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'TWO NINETEENTH CENTURY QUAKERS AND THE IRISH QUESTION: JONATHAN PIM AND JAMES HACK TUKE 1846-96'

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This thesis intricately weaves the lives and activism of Jonathan Pim (1806-85, a Dublin businessman and Member of Parliament, whose merchant family were amongst Ireland's earliest Quakers) and James Hack Tuke (1819-96, a banker and member of a prominent philanthropic Quaker family in York) with the histories of Irish Quakerism, nineteenth-century Ireland and British politics. The Great Famine of the 1840s and the height of Home Rule agitation in the 1880s and 1890s feature prominently. The Famine was the only Irish issue in which the Society of Friends offered an overt and emphatic corporate response. Reportage by Quakers (including Pim and Tuke) revealed the degradation wrought by the Famine, but also outlined the root causes and exacerbating issues. The nucleus was the Land Question – the unfair landlord-tenant relationship in Ireland, especially given the generality of poor quality land. Tuke attempted, with some success, practical interventions. Whilst emigration was contentious, for several thousand people Tuke's financial assistance helped them avoid Irish agricultural distress in 1879/80. For those who remained, he helped to generate industry and rail networks and diversify foodstuffs in impoverished West Ireland. However, the lack of any active intervention by the British Government to solve the problems known about in the 1840s – the disparity between Ireland and England, especially in political representation, and the fundamental misunderstanding of cultural issues (including religion) – fuelled Irish nationalism and the drive for Home Rule. Whilst believing that Ireland should remain in a union with the rest of Britain, as Tuke did, Pim's writings often offered genuine solutions in the form of electoral reform and devolution, not separation. Despite the efforts of the two men, sectarianism spiralled and eventually resulted in the split of Ireland.

Keywords: Famine; Ireland; County Mayo; emigration; eviction; John Bright; Land War; Unionism; Ulster; Irish nationalism; Charles Stewart Parnell; Home Rule; Catholic Church; disestablishment; William Gladstone; Land Act; electoral reform; denominational education; sectarianism; Arthur Balfour; Jonathan Pim; James Hack Tuke

Useful for: those interested in/ related to the Pims or the Tukes; those exploring Irish nationalism or North American connections to Ireland; historians of Ireland, Irish Quakerism, emigration, landlord-

tenant relations, economic regeneration and voluntary philanthropy; people interested in historical Quaker faith in action, involvement in politics, and how past Friends have dealt with disagreements.

Chapter 1. The Quaker Background

Overview

Incorporating extant scholarship, this section reflects on the position of Quakerism in the mid-late nineteenth century, and the place of Jonathan Pim and James Hack Tuke within it and Irish history.

Quakerism and Quaker Business

Founded in the 1650s, Quakerism in the eighteenth century was 'a church set apart from the world, with a distinctive outward witness expressed in worship, dress, language and life-style'. This 'Quietism' was slowly mitigated by a wider evangelical revival. Friends began to engage with the world through social activism. Modernisation was cemented through figures like Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847).

Quaker business communities emerged and consolidated between 1700 and 1850. Friends' renowned integrity bred success, wealth and a business elite, who believed they owed 'responsible stewardship to God' and therefore embraced philanthropy or politics, especially after 1800. Such was the case for James Pim and James Hack Tuke.

Quakers and Ireland

Quakers had been present in Ireland since Oliver Cromwell's conquest. Their settler roots encouraged Irish Friends to feel English, which was compounded by the faith's London-based administration. According to historian Isabel Grubb, by 1700 there were 'six or seven hundred' Quaker families. During the 1789-1802 violent religious crisis between Catholics and Protestants, Irish Friends gained respect for their 'neutrality and charity'. However, their number appeared to be declining before evangelicalism promoted a brief resurgence, 1863-80.

