

YUKAKO OTORI

'TO BE A MODERN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE: AMERICAN QUAKER PACIFISM IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR'

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This thesis explores the profound impact of World War One on modern pacifism and the propulsion of modern Quaker peace testimony. The violence of mechanised, technological trench warfare shocked Progressivist-era America. The traditional isolationism of the United States was challenged by two diametrically-opposed viewpoints: militarism and pacifism. From the nineteenth-century weakening of US Quakerism (through sectarianism, industrialisation and the expansion West), the gradual consolidation of Meetings and the influence of Liberalism paved the way for the strengthening unity brought by anti-violence for the Society of Friends. The tentative path of modern, muscular and secularised US peace testimony is traced from 1914 to the 1917 American entrance to the European War under President Woodrow Wilson. The watershed was 1915, when social feminism met with Quaker faith in action (personified by Jane Addams and Lucy Biddle Lewis). Female activism resulted in the Woman's Peace Party, a body that privileged maternal rhetoric over suffrage to protest for peace which received international attention through their 1915 participation at the Women's Peace Congress at The Hague. From such associations, those at the 1915 Quaker Winona Lake Peace Conference and through the consequent Friends' National Peace Committee, figures like Henry Joel Cadbury, Rufus M. Jones, Hannah Clothier Hull and Lewis were able to mobilise, disseminate and even politicise peace testimony for the twentieth century.

Keywords: Lucy Biddle Lewis; Jane Addams; World War One; Woman's Peace Party; Women's Peace Congress; Philadelphia; Friends' National Peace Committee; Young Friends

Useful for: historians of the First World War, pacifism and women's activism; those exploring peace testimony, Quaker Liberalism and twentieth-century Quakerism; those looking for a concise history of the Society of Friends in America; people interested in how pacifism was manifested in different ways by the various Quaker creeds.

Introduction

Overview

This section – preceded by a timeline, ‘Chronology of the First World War to the American Entry: Events in Europe and American Responses, June 1914 to May 1917’ (pp. i-iv), the “‘moratorium’ period’ for the modernisation of US Quaker pacifism (p. 6) – outlines the key themes of the thesis (pp. 1-6) and the organisation of the work (pp. 6-7).

Militarism

Foreshadowed by Jean de Bloch’s 1898 text, *The Future of War in Its Technical, Economic, and Political Relations*, and consolidated by the total war effort of the First World War (1914-8), ‘pacifist-minded Americans’ focused on militarism (p. 2). World War One initiated the Anti-Militarism Committee (renamed the Anti-Preparedness Committee and ‘reorganized as the American Union Against Militarism (AUAM)’, p. 3).

Pacifism

Despite US involvement in the War from 1917, ‘Quaker pacifism survived’ (p. 3); more than this, ‘American Quakers initiated the modernization – politicization and secularization – of their peace witness’ (p. 4). At the same time, ‘relief work for the war victims provided Quakers with’ a compromise ‘between their religious pacifism and patriotic feelings’ and led to alliances with non-sectarian activists, including ‘social feminists like Jane Addams’ (p. 5). In this thesis, the author explores the modernisation of Quaker pacifism through women’s peace activism and the Friends’ National Peace Committee against a backdrop of Quaker Liberalism.

Chapter I. Preparations: Quaker Liberalism at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century

Overview

This chapter provides a useful condensed history of Philadelphian (and by extension, American) Quakerism from 1827 to the start of the twentieth century (pp. 8-12). It also introduces Rufus M. Jones and the Young Friends’ Movement (pp. 12-6).

Tradition and Change

Beginning with the 1827 Orthodox/ Hicksite split, the author charts the tensions between established Quietism and the ramifications of evangelical emphasis on Scripture in nineteenth-century Quakerism.

In the 1830s, Orthodox Friends were further divided into Gurneyite and Wilburite factions by the emphasis of Joseph John Gurney, an English Quaker, on Bible study and First Day Schools. By the 1880s many meetings sought to consolidate their respective positions. At the same time, propelled by industrialisation and the expansion of the frontier, the 1867-77 revivals birthed an Evangelical Quakerism in the Midwest that did not privilege peace testimony. All this split, diversified and even diminished Quakerism in America. Consequently, the 'impetus for charity' was weakened and its expressions were conservative – for example, the Women's Christian Temperance Movement (p. 12).

Quaker Liberalism

Whilst the author acknowledges that much work needs to be done to illuminate the history, it is asserted that post-1890s Quaker Liberalism was essential to modernisation (p. 12). The movement was pragmatic, adapting the faith to *fin de siecle* society, and promoted by younger Friends. It was personified by Rufus M. Jones, a Gurneyite Quaker who had been profoundly influenced by his 1890s visit to Britain, 'professor of Philosophy at Haverford College and editor of the *American Friend* from 1894-1912'. He was interested in liberalism and the immediate communication with God that mysticism promised. This collided with the attempts of the Young Friends' Movement to reunify Philadelphia Quakers through Bible studies, First Day Schools and, crucially, a more vivid devotion to social service; a social service that would manifest in Quaker pacifism.

Chapter II. Strenuousness: Quaker Presence in the American Peace Movement

Overview

This chapter explores the role of social feminists in the American peace movement. The association of Quaker Lucy Biddle Lewis (biographical details, pp. 29-32, and belief and activism, pp. 40 and 44) with Jane Addams is discussed; so too the 1915 foundation of the Woman's Peace Party (WPP) and Women's Peace Congress (WPC) at The Hague.

