

INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATION

*Leibniz and the American Revolution*

# Leibniz, Halle, and The American Revolution

by Edward Spannaus

When the true history of the American Revolution—the Leibnizian American Revolution—is finally written, a important chapter will be the role played by the city of Halle in Germany, which was, in the early Eighteenth century, perhaps the most important center of the scientific activity and ecumenical efforts for the common good which are associated with the name of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

This history is almost unknown, outside of a few specialist scholars, in either Germany or in the United States. But to understand how the principle of the General Welfare came to be the bedrock of the Federal Constitution, it is essential to examine the role of the Leibniz networks around the University of Halle and what became known as the *Franckesche Stiftungen*—the Franckean Foundations—associated with it.

H. Graham Lowry's groundbreaking work *How the Nation Was Won*<sup>1</sup> identified, for the first time in modern history, the trans-Atlantic, republican conspiracy which set into motion the process of creating a continental republic in the New World, which process culminated in the American Revolution and its historically unique Constitution committed to the principle of the common good, or General Welfare. That conspiracy emerged during the



Archiv und Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen

*A.H. Francke (1663-1727) corresponded with Boston's Cotton Mather, from the Leibnizian intellectual center at Halle, Germany.*

latter years of the reign of Queen Anne of England (1702-1714), and centered around three towering figures of the day: Leibniz (working out of the courts of Hanover and Berlin), Jonathan Swift (in London and Dublin), and Cotton Mather (in Bos-

ton). Boston-born and -trained Benjamin Franklin, a protégé of Mather, assumed the leading role in the mid-Eighteenth century, carrying this tradition forward into the period of the Revolution.

Lowry located the crucial period of this nation-building conspiracy around the year 1710, when, under the sponsorship and protection of the republican faction in Queen Anne's court, Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia, and Robert Hunter of New York, laid their plans for western expansion of the American colonies.

## Cotton Mather, Leibnizian Conspirator

Cotton Mather (1663-1728), the most prolific intellectual figure in colonial America, was the direct political heir of the republican founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In his youth, Cotton knew John Winthrop, Jr., the leading New England statesman and scientist of his day, who corresponded late in life with the young Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716). Winthrop's ally and political successor was Increase Mather, Cotton's father, who led the fight for the Massachusetts Charter, and in 1683 founded the Philosophical Society, the forerunner of Benjamin Franklin's American Philosophical Society.

Cotton Mather published his *Essays To Do Good* in 1710. Mather's work served as an organizing manual for the American Revolution, and was widely reprinted as late as the 1860's. Its original title unfurled the banner of Plato and Leibniz: *Bonifacius, An Essay Upon the Good, that is to be Devised and Designed, by Those Who Desire to Answer the Great End of Life, and to Do Good while They Live.*

Against the oligarchical claim that man is a beast, Mather declared, "*Government* is called, the *ordinance* of God," and thus "it should vigorously pursue those noble and blessed *ends* for which it is *ordained: the good of mankind.*"

Cotton Mather published 455 works during his lifetime, including treatises on philosophy, religion, ancient languages, history, politics, biology, botany, geology, the art of singing, and the only medical guide for American physicians of that time. He developed a vaccine for smallpox, during a deadly epidemic in Boston in 1721—which nearly cost him his life from an assassination attempt, run from London by the Hell-Fire Club networks of Bernard Mandeville. That battle brought the young Benjamin Franklin, Cotton Mather's most distinguished protégé, into political warfare for the first time. Franklin brilliantly managed an "undercover" role, directed by Mather, which led to his deployment to Philadelphia in 1723, at age 17.

—H. Graham Lowry

Not accidentally, 1710 is also the year of the publication of Cotton Mather's *Bonifacius, or Essays To Do Good*—the work which Franklin later described as the single most influential book in forming his own outlook, and which was inspired not a little, by Mather's study of the work of August Hermann Francke in Halle.

Lowry's 1987 book refers to Francke as an associate of Leibniz, and as William Penn's recruiting agent who organized the German emigration to Pennsylvania. Those few references in Lowry's book, opened up an entirely new avenue of investigation for this author, since I was already somewhat aware of Francke's importance for the Pennsylvania Germans, from my combined interest in American history and my own family history, which intersected Francke's networks in Eighteenth-century Pennsylvania and Maryland.

What follows, are the first fruits of that inspiration.

### Francke and Leibniz

August Hermann Francke was born in Lubeck, in 1663; his father was a juridical counsellor in the court of Duke Ernst the Pious of Saxe-Gotha. Gotha, where Francke spent most of his youth, was an early center of the scientific and ecumenical movement in Germany which emerged in the wake of the unimaginable catastrophe of the bloody religious conflicts of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>2</sup> The center of this movement—of which the towering figure is Leibniz—later shifts to Halle, and then still later to Göttingen. Berlin was also built up as a scientific center in the period following the Thirty Years' War, and as a bridge between Europe and Russia. The spreading, ecumenical "spirit of Halle" is the environment which later nurtured Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn, among others.

Francke attended the Universities of Erfurth, Kiel, and then Leipzig, where he took his Masters Degree in 1685. By this time he had come under the influence of Philip Jacob Spener, regarded as the founder of the controversial Pietist current within German Lutheranism, a reaction to the religious warfare which devastated the German states, and also to the rigid formalism of Orthodox Lutheranism. Francke was expelled from Erfurth in 1691, where he had led the Pietist chapter, and soon after received a call to be pastor at Glaucha, a suburb of Halle. In 1694 he became Professor of Oriental Languages at the newly founded University of Halle. In that year, the University was established by the Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick III (later King Frederick I of Prussia), when Christian Thomasius and a group of students came from Leipzig.

Along with the Elector of Hanover, Brandenburg's Frederick and his wife Electress (later Queen) Sophie Charlotte, were principal sponsors of Leibniz's work, including his contacts with Russia. In 1700, Frederick

and Sophie Charlotte founded the Berlin Society of Sciences (later the Berlin Academy of Sciences) and invited Leibniz to head it.