With the exception of the 1840s Great Famine, it was individual and not corporate endeavour that marked philanthropic work amidst the precarious social and religious situation in nineteenth-century Ireland. This manifested in two ways: 'Quaker analyses of the condition of Ireland', and 'efforts to promote social and economic improvement ... or to provide relief in distress' (p. 8). Whilst they were profoundly involved beforehand, the 1869 disestablishment of the Church of England drew both Jonathan Pim and James Hack Tuke – as well as other Quakers like William Forster and John Hodgkin – into the minefield of Anglo-Irish relations.

Chapter 2. The Quakers and the Great Famine

Overview

This section explores Quaker involvement in Famine relief and its associated politics after the Poor Law buckled under the weight of need. Their action fell into two phases: first, the response to immediate need (1846-7); and second, relief work (1847-9, with some residual efforts lasting until 1863), moved to wider questions of the social and economic condition of Ireland (1849-52). The section also discusses Jonathan Pim's work for London Central Relief Committee and James Hack Tuke's Ireland visits, 1846-8.

Quaker Analyses of the Situation

Quaker investigations and reports (authors included William Forster, Pim and Tuke) revealed the scale of the Famine, its causes and potential remedies, and provoked donations. In many ways, the crisis – the poverty, lack of any middle class to encourage commerce, the deficiency of education, and a deficient 'social structure' – radicalised Pim and Tuke, with the latter in particular courting controversy. The author noted that Pim's 1852 *Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends during the Famine in Ireland* remains important for assessing the 1846 Labour Rate Act and the 1847 Temporary Relief Act. The author noted that in the absence of understanding the internal spiritual life of past Friends, the text also continues to provide 'an account of Quaker principles in action' and 'a unique record of nineteenth century Quaker experience'.

Quaker Improvements and Relief

Aided by their reputation for integrity, Quakers in Ireland, England and America raised c.£190,000 in food and money (the US contributing c.£150,000). Aside from other funding sources, the Government ... advanced £10 million. The London-based Quaker Central Relief Committee were 'shrewd' in recognising the severity of the Famine in Southern and Western Ireland, with the Dublin Committee then utilising an effective on-the-ground network of clergy and gentry. Part of Quaker effectiveness lay in the good relations they established with the Russell Government, which facilitated food transit and depots. Even so, effective relief was hampered by tension between Protestant and Catholic clergy.

Quakers established projects to promote longer-term employment and prosperity. These included stimulating local manufacture, and efforts to diversify foodstuffs in agriculture and fisheries. Yet hardship was exacerbated by the evictions and crop seizures of landlords. Tuke published incorrect accusations against Sir Richard O'Donnell of exploiting tenants in County Mayo and precipitating the

Achill eviction. Pim intervened: O'Donnell was doing what he could by employing as many as possible. A more cautious Tuke would later report with truth the profound cruelty of John Walshe's Erris evictions.

From 1848, alongside Tuke's grandfather, his father Samuel assisted Irish refugees in the midst of widespread prejudice in York and prevalent in the country as a whole. In 1848, Pim published *Conditions and Prospects of Ireland*, a wider study of Tuke's earlier Connaught investigations. Essentially, the text argued that Ireland would never recover unless land exploitation and disputes were resolved. The 'Land Question' featured in an official published 1849 denunciation by Quakers. Yet, after 1846, their efforts were frustrated after their on-the-ground network dissipated; 1849 proved the final 'extended relief operation of the Central Relief Committee'.

Chapter 3. The Land Question

Overview

In this chapter, the intellectual responses of Pim, Tuke and other Friends – especially John Bright, 'the most active Quaker politician on Irish issues in the mid-nineteenth century' – to the Famine are considered. For these men, Ireland's long-term sustainability and growth depended on addressing landlord-tenant relations. The Report of the 1843-5 Devon Commission, on the eve of the Famine, set the agenda for subsequent discussions of the Land Question.

