proposed demonstration never took place, it has now been demonstrated that women's enthusiasm for the radical stance of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, coupled with their close links with its leadership,

---

<sup>92</sup>"Letter from the Secretary of a Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association in the North, to one of the Delegates in London", signed "M. G.", Edinburgh, 14 Apr 1838, printed in The British Emancipator, no. XV (9 May 1838), p. 86; no. XVI (16 May 1838), p. 94.

<sup>93</sup>For women heading Chartist processions see Thompson, The Chartists, p. 120.

resulted in their playing a considerable part in the surge of popular activity against apprenticeship which their own Addresses to the Queen had inaugurated.

#### 4. 'Universal Abolition' and Transatlantic Links

Many abolitionists combined campaigning for the end of the apprenticeship system with fostering closer connections with anti-slavery campaigners in the United States.<sup>94</sup> Women in Britain and America showed particular eagerness to establish contact with each other, and in this Section I will examine the progress from indirect links through leading male abolitionists, to the establishment of formal contacts between female societies and the development of friendships between female activists on either side of the Atlantic. The accompanying growth in information exchange and mutual support will be traced, as will the impact on British women of some American abolitionists raising the controversial issue of "women's rights".

The three leading male abolitionists who did most at this period to establish links transatlantic links, William Lloyd Garrison, Charles Stuart and George Thompson, were all promoters of female anti-slavery activism with strong links to women's societies. Garrison (1805-79), the prominent American campaigner for immediate emancipation, had become aware of the activities of British women through his editorial work for Benjamin Lundy's Genius of Universal Emancipation. When he split with Lundy in 1831 and founded the Liberator to promote immediate emancipation, he continued to publicise British women's activities and to

---

<sup>94</sup>Fladeland, Men and Brothers, chaps. ix, x.

urge his countrywomen to follow their example. On his anti-slavery mission to Britain from May to August 1833 he was particularly impressed with the national female petition, expressing the hope that it would excite "a spirit of emulation, in the redemption of our slave population, among the numerous female anti-slavery societies" in America.<sup>95</sup>

The first step in gaining British support for radical abolitionists in America was to undermine support for alternative approaches to solving the problem of slavery. Thus a major aim of Garrison's British visit was to disrupt the fund-raising of Elliot Cresson, agent of the American Colonization Society. This organisation's scheme to "repatriate" black Americans to West Africa had gained considerable support in the Southern States but was opposed by free blacks afraid of forced removal. Many British and American abolitionists were initially sympathetic to the Colonization Society's scheme, and in January 1831 the London Female Anti-Slavery Society had given it a £50 donation.<sup>96</sup>

Garrison, black abolitionist the Rev. Nathaniel Paul, and former Agency Committee lecturer Charles Stuart together succeeded in frustrating Cresson's two year fund-raising tour of Britain. Their success, as Anthony Barker has pointed out, was partly due to Stuart's strong base of support in Birmingham and the West Country, where he had

---

<sup>95</sup>The Liberator, Vol. III, no. 28 (13 July 1833), p. 111; Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison 1805-1879: the Story of his Life as Told by his Children, (New York: The Century Co., 1885), Vol. I, p. 366.

<sup>96</sup>The Liberator, Vol. I, no. 2 (8 Jan 1831), p. 7.

"warm relations with female abolitionists who had sponsored his earlier lecturing agency".<sup>97</sup> Garrison himself probably influenced the London Female Anti-Slavery Society to decide in 1832 not to send the Colonization Society any more funds.<sup>98</sup> In addition, the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society for Birmingham was contacted directly by the Garrison Society of Boston, an organisation of free black women which felt that the American Colonization Society encouraged racial prejudice towards their people.<sup>99</sup>

The next initiative in soliciting British support was taken by the American Anti-Slavery Society, founded by Garrison and his supporters in December 1833 as the first national abolition organisation. The Society's appeal to British abolitionists met with an immediate response. At a meeting in February 1834 the Agency Committee decided to make worldwide emancipation its goal and adopt the new title of Agency (later "British and Foreign") Society for the Universal Abolition of Negro Slavery and the Slave Trade (henceforth Universal Abolition Society). Its aims

---

<sup>97</sup>Barker, Captain Charles Stuart, p. 79 (who quotes letters from Cresson to Gurley dated 20 Feb and 17 Mar 1832 and 13 Mar 1833, among the American Colonization Society Papers (microfilm reels 13 and 17)).

<sup>98</sup>The Fourth Report of the London Female Anti-Slavery Society, (London: S. Bagster Jun., 1832). In 1833 the Society's co-secretary, Priscilla Buxton, was thanked by Garrison for obtaining Wilberforce's signature to a protest against the Colonization Society (see letter from W.L. Garrison to P. Buxton, 10 Aug 1833, Buxton Papers, Vol. XII, pp. 53c-f, Rhodes House).

<sup>99</sup>The Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1834), pp. 32-35.

were to aid American abolitionists and to campaign against foreign involvement in the slave trade.<sup>100</sup>

The Universal Abolition Society had the customary all-male committee, and the extent of female support for the group is difficult to estimate as few records survive. However a list of subscriptions published in the first issue of its periodical, The Abolitionist, recorded donations from four women's societies - at Peckham, Glasgow, Birmingham, and Nottingham - but only two men's groups. In contrast, among the twenty-two individual donations there were only three from women, suggesting that women were more likely to contribute through local organisations, men independently - a funding pattern similar to that of the earlier Agency Committee.<sup>101</sup> The Ladies' Negro's Friend Society for Birmingham made further donations to the Universal Abolition Society in 1835 and 1836, and urged other ladies' associations to follow suit. They articulated a specifically female basis for this support, stressing their keenness to influence American women to take up the cause of the million of their own sex who were in bonds.<sup>102</sup>

The Birmingham women also supported the work of the Universal Abolition Society by helping to sponsor an extended lecture tour of the United States by Captain

---

<sup>100</sup>Agency Society for the Universal Abolition of Negro Slavery, and the Slave Trade Throughout the World, To the Anti-Slavery Associations, and the Friends of Negro Emancipation Throughout the United Kingdom, (Aldermanbury [London], 14 Mar 1834).

<sup>101</sup>The Abolitionist, Vol. I, no. 1, (Aug 1834), p. 48. No further issues of this magazine could be located.

<sup>102</sup>The Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, pp. 19-20, 23-24.

Charles Stuart, organised in co-operation with the American Anti-Slavery Society. Stuart's tour took place between May 1834 and mid 1837.<sup>103</sup> He was particularly concerned to stimulate links between American women abolitionists and the British women with whom he had close ties. One of his first actions was to present an address from British women to Prudence Crandall, the white woman who had set up a school in Canterbury, Connecticut for free black children, and was persisting with her work despite constant harrassment from racists.<sup>104</sup>

Stuart's colleague George Thompson, another former Agency Committee lecturer with strong links to female abolitionists, undertook a similar anti-slavery lecturing tour of the United States in 1834.<sup>105</sup> Thompson's tour was originally organised prior to the foundation of the Universal Abolition Society, following an invitation from the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which Garrison had founded to promote immediate emancipation in 1831. Thus Thompson first turned to provincial abolitionists for support. In October 1833 he stimulated the foundation of the Edinburgh Emancipation Society and of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, with the immediate aim of funding his trip, and the long-term objective of universal

---

<sup>103</sup>Stuart's tour is described by Barker, Captain Charles Stuart, chaps. iv, v.

<sup>104</sup>For individual British women's support of Crandall see letters quoted in the Liberator, Vol. IV, no. 37 (13 Sept 1834), p. 146.

<sup>105</sup>C. Duncan Rice, "The Anti-Slavery Mission of George Thompson to the United States, 1834-1835", Journal of American Studies, Vol. II, no. 1 (Apr 1968), pp. 13-21.

abolition.<sup>106</sup> In Glasgow the Ladies' Association for Promoting the Objects of the London Anti-Slavery Society, which Thompson had set up in March 1833, was also informed of his intention to visit America and also agreed to give him financial support. When Thompson initiated the re-organisation of the societies at Glasgow following emancipation both new groups, the Glasgow Emancipation Society and its Ladies' Auxiliary, pledged themselves to the goal of universal emancipation and to support of Thompson's American mission. After the formation of the Universal Abolition Society the Glasgow abolitionists channeled their donations to Thompson through that body, the men raising £166 and the women £126.<sup>107</sup>

Thompson set out to America with two main aims: forwarding the "elevation" of the free black population, and promoting the extinction of the slave system.<sup>108</sup> In his parting address to the Glasgow ladies he also pledged that he would "endeavour to bring about such an intercourse and union between yourselves and the Anti-Slavery Females of America, as shall prove at once a source of pure pleasure, and a means of extended usefulness."<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup>George Thompson, An Address, etc., upon the Subject of an Anti-Slavery Mission to the United States of America, (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Son, 1834), p. 23.

<sup>107</sup>Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, Three Years' Female Anti-Slavery Effort, pp. 9-10 and accounts, p. 72; First Annual Report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, (Glasgow: Young, 1835), p. 3 and accounts p. 48; Second Annual Report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, (Glasgow: Young, 1836), accounts, p. 40.

<sup>108</sup>George Thompson, An Address, etc., Upon the Subject of an Anti-Slavery Mission to the United States of America, pp. 13-15.

<sup>109</sup>Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, Three Years', p. 12.

A large proportion of Thompson's American mission was devoted to the encouragement of female anti-slavery societies in America on similar lines to those in Britain.<sup>110</sup> Duncan Rice has passed over the success of this important aspect of Thompson's tour, stressing instead Thompson's failure to gain new converts to the cause due to his tactlessness and his vulnerability to attack as a foreign agitator and a representative of a "bevy of old maids" from Glasgow.<sup>111</sup>

Thompson's tour was also of importance in maintaining British interest in American abolition in the years following the collapse of the Universal Abolition Society in 1836. On his return to Britain he travelled around Scotland, England and Ireland lecturing on American slavery and the progress of the anti-slavery cause there. He was instrumental in reorganising or setting up both men's and women's universal abolition societies. The groups he helped form included new ladies' societies in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, South Shields and Darlington in 1836, and in Sheffield, Aberdeen and Dublin in 1837, along with a Ladies' Juvenile Association at Seaport near Dublin.<sup>112</sup> Details of Thompson's activities published in the Liberator suggest that he met with a particularly enthusiastic response from women. At Aberdeen, for example, two hundred

---

<sup>110</sup>Thompson's activities were reported in Three Years Female Anti-Slavery Effort.

<sup>111</sup>Rice, Journal of American Studies, Vol. 2, no. 1 (Apr 1968), pp. 23-29. Quote (p. 28) is from report in Liberator, Vol. V (30 May 1835).

<sup>112</sup>Newcastle Courant, 9 Apr 1836, p. 2; Liberator, Vol. III, no. 1 (2 Jan 1837), p. 3; Darlington Ladies Society for the Universal Abolition of Slavery, [First Report, 1837?]; Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Boston, 1837), pp. 108-110.

women immediately joined the Ladies' Emancipation Society.<sup>113</sup>

Thompson emphasised in his talks to women the "zeal, heroism, and perseverance" of female abolitionists in the United States, especially those of Boston. He praised the increasing co-operation between British and American women in defence of the enslaved of their own sex.<sup>114</sup> He also suggested ways in which British women could aid their American co-workers, stressing the importance which American abolitionists attached to expressions of sympathy.<sup>115</sup>

Some of the new female societies which Thompson founded channelled donations to America through the Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society.<sup>116</sup> This group became the hub of transatlantic links between female abolitionists, creating a network of honorary and corresponding members which included leading American and

---

<sup>113</sup>Liberator, Vol. VII, no 25 (16 June 1837), p. 97, quoting from the Aberdeen Herald of 22 Apr 1837.

<sup>114</sup>Letter from Thompson to Garrison concerning his visit to Newcastle on 6 Apr 1836, as printed in the Liberator, Vol. VI, no. 22 (28 May 1836), p. 85.

<sup>115</sup>See for example Thompson's Dublin address on American slavery of 19 Aug 1837, reported in The Irish Temperance Shield and Literary Gazette, 26 Aug 1837 (this report was quoted in the Liberator, Vol. VII, no. 43 (20 Oct 1837), p. 172.

<sup>116</sup>Donations of £10 from Darlington Ladies' Society, £12 from Aberdeen Ladies' Society and £20 from Newcastle Ladies' Society are recorded in the "Second Report of the Ladies' Auxiliary Society. Presented 1st August 1839" incorporated in the Fifth Annual Report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society (Glasgow: Aird and Russell, 1839), p. 41.

British women campaigners.<sup>117</sup> This paralleled the network of male honorary and corresponding members established by their brother group, the Glasgow Emancipation Society.<sup>118</sup>

Initiatives also came from the American side. To drum up British support, the Ladies' Associations of New England (which were associated with Garrison's New England Anti-Slavery Society) issued an Address "To the Women of Great Britain". This praised Thompson's work in their country, and thanked British women for supporting his mission. The American women described themselves as an embattled minority and appealed for British support.<sup>119</sup> In a letter attached to a copy of this Address sent to the Darlington Ladies' Society, Angelina Grimké made more precise suggestions as to what British women could do. She urged them to enlighten British public opinion, to help fund the American Anti-Slavery Society's travelling lecturers, to keep supporting Thompson's efforts, and to pass resolutions and issue addresses to American anti-slavery societies and

---

<sup>117</sup>The American women were: Mrs Philleo (formerly Prudence Crandall); Mrs Nathaniel Paul, wife of the black abolitionist of Albany, New York who visited Britain in 1832-6; Miss Juliana Tappan and Mrs Abby Ann Cox, of New York Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society; Maria Weston Chapman of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society; Lucretia Mott of Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society; Lydia Maria Child, Angelina Grimké and Miss Hussey of Portland in Maine, and the Canadian Mrs James Johnston. The British women were Mrs George Thompson, Hon. Mrs Erskine and Miss Cruickshank of Edinburgh, Miss Beaumont of Newcastle, Elizabeth Pease of Darlington and Mrs Somerville of Dumbarton (See Three Years Female Anti-Slavery Effort, p. 6).

<sup>118</sup>See for example the Fifth Annual Report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, p. 7.

<sup>119</sup>The text of the American Address is given in Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation society, Three Years, pp. 25-6.

other groups, expressing opposition to slavery and racial prejudice.<sup>120</sup>

Elizabeth Pease convened a women's meeting in Darlington to draft a reply to the American Address. This expressed their support of Thompson and their solidarity with the American women, praising their efforts in the face of persecution, and encouraging them to persevere.<sup>121</sup> The American women were very pleased at this response, hailing the Darlington women as "coadjutors in the holy cause".<sup>122</sup> Maria Weston Chapman of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society wrote to Elizabeth Pease that the Darlington Address had been published in all the American anti-slavery periodicals and had "been the means of encouraging the hearts of thousands".<sup>123</sup> In Britain itself the Address was held up in the press as an example which should be followed by other women on the grounds that "there is nothing to which the Americans are more sensitive than the expression of public opinion in this country".<sup>124</sup> Early in 1837 a similar Address was sent by another group formed by Thompson, the Newcastle Ladies Emancipation Society.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup>These suggestions were printed in Ibid., p.59.

<sup>121</sup>The text of the Darlington Address was printed in Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>122</sup>Copy of letter from A. Weld to Elizabeth Pease, 17 Mar 1837, New York, MS 957, 1st letter, BPL.

<sup>123</sup>Maria Weston Chapman to Elizabeth Pease, 30 Dec 1837, printed as item 39 in Clare Taylor, ed., British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 1974), p. 63.

<sup>124</sup>The Durham Chronicle of 16 Dec 1836, as quoted in the Liberator, Vol. VII, no. 8 (18 Feb 1837), p. 30.

<sup>125</sup>Liberator, Vol. VII, no. 32 (4 Aug 1837), p. 127.

Formal Addresses shaded into general letters to American female anti-slavery societies and correspondence between the secretaries of particular British and American female anti-slavery societies. This was sufficiently extensive for many American groups to appoint special foreign correspondence secretaries. Maria Weston Chapman, secretary of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, corresponded with the female anti-slavery societies of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Seaport, Darlington, Sheffield, Taunton, Exeter, Liverpool and Manchester; Juliana Tappan of the New York City Female Anti-Slavery Society corresponded with Glasgow, Edinburgh and Sheffield. This correspondence involved the mutual exchange of information about the American anti-slavery campaign and the British anti-apprenticeship campaign, American requests for and British offers of advice and moral support, and mutual expressions of friendship, admiration, solidarity and sympathy.<sup>126</sup>

In 1837-8 British women combined campaigning for universal abolition with anti-apprenticeship agitation. The Darlington Ladies' Society for the Universal Abolition of Slavery was founded in December 1836 with the object of combating slavery globally, with a particular focus of

---

<sup>126</sup>See letters from American women quoted in Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, Three Years, pp. 15-19; and letters from British women quoted in Right and Wrong in Boston, in 1836. Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Boston: Knapp, 1836), p. 21-23; Right and Wrong in Boston. Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society ... in 1837, (Boston: Knapp, 1837), pp. 85, 104; Fifth Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Boston: Knapp, 1838), pp. 40-46; Sixth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Boston: Dow and Jackson, 1839), pp. 36-38; British Emancipator, no. 45 (29 May 1839), p. 251; no. 50 (7 Aug 1839), p. 276.

aiding American women abolitionists.<sup>127</sup> Its March 1838 Address to the Women of Great Britain, while concentrating on the apprenticeship issue, also urged women to promote urged women to promote the cause of universal abolition.<sup>128</sup> Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery, founded like the Darlington group through the influence of George Thompson, and also working for both anti-apprenticeship and universal abolition in 1837-8, decided after the end of apprenticeship to focus especially on the struggle in America.<sup>129</sup>

Women saw their struggles on either side of the Atlantic as interlinked. In a letter to Thompson, Abby Ann Cox corresponding secretary of the New York City Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, expressed this clearly:

We have some powerful and binding interests in common, as they have now to labour for the abolition of the cruel apprenticeship System—and here we would remind them, as an additional motive to their zeal, that the speedy success of this question in England, must and will have a most auspicious influence upon the question of Immediate Emancipation in America.<sup>130</sup>

To promote the cause of immediate emancipation in America the Philadelphia Ladies' Society decided in 1836 to

---

<sup>127</sup>Darlington Ladies Society for the Universal Abolition of Slavery [First Report, 1837?].

<sup>128</sup>For text of Address see Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, p. 64.

<sup>129</sup>For founding of the society see Sheffield Local Register for 1837; Sheffield Independent, 21 Oct 1837; Sixth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, p. 38; for its new focus from 1838 see Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery, February 19, 1839; letter from Sheffield to Boston printed in Sixth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 36-38.

<sup>130</sup>Letter from Abby Ann Cox to George Thompson, New York, 9 Dec 1835, as quoted in Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, Three Years, p. 24.

republish Elizabeth Heyrick's Immediate, not Gradual Emancipation.<sup>131</sup> Heyrick's importance to American abolitionists at this period was stressed the following year by Garrison, who, urging women to attend the first Female Anti-Slavery Convention, called on them to follow the example of England where Heyrick had "enkindled a blaze which unfolded new scenes of action, and pointed out new paths of duty".<sup>132</sup>

There was also a major new British woman writer who inspired male and female abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic at this time. Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was born into a Norwich Unitarian family of French Huguenot origin and forced by the loss of the family fortune to earn her living by writing. She had written an anti-slavery article in 1830, and "Demerara", one of the first popular tales for her Illustrations of Political Economy dealt with the economic benefits of "free" as opposed to slave labour.<sup>133</sup> She had not otherwise been active in the anti-slavery movement, however, and when she travelled to the United States in August 1834 it was not on a specifically anti-slavery mission. Nevertheless slavery became her major preoccupation during her two-year stay.<sup>134</sup> She had discussions with slave-holders, with members of the

---

<sup>131</sup>Information in Right and Wrong in Boston, in 1836, p. 79, where Heyrick is praised as the originator of the call for immediate emancipation.

<sup>132</sup>Quoted in The Liberator, Vol. VII, no. 10 (4 Mar 1837), p. 38.

<sup>133</sup>[Harriet Martineau], "Negro Slavery", Monthly Repository, no. 4 (1830), pp. 4-9; Harriet Martineau, "Demerara. A Tale", Illustrations of Political Economy, (London: Charles Fox, 1834), Vol. II, p. 141.

<sup>134</sup>Harriet Martineau's Autobiography, Vol. II, pp. 1-92.

American Colonization Society and with supporters of immediate emancipation. On November 19th 1834 she attended a meeting of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society despite the threat of attack from pro-slavery mobs. She accepted a request to offer a word of public sympathy to the abolitionists, expressing her support for their principles on the grounds that slavery was "inconsistent with the law of God". She based her decision to speak out on her belief that slavery "was a question of humanity, not of country or race; a moral, not a merely political question; a general affair, and not one of city, state, party, or nation."<sup>135</sup>

Martineau's action, like that of Thompson, was reviled in the press and she was soon shunned by polite society and threatened with death if she dared return to the South.<sup>136</sup> However her public stand had won her the admiration of William Lloyd Garrison, who felt that she had "shown true moral courage" and had made an even greater impact than Thompson.<sup>137</sup> Another leading abolitionist, James G. Birney, believed that her writing would do more good than all the agitation stirred up by Thompson, because prior to her stand she was established as a popular figure in the United States.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>135</sup>Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel, (3 Vols, London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), Vol. II, p. 156.

<sup>136</sup>See letter in Daily Advertiser Quoted in Liberator, 19 Dec 1835.

<sup>137</sup>Letter from W. L. Garrison to Mary Benson, Brooklyn, 27 Nov 1835 and letter from W. L. Garrison to S. J. May, Brooklyn, 5 Dec 1835, printed as letters no. 229, 232 in Walter M. Merrill and Louis Ruchames, eds., The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, (6 vols., Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard U.P., 1971-1981), Vol. II.

<sup>138</sup>Letter from J. G. Birney to Lewis Tappan, 28 Nov 1835, as quoted in Dwight L. Dumond, ed., The Letters of James G. Birney, 1831-57 (New York: Appleton-Century,

Martineau's alliance with the radical female abolitionists of Boston was cemented by her election in August 1836 as life member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. In her note of thanks she expressed her pleasure that she was now "one of your sisterhood in outward as well as inward relation".<sup>139</sup>

As a well-known writer, the most valuable contribution Martineau could make to the American cause was literary. The two books based on her travels, Society in America (1837) and Retrospect of Western Travel (1838), gave some information on the activities of the radical abolitionists and argued that both slavery and prejudice against free blacks were totally against the principles of the American constitution.<sup>140</sup>

To arouse British sympathy and support for the radical American abolitionists Martineau wrote a series of articles on "The Martyr Age of the United States" for the London and Westminster Review of December 1838. As her biographer Richard Webb has pointed out, the articles were "the first full-scale introduction for the general public to the work of the abolitionists" in America.<sup>141</sup> They contained a lot of information of women's activities, being

---

1938), Vol. I, p. 274-7.

<sup>139</sup>Letter from Harriet Martineau to Abby Kelly, Westminster, June 20 1838, as printed in Harriet Martineau's Autobiography with Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman, (3 Vols., London: Smith, Elder, 1877), Vol III, pp. 223-4.

<sup>140</sup>Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel, pp. 148-165; Harriet Martineau, Society in America, (3 Vols, London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), Vol. II, pp. 162-79, 193-9, 312-52.

<sup>141</sup>R. W. Webb, Harriet Martineau: A Radical Victorian, (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 161.

based on information in the 1835-37 annual reports of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society written by its secretary Maria Weston Chapman, a close friend of Martineau. The articles extravagantly praised the radical American abolitionists, especially Garrison, Chapman, and the Grimké sisters, portraying them as anti-slavery martyrs who courageously persisted despite verbal and physical abuse.

Martineau's writings had a considerable impact in abolitionist circles on both sides of the Atlantic. In America Garrison published extracts from Society in America and Retrospect in the Liberator, where the former was also favourably reviewed. The American Anti-Slavery Society printed two thousand copies of "The Martyr Age", and published as a pamphlet that part of Society in America dealing with slavery. In Britain "The Martyr Age" was reprinted in pamphlet form in 1839 as A Review of Right and Wrong in Boston in 1835, and in 1840 the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Emancipation Society republished it with the addition of an appeal written by Martineau on behalf of the Oberlin Institute, a seminary in Ohio for the education of both black and white men and women.<sup>142</sup> Richard Davis Webb, the Dublin abolitionist who became a leading supporter of Garrison in the 1840's and 50's, later claimed that his

---

<sup>142</sup>The Martyr Age in the United States of America, with an Appeal on Behalf of the Oberlin Institute in Aid of the Abolition of Slavery, (Newcastle: J. Blackwell, 1840). The appeal was a response to the fund-raising expedition to Britain in 1839 by John Keep and William Dawes, two abolitionists associated with the Institute. for Martineau's authorship of the appeal see Harriet Martineau's Autobiography with Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman, Vol. III, pp. 227-31.

interest in American slavery had arisen in part from reading "The Martyr Age".<sup>143</sup>

The appreciation by American women of British women's support was expressed at the first national convention of anti-slavery women, held in New York in May 1837, at which a special committee was appointed to send an expression of "deep gratitude for the aid and encouragement and strengthening sympathy of the women of Great Britain."<sup>144</sup> That same year the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society publicly expressed their thanks to their British friends, with whom they felt united "by the firmest of all ties—those which bind Christians to the accomplishment of righteous exertions".<sup>145</sup> The following year the Society held up "the example of our British sisters" in organising the massive female anti-apprenticeship address to the Queen as an example to American women.<sup>146</sup>

By this stage, however, American women were no longer simply following the example of British women campaigners, but had moved beyond them in several ways. Their successful national Anti-Slavery Convention in May 1837 had attracted over a hundred female delegates, both black and white. These delegates had been addressed by Angelina Grimke, who urged women to break their own bonds so that they could aid enslaved women more effectively. Grimke went on in late 1837 to address large meetings of both men

---

<sup>143</sup>Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign", p. 75 (information taken from letter from R. D. Webb to A. W. Weston, Dublin, 5 July 1849 in BPL).

<sup>144</sup>Right and Wrong in Boston ... in 1837, p. 39.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>146</sup>Fifth Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, (1838), p. 22.

and women as a travelling anti-slavery lecturer, following a precedent set by black Boston abolitionist Maria W. Stewart in 1831-3. Persisting in her activities despite the public condemnation by Congregational ministers for stepping outside her appropriate sphere, in February 1838 Angelina Grimké became the first woman to address the Massachusetts legislature. Her activities were wholeheartedly supported by her sister, Sarah, who in 1838 wrote the first serious American discussion of women's rights, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Women. They also gained the support and encouragement of leading male abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison.<sup>147</sup>

News of these American developments reached leading British women abolitionists who were in contact with their American co-workers and through Harriet Martineau's descriptions in the "Martyr Age", in which she praised American women activists for both fulfilling their duties and exercising their rights. Martineau's Society in America (1837) contained her first explicitly feminist statements - which her biographer V.K. Pichanick has rightly described as "a too much neglected early manifesto

---

<sup>147</sup>For a good general account of these developments see Blanche Glassman Hersh, The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America, (University of Illinois Press, 1978); for the Convention see Dorothy Sterling, ed., Turning the World Upside Down: the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women Held in New York City May 9-12, 1837, (New York: Feminist Press of the City University, 1987). The Convention was reported in Britain in the Christian Advocate, Vol. VIII, no. 39 (3 July 1837), p. 215, and in Ireland in the Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, no. 55 (25 Nov 1837).

of the women's rights campaign".<sup>148</sup> She likened the position of women in North American society to that of slaves. Both women and slaves, she argued, were denied the rights to independence and property "on no better plea than the right of the strongest". The acquiescence of many women to their present powerless position, like the fear of some slaves about freedom, "proves nothing but the degradation of the injured party". Arguments against women engaging in politics on the grounds of its incompatibility with their other duties were as invalid as Tory arguments against the enfranchisement of artisans, and as unprincipled as the planters' opposition to the freeing of slaves.<sup>149</sup>

The influence of American women abolitionists on Martineau's feminist ideas is evident in her defence of their public actions on the ground that "fidelity of conscience" must take precedence over false notions of "retiring modesty". Openly challenging the ideology of "separate spheres", she argued that women's sphere should not be that appointed to them by men and "bounded by their ideas of propriety" but rather "the sphere appointed by God, and bounded by the powers which he has bestowed".<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup>Martineau, Society in America, Vol. I, pp. 199-207, Vol. III, pp. 16-118; V. K. Pichanick, Harriet Martineau, p. 93 (see also pp. 92-99). For another discussion of Martineau's feminism see Gaby Weiner, "Harriet Martineau: A Reassessment", in Dale Spender, ed., Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Women's Intellectual Traditions, (London: Women's Press, 1983), pp. 60-73.

<sup>149</sup>Martineau, Society in America, Vol. I, p. 201, 203, 204, Vol. III, p. 106.

<sup>150</sup>Martineau, Society in America, Vol. III, p. 112, Vol. I, p. 206.

Another British woman abolitionist, Anne Knight, while initially influenced in her feminism by French utopian socialists and feminists, was further inspired through contact with American women abolitionists.<sup>151</sup> In 1834, unable to obtain George Thompson for an anti-slavery speaking tour of France, she herself addressed several French scientific congresses and numerous smaller gatherings.<sup>152</sup> From around 1838 she began corresponding with radical American abolitionists Angelina Grimké, W. L. Garrison and M. W. Chapman. Her letters reveal her admiration of American women abolitionists' courageous stand in the face of attacks from both pro-slavery and anti-feminist opponents. She described the Grimke sisters and Margaretta Forten, a leading black member of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, as "brave Amazons", and wrote an admiring letter to Angelina Grimké in which she likened her to Joan of Arc and signed herself "thy fellow-warrior though quite a subaltern".<sup>153</sup> Knight similarly wrote to Maria Weston Chapman: "I fear your women to be far above us in the attitude of Christian action and endurance".<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup>For a valuable account Anne Knight's activities see Gail Malmgreen, "Anne Knight and the Radical Subculture", Quaker History, Vol. LXXI (Fall 1982), pp. 100-113. Knight's contribution to the British anti-slavery movement was commemorated by the naming of a Jamaican village for freedmen "Knightsville" in her honour (personal communication from Alex Tyrrell).

<sup>152</sup>Malmgreen, "Anne Knight", p. 105.

<sup>153</sup>Anne Knight to William Lloyd Garrison, Paris, 14 Mar 1838, MS A.1.2. v. 7, no. 13 in BPL; Anne Knight to Angelina Grimké, Paris, July 1838, Weld-Grimké Papers, William Clements Library.

<sup>154</sup>Anne Knight to Maria Weston Chapman, London, 30 Oct 1839, printed as item 57 in Clare Taylor, ed., British and American Abolitionists, p. 85.

Praise of American women abolitionists was also expressed, if in rather more measured tones, by Darlington abolitionist Elizabeth Pease. She corresponded with the Grimké sisters and William Lloyd Garrison in 1837-8 on developments in American abolition, including the role of women in the movement. In December 1837 Sarah Grimké wrote to Pease about her sister Angelina delivering public lectures on slavery to mixed audiences of men and women: "wherever we went the question came up, what right have women to hold public meetings", to which their reply had been that "the fact that women had been qualified to plead the cause of the dumb was the best argument in favor of their right to do it."<sup>155</sup> In response Elizabeth Pease expressed her admiration of the Grimkés for moving "steadily onward in your path of duty". She believed it to be their duty just as "any female minister in our Society is required to preach the Gospel".<sup>156</sup> Pease's Quakerism thus made her sympathetic to women speaking out when they felt impelled by their conscience to do so, though she stressed that the Grimkés action was, and would remain, exceptional:

unusual tho' it may be, and unusual it will doubtless continue to be, few indeed of our sex being qualified to stand so conspicuously forward, as advocates for the oppressed.<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup>Sarah M. Grimké to Elizabeth Pease, Brookline, Mass., 18 Dec 1837, Ms. A.1.2. v. 41, p. 25 in BPL.

<sup>156</sup>Letter from Elizabeth Pease to Angelina Grimké, Darlington, 12 Feb 1838, printed in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844, (New York: American Historical Association, 1934), Vol. II, p. 545.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.

Pease was also concerned to distinguish women's duty to the anti-slavery cause from the advocacy of women's rights for its own sake. She admitted that she was "rather startled" to hear of the Grimké's intention to advocate the "rights of women", feeling that it was a "delicate subject" which she had much rather "remained unassailed by words at least". She questioned whether those who censured women speakers were not better silenced, and the fastidious more readily convinced "by actions than by words", asking:

is not the right of woman to act on all moral questions, and her determination to maintain that right most securely established, by a modest yet resolute and unflinching perseverance in doing all she can heedless of the scorn and the jeers, the ridicule of the opposition of those who are striving to build up the kingdom of darkness?<sup>158</sup>

For Pease the women's rights issue was at this period one to be discussed in terms of American abolition rather than introduced into the British anti-slavery movement. Unlike Harriet Martineau, she was unwilling to challenge the ideology of "separate spheres" which had hitherto provided the framework for women's anti-slavery effort. Her position was similar to that taken by the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Glasgow Emancipation Society under the leadership of her friend Jane Smeal. The members of this group, while extravagantly praising the forthright stand of Boston women abolitionists in the face of mob violence in 1837, defined their own role as auxiliary and supportive and stressed

---

<sup>158</sup>Ibid. For Sarah Grimké's response, arguing that discussion of women's rights was necessary to enable women to play a full part in the anti-slavery movement, see letter from S.M. Grimké to E. Pease, Fort Lea, 16 Nov 1838, MS 957, 6th Letter in BPL.

that they had "no desire to step beyond their appropriate sphere".<sup>159</sup>

##### 5. New Directions after Apprenticeship

British women's continued exclusion from formal decision-making positions in the British movement is evident from the all-male committees of the three new national societies set up in 1839 following the termination of the apprenticeship system: the African Civilization Society, the British India Society and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (henceforth, the BFASS).

The African Civilization Society, founded by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton with the aim of eradicating the foreign slave trade by promoting legitimate commerce, education and Christianity in Africa, was the most aristocratic of the new anti-slavery bodies.<sup>160</sup> It was also the one with the lowest level of formal participation by women: Of its three hundred and sixty-one initial subscribers only twenty-three were female, several of these being titled ladies.<sup>161</sup> The Society organised mass meetings and set up some local male auxiliaries, but its periodical, The Friend of Africa, makes no mention of the formation of any female associations. At least one women's group did show interest in the Society, however: The Darlington Ladies' Anti-Slavery and British India Society

---

<sup>159</sup>Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society, Three Years, p. 27-8.

<sup>160</sup>For an account of the Society see Temperley, British Antislavery, chap. iii.

<sup>161</sup>Proceedings at the First Public Meeting of the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade, and for the Civilization of Africa, (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1840).

purchased two copies of Buxton's pamphlet on The Slave Trade and its Remedy and its secretary Elizabeth Pease dispatched copies of the pamphlet to her abolitionist contacts in America.<sup>162</sup>

Despite the lack of public participation by women in the African Civilization Society's activities, Buxton's female relatives did vital work behind the scenes just as they had aided him during his anti-slavery campaigning in Parliament in 1823-33.<sup>163</sup> Priscilla Johnston, his daughter, drafted notes for him to use at the founding meeting of the Society, defining its aims, and intended methods and activities.<sup>164</sup> She also helped him to rearrange and revise his key text, The African Slave Trade and its Remedy (1840).<sup>165</sup> Buxton's wife's cousin, Anna Gurney, also gave him valuable help, collecting together information on Sierra Leone, entertaining African princes who visited Britain and using her philological skills to help translate the gospels into African languages.<sup>166</sup>

---

<sup>162</sup>Darlington Ladies' Anti-Slavery and British India Society, [Report, ca. 1839]; letter from Elizabeth Pease to M. W. Chapman, 11 July 1839, printed as item 48 in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 72.

<sup>163</sup>For a useful sketch of their work see Patricia M. Pugh's Introduction to the Calender of the Papers of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, 1786-1845, List and Index Society Special Series, Vol. XIII, (1980), pp. i-iv.

<sup>164</sup>Buxton's notes [drafted by Priscilla Johnson], 20 Apr 1839, Buxton Papers, Vol. XVIII, p. 55, MSS Brit. Emp. S 444 in RHL.

<sup>165</sup>Letter from Buxton to Andrew Johnston, 13 June 1839, Buxton Papers, Vol. XVIII, p. 128; letter from Buxton to Priscilla Johnston, 26 Dec 1839, Buxton Papers, Vol. XIX, pp. 36-42.

<sup>166</sup>Letter from Buxton to Anna Gurney, [18th May 1839], Buxton Papers, Vol. XVIII, p. 100 a-d; notes by Sarah Buxton, 23 July 1839, Buxton Papers, Vol. XVIII, p. 156-7; letter from Anna Gurney to Priscilla Johnston, 10-11 Oct 1843, Buxton Papers, Vol. XX,A, p. 462-9.

Other women promoted the African Civilization Society at a local level, distributing prospectuses of the Society and attempting to attract further female support.<sup>167</sup> In addition, Buxton co-operated with the London-based Ladies' Negro Education Society on schemes for missionary work and African education, corresponding with the Society's patroness, the Duchess of Sutherland, on the issue.<sup>168</sup>

The African Civilization Society collapsed in 1841, following the disastrous failure of the Niger Expedition, an attempt to establish an inland trading post and model farm in West Africa. The British India Society was also short-lived, though more successful. It was formed in response to the continued existence of slavery in British India: the 1833 Emancipation Act did not effect the status of over a million serfs in debt bondage in British India, largely because this was an aspect of indigenous society rather than a British imposition.<sup>169</sup> The Society also hoped that by encouraging land reforms in India in order to increase the efficiency of cultivating tropical produce they could decrease British dependance on slave-grown cotton and sugar from the United States and elsewhere and thus contribute to the downfall of the slave system.<sup>170</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup>Mrs Jane M. Widgins [to Anna Gurney], 1841, Buxton Papers, Vol. XX, p. 153 a-d.

<sup>168</sup>T. F. Buxton to Duchess of Sutherland, 26 Dec 1840, Buxton Papers, Vol. XX, p. 92-94.

<sup>169</sup>For a discussion of the nature of slavery in India see Mark Naidis, "The Abolitionists and Indian Slavery", Journal of Asian History, Vol. XV, no. 2 (1981), pp. 146-58.

<sup>170</sup>For a useful overview of the activities of the Society see John Hyslop Bell, British Folks and British India Fifty Years Ago: Joseph Pease and his Contemporaries, (London: Heywood, [1891]).

The British India Society was organised on conventional lines, with a central committee, provincial auxiliaries and a periodical, The British Indian Advocate. Women showed interest in the Society from the beginning, consistent with their history of campaigning on the free produce issue. At its founding meeting it was reported that "a great number of respectable ladies" were present, though only five of the initial fifty-six subscribers were women.<sup>171</sup>

One of the leading activists of the British India Society was Elizabeth Pease, though as a woman she held no official position on its all-male committee. She worked closely with her father, Joseph Pease, and with George Thompson in promoting the work of the Society.<sup>172</sup> She accompanied Thompson on his lecture tours of Scotland and the North of England.<sup>173</sup> She gave him directions and advice on the contents of his lectures and when the committee of the British India Society was formed in London she advised on its constitution.<sup>174</sup> She also acted as her father's secretary, collecting information and writing letters as well as writing a series of articles for the provincial press and contributing to the series of leaflets

---

<sup>171</sup>Speeches Delivered at a Public Meeting, for the Formation of a British India Society, Held in the Freemasons' Hall, Saturday, July 6th 1839, (London: Johnson and Barrett, 1839).

<sup>172</sup>See Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, for a general assessment of her work for the Society, based on manuscript material much of which is no longer available.

<sup>173</sup>Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, p. 86.

<sup>174</sup>Letters from George Thompson to Elizabeth Pease, London, 27 March and 5 Apr 1839, as quoted in Bell, British Folks and British India, pp. 58-9.

published by the British India Society.<sup>175</sup> Pease corresponded with American abolitionists Sarah Mapps Grimké, Maria Weston Chapman and Gerrit Smith on British India, sending them pamphlets for distribution in America. She explained her belief that helping the development of cheap free labour agriculture in India would help to end slavery in the United States by providing an alternative source of cotton.<sup>176</sup> Boston women responded with an address to the women of Great Britain which acknowledged the complementarity of their work.<sup>177</sup>

Elizabeth Pease also acted as secretary of the Darlington Ladies' Anti-Slavery and British India Society, which raised funds for the British India cause. Other women's societies which raised funds and disseminated information on the issue were the Edinburgh Ladies'

---

<sup>175</sup>Stoddart, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, p. 91-92, 99. Pease's articles appeared in the Bradford Observer, Irish Friend, Worcestershire Chronicle, Manchester Times, Brighton Guardian, and Dublin Herald in the summer and autumn of 1839. A surviving example of her correspondence at this period is a letter to her cousin Thomas Pease of Leeds, dated 8th October, 1839, asking him to support the cause, preserved in Darlington Branch Library. One leaflet produced by her was "English in India", a condensed version of William Howitt's major work Colonization and Christianity. (see letter from Elizabeth Pease to M. W. Chapman, 11 July 1839, printed as item [48] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 72).

<sup>176</sup>Extract of letter from Elizabeth Pease to Sarah M. Grimke, London, 11 July 1839, printed in Sixth Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, p. 39; letters from Elizabeth Pease to Maria Weston Chapman, 11 July, 28 Sept and 26 Oct 1839, printed as items [48], [55], and [56] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, pp. 72, 84. Further correspondence on British India between Elizabeth Pease and American abolitionists (John Anderson Collins, William Bassett, Edward Morris Davis, Sarah Mapps Grimké, Sarah Pugh, Mary Grew and Maria Weston Chapman) is in BPL.

<sup>177</sup>"Address of the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Boston, U. S., to the Women of Great Britain", dated 9 Oct 1839 and reprinted as an appendix to the Darlington Ladies' Anti-Slavery and British India Society [Report, ca. 1839].

Emancipation Society and the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Glasgow Emancipation Society.<sup>178</sup> Elsewhere, however, the competing demands of the African Civilization Society and the BFASS caused problems in gaining support. At Sheffield, for example, women concerned over the situation in the British East Indies decided that they had insufficient money or resources to take up the issue.<sup>179</sup>

The British India Society ceased operations in 1843, the year that the Indian Government passed an act removing the legal basis of slavery.<sup>180</sup> The third society formed in 1839, the BFASS, became the only group to survive beyond 1843, and indeed the only national anti-slavery society in Britain to continue its activities throughout the 1840's and 1850's. It defined its objects as: "The universal extinction of slavery and the slave trade, and the protection of the rights and interests of the enfranchised populations in the British possessions, and of all persons captured as slaves." In keeping with the prominence of Quakers on its committee, the Society resolved to employ

---

<sup>178</sup>Letter from Mary Wigham to M., W. Chapman, 1 Apr 1839, printed as item [46] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 69; "Report of the Ladies' Auxiliary Society. Presented 1st August 1839", printed as a supplement to the Fifth Annual Report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, (Glasgow: John Young and Co., 1839).

<sup>179</sup>Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery. February 19 1839, pp. 12-13.

<sup>180</sup>This Act didn't remove slavery, however, since debt bondage was an economic and social problem which couldn't simply be solved by legislation (see Naidis, Journal of Asian History, Vol. XV, no. 2 (1981), pp. 155, 158).

only "those means which are of a moral, religious, and pacific character".<sup>181</sup>

In origin the BFASS was a replacement for the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, which had co-ordinated opposition to the apprenticeship system. Like that group, it was set up through the initiative of Joseph Sturge of Birmingham and drew support mainly from those middle class nonconformists who had provided the backbone of anti-slavery activism in the 1820's and 1830's. Its initial subscriptions and donations came mainly from individuals, around 10% of whom were women, including Emancipation Committee supporters Lucy Darby, Sarah Wedgwood, Ann Knight and Elizabeth Pease. Only three ladies' associations - at Birmingham, Bath and Woodbridge - and three men's auxiliaries - at Bath, Dublin and Margate - gave it financial support in its first year. However, the new Society actively promoted the formation and revival of societies, organising tours throughout England by members of the Committee and their friends, and urging local activists to form groups, since "upon such associations its resources must mainly depend".<sup>182</sup>

The newly formed women's groups were unclear as to what precisely they could do to advance the cause of

---

<sup>181</sup>The First Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1840), pp. 4, 5. The formation of the BFASS is described in Temperley, British Antislavery, chap. iv.

<sup>182</sup>First Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 6, 9; British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, Vol 1, pp. 23, 34, 54-5, 127, MSS Brit. Emp. S 20, E 2/6 in RHL.

universal abolition.<sup>183</sup> The BFASS committee thus decided to issue a special "Address to the Women of England". This was intended "not as a mere appeal to their sensibility, but as a summons to action".<sup>184</sup> It urged women to diffuse the society's principles, to develop its plans, and to increase its funds.<sup>185</sup> To forward these objectives women's groups were supplied with tracts and pamphlets and special collecting books for donations and subscriptions.<sup>186</sup>

Women's groups were considered better at fund-raising than men: when the BFASS wish to raise funds for a World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 it gave priority to the formation of ladies' associations rather than men's auxiliaries since these were considered "the more valuable of the two."<sup>187</sup>

### Conclusion

An overall comparison of women's contribution to anti-slavery in 1834-39 compared to 1825-33 shows a mixture of continuity and innovation. Women's societies which persisted from the 1825-33 period as "negroes' aid" groups were joined by dynamic new groups at Dublin, Glasgow,

---

<sup>183</sup>Letter from Sarah Sparkes of the Exeter Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society to John Tredgold of the BFASS, Exeter, 1 Aug 1839, MSS Brit. Emp. S. 18, C. 10/54 in RHL.

<sup>184</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. I, no. 6 (Mar 1840), p. 56.

<sup>185</sup>Address from the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the Women of England, (London: Johnston and Barrett, [1840]).

<sup>186</sup>First Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1840), pp. 4, 5.

<sup>187</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. I, no. 1 (Jan 1840), p. 3.

Sheffield and Darlington, which were also concerned with promoting universal abolition. The network of local organisations was, however, smaller than before, with the total of around twenty-four active women's societies comparing to the total of seventy-three active in the 1825-33 period (compare lists (1) and (2) in Appendix I). The list of contributions to the Central Negro Emancipation Committee by eight women's and seventeen men's groups suggests that the number of men's societies was about double that of women's, as it had been in 1830-31.

Despite this shrinking of the organisational network, the national female anti-apprenticeship Addresses to the Queen gained more signatures than had been attached to the national female petition of 1833, indicating that despite the smaller number of activists, the base of general anti-slavery support among women had grown rather than decreased, especially in Scotland and Ireland.