Sophie Charlotte was the daughter of Leibniz's closest patroness, the Electress Sophie of Brunswick-Lüneburg (Hanover), who was in line to succeed Queen Anne as Queen of England. (Sophie died, conveniently, about two months prior to Anne's strange death.) Had Sophie taken the throne of England, instead of the detestable Georg Ludwig (George I), Leibniz would likely have been named Prime Minister, or would have assumed another influential position in England—and how different history would have been!

Meanwhile, in 1697, Leibniz published his *Novissima Sinica*, a collection of letters and essays from the Jesuit missions in China, and he sent a copy to Francke in Halle, seeking Francke's comments; this launched a correspondence between the two, focussed on Russia and the Orient, which continued until Leibniz's death in 1716; Leibniz also recommended Francke for membership in the Berlin Society of Sciences.

Halle quickly became the focal point for collaboration between the Leibniz networks in the German states, and Russia. In 1697, Peter the Great of Russia met both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte, who put him in touch with Leibniz. This collaboration continued for the rest of Leibniz's life, with Leibniz being named Privy Counselor of Justice to the Czar, and later helping to found the Russian Academy of Sciences, along with collaborators from Halle. Peter the Great was favorable toward Halle, and it is reported that his wife Katherine once visited the *Stiftungen* incognito. Scientists from Halle played important roles in expeditions to Russia and the Far East, including to Kamchatka and the Bering Straits.<sup>3</sup>

Leibniz's firmly held view was that the unity of the churches—his life-long project—was in large part a question of languages, and he of course devoted much effort to their study, and himself developed a system for

Archiv und Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen



By 1700, the University at Halle was Europe's leading center for language studies. H.W. Ludolf (left) organized study of Oriental languages, travelling to Russia and the Far East, as well as London.

Right: A University lecture by A.H. Francke. Below: Students attend a lecture in the Great Hall at Halle.



Archiv und Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen



Archiv und Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen

the Slavic languages. Halle became the center of language studies in this period. Among those associated with Halle were Hiob Ludolf (1624-1704), acknowledged as the founder of Ethiopian studies in Europe, and his nephew Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf (1655-1710), who founded Russian, Slavic, and Polish language studies at Halle around 1697.

Hiob Ludolf was an acquaintance of Leibniz; among their topics of mutual discussion were a project for the creation of an Imperial College of History, and the Jesuit edition of the writings of Confucius published in the mid-1680's. A volume of correspondence on linguistics and the origin of languages between Leibniz and Hiob Ludolf has been published in English.<sup>4</sup>

H.W. Ludolf published the first Russian grammar in Latin, in 1696, and he was part of Francke's Bible translation project. As was the case for Leibniz, Francke and Ludolf viewed their work on languages as part of an ecumenical project for the reunion of the churches. Francke's

vision of establishing a Universal Seminary at Halle, coincided with Ludolf's plan for an Ecumenical Seminary at Halle, to unite the German Pietists and the Eastern Orthodox Churches in preparing for missionary work. H.W. Ludolf was well-acquainted with leaders of the churches in Greece, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Egypt, and Abyssinia (Ethiopia), having mastered the languages of those countries.

By the turn of the century, Halle was the leading European center for the study of languages, with an Oriental Institute and a Judaic Institute, among others, and there also existed a major project for translating—and printing—the Bible into many languages.

In 1698, with a charter from the Elector Frederick III, Francke established the celebrated ecumenical orphanage (*Waisenhaus*) at Glaucha, just outside the city wall of Halle, which taught children from all over Germany and other countries, and which became a model and inspiration worldwide for its education of poor children—a direct continuation of the project for the education of orphans and poor children of the Brotherhood of the Common Life in the Netherlands and Germany beginning in the 1390's, which had played such a crucial role in bringing into existence institutions dedicated to the common good (*commonweal*), through the work of both Nicolaus of Cusa, and later, Erasmus of Rotterdam.

And, as this author happily discovered recently, the buildings of the *Franckesche Stiftungen*, dating from 1701, still exist in Halle, and have been in the process of being restored since the reunification of Germany.

## The London Connection

The influence of Halle and Francke on America was mediated through London via Queen Anne's court, and more specifically through the court of her husband, the Queen's consort Prince George of Denmark (1653-1708). Prince George is one of those figures who has been written out of history, except for his name living on in Prince



Top: In 1698, Francke established an ecumenical orphanage (*Waisenhaus*) and charity-school for the education of poor children at Glaucha, a Halle suburb. Above: Published reports review methods for educating young children, institutional operations, and progress in the education of young girls.

George County, Virginia, and Prince George's County, Maryland.

As is the case with many of the important figures in the Commonwealth or republican faction, Queen Anne and Prince George are disparaged by the oligarchical history writers. Queen Anne is the most notable example, usually described as fat, stupid, and drunk. Her husband George is generally characterized as a shallow nobody—Queen Victoria referred to him as “the very stupid and insignificant husband of Queen Anne.” Yet this “very stupid” man was known to be well-schooled in the sciences, and was in the middle of a global network of Leibnizian scientists and scholars.<sup>5</sup>

Prince George was the son of King Frederick III of Denmark and Sophia Amelia of the House of Brunswick-Luneburg—thus making him a relation of the Electress Sophie of Hanover, Leibniz's chief patron.

Prince George's secretary from 1686 to 1691 was the above-cited Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf, the founder of Slavic and Russian Studies at the University of Halle.