Ireland, Tenants and Landlords

Irish landlord-tenant relations were very different to England; alongside vested interests in Dublin Parliament, this was something which hampered Westminster understanding and action. Part of the issue was the poor quality of land. There was no equitable contract, nor a tradition of paternalism. Tenants, not landlords, were expected to invest to improve land. Yet small-holdings were let on a short-term basis. Unfair pay contributed to tenants' lack of enthusiasm for paid agricultural labour. After 1850, the Tenant Land League campaigned for the 'three F's': '[f]ixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale of land'. Demands for tenant compensation for improving land were surpassed by agitation for land purchase (supported by government loans), especially after Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt established the Land League (1879). The febrile Irish political situation and demands for Home Rule would have been mitigated if legislation had earlier addressed the Land Question earlier than 1870.

Pim's Ideas

Pim's 1847, 1848 and 1852 works fossilised his thinking on the Land Question before he became a County Mayo landlord (1854) and Dublin Liberal MP (1865). His ideal of free trade in land reflected his mercantile background. He believed it would: attract English investment; develop Western fisheries; encourage disinterested landowners to sell to middle-class investors eager to improve land; promote employment; establish wage labour and smallholdings; and precipitate stability and well-being. However, this agricultural revolution depended on capital and on private land reclamation ventures. He felt the proposition of 'joint ownership' by landlord and tenant unfeasible, and instead adopted the English model once he became a landlord. His efforts at estate improvement did not materially benefit him, but aided tenants, especially when the late-1870s saw another agricultural crisis.

Tuke's Ideas

Tuke's two pamphlets, published in 1848 (the height of the Famine) and 1880 (a peak of unrest in the 'Land War'), demonstrate a development in his ideas about the Land Question; in the interim, he spent little time in Ireland. Tuke felt land reclamation could be realised within the landlord-tenant relationship. If tenants were made secure in larger smallholdings, their improvements would be supported by part-time waged employment and landlords' implementation of drainage.

Even so, Pim and Tuke both believed that legislation other than the Encumbered Estates Act (1849) should assist landlords 'who had neither the means of sale nor the capital to invest'. The author considers this, and the emphasis on free trade of land by the two men, the Central Relief Committee and Bright to have been a distraction from the fundamental problems of landlord-tenant relations and Irish geography and society. Pim's mercantile contract, for example, was proven unworkable as 'it presupposed 'two free and willing parties' on equal terms'. This, according to Tuke's conclusions from his 1880 Ireland visit, was one reason why legislation had failed and recognised the validity of the three Fs. He continued to believe that less than twenty acres would perpetually impoverish tenants, but grew less sure of land reclamation. Upon his return to England, he urged Quakers' London Yearly Meeting to address the Land Question, reminding them of their connection and success in Ireland.

Tuke and Pim now believed in the increase of smallholders by legislation enabling state-assisted land purchase; in the words of one Land Leaguer, if 'peasant proprietorship' was facilitated 'you would make the peasants more conservative than the Conservatives'. The 1881 Land Act enacted the '3 F's' and established 'dual ownership.' Supplemented by the Arrears Act of 1882 it inaugurated a new phase in

the Irish Land Question. Even so, it was not until further legislation in 1903 that smallholdings increased dramatically.

Chapter 4. The West of Ireland

Overview

The author argues that the second wave of distress in 1879-80, marked a dividing line between the two men's efforts for the West of Ireland. Pim's association with County Mayo disintegrated. Tuke, however, invested more in the area and began to reconsider prior solutions for the long-term sustainability. His main concern was the poorest tenants who held fewer than twenty acres; a group whom, it is argued, the Land League were incapable of assisting.

Tuke's Involvement

Tuke's 1880 efforts in London did not secure corporate Quaker determination to address the Land Question, but did generate money and a reprise of William Forster's 1846 tour of western Ireland. Tuke discovered virtually the same issues as had been found during the Famine. He therefore reconnected with the Forster and Hodgkin families and recognised that a wider, political, non-partisan response was required. The author has characterised Tuke's involvement as tri-phased: 1880-6 saw the successful publication of *Irish Distress and Its Remedies* and his promotion of assisted migration; 1886-9 was punctuated by his *Report on Achill with Suggestions for the Congested Districts* and initiatives for economic development; 1888-96, marked by *The Condition of Donagal*, expanded his economic initiatives. Contemporaneously, Tuke came into conflict with Nationalists and generated unity amongst English politicians from Liberal W. E. Forster to Conservative W. H. Smith.