The leadership of local groups continued to be mainly, though not exclusively, Quaker. It was composed of a combination of veterans of the emancipation campaign like Elizabeth Dudley and Rachel Stacey of London and Mary Anne Rawson of Sheffield with new activists like Sophia Sturge of Birmingham, Jane Smeal of Glasgow and Elizabeth Pease of Darlington.

Such women maintained a female tradition of anti-slavery radicalism, supporting extra-Parliamentary agitation for the immediate ending of apprenticeship. They also asserted their independence from the control of local men's societies. But they continued to lack a formal decision-making role in the movement and, with the notable exceptions of Harriet Martineau, Anne Knight and Elizabeth

Pease, women activists were hardly affected by the stirrings of debate at this period on "women's rights" among abolitionists in the United States.<sup>188</sup> No objections were voiced when the three new national societies formed in 1839 followed custom in appointing committees composed exclusively of men.

Elizabeth Pease joined male leaders like Joseph Sturge in supporting Chartist demands, and she and Jane Smeal made some attempt to open their groups to working-class women through lowering the subscription rates. But, though working-class women joined in signing the anti-apprenticeship Addresses just as they had signed emancipation petitions in 1830-33, there is no evidence that large numbers of them joined anti-slavery associations.

---

<sup>188</sup>For Owenite analogies between the position of women and slaves and calls for women's rights see articles by "Kate", Mrs Leman Grimstone and others in The New Moral World, 1835-1839. For support for women's suffrage by a minority of Chartists see Thompson, The Chartists, pp. 124-126.

CHAPTER V  
BRITISH WOMEN IN THE TRANSATLANTIC ABOLITION MOVEMENT,  
1840-1860

The 1840's and 1850's were a period of schism in the British anti-slavery movement, when serious rifts in the American movement affected British supporters of the campaign against American slavery. This was also a period of declining public interest in the cause, the result in part of the lack of opportunities for effective action on issues of foreign slavery which lay outside the control of the British Parliament.

Coverage of women's activities in general histories of British anti-slavery at this period has been fuller than for earlier periods.<sup>1</sup> As will become clear in the following account, this is largely because the increasing prominence and predominance of female societies in comparison to male, and the influential part played by individual women activists, make an account of female activity essential to a general understanding of the period.

In this chapter I do not attempt to give a full account of women's place in the complexity of shifting alliances within the British abolition movement in this period, since this is best tackled through such general

---

<sup>1</sup>For general accounts which include information on women see Fladeland, Men and Brothers (chaps. iv, v, vi), Temperley, British Antislavery (especially chaps. x and xi), Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, and Billington, "Some Connections", Bingham, "The Glasgow Emancipation Society", Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign", Turley, "Relations Between British and American Abolitionists".

accounts as I have mentioned. In addition, I do not cover women's contributions to all aspects of the anti-slavery movement at the period, focussing rather on their relationship with American abolitionists. Making use of a large quantity of new and mostly unpublished manuscript sources, my account expands on the work of Louis and Rosamund Billington, who have outlined female initiatives and made interesting observations about the tensions between evangelicalism and feminism in the anti-slavery movement at this period.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter, then, concentrates on British and Irish women's contributions to the transatlantic anti-slavery movement. Section 1 examines the question of "women's rights" in the anti-slavery movement, looking at the impact of the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840 in stimulating debate on the issue, and at developments towards more equal participation by women in the 1850's. Section 2 describes the important part played by individual women and women's societies in the internal politics of the movement. The following sections explore women's activities as fund-raisers for the various sections of the American movement (section 3), as leaders of the free-produce movement (section 4), and as exerters of moral pressure on America to abolish slavery (section 5). This is followed by a short concluding section.

---

<sup>2</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness'", pp. 96-108. The two main collections of manuscript sources used are the transatlantic correspondence of the radical "Garrisonian" wing of the movement in BPL and the correspondence of the BFASS in RHL. Taylor, British and American Abolitionists is a useful published selection of the BPL letters but I have also examined hundreds of previously unpublished letters to and from British and Irish women.

1. The World Anti-Slavery Convention and Its Aftermath: Anti-Slavery and "Women's Rights" in the 1840's and 1850's

The World Anti-Slavery Convention organised by the BFASS in London in 1840 was a pivotal event in the history of the British anti-slavery movement. The controversies at the Convention have been described by a number of historians, and may be summarised briefly. The year previously, there had been a schism in the American abolition movement between supporters of radical abolitionists led by William Lloyd Garrison, who took control of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and his evangelical opponents, led by Lewis Tappan, who seceded and formed a new society, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. A crucial point of dissension was the right of women abolitionists to fully participate in mixed assemblies as office-holders, public lecturers and delegates. It was this issue which caused argument at the World Convention in London. The Garrisonian American abolitionists appointed a number of female delegates to attend the conference but the committee of the BFASS refused to accept the women's credentials. The women's male supporters challenged this decision, and as a result the first day of the Convention was devoted to a heated debate on women's rights.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1841). For the effect on the Convention on the development of the British anti-slavery movement see Douglas H. Maynard, "The World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. XLVII (1960-61), pp. 452-471. For accounts of the Convention which deal with the "woman question" see Donald R. Kennon,

British women abolitionists witnessed these events as silent spectators, since they were allowed to attend only as non-participating visitors, seated apart in the gallery. Elizabeth Pease and Anne Knight, already friends and supporters of the Garrisonians prior to the Convention, tried to arrange a separate female conference to meet with the women on a more official basis but they were prevented by obstruction from the leadership of the BFASS. Pease wrote of the American women that "every obstacle was thrown in the way and no public opportunity was ever afforded them for a free interchange with their English sisters", and added that "I regretted it deeply and several of us mourned our utter inability to help it - had we been at our homes, we might have exerted an influence, but here we felt ourselves to be powerless."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, informal meetings between the British and American women did take place both during and after the Convention.<sup>5</sup>

The American women found the powerlessness of their British sisters depressing. Lucretia Mott complained of a

---

"'An Apple of Discord': The Woman Question at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. V, no. 3 (Dec 1984), pp. 244-266; Clare Taylor, "Romantic Reform and Anglo-American Women: London, the 1840 Convention and its Aftermath", (unpublished typescript in British Library, 1981); and Tyrrell, "'Women's Mission'", pp. 194-230. For a brief account of British women's reaction to events see Frank Thistlethwaite, America and the Atlantic Community: Anglo-American Aspects, 1790-1850, (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 128-133.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Elizabeth Pease to [?], London, 17 July 1840, printed as item [66] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup>See Frederick B. Tolles, ed., Slavery and "the Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, supplement no. 23 to the Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, (Haverford, Penn.: Friends' Historical Association, 1952).

meeting with a company of anti-slavery ladies at her lodgings: "stiff - poor affair - found little confidence in women's action either separately or con-jointly with men, except as drudges".<sup>6</sup> American supporters of Garrison were nevertheless hopeful that the agitation at the Convention would help change this situation. Garrison observed that it had "done more to bring up for the consideration of Europe the rights of women, than could have been accomplished in any other manner".<sup>7</sup> Both feminist Sarah Grimké and radical Quaker abolitionist William Bassett agreed, Grimké specifically hoping that the discussion would be "the means of extending the usefulness of women" in the British movement.<sup>8</sup> Some fifty years later, recalling her own visit to the Convention, the American women's suffrage leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton asserted that the Convention had indeed "stung many women into new thought and action" and given "rise to the movement for women's political equality both in England and the United States."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Frederick. B. Tolles, ed., Slavery and "the Woman Question", diary entry for 27th June. Mott was a "Hicksite" or quietist Quaker whose religious stance was viewed with suspicion by members of the evangelically inclined British Quaker leadership like John Joseph Gurney.

<sup>7</sup>Letter from William Lloyd Garrison to Henry Clarke Wright, Brooklyn, Aug 1840, printed as item [73] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 110.

<sup>8</sup>Letter from William Bassett to Elizabeth Pease, Lynn, Mass., 31 Aug 1840, MS A.1.2. v. 9, p. 87 in BPL; letter from Sarah Mapps Grimké to Elizabeth Pease, Philadelphia, 14 Nov 1840, printed in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké 1822-1844, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934), p. 852.

<sup>9</sup>Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p. 82. Stanton included an almost identical statement in History of Women's Suffrage, (3 Vols., Rochester, N.Y.: Charles Mann, 1887), Vol. I, p.

There is evidence to suggest that Stanton's assertion, while exaggerated in respect to developments in Britain, did contain an element of truth. Anne Knight, herself already a convinced feminist, found that the Convention opened up opportunities for her to discuss the women's rights issue with other British and Irish abolitionists. She told Boston abolitionist Maria Weston Chapman that she and other women were now explaining to male abolitionists that with anti-slavery agitation women had been "driven into the forefront of the battle". Men should be listening to their counsel rather than excluding them with "the puny cry of custom".<sup>10</sup> During the 1840's she devoted as much energy to what she called "womanism" as to anti-slavery, and in 1851 was involved in the formation of the first women's suffrage society in England, the Chartist aligned Sheffield Female Reform Association.<sup>11</sup>

Other women who attended the convention also wrote enthusiastically on the stimulus of the women's rights debate. Maria Waring, an Irish anti-slavery campaigner who attended the Convention, found the debate over the female delegates "extremely interesting" and described their

---

62.

<sup>10</sup>Letter from Anne Knight to Maria Weston Chapman, England, 4 Aug 1840, MS A.9.2. v. 13, p. 49 in BPL. For Knight's attempt to convert leading Dublin Quaker abolitionists Richard and Hannah Webb to women's rights see letter from Anne Knight to Richard and Hannah Webb, Chelmsford, 12 Oct 1841, MS A.1.2. v. 12, pt. 1, p. 118 in BPL.

<sup>11</sup>See Marion Ramelson, The Petticoat Rebellion, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1967), pp. 72-3; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., History of Woman Suffrage, (3 Vols., Rochester, N.Y.: Charles Mann, 1887), Vol. III, pp. 837-8; Malmgreen, "Anne Knight and the Radical Subculture".

exclusion as "silly".<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Pease was also indignant at "the spirit of exclusion manifested towards those noble women". After the Convention she came into conflict with Charles Stuart, who was attempting to obstruct British support the "woman-intruding society", as he called the American Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>13</sup> In her arguments with Stuart, Pease emphasised both on her full knowledge of the origin and history of the "woman question" in America, and on her conviction as a Quaker that it could not be right to allow human authority to interpose between woman and her conscience.<sup>14</sup> In a letter to John Collins, who arrived in Britain in late 1840 on a fund-raising mission for the Garrisonians, she explained her current "very crude and undefined" position on women's rights. While not as "ultra" as Harriet Martineau, she believed that women should have been admitted to the Convention. For "on moral questions, they ought to stand in equality with their "masters"". She concluded:

I believe there are few persons whose natural feelings are so opposed to women appearing prominently before the public, as mine - but viewed in the light of principle I see, that prejudice - custom and other feelings which will

---

<sup>12</sup>Account of the 1840 Convention by Maria Waring, among A. Webb, "Copies of Letters by Sarah Poole", MS A.1.2. v. 9, no. 60 in BPL.

<sup>13</sup>For a detailed account of Stuart's attacks on the Garrisonians see Barker, Captain Charles Stuart, chap. ix. Stuart's 1841 broadsheet condemning the "woman-intruding" society is reprinted in Barnes and Dumond, eds, Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Vol. II, pp. 858-60; for Pease's criticism of Stuart's inconsistency on "women's rights" see Elizabeth Pease to William Smeal, Darlington, 14 Feb 1841, MS A.1.2. v. 11, p. 68 in BPL.

<sup>14</sup>Elizabeth Pease to [Charles Stuart], Darlington, 28 Sept, 1840, MS A.1.1. v. 10, p. 3, in BPL.

not stand the test of truth, are at the bottom, and must be laid aside.<sup>15</sup>

By 1843 Pease was publicly expressing her agreement with Garrison that the exclusion of women from anti-slavery and other philanthropic assemblies "proceeds from a paltry, ill-founded, unscriptural and anti-Christian prejudice", comparing it with the racial prejudice which segregated black people in the "negro pew" in Quaker meeting houses in America, and stating that she now saw it to be her duty to protest against it, feeling "far differently from what I once did".<sup>16</sup>

Pease's developing feminism was to lead her to active participation in feminist campaigning in the 1860's and 1870's. Other women who attended the Convention also became supporters of Garrison, corresponded with American feminist abolitionists, and themselves became active in both the anti-slavery and women's rights movements as well as a variety of other radical causes. These women included the author Mary Howitt (1799-1888), the Unitarian educationalist Elizabeth Reid (1789-1866) and Matilda Ashurst Biggs, daughter of William Henry Ashurst.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Elizabeth Pease to John A. Collins, Darlington, 14 Dec 1840, MS A.1.2. v. 10, p. 93 in BPL.

<sup>16</sup>Letter from Elizabeth Pease to W.L. Garrison, Darlington, 1 May 1843, as printed in the Liberator, Vol. XIII, no. 21 (May 26, 1843). In 1840 Pease wrote and privately circulated a pamphlet opposing racial segregation entitled "The Society of Friends in the United States—their Views on the Anti-Slavery Question and Treatment of the People of Colour" (copy in Library of Anti-Slavery Society, London).

<sup>17</sup>Matilda Ashurst Biggs was approached by Anne Knight in 1847 with a request for support for her call for universal suffrage for both men and women (see Helen Blackburn, Women's Suffrage, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1902), p. 19). In 1859 she urged the newly formed Northern Reform Society to include women in their call for universal suffrage. According to her daughter Caroline Ashurst Biggs

They also included a Scotswoman, Marion Reid, who three years after attending the Convention produced A Plea for Woman. This had on its title page the quote "Can man be free, if woman be a slave?", it compared the position of women to that of slaves, and it held up the success of the British anti-slavery campaign as an inspiration to women beginning to campaign for equal rights.<sup>18</sup> The book, which went into several editions in Britain and the United States, impressed leading British supporters of anti-slavery and women's rights like Harriet Martineau, Anne Knight and Elizabeth Pease, who recommended it to Garrison.<sup>19</sup>

Reid's comments about the British anti-slavery campaign suggest that it was not only admiration for American women but also pride in their own achievements which encouraged British women abolitionists to support women's rights. Further evidence for this is provided by the anonymous author of Domestic Tyranny, or Women in Chains who in 1841 held up the successful efforts of large numbers of British women in favour of black emancipation

---

(who in 1870 became editor of the feminist Englishwomen's Review) she was aroused to support women's rights by the World Convention. (see Stanton et al, History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. III, p.838).

<sup>18</sup>Marion Reid, A Plea for Woman, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1988 (reprint of first edition of 1843 published by William Tait of Edinburgh). Marion Kirkland, the eldest daughter of a Glasgow merchant, in 1839 married Hugo Reid and moved to Edinburgh.

<sup>19</sup>Letter from Elizabeth Pease to W.L. Garrison, Darlington, 26 Apr 1844, printed in Liberator, Vol. XIV, no. 21 (24 May 1844), p. 85; Anne Knight to W.L. Garrison, Moores, 10 June 1845, MS A.1.2. v. 15, p. 39, in BPL. Anne Knight's annotated copy of the book, with copies of her own printed statements on women's rights included, is preserved in Friends' House Library, London.

"as a pledge and forerunner of their own emancipation from the state of civil bondage".<sup>20</sup>

Some women, however, while supporting the American women delegates in principle, were worried that the "woman question" would divert energy from anti-slavery activism, feeling that this should be kept a single-issue campaign. Sheffield anti-slavery activist Mary Ann Rawson considered "that both parties have made the question respecting women's rights of too great importance." She viewed slavery as the greatest social evil and in attempting to eradicate it was willing to unite with either the upholders or opposers of women's rights. Esther Sturge of London, though soon persuaded of the women's case by Mrs Chapman, initially took a similar line, urging Garrisonians to keep to anti-slavery alone, for:

Ever since I have heard of the questions mooted as to the equality of women etc. I have thought it would prove only as a strategem to divert the minds of valuable labourers from the point.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to those British women who supported Garrison, women who aligned themselves with the BFASS and the Tappanite wing of the American movement tended to be hostile to women's rights as disruptive of proper relations between the sexes. Eliza Conder, wife of Independent publisher Josiah Conder of London, was most scathing of the American women, describing the "vulgar clamour" at the Convention and ridiculing the women as "most untidily

---

<sup>20</sup>A Philanthropist, Domestic Tyranny, or Woman in Chains, (London: Whittaker and Co., 1841), p. 55. The pamphlet, apparently written by an Evangelical, included a call for married women to be given property rights.

<sup>21</sup>Esther Sturge to Maria Weston Chapman, London, 14 Apr, 1842, MS A.9.2. v. 17, n. 52 in BPL.

arrayed". She was afraid that women's rights would contaminate English women:

If we are thus to start out of our spheres, who is to take our place? who, as 'keepers at home' are to 'guide the house', and train up children? Are the gentlemen kindly to officiate for us?<sup>22</sup>

Similar hostility was expressed by Mary Caroline Braithwaite, Quaker secretary of Kendal Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, who wrote to Joseph Birney of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society asking him to recommend American women abolitionists with whom they could establish contact, because they were not "disposed to extend our sympathy to the Women's Rights Party". Clearly influenced by Charles Stuart, who had revived her society, she described the American Anti-Slavery Society as a "Women's Rights Party" which had appointed "inconsistent representatives", and stressed that her own anti-slavery activities were "consistent with needful attention to other duties".<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Sarah Dymond, Quaker secretary of the Taunton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and also an associate of Stuart's, wrote to the secretary of the BFASS:

I will engage to get up a public meeting, which I think I can do without stepping out of my proper sphere; I am decidedly opposed to the woman question, but when men will not work in the cause women must.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Eustace R. Conder, Josiah Conder: A Memoir, (London: John Snow, 1857), p. 318.

<sup>23</sup>Letters from Mary Caroline Braithwaite to Joseph G. Birney, Kendal, 28 Nov 1840 and 3 Feb 1841, microfilm of J. G. Birney Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Sarah Dymond to John Tredgold, Taunton, 10 Aug 1840, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 6/120a in RHL; letter from Sarah Dymond and Charles Stuart to Angelina G. Weld, 4 Nov 1842, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké 1822-1844, (2 Vols., New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934), Vol. II, p. 944.

The controversy over women's rights was intertwined with religious controversy. Many leading anti-slavery campaigners, including the Quaker leadership of the BFASS, were evangelicals. Evangelical beliefs about women's moral duties were central to the dominant "separate spheres" ideology and provided the basis on which women had traditionally based their support for anti-slavery. Evangelicals combined advocacy of "separate spheres" with a stress on Biblical authority and on church unity and interdenominational alliances.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, Garrisonians stressed women's right to campaign against slavery, rather than their duty to do so. They tended to be unorthodox "Hicksite" Quakers or Unitarians, who gave priority to the following of the individual conscience, who questioned all forms of established civil and religious authority, who subscribed to an anarchistic form of pacifism known as "non-resistance", and who undermined "separate spheres" ideology by their demand for a perfectionist moral standard for all. Evangelicals accused Garrisonians not only of religious "infidelity" but also of defying divine ordinances about the role of women.<sup>26</sup>

The strength of evangelical tradition in British anti-slavery was such that the potential which Garrisonianism offered for a break with traditional women's roles in anti-slavery was never fully exploited. In Glasgow, where local

---

<sup>25</sup>For a discussion of evangelicalism and anti-slavery see Billington, "Some Connections", pp. 88-95, 121-22. For tensions between evangelicals and Hicksite Quakers and Unitarians in the movement see Turley, "Relations Between British and American Abolitionists" chap. i.

<sup>26</sup>For the intertwining of evangelical opposition to "women's rights" and "infidelity" in provoking splits in the Glasgow anti-slavery movement see Bingham, "The Glasgow Emancipation Society", chap. iv.

men's and women's societies split in the aftermath of the controversies at the Convention, even those women who supported Garrison and were angered at the exclusion of the American women delegates made it clear that they had no desire to follow the American women's example. Fears among local Congregational ministers that local women might now attempt to intrude themselves into public and leadership roles in the Glasgow anti-slavery movement thus proved unfounded.<sup>27</sup>

Until 1853 all the independent local societies, formed to support the Garrisonian wing of the American anti-slavery movement were segregated on sex lines just like the auxiliaries of the BFASS. The Anti-Slavery League, set up in 1846 as a central co-ordinating body for British and Irish Garrisonians, had an all-male organising committee. The only small advance was that women were now given an informal role in national decision-making, participating alongside men at a meeting held to discuss the League's activities in Liverpool in November 1846.<sup>28</sup>

In Britain the earliest developments towards women's rights came not within the anti-slavery movement but in other campaigns. Elizabeth Pease was able to report to Garrison in 1852 that the cause was progressing slowly, with increasing support for women's education and decreasing horror at women's public speaking on

---

<sup>27</sup>Seventh Annual Report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, (1841); Committee of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, An Appeal to the Ladies of Great Britain, in Behalf of American Slaves, (1841).

<sup>28</sup>Letter from J. B. Estlin to Mary Estlin, Liverpool, 3 Nov 1846, MS A.7.2. p.1 in B.P.L.

philanthropic issues.<sup>29</sup> In return, American women abolitionists including Lucretia Mott and Sarah Pugh kept their British contacts informed about the progress of the cause in America, and the first women's rights conventions there.<sup>30</sup>

It was Sarah Pugh who was involved in the first step towards equal rights for women in British anti-slavery organisation, promoting the formation of the first mixed British anti-slavery society. Founded in March 1853, the Leeds Antislavery Association had a mixture of male and female officers, committee members and subscribers, breaking with the pattern of single-sex organisation established in the anti-slavery movement in the 1820's and standard in all forms of voluntary societies in Britain until the mid- to late-Victorian period.<sup>32</sup>

An account of the society, which ascribes its formation primarily to the efforts of Wilson Armistead (1819-68), its Quaker President, has been written by Irene Goodyear.<sup>33</sup> My own research, however, suggests that the initial impetus for the society came from Pugh and her friend Harriet Lupton. Sarah Pugh, a "Hicksite" Quaker stayed in Leeds from around December 1852 to February 1853, lodging with the Luptons, who were Unitarian supporters of

---

<sup>29</sup>Elizabeth Pease to W. L. Garrison, Ben Rhydding, 9 July 1852, MS A.1.2. v. 21, p. 50 in BPL.

<sup>30</sup>See for example letters from Lucretia Mott and Sarah Pugh to R. D. and H. Webb, 1848-52, MS A.1.2. v. 18, pp. 14, 33; v. 21, p. 13 in BPL.

<sup>32</sup>Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, pp. 30-31 and Appendix 1, which lists only one society with a mixed committee formed prior to 1858.

<sup>33</sup>Irene E. Goodyear, "Wilson Armistead and the Leeds Antislavery Movement", reprinted from The Publication of the Thoresby Society. Miscellany, vol 16, part 2, pp. 113-119.

Garrison. She and Harriet Lupton formed a ladies' committee in December 1852 to collect signatures for an anti-slavery address to American women (the Stafford House Address discussed in section 5 of this chapter), and had hopes that this committee would form the basis for an independent ladies' society in the town.<sup>34</sup>

At some stage this plan became transformed into a scheme for a mixed group. Precisely how this came about is unclear but there is evidence to back Howard Temperley's assertion that it was an attempt to apply Garrisonian organisational principles.<sup>35</sup> Pugh herself was a women's rights campaigner who, as official delegate of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, had been one of the women excluded from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840. Harriet Lupton also supported women's rights: in 1852 she had written to Maria Weston Chapman that she always get anything on the subject which was recommended.<sup>36</sup>

The Leeds Antislavery Association was eventually founded at a meeting on 22nd February. Remarkably, it gained support both from Garrisonians and from evangelicals traditionally hostile to Garrisonian "infidelity" and women's rights. With a total of 110 female and 77 male subscribers, it had an interdenominational committee of both sexes, including Quakers Mr and Mrs Wilson Armistead,

---

<sup>34</sup>These developments can be traced in a series of letters which Pugh wrote to Bristol anti-slavery activist Mary Estlin, among Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library: ref. nos. 24.121.19,20,24,25,27.

<sup>35</sup>Temperley, British Antislavery, p. 245.

<sup>36</sup>Letter from Harriet Lupton to Maria Weston Chapman, Headingley, 6 June 1852, MS A.9.2. v. 26, p. 37, in BPL.

Unitarians Mr and Mrs Joseph Lupton and their daughter Harriet, Independents Rev and Mrs William Guest and Mrs E. Baines, wife of the editor of the Leeds Mercury, and Baptists Rev and Mrs John Walcott.<sup>37</sup>

The new Association s adopted an emblem, a variant of the traditional Wedgwood plaque, which showed the figures of two slaves, one male and one female, with the slogans "AM I NOT A WOMAN AND A SISTER" and "AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER" (see Appendix V, fig. 5).<sup>38</sup> In practice, however, women and men did not have completely equal roles. While women slightly outnumbered men on the committee, and Harriet Lupton and Mrs Guest held important posts as its secretaries, men took on the more public roles of president and vice-president, which involved chairing public meetings. At the group's founding meeting, men proposed the motions, women seconded them. This pattern was probably encouraged by the familial basis of support for the society, leading to a tendency for patriarchal authority and the sexual division of labour within the family to be replicated in the society.<sup>39</sup>

This local development was followed in November 1854 by a move towards the involvement by women in national decision-making. The BFASS called a conference to which

---

<sup>37</sup>Mrs Walcott was an old friend of Eliza Wigham, with whom she had been co-secretary of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society.

<sup>38</sup>See title page of First Annual Report of the Leeds Antislavery Association, (Leeds: W. Walker, 1854). For a similar use of the combined slogan see the title page of Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1866) (see Appendix V, fig. 5).

<sup>39</sup>First Annual Report of the Leeds Antislavery Association; letter from Harriet Lupton to Mary Estlin, Headingly, 27 Oct 1853, MS A.9.2. v. 27, no. 72, in BPL.

British abolitionists of all persuasions were invited, with the aim of reaching agreements on united action. On receiving information of the planned meeting, Harriet Lupton of Leeds sent a circular to independent women's societies offering to pay the expenses of any ladies who would consent to attend as delegates "for the purpose of testing the woman question".<sup>40</sup>

Harriet Lupton's circular stimulated considerable debate among independent women's societies over the issue of female delegates. The Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, whose leader Mary Estlin was a friend of Harriet Lupton and was apparently involved in the scheme, received communications from Leeds, Manchester, Bridgewater, Edinburgh and Glasgow, all expressing the desire that the right of women to attend such conferences should be established.<sup>41</sup> The responses testify to the growth in feminist sentiment among Garrisonian women abolitionists in Britain in the 1850's.

The two women who eventually agreed to attempt to attend the conference as delegates were Rebecca Moore and Rebecca Whitelegge of the Manchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Mrs Rebecca Moore was an Irish Quaker supporter of Garrison who had founded Manchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society in 1847 to collect for the Boston Bazaar.<sup>42</sup> She

---

<sup>40</sup>Letter from Rebecca Moore to R. D. Webb, London, 30 Nov 1854, MS A.1.2. v. 26, p. 37, in BPL; Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 24 Nov 1854.

<sup>41</sup>Minute Book of the BCLASS, entries for 16 and 24 Nov 1854.

<sup>42</sup>Rebecca Fisher, who with her sisters Susanna and Charlotte had been active supporters of Garrison in Limerick since 1841, eloped with barrister and Anti-Corn Law League lecturer Robert R.R. Moore (1811-1864) but he abandoned her in Manchester in 1847 (see Riach, "Ireland

later became active in the women's suffrage movement (see chapter vi, section 6 of this thesis). Rebecca Whitelegge is known to have collected subscriptions to the British Garrisonian paper the Anti-Slavery Advocate. Mary Estlin thought highly of her contribution to the cause, describing her and Eliza Wigham in 1855 as "the two main props of the enterprise in Great Britain".<sup>43</sup>

While the Manchester women were the only female delegates, the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society sent a male delegate, Duncan McLaren, bearing a long letter containing suggestions about matters they felt should be prioritised at the conference and also calling for women's full participation in the movement.<sup>44</sup> It recommended holding a World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1855, providing it was "on a broad and comprehensive platform". In particular:

When it is considered that of those whose interests the Convention will meet to advocate, one half at least are women ... and that during the interval since West India Emancipation, a great share of anti-slavery work and duty had devolved on the women of Britain, we would respectfully suggest that ladies should be specially invited to attend the conference, and thus have the opportunity of representing the wrongs of their sisters who are in bonds.<sup>45</sup>

---

and the Campaign", pp. 131-3, 313).

<sup>43</sup>Rebecca Whitelegge to Mary Estlin, 10 Dec [1852] and 23 Aug [1853], MS A.9.2. v. 27, nos. 86 and 57 in BPL; Mary Estlin to M. W. Chapman, Edinburgh, 29 Sept 1855, MS A.7.3. p. 89, in BPL.

<sup>44</sup>Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1855). McLaren was the radical Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

<sup>45</sup>"To the Anti-Slavery Conference to be held in London on the 29th and 30th November, 1854", letter signed on behalf of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society by Sarah Wigham et al, Edinburgh, 27 Nov 1854, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 110/222, in RHL.

Before the London conference women's groups made enquiries of the committee of the BFASS as to whether they would accept female delegates. Surprisingly, assurances were obtained that female delegates would be received "as a matter of course".<sup>46</sup> This demonstrated a complete change in attitude from the World Convention in 1840. It is also surprising in the light of worries over female delegates being expressed by BFASS committee members in late 1853.<sup>47</sup>

The BFASS's apparent change of attitude between 1853 and 1854 should not be interpreted as a sudden conversion to women's rights but rather as the product of increased co-operation and conciliation between anti-slavery factions (discussed in section 2 of this chapter). The new mood was, however, short-lived. The conference ended in disarray when the BFASS refused to succumb to pressure from Garrisonians to grant full recognition to the American Anti-Slavery Society. The BFASS then further alienated Garrisonians by publishing a report of the conference which both omitted pro-Garrisonian speeches and failed to mention the female delegates.<sup>48</sup> In this context the snubbing of the women seems to have primarily been a method of attacking the Garrisonians.

Rebecca Moore wrote after the Convention that the acceptance of women delegates was "of little consequence if

---

<sup>46</sup>Minute Book of the BCLASS, entries for 16 and 24 Nov, 1854.

<sup>47</sup>While the letters concerned do not survive their contents may be deduced from the Rev. S. A. Steinthal's replies of 1 Oct and 1 and 4 Nov 1853, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 36/93, 94, S 22, G 85.

<sup>48</sup>London Anti-Slavery Conference. Papers Read and Statements Made, 29th and 30th of November, 1854, (London: 1854).

the American [Anti-Slavery] Society is to be passed by".<sup>49</sup> Her reluctance to prioritise women's rights seems to have been shared by other British women abolitionists, for their were no new developments on the issue for several years. Then at the end of 1859 Afro-American abolitionist Sarah Parker Remond arrived in England to conduct an anti-slavery lecture tour. Her series of lectures in Britain and Ireland between January 1859 and January 1861 were the first public talks by a woman to mixed British audiences on the anti-slavery question since 1787 (see chapter I, section 3 of this thesis).

Sarah Parker Remond (1826-1894) was the daughter of a prosperous free black tradesman from Salem, Massachusetts, who had worked as a travelling lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society. She was a supporter of women's rights, and had appeared on the platform at the National Women's Rights Convention in New York in 1858. She came to Britain both to lecture against slavery and to study at Bedford College for Ladies in London. This College had been founded in 1849 by Elizabeth Reid, a pioneer in women's education and a supporter of Garrison since the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention. Remond boarded with Reid whilst attending college, and she was an important personal link between British abolitionist feminists and their American counterparts, both black and white.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup>Rebecca Moore to R. D. Webb, London, 30 Nov 1854, MS A.1.2. v. 24, p. 169 in BPL.

<sup>50</sup>For short accounts of her life see Dorothy B. Porter, "Sarah Parker Remond, Abolitionist and Physician", Journal of Negro History, no. 20 (July 1935), pp. 287-93; Ruth Bogin, "Sarah Parker Remond: Black Abolitionist from Salem", Essex Institute Historical Collections, no. 110 (Apr 1974), pp. 120-150.

Remond's major anti-slavery lectures in Britain were attended by thousands of people, and she appealed to an audience ranging from male factory operatives in Yorkshire to fashionable ladies in London. Between December 1859 and February 1860 she lectured successively in Warrington, Ireland, Bristol, Manchester, Bury, and the Leeds area; from October 1860 to February 1861 she spoke in Scotland at Edinburgh, Hawick, Glasgow and Dumfries, and south of the border at Carlisle and Ulverstone.<sup>51</sup>

Remond was an experienced public speaker, clear and forcible.<sup>52</sup> She presented herself as a representative of both Garrisonian abolitionists and black slaves and she pleaded especially on behalf of her own sex who were suffering under the "cruelty and licentiousness of their brutal masters. Stressing that the plight of the slave woman was far worse than that the English seamstress, she urged English women to "demand for the black woman the protection and rights enjoyed by the white".<sup>53</sup>

Remond appealed to her audience in very similar terms to those of white middle-class women abolitionists, and she

---

<sup>51</sup>Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. II, no. 26 (Feb 1859), p. 201; no. 27 (Mar 1859), p. 211; no. 28 (Apr 1859), pp. 221-224; no. 29 (May 1859), p. 232; no. 31 (July 1859), pp. 249-50; no. 32 (Aug 1859), p. 255; no. 33 (Sept 1859), pp. 266-7; no. 34 (Oct 1859), pp 273-5; no. 35 (Nov 1859), p. 283; no. 38 (Feb 1860), p. 306; no. 47 (Nov 1860) p. 377; no. 50 (Feb 1861), p. 399. See also reports in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol VII, no. 7 (July 1859), p. 148; Vol. VIII, no. 1 (Jan 1860), p. 13; no. 11 (Nov 1860), p. 271.

<sup>52</sup>See for example the report of her lecture in Dublin in Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VII, no. 4 (Apr 1859), p. 73.

<sup>53</sup>Report of Remond's lecture in the Music Hall, Store St., London, 1 June 1859, in reply to a pro-slavery lecture by Lola Montez. in Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VII, no. 7 (July 1859), p. 150.

made no attempt to advocate women's rights or other controversial Garrisonian views from the anti-slavery platform. As a result she was welcomed by Garrisonian and non-Garrisonian alike, and her tour helped foster co-operation between the two sides. At her main lecture in London, leading Garrisonian George Thompson was joined on the platform by Louis Chamerovzow of the BFASS, who for the first time publicly praised the work of the American Anti-Slavery Society. His endorsement of Remond, while motivated by his desire for rapprochement with the Garrisonians, also reflected his acceptance of new roles for women in the British abolition movement. Acknowledging that it was unusual for women to speak in public, he nevertheless asserted that whenever they did "the cause they advocated benefited by their support of it".<sup>54</sup> His statement was symptomatic of the increasing acceptance in middle class circles of a public role for women in organised philanthropy in this period.<sup>55</sup>

British Garrisonians were also encouraged by their American colleagues at this time to set up a national committee with both male and female members. American Unitarian abolitionist the Rev. Samuel May wrote to the leading Irish Garrisonian Richard D. Webb of his desire to see a "living association" to replace the BFASS with a committee of both men and women. He put forward a list of possible committee members which included Eliza Paton and

---

<sup>54</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VII, no 7 (July 1853), p. 150.

<sup>55</sup>See Ray Strachey, The Cause, (London, 1979), pp. 87, 93-4. The best account of the development of feminism over this period is contained in Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism.

Elizabeth Pease (now Mrs Nicol of Glasgow), Eliza and Jane Wigham of Edinburgh, Mary Estlin and Mrs Stephens of Bristol, and Mrs Turner and Miss Whitlegge of Manchester as well as nine men.<sup>56</sup> Webb was sceptical that such a League could be formed, considering the people listed by May to be an "incongruous medley" who lacked the money to promote a new society. The women he described variously as "great stayers at home", "good as gold", "a good deal swallowed up in [her husband]", "does not much like personal publicity", "a good woman - but is also a [warm?] wife", "w[oul]d be hardly lie<sup>k</sup> to help much in council". While his comments suggest his own reluctance to support equal participation by women they also highlight the problems which women did face in attending meetings away from home, and their own continuing reservations about public action.<sup>57</sup>

Garrisonians under the leadership of F. W. Chesson and George Thompson nevertheless did succeed in setting up a mixed central co-ordinating committee in London in June 1859. The London Em<sup>n</sup>ancipation Committee had a committee of both men and women, blacks and whites. Women were thus admitted to the central decision-making body of an anti-slavery organisation for the first time in Britain. They included Sarah Remond and another Afro-American woman Garrisonian abolitionist, Ellen Craft. Craft was a fugitive slave who had appeared on British anti-slavery

---

<sup>56</sup>Letter [fragment] from Samuel May to R.D. Webb, [1859], printed as item [387] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 437.

<sup>57</sup>Letter from R. D. Webb to Samuel May, Dublin, 10 Mar 10 1859, printed as item [388] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 438.

platforms with her husband William. In 1853, when rumours were circulated that she was tired of life in freedom, Craft had issued a public statement that she "had much rather starve in England, a free woman, than be a slave for the best man that ever breathed upon the American continent."<sup>58</sup> The other women members of the new committee were, like Ellen Craft herself, mostly the wives of male committee members (Mrs Chesson, Mrs Thompson, Mrs Dennis McDonnell, Mrs T. E. Thoresby), but they also included women's rights campaigner Elizabeth Reid.<sup>59</sup>

The formation of the new committee was welcomed by local Garrisonian groups. Dissension soon arose, however, when Chesson and Thompson failed to invite Miss Remond to address the public meeting held in London on 1st August 1859 to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the abolition of British colonial slavery. Maria Weston Chapman tried to placate Remond but the Anti-Slavery Advocate publicly condemned the omission, which it blamed on "the prejudices of some influential persons present" against public speaking by women.<sup>60</sup> The Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Society and the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society wrote letters of complaint to the committee over the incident, and Harriet Martineau publicly

---

<sup>58</sup>Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. I, no. 3 (Dec 1852), p. 22. For further information on the Crafts see William and Ellen Craft, Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom, (London: William Tweedie, 1860); R. J. M. Blackett, "Fugitive Slaves in Britain: The Odyssey of William and Ellen Craft," Journal of American Studies, Vol. 12, no. 1. pp. 41-62.

<sup>59</sup>Minutes of the London Emancipation Committee, George Thompson Papers, John Rylands Library, Manchester.

<sup>60</sup>M. W. Chapman to S. P. Remond, Weymouth Landing, 4 Sept 1859, Estlin Papers, 24.122.28, Dr Williams Library; Anti-Slavery Advocate, no. 33 (Sept 1859), p. 262.

criticised the committee in the Anti-Slavery Standard.<sup>61</sup> The controversy was still alive in January 1860 and the erosion of female support probably contributed to the collapse of the London Emancipation Committee: Sarah Remond did not attend its meetings again and it only met erratically after 5th August 1859, finally terminating operations in February 1860 at a meeting attended by men only.<sup>62</sup> The first British attempt at uniting abolitionists on equal terms across racial and sexual lines in a national committee was thus short-lived.

## 2. The Internal Politics of the Anti-Slavery Movement: The Key Role of Women

American abolitionists, lacking widespread public support in their own country, weakened by ideological divisions, and admiring British abolitionists' successes, attached great importance to gaining financial and moral support in Britain and Ireland. Following the 1840 Convention the two rival American societies dispatched their representatives on tours of Britain. Their efforts were backed by British abolitionists who became embroiled in the dispute between their American colleagues.<sup>63</sup> This Section examines the role of women in these disputes, and

---

<sup>61</sup>Minutes of the London Emancipation Committee, minutes for 8 Oct 1859. The minutes of the meeting on 22 July 1859 reveal that this last committee meeting prior to the public meeting of 1st August was attended by men only.

<sup>62</sup>Minutes of the London Emancipation Committee, 5 Aug 1859 to 24 Feb 1860.

<sup>63</sup>For a general account of the development of anti-slavery factions in Britain in the 1840's see Temperley, British Antislavery, pp. 209-220.

also at the socio-economic backgrounds of women activists and the level of female activism compared to male.

The BFASS had already, by its decision to exclude women from the Convention, aligned itself with the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. By 1844 its agents had succeeded in establishing a network of twenty-two ladies' associations and twenty-five men's auxiliaries supporting their line. Most of them <sup>were</sup> in England where activists had formerly been involved with Joseph Sturge's Central Emancipation Committee and where women in particular had close links with anti-Garrisonian agent Charles Stuart.<sup>64</sup> American Garrisonian agents met with most success in Ireland and Scotland, where there was a tradition of anti-slavery organisation independent of London, and where George Thompson was particularly influential among women's societies, which had established links with American Garrisonians in the 1830's. By 1846 independent women's groups aligned with the Garrisonians were in existence at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth and Kirkcaldy in Scotland, and at Cork, Belfast and Dublin in Ireland, as well as at Bridgewater, Rochdale and Carlisle in England.<sup>65</sup> Support

---

<sup>64</sup>These figures are extrapolated from the cumulative contribution lists attached to The First to Fifth Annual Reports of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1840-1845). For a full list of ladies' associations donating to the BFASS see Appendix I. For reports of the formation of these groups see Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. VI, no. 8, (16 Apr 1845), p. 72; no. 9 (30 Apr 1845), p. 80; BFASS Minute Book, Vol. II, pp. 359-60, 391, 515; MSS Brit. Emp. S.20 E.2/7 in RHL; letters to John Tredgold, MSS Brit. Emp. S.18, C.11/53, 116, 119, 123, 126 in RHL; letter from Charles Stuart to John Tredgold, Bath, 28 Dec 1840, MSS Brit. Emp. S.22, G.84 in RHL.

<sup>65</sup>For Cork see letter from Isabel Jennings (Unitarian school-teacher and secretary of the society) to Maria Weston Chapman, Cork, 12 Apr 1843, MS A.9.2. v. 18, no. 28 in BPL; for Belfast see Mary Ireland (teacher at the

for Garrisonians continued to be through such independent groups, following the failure of an attempt to set up a network of male and female auxiliaries linked to the Anti-Slavery League, a central co-ordinating body intended to rival the BFASS.<sup>66</sup>

In England, where Stuart and others were successful in aligning most local societies behind the BFASS, a handful of women formed the leading initial supporters of Garrison. Elizabeth Pease, who felt that her long correspondence with American abolitionists had put her in a better position than most to understand the background to their divisions, was rated alongside George Thompson by American Anti-Slavery Society agent C. L. Remond as one of the two main props of Garrisonianism in Britain.<sup>67</sup> She was the leading supporter and adviser to John Collins during his fund-raising tour on behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society

---

Belfast Academical Institute) to Maria Weston Chapman, Belfast, 14 Jan 1846, printed as item [189] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 247; for Carlisle see letter from Jane Carr (wife of a Quaker biscuit manufacturer) to the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar to be held in Boston, Carlisle, 30 Oct 1846, MS A.4.6A v.1, no. 110, BPL; for Rochdale see Liberator, Vol. XVI, no. 4 (18 Dec 1846), p. 203; for Perth see Anti-Slavery Reporter, May 1853, p. 116; for Kirkcaldy see Liberator, Vol. XVII, no. 1 (1 Jan 1847), p. 3.

<sup>66</sup>For the formation of Rochdale Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society by League secretary Mr R. Smith see the Liberator, Vol. XVI, no. 4 (18 Dec 1846), p. 203. The new society's secretary was Miss Esther Bright, sister of leading anti-corn law campaigner John Bright M.P.. For women's frustration at the inefficiency of the League's male leadership see letter from Sarah Hilditch to Henry C. Wright, Wrexham, 30 Jan 1847, in Vol. II of "English, Irish and Scotch Letters Addressed to Henry C. Wright, 1846-7", Houghton Library, Harvard University; Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, (London: John Snow, 1852)., p. 8.

<sup>67</sup>Elizabeth Pease to J.A. Collins, Darlington, 19 Nov 1840, MS A.1.2. v. 10, no. 37 in BPL; Charles Lenox Remond to Maria Weston Chapman, Manchester, 16 Nov 1841, MS A.9.2. v. 15, pt. 1, no. 93 in BPL.

in 1840-41, and entered into a hot debate with John Scoble, secretary of the BFASS, over his refusal to recognise Collins.<sup>68</sup> Other English women supporters included Harriet Martineau, who contributed an introductory letter to Collins pamphlet in defence of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Mary Rawson, Anne Knight and Elizabeth Reid.<sup>69</sup> In 1840 Pease asserted that:

If we count by numbers, England may be called regularly new organized; but, if we come to those who will throw their souls into the work, I am not so sure as regards the women, at any rate.<sup>70</sup>

These English women, together with women sympathetic to Garrison in Scotland and Ireland, visited and corresponded with each other and also established a lively and extensive correspondence with American Garrisonians, particularly women, some of whom they had met and been impressed by at the Convention. Their letters show the developing of personal friendships and discussion of "non-resistance", free trade and the Anti-Corn Law League, Chartism and women's rights as well as anti-slavery. A transatlantic sisterhood of radical nonconformist reformers

---

<sup>68</sup>See Elizabeth Pease's correspondence, MS A.1.2. v. 11, p. 155, 156; v. 12, pt. 1, p. 1, 19, 66, 149, 150, 151 in BPL.

<sup>69</sup>John A. Collins, Right and Wrong Among the Abolitionists of the United States, (Glasgow: George Gallie, 1841), introductory letter by Miss Martineau. See also p. 73 for listing of Elizabeth Pease as English agent for subscriptions to the American Anti-Slavery Society and its periodicals and list of supporters including Knight and Reid.

<sup>70</sup>Letter quoted in the Liberator, Vol. XI, no. 31 (July 1840), p. 123. This was one of a series of her letters to Garrison published in his anti-slavery periodical the Liberator between 1840 and 1847. (Note that the term "new organisation" was used to refer to the anti-Garrisonian American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society).

was developing.<sup>71</sup> In contrast, women who sided with the "Tappanites" had much more limited contacts with American abolitionists, who concentrated on corresponding with the male leadership of the BFASS.<sup>72</sup>

Both the British members of this Garrisonian sisterhood and the leaders of female societies linked to the BFASS auxiliaries were middle-class women from similar backgrounds to those who had supported anti-slavery in the 1820's and 1830's. They were divided not by class but rather by religious and political perspectives.