The crucial individual linking the German Pietists of Halle to America's New England Puritans—specifically,

Cotton Mather—was Anton Wilhelm Boehm, the chaplain in Prince George’s Court. Boehm was personally recommended to Prince George by Francke, after George had difficulties with his first court chaplain, a strict Orthodox Lutheran. Boehm became the center of an extremely active ecumenical movement in England, and was a leading figure in the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), along with H.W. Ludolf, who had returned to London in 1700 after a trip to the Near East. Boehm translated ecumenical writings from German into English, and *vice versa*, and translated writings in Latin, such as the Mather-Francke correspondence, into both languages, for broader circulation. By the time of his death in 1725, Boehm had become the clearinghouse for a global correspondence of Francke and the German Pietists, connecting them with the Boston Puritans and connecting Boston with the Halle-sponsored missionaries in India and South Africa.

## The Francke-Mather Correspondence<sup>6</sup>

The first correspondence between Mather and Francke took place in 1709; those letters have not been found. Mather’s diary for Dec. 9, 1709, references his circulation of two of his essays on “ye true American pietism” to Ministers throughout America and to “Dr. Franckius, in Saxony.” The diary entry references charity schools and Reforming Societies. Charity schools, for educating poor children, are a principal topic of the triangular Mather-Francke-Boehm correspondence (the other principal topic being missions and ecumenicism); interestingly, the first known reference to charity schools in Mather’s diaries, is the 1709 entry which also mentions “Dr. Franckius.”

In 1711, Mather’s diaries contain four references to his sending an account of his work in establishing an orphan asylum in Boston, which was modelled on that in Halle, and “a present of gold . . . for use of ye University & ye Orphan-house” in Lower Saxony. Mather references “[h]aving received a collection of good and great Things doing of later years in Germany (excellent Advances of ye kingdom of God)” and he writes that it would not only glorify God but “also animate ye like Things among ourselves, to publish it unto ye country.”

In 1714 comes Francke’s letter to Mather which was first published by Mather as *Nuncia bona e terra longinqua* (Good News from a Distant Land). The full letter was later published in English translation by Boehm in Part III of *Pietas Hallensis* in 1716. Boehm had published Part I of



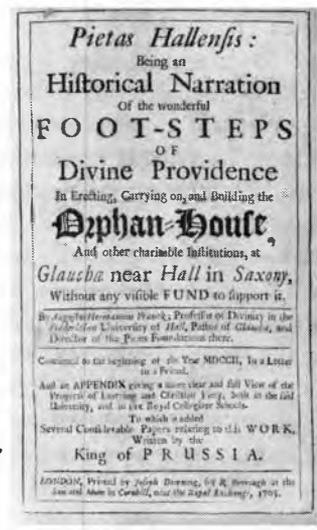
The Granger Collection

The court of England’s Queen Anne (above) and her husband Prince George, was home to Francke’s associates H.W. Ludolf and A.W. Boehm (below).



Franckeschen Stiftungen

A.W. Boehm translated the Mather-Francke correspondence for broad circulation. Right: “*Pietas Hallensis*,” Francke’s 1705 report on the Halle orphanage, translated by Boehm.

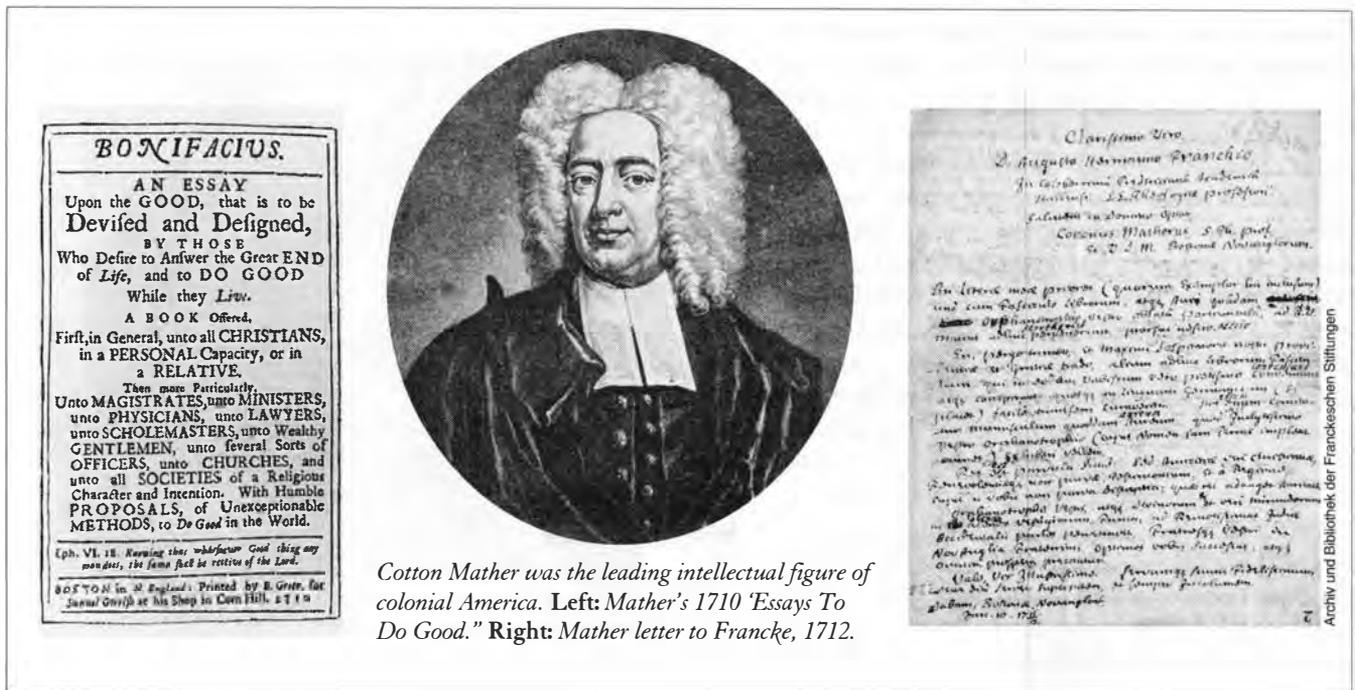


Archiv und Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen

*Pietas Hallensis* in 1705, and Part II in 1707-08. Part I was subtitled: “An abstract of the marvellous footsteps of divine providence, in the building of a very large hospital, or rather, a spacious college, for charitable and excellent uses. And in the maintaining of many orphans & other poor people therein: at Glaucha near Hall, in the domains of the k. of Prussia. Related by the Reverend Augustus Hermannus Franck.”

