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The Manchester Guardian and the American Civil War

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THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AMERICAN BELLIGERENTS . . . 2

Constitutional Problems of the Union
Collapse of Pro-Northern Sympathy
Humiliation at Bull Run
British Neutrality
The Trent Affair
The St. Albans' Raid
The Alabama Case and the Rams

II. THE COTTON FAMINE AND THE UNEMPLOYED MILL HANDS . 16

Importance of Cotton in British Economy
Early Cotton Surplus
Distress in Lancashire
Expense and Extent of Relief
Report of the Manchester Statistical Society
Deaths, Marriages, and Births
True Statistics
Relief Measures
The Labour Test
Relief Subscription
Public Kitchens and Schools
The Public Works Act

III. THE REFORM MOVEMENT AND NEGRO EMANCIPATION . . . 32

Slavery and Free Labor
Lincoln Reluctant to Emancipate
The Emancipation Proclamation
Criticism by The Times
Workers Endorse Proclamation
John Bright
Letter to President Lincoln from the Cotton Workers
Lincoln's Reply
William E. Gladstone and Reform
Northern Victory
Assassination of Lincoln

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter — Page

IV. THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN SELF-REVEALED 47

Dislike for Both North and South
The Protective Tariff
Contrast with Attitude of Cotton Workers
Aversion to Extension of Suffrage
Hostility to Slavery
Yankee Bluster and Truculence
American Charity
The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher
The Difficulties of Emancipation
Prejudice in the North
Unconditional Warfare
Lincoln--A Tyrant

CONCLUSION 66

BIBLIOGRAPHY 70

INTRODUCTION

The attitude of important British newspapers such as The Times, Morning Post, and Saturday Review toward the American Civil War has, of course, been the subject of many articles and books. These newspapers served as the mouthpieces for the aristocratic classes and represented one section of public opinion favoring the South. A little-known group of newspapers fought for the side of the North. These were the local dailies, which, to a greater or lesser degree, reflected the attitude of their readers--workingmen. Among such newspapers were the Manchester Examiner, Liverpool Daily Post, Birmingham Daily Post, Newcastle Chronicle, Leeds Mercury, Bradford Advertiser, Preston Guardian, Carlisle Examiner, Dundee Advertiser, Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury, and the Belfast Northern Daily Whig.

While the attitude of these newspapers is known, the position of one provincial newspaper of that time--The Manchester Guardian--has been neglected by students of the period. Was the viewpoint of The Manchester Guardian aristocratic, middle-class, or that of the workingman? It is the object of this thesis to discover The Manchester Guardian's position by examining its coverage of these important issues--neutrality, the Trent Affair, the cotton famine, the condition of the unemployed, the poor-law system, workingmen's meetings, John Bright, President Lincoln, slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the worth of democratic institutions.

CHAPTER I

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AMERICAN BELLIGERENTS

To many Englishmen the American Civil War was simply a struggle against slavery. Most Englishmen were not interested in the political problems facing the Republican Party, nor in the constitutional problems of the Union.

In the United States, many believed that slavery might spread with the growth of the Union and come to dominate. Though repulsive to contemplate, it was not too terrible to believe. The governing principle which brought the Republican Party into existence and brought Lincoln into its fold was determination to stop any further expansion of slavery.[1] Lincoln forever expressed this position with his famous speech:

> I do not expect the Union to be dissolved--I do not expect the House to fall--but I do expect it to cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South.[2]

This did not mean, however, that the Federal government possessed the constitutional power to destroy slavery

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[1]John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Abraham Lincoln: A History (10 vols.; New York, The Century Co., 1886), II, p. 279.

[2]Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 114.

in those states under whose constitutions it was permitted. In his first inaugural address, Lincoln attempted to reassure the South:

> I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. I will say I have no objection to this amendment being made express and irrevocable.[3]

Believing slavery to be protected under the constitution, Lincoln was offering no real concession of principle, for he also believed that, if slavery were bottled up, it would die. Lincoln's object was to use all the constitutional powers of the Federal government to check the spread of slavery. When Lincoln came to power, however, his immediate concern was neither the preservation nor the abolition of slavery. He made clear that his primary task now was the preservation of the Union:

> No state, upon its own motion, can get out of the union. Resolutions and ordinances to that effect are legally void, and acts of violence within any state or states against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary according to circumstances. I, therefore, consider the union unbroken, and to the extent of my ability I shall take care that the laws of the union are fully executed in all the states. . . . In your hands, dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you, so you can have no conflict without being yourselves aggressors.[4]

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[3] The Manchester Guardian, 18 March 1861, p. 3. (All material from The Manchester Guardian will be quoted in the original British spelling.)

[4] Ibid., p. 3.

All this was not very well understood in Britain. In the absence of such knowledge, the anti-slavery supporters of the North expected sweeping reforms. After the first six months of the war, these expectations collapsed in bitter disappointment. In October, 1861, the President was forced to countermand an emancipation proclamation which had been issued without official authority. General Fremont had proposed to free the slaves of rebels in his area of command. If the measure had remained in force, it might have split the North and would have impaired presidential authority.[5] By countermanding it, however, Lincoln robbed the North of the moral issue which made the contest meaningful to Northern supporters.

Before the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, the tone of the British press alternated between disgust for the South and contempt for the North--an emotion inspiring this poem:

> O Jonathan and Jefferson,
> Come listen to my song;
> I can't decide, my word upon,
> Which of you is most wrong.
> I do declare I am afraid
> To say which worse behaves,
> The North, imposing bonds on trade,
> Or South, that man enslaves.[6]

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[5]Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 126.

[6]The Manchester Guardian, quoted from Punch, 23 May 1861, p. 4.

While many Englishmen had trouble deciding which side to favor, the upper classes had their prejudices upon which to rely. The desperate ordeal of the world's leading republican government was observed without dismay. Few aristocrats would mourn the loss of democratic institutions. In an interview with Lincoln, the Philadelphia correspondent of the London Guardian revealed Lincoln's grasp of the war with this observation:

> He [Lincoln] thinks that with a portion of the aristocracy there would be a willingness that the experiment of republicanism might fail; that the men of the Manchester school go with the South, because of the extreme importance to them of the cotton supply; that they will cease their opposition to us when they find, as they assuredly will, that peace would only be postponed by their continuing to favour the cause of rebellion. A third class, far outnumbering the others--a class not having at the moment, it may be, control of the Government, still have feelings with regard to slavery, and cannot fail, therefore, to sympathise with us of the North.[7]

Here, Lincoln correctly evaluated the English working-class interest as the defence of freedom against slavery.

In July, 1861, the humiliation of Bull Run merely confirmed the upper classes in their contempt of the North. The special correspondent of The Times, who was an eye-witness of the battle, gave a graphic account of the retreat of the Northern army, which ended in a cowardly rout and

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[7]Ibid., 4 July 1861, p. 3.

a miserable, causeless panic. He wrote:

> All the road from Centreville, for miles, presented such a sight as can only be witnessed on the track of the runaways of an utterly demoralised army. Drivers flogged, lashed, spurred, and beat their horses, or leaped down and abandoned their teams, and ran by the side of the road. Mounted men-servants and men in uniform, vehicles of all sorts, commissariat waggons thronged the narrow ways. At every shot a convulsion, as it were, seized on the morbid mass of bones, sinew, wood, and iron, and thrilled through it, giving new energy and action to its desperate efforts to get free from itself. Men literally screamed with rage and fright when their way was blocked up. At one time a whole mass of infantry, with fixed bayonets, ran down the bank of the road. Some, falling as they ran, must have killed and wounded those among whom they fell.[8]

After the Battle of Bull Run, the cause of the North was further weakened by the generally accepted belief that the reconquest of the South was hopelessly impracticable. As early as Lincoln's inauguration, the dissolution of the Union had been regarded as an accomplished fact. After a visit to the United States, one member of Parliament gave these reasons for the recognition of the South:

> . . . if England and France, at the proper time, acknowledge the Southern Confederacy as an independent power, it might stay this cry for vengeance which . . . came from the North against the South. It might stay that desire to march those armies into the Southern states, for the purpose of subduing those states. It might tend to save much bloodshed; and it would be adopting a course which, while it would be of great benefit to the people of England and to the people of Europe, would . . . be of great benefit and great advantage to the people of America themselves.[9]

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[8] Ibid., quoted from The Times, 6 August 1861, p. 4.

[9] Ibid., 24 May 1861, p. 3.

Although secession might have been regarded by the British as an accomplished fact, Her Majesty's Government had little inclination to risk recognition of the South and jeopardize Canada. Neutrality was proclaimed early. It seemed to be little more than a matter of time until the defeat of the North should make diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy a safe necessity. British neutrality appeared suddenly to come to an end when a warlike mood flared up over the incident known as the Trent Affair.

The Trent was a British mail steamer making her return voyage to Europe from Cuba. On November 8, 1861, she was stopped by a Northern naval vessel, the San Jacinto, under the command of Captain Charles Wilkes. Without authority from Washington, Captain Wilkes proceeded to remove John Slidell, the Southern envoy to the French court, and John Mason, the Confederacy's minister to London.

On receipt in England of the news concerning the Trent's boarding and capture of Mason and Slidell, popular indignation became intense. Immediately, a rumor spread that "a Cabinet Council was summoned by Lord Palmerston, to determine whether Mr. Adams's passports should not forthwith be sent him."[10]

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[10]Ibid., 28 November 1861, p. 4.

As the Tories and the ultra-conservative press led by The Times whipped British opinion to a frenzy, John Bright--leading supporter of the North in Parliament--courageously spoke out:

> Now, the act which has been committed by the American steamer, in my opinion, whether it was illegal or not, was both impolitic and bad. . . . I think it may turn out . . . that, so far as the taking those men from that ship was concerned, it was wholly unknown to, and unauthorised by, the American government. And if the American government believe . . . that the act is illegal, I have no doubt they will make fitting reparation; for there is no government in the world that has so strenuously insisted upon modifications of international law, and been so anxious to be guided always by the most moderate and merciful interpretation of that law. . . .[11]

Bright also questioned the idea that the United States would deliberately provoke a war with Great Britain while trying to put down an insurrection in the South. He cautioned his listeners against letting newspapers incite such a fever of war that the Government could have war with the public's assent. He continued:

> What can be now more monstrous than that we, as we call ourselves . . . an educated, a moral, and a Christian nation--at a moment when an accident of this kind occurs, before we have made a representation to the American government, before we have heard a word from them in reply--should be all up in arms, every sword leaping from its scabbard, and every man looking about for his pistols and his blunderbuss. . . . If all other tongues are silent, mine shall speak for that policy which gives hope to the bondsmen of the South, and tends to generous thoughts, and generous words, and generous deeds, between the two great nations who speak the English language, and from their origin are alike entitled to the English name.[12]

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[11] Ibid., 5 December 1861, p. 3.

