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Transcription of Germantown Friends'
Protest Against Slavery, 1688

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Transcription of Germantown Friends' Protest Against Slavery, 1688

This is to y^e Monthly Meeting held at Richard Warrell's.

These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men Body, as followeth: Js there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearfull & fainthearted are many on sea when they see a strange vassel, being afraid it should be a Turck, and they should be tacken and sold for slaves into Turckey. Now what is this better done as Turcks doe? yea rather is it worse for them, w^{ch} say they are Christians; for we hear that ye most part of such Negers are brought heither against their will & consent; and that many of them are stollen. Now tho' they are black, we can not conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall doe to all men, licke as we will be done our selves; macking no difference of what generation, descent or Colour they are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? Here is liberty of Conscience, w^{ch} is right & reasonable; here ought to be lickewise liberty of y^e body, except of evildoers, w^{ch} is an other case. But to bring men hither, or to robb and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sacke; and here there are those oppressed w^{ch} are of a black Colour. And we, who know that men must not comitt adultery, some doe comitt adultery in others, separating wives from their housbands and giving them to others; and some sell the children of those poor Creatures to other men. Oh! doe consider well this things, you who doe it; if you would be done at this manner? and if it is done according Christianity? You surpass Holland & Germany in this thing. This mackes an ill report in all those Countries of Europe, where they hear off, that y^e Quackers doe here handel men licke they handel there y^e Cattel. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither. And who shall maintaine this your cause or plaid for it? Truly we can not do so, except you shall inform us better hereoff, viz: that christians have liberty to practise this things. Pray! What thing in the world can be done worse towards us, then if men should robb or steal us away, & sell us for slaves to strange

Countries, separating housband from their wife & children! Being now this is not done at that manner, we will be done it, therefore we contradict & are against this traffick of menbody. And we who profess that it is not lawfull to steal, must likewise avoid to purchase such things as are stollen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible; and such ought to be delivered out of y^e hands of y^e Robbers & and sett free as well as in Europe. Then is Pennsilvania to have a good report, in stead it hath now a bad one for this sacke in other Countries. Especially whereas y^e Europeans are desirous to know in what manner y^e Quackers doe rule in their Province; & most of them do loock upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say, is done evill?

If once these slaves, (:w^{ch} they say are so wicked and stubborn men:) should joint themselves, fight for their freedom and handel their masters & mastrisses as they did handel them before; will these Masters and mastrisses tacke the sword at hand & warr against these poor slaves, licke we are able to belive, some will not refuse to doe? Or have these Negers not as much right to fight for their freedom; as you have to keep them slaves?

Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad? and in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire & require you hereby lovingly, that you may informe us here in, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians such a Liberty to do so. to the end we shall be satisfied in this point, & satisfie likewise our good friends & acquaintances in our natif Country, to whose it is a terrour or fairfull thing that men should be handeld so in Peñsilvania.

This is from our Meeting at Germantown held y^e 18. of the 2. month 1688. to be delivred to the Monthly Meeting at Richard Warrel's.

garret henderichs
derick op de graeff
Francis Daniell Pastorius
Abraham op Den graef.

at our monthly meeting at Dublin, y^e 30—2 mo: 1688 we having inspected y^e matter above mentioned & considered of it, we finde it so weighty that we think it not Expedient for vs to meddle with it here, but do Rather comitt it to y^e consideration of y^e Quarterly meeting; y^e tennor of it being nearly Related to y^e truth.

On behalfe of y^e monthly meeting.

Signed, P Jo: Hart.

This, above mentioned was Read in our quarterly meetting at Philadelphia, The 4th of y^e 4th mo 88 and was from thence recommended to the Yearly Meeting and the abovesaid Derick and the other two mentioned therein to present the same to y^e Abovesaid meeting it being a thing of too great A weight for this meeting to determine.

Signed by order of y^e meeting

Anthony Morris.

(Based on text in Marion Dexter Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius: The Founder of Germantown* [Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908], 261–62.)

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There is your Monthly Meeting held at Germantown
These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men
of flesh and blood. Is there any that would be done or traded at this
market? we to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life
How fearful & unchristianlike was many on sea when they see a strange
vessel. being afraid it should be a Turk and they should be taken
and sold for Slaves into Turkey. Now what is this better done
in Turkey? you rather is it worse for them, will say they are Christians
for we hear that yet most part of the Slaves are brought hither
against their will & consent, and that many of them are freed.
Now tho they are Black we can not conceive there is more liberty
to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a
saying that we shall doe to all men, like as we will be done
our selves, making no difference of what generation, descent or
Color they are. and those who steal or rob men, and those who buy
or purchase them are they not all alike? There is liberty of Con-
science, wch is right & reasonable, here ought to be likewise liberty
of ye Body, except of condovers, wch is an other case. But to bring
men hither, or to rob and sell them against their will, we stand against
in Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sake, and here there
are those oppressed wch are of a Black Colour. And we shall see
that men must not commit adultery, some doe commit adultery in other
separating wives from their husbands and giving them to others
and some sell the children of those poor creatures to other men.
Oh! we can pardon well this things you who doe it, if you would be
done at this manner! and if it is done according Christianity!
you forgive Holland & Germany in this thing. This makes
an ill report in those Countries of Europe, where they hear off
that the Christians here trade men like they traded them
ye Christians here have no need or inclination
to come hither. And who shall maintain this your cause?
I say for it. Surely we can not do so except you shall
inform us better thereof, so that Christians have liberty
to gratify this things. Any what thing in the world can be
done towards us then if men should rob or steal us away
and sell us slaves to strange Countries, separating husbands
from their wives & children. Being now this is not done
that manner, we will be done, therefore we contradict & are
against the traffick of men.

The Germantown Protest against Slavery, 1688 (from Marion Dexter Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius: The Founder of Germantown* [Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908], after p. 262).

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