The letter to Mather provides a thorough account of Francke’s endeavors at Halle, in the fields of charity, education, and foreign missions.

Francke opens the letter by noting that he had received Mather’s letter, books, and a piece of gold, in April 1713 (referring apparently to the correspondence cited in Mather’s diary for Nov. 10, 1711), and he apolo-



Cotton Mather was the leading intellectual figure of colonial America. Left: Mather's 1710 'Essays To Do Good.' Right: Mather letter to Francké, 1712.

gizes for the long delay in answering, but promises to “make Amends for its Delay” by setting forth “a pretty large Account of our present State of Affairs here, which, I perceive, you are desirous to know.”<sup>7</sup>

Francke reports that the Orphan-House, which maintained 360 persons in 1709, has increased by 100 more who receive their daily dinner and supper in the House. This includes 100 poor boys and 30 girls, plus 24 apprentices and servants who work in the print shop, the library, and the apothecary's shop. The rest are divinity students and scholars, who are permitted to eat their meals there if they need to do so; in return, they are obliged to teach two hours a day in the schools, or to transcribe sermons that are publicly preached, “or also some other matters relating to the good of the Publick.” There are twelve students comprising the “English table” who are maintained by monies allocated by Queen Anne; these students study and teach English, and translate certain books from English into German.

Thus, Francke writes, the Orphan-House is concerned with “the Improvement of the Mind,” as well as with “the eternal Salvation of Souls.” In the Charity School, the youth are brought up “in a living Knowledge of Christ, as also in useful Arts and Sciences.” There are about 600 children in the “German School” (so named to distinguish it from the schools where foreign languages—Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—are taught), most of whom are taught for free, or for a nominal fee. Those in the Latin School are taught history, geography, mathematics, and “Vocal Musick.” These students come from many foreign countries.

Francke also describes the Seminary of School Masters, by means of which the influence of the teaching methods of Halle has been spread throughout Germany. About twelve years earlier there had been established an Oriental School of Divinity, where students learned Eastern languages under Professor Johann Henry Michaelis, who was preparing a new Hebrew Bible. Francke also writes with pride about Christian Benedictus Michaelis, who had taught Oriental languages at Halle for many years.<sup>8</sup>

Not everyone was pleased with what Francke was doing; he reports that there are some who “openly condemn it, as a bad and pernicious Undertaking,” including some “as call themselves Ministers of the Gospel” (probably a reference to the Orthodox Lutheran opponents of the Pietist movement).<sup>9</sup> Some of these, when having made “some stricter Enquiry into the Matter and thereby having acquainted themselves with the true End and Design of the whole Undertaking,” were delivered from their prejudices, Francke writes. He relates how his enemies hoped, with the death of King Frederick I, his successor King Frederick William would cut off support for the Halle institutions.

Francke then reports the occasion when King Frederick William, accompanied by top officers of his Army, visited and inspected the Orphan-House, and how the King was well-satisfied, and in fact confirmed and enlarged the royal privileges granted to the Hospital. At the *Stiftungen* museum today, the walls are delightfully adorned with key parts of the dialogue between the “König” and Dr. Francke, in which the King asks why Francke is educating poor children, how Francke man-

ages to feed and house so many children, and to keep them warm in winter, and whether the boys will be good soldiers as a result of their training.

Other institutions described by Francke in his letter, are the “Royal Pedagogium” established under Elector Friedrich III in 1695, for the education of the sons of the higher estates, in subjects such as geometry, natural philosophy, astronomy, botany, and like useful sciences. Also the Gynaceum (a school for gentlemen’s daughters), a Cherotrophea (for the support of poor widows), the Apothecary Shop (famous worldwide, and a primary source of pharmaceuticals among the Germans in the American colonies), and the Bookseller’s shop and the printing presses which “have hitherto proved highly serviceable, for promoting Religion and Learning both at Home and Abroad.” Francke also tells of a project for the printing of inexpensive Bibles, which are able to be purchased by poor families.

Francke reports himself pleased by the manner in which in the Halle model of orphanages and teaching of poor children has spread to other parts of Germany, and how “a more enlarged Spirit of Charity . . . has appeared in Germany, among Protestants of both Denominations,” no doubt referring to the Lutherans and the Reformed (Calvinists).

## Missions and Ecumenicism

The last part of the Francke letter to Mather is taken up with an account on the mission in Tranquebar in the East Indies, sponsored by Frederick IV of Denmark, in which two missionaries from Halle were sent and later a printer from Leipzig. Francke is pleased that the missionaries were invited to become corresponding members of the S.P.C.K. (At Francke’s suggestion, Mather himself later carried on a direct correspondence with these missionaries, relating his own experiences in the “West Indies” to the missionaries deployed in the “East Indies.”)

Boehm wrote a preface to the edition of the Francke-Mather letter he published, a plea for the ecumenical, universalizing spirit of foreign missions. He declared that it was not the task of missions to draw the heathen into the religious conflicts of the Occident, but to preach true Christianity and to promote the “Church universal.” Boehm warned against “the spirit of partiality” which “sours the mind, rendering it unfit for propagating true wisdom,” and of those who are “more concerned about propagating their peculiar way of worship . . . than the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ.”

In his letter to the Tranquebar missionaries, Mather is critical of the Churches of the Reformation for ignoring missions, terming this “a great and heavy scandal in the Protestant churches.” As did Leibniz, Mather contrasted

the lack of missionary spirit in the Protestant churches to the active missionary activities of the Roman Catholic Church (although Leibniz was rather more sympathetic to the Roman Church than was Mather). This was one of Leibniz’s purposes in the design of the Berlin Society of Sciences: to establish a Protestant mission to China, from which would follow a commerce in manufactured goods, and also in scientific knowledge and wisdom. This feature comes across clearly in the exhibits at the *Franckesche Stiftungen* today: that missions were expected to be accompanied by economic development and trade.