[12] Ibid., p. 3.

Another friend of the North in Parliament was Richard Cobden--liberal statesman, industrialist, and political writer. In this letter, Cobden joined his friend John Bright in imploring Englishmen to suspend final judgment:

> We could destroy each other's commerce, and spend countless treasure; we might pour out blood like water, and ruin for a generation two great civilisations; but the object aimed at could not be accomplished. . . . What we require is peace on the principles of impartial justice; and the truest way of insuring this in case of dispute, whether in the affairs of nations or of individuals, is by calling in the services of a disinterested arbitrator.[13]

The entire drift of opinion appeared in the direction of war, with the ministerial press fanning the popular flame by promising to clear the seas of the American navy in a month; to acknowledge the Confederacy; and, by breaking the blockade, letting out cotton, and letting in British manufactures.[14] A blockade of the Northern ports was also on the war program. By Royal Proclamation, Queen Victoria prohibited "the exportation of arms, ammunition, and military stores (including percussion caps and tubes), and also lead, from the United Kingdom."[15]

Soon, this action was followed by the embarkation of troops to Canada. The first to go were "two battalions of infantry of the line, two batteries of artillery, and one company of royal engineers." These were followed by "two

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[13] Ibid., 20 December 1861, p. 3.

[14] Ibid., 2 December 1861, p. 3.

[15] Ibid., 5 December 1861, p. 4.

battalions of guards, four battalions of infantry of the line, three batteries of field artillery, five batteries of garrison artillery, two battalions of the military train, and two companies of the royal engineers."[16]

The troops were shipped to Canada with shot, shells, cannon, sledges, and everything necessary for a winter campaign. War vessels left for the North American coast. Great Britain prepared for war under the pressure of intense excitement engendered by the press. The Manchester Guardian reported the suggestion of the London Observer that it would be not only proper, but easy, to cause Mason and Slidell to be "restored to the quarter deck of the British Admiral before New York--or Washington itself--in the face of some ten or twelve British men-of-war, whose presence in the Potomac would render the blustering Cabinet of Washington as helpless as the Trent was before the guns and cutlasses of the San Jacinto. . . ."[17]

The continued violent and uncompromising tone of the press, which included editorials in The Manchester Guardian, gave little hope that the United States would make concessions either to reason or to British diplomacy. With disdain for an immature people, The Manchester Guardian

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[16]Ibid., 13 December 1861, p. 4.

[17]Ibid., 2 December 1861, p. 3.

censored the North's pride in the expansion of the United States. The fear that America might attain the status of a world power inspired much criticism of this type:

> We know that the Northerns have been swelling almost to bursting with the contemplation of the future grandeur of the great American republic embracing one whole continent, with a population so vast, and so compact in its structure, that it would give the law to all the other nations of the world.[18]

In the same vein, the Honorable Joseph Howe, Prime Minister of Nova Scotia, gave as his opinion little hope for reconciliation with America on the Trent Affair. He gave these reasons:

> The insult was so gross that it was just possible that public men in America might yield to the pressure of circumstances, and retire before the storm. But from what he knew of the country he had his fears. He believed that the mob of New York would tear the men [Mason and Slidell] before they would give them up; and he believed the democratic influence of the government was so strong that he did not believe . . . that they would be given up. . . .[19]

The Manchester Guardian spoke of the Trent Affair as part of a design by Seward to "force a quarrel with England." A chance remark, attributed to General Winfield Scott upon his arrival in Paris, verified this conjecture, for the "seizure of the Southern Commissioners had been the subject of cabinet discussions at Washington long before he [General Scott] left."[21]

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[18] Ibid., 13 December 1861, p. 4.

[19] Ibid., 4 December 1861, p. 4.

[20] Ibid., 2 December 1861, p. 4.

[21] Ibid., p. 3.

Many Englishmen felt that a scandalous insult had been offered to the British flag, by and with the connivance of the Washington authorities. Their impression found confirmation in this letter from the Toronto correspondent of the London Guardian:

> The turmoil of warlike preparation which has prevailed amongst our neighbours during the past twelve months has at length crossed the lines, and is now making itself heard among ourselves. There is a very general impression through the province [Canada] that it is the intention of certain members of the American government to force England into a war. . . . The outrage upon the Trent, and the impertinent remarks made upon the subject officially by Mr. Secretary Welles, together with the public honours showered upon Commander Wilkes, have aroused feelings of intense disgust and astonishment throughout the British provinces, and fervent hopes are cherished that England may take a bold and determined stand against such insulting violations of national law.[22]

By January 6, 1862, the prospects of peace brightened with the news that assurances of amity had been given personally "by the members of the Washington Cabinet to the most eminent bankers and merchants in America."[23] Due to the prolonged diplomacy of the day, the position of the United States appeared to hesitate in favor of war. Diplomatic correspondence had begun with this dispatch from Palmerston's Foreign Secretary, Lord Russell, to Lord Lyons, British Minister in Washington:

> It thus appears that certain individuals have been forcibly taken from a British vessel, the ship of a neutral power on a lawful and innocent voyage, an act of violence which was an affront to the British flag,

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[22]Ibid., 2 January 1862, p. 3.

[23]Ibid., 6 January 1862, p. 3.

> and a violation of national laws. Her Majesty's Government are willing to believe the act was without authority and resulted from misunderstanding . . . and the British Government are unwilling to believe that the United States deliberately intended unnecessarily to force a discussion of so grave a question between the two governments. Her Majesty's Government trust that the government of the United States, will, of its own accord, offer such redress as alone could satisfy them--namely, the liberation of the four prisoners, and their delivery to Lord Lyons, that they may again be placed under British protection, and a suitable apology for the aggression committed. Should these terms not be offered by Mr. Seward, you will propose them to him.[24]

On December 27, Seward delivered his reply--a long legalistic document in which he claimed that Wilkes was justified in seizing the envoys, but admitted that "the British Government has a right to expect the same reparation that we as an independent state should expect from Great Britain. . . ."[25]

To the great relief of everyone, except Mason and Slidell, the Southern Commissioners were released. The Manchester Guardian celebrated their liberation with this jubilant editorial:

> We want no excuse for exulting in this triumph of firmness and justice over the spirit of lawless violence which at one time certainly threatened to compel us to have recourse to arms. . . . The Federal government have acceded to all which we thought proper to require, and if they have not done so in the way most conducive to the saving of their own reputation . . . they themselves are the chief . . . sufferers. . . .[26]

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[24] Ibid., 11 January 1862, p. 5.

[25] Ibid., p. 5.

[26] Ibid., editorial, 10 January 1862, p. 2.

The current of public opinion now reversed itself and began to run in the North's favor. The Manchester Guardian gave notice that:

> The men whom we have been obliged to demand from them are no favourites of ours, and we hope it will be shown by the indifference of the reception accorded to them when they arrive, that they have been regarded by us, not as heroes, but only as subjects of an attack in which the rights of neutral nations, and our own dignity in particular, were violated. That wrong has been redressed; and if the Americans are sufficiently in the acknowledgment to consider the account closed, all parties will be satisfied.[27]

So completely did the release of Mason and Slidell close the incident that by the end of January, when they arrived in England, there was very little public interest in them.

After the war scare died down in the spring of 1863, there was a steady increase of pro-Northern sympathy among the British masses and a corresponding decrease in the willingness of a British government to risk any form of intervention. The danger remained, however, in connection with any attack involving Canada. Were Canada to be endangered, Great Britain might be induced to form an alliance with the South. This situation became apparent when the Confederates made a melodramatic raid into Vermont from Canada in October, 1864. Although the avowed purpose of the raid had been to rob the St. Albans bank,[28] the incident

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[27] Ibid., p. 2.

[28] Philip Van Doren Stern, Secret Missions of the Civil War (New York: Bonanza Books, 1959), p. 242.

was interpreted in quite another light by Charles Sumner, who, speaking in the Senate, declared:

> . . . their object was to embroil the Government of the United States with the Government of Great Britain. . . . The whole proceeding was a trap in which to catch the Government of this country. It was hoped that in this way the rebellion would gain that powerful British intervention which would help to restore its fallen fortunes.[29]

In the Alabama case (the British-built Southern sea-raider which destroyed or incapacitated more than 250 Northern vessels) the controversy resulted in triumph for the diplomacy of the American Minister, Charles Francis Adams. In the case of the rams later built by the Lairds, the British government purchased them and restrained the Confederacy from further acquisition of warships built in Britain.[30]

Throughout the American Civil War, diplomacy between Great Britain and the United States had been complicated by mutual suspicion and recrimination. The British misinterpreted Seward's braggadocio, while the United States overestimated the hostility of the British government. Without sacrificing their own country's interests, the diplomats of both sides successfully stamped out the fires of controversy and thus averted another tragic war.

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[29] The Manchester Guardian, 4 January 1865, p. 3.

[30] H. C. Allen, Great Britain and the United States: A History of Anglo-American Relations, 1783-1952 (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1955), pp. 486-490.

CHAPTER II

THE COTTON FAMINE AND THE UNEMPLOYED MILL HANDS

While war news from America never ceased to be amply reported, The Manchester Guardian gave increasing prominence to the social and economic upheaval following the cotton famine. In 1860, more than 500,000 persons had been employed in the cotton mills of Lancashire, North Cheshire, and Lanarkshire, as well as in other districts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Between three and four millions were in some way dependent on the prosperity of the cotton industry.[1] The dependence of the British economy on cotton was well known to the South, which considered itself the indispensable source of supply. Southern leaders felt that the mere threat of withholding cotton (by burning, if necessary) would force Great Britain into recognition of the Confederacy.

Unfortunately for those Southerners who relied on an immediate shortage, cotton production had already overloaded the market and filled the warehouses. In 1860, the South had sent to Lancashire more bales than in any previous year. British manufacturers were torn between fear of a famine due to some crisis over slavery and fear of a surplus from a bulging market. At first the shortage was viewed as

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[1] The Manchester Guardian, quoted from the Economist, 21 January 1861, p. 4.

an opportunity for profiteering on the sale of accumulated stocks. One observer gleefully commented:

> The fact is that the present crisis would in all probability have arisen, as it often has before, from glutted markets, caused by over-production, and many are of opinion that a limitation of production this year has been most beneficial to the manufacturing interest in a pecuniary point of view, as it has enabled them to dispose of the accumulated stocks of former years in the markets of the world at remunerative prices, instead of having to sacrifice them at a ruinous loss.[2]

When the shortage began to be felt after October, 1861, the South discovered that British policy rested on greater considerations than cotton. Britain continued to prosper while its disorganized cotton industry suffered.