Assisted Emigration

'During the Famine neither Pim nor Tuke shared the American Quaker Jacob Harvey's enthusiasm for Irish emigration'. The lack of progress in West Ireland prompted Tuke to change his mind in 1880. From 1882, in the midst of tumultuous politics, he wrote descriptive letters to Friends and established the Tuke Fund Committee to assist emigration to Canada and America. Thousands – from Clifden, Belmullet, Newport, Oughterard and Swineford – migrated. Family migration was especially encouraged, but given financial support only if half the funds required were met through other means. Whilst earlier charitable

colonisation schemes were rejected as unhelpful for the unskilled, assistance to seek work on arrival was present. The Committee was wound up in 1886 after proving contentious to Charles Stewart Parnell and elements of the Catholic Church, and difficult due to local Poor Law officials and prejudice and economics in North America. Tuke continued to advocate emigration and gave private assistance, 1886-91. Indeed, emigration was seen as the solution by many in what were known as 'the congested districts': between 1891 and 1961 the population reduced by 51%.

Economic Development

In 1886, Tuke turned to encouraging local industry, believing that fisheries would achieve diversification. This required boats, piers and railways. Supported by Conservative Chief Secretary of Ireland Arthur Balfour, Tuke helped instigate a survey of West coast fisheries. After the Congested Districts Board (Balfour's brainchild) took over responsibility in 1891, Tuke served on its Fisheries Committee. The Board invested significantly, and this was rewarded by success in the Arran Islands, Galway Bay and Donegal.

Railways therefore aided internal development to the 1920s. The coast, where the main population was, had no extant tracks in 1889. With pressure from Tuke and supporting legislation in 1896, a coastal route linked to other lines was established. The 1889 Light Railways Bill secured a dozen railway lines in various parts of Ireland, which provided employment at a time of heightened distress; private enterprise also had a role in places.

At the outset, Tuke had considered the Congested Districts Board a possible solution to the whole situation in Ireland. Certainly, some – including W. L. Micks, the Board's first Secretary – felt that Tuke's ideas had actually helped produce and shape the initiative, which was conceived to act as a department independent of Government. Despite its chaotic early years, Tuke's deep involvement with the Board and its investigations and policies on industries, fisheries and land only ceased with his death in 1896.

Chapter 5. The Union

Overview

This chapter details the political machinations surrounding sustaining the Union and the demand for Home Rule. Electoral reform is considered through the prism of Jonathan Pim's career as Member of Parliament (1866-74) and his associations with John Bright, a prominent Quaker MP.

Nationalist Politics, 1800-48

The 1800 Act of Union ensured tension between England and Ireland until independence in 1921. At the root of animosity was, in Lord John Russell's 1845 words, that Britain 'had engaged to consider Irishmen as Englishmen'. The tension was also one cleaved by religion: most of the Protestant minority were Unionists whilst most Catholics were Nationalists. There had always been challenges – particularly via the campaigning of Daniel O'Connell for Catholic emancipation and repeal of the 1800 Act – but the Famine and 1848 European revolutions threatened violent insurrection. Pim's Memorial to Clarendon, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was widely circulated amongst senior politicians, including Russell. In essence, aside from the Land Question, Pim argued for engaging influential Catholics and instigating local administration and electoral reform to secure the Union; whilst this was ignored, the militant 1848 Young Ireland uprising also failed. Nevertheless, the British government's abysmal handling of the Famine weakened the Union and encouraged two strands of nationalism. Violent separatism first manifested in Irish-American-originated Fenianism, c.1858-67. Devolution through constitutional reform was adopted by the Catholic National Association, comprised mainly of 'Catholic clergy and liberal politicians'. They sought disestablishment (removal of the Church of England (CE) from Ireland), land reform and denominational education. Only disestablishment was achieved, but the Association's sentiments found influential friends in Westminster.