## The Outer Darkness

In his 1717 reply to Francke, Mather begins by defending American Christianity against the European anti-American prejudice of the day which identified the “outer darkness” of the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:30) in which there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” with America, which was said by some continental theologians to be outside the knowledge and interests of Christ. Mather treats roughly this interpretation identifying America as the “outer darkness,” and comparing emigrants to America with “the worthless servant.”

In his *Magnalia Christi Americana* of 1702, Mather wrote:

But behold ye *European Churches*, There are Golden Candlesticks . . . in the midst of this *Outer Darkness*: Unto the *upright* Children of Abraham, here hath arisen *Light in Darkness*. And let us humbly speak it, it shall be *Profitable* for you to consider the *Light*, which from the midst of this *Outer Darkness*, is now to be Darted over unto the other side of the Atlantick Ocean.

In his reply to Francke, Mather put it this way: “But into these outer regions the salutary, blessed light of the Gospel did finally penetrate. The sun of righteousness and blessedness arose. This is the work of God . . . .” Mather further declares that, “in the present depraved and deplorable state of this impure world, there is not to be found a place in which true and genuine Christianity is more cultivated than here in New England.”

Mather, seeing America’s Christian churches as “the light on the candlesticks” illuminating not only the darkness of the American continent, but degenerate European Christianity, frequently polemicized against the idea which linked the West with the Devil, contrasting that with his view of the enlightening mission of America:

It was an odd Ceremony and Superstition in some ancient Baptisms, that when they *Renounced Satan*, they turned their Faces to the West, where the Sun sets in *Darkness*; But professing their Faith in our SAVIOUR, they turned their Faces to the *East*, the Region where *Light* arises. We have

seen the *Sun Rising in the West*; a Forlorn People in the Western World now said, *Thro' the Tender-Mercy of our GOD, the Day-Spring from on high has Visited us.*

Mather found his view of the corruption and decay of the Continental Reformation, to be very close to the attitude of the German Pietists. In an Appendix to his 1716 edition of *Pietas Hallensis*, Boehm had written a brief summary of developments in continental Pietism, emphasizing the practical side of religion, with examples pertaining to the education of children, and the erecting of hospitals and foundations for the care of the poor, and attacking “the vast degeneracy and apostasy of the modern Churches of all Parties.”

“The superficial and common way of philosophizing, together with *Aristotle's* Heathenish trash, has begun to lose credit in some Schools, and a philosophy more favouring of a Christian temper, and rais'd upon more solid Principles, set up again,” Boehm wrote. “*Aristotle* begins to retire before the Light of the Gospel.”

As one might expect, there was a common, strong ecumenical current in the shared outlook of the Mather and the German Pietists, a shared reaction against the religious conflict and religious warfare in Europe, where men would march off to slaughter each other with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other. In addition to his interest in the unity of the Western churches, Mather was particularly concerned with the Eastern Orthodox Church. In 1701 he published a book entitled *American Teares upon the ruines of the Greeκ Churches.*

Related to this was the shared intense interest in missions. Mather, for his part, rejected the view that native Americans were an inferior, sub-species of human, proclaiming that “we are sure, that the *Americans* are of the *Noetic Original.*” For Mather, the American natives, just like the people of Asia, were created in the image of God.

## Charity-Schools and Their Enemies: Mandeville and Adam Smith

The same view of man is reflected in the common enthusiasm of Mather and Francke regarding charity schools and the advisability of educating poor children. This is a significant theme of their correspondence and of Mather's diaries. In January 1713 Mather mentions “our overstockt Charity-Schole.” He refers to the Charity-School having “expired” in March 1716, and in July 1716, Mather says that something must be done about a second Charity-School.

In October of the same year Mather writes that he wants to see about a Charity-School for Negroes to learn to read, including reading the Catechism. This is probably the first time anyone in American undertook to educate Blacks—which was of course prohibited in the slave-

holding colonies; Franklin did the same thing years later in Philadelphia. In January 1718 Mather wrote that “I have a Charity-School erected for the Instruction of Negroes and Indians.” In December 1721 he wrote that he has maintained, at his own expense, a Charity-School for the instruction of Negroes in reading and religion.

This must be understood as a bold idea at the time. As indicated above, Francke encountered intense opposition from the strict Orthodox churchmen in Germany to his charity projects and education of the poor.

To put the factional battle in sharp relief, and in its contemporary—and current—setting, we must attend to the evil Bernard Mandeville, who is proclaimed as the founder of free-market economics, and as the intellectual godfather of Adam Smith and of the “Austrian School” of economics of Friedrich von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, and Milton Friedman.

Graham Lowry's book relates how the young Benjamin Franklin was deployed from Boston on an intelligence mission to London in 1724, to gather intelligence on the operations of the satanic “Hellfire Club” and other enemies of the republican faction in England and America, and how Franklin sought out Mandeville as part of this mission. The previous year, Mandeville had published an expanded version of his infamous *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*—an attack on the Leibnizian view of a “grand design” for society and on creating institutions to promote the common good. Men must be free to do their own selfish thing “in the small,” Mandeville insisted, and the combination of individual, selfish, even criminal, actions, will invariably lead to the greatest good “in the large”:

Thus every part was full of vice,  
Yet the whole mass a paradise . . .

Millions struggling to supply  
Each other's lust and vanity . . .

Their crimes conspired to make them great . . .

The worst of all the multitude,  
Did something for the common good.