In 1862, the population of the township of Manchester was 185,050. By the end of March, 1862, the Board of Guardians reported that one person in nineteen was receiving outdoor relief from the poor rates. From the beginning of the year an average of 205 laborers each week lost their jobs. By the end of March there were 9,661 unemployed, an increase from January of 2,674 receiving out-door relief.[3]

The distress was the more acute because the population had previously begun to have some share in the earnings of a prosperous industry. The older people whose working life was closing experienced the most tragic loss when their savings were gradually eaten away. The condition of these proud people

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[2]Ibid., quoted from the Money Market Review, 27 January 1862, p. 3.

[3]Ibid., 16 April 1862, p. 2.

comes alive in this letter from an unemployed worker to the Lord Mayor of Manchester:

> To see the homes of those whom we know and respect, though they are but working men, stripped of every bit of furniture--to see long-cherished books and pictures sent one by one to the pawnshop, that food may be had, and to see that food almost loathsome in kind, as well as insufficient in quantity, are hard, very hard things to bear; but these are not the worst things. In many of our cottage homes there is now nothing left by the pawning of which a few pence may be raised; and the mothers and sisters of 'Lancashire lads' have turned out to beg, and at times knock at doors of houses in which there is as much destitution as there is in their own, whilst the fathers and the lads think they are very fortunate if they can earn a shilling or two by street sweeping or stone breaking. We have a dreary time of it.[4]

Members of the middle class at first minimized the growing seriousness of their situation. In a letter to Mr. C. H. Rickards, Chairman of the Manchester Board of Guardians, a rent collector of cottage property claimed:

> The greatest amount of distress that I have experienced was in the year 1847; and again there was great distress in 1857, and there is much suffering now amongst the working classes; but the present distress existing among them is by no means so great as it was in 1847, and very much less than it was in 1857.[5]

By July, 1862, The Manchester Guardian admitted the existence of a crisis in Lancashire with this editorial based on figures supplied by the Manchester Central Relief

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[4] Ibid., 28 April 1862, p. 3.

[5] Ibid., 16 May 1862, p. 3.

Committee:

> More than 33,000 persons wholly out of employment in five townships only; 24,000 more working short time; nearly £21,000 subscribed and distributed by private benevolence; more than £57,000 withdrawn from the Savings Banks by starving depositors; the smaller tradesmen forced to apply for relief from the payment of the rates; . . . these are symptoms of a distress which may well excite profound anxiety, and which it should be remembered, has not yet attained its full dimensions.[6]

By November, 1862, the middle classes of Lancashire and Cheshire had become deeply involved in the crisis of feeding the poor. With the coming of the cotton famine, employers had lost the opportunity to make profits, but had gained the duty of supporting local relief agencies. Haunted by the spector of eventual bankruptcy, they began to agitate for additional government aid for the paupers.[7]

Just how expensive this relief became is reflected in these statistics from the Poor-law Board for Lancashire from December, 1861, to December, 1862:

> The expenditure for relief in the first half year was £205,447, and in that first past £332,443. This is equivalent to an increase in the six months of 61.8 per cent,--or, in absolute amount £126,996.[8]

In Special Commissioner Farnall's report to the Poor-law Board, he listed twenty-seven unions (towns receiving aid) within the cotton manufacturing districts having a

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[6] Ibid., editorial, 17 July 1862, p. 2.

[7] Ibid., 1 November 1862, p. 6.

[8] Ibid., 6 December 1862, p. 4.

population totaling 1,964,955.[9] The crest of pauperism occurred in these districts during the first week of December, 1862,[10] when a total of 508,293 received relief. By the first week of January, 1864, the number had fallen to 190,895--a decrease of 317,398 paupers in 57 weeks.[11] During maximum unemployment, therefore, the number of persons receiving relief was twenty-five per cent of the whole population, while by 1864 it was only about nine per cent. In Manchester alone, December, 1862, saw the number of paupers reach 41,692, and then fall to 18,781 by 1864.[12]

By December, 1863, 18,244 workers had emigrated to the colonies or to the United States; while 15,725 had "found employment in other occupations within the cotton districts."[13] By May, 1864, 4,000 more had been absorbed into other trades, and about 7,000 had left the cotton districts.[14]

During the spring of 1864, the Manchester Statistical Society made a house-to-house survey of the workers' condition in Manchester's cotton districts. The report covered 713 houses and 68 cellars with occupants. Information was

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[9] Ibid., 23 February 1864, p. 7.

[10] Ibid., 9 January 1864, p. 4.

[11] Ibid., 23 February 1864, p. 7.

[12] Ibid., 9 January 1864, p. 4.

[13] Ibid., 5 January 1864, p. 6.

[14] Ibid., 10 May 1864, p. 6.

obtained from all except eleven of the dwellings--"of these houses eight were in the liquor trade, and the other three were brothels."[15] More than twenty-eight per cent of all the families in the district lived in one room; many of these included four, five, six, and sometimes seven persons. The more extreme examples well illustrate the squalor of long-continued poverty:

> There are four persons living in a one-roomed cellar, consisting of a widow and her lodger, and a spinster and her child. In another case, a man and his wife and two lodgers are living in one room. . . . In another, the family consists of seven persons, the children being two boys and three girls. . . . In a house of three rooms there are 14 persons, amongst whom are one boy and two girls, all over 12 years, and 10 lodgers. . . . In another, of five rooms, there are five families and 19 persons, 13 being women and six men who are bachelors. In another case, the family consists of the parents and four girls, two over 12 years; they live in a cellar, have no regular income, and nothing but a little straw to lie on.[16]

The number of families giving information was 1,054. In 574 cases, the head of the family had permanent employment, 398 had occasional work, and 82 had no occupation at all. This last number included those living entirely on grants of charity, and also took in "others who are thieves, receivers of stolen goods, and brothelkeepers."[17]

Only half the lodgers paid rent. The rest took care of the home and children. A large proportion of the income

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[15] Ibid., 15 November 1864, p. 6.

[16] Ibid., p. 6.

[17] Ibid., p. 6.

went to rent, coal, and a poorly nourishing diet of tea, coffee, bread, potatoes, cabbage, bacon, and fish. This diet could be supplemented with beer and liquor at one of the forty-one beerhouses and public-houses in and around the district.

With scientific detachment, the Statistical Society favored its Victorian readers with these figures on local prostitution:

> Twenty-two houses are brothels, and in nine others there are women who have the appearance of being prostitutes. In 19 of the houses ascertained to be brothels there are residing no less than 105 women, in two of which there are 15 women each, and in another no less than 16. In 10 other houses, either brothels or lodging-houses which appeared to be brothels, there were 55 persons, consisting apparently of prostitutes and men apparently connected with them. In two cases a daughter supports her mother by her prostitution, and in one case a widow keeps two prostitutes along with her own daughter.[18]

For the satisfaction of the curious, this report instructed its readers that "very nearly the whole of the houses above mentioned are found in the southern portion of the district and most of them in Lombard-street."[19]

The current statistics on births, deaths, and marriages revealed some unexpected information on the workers' condition. In a report from the Registrar General covering the twenty-one most distressed unions, the death rate for

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[18] Ibid., p. 6.

[19] Ibid., p. 6.

1862 revealed a decrease of 225 in 1862:

	Deaths
1859	53,194
1860	52,396
1861	57,771
1862	57,556

During the previous year, 1861, however, the death rate had climbed to 5,375.[20]

The county of Lancashire witnessed a steady decrease in marriages:

	Marriage in The Christmas Quarter
1860	6,835
1861	6,078
1862	5,307

This was somewhat strangely offset by a small increase in the birth-rate:

	Births in The March Quarter
1860	23,195
1861	22,736
1862	25,002
1863	24,287

Here, we note that when we compare the last figure of 24,287 with the average of the three preceding years--namely, 24,644--we discover an increase of 643 births, or 2.7 per cent. Even stranger is the decrease of 737 in Lancashire's death-rate:

	Deaths in The March Quarter
1862	18,652
1863	17,915

This constitutes a four per cent decrease as compared with a

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[20] Ibid., 13 February 1863, p. 3.

5.2 per cent increase for England and Wales. From this comparison of figures The Manchester Guardian concluded that the "board of guardians and relief committees must have efficiently fed, clothed, and strengthened the unemployed during the winter, or the statistics would have told a very different tale."[21]

By August, 1863, the Statistical Society had additional figures on the death-rate and advised the editor of The Manchester Guardian to have "sufficient data before drawing conclusions":

> The writer in the Guardian shows that the deaths in Lancashire for the March quarter, 1863, were 737 less than in the corresponding quarter of 1862. Had he compared it with the average of the last five years, he would have found that it was 610 in excess. Since the above was written, the Registrar General's return for the June quarter has been received. Its contents fully confirm the impression previously made, that the low mortality of the March quarter was quite of an accident's character, and did not afford sufficient ground on which to base any theory. The deaths registered in Lancashire during the last quarter are greater than in any corresponding quarter for several years, and are above 1,000 in excess of the average of the last five years.[22]

In addition, the average death-rate under five years of age from 1854 to 1861 was 39 per cent of all children born in Manchester.[23] The mortality of children, however, was even in good times much higher than our rate, today.

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[21] Ibid., 9 May 1863, p. 4.

[22] Ibid., 7 August 1863, p. 2.

[23] Ibid., 13 January 1864, p. 4.

Below are the total births and deaths recorded in Lancashire by the Registrar General for the period 1859-1863:

Year	Births	Deaths
1859	88,916	58,770
1860	89,507	57,732
1861	93,326	64,164
1862	97,011	64,431
1863	95,294	67,211
Total	464,056	312,308

The death-rate for 1859 was 58,770, a decrease of 8.2 per cent over the previous year; in 1860, the number fell again by almost two per cent. In 1861 we meet with a sudden rise of 11.1 per cent. The next year was marked by a small decline. In 1863, the death rate rose 2,780 over 1862--the exact number was 67,211, or 8,441 higher than it stood in 1859. The cotton famine appears to have had no influence in reducing the birth rate until 1863, and then only in comparison with the large crop of babies in 1862. The births of 1863 were 1,717 below those of 1862. At the same time, however, they were above the average of the five years by 2,483.[24]

The position of The Manchester Guardian became ludicrous when it attempted to lie with the aid of statistics. Its attitude was one of determined optimism. If the mill hands suffered, they must remember the really terrible crisis

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[24]Ibid., 19 February 1864, p. 3.

of 1847. Moreover, if the workers had not fallen prey to a cotton famine, they must take comfort in the thought that over-production would have robbed them of a livelihood. Despite their personal knowledge to the contrary, vital statistics proved that they were having more children and dying more slowly. When The Manchester Guardian could no longer ignore the real extent and nature of the distress, complacency turned to startled consternation. Disaster was averted through aid provided by the British Government and by voluntary contributions.