The Peace Movement

Progressivist-era America embraced isolationism. Yet US President Woodrow Wilson considered himself 'a friend of international peace and arbitration' (p. 18), as did other transatlantic-minded wealthy men. His 'sophisticated phraseology of American neutrality appeased' peace advocates' 'anger, allayed their grief and alleviated their shames' (p. 20). Women, formerly mobilised by suffrage 'and other reform

efforts', first publicly protest for peace in New York in August 1914. Key activists included Americans Addams (a social worker motivated by human universality and US democracy) and Carrie Chapman Catt, and Briton Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. Although dominated by social feminists, the WPP incorporated tenets of the peace movement and also maternal rhetoric. Addams and the WPP 'soon received international approval from the European sisterhoods' and an invite to attend the WPC (pp. 22-7).

Lucy Biddle Lewis

Amongst the delegates was Lewis, 'a middle-aged, energetic but quiet' Philadelphian. She and her friend Hannah Clothier Day (wife of William I. Hull, outspoken Swarthmore College Professor, who had recommended Lewis to Addams), were the most active women of pre-1950 American Quaker pacifism (p. 28). The sea voyage to Holland provided an opportunity to discuss pacifism; Lewis spoke on the lineage of Quaker peace testimony. Internal tensions marked WPC experience, as WPP membership sat uneasily between maternal claims and stalwart suffrage. Lewis and Addams also believed 'foreigners' did not 'understand our American democratic ideas'. Friction was crystallised by a debate between Addams and Pethick-Lawrence (pp. 33-8), with the latter mythologising heroic soldiers; later misinterpretation of Addams' grounded views led to her vilification in wider US society (pp. 41-2). Whilst Hull charged pre-War pacifism 'ostensible' (p. 20) and Quakers continued unsettled by war between civilised nations, Wilson had sufficiently manoeuvred US foreign policy 'from continental isolation to world-wide intervention' (p. 22). Certainly, the author notes, the WPC's influence on the course of the First World War was unclear to contemporaries, including Lewis, and remains so to historians (pp. 43-4).

Chapter III. Their "Preparedness": Initial Attempts in the Politicization and Secularization of Quaker

Pacifism

Overview

This section considers the shift in American Quaker pacifism, informed by Liberalism and the horror of twentieth-century warfare, from a personal or sectarian belief to one which could form part of Quaker service and activism in the modern world.

British Friends' Response to War

Unlike US Quakers, the author infers, British Friends were more spiritually prepared for World War One as they had begun to modernise their peace testimony in the 1890s (pp. 46-8). Their mobilisation –

through the Friends' Ambulance Committee, the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee and the Committee for Helping Aliens – was observed by Lucy Biddle Lewis, her daughter and Quaker friends during their 1914 stay in England. Soon, and pioneered in Philadelphia by Lewis, American Friends (including Rufus M. Jones) 'began to cooperate with British Quakers for relief work' (p. 50).

Protesting Militarism in America

The expression of pacifism varied between Quaker creeds. For all sects, 'the "war to end all wars" ... one of the phrases widely used to justify American militancy, remained a contradiction in terms' (p. 52). The 'liberal *The American Friend*, the Orthodox *The Friend* and the Hicksite *Friends' Intelligencer*' (p. 51), exposed distant US Quakers to the horrors of modern violence in Europe. Yet the narrowing of the Atlantic ignited militaristic sentiments amongst some Americans. Alarmed, disparate US Quakers began to mobilise. In February 1915 Lewis and two male representatives from the Concord Quarterly Meeting met with President Wilson and other key federal figures. Such moves 'reflected the changes in Quaker pacifism: organization, aggressiveness, open-mindedness, secularization and politicization' (p. 58).

Friends' National Peace Committee (FNPC)

Local and Young Friends' activism became consolidated, first by the Winona Lake Peace Conference in 1915 (attendees also included non-Quakers like Jane Addams), by the consequent FNPC, then, once the US joined the War, through the American Friends Service Committee. With key figures like Henry Joel Cadbury, Rufus M. Jones, Hannah Clothier Hull and Lewis, American militarism became the target, albeit one difficult to oppose successfully. The history of Quaker pacifism was consulted. William Penn's 1693 idea of an 'international parliament of nations' gained currency (p. 62). Yet Quaker Liberalism and the 'the fundamental belief in the American concept of liberty and democracy' would promote the wider palatability of peace testimony, which was actively disseminated and continued to develop (pp. 64-9).

Conclusion

The author briefly discusses the Friends' National Peace Committee archive at Swarthmore College Peace Collection. It is argued that these documents and the FNPC and their national advertising campaign need greater attention, as '[i]t was the last collective voice of pacifist and liberal Quakers to row against the tide of militarism and American entrance into the First World War' (p. 70). The author also notes how difficult was peace testimony for a faith characterised as pro-German by many Americans amidst Quakers' realisation that modern government was a harbinger of modern war. The

emphasis on anti-violence, the bolstering force of post-1890s Quaker Liberalism, and a genderless approach to pacifism and relief activities, it is asserted, smoothed the path to modern peace testimony; a position pioneered by Lucy Biddle Lewis and propelled by the American Friends Service Committee.

Summary prepared by Rebecca Wynter (2012)