Attached to Mandeville's expanded *Fable of the Bees* was a new work, an *Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools*, which makes the battle lines very clear indeed. Accounts of Francke's work report that he created the Halle Foundations in direct opposition to the English model of the poorhouses—which were workhouses, poorhouses, and penal institutions, all wrapped up in one.

Mandeville flaunts his oligarchical outlook and his bestial view of man, attacking the Charity-Schools as not just a waste of time, but counterproductive.

Mandeville's theory, simply put, was that every society needs a large body of workers who would patiently sub-

mit to drudgery and poverty. In his "Essay on Charity and Charity Schools," he wrote:

It is impossible that a Society can long subsist, and suffer many of its members to live in idleness, and enjoy all the ease and pleasure they can invent, without having at the same time great multitudes of people that to make good this defect will condescend to be quite the reverse, and by use and patience inure their bodies to work for others and themselves besides.

The plenty and cheapness of provisions depends in great measure on the price and value that is set upon this labor, and consequently the welfare of all societies, even before they are tainted with foreign luxury, requires that it should be performed by such of their members as in the first place are sturdy and robust and never used to ease or idleness, and in the second soon contented as to the necessaries of life; such as are glad to take up with the coarsest manufacture in every thing they wear, and in their diet have no other aim than to feed their bodies when their stomachs prompt them to eat, and with little regard to taste or relish, refuse no wholesome nourishment that can

be swallowed when men are hungry, or ask anything for their thirst by to quench it. . . . If nobody did want nobody would work; but the greatest hardships are looked upon as solid pleasures, when they keep a man from starving.

Going to school in comparison to working is idleness, and the longer boys continue in this easy sort of life, the more unfit they'll be when grown up for down right labor, both as to strength and to inclination. Men who are to remain and end their days in a laborious, tiresome and painful station of life, the sooner they are put upon it at first, the more patiently they'll submit to it for ever after.

Throughout the "Essay on Charity," he attacks the idea of educating the children of the poor, because it incapacitates them for labor. From another edition of the same work:

No Body will do the Slavish Dirty Work, that can help it. I don't discommend them, but all these things shew that the People of the meanest Rank know too much to be Serviceable to us. Servants require more than Masters and Mistresses can afford, and what madness is it to Encourage them in this, by industriously encreasing at our Cost that Knowledge which they will be sure to make us pay for over again!

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



Bernard Mandeville, the intellectual godfather of Adam Smith (left), attacked the Halle Charity-School, in favor of workhouses. His "Fable of the Bees" claimed public good came from personal vice. Below: The spirit of Mandeville's satanic "Hellfire Clubs," portrayed in William Hogarth's "A Midnight Modern Conversation" (1732/3).



Thus it is, that commentators on Mandeville observe that he viewed religion and trade as contradictory, and that he professed that a nation must choose between moral virtue and economic greatness.

One might expect that such vile rantings would have been consigned to the trash-barrel of Eighteenth-century England, never to be heard again; but, alas, Mandeville is lauded still by today's "free-market" ideologues.

In his 1957 book *Theory and History*, Ludwig von Mises, one of the key figures of the feudal "Austrian School" of Economics (which "School" is now relocated at Milton Friedman's University of Chicago) states that during the Enlightenment, eminent philosophers began to abandon the traditional methods of philosophy and finally stopped "brooding about the hidden purpose of Providence in directing the course of events." They began to look at things from the standpoint of acting men, rather than from the standpoint of plans ascribed to God or nature. This is best illustrated by Adam Smith, says von Mises, but he cautions that,

in order to analyze the ideas of Smith we must first refer to Mandeville. . . .

The older ethical systems were almost unanimous in the condemnation of self-interest. They were ready to find the self-interest of the tillers of the soil pardonable and very often tried to excuse or even glorify the kings' lust for aggrandizement. But they were adamant in their disapprobation of other people's craving for well-being and riches. Referring to the Sermon on the Mount, they exalted self-denial and indifference with regard to treasures which moth and rust corrupt, and branded self-interest as a reprehensible vice. Bernard de Mandeville in his *Fable of the Bees* tried to discredit this doctrine. He pointed out that self-interest and the desire for material well-being, commonly stigmatized as vices, are in fact the incentives whose operation makes for welfare, prosperity, and civilization.

Adam Smith adopted this idea.

Friedrich von Hayek, another godfather of today's free marketeers, likewise praises Mandeville as "an anticipator of Adam Smith's argument for economic liberty," declaring that "the burden of his argument . . . is that most of the institutions of society are not the result of design, but how 'a most beautiful superstructure may be raised upon a rotten and despicable foundation,' namely, men's pursuit of their selfish interests . . . ."

Not for nothing did Alexander Hamilton attack the free-trade dogmas of Adam Smith. The lie that the American Revolution was fought for the ideas of Smith (and, therefore, those of Mandeville as well) is a most pernicious libel against the Founding Fathers and their commitment to the principle of the General Welfare—but unfortunately, it is one which still has some currency in certain quarters today.

## Franklin and the General Welfare

Back to Benjamin Franklin. Franklin himself, who never questioned the link between moral virtue and economic greatness, avowed that Mather's *Essays To Do Good* was the book that had the greatest influence on him, and it is beyond question that the Franckean model of charity work and education was a powerful influence on Mather's *Essays*.

Truly, Franklin was the "American Leibniz"—who represents the very embodiment of the promotion of the concept of the General Welfare, *viz.*, his creation of the Junto in 1727 (a "club for mutual improvement"), his 1744 founding of the American Philosophical Society, his promotion of public works, etc., in Philadelphia.

Not surprisingly, Franklin was a promoter of Charity-Schools and had a deep interest in the education of Negro slaves. He opened a school for the education of and teaching of the Catechism to Blacks in 1760. Franklin was also a leading member of the S.P.C.K. in America (although the institution was very mixed), and he was a member of the governing board of Bray Associates—created by

Thomas Bray, a founder of the S.P.C.K. of Francke, Boehm, and Ludolf—which established a system of libraries in the English colonies, and promoted the Christian education of slaves.