Although the cotton famine had been a long-foreseen danger, adequate relief measures had not been taken for the widespread unemployment which developed. Parliament seemed paralyzed into apathy by the hope that the American Civil War would soon end. The local Committees and Guardians looked to the Special Commissioner, Mr. Farnall, for deliverance; but he could provide no final solution to this very complex problem. Mr. Farnall, however, did take the position that relief should be given, even though the recipient did not work for it. This was against the philosophy of the manufacturers and the Assistant Commissioner who had instructed the Guardians that "an adequate amount of labour should be required of every able-bodied man who was relieved." [25]

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[25] Ibid., 27 December 1864, p. 3.

As early as June, 1862, about 700 workers met in Manchester to denounce the Labour Test, which seemed especially shameful because the mill hands felt that honest men should not be forced "to perform that kind of labour which common felons are required to perform"--picking oakum or grinding corn in the workhouse.[26]

A month earlier, the Earl of Shafesbury in the House of Lords had taken the side of the workers with this speech:

> It must be borne in mind that these people were destitute from no cause which they could control. They were disposed to work if work could be found, but in its absence, they were driven to ask relief. The enforcement of the labour test, would be a most cruel and injudicious step, as many of the factory hands were employed in operations which required the most delicate handling, and which could not be performed by persons whose hands were hardened by rough work. To set such persons to break stones, would be not only to expose them to much unnecessary suffering as a condition of the relief afforded, but would . . . deprive them of the means of earning their bread when a revival of trade took place.[27]

Out-door work, however, was strongly advocated by the cotton manufacturers who dreaded the idle and discontented might become riot-prone. Their anxiety pervades this letter signed by ten manufacturing firms and received by the Poor-law Board:

> We, the undersigned owners and managers of cotton and silk mills in Lancaster and its neighbourhood, do

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[26] Ibid., 27 June 1862, p. 3.

[27] Ibid., 13 May 1862, p. 3.

> hereby certify that we are of opinion that outdoor work at this season of the year would not be injurious to able-bodied men usually employed in mills, nor, except long-continued, unfit them for their ordinary occupation, provided that such men be not kept at work in wet weather nor required to perform an unreasonable task of work. We are also of opinion that it is advisable to require from able-bodied men who derive support from the poor rate on account of want of employment the performance of a proper quantity of work in return for the aid afforded them, rather than that such men be supported in a state of inaction.[28]

The jobless cotton workers, not wishing to degrade themselves by doing work ordinarily performed by criminals, came into conflict with the attitude of manufacturers reluctant to support the workers in idleness. Neither the Poor-law Guardians nor any other group could adequately grapple with the problem alone. The local contributions were rapidly decreasing, and the Committees felt it necessary to appeal to other sections of England.[29]

A London Committee was formed for collecting subscriptions and forwarding the funds to the townships most in need. Even the native merchants of Bombay sent a donation.[30] Money was also received from such unlooked-for sources as the officers and crew of Her Majesty's ship St. George, as well as from a garrison of soldiers.[31] By March, 1863, contributions received by, and promised to, the local

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[28] Ibid., 27 December 1864, p. 3.

[29] Ibid., 28 April 1862, p. 3.

[30] Ibid., 17 July 1862, p. 2.

[31] Ibid., 11 February 1863, p. 3.

committees amounted to £858,000, one-fourth of which had been raised in the cotton districts, while the remainder came from the General Relief Committee and the London Committee.[32]

The Special Commissioner, Mr. Farnall, felt that more could have been contributed by the cotton manufacturers. To the charge of parsimony, the manufacturers replied that they did not consider the Committees efficient in the distribution of their alms. They claimed that they were perfectly ready to spend many "thousands of pounds (indeed, as many thousands as may be needed) to keep their work people in comfort."[33] Rather than subscribe to the general fund, some manufacturers preferred to purchase cotton and work their mills at a loss.

At first, relief for the unemployed could be obtained by being recommended to a committee, which would then supply tickets to be exchanged at a store for bra and oatmeal. Occasionally, a ticket might be th a quart of soup. If one were ill, then one became e for rice, cocoa, sugar, and tea.[34] Later, the public soup kitchens opened in Manchester to provide bread and soup for one penny.[35]

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[32] Ibid., 14 March 1863, p. 4.

[33] Ibid., 8 September 1862, p. 3.

[34] Ibid., 16 April 1862, p. 2.

[35] Ibid., 1 May 1862, p. 3.

By October, 1862, a scheme was suggested whereby the public kitchens would be operated by unemployed working girls.[36] The Manchester Statistical Society suggested that:

> The girls should, in rotation, be drawn in groups to the public wash houses, as well as the public cooking establishments, there to acquire some knowledge of household duties. Their occupations should be further varied by their being instructed on certain days in the laws of health, and the best methods of ministering, as nurses, to the sick. . . . They should have the opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of the general range of domestic duties, together with cooking and preparing food in a simple and economical manner. Large numbers would thus be capable of supplying a want felt in all large cities, namely, of properly qualified household servants.[37]

By January, 1863, the various committees had placed 84,000 adults in schools and sewing classes or in some kind of work. This number grew to 95,000 in February.[38] After the crisis seemed a permanent condition, a Public Works Act was brought forward by Parliament. The law was designed to:

> absorb in municipal and sanitary improvements the labour of as many unemployed operatives as, after reasonable training, could earn the ordinary wages of outdoor labour at such work. . . . Such operatives as either could not find work on these improvements, or were physically incapable of earning ordinary wages by outdoor labour, were the peculiar charge of the relief committees.[39]

Despite its tardy arrival, the Public Works Act was regarded by The Manchester Guardian as a "refuge in times of extensive commercial disaster for the unemployed, and

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[36] Ibid., 17 October 1862, p. 2.

[37] Ibid., 20 March 1863, p. 2.

[38] Ibid., 14 March 1863, p. 4.

[39] Ibid., 27 January 1864, p. 2.

the sole means by which the labour classes can be then maintained, without allowing them to sink into the slough of pauperism."[40]

In its news concerning the unemployed, The Manchester Guardian reflected the viewpoint of the prosperous middle class. The manufacturing interests feared that labor would be corrupted by charity into the enjoyment of idleness; therefore, the Labour Test must be enforced. The honest mill hands detested the work of felons and paupers. Not having chosen unemployment, they resisted the Labour Test in public meetings and demonstrations.

The manufacturers had no notion of being ruined along with their employees. The employers had made their own wealth and looked on it as their own to do with as they liked. They, therefore, welcomed the Public Works Act which relieved them of the responsibility of charity. In order to keep the rabble occupied, however, the middle class did sponsor public wash houses, soup kitchens, reading rooms, and schools. The workers found these institutions useful, if not luxurious. Emigration of workers was discouraged, as their loss would eventually force up the price of skilled labor. Due to family ties the majority of workers remained in Lancashire, where they awaited better times.

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[40] Ibid., 27 December 1864, p. 3.

CHAPTER III

THE REFORM MOVEMENT AND NEGRO EMANCIPATION

The cotton workers believed that the American Civil War had been brought about by a superior moral cause--emancipation. The mere existence of slavery anywhere was an affront to the dignity of labor everywhere. Should the South win, the continuance of slavery would, in some distant way, prove a threat to labor. Throughout the war, labor deplored the institution and denounced the South as the

> . . . abettors of slavery and the enemies of liberty, an everlasting curse to mankind, and by their revolt against the most liberal government in the world they have thrown the whole continent of America, and every part of the civilised world, into a state of misery, privation, and suffering that neither tongue nor pen can describe.[1]

When labor criticized the North, it was for moving too slowly in opposing slavery. Labor was impatient to see the Negro gain his freedom; hence, Lincoln's policy received this severe criticism from the workers meeting at Blackburn:

> In proof that it was not an anti-slavery war, the moment General Fremont declared the freedom of the slaves, President Lincoln annulled the decree, and removed Fremont from his command. . . . Hence it was clear that the war was not one against the institution of slavery, but for the aggrandisement of the North at the expense of the South.[2]

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[1] The Manchester Guardian, 1 May 1862, p. 3.

[2] Ibid., 30 June 1862, p. 3.

The British worker knew little racial feeling and had no conception of color as a factor dividing worker from worker, or man from man; therefore, he rejected the South's cause as fanatical when he read South Carolina's Slaveowners' Declaration:

> We, the states whose representatives have subscribed to the following declaration, do hereby assert and affirm,
>
> That all mankind have a perfect and equal right to freedom, if they can keep it.
>
> That their being unable to keep it is a proof that they have no right to it.
>
> That the presence of any colouring matter in skin, as in water, is a proof, offered by nature, of the inferiority of the article.
>
> That we have heard, with unutterable disgust and contempt, that professor Owen considers Adam and Eve to have coloured skins, and that we should like to leave the said professor without any skin at all.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> That slavery is the most humane institution in the world; for, inasmuch as half the sorrows of white persons arise from the sorrows of their husbands, wives, or children in forbidding a race to have any husbands, wives, or children to call their own, we deprive that race of one half the suffering we undergo.[3]

Despite the condition of the slave, the Lincoln administration moved slowly, almost, it seemed to observers, with reluctance, towards the goal of emancipation. None of the steps publicly taken to that objective went very far toward strengthening the position of Northern supporters abroad.

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[3]Ibid., 24 January 1861, p. 4.

Lincoln had earlier stated his position with these well-known words:

> If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it.[4]

As the war progressed, emancipation became a necessary instrument of policy designed to bring about a Northern victory. In this letter, Lincoln defended his policy:

> It was in the oath I took, that I would to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the constitution of the United States. I could not take office without taking the oath. . . . Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the constitution? . . . I felt that measures, otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the constitution through the preservation of the nation. . . . When, early in the war, General Fremont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not think it an indispensable necessity. When a little later General Cameron, then secretary of war, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When, in March, and May, and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the Border States to favour compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition; and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it the constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the coloured element. I chose the latter.[5]

In other words, the war became more and more critical, and as a result the slaves were to be given their freedom.