The extent to which working-class women supported the anti-slavery cause at this period is difficult to determine. Patricia Hollis has emphasised class antagonism and Chartist disruption of anti-slavery meetings and there is some evidence relating specifically to women to back her views.<sup>73</sup> In 1840 Elizabeth Fry's daughter Katherine wrote with horror of an anti-slavery meeting at Norwich which she and other ladies had been forced to leave when it was disrupted by Chartists calling for the rights of English white slaves. Among them were "some women who excited the men, and whose shrill voices out screamed the roar of the men. I heard they were three well-known Socialist sisters,

---

<sup>71</sup>I have identified some 1500 letters written to/from 66 British/Irish women in the BPL collection. There is a useful published selection of these in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists.

<sup>72</sup>There are 15 letters to/from 6 British/Irish women among the J.G. Birney Papers in William Clements Library and 52 letters to/from 15 women among the Papers of Lewis Tappan in the Library of Congress.

<sup>73</sup>Patricia Hollis, "Anti-Slavery and British Working-Class Radicalism in the Years of Reform", Bolt and Drescher, Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform, chap. xiv.

the vilest of the vile".<sup>74</sup> Chartist women referred to the suffering of working-class women as "the wrongs of sisters in slavery".<sup>75</sup> Class antagonism between women was made explicit by Owenite socialist lecturer Emma Martin, whose 1844 criticism of philanthropic ladies who wept over the sufferings of people in distant countries while ignoring the exploitation of poor women in their own land referred specifically to supporters of foreign missions but could equally have been applied to abolitionists.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, there is also evidence about women to back Betty Fladeland's contrasting stress on the involvement of Chartist leaders in anti-slavery organisations, and support for Chartism by middle-class abolitionists.<sup>77</sup> In the first place, there is evidence that some working-class women supported anti-slavery. In Bristol, Mary Carpenter succeeded in interesting poor women in the cause despite opposition from leading local abolitionist Jon Bishop Estlin who considered that "it is the more educated classes here that can alone benefit the A.S. movement".<sup>78</sup> In Scotland the "deep poverty" of the

---

<sup>74</sup>Letter from Katherine Fry to Louisa Pely, 19 Nov 1840, Buxton Papers, Vol. 20, pp. 37-43, MSS Brit. Emp. S.444, in RHL.

<sup>75</sup>This phrase was used by Miss Ruthwell, Bradford treasurer of the Power Loom Weaver's Society in a speech in 1845, quoted in Thompson, The Chartists, p. 136.

<sup>76</sup>Emma Martin, The Missionary Jubilee Panic, (1844), p. 3, as quoted in Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, p. 152.

<sup>77</sup>Betty Fladeland, "'Our Cause Being One and the Same': Abolitionists and Chartism", Walvin, ed., Slavery and British Society, chap. iii.

<sup>78</sup>Letter from Mary Carpenter to M.W. Chapman, Bristol, 31 Oct 1847, MS A.9.2. v. 23, p. 58 in BPL; letter from J.B. Estlin to the Rev. S. May Jr., Bristol, 17 Oct 1847, MS B.1.6. v. 2, no. 59 in BPL.

young women who were active in the Perth Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society was remarked upon, and it was stated that most earned their own livelihood "by their head or their hands".<sup>79</sup> The Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, like the Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society it replaced, opened itself to working women by setting no minimum subscription and obtaining a considerable number of members who subscribed only a shilling.<sup>80</sup>

There is no positive evidence for Chartist women's involvement in anti-slavery organisations at Glasgow or elsewhere. There is, however, evidence that some American Garrisonian women and British women Chartists were aware of each others activities and that they were sources of mutual inspiration. An American Garrisonian, Abby Kimber, wrote to George Thompson in 1840 praising the public activism of the "Lady Chartists of Glasgow".<sup>81</sup> Conversely, at least one Chartist woman, "Sophia" of Birmingham, was inspired by the anti-slavery commitment of American women.<sup>82</sup>

There is also evidence that some middle-class women anti-slavery campaigners in Britain, like leading male

<sup>79</sup>Letter from M.A. Estlin to A.W. Weston, Bristol, 15 Nov 1850, MS A.9.2. v. 25, no. 44, in BPL.

<sup>80</sup>Committee of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, An Appeal to the Ladies of Great Britain, in Behalf of the American Slave, (Glasgow: John McLeod, 1841), p. 15; Annual Report of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Glasgow: Temperance Press, 1842), p. [19].

<sup>81</sup>Letter from Abby Kimber to George Thompson, Kimberton, 26 Nov 1840, printed as item [88] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 125. For Chartists in the Glasgow Emancipation Society see Fladeland "Abolitionists and Chartism", pp. 85-6.

<sup>82</sup>Letters from "Sophia" of Birmingham to W.L. Garrison, printed in the Liberator, Vol. XIII, no. 9 (3 Mar 1843), p. 83; Vol. XIV, no. 25 (21 June 1844), p. 99.

abolitionists, were sympathetic to Chartism.<sup>83</sup> Anne Knight, as mentioned above, campaigned for Chartists to include women's rights in their program. Elizabeth Pease described herself as an "ultra radical" who fully sympathized with the "moral force" Chartists, though acknowledging this to be an "almost outrageous" stance for a "lady". Pease based her support on the principle of "the natural equality of man" and considered contentions that working people were not ready for full rights to be "nothing but a slaveholder's argument". She was in close contact with Chartists in her home town of Darlington and also transmitted information on Chartism to American Garrisonians. However, wishing anti-slavery to remain a single issue campaign, she warned Collins that Garrisonian attempts to enlist Chartist support in their battle with the BFASS would compromise anti-slavery principles and independence of action.<sup>84</sup>

While anti-slavery never gained widespread working class support and underwent a general decline in the final years of the 1840's, women's societies remained more active than men's. For example in 1847 independent female societies at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin were still thriving though local men's societies were becoming

---

<sup>83</sup>Fladeland, "Abolitionists and Chartism" discusses Harriet Martineau's attitude to Chartism (pp. 73-75) and mentions Elizabeth Pease's support (p. 87).

<sup>84</sup>Elizabeth Pease to A.W. Weston, London, 24 1841; Elizabeth Pease to W. and A. Phillips, Darlington, 16 Aug and 29 Sept 1842; Elizabeth Pease to J.A. Collins, Darlington, 12 May [1841?], printed as items [109], [131], [134] and [105] respectively in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, pp. 154, 179, 151.

moribund.<sup>85</sup> The number of men's societies donating to the BFASS decreased between 1844 and 1850 from twenty to only three whereas the decrease in women's groups was less: from twenty-two to eleven.<sup>86</sup> Active women's societies came to outnumber active men's groups for the first time in the history of the movement. This numerical dominance of active women's societies became even more noticeable in the 1850's. Through the 1850's between eight and thirteen ladies' auxiliaries contributed each year to BFASS funds whereas there were never more than six contributing men's auxiliaries.<sup>87</sup> The BFASS's 1854 report, praising the work of local societies both auxiliary to and independent of it, acknowledged the receipt of printed reports from five women's groups and one mixed group but made no mention of any men's groups.<sup>88</sup> In 1857 the BFASS singled out two women's groups, the auxiliary Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society and the independent Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, as the "chief" amongst various provincial organisations forwarding its work.<sup>89</sup> In addition, though a few new men's societies were formed over

---

<sup>85</sup>Bingham, "The Glasgow Emancipation Society", p. 156; Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, p. 146.

<sup>86</sup>Contribution lists in The Fifth to Eleventh Annual Reports of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1844-1850). Note that from 1850 contributions are listed for the current year only rather than cumulatively.

<sup>87</sup>Fifteenth to Twentieth Annual Reports of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1854 to 1859).

<sup>88</sup>Fifteenth Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1854), p. 18.

<sup>89</sup>Twentieth Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston & Barrett, 1859), pp. 12-13.

the period there was nothing to equal the two extensive new networks of female societies: the twenty-six Free Labour Associations formed in 1850-51, and the seventeen new ladies' anti-slavery associations formed by Julia Griffiths in 1856-59 (discussed in Sections 3 and 4 below).

Two of the most active local societies in the 1850's were two independent women's groups: the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, under the leadership of Mary Estlin, and the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society under the leadership of Eliza Wigham. An examination of their activities and role in anti-slavery controversies illuminates the high level of female independence, initiative and influence in the anti-slavery movement in this period.

On 13th November 1851 the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society became the first and only BFASS auxiliary to vote to sever its connection with the parent body and become an independent group.<sup>90</sup> Its members had become increasingly frustrated by the failure of the BFASS to make practical suggestions for action, the petering out of its communications with "Tappanite" American abolitionists, snubs to every attempts to obtain from the BFASS a clear explanation of its policy towards the American societies, and finally the BFASS's attempt to appropriate all the credit for campaigns on church fellowship initiated by the local society in 1851.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup>Mary Estlin to Miss Anne W. Weston, Bristol, 11 Oct 1851, MS A.9.2. v.25, p.126 in BPL; Mary Estlin to M.W. Chapman, Bristol, 17 Oct 1851, MS A.9.2. v.29, p.13 in BPL; Minute Book of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society (henceforth, BCLASS): entry for 13 Nov 1851, Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library.

<sup>91</sup>Letter from Fanny Tribe to John Tredgold, Bristol, 10 Oct 1840, letters from Fanny Tribe to John Scoble, Bristol, 24 Feb 1843, 1 Feb 1844, 5 Feb 1846, 6 Feb 1847,

The group was thus receptive to the influence of Frances Armstrong and Mary Estlin, two local Unitarian women whom American Unitarian minister the Rev. Samuel May Jr. had won over to Garrison in 1843. Armstrong, an established member of the committee, and Estlin, newly appointed to the committee in February 1851 were backed by Frances' husband the Rev. George Armstrong and by Mary's father John Bishop Estlin, who became a leading financial supporter and propagandist for the Garrisonians in England.<sup>92</sup> Their efforts were also helped by the good impression made by American Garrisonians during visits to Bristol. Most importantly, Garrisonians offered women a channel for their energies in the form of collecting for the Boston Bazaar (see Section 3 of this Chapter), sources of direct information on developments in America, and the attraction of becoming part of a lively transatlantic abolitionist network.

The Bristol women were not content to just quietly leave the BFASS. Instead, under the influence of Mary Estlin who had compiled a list of eight charges against the BFASS, they set about drawing the attention of all other associations affiliated to the BFASS to the grounds of

---

18 Feb 1848, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 10/128, C 22/86-90, in RHL; letter from Frances Armstrong to Samuel May, Clifton Vale, Feb 16th 1846, printed as item [195] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists. p. 251; Fanny Tribe to John Scoble, Kingsdown, 13 June, 1851, MSS Brit. Emp. S.18 C.22/91,91a in RHL; Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 21-31.

<sup>92</sup>Minute Book of the BCLASS, entries for 6 and 13 Feb 1851; letter from Mary Estlin to Miss Weston, 13 Feb 1851, MS A.9.2. v. 25, p. 63 in BPL; Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 14-15. The Rev. George Armstrong (1792-1857) was a leading local Unitarian minister; John Bishop Estlin was a wealthy ophthalmologist.

their separation from the Parent Society.<sup>93</sup> The BFASS Committee clearly took this attempt to undermine its auxiliary network seriously: they asked John Scoble to prepare a response, and agreed to request editors to publish it in newspaper columns opposite the women's charges.<sup>94</sup>

The launch of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society as an independent organisation marked the beginning of a period of intense national propaganda by the group under Mary Estlin's leadership.<sup>95</sup> Pamphlets in defence of the Garrisonian American Anti-Slavery Society written by R. D. Webb and the American abolitionist Mr Edmund Quincy were distributed to local anti-slavery associations and in towns "infested with" BFASS supporters. In February 1852 Mary Estlin compiled a pamphlet contradicting attacks on American Garrisonians made by Dr Campbell in January to March 1852 in the British Banner, organ of the Independent denomination.<sup>96</sup> The women also produced a Special Report explaining their course of action

---

<sup>93</sup>Minute Book of the BCLASS, entry for 13 Nov 1851.

<sup>94</sup>Minute Book of the BFASS, Vol. 3, entries for 5 Dec 1851, 2 Jan 1852, MS Brit. Emp. S20 E2/8, RHL.

<sup>95</sup>Mary Estlin to M. W. Chapman, Bristol, 16 Feb 1852, MS A.7.3. p.43 in BPL; Mary Estlin to Miss [Caroline?] Weston, Bristol, 30 Apr 1852, MS A.7.3. p.45 in BPL; Minute Book of the BCLASS: entry for 7 May 1852.

<sup>96</sup>Mary Estlin to [Caroline?] Weston, Bristol, 26 Feb 1852, MS A.7.3. p.45 in BPL; Minute Book of the BCLASS: entries for 19 Feb and 7 May 1852; Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society (compilers), Statements Respecting the American Abolitionists; by their Opponents and their Friends: Indicating the Present Struggle Between Slavery and Freedom in the U.S.A.. (Dublin: Webb and Chapman, 1852).

and this was widely circulated to local anti-slavery associations and newspaper editors.<sup>97</sup>

After splitting with the BFASS, the society remained formally independent of both wings of the anti-slavery movement. Mary Estlin explained to American Garrisonians that they must be content with a "co-alition and not a union", and in 1853, when the BFASS's vehemently anti-Garrisonian secretary John Scoble was replaced, Mary Estlin successfully sought a rapprochement with the new secreatry, Louis Chamerovzow.<sup>98</sup> That winter, after consulting Mary Estlin, Frederick Chesson, along with his father-in-law George Thompson, launched the Manchester Anti-Slavery Union in co-operation with Louis Chamerovzow and Joseph Sturge. Mary Estlin then became involved in preparing an Address to the American Anti-Slavery Society, to come from the new Union as an auxiliary of the BFASS. The purpose of this Address was to have the BFASS indirectly endorse the Garrisonian wing of the American movement.<sup>99</sup> When the group collapsed in disputes over control, Estlin advised on the foundation of a new Garrisonian group, the Manchester Anti-Slavery League.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup>Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society; Minute Book of the BCLASS: entry for 16 Sept 1852.

<sup>98</sup>Mary Estlin to Miss Caroline Weston, 29 Dec 1851 and 1 Jan 1852, MS A.9.2. v.25, no.141 in BPL; Mary Estlin to L. Chamerovzow, Bristol, 10 Apr 1853, MS Brit. Emp S18 C30/131 in RHL.

<sup>99</sup>Mary Estlin to Miss [Caroline?] Weston, Taunton, 6 Nov 1853, MS A.7.3. p.75 in BPL; Mary Estlin to M. W. Chapman, Bristol, 9 Dec 1853, MS A.9.2. v.27, no.85 in BPL.

<sup>100</sup>Minute Book of the BCLASS: entries for 15 Dec, 1853, 11 Feb, 1854; Mary Estlin to [Caroline?] Weston, Bristol, 16 Jan 1854, MS A.7.3. p.78 in BPL; F. W. Chesson to M. W. Chapman, Manchester, 17 Jan 1854, printed as item [348] in Clare Taylor British and American Abolitionists,

Estlin had little confidence in the League, fearing that it would "crumble through poor management" by incompetent British men. In fact, she considered Eliza Wigham of Edinburgh and herself to be the only two in the country with "combined knowledge of what is wanted and faculty or means of taking steps in accordance with the demands of the occasion."<sup>101</sup> Her judgment of the comparative worth of male and female activists accords with that of the American Garrisonian J. Miller McKim, who reported in 1854 of his British visit:

The most active abolitionists were, with few exceptions, to be found among women. In Bristol, Leeds, Edinburgh, Belfast, the principal work was performed by ladies, and on them everywhere the cause seems to depend for its life and vigour.<sup>102</sup>

Chesson again solicited Mary Estlin's support when he organised a conference on 1st August 1854 for Garrisonian abolitionists, under the auspices of a new group, the North of England Anti-Slavery League.<sup>103</sup> At the same time Chamerovzow approached her, seeking to repair the breach between the Garrisonians and the BFASS.<sup>104</sup> Mary Estlin managed to set up a successful meeting between him and Maria Weston Chapman when both were in Paris, and soon afterwards the first advertisement for the Boston Bazaar,

---

<sup>101</sup>Mary Estlin to [Caroline?] Weston, Bristol, 16 Jan 1854, MS A.7.3. p. 78 in BPL.

<sup>102</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. I, no. 16 (Jan 1854), pp. 126-7.

<sup>103</sup>Minute Book of the BCLASS: entry for 9 June 1854.

<sup>104</sup>Correspondence between Louis Chamerovzow and Mary Estlin, London, Paris and Clevedon, 31 July to 28 Sept 1854, MS A.1.2. v.24, pp. 87, 88, 97, 99, 102, 122; v.25, p. 93, in BPL.

which Mrs Chapman ran to raise funds for Garrisonians, appeared in the Anti-Slavery Reporter.<sup>105</sup>

Mary Estlin's independent stance was very similar to that adopted by her friend Eliza Wigham, secretary of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, though in Edinburgh the course of events was almost the reverse of those in Bristol.

Eliza Wigham and her step-mother Jane Wigham had in the 1840's encouraged the members of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society to support Garrison, despite the fact that John Wigham III, Jane's husband and Eliza's father, had steered the men's Emancipation Society into an alliance with the BFASS.<sup>106</sup> However in 1850, amid accusations of religious infidelity, the evangelical majority on the ladies' committee voted to sever all connections with American Garrisonians.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup>Mary Estlin to M. W. Chapman, 6 Aug 1854, MS A.7.3. p. 84 in BPL; A. W. Weston to Mary Estlin, Versailles, 20 Aug 1854, MS A.1.2. v.25, p.90 in BPL; Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 8 (Aug 1854), p. 191.

<sup>106</sup>For events in Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland following the Convention see Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, chap. iv. Eliza Wigham (1820-99) remained single and in addition to becoming one of the leading supporters of Garrison in Scotland was also involved in temperance, in aid to poor women and children and, later, in feminist campaigns. Jane Wigham, the second wife of Quaker shawl manufacturer John Wigham III, was the daughter of William Smeal, Garrisonian secretary of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, and had been secretary of its ladies' auxiliary until her marriage in 1840. (see Eliza Wigham. A Brief Memorial. Reprinted and Revised from the "Annual Monitor", [London, ca. 1901]; E.M. Mein, "Miss Eliza Wigham" [typescript in Edinburgh Central Library]).

<sup>107</sup>Letter from Eliza Wigham to Mary Estlin, Edinburgh, 13 Sept 1850, MS A.7.3. p. 12 in BPL; "Expression of sentiment tendered by members of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society to the meeting of the Committee, held August 1st 1850", printed as item [291] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 346.

Jane and Eliza Wigham's decision to remain members of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society after it withdrew support from Garrison drew strong criticism from other Garrisonians including Andrew Paton of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, who accused them of cowardice and compromise.<sup>108</sup> Their tactics, however, succeeded in keeping female abolitionists in Edinburgh united and active at a time when Paton's group was severely weakened by dissension.

The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society did not ally itself with the BFASS or become an openly anti-Garrisonian body.<sup>109</sup> Instead it maintained an independent position in relation to British and American anti-slavery factions. In 1853 Eliza Wigham and her step-mother Jane supported Mary Estlin's attempts at fostering co-operation between Garrisonians and the BFASS.<sup>110</sup> The Edinburgh society subscribed to a wide range of periodicals and produced valuable annual summaries of developments in the United States drawn from a wide range of published sources

---

<sup>108</sup>Letter A. W. Weston to Mary Estlin, 6 Apr 1851, MS A.7.2.10, in BPL.

<sup>109</sup>Letter from Eliza Wigham to Rev. S. May Jr., Edinburgh, 15 Mar 1855, in BPL.

<sup>110</sup>Jane Wigham to [M. W. Chapman?], Edinburgh, 9 Nov 1853, MS A.9.2. v. 27, p. 66, BPL; Eliza Wigham to Louis Chamerovzow, Edinburgh, 11 Apr and 19 Oct 1853, MS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 37/61 and 62 in RHL. Estlin herself had earlier defended Wigham's tactics in Edinburgh against attack from Mrs Chapman and her sisters (Mary Estlin to A. W. Weston, Bristol [1851/2], MS A.9.2. v.25, no.99 in BPL; Mary Estlin to Caroline Weston, Bristol, 21st March, 1852, MS A.9.2. v.26, no.19 in BPL).

and direct American contacts. These reports were quoted and highly recommended in the Anti-Slavery Reporter.<sup>111</sup>

### 3. Bazaars and Fund-Raising

Part of the reason for the increased prominence of women and women's societies in the British anti-slavery movement in the 1840's and 1850's lay in the serious decline in male anti-slavery activism. This stemmed from the political marginalisation of anti-slavery in Britain after 1838. Activities on which local men's groups had previously focused - petitions to Parliament, the influencing of electors and the canvassing of M.P.'s - were of little relevance when confronting slave-trading and slave-holding in foreign countries over which the British government had no jurisdiction. In contrast, areas of work in which female societies had established prominence such as fund-raising, boycotting slave-grown produce and the exertion of moral pressure now became the main courses of action open to abolitionists as a whole.

Female fund-raising took on new forms at this period. In America, female supporters of the rival anti-slavery factions held annual bazaars to raise funds for their societies and appealed to British women for aid.<sup>112</sup> As a result women made and collected "useful and fancy articles" which were boxed and shipped out for sale in the United

---

<sup>111</sup>See for example Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. VII, no. 76 (Apr 1852), p. 64. For reports see Annual Reports of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society for the Year 1854, and the Years Ending March 1857, 1859, and 1860, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1855, 1857, 1859, 1860).

<sup>112</sup>For the great importance of these bazaars as sources of finance see Benjamin Quarles, "Sources of Abolitionists Income", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. XXXII, pp. 63-76.

States. The activity clearly appealed to middle-class women who had the opportunity of putting their social contacts and ladylike domestic accomplishments to good use in serving the "wider sphere" of philanthropy, just as other women at this time shipped goods as far afield as India, Australia and Africa for missionary bazaars.<sup>113</sup>

Support for bazaars was divided on political lines. Female societies at Cheltenham, Kendal, Birmingham, Evesham and Bristol which were linked with the BFASS contributed in the 1840's to the bazaars at New York and Boston run by the Tappanite wing of the American anti-slavery movement.<sup>114</sup> The Massachusetts Female Emancipation Society had appealed to British women for support after breaking away from the Garrisonian Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society on the grounds that it was mixing non-resistance (an anarchistic form of pacificm) with anti-slavery objectives.<sup>115</sup> The Stoke Newington Ladies Anti-Slavery Association issued a national appeal for contributions to this bazaar which was printed in the Anti-Slavery Reporter in 1845, and the following year the magazine encouraged women to make contributions to the bazaar in Philadelphia in aid of the Liberty Party, a group opposed by Garrison because it

---

<sup>113</sup>Frank Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, p. 56.

<sup>114</sup>Letter from Rebecca Yerbury to John Tredgold, Cheltenham, 5 Mar 1841, MSS Brit. Emp. S. 18, C 10/194 and letters from Mary Caroline Braithwaite to John Tredgold, Kendal, 3 and 7 Mar 1841, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 5/72, 5/73 in RHL; BCLASS Minutes, 1 Jul 1841, 3 Mar, 5 May, 6 Sept 1842, 6 Apr 1843.

<sup>115</sup>Address of the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Boston, United States, to the Women of Great Britain (Oct 1839); Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, (London: John Snow, 1852), p. 6; Minute Book of the BCLASS, entries for 1 July 1841, 3 Mar, 5 May and 6 Sept 1842, 6 Apr 1843.

advocated political action against slavery rather than the exclusive use of moral pressure. A nation-wide network of women in twenty-two towns, mostly the secretaries of female societies linked to the BFASS, was formed to collect goods for Philadelphia.<sup>116</sup>

Female supporters of Garrison formed a rival network of collectors for the Boston Bazaar, an event organised by Maria Weston Chapman of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society which provided a vital source of funding for the Anti-Slavery Standard, the official paper of the American Anti-Slavery Society. The members of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society were some of the first British women to collect for the Boston Bazaar, and in 1841 it set about widening support for the Bazaar by issuing an Appeal to British women to form female associations throughout the country with the object of raising funds for the American Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>117</sup> As a result of this appeal, and of subsequent efforts by Garrisonian lecturers, a network of female collectors in Britain and Ireland developed, comprising both the secretaries of local societies and individual supporters. By 1846 boxes were being sent to the Boston Bazaar from five English, four Scottish and three Irish towns, and by 1854 the network of women collectors had expanded to include thirty-nine towns, mostly in

---

<sup>116</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. VI, no. 14 (July 1845), p. 128; n.s., Vol. I, no. 4 (Apr 1846), p. 58; no. 9 (Sept 1846), p. 132; British Friend, Vol. III, no. 7 (Aug 1845), pp. 107, 110-11.

<sup>117</sup>Committee of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, Appeal to the Ladies of Great Britain, in Behalf of the American Slave.

England.<sup>118</sup> Women also contributed to the Liberty Bell, an anti-slavery annual connected to the Bazaar. Harriet Martineau wrote several pieces, and her friend Elizabeth Barrett Browning sent in her two powerful anti-slavery poems, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" and "A Curse for a Nation".<sup>119</sup>

From 1846 some women also began collecting for the Rochester Anti-Slavery Bazaar, organised to support the work of Frederick Douglass, who had decided to work more independently of Garrison and set up his own anti-slavery paper, the North Star, in Rochester, New York, to represent the black community. In Ireland support for Douglass was canvassed by Maria Webb of the Belfast Female Anti-Slavery Society, who composed an Address to the ladies of Ulster urging them to support both Boston and Rochester.<sup>120</sup> English women also began collecting for Rochester following the issuing of a national appeal in 1848.<sup>121</sup> Support for Douglass was further boosted in 1849 when Julia Griffiths, who had met Douglass during his visit to Britain in 1846-7,

---

<sup>118</sup>"Thirteenth National Anti-Slavery Bazaar", Liberator, Vol. XVII, no. 5 (29 Jan, 1847), p. 17; Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 8 (Aug 1854), p. 191.

<sup>119</sup>Friends of Freedom, The Liberty Bell, (Boston, Massachusetts: Anti-Slavery Fair/National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1845-1858).

<sup>120</sup>Address of the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society to the Ladies' of Ulster, (Belfast, 23 Sept 1846). Maria Webb (1804-1873) was a orthodox Quaker who also established a Servant's Friend Society, an Industrial School and a Ladies' Association for the Relief of Irish Distress in Belfast. She wrote a textbook, Geography Simplified, to inculcate peace and anti-slavery principles in children. She moved to Dublin ca. 1848.

<sup>121</sup>For text of appeal see North Star, Vol. I, no 24 (9 June, 1848), [p. 2]; for collection see Ibid., Vol. II, no 3 (12 Jan 1849), [p. 2].

decided to travel to the United States to aid his anti-slavery campaigning. She remained in Rochester, New York, for six years, giving Douglass vital help in running his newspapers and acting as secretary to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, which co-ordinated collections for the Rochester Bazaar, most of whose goods came from Britain and Ireland.<sup>122</sup> Through her untiring efforts she succeeded in rescuing Douglass for his serious debts and placing his papers on a secure financial footing.<sup>123</sup> Douglass himself was later to acknowledge that "to no one person was I more indebted for substantial assistance".<sup>124</sup>

In 1855 Julia Griffiths returned to Britain to raise further funds for Douglass.<sup>125</sup> Between 1856 and 1859 she travelled through Scotland, England and Ireland, forming a

---

<sup>122</sup>Julia and Eliza Griffiths, "Address to the Anti-Slavery Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland", North Star, Vol. II, no. 39 (21 Sept, 1849), p. 27; the Third Annual Report of the Festival Held by the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Sewing Society, [Rochester, 1854], which acknowledges British and Irish contributions from Bridgwater, Birkenhead, Evesham, Penkeith, Birmingham, Manchester, Dublin and Belfast. In 1853 British and Irish goods valued at \$103 were sold compared to American goods valued \$59 (see North Star, Vol. VI, no. 7, (4 Feb 1853, [p. 2])).

<sup>123</sup>A considerable amount of information on Griffiths' aid to Douglass is scattered in Philip S. Foner, Frederick Douglass: a Biography, (New York: Citadel Press, 1966). See also Erwin Palmer, "A Partnership in the Abolition Movement", The University of Rochester Library Bulletin, Vol. XXVI, no. 1 (1970), pp. 1-19. Neither account contains a great deal on her activities after her return to England.

<sup>124</sup>Frederick Douglass, The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, (Hartford, Conn.: Park Publishing Co., 1882), p. 268.

<sup>125</sup>She never returned to the United States, marrying the Rev. H. D. Crofts of Halifax in 1859. After he died ca. 1876 she supported herself by running a school for girls. She remained in correspondence with Douglass into the 1880's. (see Foner, Frederick Douglass, pp. 338, 342-3, 352).

network of fifteen "Christian" female societies in rivalry to the network of "infidel" Garrisonian groups, to collect for the Rochester rather than the Boston Bazaar.<sup>126</sup> Two of these groups, at Halifax and Dublin, also successfully organised their own bazaars which raised £300 and £121 respectively for Douglass's work.<sup>127</sup> These female societies constituted the largest group of new anti-slavery societies since the formation of local auxiliaries by BFASS agents in the early 1840's.<sup>128</sup>

Garrisonians were concerned that female support for the Rochester Bazaar would deplete collections for the Boston Bazaar.<sup>129</sup> These fears proved justified in Edinburgh, where evangelical members of the Ladies' Emancipation Society left the group to form the Edinburgh Ladies' New Association.<sup>130</sup> Most of the new societies

---

<sup>126</sup>These societies are listed in Appendix I. For information on their formation see Anti-Slavery Reporter 3rd Series, Vol. IV, no. 11 (Nov 1856) p. 251; no. 12 (Dec 1856), p. 270; Vol. V, no. 1 (Jan 1857), pp. 23, 24; no. 3 (Mar 1857), pp. 71, 72; no. 4 (Apr 1857), pp. 76-78; no. 5 (May 1857), pp. 116, 119; no. 6 (Jun 1857), p. 143; Formation of the Irish Metropolitan Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, with a Report for the Irish Contributors of 1856 to the Rochester Anti-Slavery Bazaar, (Dublin: R. Chapman, 1857). Griffiths was aided in forming this Irish society by Maria Webb, Quaker cousin of leading Irish Garrisonian R.D. Webb but herself a vehement opponent of Garrison on the grounds of his religious infidelity.

<sup>127</sup>Douglass Monthly, Vol. I, (1859), pp. 71-74, 173; Vol. II, (1860), p. 248.

<sup>128</sup>Griffiths was attacked by Garrisonians in the Anti-Slavery Advocate (Vol. II, no. 2 (Feb 1857), p. 11; no. 7 (July 1857), pp. 50-51), but defended by the BFASS in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, (3rd Series, Vol. V, no. 4 (Apr 1857), pp. 80, 81).

<sup>129</sup>Letter from Eliza Wigham to the Rev. Samuel May Jr., Edinburgh, 2 Oct, 1857, MS B.1.6. v. 6, no. 59, in BPL.

<sup>130</sup>Letters from Eliza Wigham to the Rev. Samuel May Jr., Edinburgh, 4 Apr 1856 and 2 Oct 1857, MS B.1.6. v. 6, nos. 28 and 59, in BPL; letter from Eliza Wigham to Louis

Griffiths formed, however, were in towns without existing active groups, and her activities thus tended to expand rather than divide female support for American abolition.

Women also gave financial support to groups in America and Canada who were aiding fugitives. In Scotland support for fugitives through donations to the New York Vigilance Committee was co-ordinated by the Glasgow Female New Association for the Abolition of Slavery, formed by evangelical women who had left the "infidel" Garrisonian Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1850.<sup>138</sup> The new group launched a periodical entitled the Friend of the Fugitive and Anti-Slavery Record and organised an annual bazaar to raise funds for the New York Vigilance Committee and issued a public appeal urging Scottish women to support this rather than donate to the Boston Bazaar.<sup>139</sup> It succeeded in gaining support from women in Edinburgh and Perth and in 1853 was able to send £400 to New York. In Ireland the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and the Clogher Ladies' Association supported fugitive aid through donations to the

---

Chamerovzow, Edinburgh, 3 Apr 1856, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 37/75 in RHL; Annual Reports of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society for the Year 1854 and the Year Ending March, 1857, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1854, 1857); Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association for the Years 1856 and 1857, (Edinburgh: R. and R. Clarke, 1858).

<sup>138</sup>See "extract of a letter from Mr Wm Smeal to W. Wells Brown Dec 12th 1850", MS A.9.2. v. 25, no. 50, in BPL. For more on the Glasgow splits see Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, p. 156.

<sup>139</sup>"Scottish Anti-Slavery Bazaar", Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. VII, no. 84 (Dec 1852), p. 191; "The Glasgow Female New Association for the Abolition of Slavery", on back page of Letter from Mrs H. B. Stowe, to the Ladies' New Anti-Slavery Society of Glasgow, (Glasgow: John Mackay, 1854).

New York and Philadelphia Vigilance Committees.<sup>140</sup> In addition, the ladies' associations at Clogher, Bury St Edmunds and Edinburgh responded to appeals for donations for the relief and education of fugitives in Canada.<sup>141</sup>

Women also took the lead in providing aid to Afro-American fugitive slaves in Britain. Eliza Wigham of Edinburgh helped to raise funds for William and Ellen Craft. They were given board and tuition at an agricultural school at Ockham in Surrey partly owned by anti-slavery supporter Lady Byron.<sup>142</sup> Ellen Richardson, Anna Richardson's sister-in-law, successfully raised funds for the ransom of leading Afro-American abolitionists Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, so that they could return to America without fear of re-enslavement.<sup>143</sup> The Glasgow Female New Association raised funds to ransom from slavery the Weims family, whose daughter had fled to Britain.<sup>144</sup> It should be noted, however, that some women opposed the

---

<sup>140</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 5 (May 1853), p. 116; Vol. IV, no. 5, (May 1856), p. 129; Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society for the Year 1854, p. 14.

<sup>141</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 5 (May 1853), p. 116; Vol. IV, no. 5 (May 1856), p. 129; MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 1/12, C 34/137 in RHL.

<sup>142</sup>See "The history of William and Ellen Craft ...", (Aug 1852) [printed sheet soliciting contributions].

<sup>143</sup>Douglass, The Life and Times, p. 256; "To the Friends of the Slave", (Newcastle, 14 Feb 1854) [printed circular] and letter from Henry Richardson to Louis Chamerovzow, 23 Feb 1854, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 35/109, 110 in RHL. Ellen Richardson (1808-1896) was a Quaker whose predominant concern was working-class education. She was the sister-in-law of Anna Richardson.

<sup>144</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. VII, no. 84 (Dec 1852), p. 191.

ransoming of individuals on the grounds that it constituted an acknowledgement of their status as slaves.<sup>145</sup>

In 1853 women in London formed a new society specifically to aid fugitives slaves in Britain. This Ladies' Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery was founded at a meeting on 4th November 1853 in the BFASS offices. It seems likely that the group was promoted by the BFASS as a means of avoiding use of its own funds for purposes not strictly anti-slavery. The joint secretaries of this society were Mrs J. Horman-Fisher, Sarah Cogan of Walthamstow Free Labour Produce Association and Sarah Ann Alexander of Stoke Newington Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association.<sup>146</sup> By April 1855 subscriptions and donations of £107 had been collected from over two hundred individuals, mainly women, and from ladies' anti-slavery associations at Chelmsford, Walthamstow, Birmingham, Halstead, Peckham and Sunderland. Before its demise in January 1856 the Society spent a further £60 on aid to fugitives.<sup>147</sup>

The Society remained a small scale affair with limited objectives, soliciting money privately rather than courting publicity. Nevertheless it gave useful practical aid to a small group of friendless refugees. Its report of 1855

---

<sup>145</sup>See resolution of Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society quoted in Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. I, no. 3 (Dec 1852), p. 21.

<sup>146</sup>Sarah Cogan was the daughter of Unitarian minister and social reformer the Rev. Eliezer Cogan of Higham Hall, Walthamstow. Mrs Horman-Fisher's husband acted as the treasurer of the Society, and was also a member of a committee formed in 1853 to co-ordinate aid to fugitives in Canada (see Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 7 (July 1853), p. 155).

<sup>147</sup>Minutes of the Ladies' Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery, MSS Brit. Emp. S 22, G 85 in RHL.

gave details of six men and two women, (five fugitive slaves and three free black people), who were aided in finding work or education in Britain or helped with passage money for their resettlement in Canada or Africa.<sup>148</sup>

Another female fund-raising initiative was taken by Birmingham women abolitionists in 1852, when they co-ordinated collection of a national tribute to Harriet Beecher Stowe, from the readers of her best-selling anti-slavery novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. A total of £1,800 was eventually contributed to this so-called "Penny Offering", mainly in the form of small donations from working and middle class people.<sup>149</sup> The total compared favourably with the total annual income of the BFASS at this period of some £1,100.<sup>150</sup> In addition a separate testimony totalling £1,000 was organised by societies independent of the BFASS in Scotland, and other collections were made by independent societies in Dublin and Leeds.<sup>151</sup> As British women wished, Stowe eventually spent the money from the testimonial on promoting both abolition and black Christian education.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup>Ladies Society to aid Fugitives from Slavery. Report, (London: printed for private circulation, 1855).

<sup>149</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. VII, no 84 (Dec 1, 1852), p. 183; 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 5 (May 1854), p. 101.

<sup>150</sup>See accounts in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Annual Reports of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1853 and 1854).

<sup>151</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 5 (May 1853), p. 100; no. 10 (Oct 1853), p. 200.

<sup>152</sup>Donations were made to Mrs Miner's school for free "coloured" girls in Washington, anti-slavery periodicals, the free-labour movement and fugitive aid, and missionaries were supplied in bulk with free copies of Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin. See Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. II, no. 1 (Jan 1854), p. 7.

Overall, women were responsible for most of the financial help which was sent from Britain and Ireland to the American anti-slavery movement, through making and collecting goods for American anti-slavery bazaars, through ransoming fugitive slaves who had fled to Britain and giving them financial aid, and through collecting the Penny Offering.

#### 4. The Free-Produce Movement

The free-produce movement was another campaign which came increasingly under female control in the 1840's and 1850's. The movement was initially promoted by both men and women, with women, as in 1825-33, concentrating on the consumer side of the campaign, men on petitioning Parliament against the abolition of protective duties for free-grown sugar from the British West Indies. In 1846, however, the failure of the attempt to stop Parliament extending free trade principles to slave-grown produce, led the BFASS to focus on the consumer side of its campaign.<sup>153</sup> The Society's 1846 Address "On the Disuse of Slave Produce" was directed especially at "the female heads of families".<sup>154</sup>

The boycott campaign was concerned not only with sugar but increasingly also with the import of slave-grown cotton

---

<sup>153</sup>For a discussion of the campaign over sugar duties, and the dissension it caused between the BFASS leadership and provincial abolitionists who were ardent free traders, see Duncan Rice, "'Humanity Sold for Sugar!' The British Abolitionist Response to Free Trade in Slave-Grown Sugar", The Historical Journal, Vol, XIII, no. 3 (1970), pp. 402-418.

<sup>154</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. II, no. 13 (Jan 1847), p. 1.

from America.<sup>155</sup> The Birmingham Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, the most active BFASS auxiliary, organised a memorial to the Queen, urging her to set an example by using only free-labour produce and to give encouragement to the cultivation of free-grown cotton in British India.<sup>156</sup> The memorial, read out at the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends in London and signed by a total of 59,686 women from all parts of the country, was presented to the Queen in March 1850.<sup>157</sup> While the Queen did not respond to the memorial's requests it was viewed by both the BFASS and women themselves as a success in terms of the information diffused and the resulting revival of "almost dormant" interest in the anti-slavery cause among the public.<sup>158</sup>

After having made some initial attempts to promote the free-produce movement, by the 1850's the BFASS was content to leave it to develop independently under the supervision of the Quaker activist Anna Richardson.<sup>159</sup> Richardson, a

---

<sup>155</sup>For a general account of the promotion of free in preference to slave grown cotton see Louis Billington, "British Humanitarians and American Cotton, 1840-1860", Journal of American Studies, Vol. XI (1977), pp. 313-334.

<sup>156</sup>The circular on the memorial was printed in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. IV, no. 41 (May 1849), p. 73. The text of the memorial was printed in the Tenth Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1849), pp. 137-8.

<sup>157</sup>British Friend, Vol. VII, (June 1849), pp. 147-8; Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. V, no. 52 (1 Apr 1850).

<sup>158</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. LV, no. 53 (May 1850), p. 73; no 54 (June 1850), pp. 85-86; Louisa Bigg to the secretary of the BFASS, April 1849, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 13/90 in RHL.

<sup>159</sup>MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 13/90. Anna Richardson, nee Atkins, (1806-1892) was a member of the BFASS and was active in many reform causes, including the peace movement (see J.W. Steele, Historical Sketch of the Society of Friends in Newcastle and Gateshead, (1899), pp. 189-92; Thomas and Emma R. Pumphrey, Henry and Anna Richardson. In Memoriam, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Dec 1892).

member of the BFASS, had founded the independent Newcastle Ladies' Free Produce Association in 1846 and had issued a circular encouraging women to form similar local groups.<sup>160</sup> From 1847 she also issued "Monthly Illustrations of American Slavery", in which she provided up-to-date information to nearly a hundred newspaper editors.<sup>161</sup>

In 1850 Anna Richardson persuaded an American ex-slave, the Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, to come to Britain to promote women's involvement in the movement.<sup>162</sup> Garnet addressed women in Gateshead, Newcastle, Carlisle, Sunderland and the London area.<sup>163</sup> As a result of his efforts backed by the Newcastle women around twenty-six Free Labour Associations had been formed by January 1851. This rapid progress was recorded in The Slave, a periodical launched by Anna Richardson and her husband Henry in 1851 to promote the movement.<sup>164</sup> In 1853, when a woman wrote to the BFASS secretary Louis Chamerovzow for information on the movement, he forwarded her letter to Anna Richardson explaining that it was a "ladies' question" and that she

---

<sup>160</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. IV, no. 41 (May 1847), p. 76.

<sup>161</sup>British Friend, Vol. VI, no. IV (Sept 1848), pp. 103-5.

<sup>162</sup>Letter from A.H. Richardson to John Scoble, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 4 Aug 1851, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C21/27 in RHL. For more on Garnet and the free produce movement see R.J.M. Blackett, Building an Antislavery Wall, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1983), chap. iii.

<sup>163</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. LV, no. 58, (Oct 1850), p. 160; no. 59, (Nov 1850), p. 175; Vol. VI, no. 61, (Jan 1851).

<sup>164</sup>The Slave, no 1 (Jan 1851), pp. 1, 3. For list of free produce associations see Appendix I.

had "this matter under her more immediate direction".<sup>165</sup> He wrote to Richardson herself that he considered her "one of the principal as well as most energetic co-operators in this movement, to which I desire to lend a strong helping hand", and asked her to supply him with a list of Free Labour Associations and sources freeo-grown produce.<sup>166</sup>

The major practical problem facing the free labour movement was obtaining sufficient quantities of guaranteed free-labour cotton goods of good quality and reasonable price.<sup>167</sup> A free labour depot was eventually opened in London in May 1853 as a non-profit making enterprise by a woman, Mrs Bessie Inglis.<sup>168</sup> In addition Anna Richardson received information from women on plans in both Dublin and Glasgow to set up free labour warehouses.<sup>167</sup>

The London Depot supplied not only such regional depots but also Ladies' Olive Leaf Circles, a network of peace groups linked to the League of Universal Brotherhood and composed primarily of young middle-class Quaker women.<sup>168</sup> The League had been founded by an American, Elihu Burritt, who came to live in Britain around 1846, and

---

<sup>165</sup>Louis Chamerovzow to Miss Moore, London, 13 Jan 1853, MSS Brit. Emp. S.18, C.37/128 in RHL.

<sup>166</sup>Letter from Louis Chamerovzow to Anna Richardson, London, 13 Jan 1853, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18 C 37/122 in RHL. For such a list of suppliers see The Ladies' Free-Grown Cotton Movement [Circular] [n.p., n.d.].

<sup>167</sup>Letter from Sarah Evans to John Scoble, Kelvedon, 3 Feb 1850, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 157/45 in RHL. See also MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 114/68, C 34/137 in RHL.

<sup>168</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 8 (Aug 1853), p. 177.

<sup>167</sup>Letter from A.H. Richardson to Louis Chamerovzow, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 35/100 in RHL.

<sup>168</sup>See The Slave, no. 31 (July 1853), p. 25.

was a keen proponent of the free-labour movement as an important element of work "affecting the union and brotherhood of man". Burritt's magazine, The Bond of Brotherhood, carried frequent articles on the free labour issue and Burritt kept in close contact with Anna Richardson, who like Bessie Inglis was involved in her local Olive Leaf Circle.<sup>169</sup> In 1855, when Anna was forced to cut down on her free-produce work owing to the illness of her husband, Burritt took over the editing of The Slave.<sup>170</sup> The free-produce movement thus retained its independence from the BFASS, and its close links with ladies' Olive Leaf Circles.

The free-produce movement continued to be promoted by Anna Richardson and by other Quaker women until 1860 but despite their efforts it had little effect.<sup>171</sup> As Louis Billington has pointed out, the export of American cotton to Britain more than tripled between 1840 and 1860, and the United States continued to provide at least 80 percent of Britain's cotton supply.<sup>172</sup> The movement was nevertheless significant as an example of female organisation and initiative, as a moral protest against slavery, and as an

---

<sup>169</sup>Letter from A.H. Richardson to L. Chamerovzow, Newcastle, 4 Nov 1854, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 35/101, RHL. Bessie Inglis was treasurer of the Central Olive Leaf Circle, formed in London in 1851.

<sup>170</sup>See BFASS Minute Books, Vol. 3, entries for 6 Oct and 29, 30 Dec 1854, MSS Brit. Emp. S.20, E.2/8 in RHL.

<sup>171</sup>For annual free labour meetings by Quaker women see British Friend, Vol. XVI (Aug 1858), p. 211; for Anna Richardson's continued promotion of the cause see Anna H. Richardson, Anti-Slavery Memoranda, (Newcastle: printed for private circulation, 1860).

<sup>172</sup>Billington, "British Humanitarians", pp. 313-334. For an account of the central place that cotton occupied in the Atlantic economy at this period see Thistlethwaite, America and the Atlantic Community, chap. i.

effective means of keeping concern about American slavery alive among British women.

5. Moral Pressure: Church Fellowship, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and the Stafford House Address

The BFASS, dominated by Quaker pacifists, and the Garrisonians, who supported "non-resistance", were agreed that attempts to abolish slavery should be made through the use of moral pressure rather than physical force. It was a pressure which women, viewed in the dominant evangelical ideology as the guardians of morality, were well placed to exert.

