



# Quaker Brotherhood: Interracial Activism and the American Friends Service Committee, 1917-1950

*Allan W. Austin*

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## **Quaker Brotherhood: Interracial Activism and the American Friends Service Committee, 1917-1950**

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Quaker Brotherhood is the first extensive study of the American Friends Service Committee's interracial activism in the first half of the twentieth century, filling a major gap in scholarship on the Quakers' race relations work from the AFSC's founding in 1917 to the beginnings of the civil rights movement in the early 1950s. Allan W. Austin tracks the evolution of key AFSC projects, such as the Interracial Section and the American Interracial Peace Committee, that demonstrate the tentativeness of the Friends' activism in the 1920s, as well as efforts in the 1930s to make scholarly ideas and activist work more theologically relevant for Friends. Documenting the AFSC's efforts to help European and Japanese American refugees during World War II, Austin shows that by 1950 Quakers in the AFSC had honed a distinctly Friendly approach to interracial relations that combined scholarly understandings of race with their religious views. Highlighting the complicated and sometimes controversial connections between Quakers and race during this era, Austin uncovers important aspects of the history of Friends, pacifism, feminism, American religion, immigration, ethnicity, and the early roots of multiculturalism.

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