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[4]Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 130.

[5]The Manchester Guardian, 13 May 1864, p. 3.

Lincoln waited until the rather dubious victory at Antietam, September 17, 1862, before issuing his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which proceeded from his capacity as Commander-in-Chief. The pronouncement said that on and after January 1, 1863, all slaves in any state still in a state of rebellion, or in any part of such a state as the President might designate, would then be declared free; and the military power of the United States would be used to ensure this freedom.[6]

In Britain, many regarded the Proclamation as carrying to the South a threat of slave rebellion. The pro-Southern element was quick to emphasize this danger when it met in Liverpool to denounce the proclamation with these words:

> It [the Emancipation Proclamation] must either be null and void or one of its results must be a revolt of the slaves, which would be attended by enormous bloodshed and destruction of property. The slaves, however, must ultimately succumb, for while they numbered four millions, the whites numbered eight millions. . . .[7]

Both the danger of a slave revolt and emancipation could have been averted by a peaceful return to the Union, but the South had to be broken before it would yield. Few wars have been fought with such implacable rage by both antagonists.

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[6]Benjamin P. Thomas, Abraham Lincoln (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 344.

[7]The Manchester Guardian, 19 January 1863, p. 2.

The aristocratic press of Britain received the Proclamation with alarm and derision. The Times thundered:

> The Emancipation Proclamation is an incitement to assassination. In truth, it is nothing else, and can mean nothing else. . . .[8]

In a fit of purple prose, The Times later resorted to name-calling:

> Is the name of Lincoln ultimately to be classed in the catalogue of monsters, wholesale assassins and butchers of their kind? . . . When blood begins to flow and shrieks come piercing through the darkness, Mr. Lincoln will wait until the rising flames tell that all is consummated, and then he will rub his hands and think that revenge is sweet. . . .[9]

Such criticism was indeed extreme. The Proclamation, however, seemed to lack the quality of definitive action. Lord Russell in a despatch to Lord Lyons, dated January 17, 1863, gave an indication of some perplexity when he wrote:

> The proclamation of the President of the United States, enclosed in your Lordship's despatch . . . appears to be of a very strange nature. It professes to emancipate all slaves in places where the United States authorities cannot exercise any jurisdiction or make emancipation a reality; but it does not decree emancipation of slaves in any states or parts of states occupied by Federal troops, and subject to United States jurisdiction, and where, therefore, emancipation, if decreed might have been carried into effect. . . . The proclamation, therefore, makes slavery at once legal and illegal. . . . There seems to be no declaration of principle adverse to slavery in this proclamation. It is a measure of war, and a measure of war of a very questionable kind.[10]

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[8] The Times, 14 October 1862.

[9] Ibid., 21 October 1862.

[10] The Manchester Guardian, 16 March 1863, p. 3.

Lord Russell missed the fact that with every Northern advance the Proclamation extended its field of force. Moreover, this act of policy pointed to a general direction. Whatever means might be adopted towards eventual emancipation, only a complete Northern defeat could now reverse the movement towards constitutional emancipation. The war from that time was bound to assume the character of an anti-slavery crusade--a conclusion that did not escape the British worker in his own movement for Parliamentary reform.

Lincoln's philosophy of government had a peculiar attraction for the disenfranchised British worker. Lincoln believed that American government was the world's testing ground of the principle that all men are created equal; the principle that what government owes to individuals is the opportunity to rise by merit and to control their public affairs by majority rule; that republican institutions could prove to the world that public order might be combined with private opportunity.[11]

The Emancipation Proclamation was the decisive weapon that the North's supporters needed to let in the stemmed tide of Northern sympathy. The first three months of 1863 saw an extraordinary increase in working class meetings, the product of an enthusiasm and a unity of purpose that Parliament could not much longer ignore.

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[11]H. C. Allen, Great Britain and the United States: A History of Anglo-American Relations, 1783-1952 (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1955), p. 494.

On the eve of Emancipation, December 31, 1862, large meetings in London and Manchester hailed the new era and heard rousing cheers of enthusiasm for Anglo-American understanding. The spokesmen of the workers' interest now became more vocal than ever before about the connection between the cause of reform and the cause of the Union. In this vein, Mr. W. E. Forster, a friend of the North in Parliament, declared:

> . . . it was time for Bradford men and for Yorkshiremen generally to show that they had not forgotten their love of freedom, and that they condemned the system which treated the labourer as a beast of burden. It was high time to hold a meeting against slavery even though that slavery was American, the greatest development of that vile system which had ever existed in the world, and even though it had caused this terrible war, which for the time it had lasted, had been the most bloody that ever was known in the history of the world.[12]

Lincoln had moved first to save the Union, and had said that he would, if necessary, have achieved this end without freeing a single slave. The British enthusiasts ignored the refinements which seemed to belong to the strategy of the war. To them the war was not really comprehensive unless the abolition of slavery were viewed as its principle object. When Bright asked the question, "Is there a man here that doubts for a moment that the object of this war on the part of the South who began the war is to maintain the bondage of four millions of human beings?"--his audience responded

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[12]The Manchester Guardian, 30 January 1863, p. 3.

with a ringing--"No!"[13] By the march of events, the strategy had been brought into collaboration with the principles of the abolitionists.

The meetings became more ambitious. On January 29, 1862, a major gathering was held in Exeter Hall, London, in which these resolutions were made:

> No war with the United States for the slaveholder. No premature recognition. No hostile mediation which leads to both. No recognition at all until they emancipate. No jealous and spiteful wish to see the United States dismembered, impoverished and ruined. Emancipation and reunion.--(Protracted cheering.)[14]

The American Civil War made apparent the profound chasm between the upper and lower classes in Britain. It was quite patent that the British worker was anxious to express his zeal, not only for emancipation, but for the triumph of republican principles and institutions over the aristocracy of the South. The British worker had demonstrated his ethical superiority over the class which had sided with the morally bankrupt South and this position gave him an immense advantage in his own struggle for the vote.

A great meeting on the American question--a distinctly working-class demonstration of solidarity with the North--invited, as its speaker, John Bright, the staunchest champion of the North in Parliament and long an advocate of the exten-

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[13] Ibid., 19 December 1862, p. 3.

[14] Ibid., 31 January 1863, p. 6.

sion of the vote at home. Bright addressed the workers in London's St. James's Hall on March 26, 1863. For Northern victory and parliamentary reform, Bright's words did not spare the aristocracy:

> Privilege thinks it has a great interest in it, and every morning with blatant voice it comes into your streets and curses the American republic. It has beheld an afflicting spectacle for many years past, for it has beheld 30,000,000 of men happy and prosperous, without Emperor; without King; without the surroundings of a Court; without nobles, except such as are made by eminence, and are entitled to the name by virtue; without bishops and state priests, as the sole vendors of the law which works salvation; without great armies or great navies; without great debt, and without great taxation. Privilege has shuddered at what might happen to old Europe if this great experiment should succeed, but you who are striving after a better time, you who are struggling upwards towards the light with slow and painful steps, you have no cause to look with jealousy upon a country which among all the great nations of the globe is that in which labour has met with the highest honour and has reaped its greatest reward.[15]

He dwelt on the Southern philosophy of labor and emphasized the right of the trade societies to maintain the rights of industry. In the Southern outlook, Bright declared, it was not only black men who were to be slaves

> But they have in the Southern States a specific for all these differences between capital and labour. They say they make the labourer capital, that the free system of Europe is a rotten system, that they are to get rid of it and make all the labourers so much capital, and the property of the capitalists.[16]

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[15] Ibid., 27 March 1863, p. 3.

[16] Ibid., p. 3.

In Lancashire, as elsewhere, the Emancipation Proclamation freed and clarified the whole flood of long-restrained emotion. At a London workingmen's meeting in December, 1862, John Bright had said:

> The trades' unions are not political bodies, they are bodies of operatives united together to promote and defend their social interests; and I believe this is the first occasion on which they have come out as a united body to publicly express an opinion on a political question; . . .[17]

On January 1, 1863, a great meeting in Manchester, presided over by the Mayor, adopted an address to Lincoln warmly approving his work and declaring that slavery was the only thing that had lessened the people's sympathy with the United States. When one considers the destitution of the cotton workers, described in previous chapters, this letter is a remarkable display of admiration and support of Lincoln:

> Since we have discerned . . . that the victory of the free North . . . will strike off the fetters of the slave, you have attracted our warm and earnest sympathy. We joyfully honour you, as the President, . . . for many decisive steps toward practically exemplifying your belief in the words of your great founders: 'All men are created free and equal.'
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> . . . . . .
>
> . . . the vast progress you have made in the short space of twenty months fills us with hope that every stain on your freedom will shortly be removed, and that the erasure of that foul blot upon civilisation and Christianity--chattel slavery--during your Presidency will cause the name of Abraham Lincoln to be honoured and revered by posterity. We are certain that such a glorious consummation will cement Great Britain to the United States

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[17] Ibid., 5 May 1863, p. 4.

> in close and enduring regards. Our interests, moreover, are identified with yours. We are truly one people, though locally separate. And if you have any ill-wishers here, be assured they are chiefly those who oppose liberty at home, and that they will be powerless to stir up quarrels between us, from the very day in which your country becomes, undeniably and without exception, the home of the free. . . .[18]

Lincoln was well aware of the importance of these expressions of sympathy. He had been evidently moved by the patient support already received from the workers when he made this memorable reply to the working men of Manchester:

> I know, and deeply deplore, the sufferings which the working men at Manchester, and in all Europe, are called to endure in this crisis. It has been often and studiously represented that the attempt to overthrow this government, which was built on the foundation of human rights, and to substitute for it one which would rest exclusively on the basis of human slavery, was likely to obtain the favour of Europe. Through the action of our disloyal citizens, the working men of Europe have been subjected to severe trials, for the purpose of forcing their sanction to that attempt. Under the circumstances, I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an example of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country. . . .[19]

Lincoln had always believed that the general fate of free government was involved in that of the American experiment. His famous speech at Gettysburg stated the essence of the doctrine that it was the mission of the American Union to vindicate popular government. For Lincoln, therefore, the solid sympathy of the British cotton

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[18] Ibid., 1 January 1863, p. 3.

[19] Ibid., 11 February 1863, p. 3.

workers, who had suffered in the American cause, must have come as a warm and gratifying gift.

The dignified conduct of the cotton workers of Lancashire made its impression on one of the most important political minds of the coming generation--Gladstone's. In May, 1864, he publicly stated that the workers' conduct deserved to be considered when the suffrage franchise came to be reformed. During the course of this speech he declared:

> I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger, is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution.[20]

In making this statement, Gladstone placed himself at the head of a party which was to become identified with the progress of English democracy--free trade, equal taxation, the education of the masses, and the extension of suffrage.