Pim in Parliament

Pim was the second Irish Quaker Member of Parliament of the nineteenth century. He was officially a Dublin Liberal, but revelled in his independence, which at times hindered Irish progress. Nevertheless, his outlook echoed that of the Catholic National Association. At the same time, he did not support Gladstone's 1868 proposals towards disestablishment due to election promises. Nevertheless, this won Pim respect and the Irish Church Act was passed in 1869, effectively removing the Church of England and ensuring Church of England money contributed to removing Irish distress.

Gladstone's 1870 Land Act neutered the influence of the Catholic National Association. More importantly, the author argues, it 'broke the Liberal connection with Ireland and the hope that an Anglo-Irish Liberal consensus could improve the Union'. Pim's independence did not help when, as a fellow Liberal, he could have influenced Cabinet discussions and ensured a stronger Irish voice in the British Parliament. With limited Irish input or support, the Act, like other measures before and after, was a compromise. Disillusion birthed the Home Rule movement. This was a source of alarm for Gladstone and Pim, who, in *Ireland and the Imperial Parliament*, set out electoral reform proposals based on 'English

respect' and Irish decision-making in a Parliament-based 'Grand Committee' and a strong executive directly responsible to Parliament. Pim's Liberal-Unionism and his balanced response to the 1872 Galway Election Debate proved that there was no middle way in Irish politics.

Irish Universities

The Catholic National Association's third concern was addressed by Gladstone's 1873 Irish University Bill. The Anglican Trinity College was the only centre of higher education for Catholics from 1893 until the non-sectarian Queens Colleges in 1845 and the establishment of the Catholic University College. The Catholic hierarchy wanted the Queens Colleges to become denominational. Pim too opposed the mixed system. Gladstone's bill reflected Pim's notion of a single non-sectarian umbrella university with affiliated denominational and secular colleges. The bill proved politically unsuccessful for both men. Pim retired from politics, though he continued to worry about the destructive forces of sectarianism until his death in 1885. Thereafter, the 1886 and 1893 Home Rule Crises was met by little appreciation of regional disparity by James Hack Tuke and John Bright in their concern that sectarianism would split northern and southern Ireland.

Chapter 6. The Quakers and Home Rule, 1885-93

Overview

This section discusses the response of (mainly Irish) Quakers to the serious prospect of Home Rule. In doing so, it suggests that Friends' approach split into two: between c.1880 and 1885, there was no united front; in 1893, however, there was a more corporate appearance. Even so, their response to the situation diminished the Society in the eyes of other Irish people.

Irish Politics and Quaker Concern from c.1880

Irish politics underwent a tectonic shift in 1880. For the first time, more Irish Members of Parliament were both Catholic and without property. The 1885 election 'confirmed Home Rule Catholic predominance'. Prime Minister William Gladstone's support of Home Rule in 1886 meant that even Ulster – 'a Protestant community with a strong Scottish Presbyterian presence' and the bastion of Unionism – turned towards its inevitability. With this, Ireland crept closer to the North/South split (even within Unionist approaches) so feared by Pim. In a nation characterised by Catholic nationalism and a

hard-line Roman Catholic Church, 'Protestants, including Quakers, feared both for their religious and economic status'. Quakers had traditionally approached Irish politics with the spirit of 'equal civil and religious rights', Disestablishment and the continuation of sectarianism shook this belief; the Union (and therefore Westminster) was the last hope to prevent tensions spilling over. Gradually, Friends gravitated towards Unionists and ultimately 'reaffirmed the English origins of Quakerism'. They found themselves increasingly isolated, especially in the South. To the North, Ulster provided a concentrated and unified base where Protestant churches were closely aligned.

The London and Dublin Yearly Meetings played out against this background, and, in 1882, the Dublin Meeting 'co-occurred [*sic*] with the Phoenix Park murders' of two of the most senior British politicians in the Irish administration. Confused, Quakers 'could do nothing but maintain a silent isolation'. The 1886 Home Rule crisis left Irish Friends divided. In 1887/8, this became public through Parliamentary petitions and the *Irish Times* newspaper.