In some cases women joined in a campaign of moral pressure initiated by men. In Scotland the controversial Garrisonian "Send Back the Money" campaign against the Free Church of Scotland's acceptance of funds from slaveholders in the Southern States of the U.S. was launched in 1846 by the Glasgow Emancipation Society and then promoted by the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society.<sup>173</sup> The Edinburgh group appealed especially to women in its Remonstrances to the Free Church, and some of its committee members were involved in setting up a Free Church Anti-Slavery Society, which had a male managing committee and a subsidiary female committee.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup>For details of the campaign see Bingham, "The Glasgow Emancipation Society", chap. v and Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, chap. v.

<sup>174</sup>The texts of the Remonstrances are given in the Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, for the Last Year, Passed at Their Annual Meeting, Held May 27th, 1846, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, [1846]), and the Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation society, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1847). See also Laws Adopted at the Formation of the Free Church Anti-Slavery Society, September 1846.

In other cases it was women who initiated the pressure. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, which made it legal for Southern slaveholders to recapture runaway slaves in the Northern states, women initiated a campaign of moral pressure on American churches to condemn the Act. Early in 1851 the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society published a compilation of "Clerical Teachings on Slavery" and an address which urged ministers attending the annual conferences of their denominations in London not to offer access to their pulpits, or fellowship, to any American clergy who refused to condemn the Fugitive Slave Act. These documents were distributed to nearly two hundred and fifty nonconformist ministers and religious associations in England and Scotland, as well as to fifty-three anti-slavery associations and three hundred other individuals. The women's initiatives preceded action taken by the BFASS on the issue, and their parent society's decision to act was partly in response to the women's prompting.<sup>175</sup> As a result of both efforts a number of religious associations as well as ladies' anti-slavery societies at Birmingham, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Chelmsford, Liverpool and Kendal agreed to take up the issue.

British women also exerted moral pressure on American women to use their influence to bring about the end of

---

<sup>175</sup>Special Report of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 16-20; minute book of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, entries for 27 Mar and 15 May 1851; letter from Mary Estlin to Miss Weston, Bristol, 8 May 1851), p. 70, MS A.9.2. v. 25, no. 87, BPL. Resolutions concerning fellowship with American clergy passed by ladies' anti-slavery associations at Bristol, Manchester and Newcastle were printed in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s. Vol. VI, no. LXV (May 1, 1851), p. 70.

slavery. In 1847 three independent Scottish women's societies, the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society and the Kirkaldy Female Anti-Slavery Society, collected large numbers of signatures (45,000 in Glasgow and 10,337 in Edinburgh) to addresses from Scottish women to free American women calling on them to oppose slavery, which were exhibited at the Boston Bazaar.<sup>176</sup> In addition, the Glasgow Female New Association for the Abolition of Slavery in 1850 issued an address "to their Christian Sisterhood in the United States of America", urging women to arouse public opposition against the Fugitive Slave Law.<sup>177</sup>

Women were also responsible for the single most impressive attempt to exert moral pressure on Americans to abolish slavery: the Stafford House (or Shaftesbury) Address from British women to their American sisters.

The background to this Stafford House Address was the dramatic upsurge in public interest in the cause following publication in Britain in 1852 of Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel Uncle Tom's Cabin. The novel led to a widening of popular interest in abolition which abolitionists of all persuasions, and women in particular, were eager to exploit.

Uncle Tom's Cabin became a best-seller in Britain, and

---

<sup>176</sup>Liberator, Vol. XVII, no. 1 (1 Jan 1847), pp. 1, 3; Sixth Report of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society, (Glasgow: David Russell, 1851), p. 4; British Friend, Vol. IV, no 11 (Nov 1846), pp. 294-5.

<sup>177</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, n.s., Vol. VI, no. 65 (May 1851), p. 181.

within a year over one million copies had been sold.<sup>178</sup> The book had a strong appeal to women. Members of the Birmingham Ladies' Negroes Friend Society described it as of "magic power", and as presenting "a picture of slavery, free from exaggeration". The secretary of the Manchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society reported an increase in female anti-slavery activism in the town stimulated by the impact of the novel.<sup>179</sup> Interest in the book was still high in 1856, when Mary E. Webb, a black abolitionist, visited Britain to give a series of public readings from a dramatic version of the work.<sup>180</sup>

The source of the novel's appeal to women lay, as Jane Tompkins has argued, in its status as the prime example of the popular domestic and sentimental novel of the nineteenth century, written "by, for, and about women". Tompkins describes it as "the story of salvation through motherly love" which "represents a monumental effort to reorganise culture from the woman's point of view".<sup>181</sup> Tompkins' analysis suffers from her failure to recognise either the race and class specificity of this "woman's point of view".<sup>182</sup> Nevertheless, her analysis makes

---

<sup>178</sup>See F. F. Klingberg, "Harriet Beecher Stowe and Social Reform in England", American Historical Review, Vol. XLIII (1937-8), pp. 542-52.

<sup>179</sup>Rebecca Whitelegge to Mary Estlin, 23 Aug [1853], MS A.9.2. v. 27, no. 86, in BPL.

<sup>180</sup>The Slave, n.s., no. 22 (Oct 1856), p. 87.

<sup>181</sup>Jane P. Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History", Elaine Showalter, ed., The New Feminist Criticism, (London: Virago, 1985), pp. 81-104 (quotations from pp. 83, 90).

<sup>182</sup>For an analysis of the book's "progressive appeal" but "reactionary content" see Angela Davis, Women, Race and Class, (London: Women's Press, 1982), pp. 27-31. While Jacqueline Kaye accepts that Stowe turned racist

comprehensible the novel's impact on British women schooled in evangelical ideology and the cult of feminine sensitivity.

As Tompkins points out, it would seem that Stowe's aim was to achieve a change of heart in the reader rather than to inspire specific actions against slavery.<sup>183</sup> Female abolitionists, however, were keen to convert the generalised anti-slavery sentiment evoked by the novel into practical action. Women organised the "Penny Offering" from readers of the book (see section 3 of this chapter). The members of the Glasgow Female New Association for the Abolition of Slavery invited Stowe to visit Britain, and she travelled through Britain, meeting women abolitionists in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham and London.<sup>184</sup> She was honoured by being presented with formal addresses from a number of women's groups.<sup>185</sup> That Stowe appealed to women as a symbol of white women's power to bring freedom and Christianity to the grateful black man is illustrated by

---

stereotypes to anti-slavery use, she argues (on similar lines to Tompkins) that the portrayal of Uncle Tom is not a negative one of passive collaborator with the slave system but a positive one of Christ-like figure who dies to save others (Jacqueline Kaye, "Literary Images of Slavery and Resistance: The Cases of Uncle Tom's Cabin and Cecilia Valdes", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 5, no. 2 (Sept 1984), pp. 105-117). David W. Levy ("Racial Stereotypes in Antislavery Fiction", Phylon, Vol. XXXI, no. 3 (Fall 1970), pp. 265-279) sees the novel as a typical example of the use of black stereotypes common to both anti- and pro-slavery fiction.

<sup>183</sup>Tompkins, "Sentimental Power", p. 90.

<sup>184</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 6 (June 1853), pp 123-5, 139-43. For a general account of her visit see Forrest Wilson, Crusader in Crinoline: the Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, (London: Hutchinson, 1942), pp. 207-232.

<sup>185</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no 6 (June 1853), p. 123; no 7 (July 1853), pp. 148-50; no. 10 (Oct 1853), pp. 220, 225.

the silver inkstand which the ladies of Surrey Chapel presented to her. This they described thus:

The female figure is intended to represent yourself presenting the precious Book of God to a fettered slave. In a devotional attitude, he blesses his Heavenly Father for the gift, and asks that he may use the freedom which he anticipates aright ....<sup>186</sup>

This may be compared with the engraving of a white woman, representing Liberty, reading from the Bible to a group of black children which appeared on the cover of an almanack produced in London to celebrate Stowe's novel (see Appendix V, fig. 4).<sup>187</sup>

But, as stated above, the major response to Stowe's novel was the "Affectionate and Christian Address of Many <sup>u</sup>Thosands of the Women of England to Their Sisters, the Women of the United States of America". This so-called Stafford House Address marked a new departure in female anti-slavery campaigning since it originated not with the middle-class nonconformist women who had previously dominated female anti-slavery organisation but with a group of aristocratic Anglican ladies and members of the fashionable London literary set, who met at Stafford House, London home of the Duchess of Sutherland.<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 7 (July 1853), p. 150.

<sup>187</sup>The Uncle Tom's Cabin Almanack or Abolitionist Memento. 1853, (London: John Cassell, [1853]).

<sup>193</sup>Harriet Elizabeth Georgina Leveson-Gower, Duchess of Sutherland, (1806-1868) was Mistress of the Robes to Queen Victoria and a leading fashionable hostess. She had attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840. For a full list of the 34 women who attended the launch and the 30 additional women who signified their support see the Times, 29 Nov 29, 1852, p. 8.

The Address, launched on 26th November 1852, originated in a proposal by the Earl of Shaftesbury.<sup>194</sup> Shaftesbury was himself responsible for its wording, which controversially it did not call for immediate emancipation, the principle long since adopted by all committed anti-slavery campaigners in both the United States and Britain. Instead it called on women to use their influence to bring about the amelioration and eventual removal of slavery, stating:

We do not shut our eyes to the difficulties, nay, the dangers that might beset the immediate abolition of that long-established system; we see and admit the necessity of preparation for so great an event ....<sup>195</sup>

This wording may be attributed partly to Shaftesbury's ignorance of the policy of the established anti-slavery movement, partly to aristocratic fear of sudden change in the established order of things, and partly to the failure of Uncle Tom's Cabin to make clear Stowe's own position on immediatism. The committee of the BFASS, who had not been consulted on the wording, wrote to Shaftesbury "on behalf of many ladies of our acquaintance, deeply interested in the anti-slavery cause" in an attempt to get the wording changed. They enclosed a copy of an amended Address, composed by their treasurer G. W. Alexander, and urged him to circulate this instead. The Earl of Shaftesbury, however, refused, replying that the BFASS should collect

---

<sup>194</sup>Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885) was a prominent philanthropist, a Factory Act campaigner and a leader of the Ragged School Union.

<sup>195</sup>For the full text of the original Address see the Times, 29 Nov 1852, p. 8.

signatures to their Address, the Stafford House set to their's. Both could then be sent together.<sup>196</sup>

This was what in fact happened. On December 20th, women activists associated with the BFASS decided to adopt the amended address. This version declared the supposed dangers of immediate emancipation to be morally irrelevant:

We are not insensitive to the difficulties that the abolition of slavery in your country may encounter, from supposed pecuniary interests and long-cherished prejudices; but, whatever difficulties may exist, we believe it to be a Christian duty to terminate, without delay, a system which deprives man of his rightful freedom  
....<sup>197</sup>

A committee of women associated with the BFASS was set up in London to obtain signatures to the amended Address. Its secretaries were Sarah Ann Alexander, Sarah Cogan and Jane Horman Fisher, the same three women who acted as secretaries for the Ladies' Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery. The women immediately sent out a circular on the Address to ladies' anti-slavery societies, Olive Leaf Circles and local ministers. Local anti-slavery activists were much keener on the amended wording than on the original Address, but complained of problems in collecting signatures as many had already signed the original Address. This had been very swiftly and efficiently circulated to provincial churches and chapels. To confuse matters further, an earlier amended version of the Address, which simply deleted the passage on the dangers of immediate

---

<sup>196</sup>The text of the BFASS and Shaftesbury letters was printed in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd series, Vol. I, no. 2, (Feb 1853), p. 30.

<sup>197</sup>See Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 1, (Jan 1853), pp. 10-11.

emancipation, had been circulated by Ann Cropper of Liverpool.<sup>198</sup>

Despite the confusion, women were very successful in obtaining signatures to one or other of the Addresses, organising door-to-door canvasses in some towns.<sup>199</sup> People ascribed their success to the popularity of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which had "found its way into almost every family of all grades".<sup>200</sup> By March 1853 the original Address had amassed 562,848 signatures, the amended one around 200,000. The Addresses were presented to Mrs Stowe for transmission to American women.<sup>201</sup>

This total was similar to the number of signatories to the ladies' anti-apprenticeship address to the Queen of 1837-8. The Address was the largest single British anti-slavery effort of the 1840-1860 period. As such, it gained a great deal of public attention in both Britain and the United States of America. Indeed the attention accorded to this female anti-slavery initiative was unrivalled by any male anti-slavery activity of the period.

In the United States the address provoked predictably polarised reactions. It was enthusiastically received by abolitionists such as the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society of

---

<sup>198</sup>For file of letters relating to the amended Address linked to the BFASS see MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 114 in RHL. Information on Ann Cropper's amended Address is contained in C114/30 and C114/133.

<sup>199</sup>MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 114/78, C114/148 in RHL.

<sup>200</sup>Letter from the Rev. George Jones of Wolston near Coventy to the Ladies Committee for the Amended Address, 17 Jan 1853, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 114/96 in RHL. A similar point was made by Ann Priestman of Malton in Yorkshire (MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 114/116 in RHL).

<sup>201</sup>The Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 4, (Apr 1853), p. 83; no. 6, (June 1853), pp. 123-5, 127, 139-43.

Oberlin in Ohio, who in a reply to the Address expressed the desire to establish stronger links with British women.<sup>202</sup> The Address was, however, subject to virulent attack in the Southern and pro-slavery press, including the Courier, the New York Enquirer and the Richmond Enquirer. The Duchess of Sutherland's hope that an address from women would be seen as free from "political motives" and as a reflection of "domestic" rather than "national" feeling proved ill-founded.<sup>203</sup> The most widely circulated condemnation, by Juliet Gardiner (1820-1889), wife of ex-president and Virginia slave plantation owner John Tyler, contrasted Southern women, portrayed as ideal wives and mothers who presided benevolently over the domestic economy of slave plantations, with English women who went outside their proper sphere by interfering with the internal concerns of another country.<sup>204</sup> It was, as Evelyn Pugh has pointed out, "not only a defense of slavery, but a classic justification of the role and life-style of the idealized Southern woman".<sup>205</sup>

Criticisms of the Address were also voiced in Britain, reflecting and exploiting working-class antagonism to the aristocracy. A pamphlet in the form of a letter from an "Englishwoman" concerning slavery at home, argued that it

---

<sup>202</sup>The Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, vol. I, no. 9, (Sept 1853), pp. 198-200.

<sup>203</sup>See text of the Duchess of Sutherland's statement at the launching of the Address, Times, 29 Nov 1852, p. 8.

<sup>204</sup>Tyler's letter, which had originally appeared in the Richmond Enquirer of 28 Jan 1853, was reprinted in full in the London Times of 15 Feb 1853.

<sup>205</sup>Evelyn L. Pugh, "Women and Slavery: Julia Gardiner Tyler and the Duchess of Sutherland", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XXCVIII, no. 2, (1980), pp. 187-202.

was hypocritical for fashionable ladies to lecture American women while poor needlewomen toiled to supply them with fripperies.<sup>206</sup> Reynolds Newspaper, a popular radical paper which delighted in attacking the aristocracy, carried an editorial describing "The Titled Conclave at Stafford House" as "the vampire-brood which preys upon the vitals of our industrial population". It asserted that independent working class women had for the most part "wisely abstained" from signing the Address, and argued that working women had been too much oppressed by these ladies "for any union or coalition to take place".<sup>207</sup> Another male attacker adopted a tone of masculine superiority towards the "pretty little parliament" at Stafford House, asserting that popular clamour for emancipation was useless unless led by government and nation: only then could "manly, practical results" be secured.<sup>208</sup>

Such attacks were replied to both in editorials in the Anti-Slavery Reporter and by female abolitionists like Sarah Cogan, co-secretary of the committee which organised the amended Address, and Mrs Henry Grey, wife of an Edinburgh minister and one of the many women who had signed the Address. They argued that the attacks were in fact

---

<sup>206</sup>"Englishwoman", A Letter to Those Ladies Who Met at Stafford House in Particular, and to the Women of England in General, on Slavery at Home, (London: James Ridgeway 1853). The seamstress, portrayed as the pathetic slave of fashionable ladies, was a focus of concern among socially conscious artists and poets at this period (see Helene E. Roberts, "Marriage, Redundancy and Sin", Martha Vicinus, ed., Suffer and Be Still, (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 58-62).

<sup>207</sup>Reynolds Newspaper, March 27, 1853, p. 8.

<sup>208</sup>A Briton, The Fashionable Philanthropy of the Day. Some Plain Speaking About American Slavery. A Letter Addressed to the Stoweites of England and Scotland, (London: Hope, 1853).

written by pro-slavery male editors rather than women, that the position of poor women in Britain was better than that of slaves, and that women abolitionists were in any case involved in philanthropic work among their own poor as well as in anti-slavery campaigning. Above all, they argued that it was women's duty to exercise a moral influence against slavery.<sup>209</sup>

The Address represented the climax of this attempt to exert moral pressure on Americans to abolish the slave system. It aroused more British people than ever before in a protest against American slavery, though it also highlighted the problems of attempting to forward the end of slavery in a foreign country.

### Conclusion

As the preceding survey has made clear, women's anti-slavery societies, numerically equal with men's groups in the 1840-1846 period, became numerically predominant in the late 1840's and 1850's, the first time this had happened in the history of the British anti-slavery movement. Women's groups also tended to be more active than men's societies, and individual women played a central part in the controversies within the movement at this period.

---

<sup>209</sup>The Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. I, no. 2, (Feb 1853), pp. 37-38; "Bread Upon the Waters", or, Letters, Illustrative, Moral, and Practical, Addresses Generally to the Women of Great Britain and Ireland, on the Subject of the "Stafford House Memorial", Recently Transmitted to the Women of the United States, Concluding with an Appeal to Gentlemen Connected with the Cotton Question, (London: W. and F. G. Cash, etc, 1853), especially pp. 26-40; an Englishwoman [Mrs Henry Grey], Remarks Occasioned by Strictures in The Courier and New York Enquirer of December 1852, Upon the Stafford House Address. In a Letter to a Friend in the United States, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co. etc, 1853).

Women were the leading providers of financial aid to American abolitionists, primarily through their supply of goods to American anti-slavery bazaars. They organised the largest British moral protest against American slavery, they ran special associations which promoted the boycott of slave-grown cotton, and they organised practical help for fugitive slaves.

British and Irish women's actions did not persuade Southerners to renounce the slave system, and were attacked in the pro-slavery press as foreign interference. Northern abolitionists, however, placed great store on the women's financial and moral support. Contacts between British, Irish and American women involved in the Garrisonian wing of the movement were sufficiently extensive for us to speak a transatlantic sisterhood of radical reformers.

The introduction of the "women's rights" question into British abolitionism at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840 represented a challenge to the hegemony of evangelical ideology in the movement and led to division among the middle class nonconformists who dominated anti-slavery organisations. Most women were unwilling to break with an ideology which had formed the basis for their involvement in the movement, and followed the BFASS in siding with the "Tappanite" wing of the American movement. An independent minority of radical Quaker and Unitarian women were, however, inspired by Garrisonian questioning of convention and established authority. Yet even these radicals were reluctant to push the women's rights issue within Britain itself and no attempts were made to promote a more equal role for women in anti-slavery organisations. By the time this was being done in the 1850's, evangelicals

themselves were increasingly accepting a more public role for women in organised philanthropy while maintaining opposition to the principle of women's rights.

Middle-class women continued to dominate female anti-slavery organisations at this period, though working women did contribute to bazaars and to the "Penny Offering". At the opposite end of the social scale, a major initiative was taken by aristocratic Anglican women. The cautious wording of this Stafford House Address contrasted with the forthright denunciations of slavery by Sarah Parker Remond and Ellen Craft, women who formed part of a significant Afro-American contribution to the British anti-slavery movement at this period.

## CHAPTER VI

### WOMEN AND THE FINAL STAGES OF THE POPULAR ANTI-SLAVERY CAMPAIGN, 1861-1868

The 1860s were marked by two dramatic events abroad to which anti-slavery campaigners in Britain responded: the American Civil War of 1861-5, and the Jamaica Insurrection and Governor Eyre controversy of 1865-8. It was also the period of the freedmen's aid movement, the final large-scale effort by anti-slavery campaigners.

Despite these major developments, a number of accounts of the British anti-slavery movement terminate in 1860. Howard Temperley's overview of the various different concerns of campaigners at this period is quite brief and makes only one passing mention to women's activities.<sup>1</sup> More information of female campaigners is incorporated into accounts of British reactions to the American Civil War by Betty Fladeland and Douglass Stange, and of the Freedmen's Aid movement by Robert Vaughan and Christine Bolt.<sup>2</sup> Louis and Rosamund's account of British women campaigners is sketchy on this period, but stresses their practical contributions to the Freedmen's Aid movement and the

---

<sup>1</sup>Temperley, British Antislavery, chap. vi (mention of continued activity by Mary Estlin, the Peases and the Wighams on p. 259).

<sup>2</sup>Fladeland, Men and Brothers, chap. xvi; Stange, British Unitarians Against American Slavery, chap. viii; T. J. Vaughan, "The British Freedmen's Aid Movement, 1863-9", M.Litt thesis, University of Bristol, 1971; Christine Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: A Study in Anglo-American Co-Operation, 1833-77, (London: Oxford U.P., 1969).

movement of radical women abolitionists into feminist campaigns in the late 1860's.<sup>3</sup>

In this Chapter I assess women's contributions to all aspects of anti-slavery campaigning in the 1860's. In Section 1 I examine women abolitionists' responses to the American Civil War. The following section explores the involvement of women in the freedmen's aid movement, through practical aid to slaves freed as the result of the Civil War. Thirdly, I look at women's reaction to the Jamaica Insurrection of 1865 and the subsequent controversy over the actions of Governor Eyre. This is set in the context of women's continuing support for educational and missionary work among the black population of the West Indies and Africa. Section 4 looks briefly at the other main anti-slavery concerns of women at this period: African education and the continuance of the Cuban slave-trade. Fifthly, I examine the involvement of women abolitionists in the developing organised feminist campaigns of the 1860's and 1870's. While these new campaigns are shown to provide a new focus for female reforming zeal from the late 1860's on, section 6 presents evidence for the continuing concern of a number of women in campaigning for black rights into the 1870's and 1880's. Finally, some general conclusions are made.

#### 1. The American Civil War, 1861-5

As scholars have pointed out, British reactions to the secession of the Southern States from the Union and to the outbreak and course of the American Civil war were complex,

---

<sup>3</sup>Billington and Billington, "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness'", pp. 108-9.

and did not follow simple pro- and anti-slavery lines. British abolitionists were confused by the initial failure of the North to come out in favour of slave emancipation. Those who were Quakers and pacifists found it impossible to support war for however worthy a cause. Those allied to the Garrisonians were bewildered at the sudden about-turn of their American co-workers from a non-resistant, non-political and disunionist stance to support for the Union and the North and acceptance of the use of violent means to overthrow slavery.<sup>4</sup>

With both the BFASS's Anti-Slavery Reporter and the Garrisonian Anti-Slavery Advocate failing to take a clear line on the War, Harriet Martineau's firmly pro-Northern leaders for the Daily News on the war provided almost the only public opposition to the pro-Confederate stance of the bulk of the British press. Richard D. Webb, whom Harriet Martineau replaced as correspond<sup>s</sup>ent for the American Garrisonian Anti-slavery Standard in the 1860's, considered that "there is nobody in Europe who has done so much to promote anti-slavery views and uphold the northern cause in England".<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Temperley, British Antislavery, pp. 251-253, 256-7; Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>R.D. Webb to the Westons, Greenfield, Kilgobbin, Co. Dublin [n.d.] and R.D. Webb to Samuel May Jr, Dublin, 12 Mar 1862, MS A.9.2. v. 16, pt. 2, no. 20 and MS B.1.6 v. 15 in BPL, quoted as items [408] and [427] in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, pp. 456, 479. For assessments of the great importance of Martineau's Daily News articles by her biographers see Valerie Kossew Pichanick, Harriet Martineau: the Woman and her Work, 1802-76, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), p.213; R.K. Webb, Harriet Martineau: a Radical Victorian, (London: Heineman, 1960), pp. 329. Neither Pichanick nor Webb provide a full analysis of the articles, however.

Martineau's view of the American Civil War was influential because of her well-established reputation as a journalist, her personal familiarity with America, and her close contacts with leading American abolitionists. In contrast to many other British radical abolitionists, she joined George Thompson in immediately accepting American Garrisonians' abrupt change from an anti-war and disunionist position to a pro-Union stance. From the outset of the War she stressed that slavery was "the great question which underlies the whole quarrel", and "the one irresistible cause of the existing civil war".<sup>6</sup> She also consistently championed the North, putting forward evidence of its progress towards an emancipationist policy and asserting that it was inevitable that the war would result in abolition.<sup>7</sup>

Martineau's was the main voice countering the predominantly pro-Confederate stance of the British press at this period. This dominant viewpoint was in part based on fears for British commerce and a belief that the war was about the South's right to self-determination rather than the issue of slavery. It led to pressure on the Government to abandon its policy of neutrality and take the Confederate side, break the Northern blockade of Southern ports and even enter the War. The pro-Confederate viewpoint also marked a reversal of the dominant anti-

---

<sup>6</sup>Daily News, 30 Aug 1861, leader no. 2, p. 4; 11 Oct 1861, leader no. 1, p. 4. The identification of these and other leaders as the work of Martineau is based on R. K. Webb's typescript compilation, "A Handlist of contributions to the Daily News by Harriet Martineau 1852-1866", a copy of which is lodged in the British Library.

<sup>7</sup>See for example Daily News, 20 July 1861, leader 3, p. 4; 30 Aug 1861, leader 2, p. 4; 26 Sept 1861, leader 2, p. 4; 28 May 1862, leader 2, p. 4.

slavery sentiment of the press in the 1820's and 1830's, and was characterised by a willingness to accept Southern arguments that emancipation would herald economic ruin, a servile war, and the massacre of planters and rape of the wives and daughters. Martineau combated these assertions by arguing that, on the contrary, emancipation was the only security against such disasters, and that it would actually increase planters' profits because free labour cost less than the upkeep of slaves.<sup>8</sup> She argued, in words echoing Elizabeth Heyrick's in the 1820's, that "immediate emancipation" didn't mean "letting loose a race of barbarians to run a muck in society" but simply that there was no possible intermediate stage between the status of chattel and that of human being. Drawing on the history of the British West Indies, Martineau contrasted the success of immediate full emancipation in Antigua with the failure of the apprenticeship system, and pointed out that the slave insurrection of 1832 had occurred when there was no prospect of emancipation, rather than as the result of freedom.<sup>9</sup>

Martineau was never an uncritical supporter of the North, but rather judged it by its progress towards an openly anti-slavery policy. She expressed her frustration at the continued failure of the Federal government to make an unequivocal statement on slavery. In particular, she criticised Lincoln for attempting to compromise with slaveholders by taking his stand on the constitution, which included pro-slavery provisions, and by advocating the

---

<sup>8</sup>Daily News, 3 Oct 1861, leader 1, p.4; 10 Oct 1861, leader 1, p.4.

<sup>9</sup>Daily News, 18 Dec 1861, leader 3, p.4.

discredited scheme of colonization as a solution to the "problem" of the black population of four million.<sup>10</sup>

By March 1862, however, Martineau was more optimistic. The House of Representatives in Washington had just approved Lincoln's proposal for the gradual emancipation of slaves, and she interpreted this as a declaration that "the extinction of slavery" was "a proper object of Federal policy". It paved the way for state by state abolition. Through Lincoln's message "the true awakening touch has been administered to the national mind and heart", for "it has answered the great purpose of uniting people by one common sentiment in one common aim".<sup>11</sup>

Martineau heralded the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia on 16 April 1862 as "a day which will stand in American history as the greatest day since the signing of the Declaration of Independence". She felt that the event was being ignored in Europe because people failed to grasp its significance. She explained that by abolishing slavery in the national territory, which was under the direct jurisdiction of Congress, the national Government had ceased to be a slaveholding power and thus "the people of the United States ceased to be a slaveholding nation." Slavery had now "sunk to be a mere state institution" which, "deprived of national sanction and support" could not long survive.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>Daily News, 18 Dec 1861, leader 3, p.4; 21 Dec 1861, leader 3, p.4; 1 Mar 1862, leader 2, p.4.

<sup>11</sup>Daily News, 25 Mar 1862, leader 3, p.4; 28 Mar 1862, leader 2, p.4.

<sup>12</sup>Daily News, 7 May 1862, leader 2, p.4.

Harriet Martineau's public stand was complemented by the efforts of another British woman abolitionist, the Duchess of Argyll, to use her prominent political contacts in both Britain and America to aid the Northern cause through private channels. Elizabeth Duchess of Argyll (1824-78), the eldest daughter of the Duchess of Sutherland, had been involved with her mother in organising the 1853 Stafford House Address to American women. Her mother was a long-standing acquaintance of Charles Sumner, who during the Civil War became the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in the Republican administration. Her husband, George Campbell, Eighth Duke of Argyll, was a member of the British cabinet in the 1860's, and thus a close colleague of foreign secretary Lord John Russell. Elizabeth was thus ideally placed to exert an informal influence on relations between Britain and America during the War. This she attempted to do through a series of letters to Charles Sumner from December 1861 onwards. In these she tried to explain to him the rationale of the British government's policy towards the War, and the reasons for the British press and public's lack of support for the Union. She attributed the latter to assertions by many Northern leaders that the War was not about the destruction of slavery.<sup>13</sup>

Confusion about war aims is evident among the members of local anti-slavery societies, the majority of which were ladies' associations. The BFASS was still receiving

---

<sup>13</sup>Letter from Duchess of Argyll to Charles Sumner, Toulon, 1 Dec [1861], quoted in "Letters of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll to Charles Sumner", Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. XLVII (1813-14), p. 92.

donations from fourteen ladies' anti-slavery societies in contrast to three men's groups.<sup>14</sup> The only local society to regularly give sizeable donations was the Birmingham Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, which maintained a large number of subscribers and continued to publish annual reports through the 1860's. A similar pattern was evident with Garrisonian groups, with only the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society maintaining a high public profile and issuing annual printed reports through the 1860's.<sup>15</sup>

The absence of active male groups gave added importance to Edinburgh and Birmingham women's society's reactions to the War. Both groups publicly opposed recognition by the British government of the Confederate States on anti-slavery grounds, but both withheld full support from the North despite American criticisms of their position.<sup>16</sup>

The Edinburgh society, an independent group which had never been willing to simply follow the instructions of American abolitionists, was critical of the change of

---

<sup>14</sup>List of donations and subscriptions in The Twenty-Third Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, (London: Johnston and Barrett, 1862). The women's societies were at Banbury, Birmingham, Chelmsford, Evesham, Exeter, Falmouth, Liskeard, Peckham, Saffron Walden and Sheffield in England, at Aberdeen, Dalkieth, Dundee and Edinburgh in Scotland, and at Clogher in Ireland.

<sup>15</sup>For Scotland see Robert M. Botsford, "Scotland and the American Civil War", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1955; R. Bingham, "The Glasgow Emancipation Society 1833-76", chap. vi. For Ireland see D. Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign Against American Slavery, 1830-1860", chap. viii. For Wales see Clare Taylor, "Wales and the American Civil War", unpublished typescript dated Aberystwyth, Sept 1972, copy lodged in British Library.

<sup>16</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. IX, no 4 (Apr 1861), p. 95; no. 5 (May 1861), p. 111; no. 12 (Dec 1861), p. 278; Vol. X, no. 3 (March 1862), p. 72; no. 10 (Oct 1862), p. 239-40.

policy by Garrisonians. Eliza Wigham, the society's Quaker secretary, was particularly worried by the abandonment of the doctrine of non-reistance, and wrote critically to William Lloyd Garrison on the issue. She also expressed her doubts at the anti-slavery credentials of the North.<sup>17</sup> In a letter to Garrison's colleague the Rev. Samuel May Jr., she protested against American criticisms of the lack of enthusiam shown people like her for "a Union you have taught us to believe, and which we still believe, to be based on the subjection of the poor slaves".<sup>18</sup>

May responded swiftly and fully to these criticisms from Eliza Wigham, clearly considering it important to regain the full support of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society.<sup>19</sup> Eliza Wigham found his explanations satisfactory, though she felt he had "gone a little too far in defense of the North". She expressed the hopes that the North would soon come out in favour of emancipation, since this would be the best means not only of crushing the rebellion and restoring peace but also of "stirring the sympathy of England."<sup>20</sup> The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society's official view of the War at this period is reflected in its 1862 report, which accepted Garrisonian arguments that "slavery was the origin of the War; interest in slavery prolongs it; and the abolition of

---

<sup>17</sup>Letter from Eliza Wigham to William Lloyd Garrison, Edinburgh, 31 May 1861, MS A.1.2. v.31, p.5BB, BPL.

<sup>18</sup>Letter from Eliza Wigham to the Rev. Samuel May Jr., Edinburgh, 5 Dec 1861, MS B.1.6. v.8, no.90, BPL.

<sup>19</sup>This letter does not survive. For another letter on the same issue from Maria Weston Chapman to Mary [Estlin], [n.p.], Apr 1862, MS A.7.2.95, BPL.

<sup>20</sup>Letter from Eliza Wigham to the Rev. Samuel May Jr., Edinburgh, 27 Mar 1862, MS B.1.6. v.9, no.25, BPL.

slavery only can end it". The time for emancipation was approaching, and it was "to this end the conflict is being waged in the United States, although the design of the combatants had no such avowed purpose."<sup>21</sup>

President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 22 September 1862, granting freedom to slaves in the rebel states from 1 January 1863, brought anti-slavery closer to being an official war aim. As the Duchess of Argyll explained to Charles Sumner, however, there were reservations in Britain about its status as a document based on anti-slavery principle rather than the expediency of war, because it maintained slavery in Federal states and failed to abolish the Fugitive Slave Law.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, Harriet Martineau hailed the Proclamation in the Daily News, and many other abolitionists were now convinced that the North was worthy of support.<sup>23</sup> In November 1862 a group of influential radical politicians joined with veteran Garrisonian abolitionists including George Thompson and Frederick W. Chesson to form the London Emancipation Society to propagandise about the war and its roots in Southern aggression.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, and Sketch of Anti-Slavery Events During the Year Ending 4th March 1862 (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1862), quotes from pp. 19 and 1.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from the Duchess of Argyll to Charles Sumner, Argyll Lodge, Kensington, 26 Mar 1863, quoted in "Letters of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll to Charles Sumner", p. 101 (see also letter dated 29 Apr 1863, quoted on pp. 76-77).

<sup>23</sup>Daily News, 10 Oct 1862, leader 1, p.4.

<sup>24</sup>Temperley, British Antislavery, p. 254.

A particular impetus to female activism was given at this time by the issuing by Harriet Beecher Stowe of an open letter to British women "in behalf of many thousands of American women". This took the form of a belated reply to the 1853 Stafford House Address. Stowe turned the wording of that Address on British women, urging them to show their opposition to American slavery by giving support to the Unionist cause. She gave an account of the origins and outbreak of the Civil War, of the aims and actions of the two sides with reference to slavery, and of the progress towards emancipation culminating in Lincoln's Proclamation. She argued that this had been misrepresented in England: emancipation was not dependent on ending the rebellion but would go ahead regardless. She expressed her disappointment that the "party advancing freedom" had found so little support in England whereas the pro-slavery party had found its strongest defenders there. This she attributed in part to a sad decline in anti-slavery sentiment in the country, and in part to confusion caused by false statements that the North were fighting for supremacy and the South for independence.<sup>25</sup>

Stowe's fame insured her Reply of widespread publicity. It was published in pamphlet form and printed in full in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, the Daily News and the Morning Star.<sup>26</sup> The editor of the Reporter described the Reply as "exceedingly trenchant" and felt that it would "awaken the

---

<sup>25</sup>Harriet Beecher Stowe, A Reply to "the Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, to their Sisters, the Women of the United States of America", (London: Sampson Low, 1863).

<sup>26</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Third Series, Vol. XI, no. 2 (March 1863), p. 56; Garrison and Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, p. 73.

attention of the "Upper Ten Thousand" to what is to be said on the side for which their sympathy does not appear, up to the present time, to have been at all enlisted".<sup>27</sup> Frederick Chesson of the London Emancipation Society wrote to Garrison that the "eloquent and beautiful address" was "exciting great interest, and cannot fail to do much good."<sup>28</sup>

The Reply met with a very positive response from women.<sup>29</sup> In Scotland the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society issued a response to the Reply which was described in the Anti-Slavery Reporter as "at once forcible, friendly, and conclusive, in relation to the points the lady had raised".<sup>30</sup> In addition, a Rejoinder was rapidly produced "in behalf of Englishwomen" by the journalist Frances Power Cobbe.<sup>31</sup> While Cobbe had not previously been involved in the anti-slavery movement, she articulated the traditional feminine approach to slavery, stressing the sufferings of women, and portraying it as a moral and religious issue which transcended politics. English women, she asserted, abhorred slavery as human beings, as women and for itself. They had witnessed with "solemn joy" the picture of "your country purging herself, even through seas

---

<sup>27</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, Third Series, Vol. XI, no. 2 (Feb 1863), p. 26.

<sup>28</sup>Letter from F.W. Chesson to W.L. Garrison, London, 9 Jan 1863, MS A.1.2. v.32, no.4, BPL, quoted as item [441] in Clare Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, p. 493.

<sup>29</sup>For a hostile, pro-Southern response see Civis Anglicus, A Voice from the Motherland, Answering Mrs H. Beecher Stowe's Appeal, (London: Trubner, 1863).

<sup>30</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XI, no. 3 (March 1863), p. 52.

<sup>31</sup>Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904) is best known as a leading anti-vivisection campaigner.

of blood, from the guilty participation in the crimes of the past", and they were convinced that the conflict would end in abolition. Such were "the beliefs and hopes of the Women of England, whose hearts the complicated difficulties of politics, or the miserable jealousies of national rivalry, do not distract from the great principles underlying the contest".<sup>32</sup>

Cobbe's Rejoinder was printed in full in the Anti-Slavery Advocate, and praised in the Anti-Slavery Reporter as "an admirable document".<sup>33</sup> It excited immediate attention from women abolitionists. The Manchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society issued a public statement expressing their "approval and adoption of the sentiments it contains" and their joy at "the recent revival of anti-slavery feeling in this country, since the American Government has adopted measures unmistakably tending towards total emancipation."<sup>34</sup> In London women responded to Stowe's Reply and Cobbe's Rejoinder by setting up a new society, the Ladies London Emancipation Society. Formed in March 1863 on the basis that slavery was "a question especially and deeply interesting to women", it worked in co-operation

---

<sup>32</sup>[Frances Power Cobbe], Rejoinder to Mrs Stowe's Reply to the Address of the women of England, (London: Emily Faithful, 1863). Cobbe is identified as the author of this pamphlet in The First Annual Report of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society, (London, 1864), footnote on p.4.

<sup>33</sup>Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. III, no. 3 (March 1863), pp. 17-18; Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XI, no. 3 (March 1863), p. 52.

<sup>34</sup>These resolutions were printed in full in the Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. III, no. 4 (Apr 1863), p. 32.

with the London Emancipation Society while retaining its independence from the men.<sup>35</sup>

The new group was founded by Mentia Taylor, wife of Peter Taylor, who was treasurer of the men's society.<sup>36</sup> It was the first national female anti-slavery society, in the sense that it recruited over two hundred members from all over England, though Londoners predominated and it had no local auxiliaries.<sup>37</sup> Frances Power Cobbe was a member of its executive committee, as were veteran abolitionists Mary Estlin of Bristol, Sarah Parker Remond and Harriet Martineau. Among its subscribers were other established activists including Amelia Chesson, Ellen Craft, Mrs Cropper of Liverpool and Harriet Lupton of Leeds, and female members of the Ashurst and Biggs families. It is notable, however, that the majority of the committee had not previously been prominent in the anti-slavery cause. Their presence marks the input of new energies into the movement. Some committee members, like Mrs T.B. Potter, Mrs Lucas, Mrs W. Malleeson, Miss Bright and Mentia Taylor herself, were the relatives of men who were also newly prominent in the movement as leaders of the London Emancipation Society and the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society. Some, like Mrs Stansfield, Mrs

---

<sup>35</sup>The First Annual Report of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society. January 1864, (London); The Second Annual Report of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society. January 1865, (London: Levey); Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XII, no. 2 (Feb 1864), p. 47; no. 3 (Mar 1864), p. 70; no. 4 (Apr 1864), p. 73; no. 5 (May 1864), p. 119; Vol. XIII, no. 3 (Mar 1865), pp 70-71.

<sup>36</sup>Mentia Taylor (nee Doughty) and her husband Peter, M.P. for Leicester, were Unitarians whose home at Aubrey House in Notting Hll was a centre for radical movements.

<sup>37</sup>See advertisement in Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. III, no. 4 (Apr 1863), p. 32.

Wedgwood, Mrs Courtauld, Mrs T.B. Potter and Mrs Harriet Taylor, were Unitarians like Mentia Taylor. Others like Mrs Lucas and Miss Bright were Quakers. Most, with the notable exception of the Tory Miss Cobbe, were radicals, and the European political connections of the new group are reflected in the presence of Italian nationalists Signor Mazzini as the sole male subscriber and General Garibaldi as honorary member.<sup>38</sup>

Like its brother society, the Ladies' London Emancipation Society saw one of its prime aims to be the circulation of tracts "explanatory of slavery as it now exists in the United States, and of its bearing on the present struggle between North and South." Between 1863 and 1864 it produced a twelve tracts, of which a total of over twelve thousand copies were circulated. Half of the tracts were written or compiled by women connected with the society. Taken together these tracts combated pro-Confederate sympathies in Britain through revelations about the true nature of slaveholding southern society, in particular its treatment of women slaves. They also counterposed a positive image of black people to offset the negative stereotypes purveyed by supporters of the South.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup>The First Annual Report of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society.

<sup>39</sup>The tracts were: no. 1 - Frances Power cobbe, The Red Flag in John Bull's Eyes; no. 2 - Isa Craig (ed.), The Essence of Slavery; no. 3 - J.E. Cairnes, Who are the Canters?; no. 4 - Edward Dicey, Labour and Slavery; no. 5 - Loring Moody (comp.), The Destruction of the Republic and of all Constitutional Liberty, the Object of the Rebellion; no. 6 - Emily Shirreff, The Chivalry of the South; no. 7 - Sarah Parker Remond, The Negroes and Anglo-Africans as Freedmen and Soldiers; no. 8 - J.M. Ludlow, American Slavery. Reprinted from "Good Words"; no. 9 - M.D. Conway, Benjamin Banneker, the Negro Astonomer; no. 10 - Mrs P.A. Taylor (comp.), Professor Huxley on the Negro Question; no. 11 - Emily Shirreff, A Few More Words on the Chivalry of

The tracts supplemented the propaganda produced by the London Emancipation Society and the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society, which was written by men for a general readership.

Other tracts stressing the sufferings of women under slavery were promoted by or addressed to British women at this period. Tract no. 2 of the London Ladies' Emancipation Society was a compilation of extracts from the most famous of these, Frances Ann Kemble's Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839. The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society purchased a copy of the Journal for their library and obtained a stock of the cheaper tract, along with other tracts, from the London Ladies' Emancipation Society for distribution.<sup>40</sup> Kemble, a well-known English actress, had kept a journal of her horrific experiences as wife of a slave-holder and rice plantation owner. She was finally driven to publish her journal in 1863 by her dismay at widespread British sympathy for the Southern Confederacy.<sup>41</sup> A chapter of the Journal detailed the sufferings of women under slavery, and it was this section that was particularly remarked upon by

---

the South; no. 12 - The Humanity of the Confederates, or, the Massacre at Fort Pillow. All the tracts were published in London by Emily Faithfull in 1863-4.

<sup>40</sup>Report of the Committee of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society for the Year Ending March 3, 1864, pp. 1-2.

<sup>41</sup>For a useful discussion of the background to and impact of the book see introduction to John A. Scott, ed., Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839 by Frances Anne Kemble, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961 edition of original 1863 edition)

reviewers.<sup>42</sup> In it Kemble contrasted the lot of slave mothers, who had entreated her not let them be forced them to resume hoeing the field immediately after childbirth, with her own privileges as a mother. She also contrasted the lot of the wife of a slave mechanic, worn down by hard labour, with the lot of British artisan's wife, whose husband could earn enough for them both, enabling her to concentrate on housework and childcare.

A similar emphasis on female suffering is evident in Edward Yates' A Letter to the Women of England (1863). Yates was an English barrister who had travelled extensively in the South. He addressed women as especially sensitive beings, calling on them in rather high-flown language to use their feminine influence to support emancipation and the free North and to end the degradation of their own sex under slavery.<sup>43</sup>

A year earlier a narrative of slavery written by a former slave woman herself had been published in London. The Deeper Wrong was the autobiography of Harriet Jacobs, an fugitive slave.<sup>44</sup> Amelia Chesson, George Thompson's daughter, wrote a long review of it in the Morning Star, which, under the editorship of her husband F. W. Chesson

---

<sup>42</sup>Reviews appeared in the Athenaeum, 6 June 1863, and the London Spectator, 30 May 1863 - see John A. Scott, ed., Journal, introduction, p. liv. Chapter XIX of the Journal was entitled "Women in Slavery".

<sup>43</sup>Edward Yates, A Letter to the Women of England, on Slavery in the Southern States of America; Considered Especially in reference to the Condition of the Female Slaves, (London: John Snow, 1863).

<sup>44</sup>Lydia Maria Child, ed., The Deeper Wrong; or, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself, (London: W. Tweedie, 1862). To avoid detection by her owners Harriet Jacobs used the pseudonym Linda Brent in this book.

was one of the few newspapers to take a pro-Northern line during the Civil War.<sup>45</sup>

Another important tract was Eliza Wigham's The Anti-Slavery Cause in America, and its Martyrs (1863), which was circulated by both the Edinburgh and London Ladies' Emancipation Societies.<sup>46</sup> This was a succinct summary of the history of the American anti-slavery movement, set in the context of political developments in the United States. It concentrated on the Garrisonian wing which Wigham herself had supported and emphasised women's contributions to the movement. Wigham stated that the aim of her pamphlet was to arouse British people's determination to guard their country from any tendency to ally itself with the Confederacy, which she described as "having for its corner-stone American Slavery". She concluded that at the present juncture it was the duty of Britain "to preserve strict neutrality between North and South in their contest, and to proclaim herself on the side of the slave, as becomes her national character."<sup>47</sup>

Abolitionists were also concerned about the effect of the American Civil War on the British economy, in particular the cotton famine in Lancashire brought about by the North's naval blockade of Southern ports. This led to widespread unemployment among cotton operatives and to famine and distress.