Extensive agitation for the purpose of calling upon Parliament to bring in a measure of reform was carried on in a campaign directed by the National Reform Union. With confidence it declared:

> If Parliament did not grant reform, there were the people to appeal to, and they would never fail to support those who served them honestly. . . . The working classes, especially those of Lancashire, had shown their fitness for reform, and . . . the safety and prosperity of the empire could only be preserved and promoted by a comprehensive reform.[21]

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[20]John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone (3 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903), II, p. 126.

[21]The Manchester Guardian, 2 February 1865, p. 3.

The final triumph of Northern arms was joyously claimed as a victory for the reform interests in Britain. Republicanism had been on trial. Under such a strain as few monarchies and empires could have supported, democratic institutions had stood firm. Everywhere the spokesmen of the working classes and reformist side proclaimed their profound satisfaction with the result. The victory had vindicated popular government, and opened the United States to European emigrants and established at the same time the rights and dignity of labor. The cause of the North had been the cause of labor; the North's triumph was labor's triumph.

The sudden news of Lincoln's assassination gave the whole British nation a convulsive shock. To the working people of Britain the loss was personal. Huge crowds gathered in meetings of tribute, such as the one at Birmingham, in which the following resolution was adopted:

> That this meeting desires to express the deepest regret at the irreparable loss which the people of the United States of America have sustained by the untimely death of President Lincoln; that this meeting regards with horror and detestation the crime by which the President's life was sacrificed; and that on behalf and in the name of the inhabitants of Birmingham this meeting respectfully offers to the Government and people of the United States the most sincere and earnest sympathy under the calamity which has befallen them; and that an address of sympathy be also transmitted to Mr. Seward.[22]

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[22] Ibid., 29 April 1865, p. 5.

As a personal expression of their sympathy the workers of Manchester addressed this letter to Lincoln's widow:

> It is not for us to invade the privacy of domestic sorrow, nor fitting that we should add to the sharpness of your grief by characterising as it deserves the deed which has deprived you of a husband and your country of its chief magistrate. We desire, however, to express our deep sympathy with you in this mournful affliction, and our earnest hope that you may be supported through the trial by the consciousness that your husband, though called to the helm in the midst of tempest and storm, never failed to respond to the call of duty, and that throughout a period of unparalleled difficulty he has guided the affairs of the nation in a manner which will ever connect his name with all that is noble, magnanimous, and great in your country's history. His name will be associated with the cause of human freedom throughout all time. . . .[23]

Lincoln's strong presence had presided over the destiny of America and had become the image in which his country was seen. His qualities had emerged, slowly, with the progress of the war. In a late tribute to Lincoln, The Times recognized this fact:

> The quality of Mr. Lincoln's Administration which served, however, more than any other to enlist the sympathy of bystanders was its conservative progress. He felt his way gradually to his conclusions, and those who will comparethe different stages of his career one with another will find that his mind was growing throughout the course of it.[24]

Lincoln, a man of humble birth and beginnings, had risen by merit and the choice of the people to the highest elective office in the world. The equality of man, the

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[23] Ibid., p. 5.

[24] Ibid., quoted from The Times, 28 April 1865, p. 3.

dignity of labor, and the right to move upward in the social scale were infectious concepts which had made Lincoln the representative of the workers throughout the world. Like Lincoln, they believed that the most important function of a free society was to give its common men freedom and opportunity to make their own way.

CHAPTER IV

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN SELF-REVEALED

Conservative in its outlook, The Manchester Guardian found opportunity for more criticism than praise in the conduct of either the North or the South. At first, it had reacted favorably to the North with a prophecy that "Mr. Lincoln will be sustained by every man of sense and character in the North; and the public opinion of Europe and the world will eagerly go along with him."[1] The South soon decreased its popularity when it burned cotton in a misguided attempt to win diplomatic recognition.[2]

At the beginning of the war, The Manchester Guardian gave little encouragement to the South and expressed sympathy with the cause of the North. It was repelled by the "violence of Southern leaders, the treason of a section of the President's Cabinet, and the weakness of Mr. Buchanan. . . ."[3]

With oracular insight, it predicted:

> For the South we see no possibility of a good issue for the war which its statesmen have provoked and commenced. The greater their temporary success, the greater must be their ultimate humiliation.[4]

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[1]The Manchester Guardian, quoted from the Morning Post, 14 March 1861, p. 4.

[2]Ibid., 14 October 1861, p. 4.

[3]Ibid., quoted from The Times, 8 February 1861, p. 4.

[4]Ibid., quoted from the Economist, 6 May 1861, p. 4.

More and more, The Manchester Guardian followed the traditional interests of the British middle classes, rather than any sentimental attachment for either belligerent. The North's cause first lost support with the passage of a tariff regarded by many Englishmen as "high and unsystematic."[5] In its wrath over this unjust act, The Manchester Guardian devoted a column to a blistering diatribe on American democracy:

> Certainly, the most uncontrolled democracy, it is obvious, offers no security whatever to any nation, either for . . . respect for the rights and interests of others, or for the simplest principles of morality or justice. The narrowest oligarchy, the most arbitrary autocrat, could scarcely have acted with harder or more unblushing class-selfishness, could scarcely have displayed greater ignorance and disregard of all economic laws, than have been manifested, in the matter of the new Protective Tariff, by the educated, commercial, ochlocratic republic which has been accustomed to hold itself up to the world as an object of supreme envy, admiration, and almost worship. . . .[6]

The American Civil War had created a regrettable and ugly intrusion on the peace of the world, while the tariff threatened an interruption to business as usual.

The American Civil War was, of course, much more than an interruption to British commercial interests. The presence, however, of a moral issue in the conflict was difficult to discern while the Federal attitude towards slavery remained ambiguous. Lincoln's assertion that he would not

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[5]J. H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain (3 vols.; London: Cambridge University Press, 1932), II, p. 247.

[6]The Manchester Guardian, quoted from the Economist, 18 March 1861, p. 4.

interfere with slavery where it already existed resulted in a loss of faith in the North's cause. To the end of the war, The Manchester Guardian remained cynical about emancipation, agreeing with Lord Russell that "the North is fighting, not for abolition of slavery, but for empire."[7]

This attitude contrasted strongly with the intensely pro-Northern sentiment of the cotton workers, who eventually came to resent the very concept of neutrality. The cause they represented was so pre-eminently just in their eyes, so obviously worthy of the support of mankind, that a newspaper not sharing their enthusiasm had to be pro-slave.

At the famous workers' meeting called to draft a letter of support for President Lincoln, one of the speakers characterized The Manchester Guardian as obstructionist:

> . . . he [the speaker] and others had been goaded to the calling of that meeting by the remarks made from time to time by the Manchester Guardian, as the working men of this district desired to set themselves right with the world. He believed Abraham Lincoln to be one of the greatest constitutional monarchs of the present age.--(Hear, hear.) They who maligned him would do well to compare him with the monarchs of Prussia and Austria and with the ex-King of Naples. Lincoln was a noble spectacle in the history of the world, for no monarch had ever stuck so tenaciously to the constitution of his country. Those who now found fault with the North were the same who formerly blamed the democracy of the United States for maintaining slavery. They were afraid that if America continued to rise as it had in the past, and became one consolidated power over a vast continent with its affairs regulated as they had not been regulated in Europe, it would be too powerful an example for them to be able to resist manhood suffrage.[8]

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[7] Ibid., editorial, 22 February 1865, p. 2.

[8] Ibid., 1 January 1863, p. 3.

To avoid endorsing the extension of suffrage to the British workers, it was perhaps necessary that The Manchester Guardian rationalize the American Civil War as a Federal war of aggression and not as a war to free the downtrodden. In any case, its profound distrust of the people's wisdom can be found in its own words:

> . . . there are a great many people who will doubt that the working classes are sufficiently instructed to be fit to exercise a supreme control over the interests of their own body, to say nothing of those of the nation.[9]

Although cynical about the North's cause and distrustful about extending the franchise at home, The Manchester Guardian did not side with the Confederacy and slavery. From the beginning of the war, it had shown hostility to that institution with these comments quoted from Mr. Russell, special correspondent of The Times:

> There is one stereotyped sentence which I am tired of--'Our negroes, sir, are the happiest, the most contented, and the best off of any people in the world.' The violence and reiterancy of this formula cause one to inquire whether anything which demands such insistance is really in the condition predicated, and for myself, say, 'It may be so, but as yet I do not see the proof of it. The negroes do not look to be what you say they are.'[10]

After examining the negroes' condition on the plantation of an ex-governor of Louisiana, Mr. Russell reported:

> It struck me more and more, as I examined the expression of the faces of the slaves all over the South, that deep dejection is the prevailing, if not universal,

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[9]Ibid., editorial, 20 January 1865, p. 2.

[10]Ibid., quoted from The Times, 19 June 1861, p. 3.

> characteristic of the race. . . . They all looked exceedingly sad, and even the old woman who boasted that she had held her old master in her arms when he was an infant did not look cheerful . . . at the sight of her ancient charge.[11]

In a letter to a Manchester manufacturer, a merchant from Charleston attempted with crude sophistry to gain recognition for the "great cotton producers of the world":

> The negroes are our agriculturists; they till the field and make the crops, and an army of 250,000 men can be raised by volunteers without at all interfering with the labouring classes, who are beyond all influences, and being contented, well fed, and clothed, will not be induced to abandon their contentment for the uncertainties of freedom, which is only an abstract question.[12]

A far different picture of negro contentment with the abstract question of freedom is painted in this letter from a woman in South Carolina:

> You have heard that our servants all love their masters, and their master's families, and would lay down their lives for them--that the coloured race in the South prefers slavery to freedom--that they would not be free if they could, etc. This is but the mastery of force--in buying watch dogs, and in taking turns in watching our sleeping children, to guard them and ourselves from the vengeance of these same 'loving servants'--a vengeance which, though now smouldering, is liable to burst out at any moment, to overwhelm the state in spite of the Palmetto flags or state precau-
> vants'--a vengeance which, though now smouldering, is liable to burst out at any moment, to overwhelm the state in spite of the Palmetto flags or state precau-
> tions.[13]

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[11] Ibid., quoted from The Times, 13 July 1861, p. 6.

[12] Ibid., 19 February 1861, p. 3.

[13] Ibid., quoted from the New York Times, 5 January 1861, p. 6.