Education and the Christianizing of slaves was violently opposed by most slaveowners and those of the John Locke "Life-Liberty-and-Property" persuasion. (Locke's Constitution for the Carolina colonies—in contrast to the 1787 Federal Constitution, ensured the primacy of private property, including slavery.) The terms of the opposition to converting slaves to Christianity, were remarkably similar to Mandeville's argument against educating poor children.

One study of slavery and conversion—which is sympathetic to these arguments—says: "Of great importance was the belief that religious instruction would impair their [slaves'] economic value." Many slaves were compelled to work on Sundays as on other days. "Another and more serious effect of conversion was the alleged change in the attitude and character of slaves. It was asserted that conversion developed notions of religious equality. . . . The notion was widespread that the converted negro became intractable and ungovernable, because of increased knowledge obtained through religious instruction."<sup>10</sup>

And, as I showed in my earlier article on the history of the "General Welfare" clause in the U.S. Constitution,<sup>11</sup> it was Franklin, the personification of the continuity from the Massachusetts Bay Colony through to the American Revolution, who provided the first draft for the 1775 Articles of Confederation, explicitly committing the "United Colonies" to the promotion of "their mutual and general Welfare," and also giving the Continental Congress the duty to legislate for the "General Welfare"—precisely that which Mandeville and Adam Smith railed against.

The American Republic was the first nation-state consciously created to promote the common good for all its citizens—in contrast to a Lockean oligarchical system, in which the government exists to perpetuate the power and wealth of a small stratum ruling over the majority of the population. The United States was the first sovereign nation-state dedicated to the principle that all men and women are created equal, in the image of God.

Whatever imperfections and compromises existed at the time of our republic's creation and thereafter, the very fact that the best minds of Europe, gathered in a trans-Atlantic commonwealth faction based on a Leibnizian conception of "Life, Liberty and Happiness"—and not "Property"—were able to wield their ecumenical commitment *to do good*, to create a commonwealth in the New World dedicated to that principle, is what continues to provide hope and inspiration for the world today.

# Halle and the Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania

The extraordinary Muhlenberg family exemplifies the role of Halle in the events leading into the American Revolution.

William Penn's agent James Logan, himself a correspondent of Leibniz, recruited Germans to emigrate to Pennsylvania via Leibniz networks in Germany, particularly through Francke at Halle. The German emigration to Pennsylvania in the early Eighteenth century, the Palatinate emigration organized by New York's Governor Hunter in 1709-10, and the German settlements in Virginia under Governor Spotswood, were all coordinated through Francke.

Other than the fact that Francke was a principal recruiter for Germans who went to America, the most important direct connection to the Pennsylvania German community—and indeed, for the entire German immigrant community the American colonies—was the Muhlenberg family.

To situate the Muhlenbergs, we must first refer to Conrad Weiser, James Logan's ambassador to, and chief negotiator with, the Indians, from the 1730's through the 1750's, whose life is a fascinating story in itself.<sup>a</sup> Weiser came to America at the age of 14, in 1709, with the Palatinate Germans deployed by Queen Anne to Governor Hunter's New York. The Germans located first at Livingston Manor and then at Schoharie. Weiser's father sent him to live with the Mohawks at age 16, to learn their language. After the failure of the Schoharie project, the Weisers and others relocated to the Tulpehocken settlement in eastern Pennsylvania, located in the area between Reading and Lancaster, where Weiser lived for the rest of his life, amidst extensive travels (on foot and horseback), from Virginia to upper New York. Weiser regarded himself as a follower of Francke, and he always remained in correspondence with Francke and Francke's son Gotthilf August Francke (a correspondent of Cotton Mather's son Samuel).

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was raised in Einbeck in the Electorate of Hanover, and was one of the first students at Göttingen University in 1735, where he studied Greek, Hebrew, and mathematics, among other subjects. He was already a proficient organist by this time. At Göttingen he met two "missionaries to the Jews," who convinced Muhlenberg to join them, but who first referred him to Halle for preparation. He left Göttingen for Halle

in 1738. At Halle, Muhlenberg did what most of the students there did—teaching in the Orphan-House, inspecting the sick wards, plus teaching Theology, Greek, and Hebrew to other students. He was first asked by the "Fathers at Halle" to go to India as a missionary.

In 1741 Gotthilf Francke presented Muhlenberg with a call to Pennsylvania, which had come through the Lutheran court chaplain in London, Friedrich Michael Ziegenhagen, the successor to Boehm.

Muhlenberg came to America in 1742, passing through Georgia and meeting with the Halle-trained pastors to the Salzburgers. He located permanently near Philadelphia, whence he operated as a troubleshooter among the frontier churches—plagued as they were with itinerant impostors and factional tumults. His duties required continuous travel under the worst of conditions, something for which he was well-suited, his physical strength having been a factor in his assignment to America. Muhlenberg ministered for many years to the German Lutheran and Reformed congregations in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and in New York.

In 1745, Muhlenberg married Conrad Weiser's daughter Anna Maria. A plaque commemorating this marriage—of importance to the coming American Revolution—may still be seen at Christ Church near Stouchberg, Pennsylvania, west of Womelsdorf—where the old Weiser Homestead can still be visited.<sup>b</sup>

Many other important ministers in this period also came from Halle and Göttingen to New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and also to Georgia accompanying the Salzburger refugees. Among these were John Christopher Hartwick, who translated Abraham Kästner's comments on the work of the American scientist Cadwallader Colden [SEE "Leibniz to Franklin on 'Happiness,'" p. 44, this issue].