---

<sup>45</sup>Review in Morning Star, 10 Mar 1862.

<sup>46</sup>The First Report of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society, p. 10; Report of the Committee of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society for the Year ending March 3, 1864, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup>For favourable reviews of the tract see Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, vol. XI, no. 10 (Oct 1863), p. 240; The Friend, n.s., Vol. III (1868), p. 218.

Women abolitionists responded to these events in several ways. A form circulated by a London publisher during 1863 and 1864 acquired over nine thousand signatures to an appeal from British and Irish women to their sisters to join in discountenancing any future use of slave-grown cotton as an individual moral protest against slavery.<sup>48</sup> The Free Produce sub-committee of the Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society and the Peckham Ladies' Free Labour Association continued to promote the use of free-grown cotton.<sup>49</sup>

Female abolitionists also put forward their views of the causes of the cotton famine. The Birmingham women blamed the famine on the British public, who had failed to fully espouse the free labour movement. Harriet Martineau, who had consistently promoted Indian cotton in preference to American for both moral and economic reasons in her leaders for the Daily News from 1853 onwards, blamed Lancashire textile manufacturers who had made large fortunes from American cotton while failing to take precautions against a sudden failure in supply.<sup>50</sup>

Women abolitionists supported the giving of practical aid to the distressed cotton workers as a part of the anti-

---

<sup>48</sup>England and Slavery. The Present Crisis and our Duty, (London: Morgan and Chase [1863?]); Anti-Slavery Reporter 3rd series, Vol. XI, no. 10 (Oct 1863), p. 226-7; The Thirty-Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham etc, (Birmingham: Hudson, 1864), p. 20.

<sup>49</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. X, no. 3 (Mar 1862), p. 72; no 8 (Aug 1862), p. 182; Thirty-Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society for Birmingham etc, pp. 38-40.

<sup>50</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd series, Vol. X, no. 10 (Oct 1862), p. 240; Daily News, 14 July 1862, leader 1, p. 4; 17 July 1862, leader 3, p. 4.

slavery cause. Harriet Martineau, seeing the workers as innocent victims of the cotton famine, acknowledged that this was a case where it was right to abandon the dogma of political economy and her belief that charity stunted self-help. She urged that steps be taken to sustain the "lives, character and self-respect" of the operatives, suggesting that possible measures were emigration, public works, recruitment to the armed forces, and the training of young women for household employment.<sup>51</sup>

It was the alleviation of female distress that particularly preoccupied female abolitionists. At a meeting of the Birmingham society in September 1862 an outline was given of a plan for employing young Lancashire women who had been deprived of their livings. Ladies in several large towns had gathered them together to make up clothing for the poor, to be disposed of at the cost of the material. It was hoped that this would both give the women a means of subsistence and enable the ladies to exert a useful moral influence on the women "at a time of forced idleness and pressing need".<sup>52</sup> Quaker women were prominent among those who organised sewing, cooking and reading classes for young unemployed women in Lancashire which by March 1863 had been attended by over forty-one thousand women.<sup>53</sup>

Little information is available on the attitudes to the Civil War of the tens of thousands of women who

---

<sup>51</sup>Daily News, ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd series, Vol. X, no. 10 (Oct 1862), p. 240.

<sup>53</sup>See John Watts, The Facts of the Cotton Famine, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co, 1866), pp. 205, 278.

composed slightly over half the work-force of the cotton factories.<sup>54</sup> Lancashire working women lack visibility in the contemporary record because they were not prominent as leaders of textile unions, they did not make public speeches or edit working class newspapers, and their opinions were generally not recorded by the leadership of the anti-slavery movement.

An exception is George Thompson, who had always taken a particular interest in women's anti-slavery efforts. At Christmas 1862 he wrote to Garrison, saying he was sure he could collect twice the number of signatories as those to the Stafford House Address to an Address calling on Lincoln and Congress to give immediate and unconditional freedom to all slaves. He could not promise that as many aristocratic names would appear as before, but:

I think I might guarantee that there should be the names of at least two hundred thousand women, who are at this moment heroically and uncomplainingly suffering from the suspension of our supply of slave-grown cotton, and who are willing to continue to suffer, rather than see the triumph of the slave holder, or a compromise of the principles of liberty on the part of the Northern States.<sup>55</sup>

Thompson's statement was made immediately prior to the famous meeting of the working classes in Manchester Free Trade Hall on 31 December 1862, which resolved to send an Address to Lincoln on the abolition of slavery. As Mary Ellison has pointed out, this meeting was not the spontaneous expression of working class feeling which it

---

<sup>54</sup>See Mary Ellison, Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), table of "occupations of adults over 20 in Lancashire in 1861", p. 223.

<sup>55</sup>George Thompson to W.L. Garrison, 24 Dec 1862, MS A.1.2. v. 31, no. 167, in BPL.

was claimed by abolitionists and has been accepted by historians as being, but in fact a carefully arranged event chaired by the mayor and attended by many members of the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society.<sup>56</sup> In this context Thompson's unsupported claims of the anti-slavery zeal of women textile workers cannot be fully relied on. This is not, however, to deny the effectiveness of his image of self-sacrificing womanhood as anti-slavery propaganda.

A contemporary account of the cotton famine by a member of the Central Relief Committee suggests that women did not in practice always passively and gratefully join the sewing and reading classes formed by well-off ladies to await the victory of anti-slavery forces abroad. At Stalybridge in 1863 women were involved in a riot against the low level of relief, and at the trial of the rioters a crowd of women and girls gathered illegally outside the court and "continually insulted the soldiers and police, and chaffed the male bystanders for their cowardice". Women also took part in raids on provision stores.<sup>57</sup> More research needs to be done on local sources, however, before

---

<sup>56</sup>Mary Ellison, Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 80-81. Mary Ellison has found widespread pro-Southern sympathies in Lancashire working class newspapers of the period. For earlier historical studies which accept the abolitionist account of cotton workers' anti-slavery commitment and self-sacrificing support for the North see Frank Thistlethwaite, America and the Atlantic Community: Anglo-American Aspects, 1790-1850, (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 119-20; Joseph H. Park, "The English Workingmen and the American Civil War", Political Science Quarterly, Vol. XXXIX, (1924), pp. 432-457.

<sup>57</sup>John Watts, The Facts of the Cotton Famine, pp. 267, 270.

an overall picture of women workers attitudes to slavery and Civil War in America can emerge.

In contrast to these women workers, middle and upper class women abolitionists take a stand on the War independent of any effect on their own lives. As I have shown, they exploited their direct contacts with American abolitionists to reach well-informed and independent decisions about the course of the War. They then made a significant contribution to anti-slavery propaganda at the period. Harriet Martineau's pro-Northern Daily News articles were contributions of outstanding importance. Eliza Wigham's history of the American anti-slavery movement provided a useful historical background to the politics of the struggle. The tracts of the London Ladies Emancipation Society complemented those of male organisations equivalent by arousing female public opinion through a stress on the sufferings of slave women at the hands of supposedly chivalrous Southern gentleman. In addition, women's groups continued to organise the boycott of slave-grown cotton as a moral protest against American slavery.

## 2. Aid to the American Freedmen, 1863-68

As more and more slaves were freed between the implementation of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 and the end of the American Civil War in 1865, British abolitionists became increasingly preoccupied with providing them with practical aid. As Christine Bolt has pointed out, the freedmen's aid movement which resulted was a continuance of the fight against slavery, and involved

many families with a history of anti-slavery campaigning.<sup>58</sup> It is the purpose of this section to assess women's contribution to this movement, a subject not fully explored by either Bolt or Thomas Vaughan.<sup>59</sup>

Women abolitionists, as has been shown, had always taken a particular interest in educational, missionary and relief work among black people in the West Indies and Africa. In addition, their aid for American fugitive slaves had continued by ladies' societies in Birmingham and Edinburgh into the early 1860's, at a time when men's groups had become inactive, and from 1863 this merged into aid to freedmen.<sup>60</sup>

Women took some of the first freedmen's aid initiatives. In 1862 Eliza Wigham, secretary of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, wrote to the editor of the British Friend urging Quakers to follow the example of her society in sending donations in aid of the education of emancipated slaves.<sup>61</sup> At the beginning of 1863 women in Bristol issued an appeal "to the friends of abolition" urging them to contribute money towards the education and clothing of freedmen, and giving a list of receiving ladies in towns in England, Scotland and Ireland which

---

<sup>58</sup>Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction, p. 114.

<sup>59</sup>Thomas John Vaughan, "The British Freedmen's Aid Movement 1863-1869", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1970.

<sup>60</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd series, Vol. VIII, no. 11 (Nov 1860), p.271; Vol. IX, no. 1 (Jan 1861), p. 24; no. 4 (Apr 1861), p. 95; no. 6 (June 1861), p. 123; no. 7 (July 1861), p. 145; no. 12 (Dec 1861), p. 278; Vol. X, no. 4 (Apr 1862); no. 8 (Aug 1862), p. 182.

<sup>61</sup>"The Emancipated American Slaves", British Friend, Vol. XX (1862), p. 175.

corresponded closely with the network of collectors for the Rochester Anti-Slavery Bazaar and fugitives aid established by Julia Griffiths in the 1850's.<sup>62</sup>

When the London Freedmen's Aid Society was formed in April 1863, however, its Quaker dominated committee was exclusively male, being drawn mainly from the committee of the BFASS. Women were also excluded from the Central Committee of the Society of Friends for the Relief of the Emancipated Negroes of the United States, formed in March 1865, from the National Committee of British Freedmen's Aid Associations (1865-6), and from the committees of the National Freedmen's Aid Union and the British and Foreign Freedmen's Aid Society (1866-8). At a local level the organisation was divided into separate men's and women's committees, with at least sixteen women's freedmen's aid committees out of a total of around fifty societies (see Appendix 1, list 3e).<sup>63</sup> Unlike men, however, women did not send delegates to national committees.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup>To the Friends of Abolition, (Bristol: Ackland). This circular is printed in full in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XI, no. 2 (Feb 1863), p. 48.

<sup>63</sup>The estimate of a total of fifty societies by the end of the Civil War is taken from Howard Temperley, "British Anti-Slavery" in Hollis, ed., Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England, (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 50. The list of women's committee is compiled from various sources, including the Freedmen's Aid Reporter, the Freedman, the British Friend, and the records listed in note 65 of the present chapter.

<sup>64</sup>Report No. I. Report of the Central Committee of the Society of Friends for the Relief of the Emancipated Negroes of the United States, for the Three Months Ending 6th Month 1st, 1865. Also List of Subscriptions and Letters from America, (London: Richard Barrett); Report No. II ... Ending 9th month, 1865 ...; Report No. III ... Ending 3rd Month, 1866; minute books of the Central Committee of the Society of Friends for the Relief of the Emancipated Slaves of North America, Friends House Library, London; minutes of the National Committee of British Freedmen's Aid Associations and of the National Freedmen's Aid Union, MSS

It is clear that women were encouraged to engage in practical work for the freedmen rather than take leading organisational roles. Levi Coffin, an American Quaker who came to Britain in 1864 as general agent of the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, addressed the Women's Yearly Meetings in London on the condition and needs of the lately emancipated slaves in America and the work of his Commission among them. In his Reminiscences he later described his female audience as "large and intelligent", and wrote: "I felt that the cause I had come to plead would find quick sympathy in the benevolent hearts of the mothers and wives and sisters before me". Appealing in traditional ways to these women, he presented them with "an account of the extreme destitution and suffering which I had so lately witnessed among the thousands of women and children whose chains had so recently been stricken off." Coffin spent a large part of his time in London holding parlour meetings for women, which often resulted in the organisation of sewing societies to make up clothing for the freedmen. The sexual division of labour in the freedmen's aid movement is exemplified by a Stoke Newington couple, both prominent ministers in the Society of Friends, with whom Coffin stayed in 1864-5. The husband, Robert Alsop, was a member of the committee of the London Freedmen's Aid Society while his wife Christine organised local ladies' sewing circles.<sup>65</sup>

---

Brit. Emp. S 27, G 88, in RHL; letters to the secretaries of the National Freedmen's Aid Union, MSS Brit. Emp. S 18 C 38-40, C 117-121, S 22, G 87, in RHL.

<sup>65</sup>Christine Alsop (1805-1879), nee Majolier, was a French Quaker who settled in England in the 1820's.

Such sewing circles became the main focus of female work in aid for the freedmen. They proliferated throughout Britain, replacing the bazaar committees of the 1840's and 1850's. Mrs J.B. Braithwaite, another Quaker friend of Levi Coffin's, set up twenty-five to thirty circles in the London area in 1864-5. In Bristol by late 1865 nearly a hundred women were meeting in sewing circles, £100 a month was being raised to purchase materials, and each month five or six boxes of clothing containing up to two thousand garments each were being forwarded to America. Louisa Brown of Leighton Buzzard wrote to the editor of the Friend suggesting that such circles could be set up by Friends conducting mothers' meetings. She had raised the subject of freedmen's aid with the thirty women belonging to her meetings and been "much cheered by the practical sympathy, evidenced by gifts of well worn, neatly mended garments, pence, and testaments, brought by the very poorest", and their rapid sewing of one hundred and fifty garments for the freedmen.<sup>66</sup>

Sewing societies, while often set up by women who were committed anti-slavery activists, drew in many women with no history of involvment in abolition, many of whom probably viewed the work as simply another philanthropic duty and social activity. In Bristol, for example, a sewing circle of eighty to ninety Unitarian women was set up by minister's wife Frances Armstrong, a veteran anti-slavery campaigner. It was joined by her co-worker Mary Estlin, who remarked in a letter to an American

---

<sup>66</sup>Friend, n.s., Vol. V (1865), p. 77-8, 142, 156.

abolitionist friend that "no one whom I spoke to had an idea what the cause was wh[ich] brought them together".<sup>67</sup>

Women abolitionists were also interested in larger scale projects. In February 1864 the Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society set up a committee of twelve to consider how to raise funds for freedmen's aid. The following month it issued a printed circular urging the collection of funds, which was forwarded to over a hundred places around Britain, and to ministers of all denominations in Birmingham itself. By June 1865 a total of £280 16s 8d had been received from around three hundred individuals, mainly in sums of 2s 6d to 10s. The donors included some working class women who were employed as domestic servants by committee members.<sup>68</sup>

At the society's annual meeting in May 1864 a proposal was made by Mrs Joseph Sturge that a vessel should be freighted with clothing and agricultural implements for the use of the freedmen, "as an appropriate return for the cargoes of bread-stuffs so beneficently sent from America to relieve our Irish and cotton famines". The women did not feel able to carry out this scheme themselves, however, and it was put to male abolitionists who formed the Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's Aid Association to carry

---

<sup>67</sup>Mary Ann Estlin to Caroline Weston, Bristol, 17 and 19 May 1865, MS A.4.2. v.32, no. 38, BPL.

<sup>68</sup>The Thirty-Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1864), p. 21; The Fortieth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1865), pp. 55-72.

it into effect. This group became one of the major freedmen's aid organisations in Britain.<sup>69</sup>

The Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society and the Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's Aid Association maintained close working links, and publicised each others activities. Their co-operation was facilitated by family connections: the secretary of the women's society, Lydia Sturge, was married to Edmund Sturge, the founder of the new group, and was the sister of Arthur Albright, a leading Birmingham activist who in 1866 became leader of the National Freedmen's Aid Union.<sup>70</sup>

The Birmingham men offered £5 to any congregation or circle of ladies who would raise another £5 for the purchase of material to make-up clothing for the freedmen. This scheme proved very popular, and resulted in the receipt of goods worth £684 from ladies' sewing circles in 1864-5. These circles were located both in the Birmingham area and in other parts of the country: at Falmouth and

---

<sup>69</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XII, no. 4 (Apr 1864), pp. 95-6; no. 5 (May 1864), p. 101; The Annual Report of the Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's-Aid Association, to May 19, 1865, (Birmingham: White and Pike, 1865), [p.5]; Friend, n.s. Vol. V (1865), p. 141; The Thirty-Ninth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, (Birmingham: Hudson, 1864), p. 25. For Mrs Joseph Sturge's involvement see Sixty-Eighth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society. 1893, (Birmingham: Hudson), p. 13-14; Seventy-First Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society. 1896, (Birmingham: Hudson), p. 10. Mrs Hannah Joseph Sturge (ca.1816-1896), nee Dickinson, the second wife of BFASS leader Joseph Sturge, was founder of the Birmingham Ladies' Temperance Society as well as an anti-slavery activist.

<sup>70</sup>Lydia Sturge (1807-1892), a Quaker, was a friend of the explorer Dr Livingstone, of abolitionists Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass and Lewis Tappan, and of pastors and teachers in the West Indies. She and her husband Edmund (1808-93) were also involved in movements for peace, abstinence and suppression of the opium trade (see obituary in Sixty-Eighth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society. 1893, (Birmingham: Hudson), pp. 12-16).

Liskeard, Aberdeen and Dublin, where ladies' anti-slavery associations had remained active into the 1860's; in Leeds and Newcastle, towns with newly revived ladies' associations (the latter led by veteran Quaker abolitionist Anna Richardson); in Banbury, Bridport, Derby, Gloucester and Halifax, towns with local freedmen's aid societies; and also at the market towns of Axbridge, Cirencester, Diss, Earl's Colne, Hallsowen, High Wycombe, Kelvedon, Leighton Buzzard, Norwich, Selby and Sudbury.<sup>71</sup>

Freedmen's Aid work reached a climax in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Civil War, when the problem of catering for the physical needs and education and the four million emancipated slaves was most acute. At this period large numbers of women attended public meetings on the subject in both London and the provinces.<sup>72</sup> Specific appeals were made to women by the male leadership of the freedmen's aid movement, calling on them to honour their tradition of commitment to the anti-slavery cause: "as you pleaded for the liberty of your sisters in slavery, so you are now pledged for their elevation".<sup>73</sup> The two rival national societies set up in 1866, the National Freedmen's Aid Union (NFAU) and the British and Foreign Freedmen's Aid Society (BAFFAS), both adopted the sewing circle subsidy scheme started in Birmingham. The NFAU described the work of sewing circles as the most "pressingly indispensable"

---

<sup>71</sup>The Annual Report of the Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's-Aid Association, pp. 8, 22; Freedmen's-Aid Reporter, Vol. I, no. 10 (Feb 1867), p. 112; n.s., no. 2 (Dec 1867), p.36.

<sup>72</sup>Freedmen's Aid Reporter, Vol. I, no. 4 (Aug 1866), p. 38-9; no. 8 (Dec 1866), p. 83.

<sup>73</sup>Freed-Man, no. 2 (Sept 1865), p. 19; no. 3 (Oct 1865), p. 50.

form of practical aid to the freedmen, and urged manufacturers and drapers to donate materials to sewing circles.<sup>74</sup>

Such appeals to women helped revive flagging interest in the cause.<sup>75</sup> In February 1866 alone £2000 worth of goods were forwarded to America on behalf of the BAFAS, and during 1866 and 1867 numerous boxes of garments made up by women were also dispatched by the NFAU, the Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's Aid Association, and by women themselves. Garments were contributed by individual women, by informal groups, by local sewing circles, some associated with church congregations including Wesleyans, Congregationalists and United Presbyterians, and by more formal ladies' associations at Croydon, in the London area at Camden Road in Holloway, Camden, Clapton and Stoke Newington, and in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Glasgow and Cork.<sup>76</sup> Commenting on the work of these groups in its final report in October 1867, the committee of the National Freedmen's Aid Union spoke in high terms of their strenuous efforts. The goods they had forwarded had "been not merely excellent

---

<sup>74</sup>Freed-Man, no. 8 (March 1866), p. 212; no. 10 (May 1866), pp. 339-40; Freedmen's-Aid Reporter, Vol. I, no. 5 (Sept 1866), p. 49; no. 8 (Dec 1866), p. 89; no. 9 (Jan 1867), p. 95; no. 10 (Feb 1866), pp. 101, 104, 106.

<sup>75</sup>See for example the Brighton circular printed in the Freedmen's-Aid Reporter, Vol. I, no. 7 (Nov 1866), pp. 65, 67. This circular was signed by Elizabeth B. Prideaux, formerly an officer of the Brighton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, which became inactive ca. 1861.

<sup>76</sup>Freed-Man, no. 8 (March 1866), pp. 204-211; no. 9 (Apr 1866), p. 232; and various entres in Freedmen's-Aid Reporter.

in quality, but admirably adapted to the wants of the coloured people".<sup>77</sup>

Women also contributed money to the freedmen's aid movement through their subscriptions and donations to local and national freedmen's aid societies. In the absence of complete lists detailing individual donors it is, however, impossible to estimate what proportion women contributed of the estimated £120,000 raised in Britain for freedmen's aid between 1863-1868.

While the total financial contribution of women to freedmen's aid is thus uncertain, it is clear that the majority of the large quantities of clothes contributed were made up by women's sewing circles. In undertaking this work women were continuing their tradition of exploiting their domestic skills for anti-slavery ends. However, though their practical help was welcomed, women were excluded from national organising committees. Though they expressed particular concern for the sufferings of freed black women they did not introduce the term "freedwomen" to counterbalance the dominant male emphasis on "freedmen", and thus did not articulate a distinctive female contribution to the ideology of the movement.

### 3. Jamaica: Freedmen's Aid and the Governor Eyre Controversy, 1865-68

In 1866 the British freedmen's aid movement split over the question of whether to send aid only to the American freedmen - the line taken by the NFAU and its affiliates - or to aid freedmen in Jamaica and elsewhere as

---

<sup>77</sup>The Freedmen's Aid Reporter, n.s., no. 2 (Dec 1867), p. 20.

well - the position of the BAFFAS and its supporters. The division was largely the result of the so-called Governor Eyre controversy. This began in October 1865 with a riot by black people outside the courthouse in Morant Bay in Jamaica over a disputed fine for squatting on land. A number of people were killed both by the rioters and by the volunteer militia. The British Governor, Edward John Eyre, fearing a general rising of the black population against the white, immediately declared martial law and sent in the troops. Over four hundred black people were killed, six hundred men and women were flogged and over one thousand homes burnt down. In addition George William Gordon, a "coloured" member of the Jamaican House of Assembly accused of inciting the riot, was given a summary court martial and hanged.<sup>78</sup>

Confused accounts reaching Britain resulted in exaggerated stories of terrible atrocities committed by the black rioters, and abolitionists split over the best way to respond to the events.<sup>79</sup> The events also polarised British public opinion, with the majority of the middle and upper classes, backed by most newspapers, coming out in support of Eyre, whereas a minority of middle-class radicals and working-class leaders demanded his prosecution. Analyses of British reactions to the events made by Bernard Semmel, Douglas Lorimer and Christine Bolt have set them in the context of the development of virulently racist ideology

---

<sup>78</sup>For details of events in Jamaica see Bernard Semmel, The Governor Eyre Controversy, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1962).

<sup>79</sup>Letters from Mary Edmundson to Louis Chamerovzow, Dublin, 15 Nov 1865, and from Isabella Waring Maxwell to Louis Chamerovzow, Killifaddy, 19 Jan 1866. MSS Brit. Emp. S 18, C 30/122 and C 34/39, RHL.

and of upper- and middle-class fears of working-class agitation at this period.<sup>80</sup> Catherine Hall is in the process of research on issues of gender and ethnicity in relation to the riot.<sup>81</sup> In addition, the impact of the controversy on the freedmen's aid movement has been assessed by Vaughan and Bolt.<sup>82</sup>

This section supplements these studies by focussing specifically on women abolitionists' reaction to the controversy. This has been largely ignored as the result of female marginalization in the public debate. The two rival committees formed in Britain in 1865 in response to the events, the Jamaica Committee, and the Eyre Defence Committee, were both composed entirely of men. In the case of the Jamaica Committee, formed to campaign for Eyre's prosecution, this was not because its members were hostile to women's rights. Indeed its leader, John Stuart Mill was a leading proponent of women's suffrage. Rather, female exclusion resulted from the desire of the Committee to recruit members with the greatest public power and influence, and women had little of either. The Committee was dominated by M.P.'s and clergymen, occupations which

---

<sup>80</sup>Semmel, The Governor Eyre Controversy; Douglas Lorimer, Class, Colour and the Victorians, (Leicester: Leicester U.P., 1978), chap. ix; Christine Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), chap. iii.

<sup>81</sup>Catherine Hall, "The Economy of Intellectual Prestige: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre", unpublished paper the substance of which was delivered to a seminar at the Institute of Historical Research on 13th January 1989. Many thanks to Catherine Hall for lending me a copy of this paper.

<sup>82</sup>Vaughan, "The British Freedmen's Aid Movement", chaps. v, vi; Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction, pp. 36-50.

respectively carried the greatest political and moral weight, but which were both closed to women.

Women abolitionists, excluded from membership of the Jamaica Committee, nevertheless backed its work. The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society stressed the importance of the gentlemen's work in "vindicating the law, providing constitutional safeguard against the recurrence of such abuse of prerogative" and defending "the safeguards of life throughout the breadth of our vast empire".<sup>83</sup> The group circulated the Committee's pamphlets, and contributed to the Jamaica Investigation Fund. The fund also received donations from Aberdeen and Preston Ladies' Anti-Slavery Societies, and Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society.<sup>84</sup> Women also gave practical aid to victims of destitution in Jamaica caused by Eyre's reprisals. The Birmingham society sent £100 worth of clothing and other goods to Jamaica in 1865-6, and Edinburgh women contributed a small sum to a Restitution Fund for Sufferers in Jamaica.<sup>85</sup>

Women based their support for the Jamaica Committee on their own knowledge of developments in Jamaica. The Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society's continuing support for missionary and educational support among the black population of the West Indies involved it in

---

<sup>83</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XV, no. 5 (May 1867), p. 101; Vol. XVI, no. 1 (Jan 1868), p. 20.

<sup>84</sup>Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society ... Ending 15th February 1866, p. 25; "Special contributions for the Jamaica matter" listed in Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XIV, no. 3 (Mar 1866), p. 85; no. 4 (Apr 1866), p. 113; no. 9 (Sept 1866), p. 234. Only one donation from a men's auxiliary is listed.

<sup>85</sup>See accounts in the Forty-First Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham and the Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society ... Ending 4th April 1867.

extensive correspondence with missionary teachers. These teachers gave then first-hand information on events, and stressed the temperate and hard-working character of the black population.<sup>86</sup>

Birmingham women had campaigned in 1859-60 against the importation to Jamaica of "coolie" labour from China and India.<sup>87</sup> They had also compiled a pamphlet on the state of Jamaica, which combated claims by Thomas Carlyle and others that the economic ruin of the plantations was the result of black laziness by laying the blame on inefficient plantation management.<sup>88</sup>

The Birmingham women were well aware of the depressed state of the island at the time when the Morant Bay riot occurred.<sup>89</sup> At a meeting attended by fifty women on 6 Febraury 1866, several months after the riot, letters the society had recently received from Jamaica were read and a

---

<sup>86</sup>The Thirty-Sixth, Thirty-Ninth and Fortieth Reports of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham ..., (Birmingham: Hudson, 1861, 1864, 1865); reports of the Society's meetings in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VIII, no. 10 (Oct 1860), p. 268; Vol. IX, no. 7 (July 1861), p. 145; Vol. X, no. 8 (Aug 1862), p. 182; Vol. XII, no. 4 (Apr 1864), p. 95.

<sup>87</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VIII, no. 3 (March 1859), p. 72; no. 6 (June 1859), p. 144; no. 10 (Oct 1859), pp. 217-8; Vol. IX, no. 1 (Jan 1860), pp. 12-13; no. 3 (Mar 1860), p. 67. Edinburgh women sent a similar petition - see Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, for the Year Ending March, 1859, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1859), p. 9.

<sup>88</sup>The Labour Question in the West Indies. Three Letters from Ernest Noel, Esq. ... and also, Extracts from the Correspondence of the New York Times, (Birmingham: printed for the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, by Hudson, [ca. 1860]); review in Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VIII, no. 10 (Oct 1860), pp. 267-8. See also The Thirty-Sixth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham.

<sup>89</sup>The Fortieth Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, pp. 21-24.

resolution was passed which, while strongly condemning the murders committed by the rioters, also expressed the belief that the Government Commission of Inquiry would prove:

that these barbarous acts were no part of a general conspiracy to exterminate the white population of the island, and that therefore the indiscriminate slaughter of the numbers that perished under martial law, with the flogging of women and the suffering of children, calls for the strongest condemnation, and, as far as possible, for redress from the English people.<sup>90</sup>

This image of suffering of black women and children contrasted with the spectre of savage black male lust for white women conjured up by British newspapers sympathetic to Eyre.<sup>91</sup> In their 1866 report the Birmingham women, while repeating their condemnation of the rioters, attacked opponents of the anti-slavery cause for using the riots to stereotype blacks as savages on whom attempts at education were wasted. It was unfair to condemn all for the misdeeds of the few, for "we believe that these acts cannot fairly be attributed to any peculiar depravity of the negro race". Rather, black character was similar to "the character of the labouring classes in our own land", which "rises and falls in no inconsiderable degree with that of the classes above them". Counterposing the pro-slavery stereotype of the savage with the missionary stereotype of the childlike innocent, the women argued that the influence of bad example would "operate more powerfully with a race naturally impulsive and imitative in a high degree." In Jamaica, where blacks were dealt with "by those who despise

---

<sup>90</sup>See report of meeting in Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XIV, no. 3 (March 1866), pp. 86-7.

<sup>91</sup>See Douglas A. Lorimer, Class, Colour and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, (Leicester: Leicester U.P., 1978), p. 182.

and hate them" it was inevitable that bad consequences would follow.<sup>92</sup>

The Birmingham women felt that if proper efforts had been made for black education the catastrophe of 1865 might have been avoided.<sup>93</sup> The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society took a more radical line, supporting education not because of the potentially good influence of "superior" whites but as a way of informing black people about their rights. The Society considered that:

Although the rising at Morant Bay was the first act of violence, it is well known that the unhappiness of the people had just grounds in the oppressive tariffs, the low rate of wages the withholding of wages, and the impossibility of procuring legal redress.<sup>94</sup>

To avoid the recurrence of a similar tragedy it donated £20 towards education in Jamaica in 1867, stating:

The best compensation it is in the power of their friends in this country to provide, is to send means of education, so that, under careful protection, these poor people may be able to expand to the moral dignity of free citizens, and to understand contracts, regulations of wages, and other arrangements which materially affect them, and in which they have been so grievously imposed upon by the white race.<sup>95</sup>

For abolitionists the most shocking aspect of the Eyre controversy was the spectacle of the majority of the press and middle class public siding with the Governor. Worries had earlier been expressed at the tendency of the press and

---

<sup>92</sup>The Forty-First Report of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, pp. 6-10.

<sup>93</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XVI, no. 1 (Jan 1868), p. 20.

<sup>94</sup>Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society ... During the Year Ending 15th February 1866, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1866), p. 25.

<sup>95</sup>Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society ... Year Ending 4th April 1867, p. 3.

the well-off to side with the Southern Confederacy during the Civil War, but it had been possible to attribute this partly to confusion about the objectives of the North. The openly racist tone of support for Eyre, however, forced abolitionists to acknowledge that the tide of public opinion in favour of anti-slavery in the 1830's had, after a period of apathy, now been reversed. The Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society deplored the spectacle of the upper and middle classes urging the Government to restore and reward Eyre.<sup>96</sup> The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society expressed its particular disgust at finding English women applauding as a hero a man who had been accessory to the flogging and slaughter of women.<sup>97</sup> There was little, however, that they, or others among the minority of anti-slavery activists of the middle class, could do to change the situation. The termination of the national freedmen's aid societies in 1868 was in part the result of this decline in public sympathy for former slaves which had crystallized during the Governor Eyre controversy.

#### 4. Africa and Cuba: Black Education and the Spanish Slave Trade

During the 1860's British abolitionists, while focusing their attention on events in America and Jamaica, also continued to support educational initiatives by missionaries in Africa and to campaign for the end of

---

<sup>96</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XVII, no. 8 (Jan 1869), p. 184.

<sup>97</sup>Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society ... Ending 4th Apr 1867, p. 3.

involvement by other European powers in the slave trade. As earlier, abolitionists saw these educational and anti-slavery campaigns as interconnected: "we consider", the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society stated in their 1864 report, "that the civilization and Christianization of Africa afford the best antidotes for the slave trade, native slavery, and the dreadful human sacrifices."<sup>98</sup> More broadly, women linked their support for these two campaigns to the other causes they supported: pacifism, campaigns against the degradation of women in "savage" societies, and temperance. Commenting on progress at the Mendi Mission schools it helped fund in West Africa, the Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society stated that "very pleasing accounts are constantly received of the readiness among the people to listen to Christian instruction, even when it conveys reproof of war, polygamy, slavery, and intemperance."<sup>99</sup>

The major effort by women abolitionists to support African education was made in response to appeals by Mrs Moseley, the widow of the late chief justice at Cape Coast Castle on the Gold Coast of West Africa. In "A Cry from the Cape Coast", printed in the Freed-Man of December 1866, she explained that the Christian kings of the area wished to establish a Christian Industrial School, and that she

---

<sup>98</sup>Report of the Committee of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society for the Year Ending March 3 1864, p. 2. In 1862 the Society had given a small donation to a girls' school in Liberia (see Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society ... Ending 4th March 1862, [p. 27]).

<sup>99</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VIII, no. 10 (Oct 1860), p. 268. See also Thirty-Sixth, Thirty-Ninth and Fortieth Reports of the Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham.

herself wished to set up a female infant school. Mrs Moseley's scheme gained the support of the BAFAS and was extensively publicised in the Freed-Man. She was held up to other English women as an example at a time when missionary zeal appeared to be collapsing, for: "here was a lady of education, of aristocratic relations, with ample means, turning from the best English society, to the work of the truest philanthropy."<sup>100</sup>

Mrs Moseley, like other missionaries and abolitionists of the period, had a patronising view of black people, but a firm belief in their innate humanity which contrasted sharply in the derogatory views of black ineducability gaining currency in Britain at this period. In an appeal to English children she attempted to counter such views, stating that black children were not the monkeys many of them had been taught to believe, but had a natural intelligence, though they were "sunk in superstition, idolatory and ignorance". To adults she argued that "the negro character is as capable of gratitude, affection, and fidelity, as it is of intelligence, when treated with consideration, justice, and straightforwardness."<sup>101</sup>

Women abolitionists sent subscriptions for Mrs Moseley's schools and decided to allocate her part of the proceeds of a freedmen's aid bazaar initiated by Ellen Craft in connection with the BAFAS. Support for the bazaar was not extensive, however, and only around £44 was

---

<sup>100</sup>Freed-Man, no. 20 (March 1867), p. 120-1.

<sup>101</sup>Freed-Man, no. 18 (Jan 1867), pp. 84-88; no. 20 (March 1867), p. 116.

raised, suggesting that fears about declining missionary and anti-slavery zeal were well-founded.<sup>102</sup>

Women also campaigned more directly against the continuance of the African slave trade. It is likely that bazaar organiser Ellen Craft had been one of the "several well-dressed men and women of colour" who attended a public meeting on the African slave trade in London in 1862.<sup>103</sup> Certainly female abolitionists at this period provided around one fifth of the funding for her husband William Craft's anti-slavery mission to the King of Dahomey in West Africa.<sup>104</sup>

Abolitionists were particularly concerned at the continuing involvement of Spain in the slave trade and in slavery in its colony of Cuba. The Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society felt that the issue was of "immense importance", and one in which the British were implicated through their consumption of Cuban produce. It supported the BFASS's campaign against the slave trade to Cuba, trying with some success to arouse public opinion on the issue through circulating information to clergymen and ministers in the Birmingham area.<sup>105</sup> Success came with the

---

<sup>102</sup>Freed-Man, no. 15 (Oct 1866), p. 32; no. 17 (Dec 1866), pp. 71, 76; no. 18 (Jan 1867), p. 82; no. 20 (March 1867), p. 117-121, p. 124; no. 21 (Apr 1867), p. 134-7; no. 22 (May 1867), p. 152; no. 23 (June 1867), p. 161; no. 24 (July 1867), p. 180, 184-6; no. 26 (Sept 1867), p. 220.

<sup>103</sup>Friend, n.s., Vol. II (1862), p. 178.

<sup>104</sup>Subscriptions Received in aid of W. Craft's Mission to the West Coast of Africa, and Especially to the King of Dahomey, (Bedford Square [London], November 1862).

<sup>105</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. VIII, no. 11 (Nov 1860), p. 271; Vol. IX, no. 1 (Jan 1861), p. 24; no. 4 (Apr 1861), p. 95; no. 12 (Dec 1861), p. 278; Vol. X, no. 4 (Mar 1862), p. 72; no. 5 (May 1862), p. 97; no. 8 (Aug 1862), p. 182; no. 10 (Oct 1862), p. 239.

Treaty of Washington, concluded in April 1862 and formalising co-operation between Britain and America in imposing a blockade on slave ships. This, as Howard Temperley has pointed out, effectively ended the Atlantic slave trade by the mid 1860's.<sup>106</sup>

Women abolitionists in Britain also tried to arouse Spanish women to campaign against their country's involvement in slavery and the slave trade. The Birmingham society produced a pamphlet in Spanish, which was favourably reviewed in Spain.<sup>107</sup> In 1862, at the suggestion of the BFASS, the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society decided to promote an Address to the Queen of Spain from British ladies, urging the abolition of the slave trade. The Address took several years to organise, however, and was not presented until 1868.<sup>108</sup> More effectual were the series of friendly addresses to Spanish ladies presented in 1865, which appealed to them on behalf of slaves in the Spanish colonies. These were drafted by the Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, the London Negro Aid Society (the successor of the London Ladies' Emancipation Society), Liverpool Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and anti-slavery ladies at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. They were read out to great applause at a great meeting in Madrid on 10 December 1865. They were translated, published in Spanish newspapers, reprinted for general

---

<sup>106</sup>Temperley, British Antislavery, p. 257.

<sup>107</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. X, no. 10 (Oct 1862), p. 240.

<sup>108</sup>BFASS Minute Book, entires for 7 Mar 1862, 1 May 1868, MSS Brit. Emp. S 20, E 2/9, in RHL.

circulation, and stimulated the formation of Madrid Ladies' Emancipation Society.<sup>109</sup>

Women's campaigning against continued European involvement in slavery and the slave trade, and their support for African education were, however, only minor aspects of their work at this period, and of minor significance compared to the work of missionary societies themselves, and to the role of international diplomacy in advancing the end of slavery and the slave trade.

##### 5. Anti-Slavery and Feminism: the 1860's and Beyond

The above survey of women's contributions to the anti-slavery and freedmen's aid movements has indicated that neither movement accorded equal participation to women. Indeed some regression from the 1850's is discernible, with the return to exclusively single-sex national and local societies, the ghettoizing of women in sewing circles, the absence of female delegates to decision-making meetings, and the lack of women lecturers. In view of this it is at first sight surprising to find that many women active in anti-slavery and freedmen's aid in the 1860's became leaders of feminist campaigns in the late 1860's.

This section explores the link between anti-slavery and women's rights in 1860's Britain, looking at the strength of the link in terms of personnel, and assessing the extent to which features of the anti-slavery movement fostered these women's feminist involvements.

While historians of the British anti-slavery movement have ignored any connections it might have with the women's

---

<sup>109</sup>Anti-Slavery Reporter, 3rd Series, Vol. XIV, no. 1 (Jan 1866), pp. 20-23; no. 3 (March 1866), p. 86.

rights movement, historians of feminism have focused on the impact World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 rather than on the entry of women abolitionists into the organised feminist movement in the 1860's (see chapter V, section 10). An article on "The emancipation of women" in the Westminster Review of 1887 stated that "the public work of women began appropriately with the Anti-Slavery agitation", and traced a path from this through the temperance and anti-Corn Law movements to the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and the women's suffrage movement.<sup>110</sup> The present study of women anti-slavery campaigners provides the basis for constructing a more precise picture of the links between abolition and organised feminism in the 1860's.

An important exception to the neglect of links between abolitionism and feminism in the 1860's are studies of the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts by Judith Walkowitz and Paul McHugh. The women's campaign coordinated by the Ladies' National Association (henceforth, LNA) in 1869-86 rates alongside the women's suffrage movement as a major feminist campaign. Walkowitz's table of the other voluntary activities of the LNA leadership identifies ten of the thirty-three women as having been involved in anti-slavery, and my own research shows six of these to have been leading anti-slavery activists: Mary Estlin, Margaret Bright Lucas (a member of the committee of the London Ladies' Emancipation Society), Priscilla Bright McLaren (a member of the committee of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society), Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth

---

<sup>110</sup>Westminster Review, Vol. CXXVIII (1887), pp. 165-173 (quote from p. 168).

Pease Nichol and Eliza Wigham. Seven of the ten were also involved in the women's suffrage movement, four in promoting higher education for women, and two in the campaign for a married women's property act.<sup>111</sup>

Josephine Butler, leader of the LNA, and committee member Elizabeth Pease Nichol were involved in both anti-slavery and all five feminist campaigns. A comparison of the two women should thus shed some light on link between anti-slavery and feminism.

Elizabeth Pease Nicol (1807-1897) had been a leading anti-slavery activist since around 1836-8, and her background and early work for the movement has already been described. In 1859, on the death of her husband, she moved to Edinburgh, where she joined her friend Eliza Wigham as one of the leaders of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, becoming involved freedmen's aid work. As has been explained in earlier chapters, Nichol's interest in women's rights was as long-standing as her commitment to anti-slavery, and had been fostered by her meetings and correspondence with leading American abolitionist feminists. While she had supported her American friends' stand, however, she had never pushed women's rights in the British anti-slavery movement. It was not until her

---

<sup>111</sup>Judith Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State, (Cambridge University Press, 1980), Table I [pp. 126-7]. The other anti-slavery supporters listed by Walkowitz are Josephine Butler, Emilie Ashurst Hawkes Venturi (one of the daughters of radical lawyer William Henry Ashurst Senior) Margaret Tanner (1817-1905 - a Bristol Quaker), and Mrs H. Kenway (a Birmingham Quaker). To these can be added several women abolitionists mentioned by McHugh as important local activists in the campaign against the Acts: the Clarks of Street in Somerset and the Priestmans and Mrs Charles Thomas of Bristol (see Paul McHugh, Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform, (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 170-171).

sixties that she became active in the women's movement, and she can be taken as representative of that generation of female abolitionists for whom the winding down of the British anti-slavery and freedmen's aid movements released reforming energies which were channelled into the newly organised women's rights movement. Indeed, it may be tentatively suggested that one reason why feminist organisations burgeoned in the late 1860's was because of this release of women reformers from anti-slavery work.

Josephine Butler (1828-1906), some twenty years the junior of Elizabeth, is representative of the generation of feminists who were too young to have been in the height of the British anti-slavery movement in 1823-38, but who came from families which had supported the cause. Her own anti-slavery convictions had led to early support for the North during the American Civil War, and donations to the Freedmen's Aid movement. Josephine later credited her unpopular stand during the War with providing useful training for her work in the controversial campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts: "The feeling of isolation was often painful ... but the discipline was useful."<sup>112</sup>

Josephine admired Garrison for his uncompromising anti-slavery stance, his stress on moral suasion and his fervent desire to combat suffering.<sup>113</sup> She and her co-workers in the LNA referred to themselves as "abolitionists" campaigning in the "New Abolition" movement and her rhetoric was imbued with references to slavery. She

---

<sup>112</sup>Quoted in Glen Petrie, A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler, (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 44.

<sup>113</sup>See McHugh, Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform, p. 171, 240-241.

described the C.D. Acts as a "legislative movement for the creation of a slave class of women for the supposed benefit of licentious men".<sup>114</sup> Like women abolitionists before her, she saw her new campaign as a religious mission, drawing inspiration from a conviction that equality and liberty were the basis of Christ's teachings. She argued that just as slaves had found arguments against slavery in the Scriptures despite the sanction they might appear superficially to give, so women had found arguments for their liberation from "legal thralldom" and from "chains which had been riveted by the traditions of centuries."<sup>115</sup> In Walkowitz's account of how women like Butler viewed the prostitutes on whose behalf they were campaigning as their "less fortunate sisters" who were the innocent and passive victims of male lust, may be discerned many echoes of women anti-slavery campaigners expressions of concern for female slaves.<sup>116</sup> Both sets of propaganda show the desire of middle class women to counter the stereotype of voracious working-class/black female sexuality with an alternative stereotype of the passive and inarticulate female victim.

As well as drawing on anti-slavery for its ideological approach, the developing feminist movement made use of the network of female abolitionists in creating its own network and leadership. This network overlapped with the networks of Quaker and Unitarian families, denominations which

---

<sup>114</sup>Josephine E. Butler, Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade, (London: Horace Marshall, 1896), p. 81.

<sup>115</sup>Josephine E. Butler (ed.), Women's Work and Women's Culture, (London: Macmillan, 1869), introduction, pp. lv, lvi, lvii.

<sup>116</sup>See especially Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, pp. 110, 146, 255.

provided the leadership of both anti-slavery and feminist movements. Caroline Ashurst Biggs asserted of Mentia Taylor, known as the "mother" of the women's suffrage movement, that "when she began her efforts for women's suffrage, the English abolitionists were among the first correspondents to whom she applied, and they nearly all responded cordially".<sup>117</sup> This is backed by the large number of London Ladies' Emancipation Society officers, committee members and pamphleteers who became leading figures in the women's movement. Mentia Taylor herself acted as secretary and treasurer of the London Women's Suffrage Society, and other leading feminists involved in the Emancipation Society included veteran abolitionists Mary Estlin, Harriet Martineau, Sarah Parker Remond and Caroline Ashurst (Mrs James) Stansfield as well as new recruits like Margaret Bright (Mrs Samuel) Lucas, Frances Power Cobbe, Isa Craig, Emily Shirreff, Miss E. A. Manning, Elizabeth (Mrs Frank) Malleson and Harriet Taylor. Less certain are the identifications of committee members "Miss Davies", "Miss Priestman", "Mrs Wedgwood", and "Miss Merryweather" as the feminist campaigners Emily Davies, A.M. or Mary Priestman of Bristol, Mrs Hensleigh Wedgwood and M. Merryweather.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup>Elizabeth Cady Stanton et al., eds., History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. III, p. 840.