The South took precautions against a slave uprising with these measures, reported by The Times correspondent, Mr. Russell:

> I perceive that there are regular patrols and watchmen at night, who look after levees and the negroes; a number of dogs are also loosed, but I am assured . . . that these dogs do not tear the negroes, they are taught to catch and mumble them to treat them as a retriever well broken uses a wild duck. Next day I left . . . in no degree satisfied that even with his care and kindness the 'domestic institution' can be rendered tolerable or defensible, if it be once conceded that the negro is a human being with a soul or with the feelings of a man.[14]

The moral bankruptcy of the South's cause became painfully glaring in a letter written to appeal to the moneyed interests of Britain; but must have alienated them, as every class--landowners, factory owners, and the mass of British people--hated slavery. The commissioner for the Confederate States, Mr. Yancey, had written:

> My mission here is not to ask for an approval of, nor yet to apologise for, the laws of the Confederate States and the opinions of their people; it is simply to obtain a recognition of those States as a government, whose people are producers of cotton, tobacco, corn, and naval stores, and who desire to offer to manufacturing Europe the benefits of free trade in the peaceful interchange of those valuable products for the woollen, cotton, silk, and hardware fabrics of the Old World, unrestricted and untaxed by prohibitory tariffs. In view of that great object, any discussion of the internal or domestic laws of the Confederate States is irrelevant. Our system of labour is our own, injuring no other country, for which no others are responsible to God or to man, and about which we will treat with no country.[15]

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[14] Ibid., quoted from The Times, 13 July 1861, p. 3.

[15] Ibid., 27 January 1862, p. 3.

Without realizing it, Mr. Yancey had served the cause of the North better than many of its most dedicated propagandists. Although the cause of the Confederacy was a bad one, the courage and ability with which it was fought in the field excited admiration and respect.[16] To The Manchester Guardian, the cause of the North remained forever doubtful and the lack of ability with which it was supported aroused disgust.

All through the war, there had been apparent in the Northern states the action of two mutually contradictory feelings with regard to Great Britain. There had been, in the first place, an anxiety to get favorable British opinion. On the other hand, Americans believed in international diplomacy based on a show of strength. Such strength was, of course, mistaken for menace and abuse. America's ambivalent feelings were exposed when the New York Journal of Commerce suggested that Britain "leave off parleying with the rebellion as if we thought its supporters might one day be our friends," assume a "friendly position towards the American government," and "withdraw our recognition of the rebels as belligerents."[17] The Manchester Guardian's reaction was a peculiar mixture of pity and contempt:

> It is not in human nature to read these impudent demands--supported, of course, by the usual amount of

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[16] Ibid., 7 June 1864, p. 3.

[17] Ibid., editorial, 30 May 1862, p. 2.

> swagger about 'immense armies,' 'triumphant generals,' and 'an iron-clad navy'--without the strong feeling of concentrated indignation which finds its most adequate expression in a kick. But a very few minutes, however, will elapse before anger is supplanted in the breast of every well-bred and good-tempered Englishman by pity and amusement. . . .
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> . . . . . .
>
> They [the United States] have . . . paraded their impotent hostility to us on every possible occasion. For the greater part of their national history, there has been no such good stock in trade for an American statesman as a disposition to insult the mother country, to envy her good, and rejoice in her calamity. As a passport to office there is scarcely any extent of incapacity or dishonesty which the sufficiently bitter manifestation of this spirit has not been found to cover.[18]

The resentment in this editorial had an undeniable basis in a long history of Yankee bluster and truculence. During the 1850's, Northern politicians and members of Congress frequently ranted against the British Government, using harsh words in assailing British policy. Britons remembered America's hard bargaining over the Maine boundary, the slogan "Fifty-four forty or fight," and the filibuster activities over Cuba and Central America.[19]

As Secretary of State, Seward carried on this anti-British tradition in American politics and diplomacy. During the spring of 1861, he came to the flattering conclusion that the country looked to Seward, rather than to Lincoln, for some master stroke to forestall the dissolution of the

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[18] Ibid., p. 2.

[19] Frederic Bancroft, The Life of William H. Seward (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1900), I, pp. 466-92.

Union. In the following remarkable series of proposals, Seward actually advocated picking a quarrel with European powers as the best way to reunite North and South:

> I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico, and Central America, to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention. And, if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France, would convene Congress and declare war against them.[20]

Such proposals are typical of the Romantic statesmanship which attempts to unravel all problems with one sweeping solution. Had the war temporarily united North and South in conquest of Canada, Mexico, and the West Indies, the question of slavery would have remained still unresolved. Fortunately, Lincoln pigeonholed Seward's proposal, and according to Nicolay and Hay the "affair never reached the knowledge of any other member of the Cabinet, or even the most intimate of the President's friends."[21]

By October, 1861, The Manchester Guardian had lost all moderation in describing the crudity of American politicians posing as statesmen. It declared:

> The Americans crave for our sympathy, and in a reasonable measure, they possess it. They have done their utmost to disgust and repel us. They have

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[20]John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Abraham Lincoln: A History (10 vols.; New York: The Century Co., 1931), III, p. 446.

[21]Ibid., III, p. 449.

> flourished in our faces manifestoes of buccaneering aggression. The statesmen and diplomatists by whom they have allowed themselves to be represented have exceeded in insolence, in ruffianism, in profligate dishonesty, all other statesmen and diplomatists with whom we have had to deal; and some natural exultation could not fail to be felt at the total break-down, in the face of real difficulties, of a set of low-bred swaggerers who had been 'chawing up creation' with their lies and their bluster, with their forged Oregon maps and their Monroe doctrines. Something has been added to the cup of bitterness by demagogues on this side of the water, who have poked American institutions into our faces till we are sick of the very sound. . . .[22]

With the peaceful conclusion of the Trent Affair, American diplomacy, under Seward, became embarrassingly friendly with an offer to allow English troops to land at Portland, Maine, so they might cross the frozen St. Lawrence to Canada. Seward's instructions read as follows:

> . . . all proper facilities for landing and transporting to Canada, or elsewhere, troops and munitions of war of every kind without exception or reservation.[23]

The British, with a sense of historic dignity, refused to accept Seward's invitation to violate American territory.

Partly as the result of its deep distrust of the motives of Northern statesmen, The Manchester Guardian took offense at Yankee charity for Lancashire's mill hands. In the winter of 1862-1863 an International Relief Committee had been set up in New York to raise funds and supplies for the suffering workers, partly as the result of John Bright's

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[22]The Manchester Guardian, 7 October 1861, p. 4.

[23]Ibid., 18 February 1862, p. 3.

letter to Charles Sumner in December, 1862:

> Our people will be kept alive by the contributions of the country. I see that some one in the States has proposed to send something to our aid. If a few cargoes of flour could come, say 50,000 barrels, as a gift from persons in your Northern States to the Lancashire working men, it would have a prodigious effect in your favour here. Our working class is with you, and against the South, but such a token of your good will would cover with confusion all who talk against you.[24]

The American flour duly arrived in three ships, to the dismay of Southern sympathizers. When the workers met in public demonstrations, they were quick to exclaim that no meetings had been held in the South to assist the unemployed in Lancashire. They concluded that it was the "free who sympathised with the free."[25]

While such charity undeniably came at a most opportune moment to build good will for the North, it had not been donated in a patronizing manner. Later, however, when the American International Relief Committee for the Suffering Operatives of Great Britain wrote its report of the whole affair, it could not refrain from praising itself fulsomely and dramatizing the poverty of the mill hands. Fortunately, The Manchester Guardian was unable to publish these comments on the report until December, 1864:

> . . . if bunkum had been omitted, there would have been no chance of letting the Britishers know that 'tens of

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[24]George Macaulay Trevelyan, The Life of John Bright (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925), p. 309.

[25]The Manchester Guardian, 1 January 1863, p. 3.

> thousands were saved from the horors of starvation by the timely distribution of food sent from this country.' There would have been no chance of vaunting the charity which in the midst of their own perils forbade 'us refuse to share our food with those who were ready to perish.' And we should have lost the grand, though somewhat monotonous, exclamation, that 'the piteous cry of the starving operatives of the mother country, some of them bone of our bone, and all endeared to us by a common language, a common literature, and a common origin, appealed too strongly to our hearts to be resisted.' But even in the midst of all this rotund gabble . . . it is rather hard to forget that the very people who talk so sentimentally about kinsmanship, are at the same moment prosecuting . . . a war for the subjugation or ruin of a nation with whom they are in every way infinitely more closely connected than they are with us.[26]

The Manchester Guardian extended its rancorous ill-will to include the North's press and pulpit. Irresponsible Federal newspapers and preachers had urged on the "irrepressible" conflict. Almost every popular clergyman had his own periodical which spread his influence to a much larger audience than could have been accommodated in his church. One such preacher, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, carried the North's cause to the very streets and halls of Manchester, where he spoke:

> The chief want of England was not for cotton, but for customers; and how to obtain customers was the primary question for England, and particularly for Liverpool and Manchester. England must civilize the world in order to make better customers. . . . Four millions were asking for their liberty and eight millions were banded together to prevent it. . . .[27]

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[26] Ibid., quoted from the Saturday Review, 20 December 1864, p. 3.

[27] Ibid., 17 October 1863, p. 5.

Although wars have been fought for Christian purposes, they have seldom been won on Christian principles. The Manchester Guardian questioned the devastation of the South as a necessary act of war and pondered the fate awaiting the emancipated slaves when it wrote:

> If one of the fairest regions of this earth is not wholly subjugated and given over to rapine by whites and blacks transformed into fiends, it will not be for want of so-called gospel ministers and conscientious fanatics to preach and urge the bloody crusade, to bless the invader, and blast the invaded. Was ever conscience made such a curse since the world began as now? Self-styled Christians--those whose boast it is that they are apostles of human freedom--deny the order of the universe in the progress of races, and plunge the negroes into a slavery a thousand-fold more comprehensive and terrible than that in which they have protection, sustentation, and Christian education.[28]

The freed slaves found themselves in military service as soldiers, laundresses, cooks, officers' servants, and laborers. Some were privately employed as mechanics, draymen, hackmen, barbers, and hired laborers. Camps were set up for the care of the sick and to organize the able-bodied freedmen for military labor, to set them to work gathering and baling cotton, and to employ them in other kinds of services.[29] While some slaves continued to work loyally for their old masters, others thought that Emancipation meant that they no longer needed to work. Naturally, the

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[28]Ibid., quoted from Fraser's Magazine, 4 September 1863, p. 4.