Quaker Approach After c.1890

Irish Quakers were better prepared for the 1893 Home Rule crisis. Even so, whilst the majority opposed Home Rule, the London Meeting largely supported it. Measures were taken to mitigate division. In Ireland, Dublin Yearly Meeting reignited the historical Friends Peace Testimony, but also wrangled with Ulster Friends' association with a campaign of active resistance. The emerging non-political message from Dublin was met with an equally unified 'warm sympathy' in London. Friends, then, made it through the failure of Gladstone's 1893 Home Rule proposition with the outward appearance of agreement.

Even so, most Irish Friends continued to be concerned. They recognised that their ideal of equality and non-sectarianism was naïve in a nation in which Catholics made statements that they and Protestants 'could not 'freely co-exist in the same society'. Aside from this cementing of Quaker Unionism, their business community believed that Home Rule would wreak havoc on prosperity and generate mass unemployment. The 1893 petition to Parliament to not pass the Home Rule Bill effectively announced Irish Friends as interlopers. British Quakers had moved from a united response to the Famine towards a fundamental split in their beliefs about the future of Ireland.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

Overview

The conclusion not only notes the importance, context and legacy of Jonathan Pim and James Hack Tuke, but also offers more detailed accounts of the lives, roles and public works of some of the Quaker figures peppered throughout the thesis.

John Bright

Bright was almost unique in being a British Quaker who attained a national reputation in politics. He was both 'a formidable moral force' in Parliament, and ambivalent in his commitment to Friends' Peace Testimony. He was ultimately a muscular Quaker whose interventions aided the Irish crises of the 1880s.

John Grubb Richardson

At the height of the Famine, the paternalistic Richardson invested in Bessbrook, County Down (Northern Ireland) by cultivating flax manufacture. The town was forged into a model settlement based on non-sectarianism where prosperity and Quakerism flourished. Even here, Home Rule damaged 'community understanding'.

Pim and Tuke

Reflecting on a point made in the introduction, the author argues that whilst one cannot decipher the inner spirituality of the two protagonists, their faith manifested clearly in their actions, which were informed by their context. For those who lived through the 1880s and 1890s, this context was one in which Quakers were forced to face the inherent rift within Irish society, and their place within it. Other than the Famine, this was the only matter on which some form of corporate reaction was pronounced. In between, Friends like Pim and Tuke were left to their individual response at a time when Quakers were renewing their connectedness to the world. Nevertheless, Pim featured less in the accounts of contemporary Friends, despite his successful business, his Famine work, community service and outspoken publications. Regardless of his conservative politics and consequential marginality, he retained conscientiousness and integrity and, unlike other Irish Quakers, was keenly aware of the need to accommodate a non-sectarian Irish nationalism. Friends were keener to discuss Tuke, though were eager to place his Irish efforts in a wider context of his Quaker administrative duties, education and missionary work. Yet his work in the West of Ireland emanated from the same religious concerns and

aided the emigration of over 8,000 Irish people seeking a better life. In the face of turbulent times in Ireland, Pim and Tuke at least did what they could.

Appendices

A Minute of Dublin Monthly Meeting, concerning Jonathan Pim, an Elder, deceased

A concise obituary; only two sentences commemorate Pim's work in Parliament and during the Famine.

A Minute of Hertford and Hitchin Monthly Meeting, concerning James Hack Tuke, an Elder, deceased

A short obituary, which takes more note of Tuke's civic activism, in Ireland and in adult education.

List of Colwell Papers

At the time of the thesis, numerous papers of both James Hack Tuke and his youngest daughter, Margaret, were in the private possession of Lieutenant Commander C. B. Tuke in Honiton, Devon. These twenty pages list the contents of the archive, which includes photographs as well as correspondence, manuscripts, diaries and publications. The vast majority of the material coalesces around Ireland. Other documents include family writings and note-books on visits to the Paris Commune and America, but these appear unusual in the collection.

Summary prepared by Rebecca Wynter (2012)