<sup>118</sup>The First and Second Reports of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society. Of the women mentioned Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904) was a journalist who became a leading anti-vivisection campaigner, and whose public support for women's rights dated back to 1862; Isa Craig was assistant secretary to the Association for the Promotion of Social Science; Emilie Shirreff (1814-1897) became a leading campaigner for women's higher education from 1870; Elizabeth Malleson (1828-1914) became a supporter of women's suffrage in the 1850's but is best known as a campaigner against the C.D. Acts; Harriet Taylor (1807-

The link with abolition was also evident in the case of leading male supporters of the women's movement: the London Negro Aid Society, the mixed sex successor of the Ladies' London Emancipation Society, included on its committee the leading Parliamentary supporters of women's suffrage Professor Henry Fawcett, John Stuart Mill and Mr Peter A. Taylor.

Outside London the links between anti-slavery and feminism are equally striking. The strongest women's suffrage societies in the 1860's were in London, Manchester, Bristol and Edinburgh, and in all cases women who had led the local ladies' anti-slavery societies became leaders of the local women's suffrage committees. Rebecca Moore, founder of the Manchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and the first woman to attend a British anti-slavery conference as a delegate, became a member of the executive committee of the Manchester Society for Women's Suffrage. Mary Estlin, leader of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, acted as treasurer of the Bristol and West of England branch of the Women's Suffrage Society, as well as being a member of the executive committee of the LNA. Eliza Wigham, secretary of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, acted as secretary of the Edinburgh Women's Suffrage Society, while her step-mother and fellow anti-slavery activist Jane Wigham also

---

1858), wife of John Stuart Mill, wrote in favour of women's rights in the 1850's; Emily Davies (1830-1921) was a pioneer of higher education for women; Margaret Bright Lucas (1818-1890), Mary Priestman and M. Merryweather were all on the committee of the L.N.A and Mrs Hensleigh Wedgwood was a women's suffrage campaigner. (see Olive Banks, Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1985), Vol. I; Ray Strachey, The Cause (London: Virago, 1979 reprint of 1928 edition)).

joined the suffrage committee. In addition Elizabeth Pease Nichol acted as its treasurer and Priscilla Bright Maclaren, who had joined the committee of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society in the 1860's, became its president. Eliza Wigham, Elizabeth Pease Nichol and Priscilla Bright McLaren also served on the executive committee of the LNA.<sup>119</sup>

Such women brought to the women's movement a tradition of public activism, experience in organising women, in canvassing, in fund-raising, in propagandising, and in the petitioning of Parliament, as well as their valuable contacts and friendships with an extensive network of activists. Many had long-established links with American feminist abolitionists. Leading female supporters of Garrison, in Britain as in America, became leading women's rights activists, and London, Manchester, Bristol and Edinburgh, which had the most active radical female anti-slavery societies, gained the strongest women's suffrage societies.

Links between women allied to the BFASS and the feminist movement were less common, as would be expected given the BFASS's history of opposition to women's rights. Nevertheless the treasurer of the Birmingham Ladies' Freedmen's Aid Association, Mrs W. Middlemore, became a member of the local women's suffrage committee, as did Miss Sturge and Miss Albright, members of the two leading Quaker anti-slavery families of the town.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup>Women's Suffrage Journal, Vol. I, no. 1, (March 1870), pp. 7, 8.

<sup>120</sup>For members of Birmingham suffrage committee see Women's Suffrage Journal, Vol I, no. 1 (March 1870), p. 7.

Radical British and American abolitionists discussed and exchanged information on the developing women's rights movements in their correspondence. Mentia Taylor, Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Mary Estlin, Eliza Wigham and Harriet Lupton corresponded on women's suffrage with Samuel J. May Jr., Sarah Pugh, William Lloyd Garrison and Oliver Johnson.<sup>121</sup> Mary Estlin sent information on the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts to Maria Weston Chapman.<sup>122</sup> Rebecca Moore of Manchester wrote occasional articles for Revolution, journal of the Stanton-Anthony wing of the American suffrage movement. Garrison, while he approved of her articles, wrote to Elizabeth Pease Nichol criticising this wing of the movement for its opposition to giving black men the vote before white women and its dubious alliance with the racist George Francis Train.<sup>123</sup> Garrison's visit to Britain in 1877 was welcomed by feminists who felt that he would lend a "high moral and religious tone" to the movement, and that his association

---

<sup>121</sup>Mentia Taylor to Rev. Samuel May Jr., London, postmarked 10 Jan 1866, MS B.1.6. v.10, no.30 in BPL; Sarah Pugh to Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Germantown, Philadelphia, 15 Apr 15 1867, MS A.1.2. v.35, p.15B in BPL; Eliza Wigham to William Lloyd Garrison, Dublin, 1 May 1868, MS A.1.2. v.36, p.22, in BPL; Sarah Pugh to Mary Estlin, Germantown, 31 Jan, 27 Aug, 7 Dec 1869; Oliver Johnson to Mary Estlin, New York, 14 Feb 1869; W. L. Garrison to Mary Estlin, Roxbury Oct 8, 1868, items 24.121.76,77,78, 24.125.25, 24.124.7 of Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library.

<sup>122</sup>M. W. Chapman to Mary Estlin, Staten Island, 17 Mar [n.y.], Weymouth, 25 Nov 1875; Frank J Garrison to Mary Estlin, 1876-1881, items 24.122.53,54, 24.124.8-20, Estlin Papers, Dr Williams Library.

<sup>123</sup>William Lloyd Garrison to Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Roxbury, 26 Sept 1869, as quoted in Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. VI, no. 36.

with the successful anti-slavery cause would encourage people to believe in the women's suffrage movement.<sup>124</sup>

Looking at the connections between anti-slavery and feminism in 1860's Britain as a whole, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The end of the freedmen's aid movement released the energies of women's rights supporters for the new feminist campaigns. Experience of supporting an unpopular cause during the American Civil War helped give women strength to launch a controversial campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts, in which women abolitionists' traditional concern for the "degraded" woman was transferred from slave to prostitute. Anti-slavery also provided local and national networks of reformers, predominantly Quakers and Unitarians, from which feminism drew much of its leadership. Finally, close contacts between radical women abolitionists in Britain and Garrisonian abolitionist feminists in America provided a stimulating exchange of information and source of support.

#### 6. A Lingering Concern: Women and Anti-Slavery After 1868

The feminist movement provided a new focus for female reform and activism from 1866 onwards, an important element of the ferment of political and social reform in Britain which Christine Bolt has identified as a major reason for the end of the organised anti-slavery and freedmen's aid movements in 1868.<sup>125</sup> The diversity of issues and priorities at this period is highlighted in an account by

---

<sup>124</sup>Letter from Mary Burton to Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Edinburgh, 1 Aug 1877, MS A.1.2. v.39, p.117, BPL. Mary Burton was a prominent Scottish lecturer on women's suffrage.

<sup>125</sup>Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction, pp. 139-40.

Frances Power Cobbe of a gathering of reformers, all men and women who had played leading parts in the anti-slavery movement, at Mentia Taylor's home in London. A discussion of "what is the great cause of the age?" led to various responses of parliamentary reform, industrial schools, teetotalism, theism and women's suffrage. Only Sarah Parker Remond, the sole black participant, continued to give priority to the eradication of slavery.<sup>126</sup>

Quakers, despite the demands of the many other reforming causes in which they played a leading part, nevertheless maintained an interest in freemen's aid after the demise of its formal organisations. Elizabeth Backhouse of York wrote to the editor of the British Friend in November 1868 urging those "interested in the welfare of the coloured freed people of the United States" to send contributions through her to enable a woman to set up a school for training black teachers.<sup>127</sup> Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, informed by their American correspondents of the continuing need for aid, held a bazaar for similar purposes in 1869.<sup>128</sup> Such support for training black teachers accorded with the change in middle

---

<sup>126</sup>Life of Frances Power Cobbe as Told by Herself, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1904 ed.), p. 283.

<sup>127</sup>British Friend, Vol. XXVI (1868), pp. 309-11. Elizabeth Backhouse (1800-82) was the daughter of Quakers James Backhouse, a Darlington banker, and his wife Mary. A spinster, she looked after the children of her widowed missionary brother for many years and then got involved in freedmen's aid, despite being almost blind.

<sup>128</sup>See advertisement for the bazaar in British Friend, Vol. XXVII (1869), p. 123.

class attitudes at this period from a stress on charity to an emphasis on self-help.<sup>129</sup>

As late as 1878 some Americans were arguing, and some British supporters were agreeing, that aid to free blacks was still needed. Catherine Impey (1847-1923), for example, was an English Quaker who was too young to have played much part in the anti-slavery or freedmen's aid movements of the 1860's.<sup>130</sup> However, on a visit to Boston, Massachusetts in 1878 as a delegate to the International Conference of the Temperance Order of Good Templars, she met with former leaders of the American abolition movement and leading black churchmen. She was told of the colour bars in occupations and on public transport, and of the self-satisfied indifference to black people's plight which was prevalent even among abolitionists. Her black contacts, who impressed her with their education, stressed that they did not want patronage but simply a fair and equal chance. Writing to the Friend of her experiences, she argued that the stereotype of African inferiority was unjust, since some black men and women were "highly educated, refined and intelligent". The social disabilities of blacks were "the remains of slavery". The few in America who were "continuing to fight the battle of freedom under this new aspect" looked to "unprejudiced Christianised common sense of the British people" for moral

---

<sup>129</sup>See Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction, pp. 138-40 for a discussion of this change in British middle class attitudes, and the popularity of Samuel Smiles' 1859 tract, Self Help.

<sup>130</sup>Catherine Impey was the daughter of Quakers Robert and Mary Impey. She remained single and lived in Street in Somerset all her life, becoming a member of the urban district council and the local Board of Guardians.

support. "Should we not, then", she asked, "disregard the cry of 'British interference', and endeavour, both by act and word, as opportunity may offer, to obtain the recognition of the dark-skinned man as truly a man and a brother."<sup>131</sup>

Catherine Impey retained her opposition to racial prejudice, editing a periodical called Anti-Caste between 1888-1895, which was "devoted to the interests of the coloured races", particularly Afro-Americans. In her opening address to readers she stated that distinctions and disabilities based on differences in social rank or on physical characteristics such as sex or race were "contrary to the mind of Christ". She gained the support of Hannah Joseph Sturge, president of the Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society at this period.<sup>132</sup>

Another English Quaker woman to become involved in support for American freedmen in the 1870's was Anne Elizabeth Horne, matron of the North Eastern Hospital in Hackney Road, London. Her involvement was stimulated by Yardley Warner (1815-85), an American Quaker who came to Britain to gain support for his educational work among the freedmen in the Southern states. Horne and Warner corresponded on freedmen's aid, and in 1877 were married. They remained in Britain for four years raising funds then returned to Tennessee to work at the Warner Institute.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup>Friend, n.s., Vol. XVIII (1878), pp. 239-42.

<sup>132</sup>Anti-Caste, Vol. I, no. 1 (March 1888), p. 1; no. 2 (Apr 1888), p. 4.

<sup>133</sup>Stafford Allen Warner, Yardley Warner: the Freedman's Friend, (Didcot: Wessex Press, 1957), information on Anne Horne on pp. 89-90 and letters to her from Yardley Warner in Appendix B (pp. 271-284). See discussion of their activities in T.J. Vaughan, "The British

Both Catherine Impey and Anne E. Yardley Warner were involved in the mid 1880's in the formation of the Society for the Furtherance of Human Brotherhood. This Society issued an address which appealed to people to "complete the work of the Anti-Slavery Movement by securing, not mere declarations of emancipation, but the full enjoyment of FREEDOM, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AND BROTHERHOOD within the pale of the one great human family." While chattel slavery in America had been abolished twenty years before, it had been replaced by racial prejudice, persecution and violence. The few Northerners still fighting for equality, and the leaders of the black community, needed support from outside America for their work. The new Society had thus been formed "with a view to rendering this support to the surviving Anti-Slavery sentiment of our sister nation, and also of instilling principles of justice and human brotherhood in our own people at home, in India, and in the Colonies (who are far from blameless in this matter of race-prejudice)".<sup>134</sup>

A list of names of both men and women was appended to the appeal, headed by Edinburgh abolitionists and feminists Eliza Wigham and Elizabeth Pease Nichol, which suggests that it was they who initiated the group. Other female signatories included Mary Estlin, Mary Carpenter, Josephine Butler, Mary Priestman and Margaret Tanner, and Helen Bright Clark, a Quaker from Street in Somerset who was

---

Freedmen's Aid Movement", pp. 250-53.

<sup>134</sup>To the Friends of Justice and Humanity Everywhere, Especially Those who Interest Themselves in the Future of the Coloured Race; Also to the Remnant of the Anti-Slavery Workers, and the Members of the Society of Friends, [n.p., n.d.].

active in both freedmen's aid and women's suffrage movements in the 1860's. The list thus provides evidence of the overlap between the black and women's rights movements in terms of both personnel and chronology and indicates that preoccupation with feminism did not result in a complete neglect of issues of race and slavery.

The Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society was the only local anti-slavery society to survive into the 1870's, though the BFASS (now known as the Anti-Slavery Society) has survived to the present day as a small London-based pressure group. The Birmingham society continued to meet and to publish annual reports until 1919, when its secretary was Mrs Wilson Sturge, the daughter of society founder Mary Lloyd. In 1875 it produced a Retrospect of its half century of activism, summing up its work for both anti-slavery and black education. The Retrospect was a tribute to female efforts in the cause, singling out for special praise the work of its founders Lucy Townsend and Mary Lloyd, of local activists Rachel Lloyd and Sophia Sturge, of the pamphleteer Elizabeth Heyrick and of the educationalist Hannah Kilham.

### Conclusion

Comparing the activities of women campaigners in the 1860's with those of earlier activists such as the women listed in the Birmingham society's Retrospect, clear elements of continuity are evident. Women who had been active as early as the 1830's, notably Harriet Martineau, continued to be active in the 1860's. Local women's societies were more likely to survive into the 1860's than local men's groups, and the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation

Society and Birmingham Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, two of the most vibrant local groups in the 1840's and 1850's, continued active. Women's sewing circles made clothes for the freedmen just as women had earlier made goods for anti-slavery bazaars, and female campaigners maintained their traditional concerns for the sufferings of black women, for educational work among black people and for the arousal of female public opinion.

There were also new elements, most importantly the London Ladies' Emancipation Society, which produced an important series of tracts on the American Civil War and which involved a number of new activists.

The freedmen's aid movement, the main focus of the anti-slavery movement between 1863 and 1868, received vital practical support from women, but did not give them representation on its decision-making committees. Nevertheless, with the end of the freedmen's aid movement many prominent women abolitionists, mostly former supporters of the Garrisonian wing of the American movement, became leading activists in feminist campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Acts and for women's suffrage.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have attempted to provide a history-an account not previously written - of women anti-slavery campaigners in Britain. In the process it has been my aim to offer new insights into both the anti-slavery movement and women's lives in the period from the 1780's to the 1860's.

In terms of anti-slavery history, this study has shown that our understanding of the anti-slavery movement is increased if we take into account the contributions of women, and the influence of gender ideology on the movement as a whole. Such approaches clarify the nature of anti-slavery as a popular extra-parliamentary campaign operating at both a national and a provincial level. They expose the differing ways in which public support could be enlisted and the variety of forms which "pressure from without" could take.

The study of ladies' associations in this thesis has illuminated the provincial and local organisation of anti-slavery. These associations, founded from 1825 onwards, operated largely independently of local men's auxiliary societies, rather than being subsidiary groups of the type common in many philanthropic organisations of the period. Ladies' associations provided women with a forum for developing their own ways of working, their own campaigning priorities and their own anti-slavery networks. The groups shared common priorities with men's auxiliaries, concentrating, in the 1820's and 1830's at least, on the diffusion of information and the arousal of public opinion.

However, men's and women's groups tended to target members of their own sex, and went about achieving their objectives in correspondingly different ways, men through public meetings, women through house-to-house canvassing. Women's methods of work, while more time-consuming than those adopted by men, reached a wider section of the community, beyond those already sufficiently interested in the cause to attend a public meeting. Specifically, they reached other women in their own homes. Female activists wrote tracts aimed especially at women which encouraged them to harness their domestic duties to anti-slavery ends. In particular, women who were responsible for household purchases were urged to join the consumer boycott of slave-produce.

A study of ladies' associations has also contributed to an understanding of the relationship between local groups and national anti-slavery societies. Above all, it has become clear that women's exclusion from the successive London-based national committees, while it made it difficult for them to influence policy matters, did not mean that their role in the movement was a passive one. Rather than simply retailing the information provided by national committees and funding central initiatives, ladies' associations spent a considerable proportion of their incomes on publishing their own propaganda. Women also made important and controversial contributions to policy debates, most notably with Elizabeth Heyrick's series of pamphlets in favour of immediate rather than gradual abolition in the 1820's, and in controversies over the relative merits of the rival American anti-slavery societies in the 1840's and 1850's.

Historians' descriptions of women's anti-slavery activities as typically small-scale, local, and narrowly based have been shown to be inapplicable to many ladies' associations. At Birmingham the first, largest, and longest surviving female society was set up as an independent society with no formal relationship to the national society. From the late 1830's onwards increasing numbers of new independent female societies were formed, which established direct links with abolitionist groups in the United States. Neither auxiliary nor independent ladies' associations confined their activities to their immediate locale, and women were responsible for a number of important national initiatives. In the 1820's the Female Society for Birmingham successfully encouraged the formation of other women's anti-slavery groups throughout Britain. Women also organised the only three national petitions against slavery, the first to Parliament in 1833, the second to the Queen in 1838, and the third to American women in 1853. All three of these were signed by enormous numbers of women.

A number of individual women also played important roles at a national level, particularly following the fragmentation of the movement after 1840. The journalist Harriet Martineau, Newcastle free-produce campaigner Anna Richardson, Garrisonian supporters Elizabeth Pease of Darlington, Mary Estlin of Bristol and Eliza Wigham of Edinburgh, Frederick Douglass' assistant Julia Griffiths and Afro-American abolitionist Sarah Parker Remond may be singled out as of particular importance. The present study has thus reinforced the tendency among recent historians to revise those traditional accounts of the anti-slavery

movement which focused on the actions of its male leadership in London, in order to place due weight on the influence of pressure and initiative from below.

This study has also thrown light on the question of campaigners' motivations and the ideology of anti-slavery. Women in the organised anti-slavery movement came from a similar range of predominantly middle-class evangelical, Quaker and Unitarian backgrounds as male activists, and frequently from the same families. However, as this study has demonstrated, in order to understand how such women and men saw their roles in the movement it is vital to take into account the differing social positions of men and women within the middle class and within religious denominations. If for middle-class men the religious and moral sources of anti-slavery commitment elevated the struggle for abolition above the compromise and manoeuvrings of party politics, for middle-class women the moral nature of anti-slavery activities allowed them to be represented as a duty incumbent upon women in their assigned role in evangelical "separate spheres" ideology as guardians of morality. It is perhaps for this reason that women, unlike men, set up "negro's friend" societies which combined campaigning against slavery with the funding of Christian missionaries doing educational and relief work among black people, both slave and free.

The dominant ideology of "separate spheres" also fostered the development in women of a distinctive outlook on slavery which focused on the disruption of family life and the suffering of black women. Evangelicalism encouraged women to act as men's consciences and to put moral principle before political expediency. It is thus

not surprising to find that the first campaigners to advocate immediate emancipation were women.

The gender aspects of middle-class ideology as manifested in anti-slavery have been neglected by D. B. Davis in both his study of the origins of "immediatism" and his more general discussions of the movement. This thesis has revealed that middle-class women campaigners, though like men they expressed their opposition to slavery within the capitalist ideological framework which idealised "free" (waged) over slave labour, chose to attack the evil of consuming slave-produce, whereas men lobbied for Parliament to remove protective duties favouring slave produce. Women's approach had the effect of assigning responsibility for slavery to the buyer - commonly female - of slave-grown sugar and cotton in Britain, as much as on the slave-holder in the West Indies. In other words, women's approach "brought home" the issue of slavery, turning it from an issue of colonial and commercial policy into a domestic issue. The differing emphasis in men's and women's writing can be related to their distinct sources of power and influence in bourgeois industrial capitalist society: women as controllers of household consumption, men as managers of commercial and industrial enterprises.

This study has confirmed the middle-class domination of the organised anti-slavery movement, with hardly any evidence for the participation of either working-class or aristocratic women in ladies' associations. It has also shown, however, that tens of thousands of working-class women, many of them Wesleyan Methodists from artisan households, signed anti-slavery petitions, and that working women also contributed to the Uncle Tom Penny Offering and

participated in the slave-sugar boycott. Their support for these specific initiatives was solicited and praised by ladies' associations but few attempts were made to recruit them as members of these groups. Aristocratic women were also outsiders to the organised movement, and the text of their major anti-slavery initiative, the Stafford House Address, was disapproved by middle-class women activists for its cautious advocacy of gradual rather than immediate abolition.

Black women tend to appear in the writings of the white women abolitionists as silent, passive and degraded victims. Their own resistance to slavery in Britain, outlined at the beginning of this thesis, awaits fuller reconstruction through examination of such sources as newspaper advertisements for runaways and court records. However it has been shown that the lives of these women and the statements of black anti-slavery campaigners Mary Prince, Ellen Craft and Parker Remond, while confirming women's particular sufferings under slavery, are also representative of female resistance.

To summarize, women, despite their lack of formal power at a national level, influenced the form and direction of campaigns both locally and nationally. They were not passive supporters of male defined campaigns, but active and innovative. Without their contributions the movement would have been less well funded and less widely supported, it would have involved a narrower range of activities and middle-class ideology would have been articulated through anti-slavery in a narrower way. This would have made the anti-slavery movement less effective. A study of women thus enriches our understanding of both

the nature of the anti-slavery movement and the reasons for its widespread public support and its successes.

Turning to the area of women's history, it is hoped that this thesis has thrown light on women's relationship to the "public" and "political" spheres. In particular, it raises the question to what extent women's anti-slavery campaigning can be defined as political, and whether or not their activities represented a challenge to the ideology of "separate spheres".

The anti-slavery movement, identified by Patricia Hollis as the first great English pressure group, and, as Brian Harrison points out, both preceding and inspiring other reform movements, was an important arena in which middle class men defined a masculine identity centered on an exclusively male public and political sphere. This study has demonstrated that women were not simply onlookers to this process. Though they only exceptionally challenged their exclusion they were able to create a boundary zone between domestic and political life within which their public activities were accepted. In so doing, they evolved ways of working and of describing their objectives which integrated rather than separated the private and the public, the moral and the political.

The problems of maintaining this space have been most clearly revealed in my study of female petitioning. In petitioning Parliament women were, as they acknowledged, going outside their "sphere". In the wording of their petitions, however, they successfully justified petitioning as an exceptional response to a system which denied enslaved women the "privileges" of patriarchal protection. While apparently challenging "separate spheres" ideology by

petitioning, women thus expressed the desire to replicate British middle-class gender relations abroad.

As this example suggests, there were powerful ideological factors inhibiting the development from anti-slavery to women's rights in Britain. Women customarily articulated and justified their anti-slavery activism in the language of evangelicalism and from the late 1830's onwards only a vociferous minority of unorthodox Quaker and Unitarian women abolitionists took up women's rights. In so doing they were influenced and inspired by radical American abolitionist-feminists, with whom they cultivated close friendships and conducted an extensive transatlantic correspondence concerning all aspects of moral reform.

There was thus no simple line of development from anti-slavery to feminism in Britain despite the anti-slavery campaign representing the first large-scale political activity by middle-class women, and the first movement in which middle-class women aroused the opinion of the female public in order to put pressure on Parliament.

One aspect of women's anti-slavery consciousness which may be seen as a step towards feminism was female activists' stress on their own responsibility for the perpetuation of slavery. This was based on a belief in themselves as responsible adults, and women's challenges to men on policy matters further demonstrates that they did not feel their views could automatically always be adequately represented by their male relatives. Such an outlook sat uneasily with their legal status as "femmes couvertes", lacking an independent legal and political identity.

Women abolitionists also developed a sense of pride and self-confidence from their major contributions to the

campaigns, a self-confidence which by 1840 was causing a minority to question their lack of equal status in the movement, and to draw analogies between the position of women and that of slaves, between the ideology of "separate spheres" and racial segregation.

Nevertheless, almost no attempt was made by supporters of women's rights to press the issue within the British anti-slavery movement. It was not until the demise of the last stage of popular anti-slavery campaigning around 1868 that many leading women anti-slavery campaigners moved on into the women's suffrage movement and the new "abolition" campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts, where as in anti-slavery they campaigned for the rights of their "degraded" sisters.

This study of anti-slavery has also thrown light on the obstacles to alliances - to sisterhood - between women divided on race lines. In their concern for the suffering of women under slavery, white women abolitionists, like women who supported missionary work to "heathen" women, and among poor women in Britain, based their commitment on concern for other women. However, their professions of sisterhood with black slave women were simple assertions of equality before God directed at distant objects of pity rather than expressions of friendship and social equality.

In conclusion, it is hoped that this study has contributed to both women's and anti-slavery history, and demonstrated the importance of transgressing the academic boundaries which have tended to confine the study of women to the realm of social history while defining political history as the study of the public activities of men.

APPENDIX I  
LADIES' ANTI-SLAVERY ASSOCIATIONS

Location	Founded	Men's Society?	Founded
<u>(1) 1825-1833: Sent Donations to the Anti-Slavery Society and/or Agency Committee/Society</u>			
Alton			
Battersea and Clapham			
Beverley		y	1824
Birmingham etc	1825	y	
Bradford			
Bridlington		y	
Brighton	1831	y	1831
Calne and Salisbury	1825	y	
Camberwell			
Carlisle		y	
Charlbury			
Chelmsford	1828	y	
City District (London)			
Clifton and Bristol	1826	y	1823
Clonmell			
Colchester	1825	y	
Colebrookdale		y	
Cork		y	
Deddington			
Dorking		y	1831
Dublin	1828	y	
Durham			
Edinburgh	1830	y	1823
Exeter			
Glasgow	1833		
Gracechurch St (London)			
Grantham			
Hemel Hempstead		y	
Huddersfield		y	
Hull and East Riding		y	
Hythe	1831		

Ipswich		y	
Kendal		y	
Kingston		y	1831
Kingsbridge		y	
Leicester	1826	y	
Liverpool	1827	y	1823
London			
Manchester	1826	y	
Moyallen			
Newbury, Hungerford etc			
Newcastle-upon-Tyne		y	1823
Newcastle-under-Lyme			
North-East London			
North London and Islington			
North Staffordshire			
Norwich		y	
Nottingham		y	
Oakham			
Oxford			
Peckham			
Plaistow and West Ham			
Plymouth and Stonehouse		y	
Ramsgate			
Reading		y	
Rochester and Chatham	1826	y	1823
Sheffield	1825	y	
Southampton		y	
Southwark			
Spalding		y	
St Albans	1831	y	
St Ives (Hunts)	1830	y	
Stafford	1831	y	1831
Staines		y	
Stoke Newington			
Taunton		y	
Tenby			
Tottenham		y	
Westminster			
Woodbridge		y	
Woodgreen (Staffs)			
Worcester		y	1825

York		y	1823
<u>(2) 1833-1838</u>			
Aberdeen	1837	y	1836
Alton	[pre 1834]		
Bath	1838		
Birmingham	[1825]		
Brighton	[1831]		
Cork	[pre '34]		
Darlington	1836		
Dublin	1837		
Edinburgh	1833	y	1833
Exeter	[pre '34]		
Glasgow	1834	y	1833
Hull	[pre '34]		
Liverpool	[pre '34]		
London	[pre '34		
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1836		
Nottingham	[pre '34]	y	
Peckham	[pre '34]		
Reading	[pre '34]		
Rotherham			
Sheffield	1837	y	
Southampton	[pre '34]	y	
Southwark	[pre '34]		
Taunton	1834		
Woodbridge	[pre '34]		

(3) 1839-1868(a) Donating to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society

Aberdeen	[1837]		
Banbury			
Bath	[1838]	y	
Birmingham etc	[1825]	y	
Bury St Edmonds	1854		
Bond St Chapel (Birmingham)	1840		
Brighton		y	1839
Bristol and Clifton	1840	y	1839
Carlisle			
Chelmsford		y	

Cheltenham	1840	y	
Dartmouth	1842	y	1842
Derby	1845		
Devizes	1839	y	1839
Evesham	1841		
Exeter	1839	y	
Falmouth	1842	y	
Helston	1842	y	1842
Hull			
Kendal	1840	y	1839
Leicester	1845		
Liskeard		y	
Liverpool		y	
Manchester		y	
Newton Abbot	1842	y	1842
Newcastle-upon-Tyne		y	
Norfolk and Norwich	1846	y	1846
North Shields			
Nottingham			
Penzance	1842	y	1842
Plymouth			
Redruth	1842	y	1842
Saffron Walden	1846		
Sheffield	1839		
Southwark			
Stratford upon Avon	1845	y	1845
Stoke Newington	1840		
Taunton	1842		
Torquay	1842		
Totness	1842	y	1842
Truro	1842	y	1842
Woodbridge	[pre '34]		
York	1839, 1845	y	

(b) Independent Ladies' Associations

Belfast	1846	y	
Bridgewater	1853		
Bristol and Clifton	in 1851		became indep of BFASS
Carlisle	1846		
Clogher	1853		
Cork	1841		

Dalkeith			
Darlington			
Dublin	1841,1851	y	1851
Dundee	1851		
Edinburgh	[f. 1833]		
Free Church (Edinburgh)	1846	male + female comms	
Falkirk			
Glasgow	[1834]		
Glasgow	1841		
Glasgow	1850	y	1850
Halstead			
Handsworth	1840		
Kelso	1860		
Kirkcaldy			
Ladies Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery (London)	1853		
Ladies London Emancipation Society	1862	y	1862
Leeds	1853		
Liverpool	1855		
Manchester	1847		
Manchester Anti-Slavery League	1853/4		
Nottingham	1856		
Perth	1846		
Preston	1860		
Rochdale	1846		
Ulverstone			

(c) Ladies' Free-Labour Produce Associations

Alnwick  
 Birmingham and West Bromwich  
 Bristol  
 Braydon  
 Carlisle  
 Coldstream  
 Darlington  
 Dunse  
 Gateshead  
 Hitchin  
 Hartlepool

London	1850	mixed?
Luton		
Maryport		
Middlesborough		
Newcastle-upon Tyne	1846	
Newport		
North Shields		
Peckham		
South Shields		
Stockton		
Sunderland	1850	
Walthamstow	1851	
Worcester		
Whitehaven		
Workington		
Winlaton		

(d) Ladies' Associations Founded by Julia Griffiths, 1856-7

Aberdeen	1857
Barnsley	1857
Bradford	1856
Coventry	1857
Derby	1856
Doncaster	1857
Dublin (Irish Metropolitan)	1856
Edinburgh (Ladies' New)	1856
Halifax	1856
Huddersfield	1857
Liverpool	1856
Mansfield	1856
Rotherham	1857
Sheffield	1857
Wakefield	1857

(e) Ladies' Freedman's Aid Societies, 1862-68

Birmingham	y	1864
Brighton		
Bristol	y	
Camden		
Camden Road (Holloway)		
Cardiff		

Dublin		
Erdington		
Frome		
Glasgow	1864	
Hertford		y
Leeds		y
London Negro Aid Society	1865	
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1867	
Stoke Newington	1866	
Tunbridge Wells	1866	

APPENDIX II  
SELECTED WOMEN ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVISTS

Name (maiden name)	Dates
<u>(a) England</u>	
Rachel A. Albright	
Sarah Ann Alexander	1817-1918
Christine Alsop	1805-79
Frances Armstrong	
Ann Backhouse	
Elizabeth Backhouse	1800-82
Anna Laetitia Barbould (Aiken)	1743-1825
Hannah M. Bevan	
Matildha Ashurst Biggs	
Madame Bodichon (Barbara Leigh Smith)	1827-1891
Mrs E Bouverie	
Mary Brady	
Anna Braithwaite	1788-1859
Mary Caroline Braithwaite	
Eliza Brightwen	
Lucy Browne	
Lady Anne Isabella Noel Byron (Milbanke)	1792-1860
Maria Cadbury	
Maria Candler (Knight)	1791-1870
Mary Carpenter	1807-1877
Mrs Russell Lant Carpenter	
Jane D. Carr	
Ann Lucas Cash	1835-1895
Elizabeth Pettipher Cash (Lucas)	1796-1894
Mary Ann Cash	
Amelia Chesson (Thompson)	
Louisa Chick	
Helen Priestman Bright Clark	1840-1924
Catherine Clarkson	
Mary Clarkson	
Frances Power Cobbe	1822-1904
Sarah Cogan	
Eliza Conder	

Ellen Craft	1826-90
Anne Cropper (Wakefield)	
Eliza Cropper (married name Sturge)	c.1801-1835
Margaret Crouch	
Sarah Dimsdale (Cockfield)	
Elizabeth Dudley	1799-1849
Mary Dudley	1782-1847
Sarah Dymond	
Sarah Eliza Dymond	
Elizabeth, Duchess of Argyll	
Susan Emlen	
Mary Anne Estlin	1820-1902
Mary Joseph Foster (Tweedy)	c.1801-1871
Rachel Fox	
Elizabeth Fry (Gurney)	1780-1845
Julia Ward Williams Garnet	1811-70
Ann Gibson (Marriage)	b. 1798
Ann Gilbert (Taylor)	1782-1866
Julia Griffiths (married name Crofts)	
Mrs William Guest	
Sarah Gundry	c.1775-1860
Anna Gurney	
Priscilla Gurney	1795-1821
Lydia Hargreaves	
Elizabeth Heyrick (Coltman)	1769-1831
Mariabella Howard	1796-1852
Mary Howitt	1799-1888
Catherine Impey	1847-1923
Bessie Inglis	
Mary Johns	
Priscilla Johnston (Buxton)	
Maria Hope Jones	
Rebecca Jones	1739-1817
Frances Anne Kemble	b.1809
Hannah Kilham (Spurr)	1774-1832
Anne Knight	1786-1862
Harriet Elizabeth Georgina Leveson-Gower, Duchess of Sutherland	1806-1868
Mary Lloyd (Honeychurch)	1795-1865
Rachel Lloyd (Braithwaite)	1768-1854
Harriet Lupton	

Jessie Meriton White Mario	1832-1906
Maria Marsh (Tilson)	
Harriet Martineau	1802-76
Isabella Massie	
Hannah Messer	1787-1845
Lady Margaret Middleton	d. 1792
Emma Mitchell	
Mrs T. Moilliet (Townsend)	d. 1908
Sarah Monro	1880
Rebecca R. Moore (maiden name Fisher - see <u>Ireland</u> )	
Hannah More	1745-1833
Nancy Morgan	
Eliza Nicholson	
Amelia Anderson Opie	1769-1853
Elizabeth Pease (married name Nichol - see <u>Scotland</u> )	1807-97
Charlotte Elizabeth Phelan	
Mrs William P. Powell	
Mary Prince	
Mary Anne Rawson (Read)	c.1802-1887
Elizabeth J. Read	
Sarah Parker Remond	1826-94
Elizabeth Jessup Reid	1789-1866
Anna H. Richardson (Atkins)	c.1806-1892
Ellen Richardson	1808-96
Lucy and Maria Riland	
Mary Roberts	1798-1882
Elizabeth Robson (Stephenson)	1771-1843
Hannah Roper	
Mary Ann Schimmelpenninck (Galton)	b. 1778
Julia Smith	
Rachel Stacey	1788-1849
Mrs Steinthal	
Esther Sturge	
Hannah Joseph Sturge (Dickenson)	1816-96
Lydia Edmund Sturge (Albright)	1807-92
Sophia Sturge	1795-1845
Mentia Taylor (Doughty)	
Marie Tothill	
Lucy Townsend	d. 1847
Anne Tribe	

Fanny N. Tribe  
 Mrs J.B. Ulph  
 Hannah and Rebecca Walton  
 Susanna Watts d. 1842  
 Sarah Wedgwood 1776-1856  
 Mrs Henry Walker  
 Rebecca Whitlegge  
 Jane M. Widgins  
 Helen Maria Williams c.1762-1827  
 Rebecca Yerbury

(b) Wales

Sarah Hilditch

(c) Scotland

Sarah Brown  
 Mrs Harriet Gairdner  
 Miss Harriet Gairdner  
 Margaret Grant  
 Mrs Henry Grey  
 Euphemia Johnston  
 Priscilla Bright McLaren 1815-1906  
 Elizabeth Nichol (Pease - see England) 1807-97  
 Catherine Paton  
 Catherine Ponsonby  
 Mary Readdie  
 Mrs Marion Hugo Reid (Kirkland)  
 Jane Deans Taylor  
 Mary Welsh  
 Eliza Wigham 1820-99  
 Jane Wigham (Smeal)

(d) Ireland

Anne Allen 1805-68  
 Catherine Elizabeth Alma  
 Mary Birkett  
 Catherine Croker  
 Rebecca, Susanna and Charlotte Fisher  
 (Rebecca's married name was Moore - see England)  
 H. Hincks  
 Mary Ireland

Mary Jameson  
Isabel, Jane and Charlotte Jennings  
Mary Edmundson (Wigham)  
Harriet Kiernan d. 1835  
Mary Leadbeater (Shackleton) 1758-1826  
Eliza McIntyre  
Mrs Charles Orpen  
Isabella Waring Maxwell  
Sarah and Lizzy Poole  
Jane Russell  
Maria Waring  
Maria Webb (Lamb) 1804-73  
Hannah Ely White  
Hannah Webb 1809-62  
Gertrude Wright

APPENDIX III

FEMALE PETITIONS TO PARLIAMENT FOR THE ABOLITION OF  
SLAVERY, 1830-33

Town	Commons Date	Sigs	Lords	Date
<u>(1) Petitions from Female Inhabitants of Towns</u>				
<u>(a) England</u>				
Axminster				26.4.33
Barton Mills	14.5.33	60		
Barnstable	15.5.33	615		13.5.33
Bawtry	14.5.33	186		10.5.33
Bideford	15.5.33	615		23.4.33
Bishop Aukland				14.5.33
Blackburn	29.7.33	2302		13.6.33
Bourton-on-the-Water	15.5.33	132		21.5.33
Bow	15.5.33	279		23.4.33
Bradford	14.5.33	3292		21.5.33
Brixham				26.4.33
Budleigh Salterton				26.4.33
Bugbrook				15.5.33
Burford	6.5.33	80		
Burton Latimer	10.5.33	196		9.5.33
Bury St Edmunds	14.5.33	1038		
Chard	12.11.30			12.11.30
Charmouth	6.5.33	128		10.5.33
Chepping Wycombe	29.4.33	272		22.4.33
Chipping Norton	14.5.33	194		9.5.33
Christchurch				6.12.30
Chudleigh				26.4.33
Chulmleigh	14.5.33	65		
Colerne	6.5.33	192		
Collumpton	15.5.33	208		
Colnbrook	17.5.33	288		
Coningsby	6.5.33	558		14.5.33
Coseley	4.2.31			23.12.30
Cranfield	8.5.33	290		

Crediton	8.5.33	312	26.4.33
Culmstock	23.5.33	97	
Dalwood	13.5.33	20	
Dartford	14.5.33	144	
Dartmouth			26.4.33
Derby	13.5.33	5136	13.5.33
Devizes	8.5.33	564	14.5.33
Doncaster	14.5.33	4653	10.5.33
Dudley	29.4.33	500	
Dolton		26	23.4.33
Dunstable	14.5.33	455	13.5.33
Exeter	24.4.33	6000	23.4.33
Exmouth	14.5.33	456	21.5.33
Fenny Stratford	14.5.33		15.5.33
Frome Selwood	6.5.33	1798	9.5.33
Great Driffield	4.11.30		
Great Torrington	24.4.33	938	9.5.33
Greater + Little Bolton	15.5.33	5200	20.5.33
Greenwich	14.5.33	400	
Hadleigh	14.5.33	90	
Halifax	6.3.33		
Handsworth	24.3.31		
Hatherleigh	15.5.33	118	23.4.33
Hereford	9.11.30		
Hereford	14.5.33	340	
Hinkley	14.5.33	140	13.5.33
Holsworthy	14.5.33	193	15.5.33
Horncastle	29.3.31		18.4.31
Hook Norton	14.5.33	185	21.5.33
Kettering	10.5.33	1491	10.5.33
Lewes	14.5.33	1176	15.5.33
London: Henrietta St	28.3.31		
London: Little Alie St	28.3.31		
Long Buckby		429	
Lowestoft	6.5.33	204	3.5.33
Lyme Regis	6.5.33	392	10.5.33
Maidstone	13.5.33		
Marazion	5.11.30		
Market Lavington	10.5.33	99	
Newport	15.5.33	94	13.5.33
Newcastle + Gateshead	14.5.33	5986	14.5.33

Newton Abbott + Bushell	14.5.33	378	15.5.33
North Lawton	15.5.33	145	23.4.33
Norwood	6.12.30		13.4.31
Nottingham	17.5.33	15000	14.5.33
Paignton	8.5.33	104	26.4.33
Poole	28.3.31		18.4.31
Pilton	20.5.33	140	13.5.33
Portsmouth + Portsea	28.3.31		18.4.31
Reading	17.12.30	1662	18.4.31
Reading	3.5.33	2332	9.5.33
Ripley	30.5.33	344	
Rochester, Chatham, Strood	14.5.33	1958	21.5.33
Ross	12.11.30		
Rowell + Desborough	28.3.31		18.4.31
Rowell	10.5.33	384	10.5.33
Ruckland, Worlaby	29.3.31		
Ryde	9.3.31		
Seaton	26.4.33	115	26.4.33
Sidmouth	26.4.33	93	26.4.33
Sidbury			26.4.33
Somersham	29.3.31		
Southampton	28.3.31		18.4.31
South Molton	14.5.33	342	
Spilsby	28.3.33	1224	28.3.33
Staines			13.5.33
Staines			12.8.33
Stony Stratford	14.5.33	304	21.5.33
Stow-on-the-Wold		131	21.5.33
Topsham	26.4.33	615	26.4.33
Tiverton		1061	20.5.33
Totness + Bridgetown Pomeroy	14.5.33	397	
Uffculm	14.5.33	239	
Warboys	29.3.31		15.4.31
Waterfield			20.5.33
Wareham	14.5.33	240	
Warminster	14.5.33	406	21.5.33
West Bromwich	15.5.33	2300	13.5.33
Winkleigh	15.5.33	85	23.4.33
Yarm	28.3.31		14.4.31
Yelvertoft	17.5.33	184	
Yeovil	3.5.33	420	21.5.33

Zealmonachorum	15.3.33	34	23.4.33
<u>(b) Wales</u>			
Brecknock	3.4.33	346	
Caerleon	29.3.31		18.4.31
Haverfordwest	13.5.33	346	
Newport	12.3.33	406	
<u>(c) Scotland</u>			
Aberdeen	10.6.33	5000	
Barrowden	19.11.30		
Cults	19.2.33	102	
Cumbernauld	28.3.31		
Cupar	2.12.30		
Cupar	19.2.33	504	
Dairsie	19.2.33	93	
Dalkeith	14.5.33	796	15.5.33
Edinburgh	14.5.33	13827	14.5.33
Fruchie	8.5.33	225	
Hawick	23.5.33	1181	20.5.33
Inverbervie	6.12.30		
Leslie	6.5.33	301	
<u>(d) Ireland</u>			
Dublin	14.5.33	6004	
Waterford	16.5.33	128	
Youghal	30.5.33	144	20.5.33
Limerick	23.5.33	295	

(2) Petitions from Female Members of Chapels

(a) Baptist

Bow	14.5.33	113	14.5.33
Great Torrington	24.4.33	122	
Great Torrington	6.5.33	182	
Longford	15.7.31		
London: Eagle St	29.3.31		9.11.30
Madley	12.11.30		
Peterchurch	12.11.30		
Haverfordwest	28.3.31		
Wrexham	28.3.31		

(b) Independent

Birmingham: Carr's Lane	10.5.33	250	13.5.33
Handsworth: Union Chapel	29.4.33	73	

Trowbridge	24.4.33	405	
Wareham	11.11.30		11.11.30
<u>(c) Wesleyan Methodist</u>			
Bath: Walcot Chapel			20.5.33
London: Great Queen St			11.11.30
London: Great Queen St	26.4.33	803	7.5.33
Lyncombe and Widcombe: Wells Rd Meeting Ho.			20.5.33
Midford etc, Somerset			17.5.33
Norwich: Calvert St			19.11.30
Norwich: St Peter's Chapel			19.11.30
Tiverton and Corston			17.5.33
Walcot: New King St	29.4.33	120	17.5.33
Walcot: Larkhall Chapel			17.5.33
<u>(d) Other Denominations</u>			
Dublin: D'Olier-St Chapel, Harmony Row Lecture Room Protestants	5.11.30		
Lathones: United Secession	30.3.33	117	
Oxford: New Rd Chapel Protestant Dissenters	10.11.30		
Oxford: New Rd Chapel Protestant Dissenters	14.5.33	263	
Whitehaven: Primitive Methodists	14.5.33	220	13.5.33
<u>(3) Other Female Petitions</u>			
Exeter Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, Committee	29.3.31		
Females of Great Britain	14.5.33	187156	
<u>(4) Petitions Listed as Mixed</u>			
Glasgow: members and sitters, male and female, of the Relief Church, Carlton	14.5.33	197	
Stonehouse: male and female inhabitants	30.5.33	130	

Sources: Journals of the House of Commons, Vols LXXXVI to LXXXVIII (1830 to 1833); Journals of the House of Lords, Vols LXII to LXV (1830 to 1833); First to Forty-First Reports of the Select Committee on Public Petitions (Feb to Aug 1833)

APPENDIX IV

FEMALE PETITIONS TO PARLIAMENT FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE  
APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN THE WEST INDIES, 1838

Town	Commons Date	Sigs	Lords Date
<u>(1) Petitions from Female Inhabitants of Towns</u>			
<u>(a) England</u>			
Alston	18.5.38	290	3.5.38
Ashburton	8.3.38	81	
Attercliffe	21.5.38	2307	31.5.38
Beverley	2.3.38	230	
Barnard Castle	18.5.38	290	
Bingley	27.3.38	133	6.4.38
Blyth	18.5.38	454	
Bolton and Undercliffe	26.3.38	127	3.4.38
Bradford	26.3.38	3348	29.3.38
Brampton	14.5.38	803	18.5.38
Buckingham	29.3.38	153	28.3.38
Byerley	26.3.38	128	6.4.38
Carlisle	14.5.38	3819	18.5.38
Castle Donington	21.5.38	325	
Ceres	9.5.38	802	7.5.38
Chester	29.3.38	2308	2.4.38
Cottenham	29.3.38	306	26.6.38
Cron dall	11.5.38	64	15.5.38
Cullumpton			14.6.38
Culmstock	28.3.38	129	23.3.38
Driffield	16.2.38	164	
Eynesford + Farningham	28.5.38	268	
Exeter	2.3.38	6926	5.3.38
Farsley	27.3.38	126	6.4.38
Godalming			4.5.38
Great + Little Horton	26.3.38	331	6.4.38
Handsworth	23.3.38	1112	
Handsworth	22.5.38	945	
Horsforth	27.3.38	132	3.4.38