[29]J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Divided Union (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), p. 386.

elaborate problems of the freedmen could not be solved overnight. The situation was rich in opportunities for criticism by the North's opponents. The wretched victim of freedom was represented as a man who "labours for months, and at last is only paid with promises, unless perchance it may be with kicks, cuffs, and curses."[30]

The methods used to encourage Negroes to work were revealed in this letter written by the General Superintendent of Negro Labor at New Orleans to a Northerner recently settled on an abandoned plantation:

> By authority of the General commanding, I will visit the plantations under your charge as frequently as possible. I will take good care, so long as you observe your part of the contract that the negroes shall render faithful obedience and labour during the year. They will not be allowed to leave the place or hire to others. If they violate their agreement, I will place them on government works, without pay, or subject them to some other salutary punishment.[31]

The problem of emancipation had always been complicated by the problem of the future relations of the freed slaves with the white majority, and for many years many who favored liberation had hoped to combine it with some form of colonization. Bands of volunteer free Negroes did, in fact, sail for Liberia, Haiti, and other outlying spots; but none of these projects ever had much chance of attracting

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[30] The Manchester Guardian, quoted from The New York Tribune, 25 January 1864, p. 3.

[31] Ibid., 6 May 1863, p. 3.

more than a fraction of the American Negro population.[32] The social problem of freedmen was dramatized when Charles Sumner, speaking in the Senate, drew attention to the fact that a black man holding the rank of major in the Federal Army had been forcibly ejected from a railway car in the city of Washington for the offence of his color. Sumner expressed his indignation at such an outrage, declaring:

> . . . such things should not be tolerated, and that their constant recurrence did more to injure the Federal cause in Europe and at home than a defeat in battle.[33]

These comments soon led to an exchange, somewhat personal, between Charles Sumner and a Senator from Indiana who proclaimed:

> . . . no law could establish the social equality of the white man and the black; that the negro in question was rightly served, inasmuch as a special car was attached to the train for people of his colour, and that in deliberately thrusting himself into a place not intended for him he meant to insult, and did thereby insult, every white person present.[34]

Englishmen concluded that the North detested not only slavery, but also its victims. The North might find it expedient to emancipate, but could not legislate social equality, since no law that Mr. Sumner or the combined wisdom of the Senate could frame would break down the barrier.

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[32]Booker T. Washington, The Story of the Negro (2 vols.; New York: Peter Smith, 1940), I, p. 192; II, p. 236.

[33]The Manchester Guardian, quoted from The Times, 1 March 1864, p. 6.

[34]Ibid., p. 6.

When the North at once failed to solve the political, economic, and social problems of freedmen, The Manchester Guardian turned to the South as the true champion of emancipation. In an editorial explaining Jefferson's proposal to call out the blacks, the South emerged as a liberator fighting to free its slaves:

> The delivery of the negro will have come, as we have always predicted it would, from the hands of the Secessionists, not of their adversaries. They will have learnt that slavery is a source of internal weakness which no state occupying the position at which they aim can afford to nurture in its bosom. It will be apparent to them, as they have been told over and over again, that the institution, though temporarily practicable with the consent of the North, cannot be maintained when they live side by side with a powerful nation envying the sources of their good and ever ready to promote their calamity. . . . The South will be purging itself of the great stain upon its character with as much expedition as common prudence will allow, and the case between the two belligerents will be reduced to the limits of a plain question between insatiable greed of power on the one hand and a passion for independence on the other.[35]

More than a series of combats between armed forces, the American Civil War evolved into an all-out conflict of populations. The effort to destroy the South's capacity for resistance led to the atrocities of unconditional warfare. The Manchester Guardian vainly protested at the course of a devastation so complete that the

> Federals kill or carry off . . . every living thing except the white people, and these they leave without

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[35] Ibid., editorial, 8 September 1863, p. 2.

> the means of subsistence. The hogs, the horses, and the cattle are either shot or carried off. . . . The fences are destroyed, the barns burnt, houses pillaged, and all cultivation and means of resuming it destroyed, except the naked land, and much of that they have drowned by cutting the levees. . . . The plan of the enemy now is evidently to destroy not only the industry of the South, but also its future powers of production.[36]

An attempt to justify the strategy of devastation was written in this denial of General Hood's request to repeal the order to evacuate Atlanta:

> I [General Sherman] shall not revoke my orders, simply because my orders are not designed to meet the humanities of the case, but to prepare for the future struggles in which millions, yea hundreds of millions of good people outside of Atlanta have a deep interest. We must have peace, not only at Atlanta, but in all America.[37]

With the fall of Richmond and the rout of General Lee, the end of the war was not far off. For those regarding the United States as a menace to the whole civilized world, the outcome proved to be the triumph of brute force and numbers over a gallant people. With the assassination of the President, however, the entire world became united in a feeling of horror and grief. Thousands upon thousands of messages poured into Washington from humble workers and heads of state to express personal loss and condolence. Parliament sent an address of sympathy to the American Minister which expressed "the deepest horror and regret that the President

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[36] Ibid., quoted from a letter in The Times, 21 September 1863, p. 3.

[37] Ibid., 11 October 1864, p. 7.

of the United States of America has been deprived of life by an act of violence; and we . . . declare our hope and confidence in the future of that great country, which we trust will continue to be associated with enlightened freedom and peaceful relations with this and every other country."[38]

John Bright wrote to his American friend, Charles Sumner:

> For fifty years, I think, no other event has created such a sensation in this country as the great crime which has robbed you of your President. The whole people positively mourn, and it would seem as if again we were one nation with you, so universal is the grief, and the horror of the deed, of which Washington has been the scene. . . . In times of great excitement, dangerous men become more dangerous, partly vicious, and partly mad, and men of great mark become the objects of their hate and passion. The deed is done, and it is now too late to take precautions.
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> It is easy to kill a President, but it is not easy to destroy a nation.[39]

None, not even his bitterest foes, had wished Lincoln death at the hands of an assassin. The Times rose above its prejudices to write:

> A space of twenty-four hours has sufficed not only to fill the country with grief and indignation, but to evoke almost unprecedented expression of feeling from constituted bodies. . . . The preponderating sentiment is sincere and genuine sympathy--sorrow for the chief of a great people struck down by an assassin, and sympathy for that people in the trouble which at a crisis of their destinies such a catastrophe must bring. Abraham Lincoln was as little of a tyrant as any man who ever lived. He could have been a tyrant had he pleased, but he never uttered so much as an ill-natured speech. . . .[40]

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[38] Ibid., 28 April 1865, p. 3.

[39] Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 326.

[40] The Times, 29 April 1865.

Unsoftened by his death, The Manchester Guardian persisted in its conviction that Lincoln had been a tyrant. In a magnificent display of stupefying ignorance about the meaning of the American Civil War, The Manchester Guardian stands self-revealed in this editorial:

> It has always been one of the weaknesses of absolute monarchies that the success of the policy on which their energies are bent should be perilously dependent on the life of a single individual. We are now probably about to learn that republics, especially when they so far depart from the principles on which they are founded as to become despotisms in practice, are not exempt from the same danger. The murder of the President of the United States, and the . . . attempt . . . on the life of his principal Minister, are crimes which all upright men . . . will regard with inexpressible regret and indignant reprobation. . . . Of his rule we can never speak except as a series of acts abhorrent to every true notion of constitutional right and human liberty; but it is doubtless to be regretted . . . that he had not an opportunity of vindicating his good intentions by his manner of consolidating the power he appeared to have gained.[41]

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[41]The Manchester Guardian, editorial, 27 April 1865, p. 2.

CONCLUSION

The Manchester Guardian saw few gleams of good in anything American. The history of that model republic had begun with a rebellion; it had been populated by the dregs of all the nations in the world; greed finally ruined it. The South fought bravely and with cunning for a bad cause. Without honest leadership, the North fought a war of conquest for an uncertain cause, in which expediency--not principle--ruled. Nowhere had the lack of statesmanship been so evident as in the North's failure to show the proper respect for British power and prestige. Behind The Manchester Guardian's jealously preserved prejudices lurked the uneasy sensation that, should the United States survive as one nation, it would develop into a more powerful country than Britain.

Members of every class in Europe regarded the American Civil War as the supreme test of democratic institutions and republican government. To The Manchester Guardian, the conflict represented the tragic fallibility of majorities under a rule of universal suffrage: the war had resulted from an organized mediocrity easily inflamed by demagogues for the narrow purposes of party.

The elements of crudeness in American society, the notorious "Yankee brag," which helped to sustain the middle

and upper classes in their ingrained sense of British superiority, were matters of little importance to common workers. The mill hands, much more than their social superiors and The Manchester Guardian, were ready to accept the American view of America. Unenfranchised in their own country, they knew that their American counterparts exercised the constitutional right of self-government. No single factor could draw more sharply, to their eyes, the distinction between the two nations: the American was a citizen, but the great bulk of the British people were ruled by politicians over whom they exercised no constitutional control. Thus, the British system perpetuated the distinction between "two nations" within Britain, between the few rich and the many poor, and the inferior "nation" needed little encouragement to identify its interests with those of the English-speaking Republic.

Suffrage, though of basic importance, was not the only thing to count. It was commonly said that in America "a man might better himself." The absence of a hereditary aristocracy, of unearned privilege, attracted the British workers to the same degree that it repelled the aristocracy. Whatever admitted defects American society might have, there existed a very real and direct opportunity for the rise of men with ability. From hired laborer, flatboatman, storekeeper, country postmaster, surveyor, lawyer, Abraham Lincoln had

progressed to the nation's highest office. As the world's most successful common man, the workers soon developed a cult turning Lincoln into their folk hero.

This grand conception of the United States, rough and ready no doubt, but right where it was important to be right, was not in fact a representation of the whole American Republic. It was a picture of the North. It was the North whose social institutions appealed to free men. In its successful defence of freedom against slavery, the North gained credit for increasing the worth and dignity of labor throughout the world.

When British workers made notable advances towards universal suffrage, The Manchester Guardian became obsessed by the fear that, under democracy, the government of Great Britain would become the instrument of the most numerous and least gifted class in the community. Its distrust of the lower classes was firmly based on the bias that enterprise and talent are the exclusive virtues of the prosperous middle class.

The Manchester Guardian pre-supposed that the majority of a nation's citizens could not be brought to an advanced state of political education. It could not conceive of a fluid society in which individuals casting their votes would consult their own and their country's interests, rather than follow blindly those of party and class.

To the delight of the world's free labor and to the dismay of The Manchester Guardian, the American Civil War established the principle that government exists to create more and more opportunities for every citizen to associate himself consciously and intelligently with the life of the community.

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