Muhlenberg's three sons were sent to Halle for their

a. See Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950).

b. The writer's ancestors in his maternal line, the family of Hans Juergen Loy (Loy), first settled in the Tulpehocken settlement near Stouchberg, after having arrived in Philadelphia from Germany in 1733; after a few years, part of the Loy family resettled near present-day Frederick, Maryland; it is documented that Hans Juergen Loy met Papa Muhlenberg when Muhlenberg came through Maryland in 1747 on a trouble shooting mission; at that time, Muhlenberg chartered the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Frederickstown, amid a raging controversy with the followers of Court Nicholas Zinzendorf, the Halle-trained leader of the "Moravians." As was his invariable custom, Muhlenberg reported back to the Fathers at Halle on his activity at Frederickstown.

education in 1763, with Papa Muhlenberg specifying that, "I would desire them to be practised in singing, chorals, and thorough bass on the piano . . ." The Halle of the second generation had already deteriorated, and ultimately, Muhlenberg was compelled to partly break with it, and to chart his own course in the New World. What forced the break was the treatment of his 16-year-old son Peter, who was unhappy in his studies, and was placed as an apprentice to a druggist in Lubeck, who cruelly exploited him. Peter finally ran away and signed up with a British "Hessian" military regiment, which was on its way to America. Four months later, after serving as "Secretary to the Regiment," young Peter was back in Philadelphia, having acquired some military training—fortunately for the American Revolution, as we see below.

The three Muhlenberg sons were:

- **Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg.** He became a clergyman in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and organized the German regiment in Virginia in January 1776. He is famed for throwing off his clerical garb after Sunday services, revealing the military uniform underneath. He rose

to the rank of Major General in Washington's Continental Army, playing key roles at Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, and in the Southern Campaign that culminated at Yorktown. After the war he returned to Pennsylvania, was elected vice-president of the Commonwealth, and then served three terms in the U.S. Congress.

- **Henry August Muhlenberg** became a widely known botanist, and was often described as "the American Linnaeus." He was a founder and president of Franklin College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania (originally established as a German college), and a member of the Göttingen and Berlin philosophical and scientific societies. The naturalist Alexander von Humboldt visited Henry in Lancaster in 1807.

- **Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg,** also a minister, became a member of the Continental Congress in 1779, and was the presiding officer of the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention. A collaborator of Alexander Hamilton, he served four terms in the U.S. Congress, and was the first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives—a matter of some pride at Halle still today.

---

1. H. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won: America's Untold Story. Vol. I: 1630-1754* (Washington, D.C.: Executive Intelligence Review, 1987).

2. In Gotha, during the latter part of the Seventeenth century, were the philologist Hiob Ludolf, (see *infra*), A.H. Francke, and Laurentius Blumentrost, the founder and first director of the Russian Academy of Science, who was later in contact with Halle.

3. Clearly, Halle was far different from the likes of its well-known professor, the "Leibniz-popularizer" Christian Wolff, who was actually thrown out of the University by the Pietists in the 1720's, on account of his Enlightenment proclivities.

Among the scientists from Halle who participated in the scientific expeditions to the Far East, were Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt, educated at Halle, who made important discoveries in Siberia, and Georg Wilhelm Steller, who studied theology at Wittenberg and then Halle, and was certified in botany by the Berlin Academy of Science. Steller went to St. Petersburg, where he met Archbishop Feoton Prokovich, who was also in contact with Francke. Besides Vitus Bering, Steller was the most important scientist on the second Kamchatka expedition (1741-42), which went on to Alaska. Another American connection! (I am indebted to Karl-Michael Vitt of Dusseldorf for his insights on the Halle-Russia connection. Vitt is preparing on article on this subject for *Ibykus*, the magazine of the Schiller Institute in Germany.)

4. John T. Waterman, *Leibniz and Ludolf on Things Linguistic: Excerpts from Their Correspondence, 1688-1703* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

5. One could also note the case of another of Leibniz's sponsors, Frederick III, the Elector of Brandenburg. Comparing him to his father, Frederick William (the "Great Elector"), one historian writes that Frederick III "had none of his father's great qualities," and continues: "Ostentatious and extravagant, he . . . devoted himself to the beautification of Berlin. . . . He founded the Berlin Academy of Sciences, the University of Halle, and also attracted a

number of learned men to his court." Quite obviously the actions of a ruler with no great qualities!

6. Sources for this section include: Cotton Mather, *Diary of Cotton Mather* (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1911-12); *Pietas Hallensis* (London), Part I (1705), Part II (1707-08), Part III (1716); Kuno Francke, "Cotton Mather and August Hermann Francke," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, Vol. V, 1896; Kuno Francke, "The Beginning of Cotton Mather's Correspondence with August Hermann Francke," *Philological Quarterly*, July 1926; Ernst Benz, "Pietist and Puritan Sources of Early Protestant World Missions (Cotton Mather and A.H. Francke)," *Church History*, Vol. XXII, 1951; Ernst Benz, "Ecumenical Relations between Boston Puritanism and German Pietism: Cotton Mather and August Hermann Francke," *Harvard Theological Review*, July 1961.

7. Quotations are taken from Boehm's 1716 translation, a microfilm of which is accessible at the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington.

8. When Benjamin Franklin visited Göttingen University in 1766, he met with John (Johann) D. Michaelis, a theologian and orientalist—undoubtedly related to those at Halle.

9. These same divisions later spilled over among German immigrants to the U.S. Midwest in the Nineteenth century. The more Orthodox Lutheran synods had little or no involvement in social welfare work, whereas it was church groups influenced by Franckean Pietism that first established orphanages and related institutions. This insight was provided by the author's father, who has written a history of Lutheran social welfare. [Ruben Spannaus, *Love Never Fails* (unpublished, 1962).]

10. "Slavery and Conversion in the American Colonies," *American Historical Review*, April 1916, available at <http://www.dinsdoc.com/jernegan-1.htm>.

11. Edward Spannaus, "What is the 'General Welfare'?", *New Federalist*, May 15, 2000 (Vol. XIV, No. 17); available at [http://members.tripod.com/~american\\_almanac/welfare.htm](http://members.tripod.com/~american_almanac/welfare.htm).