Idle	27.3.38	88	6.4.38
Ipswich	28.3.38	828	28.3.38
Keighley	27.3.38	87	6.4.38
Kingsbridge + Dodbrook	29.1.38	327	29.1.38
Low Moor	27.3.38	128	6.4.38
Manningham	26.3.38	84	3.4.38
March	22.5.38	156	1.6.38
Margate	21.5.38	217	11.6.38
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	21.5.38	4556	11.6.38
Ottery St Mary	28.3.38	198	
Ottery St Mary	11.5.38	90	11.5.38
Poole	16.5.38	2056	
Reading	22.5.38	1000	
Rochester + Chatham	22.5.38	826	
Rotherham	21.5.38	4058	
Sheerness	28.3.38	1176	23.3.38
Sheffield	21.5.38	18,824	31.5.38
Shipley	27.3.38	124	3.4.38
Sidmouth	19.3.38	96	19.3.38
Skipton	29.3.38	465	19.3.38
Smethwick	21.5.38	1113	16.7.38
Southmolton			29.3.38
South Shields	9.5.38	412	7.5.38
Spilspy			28.5.38
Stamford	28.3.38	1637	26.3.38
Sunderland	21.5.38	1596	21.5.38
Tavistock	21.3.38	460	
Tiverton	30.3.38	641	
Todmorden	29.3.38	1083	29.3.38
Todmorden	22.5.38	1220	22.5.38
Torquay			29.3.38
Tutbury	29.3.38	16	28.3.38
Tynemouth			18.5.38
Uffculme	5.3.38	120	5.3.38
Wareham	22.5.38	365	
Westerham	21.5.38	150	14.6.38
Whitehaven	18.5.38	696	3.5.38
Woolwich	9.5.38	685	10.5.38
<u>(b) Wales</u>			
Caerleon	2.3.38	253	26.2.38
Llanfyllin			28.3.38

(c) Scotland

Auchtermuchty	29.3.38	869	26.3.38
Banff	4.4.38	1335	6.4.38
Brechin	22.5.38	777	
Glasgow	10.5.38	33,600	18.5.38
Kennoway	21.5.38	585	
Loanhead	22.5.38	183	22.5.38
Milngavie	9.5.38	418	18.5.38
Montrose	11.4.38	1134	9.4.38
Paisley	22.5.38	8240	
Penicuik	22.5.38	402	22.5.38
Pitlessie			18.5.38

(2) Petitions from Female Members of Chapel Congregations(a) Baptist

Abergavenny: Frogmore St			19.2.38
Great Shelford	22.5.38	57	20.7.38
Harston	22.5.38	90	12.6.38
Idle	16.5.38	66	28.3.38
Melbourn	22.5.38	98	12.6.38
Sheffield: Eldon St	28.3.38	94	
Thrapstone	11.5.38	120	18.5.38

(b) Independent

Cheadle	28.5.38	90	
Chishill	22.5.38	82	11.6.38
Duxford	22.5.38	145	
Fulbourn	22.5.38	57	12.6.38
Little Shelford	22.5.38	70	12.6.38
Stafford: Zion	29.3.38	352	
Stone	29.3.38	180	
Stone	21.5.38	58	8.6.38

(c) Wesleyan Methodist

Ecclesfield: Mount Pleasant	28.3.38	220	27.3.38
Ramsgate	21.5.38	117	11.6.38
Wick	5.4.38		

(d) Other Denominations

Devonport: Morris Sq Protestant Dissenters	22.5.38	444	22.5.38
Truro: Bethesda Chapel	22.5.38	92	
Truro: Ebenezer Chapel Methodist New Connexion	22.5.38	130	21.5.38

(3) Other Female Petitions

Hull Female Anti-Slavery Society	27.4.38	1134	
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ladies' Emancipation Society	9.5.38	51	7.5.38
Rotherham Ladies' Association			31.5.38

(4) Petitions Listed as Mixed

Kirkwall: male and female inhabitants	16.5.38	1503	21.5.38
Leven: male and female inhabitants	22.5.38	838	
Saltcoats: members, male and female, of the Relief Church	22.5.38	852	21.5.38
Sheffield: male and female Baptists, Elden St			6.4.38

Sources:

Reports of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions. Session 1837-8

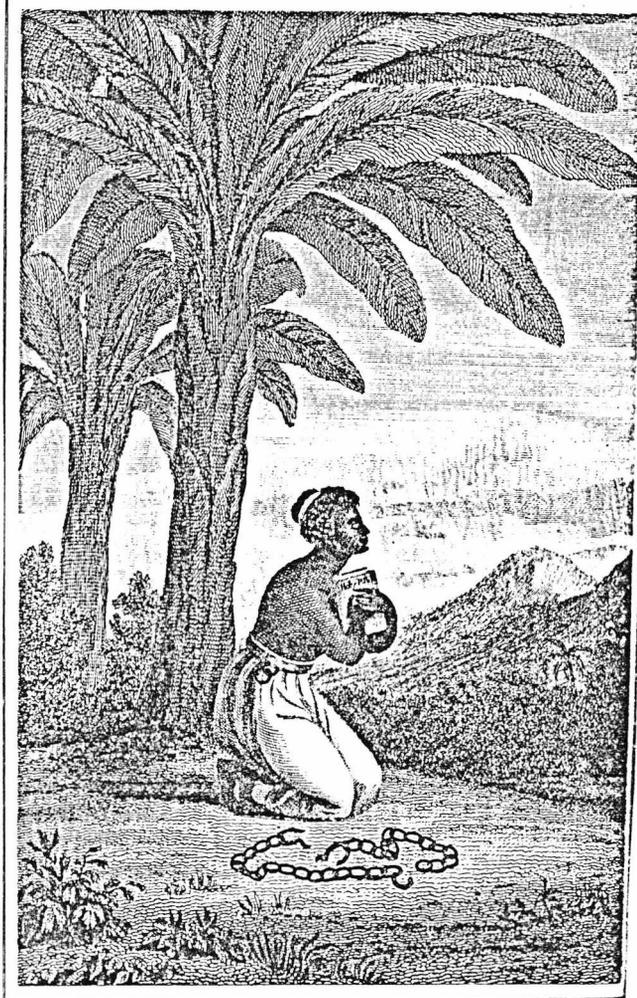
Journals of the House of Lords, Vol. LXX (1837-8)

## APPENDIX V

Illustrations

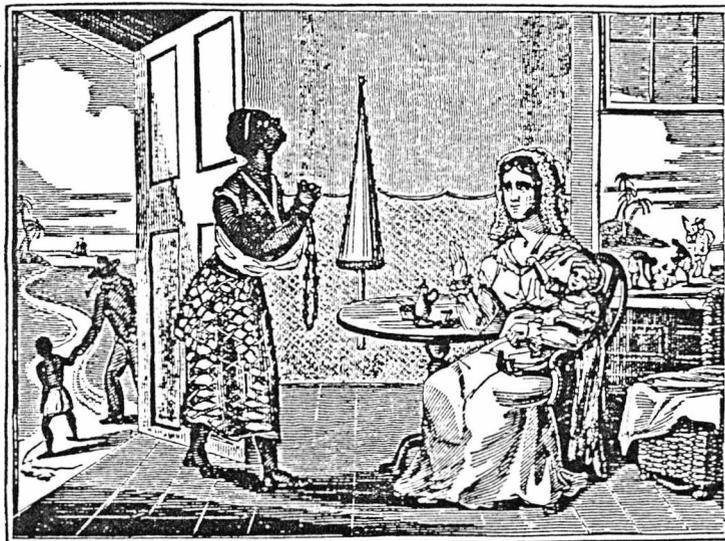
*The driver's whip unfolds its torturing coil.  
"She only sulks — go, lash her to her toil."*

Fig. 1. "Female Society for Birmingham etc., for the Relief of British Negro Slaves. Album", ca. 1825. (Birmingham Central Library, Archives Dept.)



*This Book tells Man not to be cruel;  
Oh that Slaves would read this Book.*

Fig. 2. [Mary Dudley], Scripture Evidence of the Sinfulness of Injustice and Oppression, (London: Harvey & Darton, 1828), engraving facing title page.



### THE NEGRO MOTHER'S APPEAL.

WHITE Lady, happy, proud, and free,  
Lend awhile thine ear to me ;  
Let the Negro Mother's wail  
Turn thy pale cheek still more pale.  
Can the Negro Mother joy  
Over this her captive boy,  
Which, in bondage and in tears,  
For a life of woe she rears ?  
Though she bears a Mother's name,  
A Mother's rights she may not claim ;  
For the white man's will can part  
Her darling from her bursting heart.

But, Lady, when thy look, so mild,  
Rests upon thy own fair child,  
Think, then, of one less fair, indeed,  
But one for whom thy heart should bleed.

For all the gems of Afric's coast,  
And fruits her palmy forests boast,

I would not harm that boy of thine,  
Nor bid him groan and toil for mine.  
I would but, when the lisping tone  
Of thy sweet infant mocks thine own,  
That thou shouldst teach his earliest thought  
To spurn the wealth by slavery bought.  
I would but, when thy babe is prest  
With transport to a father's breast,  
Thy gentle voice should plead the cause  
Of Nature and her outrag'd laws ;  
Should bid that father break the chain  
In which he holds our wretched train,  
And by the love to thee he bears,  
Dispel the Negro Mother's fears.  
By thy pure, maternal joy,  
Bid him spare my helpless boy ;  
And thus a blessing on his own  
Seek from his Maker's righteous throne.

Fig. 3. "The Negro Mother's Appeal", Anti-Slavery Scrap Book, (London: Bagster & Thoms, 1829).

THE  
 UNCLE TOM'S CABIN  
 ALMANACK  
 OR  
 ABOLITIONIST MEMENTO.



LONDON:  
 JOHN CASSELL, LA BELLE SAUVAGE YARD, LUDGATE HILL;  
 AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Fig. 4. The Uncle Tom's Almanack, (London: John Cassell, 1853), cover illustration.



(a)

(b)



Fig. 5 (a). The Annual Report of the Leeds Antislavery Association, (Leeds: W. Walker, 1854), title page illustration.

(b) Annual Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, (Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1866), title page illustration.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

Kelley Foster Papers (microfilm) (1 letter)

Birmingham Central Library, Archives Dept.

Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, for Birmingham etc: minute book, cash book, album and ledger

Birmingham Antislavery Society: minute books

Birmingham Freedmen's Aid Association: minute book.

Bodleian Library, Oxford

Wilberforce Papers (1 letter)

Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.

Anti-Slavery Collection (ca. 1500 items of correspondence between 66 British/Irish women campaigners and American Garrisonian abolitionists)

British Library

Clarkson Papers (correspondence of Mrs Clarkson)

Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade: Proceedings.

Cumbria Record Office

Harriet Martineau Papers (4 letters)

Darlington Branch Library

Elizabeth Pease: 3 letters

Essex Record Office

Anne Knight: 1 letter

Friends' House Library, London

Anne Knight: correspondence, notebook etc.

Anne Cropper (transcriber), extracts from the letters of the late James Cropper

Anti-Slavery Correspondence, 1821-32

Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade: Illustrations (3 Vols.)

William Dickson: Diary of a Visit to Scotland on Behalf of the London Abolition Committee in 1792

London Meeting for Sufferings, Committee on the Slave Trade: Minutes, 1783-92

London Meeting for Sufferings, Informal Slave Trade Committee: Minutes, 1783-84

London Meeting for Sufferings, standing committee appointed to aid in promoting the total abolition of the slave trade: Minute Books, 1820-1833

London Yearly Meeting: Subscription Raised to Aid in Promoting the Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery, 1825-32

Central Committee of the Society of Friends of Great Britain and Ireland for the Relief of the Emancipated Slaves of North America: Minute books, 1865-66

George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University, N.Y.  
Gerrit Smith Collection (5 letters)

Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.  
English, Irish and Scotch Letters Addressed to Henry C. Wright, 1843-7 (3 Vols) (17 letters, several documents)

John Rylands University Library, Manchester  
Rawson Family Papers: Auxiliary Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Instituted at Sheffield 21st of 6th mo. 1825": Minute book, 1825-33; Autographs - the Bow in the Cloud; Anti-Slavery Letters and Papers; Anti-Slavery Letters; Anti-Slavery Poems  
George Thompson's Papers: Amelia Chesson's notebooks; letters from George Thompson to Elizabeth Pease, later Nichol, 1837-1870; letters from George Thompson to his wife, 1831; London Emancipation Committee: Minutes, 1859

Leicester Museum, Archies Dept.  
Coltman Family Papers (correspondence of, and information on, Elizabeth Heyrick)

Leicester Public Library  
Susanna Watts: Scrapbook.

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
Lewis Tappan Papers (microfilm) (correspondence with 15 British/Irish women)  
Frederick Douglass Papers (microfilm) (correspondence with 9 British/Irish women)

Manchester City Archives Dept.  
Rebecca Whitelegge: 3 letters

Merseyside Record Office, Liverpool  
Cropper Family Papers (items including "Album")

National Library of Scotland  
Combe Papers (2 letters)

Mitchell Library, Glasgow  
Smeal Donation: Glasgow Emancipation Society: Minute books, subscription book, and miscellaneous papers  
Glasgow Freedmen's Aid Society: Minutes, etc.

Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London  
Lydia Hardy: 1 letter

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast  
Harriet Kiernan: 4 letters

Rhodes House Library, Oxford  
Anti-Slavery Papers: Anti-Slavery Society, committee on slavery: Minute books, correspondence; British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society: Minute books,

correspondence, papers concerning World Congresses 1840 and 1843; Buxton papers; Freedmen's Aid papers; Ladies' Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery: Minutes; Lucy Townsend: "Autographs", Album, Scrap Book on Negro Slaves.

Sheffield Central Library

Papers of H. J. Wilson and M. A. Rawson (a few items of Mary Rawson's anti-slavery correspondence)  
Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society: Montgomery letters (1 letter)

University College, London  
Brougham Papers (2 letters)

University of Durham, Dept. of Palaeography and Diplomatic Backhouse Papers (1 item)

William Clements Library, University of Michigan

James G. Birney Papers (15 letters)  
Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers (15 items)  
Weld-Grimké Papers (10 letters)

Dr Williams Library, London

Estlin Papers: Bristol and Clifton Auxiliary Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society: Minute book; Mary Estlin: correspondence.

2. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

Appendices to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons, 1825, 1830-31.

Hansard, T. C. (ed.) The Parliamentary Debates. 1824-33.

House of Commons. Reports of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, 1833, 1837-8.

Journals of the House of Commons, 1785-1838.

Journals of the House of Lords, 1830-31, 1833, 1837-8.

3. NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Aberdeen Almanac, or Northern Register, 1840, 1842.

Aberdeen Herald, 1857.

Abolitionist, (London) Vol. I, no. 1 (Aug 1834); no. 3 (Feb 1835).

Abolitionist, (Edinburgh), no. 1 (Jan 1832).

Anti-Caste, 1888.

Anti-Slavery Advocate, Vol. I, no. 1 (Oct 1832) to Vol. III, no. 5 (May 1863).

Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter (from 1831, Anti-Slavery

- Reporter), Vol. I. no. 1 (June 1825) to Vol, VI, no. 8 (1836).
- Anti-Slavery Record, Vol. I. nos. 1-15 (May 1832 to June 1833).
- Anti-Slavery Watchman, nos 1-3 (Nov 1853-Jan 1854).
- Arminian Magazine, Vols. X, XV, XVI (1787, 1792, 1793).
- Baptist Magazine, Vols. I-V (1809-1813); XVI-XXIX (1824-1837).
- Belfast Newsletter, 1846.
- Berkshire Chronicle, 1830.
- Birmingham Journal, 1833.
- Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1831.
- Bolton Chronicle, 1833, 1850, 1852-4, 1856-7, 1859.
- Bond of Brotherhood, Jan 1854 to July 1867.
- Brighton Herald, 1838.
- Bristol Examiner, 1851.
- British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter, Vol. I, no. 1 (Jan 1840) to 3rd Series, Vol. XVII (1869).
- British Emancipator, no. I (Dec 1837) to no. LXI (Jan 1840).
- British Friend, 1843-1869.
- Cabinet, Vol. II (1795).
- Caledonian Mercury, 1833, 1837.
- Chester Chronicle, 1791.
- Christian Advocate, 1830-33, 1837-8.
- Christian Observer, 1802-1807, 1824-37.
- Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, 1833.
- Congregational Magazine, 1830-33.
- Court Journal, 1830.
- Daily News, 1861-62.
- Derby Mercury, 1792, 1851-52, 1857.
- Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 1833.
- Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 1833.
- Doncaster, Nottingham, and Lincoln Gazette, 1833.
- Douglass' Monthly, Vols. 1-5 (1859-63).
- Durham Chronicle, 1836-37.
- Eclectic Review, 1840.
- Edinburgh Evening Courant, 1792, 1814, 1833.
- Essex Standard, and Colchester and County Advertiser, 1832.
- Evangelical Magazine, 1830-33.
- Freedman, nos. 1-29 (1865-67).
- Freedmen's-Aid Reporter, Vol. I, nos. 1-5, 7-12 (May 1866-Apr 1867); n.s. no. 2 (Dec 1867).
- Friend of Africa, nos. 26, 27 (1842-43).
- Gateshead Observer, 1858.
- General Evening Post, 1792.
- Genius of Universal Emancipation, Vol. IV. no. 3 (Dec 1824) to 4th Series, Vol. I, no. 12 (Dec. 1836).
- Gentleman's Magazine, 1791.
- Gloucester Journal, 1792.
- Herald of Peace, n.s., Vol. III (1824).
- Humming Bird, Vol. I, nos. 1-12 (Dec 1824-Nov 1825).
- Iris, or Sheffield Advertiser, 1807.
- Irish Friend, Vols. I, II (1837-39).
- Irish Temperance and Literary Gazette, Aug 1837-Jun 1838.
- Lady's Magazine, Vols. 32, 39 (March 1801, Feb 1808).
- Leicester Journal, 1792.
- Liberator, 1831-65.
- Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, 1791-92.
- Manchester Herald, 1792.
- Manchester Mercury, 1787-88, 1791-92.

Manchester Times, 1838.  
Missionary Register, 1813-32.  
Monthly Repository, 1829-35.  
Monthly Review, 1788.  
Morning Chronicle, 1788.  
Morning Herald, 1788.  
New Lady's Magazine, Vols. II, III (1787-88).  
Newcastle Chronicle, 1833.  
Newcastle Courant, 1836.  
Norfolk Chronicle, 1791.  
North Star, Vol. I, no. 1 (Dec 1847) to Vol. VIII, no. 52  
 (Dec 1855).  
Northampton Mercury, 1791, 1792.  
Nottingham Review, 1832-33.  
Olive Leaf, Vols. XI-XIV (1854-57).  
Patriot, 1833, 1837-8.  
Philanthropist (Birmingham), 1837-38.  
Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine, Vol. I, nos. 1, 2 (Oct  
 1835, Jan 1836).  
Record, 1830-31, 1833.  
Rochester Gazette, 1833.  
Scotsman, 1849, 1852, 1853.  
Sheffield Independent, 1837-38.  
Sheffield Iris, 1826-30, 1837.  
Sheffield Patriot, 1839.  
Shrewsbury Chronicle, 1792.  
Slave, nos. 1-48 (Jan 1851-Dec 1854); n.s. nos. 1-24 (Jan  
 1855-Dec 1856).  
Sussex Advertiser, 1833.  
Times, 1792, 1833, 1852, 1853.  
Tourist, Vol. I, nos. 1-44 (Sept 1832-May 1833).  
Watchman, no. IV (1796).  
Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine, 1829-32.  
Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 1833.  
York Courant, 1791-92.  
York Herald, 1791, 1807.  
Yorkshire Gazette, 1830, 1839.  
Yorkshireman, 1833.

#### 4. PUBLICATIONS OF SOCIETIES

Aberdeen Anti-Slavery Society. The First Annual Report.  
 Aberdeen: D. Chalmers & Co., 1826.

African Institution. First to Twentieth Reports. London:  
 William Phillips; Ellerton & Henderson, 1807-1826.

Agency Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society. Report.  
 London: S Bagster, Jun., 1832.

Agency Society for the Universal Abolition of Negro  
 Slavery, and the Slave Trade Throughout the World. To  
 the Anti-Slavery Associations, and the Friends of  
 Negro Emancipation Throughout the United Kingdom.  
 [circular] [London] 14th March 1834.

Bath Anti-Slavery Society. Address of the Bath Anti-

Slavery Society to the Inhabitants of Bath and its Vicinity. Bath: Wood & Cunningham, 1825.

Bath Ladies' Auxiliary British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Report of the Bath Ladies' Auxiliary British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society for the Years 1838, 1839, and 1840. [n.d.]

Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's Aid Association. Annual Report. Birmingham: White and Pike, 1865.

Birmingham and West Bromwich Free Labour Produce Association.  
Abstinence from Slave Produce Nothing New. Birmingham: White & Pike, [1849].

Free Labour Movement. Notice to Grocers; Notice to Drapers and Hosiers. [Birmingham, 1849].

Boston [Mass.] Female Anti-Slavery Society. Second to Eleventh Annual Reports. Boston: Published by the Society, 1837-44.

Bristol Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society. Report of Proceedings from the Formation of the Institution to the 31st Dec 1830. Bristol: T.D. Clark [1831?].

Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.  
"The Committee of the Bristol and Clifton Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society ...". (Untitled circular)  
[Bristol, n.d.].

Special Report. London: John Snow, 1852.

(comp.) Statements Respecting the American Abolitionists. Dublin: Webb & Chapman, 1852.

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.  
Address from the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the Women of England. London, Johnston & Barrett, [1840]

First to Twenty-Fifth Annual Reports. London: Johnston & Barrett, 1840-1864.

Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention ... 1840. London: Johnston & Barrett, 1841.

British India Society. Speeches, Delivered at a Public Meeting, for the Formation of a British India Society. London: British India Society, 1839.

Clifton and Bristol Ladies; Anti-Slavery Association.  
The Second Report. Bristol: T.D. Clark, [1828]

Clogher Anti-Slavery Association. Second Annual Report. Dublin: Alex Thom & Sons, 1857.

Colchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association.  
Rules. [Colchester, 1825].

Colonial and Continental Church Society.  
Mission to Fugitive Slaves in Canada .... Report.  
 London: Society's Offices, 1861.

Mission to Fugitive Slaves in Canada, No. V,  
Occasional Paper. August, 1856. London: Mackintosh,  
 [ca. 1856]

Cork Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.  
Ninth Annual Address and Report ... for the Year 1849.  
 Cork: George Nash, [ca. 1849]

Thirteenth Annual Address and Report. Cork: George  
 Nash, 1853.

Darlington Ladies' Anti-Slavery, and British India  
Society. [Report] Darlington: J. Wilson, [ca.  
 1840].

Darlington Ladies' Society for the Universal Abolition of  
Slavery. [Founding rules etc] Darlington: J. Wilson  
 [ca. 1837].

Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Rules and Resolutions  
of the Dublin Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Dublin:  
 R. Napier, 1828.

Annual Reports for 1858-60. Dublin: R.D. Webb, 1859-  
 61.

Dublin Ladies' Association, Auxiliary to the Hibernian  
 Anti-Slavery Society.  
An Appeal ... to their Christian Countrywomen.  
 [Dublin, 1837].  
Second Appeal ... to the Females of Ireland. Cork:  
 George Ridings, [1837].

Dundee Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association.  
Dundee Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association. [Circular]  
 [Dundee, ca. 1853].

Ninth and Tenth Annual Reports. Dundee: James Duff,  
 1861-62.

Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society.  
Address to the Public, by the Committee of the  
Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society. Edinburgh: Anderson  
 & Bryce, 1826.

Edinburgh Female Anti-Slavery Association.  
Resolutions and Rules. Edinburgh: Ballantyre, 1830.

Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society.  
 [Appeal of the Committee]. [Edinburgh], 1840.

Annual Reports for 1846-47, 1854, 1857, 1859-62, 1864-  
67. Edinburgh: H. Armour, 1846-47, 1855, 1857, 1859-  
 62, 1864-67.

To the Anti-Slavery Societies and the Friends of the

Slave Throughout Great Britain. [Circular]  
Edinburgh, 1847.

Edinburgh Ladies' Negro Education Society.  
The First Annual Report. Edinburgh: John Lindsay &  
Co., 1837.

Edinburgh Ladies' New Anti-Slavery Association.  
Report of the Edinburgh Ladies' New Anti-Slavery  
Association for the Years 1856 and 1857. Edinburgh:  
R. & R. Clark, 1858.

Edinburgh Society for Promoting the Mitigation and Ultimate  
Abolition of Negro Slavery.  
The First and Second Annual Reports. Edinburgh:  
Abernethy & Walker, 1824; Anderson and Bryce, 1825.

Female Association, for St. Ives, and its Neighbourhood, in  
Aid of the Cause of Negro Emancipation.  
The Second Report. St. Ives: S. Gardner, 1833.

Female Society, for Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wednesbury,  
and Their Respective Neighbourhoods, for the Relief of  
British Negro Slaves.

"At a meeting held at Birmingham Nov 16, 1826 ...".  
[1826]

The First, Second, Third and Fifth Reports.  
Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1826-28, 1830.

Female Society for Clifton, Bristol, and Its Neighbourhood,  
in Aid of the Cause of Negro Emancipation.  
The Second Report. Bristol: T.D. Clark [1828].

Free Church Anti-Slavery Society.  
Laws Adopted at the Formation of the Free Church Anti-  
Slavery Society. September 1846. [Edinburgh, 1846].

Freed-Man's Aid Society.  
Freed-Man's Aid Society. [Inaugural meeting] [1863].

Glasgow Emancipation Society. First to Thirteenth Annual  
Reports. Glasgow: John Young & Co. etc, 1835-51.

Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society.  
An Appeal to the Ladies of Great Britain, in Behalf of  
the American Slave. Glasgow: John McLeod etc, 1841.

First, Second, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Annual Reports.  
Glasgow: Temperance Press, 1842-43; David Russell,  
1845-46, 1851.

[circulars soliciting contributions to Boston Bazaar].  
[Glasgow], 1845-53, 1856-57.

Glasgow Freedmen's Aid Society.  
Freedmen's Aid Society. [circular] Glasgow: 1864.

Glasgow Ladies' Auxiliary Emancipation Society.  
Three Years Female Anti-Slavery Effort, in Britain and  
America. Glasgow: Aird & Russell, 1837.

Glasgow New Association for the Abolition of Slavery.  
Sixth Annual Report. Glasgow: the Reformatory  
 Institution, 1857.

Halifax Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.  
Third Annual Report. [Halifax, 1860].

Anti-Slavery Bazaar. Halifax: Birtwhistle, [ca.  
 1860]

Hibernian Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.  
America's Flag. Sold for the Benefit of the Hibernian  
 Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, in Aid of Fugitive  
 Slaves. Dublin: Thomas Webb, [n.d.].

Boston Anti-Slavery Bazaar. [Circular] Dublin, 1846.

Hibernian Ladies' Negroes Friend Society.  
Report. Dublin: M. Godwin & Co., 1833.

Irish Metropolitan Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association.  
Formation of the Irish Metropolitan Ladies' Anti-  
 Slavery Association, with a Report for the Irish  
 Contributors of 1856 to the Rochester Anti-Slavery  
 Bazaar. Dublin: R. Chapman, 1857.

Jamaica Education Society.  
Report. Birmingham: J.W. Showell, 1838.

Ladies' Association for Calne, Melksham, Devizes, and Their  
 Respective Neighbourhoods, in Aid of the Cause of  
 Negro Emancipation. The Second Annual Report. Calne:  
 W. Baily, 1827.

Ladies' Association for Liverpool and its Neighbourhood, in  
 Aid of the Cause of Negro Emancipation.  
The First Report. Liverpool: George Smith, 1828.

Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, Melksham, Devizes  
 etc, in aid of the Cause of Negro Emancipation.  
The Third to Fifth Annual Reports. Calne: T.P.  
 Baily, 1828-30.

Ladies' Free Grown Cotton Movement.  
The Ladies' Free Grown Cotton Movement. [Circular]  
 [n.p., n.d.].

From the Ladies' Free Grown Cotton Movement.  
 [Circular] [n.p., n.d.].

Ladies' London Emancipation Society.  
The First and Second Annual Reports. London: Levey &  
 Co., 1864-65.

Ladies' Negro's Friend Society, for Birmingham, West  
 Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, and Their Respective  
 Neighbourhoods.  
The Seventh to Ninth, Eleventh, Twentieth to Twenty-  
 Sixth, Twenty-Eighth to Thirtieth, Thirty-Sixth,  
 Thirty-Ninth to Forty-First, Forty-Fourth and Forty-

Fifth Reports. Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1832-34, 1836, 1845-51, 1853-55, 1861, 1864-66, 1869-70.

Negro's Friend Society. [Circular] Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1839.

Free Labour Produce. To Grocers. [Circular] [Birmingham], 1849.

To the Women of Great Britain, on the Disuse of Slave Produce. Birmingham: White & Pike, 1849.

Slavery and the Slave Trade. An Appeal to the Women of Great Britain. Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1849.

The Labour Question in the West Indies. Birmingham: Hudson & co., [ca. 1860].

Memoranda from the Records. [Birmingham, 1875].

Retrospect of the Work of Half-a-Century. London: E. Newman, 1875.

Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. Meeting. Walsall, 8th Dec 1825. Birmingham, [1825].

Founding Meeting Held West-Bromwich, 8th April 1825. [1825].

Ladies' Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery. Fugitive Slaves. [Report of foundation of Society] [London, ca. 1853].

Ladies' Society to Aid Fugitives from Slavery. [Report] London: R. Barrett, 1855.

Appeal Addressed to the Friends of the Slave. [London: printed for private circulation, 1857].

Leeds Antislavery Association. First Annual Report. Leeds: H. W. Walker, 1854.

Leeds Auxiliary to the Freedmen's Aid Society. A Plea for the Perishing. Leeds: Edward Baines & Sons, [n.d.]

Leicester Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society. An Address on the State of Slavery in the West India Islands. Leicester: T. Combe, 1824.

Liverpool Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. Declaration of the Objects. Liverpool: James Smith, [1823].

London Female Anti-Slavery Society. The Fourth Report. London: S. Bagster, Jun, 1832.

"So strong is the present feeling ...". [Circular] [London, 1833].

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom ...". [Text of petition] Leicester: Cockshaw, 1833.

Manchester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. [Appeal etc]  
[Manchester, ca. 1859]

Manchester Society, for the Furtherance of the Gradual  
Abolition of Slavery, and the Amelioration of the  
Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies.  
Report of the Committee. Manchester: Henry Smith,  
1827.

National Committee of British Freedmen's-Aid Associations.  
National Committee of British Freedmen's-Aid  
Associations. Receipts to September 1865. [1865].

Newcastle upon Tyne Society for Promoting the Gradual  
Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions.  
First Report of the Committee. Newcastle on Tyne: W.  
A. Mitchell at the Mercury Press, 1825.

Nottingham Anti-Slavery Association. To the Electors of  
Nottingham. Nottingham: J. Dunn, [1830].

Rochester and Chatham Anti-Slavery Society. First Report.  
London: J. & H. Sweet, 1828.

Rochester [New York] Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Third  
to Eighth, Twelfth and Forteenth Annual Reports.  
1854-59, 1863, 1865.

Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society  
Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society,  
Established Midsummer, 1825. Sheffield, 1827.

Appeal of the Friends of the Negro to the British  
People; on Behalf of the Slaves in Their Colonies.  
Sheffield: J. Blackwell at the Iris Office, 1830.

Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society,  
Delivered on Thursday, Oct 9, 1832. Sheffield:  
Iris Office, 1832.

Concluding Report of the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery  
Society. Sheffield: Iris Office, 1833.

An Appeal to the People of England, in Behalf of the  
Slaves in the British Colonies. Sheffield: Iris  
Office, 1833.

Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association.  
[Circular signed by Mary Ann Rawson and addressed to  
the ministers of Sheffield] [Sheffield, 1857].

To the Women of Sheffield from the Members of the  
"Sheffield Anti-Slavery Association" [Circular]  
[1857?].

"Two Meeting of Ladies were held in the Council Hall,  
Sheffield, during the month of February 1857 ...".  
[Sheffield, 1857].

Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.

Fifth Annual Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, for 1830. Sheffield: J. Blackwell at the Iris Office, 1830.  
Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Sheffield: Leader, 1837.

Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery  
An Appeal to the Christian Women of Sheffield, from the Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery. Sheffield: R. Leader, 1837.

Ladies' Petition for the Abolition of Slavery. Sheffield: Leader, Independent Office, [1838].

Report of the Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery. February 19, 1839. Sheffield: Robert Leader, Independent Office, 1839.

Sheffield Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. "At a meeting held at Sheffield, 1st Month, 1826 resolved ...". Sheffield: J. Blackwell, Iris Office, [1826].

Society Established at Edinburgh, for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Two of the Petitions from Scotland, Which Were Presented to the Last Parliament, Praying the Abolition of the African Slave Trade. Edinburgh: printed by order of the Society, 1790.

Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.  
List of the Society. London, 1788.

Society Instituted in 1787, for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. [Appeal] [London, ca. 1787].

Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade, and for the Civilization of Africa.  
Prospectus. London: W. Clowes & Sons, [1839].

Proceedings at the First Public Meeting. London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1840.

Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions (Anti-Slavery Society).

Anti-Slavery Society. [Rules for men's local societies] London: Ellerton & Henderson, [n.d.]

First to Third Reports. London: Richard Taylor etc, 1824-26.

Accounts of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Anti-Slavery Society, for the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826; 1829 and 1830; 1831: with a List of Subscribers (London, [1823-31]).

Ladies Anti-Slavery Associations. London: Bagster & Thoms, [1828].

A Picture of Colonial Slavery, in the Year 1828, Addressed Especially to the Ladies of Great Britain. London: Bagster & Thoms, [1828].

Rules for Anti-Slavery Associations. (Ladies'). London: Knight & Bagster [n.d.].

Society for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Manchester, December 27th, 1787. [Report of meetings] [Manchester, 1787/8].

Suffolk Auxiliary Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery. First Report. Ipswich: King & Garrod at the County Press, 1825.

Swansea and Neath Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Association. The First Annual Report. Swansea: F. Fagg, 1826.

Union and Emancipation Society of Manchester. Address. [Manchester, 1863].

##### 5. OTHER CONTEMPORARY BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

An Abstract of the Evidence Delivered Before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, in the Years 1790 and 1791; on the Part of the Petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Edinburgh: printed at the joint expense of the Glasgow and Edinburgh Societies, instituted for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1791.

An Account of the Murder of a Female Negro. London: J. Evans & Son, [1807?].

An Account of the Proceedings of a Meeting on the Subject of Slavery. Held at Birmingham, the 10th Nov 1825. Bristol, John Wansbrough, Albion Press, 1825.

An Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York, Against the Use of Sugar. 1792.

Address to the Public on the Present Slavery in the British Colonies. 5th ed. London: Bagton & Thoms for the Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1828.

Addressed to the Labouring Classes. Sheffield: Iris Office, [n.d.].

[Allen, William]. The Duty of Abstaining from the Use of West India Produce. A Speech, Delivered at Coach-Maker's-Hall, Jan. 12, 1792. London: T. W. Hawkins, [1792].

American Anti-Slavery Bazaar. [Circular appeal] [Bristol, 1854].

Anthropos [Mathews]. The Rights of Man. (Not Paines,) but the Rights of Man in the West Indies. London: Knight & Lacey, 1824.

Anti-Abolition Riot in Boston - Mr Thompson's Letter to Mr Garrison - Arrival of Mr Thompson in Glasgow; and Mr Thompson's First Address. Extracted from the Glasgow Chronicle, of 19th and 22nd January, 1836. [Glasgow]: Printed at the Glasgow Chronicle Office, [1836].

Anti-Slavery Scrap Book. London: Bagster & Thoms, 1829.

An Appeal to Englishwomen. London: Jarrold & Sons, [n.d.].

Autograph Contributions (Kindly written or Furnished in Aid of the Anti-Slavery Cause). [? Leeds, ca. 1854].

Barbould, Anna Laetitia. Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade. London: J. Johnson, 1791.

Behn, Aphra. Oroonoko: Or, the Royal Slave: A True History. London: Will Canning, 1688.

Benger, Elizabeth. "A Poem, Occasioned by the Abolition of the Slave Trade, in 1806", Poems on the Abolition of Slavery, James Montgomery, James Grahame, and E. Benger. London: R. Bowyer, 1809.

Beverley, R. M. A Speech on the Negro Apprenticeship, Delivered in the Cutlers Hall, Sheffield, on Monday Evening, February 12, 1838. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., [1838]

Birkett, M. A Poem on the African Slave Trade. Addressed to her Own Sex. Dublin: J. Jones, 1792.

Bradburn, Samuel. An Address, to the People Called Methodists; Concerning the Evil of Encouraging the Slave Trade. Manchester: T. Harper, 1792.

"Bread Upon the Waters", or, Letters, Illustrations, Moral and Practical, Addressed Generally to the Women of Great Britain and Ireland on the Subject of the "Stafford House Memorial", Recently Transmitted to the Women of the United States, Concluding with an Appeal to Gentlemen Connected with the Cotton Question. London: W. & F. G. Cash, 1853.

A Briton. The Fashionable Philanthropy of the Day. Some Plain Speaking About American Slavery. A Letter Addressed to the Stoweites of England and Scotland. London: Hope & Co., 1853.

Burritt, Elihu. Twenty Reasons for Total Abstinence from Slave-Labour Produce. London: J. Unwin, [n.d.].

Butler, Josephine (ed.). Woman's Work and Woman's Culture. A Series of Essays. London: Macmillan & Co., 1869.

Capp, Mary Elizabeth. The African Princess, and Other Poems. Yarmouth: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1813.

Cappe, Catherine. Observations of Charity Schools, Female Friendly Societies, and Other Subjects Connected with the Views of the Ladies Committee. York: W. Blanchard, 1805.

The Case of Wood v. Pringle. [Circular] [n.p., n.d.].

Charlotte Elizabeth [Phelan, afterwards Tonna, Charlotte Elizabeth]. The System; a Tale of the West Indies. London: Frederick Westley & A. H. Davis, 1827.

[Cobbe, Frances Power]. Rejoinder to Mrs Stowe's Reply to the Address to the Women of England. London: Emily Faithfull, 1863.

Collins, John A. Right and Wrong Among the Abolitionists of the United States .... With an Introductory Letter by Miss [Harriet] Martineau. Glasgow: George Gallie, 1841.

A Concise View of Colonial Slavery. Newcastle: Newcastle Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, 1830.

The Consumers of West India Sugar, the Supporters of West India Slavery. Bristol: Wright & Bagnall, [n.d.].

Mr Cresswick [Mary Wollstonecraft]. The Female Reader. London: J. Johnson, 1789.

A Dissenter [Anna Laetitia Barbauld]. An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. 2nd ed. London: J. Johnson, 1790.

Burn, Andrew. Second Address to the People of Great Britain: Containing a New, and More Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West India Sugar. 2nd ed., enlarged. London: M. Gurney, 1792.

Douglass, Frederick. The Nature, Character, and History of the Anti-Slavery Movement. A Lecture Delivered Before the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association. Glasgow: G. Gallie, 1855.

[Dudley, Mary]. Scripture Evidence of the Sinfulness of Injustice and Oppression. Respectfully Submitted to Professing Christians, in Order to Call Forth Their Sympathy and Exertions, on Behalf of the Much-Injured Africans. London: Harvey & Darton, 1828.

Ellis, Sarah Stickney. The Women of England, Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits. 2nd ed. London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1839.

England and Slavery. The Present Crisis and Our Duty. London: Morgan & Chase, [ca. 1863].

An Englishwoman. An Address to the Females of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Their Petitioning Parliament for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. London: J.G. & F. Rivington, 1833.

Englishwoman. A Letter to Those Ladies Who Met at Stafford House in Particular, and to the Women of England in General, on Slavery at Home. London: James Ridgway, 1853.

An Englishwoman. Remarks Occasioned by Strictures in The Courier and New York Enquirer of December 1852, upon the Stafford-House Address. In a Letter to a Friend in the United States. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1853.

An Englishwoman [Frances Wright D'Arusmont]. Views of Society and Manners in America; in a Series of Letters from That Country to a Friend in England, During the Years 1818, 1819, and 1820. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1821.

Falconar, Maria and Harriet. Poems on Slavery. London: Egertons, 1788.

Fielding, Sir John. Extracts from Such of the Penal Laws, as Particularly Relate to the Peace and Good Order of This Metropolis. New ed. London: H. Woodfall & W. Strahan, 1768.

Fitz-gerald, John. Christian Slaveholders Disobedient to Christ; or, Ten Thousand English Chrstians Invited to Protest Actively Against the Sin of the Church in the United States: And to Cease from Purchasing the Produce of Slave Labour. London: W.H. Dalton, 1854.

[Fox, William]. An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Abstaining from West India Sugar and Rum. 25th ed. London [n.d. - original ed. 1791].

Free Church Alliance with Manstealers. Send Back the Money. Great Anti-Slavery Meeting at the City Hall Glasgow, Containing Speeches Delivered by Messrs. Wright, Douglass, and Buffum, from America, and by George Thompson Esq. of London; with a Summary of a Series of Meetings Held in Edinburgh by the Above Named Gentlemen. Glasgow: George Gallie, 1846.

Garrison, William Lloyd (ed.). Lectures of George Thompson. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1836.

Geldart, Mrs T. (ed.) A Voice from Slave Land: A True Story. London: Jassold & Sons, [n.d.].

Griffiths, Julia, ed. Autographs for Freedom. Vol I. London: Sampson, Low, Son & Co., 1853; Vol. II. Auburn: Alden, Beardsley & Co., 1854.

Gurney, Joseph John. Substance of a Speech, Delivered at a Public Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City and

- County of Norwich, on the Subject of British Colonial Slavery. Norwich: Barks & Kinnebrook, [1824].
- [Hedge, Mary Ann]. Samboe; or, the African Boy. London: Harvey & Darton, 1823.
- [Heyrick, Elizabeth]. An Appeal, not to the Government, but to the People of England, on the Subject of West Indian Slavery. London, 1824.
- [Heyrick, Elizabeth]. Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British women. Leicester: A. Cockshaw, 1828.
- [Heyrick, Elizabeth]. An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties is Best Entitled to Freedom? The Slave or the Slave-Holder? From an Impartial Examination of the Conduct of Each Party, at the Bar of Public Justice. London, 1824.
- [Heyrick, Elizabeth]. Immediate, not Gradual Abolition; or, an Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery. London, 1824.
- [Heyrick, Elizabeth]. Letters On the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery; Chiefly Addressed to the More Influential Classes. To Which Are Added, Thoughts on Compensation. London, 1826.
- [Heyrick, Elizabeth]. No British Slavery; or, an Invitation to the People to Put a Speedy End to It. London, 1824.
- "The history of William and Ellen Craft ...". [Circular soliciting contributions] [n.p., 1852].
- Inquiries Relating to Negro Emancipation. London: J. Hatchard & Son, 1829.
- Ivimey, Joseph. The Utter Extinction of Slavery an Object of Scripture Prophecy: A Lecture the Substance of Which was Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Chelmsford Ladies Anti-Slavery Association in the Friend's Meeting-House, on Tuesday, the 17th of April, 1832. London: J. Messeder, 1832.
- Ireland, Mary. Slavery. [Poem printed on sheet] [n.p., n.d.].
- Jameson, Anna. "Story of a Slave", Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada. 3 Vols. London: Saunders & Otley, 1838. Vol II, 41-51.
- Knight, Anne. Letter to Lord Brougham. Result of an Interview at Meurice's Hotel, Paris, 4th Month 14, 1849. London: Johnson & Co., [n.d.].
- Knipe, Eliza. "Atombaka and Omaza; an African story", Six Narrative Poems. London: Printed for the author, 1787. 51-60.

- The Ladies of the Sheffield Anti-Slavery Association. A Word for the Slave. Sheffield: J. Blackwell, 1830.
- A Lady. A Dialogue Between a Well-Wisher and a Friend to the Slaves in the British Colonies. London: S. Bagster, Jun., [n.d.].
- A Lady (ed.). Slavery Past and Present; or Notes on Uncle Tom's Cabin. London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1852.
- A Lady [Elizabeth Sophia Tompkins] and her Brother. Tributes of Affection: With the Slave; and Other Poems. London: H. & C. Baldwin, 1797.
- The Ladies' Bazaar. From the Sheffield Patriot March 5, 1839. [Sheet of poetry] [Sheffield, 1839].
- Leadbeater, Mary. "The Negro: Addressed to Edmund Burke", Poems by Mary Leadbeater, (Late Shackleton). Dublin: Martin Keene, 1808. 87-93.
- Leeds Anti-Slavery Tracts. Five Hundred Thousand Strokes for Freedom. A series of 82 tracts. London: W. F. Cash, 1853.
- The Liberty Bell. [Annual] Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1845; National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1847-58.
- The Local Register, and Chronological Account of Occurrences and Facts Connected with the Town and Neighbourhood of Sheffield. Sheffield: Robert Leader, office of the Sheffield Independent, 1824-39.
- Mackenzie, Anna Maria. Slavery; or the Times. London: G. G. T. & J. Robinsons & J. Dennis, 1792.
- MacKinnon, W. A. On the Rise, Progress, and Present State of Public Opinion, in Great Britain, and Other Parts of the World. London: Saunders & Otley, 1828.
- Martineau, Harriet. "Demerara. A Tale", Illustrations of Political Economy. London: Charles Fox, 1834. Vol. II, 1-143.
- Martineau, Harriet. The Hour and the Man. A Historical Romance. 3 Vols. London: Edward Moxon, 1841.
- [Martineau, Harriet]. The Martyr Age of the United States of America, with an Appeal on Behalf of the Oberlin Institute in Aid of the Abolition of Slavery. Newcastle upon Tyne: republished from the London and Westminster Review [of Dec 1838] by the Newcastle upon Tyne Emancipation and Aborigines Protection Society, 1840.
- Martineau, Harriet. Retrospect of Western Travel. 3 Vols. London: Saunders & Otley, 1838.

- Martineau, Harriet. Society in America. 3 Vols. London: Saunders & Otley, 1837.
- More, Hannah. The Feast of Freedom, or the Abolition of Domestic Slavery in Ceylon. London: T. Cadell, 1827.
- More, Hannah. Slavery, a Poem. London: T. Cadell, 1788.
- More, Hannah. "The Sorrows of Yamba; or, a Negro Woman's Lamentation", The Anti-Slavery Album: Selections in Verse from Cowper, Hannah More, Montgomery, Pringle, and Others. London: Howlett & Brimmer, 1828.
- More, Hannah. Works of Hannah More, Vols. VII, VIII: Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. London: T. Cadell Jun. & W Davies, 1801.
- [More, Hannah] (ed). Cheap Repository Tracts, Published During the Year 1795, Vol. I: True Stories of Two Good Negroes. J. Marshall, [1797].
- Morrison, Frances. The Influence of the Present Marriage System upon the Character and Interest of Females Contrasted with that Proposed by R. Owen Esq. A Lecture Delivered in the Social Institute, Shudehill, Manchester on Sunday Evening, Sept 2nd 1838. Manchester: A. Heywood, [1838].
- [Naish, William]. Reasons for Using East India Sugar. London: printed for the Peckham Ladies' African and Anti-Slavery Association, 1828.
- National Anti-Slavery Bazaar Gazette. [Annual newsheet of the Boston Anti-Slavery Bazaar]. [Boston, Mass.], 1847-1852.
- The Negro's Forget Me Not. London: Bagster & Thoms, 1829.
- The Negro Slave: A Tale. Addressed to the Women of Great Britain. London: Harvey & Darton, 1830.
- Negro Slavery. To the Ladies of the United Kingdom. London: Ellerton & Henderson, [n.d.]
- The Negro's Friend. London: Harvey & Darton, 1829.
- The Negro's Friend, or, the Sheffield Anti-Slavery Album. Sheffield: J. Blackwell, Iris Office, 1826.
- Newcastle Anti-Slavery Series. Tracts no. 1, 10, 11 (London: C. Gilpin; W. & F. G. Cash, [n.d.]).
- Opie, Amelia Anderson. The Black Man's Lament; or, How to Make Sugar. London: Harvey & Darton, 1826.
- Opie, Amelia Alderson. "The Lucayan's Song", The Warrior's Return, and Other Poems. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1808. 71-79.
- Opie, Amelia Anderson. The Negro Boy's Tale, a Poem,

- Addressed to Children. London: Harvey & Darton, 1824.
- Orpen, Charles E. H. The Principles, Plans, and Objects of "the Hibernian Negro's Friend Society", Contrasted with Those of the Previously Existing "Anti-Slavery Societies". [Dublin: 1831]
- Petition to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, from the Ladies of Glasgow and its Vicinity, Adopted at the Public Meeting Held in the Rev. David King's Chapel, 1st August, 1837. [Glasgow, 1837].
- A Philanthropist. Domestic Tyranny, or Woman in Chains; With an Inquiry as to the Best Mode of Breaking Her Bonds Asunder, and Securing Her, in Lieu Thereof, the More Effectual Links of Mutual Respect and Co-Operation. London: Whittaker & Co., 1841.
- Proceedings in the City of York, in Reference to Negro Slavery in the West Indies. York: W. Alexander & Son, 1824.
- Ramsay, the Rev. James. An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies. London: James Phillips, 1784.
- [Rawson, Mary Anne (ed.)]. The Bow in the Cloud; or, the Negro's Memorial. London: Jackson & Walford, 1834.
- [Rawson, Mary Anne (comp.)]. Hymns for Anti-Slavery Prayer-Meetings. London: Jackson & Walford, 1838.
- Rawson, Mary Anne. The Thompson Normal School Jamaica. [Circular appeal] Sheffield: Leader, 1845.
- Reid, Marion. A Plea for Woman. Reprint of 1st edition of 1843. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1988.
- Reid, the Rev. William. Woman's Work for Woman's Weal. Glasgow: Scottish Temperance League, 1860.
- Report of the Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Conference and Public Meeting, Held at Manchester, on the 1st August, 1854, in Commemoration of West India Emancipation. Published under the superintendence of the Committee of the North of England Anti-Slavery and India Reform League, London: William Tweedie, 1854.
- Report of the Speeches, and Reception of the American Delegates, at the Great Public Meeting of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, Held in Dr. Wardlaw's Chapel, on the Evening of Monday, the 27th July, 1840. Reprinted from the Glasgow Argus, Glasgow: Gerorge Gallie, 1840.
- Report of the Speeches at a County Meeting Held at the Castle of Leicester, on Friday January 20th, 1826, on the Subject of Colonial Slavery. Leicester: Albert Cockshaw, 1826.

Richardson, Anna H. Anti-Slavery Memoranda. Newcastle: printed for private circulation, Newcastle: J.G. Forster, 1860.

Robinson, Mary. "The Negroe Girl", Lyrical Tales. London: T.N. Longman & O. Rees, 1800. 107-114.

Rochester Anti-Slavery Bazaar. [Circular] [n.p., n.d.].

Sherwood, Mary Martha. The Re-Captured Negro. 2nd ed. Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston & Son, [1821].

Speeches Delivered in the Town-Hall of Beverley, at a Public Meeting, Convened by the Right Worshipful the Mayor, for the Purpose of Petitioning Parliament to Abolish Slavery in the West Indies. Thursday, February 26th, 1824. [Beverley]: Beverley Anti-Slavery Association, [1824].

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Letter from Mrs H. B. Stowe, to the Ladies' New Anti-Slavery Society of Glasgow, the Contents of Which Are Designed Equally for the Anti-Slavery Societies of England and Scotland. Glasgow: John Maclay & Co., 1854.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. A Reply to "the Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, to their Sisters, the Women of the United States of America". London: Sampson, Low Son & Co., 1863.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom's Cabin or, Life Among the Lowly. Ed. Ann Douglas. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981. (First published 1852).

The Speeches Delivered at the Soiree in Honour of George Thompson, Esq., in the Renfrewshire Tontine Inn, Paisley, on 25th Jan, 1837. Paisley: Alex Gardner & G. Cuthbertson, [1837].

Subscriptions Received in Aid of W. Craft's Mission to the West Coast of Africa, and Especially to the King of Dahomey. London, 1862.

Thompson, George. An Address, etc. upon the Subject of an Anti-Slavery Mission to the United States of America: Delivered Before the Ladies of Edinburgh and its Vicinity, Assembled in Rose Street Chapel, Edinburgh, Monday, 11th Nov. 1833. Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Son, 1834.

Thompson, George. Substance of an Address to the Ladies of Glasgow and its Vicinity upon the Present Aspect of the Great Question of Negro Emancipation, Delivered in Mr. Anderson's Chapel, John-St., Glasgow, on Tuesday, March 5th, 1833 . . . . Also, Some Account of the Formation of the Glasgow Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association. Glasgow: David Robertson, 1833.

Thompson, Jemima. Memoirs of British Female Missionaries: With a Survey of the Condition of Women in Heathen Countries, and also a Preliminary Essay on the Importance of Female Agency in Evangelising Pagan Nations. London: William Smith, 1841.

Mr Thompson's Second Address to the Members and Friends of the Glasgow Emancipation Society; and the Speeches at the Soiree in Honour of That Gentleman. Extracted from the Glasgow Chronicle, of 26th and 29th January, 1836. [Glasgow]: Printed in the Glasgow Chronicle Office, [1836].

Thomson, Andrew. Substance of the Speech Delivered at the Meeting of the Edinburgh Society for the Abolition of Slavery, on October 19, 1830. Edinburgh: William Whyte & Co., 1830.

To Her Majesty Queen Adelaide. [text of Address from female inhabitants of Bristol] Bristol: Wright & Bagnall, [1830].

To the Friends of Abolition. [Circular appeal] Bristol: Ackland & Son, [ca. 1863].

To the Friends of the Anti-Slavery Advocate. [Circular] [n.p, n.d.].

To the Friends of the Slave. [Circular appeal] Newcastle, 1854.

[Townsend, Charlotte]. Pity the Negro; or an Address to Children on the Subject of Slavery. 7th ed. London: Frederick Wesley & A. H. Davis, 1829.

Townsend, Lucy. "To the Law, and to the Testimony", or Questions on Slavery Answered by the Scriptures; and Presumed to be Worthy of Particular Consideration on the National Fast Day. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1832.

Trimmer, Sarah. The Oeconomy of Charity; or, an Address to Ladies; Adapted to the Present State of Charitable Insitutions in England: With a Particular View to the Cultivation of Religious Principles, among the Lower Orders of People. 2 vols. London: J. Johnson & F.& C. Rivington, 1801.

Tuckey, M. B. The Wrongs of Africa: A Tribute to the Anti-Slavery Casuse. Glasgow: published for the Glasgow Ladies' Emancipation Society by George Gallie, 1838.

The Uncle Tom's Cabin Almanack or Abolitionist Memento for 1853. London: John Cassell, [1853].

A Vindication of Female Anti-Slavery Associations. London: printed for the Female Anti-Slavery Society [n.d.].

A Voice to the United States of America, from the Metropolis of Scotland; Being an Account of Various Meetings Held in Edinburgh on the Subject of American Slavery, upon the Return of Mr George Thompson, from His Mission to that Country. Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Son, 1836.

A Volunteer [Anna Laetitia Barbauld]. Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation; or a Discourse for the Fast, Appointed on April 19, 1793. 2nd ed. London: J. Johnson, 1793.

Wakefield, Priscilla. Excursions in North America, Described in Letters from a Gentleman to His Young Companion. London: Darton & Harvey, 1806.

Watts, Susanna. Hymns and Poems of the Late Susanna Watts, with a Few Recollections of Her Life. Leicester: J. Waddington, 1842.

Webb, Richard D. The National Anti-Slavery Societies in England and the United States: Or, Stictures on "A Reply to Certain Charges Brought Against the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, etc etc, by Lewis Tappan of New York, United States: With an Introduction by John Scoble". Dublin: Charles Hedgelong, 1852.

[Wedgwood, Miss ?Sarah]. British Slavery Described. Newcastle [under Lyme]: Sold for the Benefit of the North Staffs Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, 1828.

"What Does Your Sugar Cost?" A Cottage Conversation on the Subject of British Negro Slavery. Birmingham: Birmingham etc. Female Society, 1828.

Wheatley, Phillis. Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral. London: A. Bell, 1773.

Wigham, Eliza. The Anti-Slavery Cause in America and Its Martyrs. London: A. W. Bennett, 1863.

Wigham, Eliza, et al.. To the Friends of Justice and Humanity Everywhere, Especially Those Who Interest Themselves in the Future of the Coloured Race; also to the Remnant of the Anti-Slavery Workers, and the Members of the Society of Friends. [Circular appeal] [n.p., n.d.].

Wilberforce, William. A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade; Addressed to the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of Yorkshire. London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1807.

Wilkinson, Thomas. An Appeal to England, on Behalf of the Abused Africans. A Poem. Dublin, 1792.

Williams, Helen Maria. Letters on the French Revolution, Written in France, in the Summer of 1790, to a Friend in England; Containing Various Anecdotes Relative to That Interesting Event, and Memoirs of Mons. and

- Madame Du F--. 1st American ed. Boston: J. Belknap & A. Young, 1791. (1st English ed. appeared 1790).
- Williams, Helen Maria. A Poem on the Bill Lately Passed for Regulating the Slave Trade. London: T. Cadell, 1788.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke; Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France. 2nd ed. London: J. Johnson, 1790.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. Ed. Carol H. Poston. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975. (1st ed. published 1792).
- Wright, Henry C. William Lloyd Garrison. To the Committee of the Glasgow Female Anti-Slavery Society. Glasgow: David Russell, [1845].
- Yates, Edward. A Letter to the Women of England on Slavery in the Southern States of America; Considered Especially in Reference of the Condition of the Female Slaves. London: John Snow, 1863.
- Yearsley, Ann. A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave-Trade. London: G.G.J & J. Robinson, [1788].
- Yeoman, Jane. Verses on Slavery. Birmingham: B. Hudson, 1826.

## 6. LIVES, LETTERS, COLLECTED DOCUMENTS

- Abel, Annie Heloise, and Klingberg, Frank J. (eds.) A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858. Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Lancaster: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1927.
- William Allen. Life of William Allen. With Selections from his Correspondence. 3 Vols.; London: Charles Gilpin, 1846.
- Annual Monitor. [Obituaries of members of the Society of Friends].
- Banks, Olive. The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, 1983. Vol. I. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1985.
- Barker, Anthony J. Captain Charles Stuart, Anglo-American Abolitionist. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1986.
- Barnes, Gilbert H., and Dumond, Dwight L. (eds.) Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and

- Sarah Grimké 1822-1844. 2 Vols. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934.
- Baylen, Joseph O., and Gossman, Norbert J. (eds.) Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals. Vols. 1 & 2. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979.
- Bell, John Hyslop. British Folks and British India Fifty Years Ago: Joseph Pease and his Contemporaries. London: John Heywood, [1891].
- Biller, Sarah (ed.). Memoir of the Late Hannah Kilham: Compiled Chiefly from her Journal. London: Darton & Harvey, 1837.
- Bosworth, George F. Essex Hall, Walthamstow and the Cogan Associations. Walthamstow Antiquarian Society, Official Publication No. 5, 1918.
- [Brent, Linda] [Harriet Jacobs, pseud.] The Deeper Wrong; or, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself. Edited by Lydia Maria Child. London: W. Tweedie, 1862.
- A Brief Sketch of the Life and Labours of Mrs Elizabeth Heyrick. Leicester: Crossley & Clarke, 1862.
- Brightwell, Cecelia Lucy. Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie, Selected and Arranged from her Letters, Diaries, and Other Manuscripts. 2nd ed.; Norwich: Fletcher & Alexander, 1854.
- Brown, William Wells. Three Years in Europe; or, the Places I Have Seen and People I Have Met. London: Charles Gilpin, 1852.
- Butler, Josephine. Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade. London: Horace Marshall, 1896.
- Buxton, Charles (ed.). Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Baronet. With Selections from his Correspondence. London: John Murray, 1848.
- Chatterton, Lady Georgina. Memorials, Personal and Historical of Admiral Lord Gambier, G.C.B. with Original Letters from William Pitt. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1861.
- Cobbe, Frances Power. Life of Frances Power Cobbe. London: Swan Sounenschein, 1904.
- Conder, Eustace R. Josiah Conder, a Memoir. London: John Snow, 1857.
- Coupland, Reginald. Wilberforce: A Narrative. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Craton, Michael, Walvin, James and Wright, David. Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Black Slaves in the British Empire: A Thematic Documentary. London: Longman, 1976.

- Crawford, Anne et al (eds.). Europa Biographical Dictionary of British Women. London: Europa Press, 1983.
- Douglass, Frederick. The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass. Hartford: Park Publishing Co..
- Ellis, Grace A. A Memoir of Mrs Anna Laetitia Barbauld, with Many of Her Letters. Boston: James R. Osgood, 1874.
- Equiano, Olaudah. The Life of Olaudah Equiana or Gustavus Vassa the African. Reprint of original 1789 edition, with a new introduction by Paul Edwards; London: Dawsons, 1969.
- Foner, Philip S. Frederick Douglass: A Biography. New York: The Citadel Press, 1964.
- Fry, Elizabeth. Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry, with Extracts from her Journals and Letters. Edited by two of her daughters. 2 Vols.; London: Charles Gilpin, 1847.
- Garrison, Wendell Phillips and Francis Jackson. William Lloyd Garrison 1805-1879: The Story of his Life. New York: The Century Co., 1885.
- Gilbert, Josiah (ed.). Autobiography and Other Memorials of Mrs Gilbert (Formerly Ann Taylor). 2 Vols.; London: Henry S King & Co., 1874.
- Griggs, Earl Leslie. Thomas Clarkson, Friend of Slaves. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936.
- Hankin, Christina C. (ed.) Life of Mary Ann Schimmelpenninck. 2 Vols.; London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1858.
- Heath, the Rev. H. J. B. Margaret Bright Lucas. London: George Potter, 1890.
- Hobhouse, Stephen. Joseph Sturge: His Life and Work. London: J. M. Dent, 1919.
- Hollis, P. (ed.) Women in Public: Documents of the Victorian Women's Suffrage Movement. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979.
- Howitt, Mary. An Autobiography. Edited by Margaret Howitt. London: Wm Isbister Ltd., 1889.
- Johnston, R. Brimley. (ed.). The Letters of Hannah More. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., 1925.
- Kemble, Frances Anne. Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1833-1839. Ed. John A. Scott. Reprint of original ed. of 1863; London: Jonathan Cape, 1961.

- Knutsford, Viscountess. The Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay. London: Edward Arnold, 1900.
- Le Breton, Anna Letitia. Memoir of Mrs Barbauld. London: George Bell & Sons, 1874.
- Lerner, Gerda. The Grimke Sisters of South Carolina. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967.
- "Letters of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll to Charles Sumner," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. XLVII (Oct 1913-June 1914), 66-107.
- Martineau, Harriet. Harriet Martineau's Autobiography with Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman. Vol. III: Memorials of Harriet Martineau. 3 Vols.; London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1877.
- Martineau, Harriet. Harriet Martineau's Autobiography. 2 Vols; reprint of 3rd Edition of 1877, with a new introduction by Gaby Weiner; London: Virago, 1983.
- Merrill, Walker M., and Ruchames, Louis (eds.). The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison. 6 Vols. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard U.P., 1971-1981.
- "Letters of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll to Charles Sumner," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. XLVII (Oct 1913-June 1914), 66-107.
- Martineau, Harriet. Harriet Martineau's Autobiography with Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman. Vol. III: Memorials of Harriet Martineau. 3 Vols.; London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1877.
- Martineau, Harriet. Harriet Martineau's Autobiography. 2 Vols; reprint of 3rd Edition of 1877, with a new introduction by Gaby Weiner; London: Virago, 1983.
- Merrill, Walker M., and Ruchames, Louis (eds.). The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison. 6 Vols. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard U.P., 1971-1981.
- [Middleditch, the Rev. T.] (comp.) The Youthful Female Missionary: A Memoir of Mary Ann Hutchins. 2nd ed. rev.; London: E. Wrightman & Hamilton Adams & Co., 1840.
- Mott, James. Three Months in Great Britain. Philadelphia: J. Miller McKim, 1841.
- Neale, Mary. Some Account of the Life and Religious Exercises of Mary Neale, Formerly Mary Peisley. Dublin: John Gough, 1795.
- Phillips, Catherine. Memoirs of the Life of Catherine Phillips: To which Are Added Some of Her Epistles. London: James Phillips & Son, 1797.

- Pichanick, Valerie Kossew. Harriet Martineau: The Woman and Her Work, 1802-76. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980.
- Prince, Mary. The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself. Ed. Moira Ferguson. London: Pandora, 1987 (text of original ed. of 1831 with new preface and introduction).
- Pumphrey, Thomas and Emma R. (comp.) Henry and Anna Richardson. In Memoriam. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1892.
- Pumphrey, Thomas and Emma R. (comp.) Ellen Richardson and Ann Richardson Foster. In Memoriam. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1896.
- Richard, Henry. Memoirs of Joseph Sturge. London: Partridge, 1864.
- Ripley, C. Peter. The Black Abolitionist Papers. Vol I: The British Isles, 1830-1865. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, [ca. 1985].
- Roberts, Arthur (ed.). Letters of Hannah More to Zachary Macaulay, Esq.. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1860.
- Roberts, Samuel. Autobiography and Select Remains of the Late Samuel Roberts. London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1849.
- Roberts, William (ed.). Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs Hannah More. 2nd ed., 4 Vols.; London: R.B. Seeley & W. Burnside, 1834.
- Sancho, Ignatius. Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African. Reprint of 5th ed. of 1803, with an introduction by Paul Edwards; London: Dawsons, 1968.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. Eighty Years and More. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898.
- Stanton, Henry B. Sketches of Reforms and Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland. New York: John Wiley, 1849.
- Stephen, Sir George. Anti-Slavery Recollections: In a Series of Letters, Addressed to Mrs Beecher Stowe. London: Thomas Hatchard, 1854.
- Sturge, Sara W. Memoir of Mary Lloyd of Wednesbury, 1795-1865. Printed for private circulation, 1921.
- Swift, David E. John Joseph Gurney. Middletown: Wesleyan U.P., 1962.
- Taylor, Clare (ed.). British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 1974.
- Thompson, Henry. The Life of Hannah More: With Notices of Her Sisters. London: T. Cadell, 1838.

Tolles, Frederick B. (ed.) Slavery and "the Woman Question", Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840. Haverford: Friends Historical Association, 1952.

Turning the World Upside Down: The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women Held in New York City May 9-12, 1837. With an Introduction by Dorothy Sterling. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1987.

Walvin, James. The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England, 1555-1860. London: Orbach & Chambers, 1971.

Webb, R. K. Harriet Martineau: A Radical Victorian. London: Heinemann, 1960.

Wilberforce, Robert Isaac and Samuel (eds.). The Correspondence of William Wilberforce. 2 Vols.; London: John Murray, 1840.

Wilberforce, Robert Isaac and Samuel. The Life of William Wilberforce. 5 Vols.; London: John Murray, 1838.

Wilson, Forrest. Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1942.

## 7. SECONDARY SOURCES: BOOKS

Anstey, Roger. The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810. London: Macmillan, 1975.

Anstey, Roger and Hair, P. E. H. (eds.). Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition. Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Occasional Series ii, 1979.

Ardener, Shirley. Women and Space: Grounds Rules and Social Maps. London: Croom Helm, 1981.

Banks, Olive. Faces of Feminism. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981.

Barker, Anthony J. The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1550-1807. London: Frank Cass, 1978.

Blackburn, Helen. Women's Suffrage: A Record of the Women's Suffrage Movement in the British Isles. London: Williams and Norgate, 1902.

Blackett, R.J.M. Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1983.

- Bolt, Christine. The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: A Study in Anglo-American Co-Operation, 1833-77. London: Oxford U.P., 1969.
- Bolt, Christine. Victorian Attitudes to Race. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Bolt, Christine, and Drescher, Seymour (eds.). Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey. Folkestone: Dawson, 1980.
- Bourne, Jenny. Towards an Anti-Racist Feminism. (Race and Class Pamphlet no. 9.) London: Institute of Race Relations, 1984.
- Clarkson, Thomas. The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament. 2 Vols. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1808.
- Clarkson, Thomas. A Portraiture of Quakerism. 3 Vols. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, 1806.
- Copley, Esther. A History of Slavery, and its Abolition. 2nd ed. London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1839. (1st ed. published 1836).
- Cott, Nancy F. The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1977.
- Coupland, Sir Reginald. The British Anti-Slavery Movement. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1964 (original ed. 1933).
- Cowherd, Raymond G. The Politics of English Dissent: The Religious Aspects of Liberal and Humanitarian Reform Movements from 1815 to 1848. London: Epworth Press, 1959.
- Craton, Michael. Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies. Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1982.
- Curtin, Philip D. The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.
- Curtin, Philip D. The Image of Africa. British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850. London: Macmillan & Co, 1965.
- Davidoff, Leonore, and Hall, Catherine, Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850. London: Hutchinson.
- Davis, Angela. Women, Race and Class. London: Women's Press, 1981.
- Davis, David Brion. The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823. Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1975.
- Davis, David Brion. The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture. Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1966.

- Davis, David Brion. Slavery and Human Progress. New York: Oxford U.P., 1984.
- Drescher, Seymour. Capitalism and Anti-Slavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986.
- Drescher, Seymour. Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977.
- Dykes, Eva B. The Negro in English Romantic Thought: Or a Study in Sympathy for the Oppressed. Washington: The Associated Publishers Inc., 1942.
- Edwards, Paul, and Walvin, James. Black Personalities in the Era of the Slave Trade. London: Macmillan, 1983.
- Ellison, Mary. Support for Secession - Lancashire and the American Civil War. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Eltis, David, and Walvin, James (eds.). The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.
- Fairchild, Hoxie Neale. The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism. New York: Columbia U.P., 1928.
- Ferguson, Moira (ed.). First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578-1799. Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1985.
- Filler, Louis. The Crusade Against Slavery. New York: Harper Torchbook edition, 1963.
- Fladeland, Betty. Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Co-operation. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972.
- Flexner, Eleanor. Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S. New York: Atheneum, 1972.
- Frost, William J. (ed.) The Quaker Origins of Antislavery. Norwood: Norwood Editions, 1980.
- Fryer, Peter. Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain. London: Pluto Press, 1984.
- Gay, John D. The Geography of Religion in England. London: Duckworth, 1971.
- George, Mary Dorothy. Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Vol. VI. London: British Museum Publications, 1978.
- Gilbert, Alan D. Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914. London: Longman, 1976.

- Gunn, J. A. W. Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth Century Political Thought. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983.
- Harris, John. A Century of Emancipation. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1983.
- Hempton, David. Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850. London: Hutchinson, 1984.
- Hersch, Blanche Glassman. The Slavery of Sex. Feminist-Abolitionists in America. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. The Age of Revolution. London: Abacus, 1977 (original ed. 1962).
- Hobsbawm, E. J. The Age of Capital, 1848-1875. London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1975.
- Hogg, Peter C. The African Slave Trade and its Suppression: A Classified and Annotated Bibliography. London: Frank Cass, 1973.
- Hollis, Patricia (ed.). Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England. London: Edward Arnold, 1974.
- Holt, Raymond V. The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England. 2nd ed. London: Lindsey Press, 1952.
- Hooks, Bell. Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism. London: Pluto, 1982.
- Howse, Ernest Marshall. Saints in Politics. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953.
- Hurwitz, Edith F. Politics and the Public Conscience: Slave Emancipation and the Abolitionist Movement in Britain. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. Victorian Quakers. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1970.
- Kaplan, Cora. Salt and Bitter and Good: Three Centuries of English and American Women Poets. London: Paddington Press, [1975].
- King, Elspeth. Scotland Sober and Free: The Temperance Movement 1829-1979. Glasgow: Glasgow Museum and Art Galleries, 1979.
- King, Elspeth. The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement. Glasgow: People's Palace Museum, 1978.
- Klingberg, Frank Joseph. The Anti-Slavery Movement in England: A Study in English Humanitarianism. New Haven: Yale Historical Publications, 1926.

- Lerner, Gerda. The Majority Finds Its Past. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1979.
- Lorimer, Douglas A. Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century. Leicester: Leicester U.P., 1978.
- McCullough, Norman Verrle. The Negro in English Literature: A Critical Introduction. Ilfracombe: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1962.
- McHugh, Paul. Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform. London: Croom Helm, 1980.
- McLendrick, Neil, Brewer, John, and Plumb, J. H. The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England. London: Europa Publications, 1982.
- Malmgreen, Gail. Neither Bread nor Roses: Utopian Feminists and the English Working Class, 1800-1850. Brighton: John L. Noyce, 1978.
- Malmgreen, Gail (ed.). Religion in the Lives of English Women 1760-1930. London: Croom Helm, 1986.
- Marshall, Peter. Bristol and the Abolition of Slavery: The Politics of Emancipation. Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, the University, 1975.
- Mathieson, William Law. British Slavery and its Abolition, 1823-1838. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1926.
- Mathieson, William Law. British Slave Emancipation, 1838-1849. London: Longmans & Co., 1932.
- Mathieson, William Law. Great Britain and the Slave trade, 1839-1865. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1929.
- Mathurin, Lucille. The Rebel Woman in the British West Indies During Slavery. Institute of Jamaica, 1975.
- Miers, Suzanne. Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade. London: Longman, 1975.
- Money, John. Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1800. Manchester: Manchester U.P., 1977.
- Neale, R. S. Class in English History, 1680-1850. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.
- Newton, Judith L., Ryan, Mary P., and Walkowitz, Judith R. (eds.) Sex and Class in Women's History. (History Workshop Series). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.
- Nuermberger, Ruth Ketring. The Free Produce Movement. A Quaker Protest Against Slavery. Durham: Duke U.P., 1942.

- Patterson, A. Temple. Radical Leicester: A History of Leicester, 1780-1850. Leicester: University College, 1954.
- Perry, Lewis, and Fellman, Michael (eds.). Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1979.
- Pollard, Sidney. A History of Labour in Sheffield. Liverpool: Liverpool U.P., 1959.
- Porter, Dale H. The Abolition of the Slave Trade in England, 1784-1807. U.S.A.: Archon Books, 1970.
- Porter, Roy. English Society in the Eighteenth Century. London: Allen Lane, 1982.
- Prochaska, Frank. Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1980.
- Ragatz, Lowell Joseph (comp.). A Guide for the Study of British Caribbean History, 1763-1834, Including the Abolition and Emancipation Movements. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932.
- Ramelson, Marion. The Petticoat Rebellion: A Century of Struggle for Women's Rights. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1967.
- Rendall, Jane (ed.). Equal or Different: Women's Politics, 1800-1914. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Rendall, Jane. The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985.
- Rice, C. Duncan. The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1981.
- Rowbotham, Sheila. Women, Resistance and Revolution. London: Allen Lane, 1972.
- Rogers, Katherine M. Feminism in Eighteenth Century England. Brighton: Harvester, 1982.
- Royle, Edward, and Walvin, James. English Radicals and Reformers, 1760-1848. Brighton: Harvester, 1982.
- Semmel, Bernard. The Governor Eyre Controversy. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1962.
- Sharistanian, Janet (ed.). Gender, Ideology and Action: Historical Perspectives on Women's Public Lives. (Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 67.) Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Shyllon, F. O. Black Slaves in Britain. London: Oxford U.P., 1974.
- Shyllon, F. O. Black People in Britain, 1555-1833. London: Oxford U.P., 1977.

- Smith, Joseph. A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books.  
3 Vols. London, 1867-93.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America. New York: Oxford U.P., 1985.
- Solow, Barbara L. and Engerman, Stanley L. (eds.). British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987.  
(Especially articles by Drescher, Davis and Temperley).
- Stange, Douglas Charles. British Unitarians Against American Slavery, 1833-65. Cransbury: Associated U. P. Inc., 1984.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, Anthony, Susan B., and Gage, Matilda Joslyn (eds.). History of Woman Suffrage. 3 Vols. Rochester: Charles Mann, 1887.
- Strachey, Ray. The Cause. A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain. London: Virago, 1978  
(reprint of original ed. of 1938).
- Sypher, Wylie. Guinea's Captive Kings: British Anti-Slavery Literature of the XVIIIth Century. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942.
- Taylor, Barbara. Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century. London: Virago, 1983.
- Temperley, Howard. British Antislavery, 1833-1870. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972.
- Thistlethwaite, Frank. America and the Atlantic Community: Anglo-American Aspects, 1790-1850. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.
- Thomis, Malcolm I. and Jennifer Grimmett. Women in Protest, 1800-1850. London: Croom Helm, 1982.
- Thompson, Dorothy. The Chartists. London: Temple Smith, 1984.
- Tollis, Frederick B. Quakers and the Atlantic Culture. New York: Macmillan, 1960.
- Turner, Mary. Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Vicinus, Martha. Suffer and Be Still. London: Methuen, 1980.
- Vicinus, Martha. A Widening Sphere. London: Methuen, 1980.

- Walkowitz, Judith R. Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1980.
- Walvin, James. Black and White: The Negro in English Society 1555-1945. London: Allen Lane, 1973.
- Walvin, James. England, Slaves and Freedom, 1776-1838. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986.
- Walvin, James (ed.). Slavery and British Society, 1776-1846. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Williams, Eric. Capitalism and Slavery. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

#### 8. SECONDARY SOURCES: ARTICLES

- Amos, Valerie, and Parmar, Pratibha. "Challenging Imperial Feminism", Feminist Review, no. 17 (Autumn, 1984), 3-19.
- Anstey, Roger T. "Capitalism and Slavery: A Critique", Economic History Review, 2nd Series, Vol. XXI (1968), 307-320.
- Anstey, Roger. "A Re-interpretation of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade, 1806-1807", English Historical Review, Vol. LXXXVII (1972), 304-332.
- Anstey, Roger. "Parliamentary Reform, Methodism and Anti-Slavery Politics, 1829-1833", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. II, no. 3 (December, 1981), 209-226.
- Ashworth, John. "The Relationship between Capitalism and Humanitarianism", American Historical Review, Vol. XCII, no. 4 (Oct 1987), 813-828.
- Beckles, Hilary. "The 200 Years War: Slave Resistance in the British West Indies: An Overview of the Historiography", Jamaica Historical Review, Vol. XIII (1982), 1-10.
- Billington, Louis. "British Humanitarians and American Cotton, 1840-1860", Journal of American Studies, Vol. XI (1977), 313-334.
- Billington, Louis and Billington, Rosamund. "'A Burning Zeal for Righteousness': Women in the British Anti-Slavery Movement, 1820-1860", Equal or Different, ed. Jane Rendall, 82-111.
- Blackett, R.J.M. "Fugitive Slaves in Britain: The Odyssey of William and Ellen Craft", Journal of American Studies, Vol. XII, (1978), 41-61.
- Bogin, Ruth. "Sarah Parker Remond: Black Abolitionist

- from Salem", Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. CX (April 1974), 120-150.
- Braidwood, Stephen J. "Initiatives and Organization of the Black Poor 1786-1787", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. III, no. 3 (December 1982), 211-227.
- Brown, Ford K. "Fathers of the Victorians", reprint from Virginia Quarterly Review, July 1936.
- Brown, Ira V. "Cradle of Feminism: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1833-1840", The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. CII, no. 2 (Apr 1978), 143-166.
- Bush, Barbara, "Defiance or Submission? The Role of the Slave Woman in Slave Resistance in the British Caribbean", Immigrants and Minorities, Vol. I, no. 1 (1982), 16-38.
- Bush, Barbara. "'The Family Tree Is Not Cut': Women and Cultural Resistance in Slave Family Life in the British Caribbean", In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean and Afro-American History, ed. G. Okihiro. Amherst: Massachusetts U.P., 1986, pp 117-132.
- Bush, Barbara. "Towards Emancipation: Slave Women and Resistance to Coercive Labour Regimes in the British West Indian Colonies, 1790-1838", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. V, no. 3 (Dec 1984), 222-243.
- Bush, Barbara. "White 'Ladies', Coloured 'Favourites' and Black 'Wenches'; Some Considerations on Sex, Race and Class factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in the British Caribbean", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. II, no. 3 (December, 1981), 245-262.
- Campbell, Elaine. "Oroonoko's Heir: The West Indies in Late Eighteenth Century Novels by Women", Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. XXV (1979), 80-84.
- Carby, Hazel V. "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood", The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain, ed. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 212-235.
- Charlton, K. "James Cropper and Liverpool's Contribution to the Anti-Slavery Movement", reprinted from Transactions of the Historical Society for Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. CXXIII, (1972).
- Corfield, Kenneth. "Elizabeth Heyrick: Radical Quaker", Religion in the Lives of English Women, ed. Gail Malmgreen, 41-67.
- Davis, David B. "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Anti-Slavery Thought", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. XLIX (1962-3), 209-230.

- Davis, David Brion. "Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony", American Historical Review, Vol. XCII, no. 4 (Oct 1987), 797-812.
- Davis, D. B. and Temperley, H. "Capitalism, Slavery and Ideology", Past and Present, Vol. LXXV (May 1977), p. 94-118.
- Drescher, S. "Cart Whip and Billy Roller: Or Antislavery and Reform Symbolism in Industrializing Britain", Journal of Social History, Vol. XV (1981-2), 3-24.
- Eley, Geoff. "Re-Thinking the Political: Social History and Political Culture in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Britain", Archiv Fur Sozialgeschichte, Vol. XXI (1981), 427-457.
- Fladeland, Betty. "Abolitionist Pressures on the Concert of Europe, 1814-1822", Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXXVIII (1966), 355-373.
- Fraser, Peter. "Public Petitioning and Parliament Before 1832", History, Vol. XLVI (1961), 195-211.
- Frost, J. William. "The Origins of the Quaker Crusade Against Slavery: A Review of Recent Literature", Quaker History, Vol. LXVII, no. 1 (Spring, 1978), 42-58.
- Goodyear, Irene E. "Wilson Armistead and the Leeds Anti Slavery Movement", reprinted from Thoresby Society Miscellany, Vo. XVI, part 2, pp. 113-129.
- Greenleaf, R. "British Labor Against American Slavery", Science and Society, XVIII (Winter 1955), 42-58.
- Gross, Izhak. "The Abolition of Negro Slavery and British Parliamentary Politics, 1832-3", Historical Journal, Vol. XXIII, no. 1 (1980), 63-85.
- Gross, Izhak. "Parliament and the Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship, 1835-1838", English Historical Review, Vol. XCVI (1981), 560-576.
- Hall, Catherine. "Private Persons Versus Public Someones: Class, Gender and Politics in England, 1780-1850", Language, Gender and Childhood, ed. Carolyn Steedman, Cathy Urwin and Valerie Walkerdine (History Workshop Series, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 10-33.
- Hall, Catherine. "The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology", Fit Work for Women, ed. Sandra Burman (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 15-32.
- Hall, Catherine. "Gender Divisions and Class Formation in the Birmingham Middle Class, 1780-1850", People's History and Socialist Theory, ed. R. Samuel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 164-175.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Problem of Ideology - Marxism Without

- Guarantees", Marx: A Hundred Years On, ed. Betty Matthews, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1983), 57-85.
- Harrison, Royden. "British Labour and American Slavery", Science and Society, Vol. XXV (Dec 1961), 291-319.
- Haskell, Thomas L. "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility", Parts 1 and 2, American Historical Review, Vol. XC, no. 2 (April 1985), 339-361; no. 5 (December 1985), 547-566.
- Haskell, Thomas L. "Convention and Hegemonic Interest in the Debate over Antislavery: A Reply to Davis and Ashworth", American Historical Review, Vol. XCII, no. 4 (Oct 1987), 829-876.
- Holt, Thomas C. "'An Empire Over the Mind': Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South", Region, Race, and Reconstruction, Essays in Honour of C. Vann Woodward, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M McPherson (New York: Oxford U.P., 1982), 283-307.
- Hooks, Bel. "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women", Feminist Review, no. 23 (Summer 1986), 125-138.
- Hunt, E. N. "The Anti-Slave Trade Agitation in Manchester", Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, Vol. LXXIX (1977), 46-72.
- Isani, M. A. "The British Reception of Wheatley's 'Poems on Various Subjects'", Journal of Negro History, Vol. LXVI (1981), 144-9.
- J. R. W. [James Walvin] "A Woman and a Sister", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. IV, no. 1 (May 1983), 1-2.
- Jennings, Judith. "The American Revolution and the Testimony of British Quakers Against the Slave Trade", Quaker History, Vol. LXX (Spring 1981), 99ff.
- Kaye, Jacqueline. "Literary Images of Slavery and Resistance: The Case of Uncle Tom's Cabin and Cecilia Valdes", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. V, no. 2 (September 1984), 105-117.
- Kennon, Donald R. "An Apple of Discord: The Woman Question at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. V, no. 3 (December 1984), 244-266.
- Klingberg, F. K. "Harriet Beecher Stowe and Social Reform in England", American Historical Review, Vol. XLIII (1937-38), 542-552.
- Levy, David W. "Racial Stereotypes in Antislavery Fiction", Phylon, Vol. XXXI, no. 3 (Fall 1970), 265-279.

- Lewis, N. B. "The Abolitionist Movement in Sheffield, 1823-1833: With Letters from Southey, Wordsworth and Others; from the Original Papers in the John Rylands Library", reprinted from Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vol., XVIII, no. 2 (July, 1934), Manchester: Manchester U.P.
- Leys, Colin. "Petitioning in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", Political Studies, Vol. III, no. 1 (February, 1955), 45-64.
- Logan, Kevin J. "The Bee-hive Newspaper and British Working Class Attitudes towards the American Civil War", Civil War History, Vol. XX (Dec 1976), 337-48.
- Lorimer, Douglas A. "Black Slaves and English Liberty: A Re-examination of Racial Slavery in England", Immigrants and Minorities, Vol. III, no. 2 (July 1984), 121-150.
- Malmgreen, Gail. "Anne Knight and the Radical Subculture", Quaker History, Vol. LXXI, no. 2 (Fall 1982), 100-113.
- Maclear, J. F. "The Evangelical Alliance and the Antislavery Crusade", Huntington Library Quarterly, Vol. XLII, no. 2 (1979), 141-164.
- McCalman, Iain. "Anti-Slavery and Ultra-Radicalism in Early Nineteenth Century England: The Case of Robert Wedderburn", Slavery and Abolition (1986), Vol. VII, no. 2, 99-117.
- McKendrick, Neil. "Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution", Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J. H. Plumb, ed. Neil McKendrick, (London: Europa Publications, 1974), 152-210.
- Maynard, Douglas H. "The World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. XLVII (1960-61), 452-471.
- Minchinton, Walker E. "Williams and Drescher: Abolition and Emancipation", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. IV, no. 2 (September, 1983), 81-105.
- Morris, R. J. "Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: An Analysis", Historical Journal, Vol. XXVI, no. 1 (1983), 95-118.
- Naidis, Mark. "The Abolitionists and Indian Slavery", Journal of Asian History, Vol. XV, no. 2 (1981), 146-158.
- Oldfield, J. R. "Southampton and Anti-Slavery, 1823-1870", Southern History, Vol. IX (1987), 90-101.
- Palmer, Erwin. "A Partnership in the Abolition Movement", University of Rochester Library Bulletin, Vol. XXVI, no. 1 (1970).

- Park, Joseph H. "The English Working Man and the American Civil War", Political Science Quarterly, Vol. XXXIX (1924), 432.
- Pole, J. R. "Slavery and Revolution: The Conscience of the Rich", Historical Journal, Vol. XX (1977), 505-6.
- Porter, Dorothy B. "Sarah Parker Remond, Abolitionist and Physician", Journal of Negro History, Vol. XX, no. 3 (July, 1935), 287-293.
- Prochaska, F. K. "Women in English Philanthropy, 1790-1830", International Review of Social History, Vol. XIX (1974), 426-45.
- Pugh, Evelyn L. "Women and Slavery: Julia Gardiner Tyler and the Duchess of Sutherland", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. CLXXXVIII, no. 2 (1980), 187-202.
- Quarles, Benjamin. "Sources of Abolitionist Income", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. XXXII, 63-76.
- Reddock, Rhoda E. "Women and Slavery in the Caribbean: A Feminist Perspective", Latin American Perspectives, Issue 44, Vol. XII, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 63-80.
- Rees, Alan M. "English Friends and the Abolition of the Slave Trade", The Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Vol. XLIV, no.2 (Autumn 1955), 74-87.
- Reich, Jerome. "The Slave Trade at the Congress of Vienna - A Study in English Public Opinion", The Journal of Negro History, Vol. LIII, no. 2 (April, 1968), 129-143.
- Rice, C. Duncan. "The Anti-Slavery Mission of George Thompson to the United States, 1834-1835", Journal of American Studies, Vol. II, no. 1, 13-21.
- Rice, C. Duncan. "'Humanity Sold for Sugar!' The British Abolitionist Response to Free Trade in Slave-Grown Sugar", The Historical Journal, Vol, XIII, no. 3 (1970), 402-418.
- Schupf, Harriet Warm. "Single Women and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century England: The Case of Mary Carpenter", Victorian Studies, Vol. 17 (March 1974), 301-317.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. "Survey Article: Women in History: 2. The Modern Period", Past and Present, no. 101 (Nov. 1983), 141-157.
- Summers, Anne. "A Home from Home - Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century", Fit Work for Women, ed. Sandra Burman (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 33-63.

- Thomas, Paul. "Changing Attitudes in an Expanding Empire: The Anti-Slavery Movement, 1760-1783", Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 5, no. 1 (May 1984), pp. 50-72.
- Thompson, Dorothy. "Women and Nineteenth Century Radical Politics: A Lost Dimension", The Rights and Wrongs of Women, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 112-138.
- Tompkins, Jane P. "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History", The New Feminist Criticism ed. Elaine Showalter (London: Virago, 1985), 81-104.
- Tyrrell, Alex. "'Women's Mission' and Pressure Group Politics in Britain, 1825-60", Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library, Vol. LXIII (1980), 194-230.
- Tyrrell, Alex. "The 'Moral Radical Party' and the Anglo-Jamaican Campaign for the Abolition of the Negro Apprenticeship System", English Historical Review, Vol. CCCXCII (July, 1984), 481-502.
- Walvin, James. "The Impact of Slavery on British Radical Politics", Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies, ed. Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden, (Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, CCXCII, 1977), 347-348.
- Workman, Gillian. "Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy", Victorian Studies, Vol. XVIII, no. 1 (1974-5), 77-102.

#### 9. SECONDARY SOURCES: THESES AND OTHER UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

- Billington, Louis. "Some Connections between British and American Reform Movements 1830-1860. With Special Reference to the Anti-Slavery Movement". MA dissertation, University of Bristol, 1966.
- Bingham, Robert LeBaron. "The Glasgow Emancipation Society, 1833-76". M.Litt thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Corfield, Kenneth Allan. "English Abolitionists and the Refusal of Slave-Grown Goods 1780-1860". MA dissertation, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1983.
- Dixon, Peter Francis. "The Politics of Emancipation: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1807-33". MPhil thesis, University of Oxford.
- Hunt, E.M. "The North of England Agitation for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1780-1800". MA dissertation, University of Manchester, 1959.

- Mein, E. M. "Miss Eliza Wigham". Typescript in Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library.
- Moshinsky, Ruth. "The Role of the Agency Committee in the Anti-Slavery Campaign, 1831-1833". BPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1973.
- Mtubani, Victor Casco Dinani. "Slavery and the Slave Trade in English Poetry to 1833". PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 1980.
- Owen, Gwynne Evan. "Welsh Anti-Slavery Sentiments, 1790-1865: A Survey of Public Opinion". MA dissertation, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1964.
- Riach, Douglas Cameron. "Ireland and the Campaign Against American Slavery, 1830-1860". PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1976.
- Short, Kenneth R. M. "A Study in Political Nonconformity: The Baptists 1827-1845; with Particular Reference to Slavery". DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1972.
- Society of Friends. Typescript multi-volume "Dictionary of Quaker Biography" in Friends' House Library, London.
- Taylor, Clare. "Romantic Reform and Anglo-American Women: London, the 1840 Convention and its Aftermath". Typescript in British Library, dated 1981.
- Taylor, Clare. "Romantic Reform and Anglo-American Women: The Great Examples of Boston and Norwich". Typescript in British Library, dated 1981.
- Taylor, Clare. "Some American Reformers and their Influence on Reform Movements in Great Britain from 1830 to 1860". PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1960.
- Turley, David Malcolm. "Relations Between British and American Abolitionists from British Emancipation to the American Civil War". PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1970.
- Vaughan, T. J. "The British Freedmen's Aid Movement, 1863-9". M.Litt thesis, University of Bristol, 1971.

